Spiritual Formation Institute

COHORT 1

The Dynamics of the Human Person and the Kingdom of God I

October 11-12, 2019

The Dynamics of the Human Person and the Kingdom of God II

January 11-12, 2020

Living in the Divine Conversation and Character I

April 4-5, 2020

Living in the Divine Conversation and Character II

July 11-12,2020

Celebrating the Great Traditions of the Christian Faith Through Scripture, Literature and Practice I

October 10-11, 2020

Celebrating the Great Traditions of the Christian Faith Through Scripture, Literature and Practice II

January 9-10, 2021

Living as an Apprentice to Jesus I

April 9-10, 2021

Living as an Apprentice to Jesus II

July 9-10, 2021

Spiritual Formation Institute

Mission: To advance Christian Spiritual Formation as a field of essential knowledge

Strategy:

* Change people’s beliefs about what’s possible in their relationship with Jesus.
* Immerse persons into experiences of the Trinitarian God in their midst.
* Give individualized guidance into a robust spiritual life in Christ.

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

This Spiritual Formation Community is a two-year experience designed to deepen your life in God and your life in the world. As a participant of this experience, you will gather with 24 men and women on retreat every quarter to learn how to cultivate spiritual practices in your everyday, ordinary life. Weekend retreats include engaging lectures from seasoned leaders, conversations around tables with your companion group, and time alone to practice and process God's personal invitations to you in your spiritual journey. Each retreat begins with a light meal on Friday evening (6-9pm) and concludes on Saturday afternoon (9am-3pm, lunch included). The retreats are held at Oak Hills Christian Church and do not include an overnight stay. Between retreats, you will gather twice with your assigned companion group to share how God has been encountering you in your spiritual journey. Groups are structured around guidelines that encourage spiritual listening to one another and to God.

Total Cost: $400, divided as follows: $80 non-refundable (holds your spot upon acceptance) plus $40 per quarter ($320 total over two years) due the Sunday before each retreat regardless of retreat attendance.

# INDIVIDUAL HALF-DAY RETREATS

The Institute also offers the Saturday morning sessions of the Spiritual Formation Community as a stand-alone experience. Half-day retreats can be experienced individually without a long-term commitment.

Cost: $20 per retreat (lunch is included)

Register online for each retreat as announced.

Retreat Themes

# The Dynamics of the Human Person and the Kingdom of God

* God's long term goal for humanity goes far beyond merely the gospel of getting-into-heaven-when-I-die that has come to dominate the thinking of today's Christians.  This section will address what sort of universe we find ourselves in that would allow something like the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to be possible.

# Living in the Divine Conversation and Character

* It turns out that a "personal relationship with God" really means an interactive friendship with the Trinitarian Presence! This primary human relationship is meant to be marked by a growing authenticity, vulnerability, and accountability by means of communication through the Word of God in all its forms. This section will address the Christian Spiritual Disciplines as a means of grace, and how to live in an interactive relationship with the God of the universe.

# Celebrating the Great Traditions of the Christian Faith Through Scripture, Literature and Practice

* Living an abundant, grace-filled life with God has been the primary work of Christ's people throughout history. In this section, we will explore spiritual devotional classics from many different portions of the Body of Christ in order to see how the Great Ones in the Way of Jesus have grown in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ throughout history.

# Living as an Apprentice to Jesus

* What will it look like for you to incorporate Christian Spiritual Formation and Spiritual Disciplines into your life going forward? This final section will examine ways to bring ancient Spiritual Disciplines into our lives as apprentices to Jesus in the 21st Century.

IS THIS A GOOD FIT FOR ME?

# Retreat Participation

Each participant is expected to attend all eight quarterly retreats in their entirety from Friday evening until Saturday afternoon, unless precluded by an extenuating circumstance. People are encouraged to intentionally and regularly practice the spiritual disciplines taught at each retreat.

Reading - Each retreat is rooted in Scripture and enhanced by voices from our Christian heritage.

Participants commit to reading one book between every retreat. A sampling of the Christian authors on our reading list includes:

# Group Meetings

The Institute highly values being in community for personal spiritual development. To that end, participants are placed in spiritual companion groups that meet monthly between each quarterly retreat to listen and reflect on the work of God in one another's lives. We encourage everyone to prayerfully discern God's will regarding the above commitments before applying.

# Questions to support this discernment process might include:

* What choices will I need to make in my current life in order to prioritize the spiritual practices, reading, and companion group attendance expected in the spiritual formation experience?
* How does this spiritual formation community align with the other things God has been saying and doing in my life these days?
* Does this seem like the next step in my spiritual journey?

Frequently Asked Questions

# Who should apply?

# The ideal individuals to benefit from the offerings of the Institute are the cross section of people within various local congregations who are profoundly dedicated to Christian spiritual formation. These are educated influencers among both laity and clergy who may have become frustrated with church but cannot abandon it. These are motivated individuals who are looking for something not fully provided by either seminary education or local church life. Their common desire is to know and live life with God. Their common strength is the ability and the platform to influence others in living well.

# Who will be teaching?

Rob Gillgrist, Melanie Gillgrist, and others will be teaching and facilitating these retreats.

# What is the process for applying to The Institute?

The two-year cohort experience involves an online application process; please apply early as space in each cohort is limited. Those interested in the half-day retreats need only register online by the Sunday before the retreat.

# How are spiritual companion groups in the two-year cohort experience formed?

When applying online for the cohort experience, you will be asked to indicate your preferences for those in your group (for example, whether or not you want everyone to be of the same gender). You can also apply with an existing small group or with one or more of your friends. Additionally, you will be able to indicate in the application form if there is a particular person with whom you’d rather not be in group (for instance, a client from a professional relationship or an ex-spouse).

# Can I still participate if I know I will miss one of the retreats?

Participants are asked to carefully discern their commitment to the cohort experience and mark their calendars for all eight retreats. Nevertheless, we recognize that someone may have to miss one retreat due to illness or a previous commitment. Missing one retreat does not preclude your participation in the experience.

Retreat Schedule

Friday

6:00-6:30 pm Communal Dinner

6:30-6:45 pm Evening Prayers

6:45-8:45 pm Teaching, reflection and response

8:45-9:00 pm Night Prayers

Saturday

9:00-9:15 am Morning Prayers

9:15-11:45 am Teaching, reflection and response

11:45am-Noon Noonday Prayers

Noon-12:45 pm Communal or Silent Lunch

12:45-2:45 pm Teaching, reflection and response

2:45-3:00 pm Closing Prayers

Oak Hills Christian Church

100 Township Line Road, Butler, PA 16002

724-287-2826

rgillgrist@gmail.com

www.oakhillschristianchurch.com