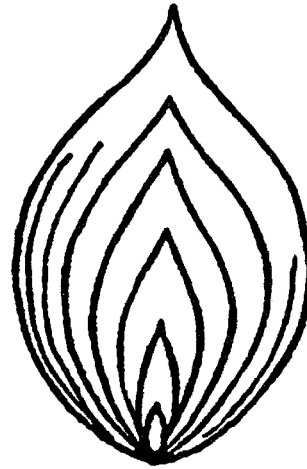


*A Quaker Ministry of
Prayer and Learning
devoted to*

the School of the Spirit



On Being a
Spiritual Nurturer

2007–2008

a program of prayer and study

A Ministry of the Standing Committee on Worship and Care of
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends

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On Being a Spiritual Nurturer

a program of prayer and study

We invite you to read this prospectus so that you may learn more about the purpose, structure and themes of the Spiritual Nurturer program. We hope it will help you discern whether you are called to the ministry of spiritual nurture and whether you are led to apply to this program. You will find an application form at the end of this document. Please feel free to contact any of the core teaching staff (see below) for further information and discussion.

The core teaching staff:

Michael Green
1306 Hillsborough Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 929-2339
mgreen@mindspring.com

Patty Levering
309 Pinecrest Street
Davidson, NC 28036
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pattylev@bellsouth.net

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Greensboro, NC 27408
(336) 855-5173
ctreadway5@earthlink.net

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS is DECEMBER 1, 2006

*All applications will be considered after this date,
not as they are received.*

◀ www.quakerinfo.com/sos.shtml ▶

Persons called to the **MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL NURTURE** are keenly aware of their own lives in God and committed to ongoing spiritual growth. The practice of prayer is essential.

The ministry of spiritual nurture may express itself in many forms over a lifetime. Past program participants have been drawn to nurturing their meetings and churches through teaching, leading retreats or creating small groups; through vocal ministry or prayerful presence; through partaking in one-to-one spiritual companionship, encouraging spiritual gifts in others or traveling with a concern for other meetings and churches. Your ministry will be uniquely shaped by your gifts, your life situation, and your call.

The Program *On Being a Spiritual Nurturer* is for persons who are already doing spiritual nurture ministry as well as those who may feel led to this work. Rooted in Quaker historical practice and alive to contemporary Quaker service, the program strengthens the nurturer and helps the ministry unfold. Participation in the program draws one into a community that supports and encourages one's relationship with God.

OUR GOALS are that participants will:

1. have opportunity to grow spiritually, deepening their lives in God through greater understanding of how God works in our lives and through an expansion of love and compassion for others.
2. gain a greater understanding of spiritual practices and faith journeys of others, particularly those of the Judeo-Christian and Quaker traditions.
3. develop further their gifts for spiritual nurture and discern how these gifts can best be used to serve individuals, meetings, churches, and the wider world.

THE CORE CHARACTERISTICS articulate the program's intellectual and experiential foundation.

The program:

1. Combines a clear Christian grounding with the ability to recognize spiritual openings and committed journeys in whatever form they appear. This rare combination helps to lead one into deeper spiritual understanding and brings forth a greater tenderness with each other.
2. Sets our understanding of spirituality and spiritual journeys in the context of the ongoing Judeo-Christian story.
3. Strengthens understanding and appreciation of the roots of Quakerism, its theology, practices and traditions (e.g., ministry, eldering, Quaker Christology).
4. Fosters a deeper appreciation of contemplative life within a corporate faith community and how it relates to the individual faith journey.
5. Emphasizes and strengthens relationships with participants' meetings and churches in ways that foster growth into the ministry of spiritual nurture.
6. Focuses on understanding those aspects of Quaker spirituality and practice that particularly relate to spiritual nurture (e.g., contemplative practice, listening, discernment).
7. Develops an understanding of the adult spiritual journey, its various phases and venues, and places this understanding within the context of spiritual nurture.
8. Focuses on learning about the varieties of prayer practices and spiritual disciplines, and encourages mutual support of individual practices.

Each **PROGRAM COMPONENT** is a means to deepening your life in prayer, to opening you to the life of the Spirit in community, and to shaping your nurture ministry.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

We believe in the daily need to set aside a time for stilling the body and mind for prayer and quiet reflection. Your practice may include private prayer, journaling, *lectio divina* or other disciplines. Such practices are not ends in themselves but means to becoming more aware of God's presence and activity in our lives. It can be helpful to reflect on your practice with a spiritual friend, your Care Committee and with your *koinonia* group (see p. 5).

READINGS AND PROJECTS

We approach study as a spiritual practice. Assigned readings will average 100 pages per month. You will also complete four projects: two reflective papers and two research projects. Reflective papers speak to your own growth, understanding, and sense of call as the program progresses. Their form may vary from a traditional paper to journal excerpts, spiritual autobiography, or artistic expression. Research projects explore more deeply an area of spiritual nurture ministry of interest to you. The second research project may take a form other than a written paper, such as a detailed outline for a course you wish to teach, a retreat you wish to lead, or an artistic exhibit.

CARE COMMITTEE

A Care Committee usually comprises members from your meeting or church. This committee provides an essential link between your participation in this program and your home faith community. It provides encouragement, guidance, discernment, and accountability for you, both as a program participant and as a nurturer exploring your ministry in your community. You should plan to meet with this committee monthly. The committee will be asked to respond each year to queries from the core staff. We strongly recommend that you establish this committee before the program begins.

RESIDENCIES

A typical day in a residency follows a rhythm of solitary spiritual practice, corporate worship, teaching, free time and meetings in a *koinonia* or “k” group.

7:30 a.m.	Solitary spiritual practice
8:00	Breakfast
8:45	Corporate worship
9:30	<i>Teaching session</i>
12:00 p.m.	Lunch, followed by free time
3:00	<i>Koinonia groups</i>
4:45	Corporate worship
5:30	Dinner
6:45	<i>Teaching session</i>

The *koinonia* group, consisting of 5-8 persons, is an opportunity where deeper knowing and sharing occurs, and where we can practice being church for one another. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20) Under the guidance of a core teacher, each group meets at least twice in each residency as a venue for sharing, reflection, and prayer concerning your relationship with God and the way the Spirit is at work in your life. Participants remain together in the same group for the program’s two years.

The first day of each residency begins with worship at 4:30 p.m. and the residency closes with lunch at noon. The dates of the residencies are:

I.	Wed. Mar. 14 – Mon. Mar. 19, 2007
II.	Thurs. May 10 – Sun. May 13, 2007
III.	Thurs. Sept. 20 – Sun. Sept. 23, 2007
IV.	Wed. Nov. 14 – Mon. Nov. 19, 2007
V.	Wed. Feb. 20 – Mon. Feb. 25, 2008
VI.	Thurs. May 15 – Sun. May 18, 2008
VII.	Thurs. Sept. 11 – Sun. Sept. 14, 2008
VIII.	Wed. Nov. 12 – Mon. Nov. 17, 2008

THE CURRICULUM comprises the study and the practice of the contemplative foundation of spiritual nurture.

STUDY THEMES AS CURRICULUM

Teaching presentations and the readings related to them fall generally within these five areas:

1. The Judeo-Christian Narrative
Faith, discipleship and expressions of individual and communal spiritual formation within the Judeo-Christian experience.
2. Quaker Spirituality
Traditional understandings of Quaker faith and practice and how they can be expressed in contemporary Quaker faith communities.
3. Spiritual Practice
Varieties of prayer, traditional spiritual disciplines and distinctive Quaker spiritual practices.
4. Life Venues as a School of the Spirit
Life situations, such as vocation, family or single life, bereavement, spiritual friendship, as opportunities for Spirit-led learning.
5. Adult Spiritual Formation
Exploring the adult spiritual journey, including darkness, transformation, thanksgiving, forgiveness, and discernment.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE AS CURRICULUM

The spiritual practices of the residencies include:

- Solitary spiritual discipline, at the beginning of each day.
- Communal worship, after breakfast and before dinner.
- Listening to and praying for one another, especially in the k-groups.
- Active communal silence, as part of a retreat within each 5-day residency.
- Solitary silence in community, also as part of this retreat.

MICHAEL GREEN is a member of Chapel Hill (NC) Friends Meeting and of Piedmont Friends Fellowship. He completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in 1997 and joined SOTS as administrator and as a core staff teacher in 2000. Mike is a released Friend with a concern for the nurture and care of family and communal life. He and his wife are leaders in the Couple Enrichment program of Friends General Conference.

PATTY LEVERING is a member of Davidson (NC) Friends Meeting. She is a graduate of Earlham School of Religion and completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in May 2006, joining the core staff later that year. She has been involved with FGC, FUM, and Conservative Friends, and is especially interested in deep listening, spiritual disciplines, and Friends' interpretation of the Bible.

CAROLE TREADWAY is a member of Friendship Friends Meeting in Greensboro and of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative). She completed the Spiritual Nurturer program in 2000 and joined SOTS as a core staff teacher in 2002. Carole is drawn both to personal and meeting spiritual nurture work, as well as to understanding the traditional ways of Friends and how they may be preserved and interpreted today.

Residencies will be held at the **AVILA RETREAT CENTER**, just north of Durham, NC, and about 30 minutes from the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. The center is under the care of the Catholic Archdiocese of Raleigh. Each participant is assigned to a single, furnished room. Each room has a window overlooking the grounds and most have a bathroom ensuite. The Avila Retreat Center is fully accessible. Directions and transport possibilities to the center will be sent upon acceptance into the program.

THE FEE for the two-year program, \$5,200, covers your tuition, room and board for the 32 residential days. The fee also includes a \$400 non-refundable payment that is due on acceptance into the program. The fee excludes the application fee (\$35), books (up to \$200), and your travel to and from the Avila Retreat Center.

If you feel drawn to the program, please do not let the cost keep you from applying. We strongly encourage you to apply for grant support from your monthly meeting or your local church, and your quarterly and yearly meetings. You may also be eligible to apply to other grant sources; please contact us for a list of potential grantors. You may also request from us a form to apply to our needs-based *Sandra Cronk Memorial Scholarship Fund*. We can also work with you to arrange a payment plan.

IS THIS PROGRAM FOR YOU?

If you are not a Quaker, you may be wondering whether you can participate. Although the majority of those in its classes have been Friends, the program has been blessed by participation of those from other faith traditions and we believe that the program will be of benefit to other faith communities.

Applicants to the program should be able to respond affirmatively to the following statements:

- I recognize and have already reflected on my life as a journey with and into God.
- I sense a nudge or call to a ministry of spiritual nurture.
- I am a member of a meeting or church and have some knowledge and experience of its faith and practice.
- I have sought clarity in my leading to enter this program with a group that includes members of my meeting or church.
- I am able to make the space and time in my life to undertake the components of this program.
- I am of sufficient maturity and at a place in my life where I can be attentive to others.

A P P L I C A T I O N

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEETING/CHURCH _____

- A.** Write a summary (2-6 pages) of your call to and experience with spiritual nurture ministry. In your summary, reflect upon how your calling to spiritual nurture and to its study rises out of your: personal faith, faith community, life experience, education, and training.
- B.** Reflect briefly in writing on the following discernment questions. These questions are meant for your own discernment as well as to assist us in the admission process.
1. Are you able to make the time commitment that this program calls for? (i.e., daily prayer, attendance at all the residencies, reading up to 100 pages per month, preparing four integrative projects, monthly meetings with a Care Committee)
 2. Are you free to be available to others who might need your attention?
 3. Are you dealing with personal needs which demand a major part of your attention at this time? (e.g., recent loss, emotional issues, financial or family pressures, professional demands)
 4. Have you persons in mind who might serve on your Care Committee?
 5. How are you going to pay for this program?
 6. For your safety and health, are there any limitations that might affect your participation in this program?
 7. Have other questions arisen in your discernment process to enter into this program?

RECOMMENDATIONS: Please ask two people who know you well to write or e-mail regarding your call and experience in spiritual nurture ministry as well as your readiness and aptitude for this program. Ask your reference to contact us within two weeks of the receipt of your application.

1. NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEETING/CHURCH _____

2. NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

MEETING/CHURCH _____

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Application fee: \$35

Please make checks payable to *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*, earmarked for the *School of the Spirit Ministry*.
Mail this page, your responses to the questions, and your application fee by **December 1, 2006** to:

School of the Spirit Ministry, c/o Michael Green, 1306 Hillsborough Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
Late applications may be considered at the discretion of the Ministry.