Institute for Christian Spirituality

2015–2016
Workshops and Retreats

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF BIBLE & MINISTRY
Mission Statement

The Institute for Christian Spirituality nurtures the discipleship of Christ followers by cultivating a deeper awareness of and participation in God’s formative activity among us and through us in the world. We advocate a Christian life that follows the risen Lord, in the power of the Spirit, to the praise and glory of the Father.

“Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7, NASB).

“Spiritual formation is our continuing response to the reality of God’s grace shaping us into the likeness of Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit, in the community of faith, for the sake of the world.” – Jeffrey Greenman

Workshops

Healthy Churches
Moving from Inertia to Initiative

The Ministry of Reconciliation
Transforming Conflict in Christian Community

Enter the Story
Reimagining the Narrative
and Ministry of the Local Church

Pilgrims Together
Walking with Children
on Their Spiritual Journey

Nurturing the Soul
A Spiritual Immersion Experience

Retreats

Flourishing Leaders
A Three-Day Retreat for Church Leaders

Senior Minister's Sabbath
A Nine-Day Retreat for Healing and Renewal

Certificate Program

The Ministry of Spiritual Direction
Training and Transforming for Pastoral Care

The Institute for Christian Spirituality was launched several years ago as an innovative expression of Lipscomb University’s commitment to the church. As newly appointed dean of the College of Bible and Ministry, I am eager to see the institute continue its good work and to creatively branch out in its mission. I think you’ll see some exciting developments in this year’s program book.

ICS wants to partner with your church and provide resources that will positively affect the life of your congregation. The first five offerings do this in different ways. We’ll share tools that help revitalize your sense of mission, manage conflicts that arise, renew your hunger for God’s Word, better attend to the spiritual life of your children, and introduce new practices that enrich a daily walk with God.

You’ll also see ICS’s commitment to church leaders. Retreats for refreshment and equipping, a certificate programs focused on pastoral care, and an intensive program for those in senior leadership roles all minister to those who serve our congregations.

If these programs connect with needs in your community, be sure to connect with us to learn more. The contact information is listed at the back of the brochure.

Blessings,

Leonard Allen
Dean of the College of Bible & Ministry
Lipscomb University

Photo on front cover courtesy of edgarlowen.com. This early Christian dove symbol dates from the 4th–6th century AD.
Healthy Churches
From Inertia to Initiative

A weekend seminar led by Walter Surdacki and John York

This seminar is for all who feel “stuck” in the ways we have been going through the motions of church while feeling increasingly uncomfortable with the lack of life connection: to the other six days of the week and the increasingly secular world that surrounds us; to the next generation that seems to have little interest in “the way we were”; to our own spiritual growth and development.

Who is this workshop for?
For church leaders and all members who seek greater connection with each other (of all ages) and with the mission of God in the world.

What is the time frame?
A four to six hour interactive discussion-oriented Saturday seminar. It could include class and sermon times on Sunday.

What does this workshop do?
• Invites people into the exciting and life-fulfilling story of God as a way of being both in the church and in the world.
• Helps church leaders and members alike rethink some of the fundamental assumptions of our faith and renew our sense of purpose and mission in the world.
• Creates new opportunities for interactive multigenerational relationship formation and community life.
• Strategizes together what what this might look like in your context.

Here’s the biggest take-away...
One needs only look at declining attendance in many of our churches to know that “business as usual” is not going to yield growth and sustainable faith. This seminar is designed to lead church leaders and congregants into a reframing process for living into God’s promised and preferred future.

Walter Surdacki is associate professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Lipscomb University, where he teaches youth ministry and practical ministry courses as well as spiritual disciplines and spiritual formation courses. He served in full-time youth ministry for over 16 years working at churches in Torrance, Malibu, and Campbell, California. He is a regular speaker and teacher at events all over the country.

John York is the director of Lipscomb’s Doctor of Ministry program and teaches courses in the D.Min. program and text courses for graduate students. He received his training from Emory University (Ph.D.), Lipscomb University (M.A. in Conflict Management), and Abilene Christian University (B.A., M.A., M.Div). Prior to joining the Lipscomb faculty, York served in full-time ministry with congregations in Oregon, Texas and Tennessee.
The Ministry of Reconciliation
Transforming Conflict in Christian Community

A weekend workshop facilitated by Terry Briley and Steve Joiner

God calls the church to model and proclaim Christ’s “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). But the churches we meet in the Bible (including Corinth), as well as the churches of our own experience, reveal the difficulty of living up to this calling.

While we often lament the “messiness” of church, great possibilities reside within the difficulties. Randy Lowry, Lipscomb’s president and a pioneer in the field of conflict resolution, puts it this way: “There are dangers and wonderful opportunities. If our view of difficult experiences is only to view them as dangerous, we just might miss what God is trying to do among us.”

This workshop provides tools to help participants lead in the face of the inevitable struggles that result when imperfect people attempt to fulfill God’s ideal of a reconciled and reconciling community.

Who is this workshop for?
Anyone serving in a leadership role in a church (ministers, elders, teachers, ministry leaders).

What is the time commitment?
Two Saturday seminars (8 a.m. – 4 p.m.), separated by two months.

How will it help me?
• Understand the dynamics of congregational life and how to nurture a healthy culture for reconciliation.
• Grasp the detrimental effects of sin on our perception and communication, and the path to hearing God and one another more clearly and constructively.
• Learn to move beyond either/or solutions and unsatisfying compromises to more creative and collaborative possibilities in the face of disagreement.
• Gain a sustainable vision of Christian leadership, including the spiritual resources to handle the inevitable resistance to the pursuit of reconciliation.

Here’s the biggest take-away…
Just as we tend to develop the most as individuals in times of hardship, so the church can experience rich seasons of growth in difficult moments. In both cases, the way we respond to the challenge determines the outcome. We want to empower you with resources that will enhance your congregation’s capacity to respond faithfully and constructively to the challenges of conflict.

Terry Briley is professor of Old Testament at Lipscomb University, where he has taught since 1986. For ten years he served as dean of the College of Bible and Ministry. He has been involved in a preaching ministry since 1974, including the last twenty-five years at the Natchez Trace Church of Christ in Nashville, where he has also served as an elder for ten years. He completed Lipscomb’s M.A. in Conflict Management and teaches undergraduate ministry majors how to handle change and conflict in the Senior Seminar course.

Steve Joiner serves as dean of the Institutes at Lipscomb University and managing director of the Institute for Conflict Management. Before coming to Lipscomb, he served as dean of Biblical Studies and Behavioral Science at Lubbock Christian University. He is a nationally recognized trainer and educator in the field of conflict management and religion. In addition to work with national and international companies, Joiner has consulted and trained leaders in over two hundred churches in the skills of leadership and managing conflict.
Enter the Story
Reimagining the Narrative and Ministry of the Church

A weekend workshop facilitated by Earl Lavender

Churches offer an alternate story to their local communities, one that embraces Scripture and the way of life it describes. In the face of rapid cultural change, what story can we tell that will meaningfully advance the Kingdom of God in our time?

This workshop helps church leaders understand their church’s current story and then ask important questions on its connection to ministry. Our program facilitators share key insights on the process of narrative discovery and help participants imagine how their church could be more in harmony with God’s work in the world through a missional reading of Scripture.

Who is this workshop for?
This is specifically for anyone fulfilling a leadership role in the church (ministers, elders, teachers, and ministry leaders).

What is the time commitment?
One Saturday session (8 a.m. - 4 p.m.). The workshop can also include Sunday presentations to your congregation as well as a personalized seminar for the broader membership where they can enrich their own missional imagination for ministry.

How will it help me?
• Gain an overview of God’s redemptive narrative in Scripture.
• Discover the story in which you and your church are currently living.
• Practice imagining what missional ministry can be for your church.

Here’s the biggest take-away . . .
Story matters in the life of the church. We will help you listen well to where you are and make important adjustments so that your church continues to bless its community.

Earl Lavender is the director of Missional Studies in the College of Bible and Ministry at Lipscomb University. With a background in planting churches and helping established churches experience renewal, he also approaches each of his courses (undergraduate, graduate and D.Min.) as an opportunity to study effective approaches to spiritual and missional renewal. His primary passion is to help students and churches find their place in God’s redemptive narrative. He is the author or co-author of several books, including Living God’s Love: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality.
Pilgrims Together

Walking with Children on Their Spiritual Journey

A weekend seminar led by Holly Catterton Allen

Parents and teachers recognize that children, even the very young, exhibit a spiritual awareness. They seem to begin life with a sense of the inexpressible mystery of God. What can adults do to nurture that God-child relationship? This workshop offers fresh, exciting and doable methods for adults to join children in their spiritual development.

Who is this workshop for?

For parents and teachers—for all who work with children and seek to nurture them spiritually.

What is the time commitment?

A one-day event with four to six, one-hour-long interactive sessions (the length is flexible). Participants can experience five, seven, or nine practical ways to walk with children on their spiritual journeys—depending on the workshop length.

How will this help me?

• Learn how to foster children spiritually amid the ordinary tasks and experiences of life.
• Deepen your understanding of spirituality and how it touches every part of a child’s life.
• Study and discuss faith development theory versus spiritual development.
• Discover new and exciting research findings that focus on children’s spirituality.

Here’s the biggest take-away…

Children have a unique spirituality they want to share. This seminar gives you several workable, concrete, realistic ways to promote, nurture and enhance their spiritual development.

Holly Catterton Allen is professor of Family Studies and Christian Ministries at Lipscomb University. She teaches undergraduate courses such as Nurturing Spiritual Development in Children and Family Ministry. Her most recent book (with Christine Ross) is Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship (InterVarsity Press, 2012). Her first book, Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices (Cascade), an edited volume, was released in 2008. She is currently working on a book for InterVarsity Press on children’s spiritual formation.
Nurturing the Soul  
_A Spiritual Immersion Experience_

A three-month program led by Rhonda Lowry and Earl Lavender

Soul care often happens in isolation, if at all. Our Nurturing the Soul program places you in a community of like-minded learners, teachers, and mentors eager to walk the path with you. Together you will explore the practices of prayer, contemplation, and service and learn how they can benefit your spiritual life. The program involves directed readings, interactions with a spiritual mentor, two weekend retreats, monthly meetings with your own prayer group and integrative response papers.

**Who is the program for?**
Anyone interested in personal Christian growth.

**What is the time commitment?**
Three months, with weekend seminars at the beginning and end of the program. Participants will work through the required materials and interact with their program mentor monthly over what they are learning.

**How will this help me?**
- Discover rich resources for your spiritual vitality.
- Enjoy the community of your cohort as you explore new ideas together at the retreats.
- Build helpful habits in your life with the aid of your personal mentor.

_Here’s the biggest take-away…_
You can nurture a stronger connection to God in the life you already live. Join one of our Nurturing the Soul communities and experience the joy of walking with others in pursuit of the abundant life.

Rhonda Lowry is a frequent speaker at conferences, retreats, and lectureships programs where she seeks to help people know Jesus deeply and to serve him in the everyday places of their lives. She serves as executive director of the Operation Andrew Group and as assistant professor of spiritual formation at Lipscomb University. Her theological training was at Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and she has taught at Fuller and Pepperdine University. Rhonda serves on the boards of Alive Hospice, the Christian Scholars Foundation, Heartbeat, and Provision Ministries.

Earl Lavender’s primary passion is to help Christians find their place in God’s redemptive narrative. He is the author or co-author of several books, including _Living God’s Love: An Invitation to Christian Spirituality_ and several volumes in the Meditative Commentary series.
Flourishing Leaders

A Three-Day Retreat for Church Leaders

Facilitated by Kris Miller

What does it take for leaders to flourish today?

The well-being of the church is connected to the well-being of her leaders. There are common challenges that leaders regularly face which sap our personal resources. Discover what will sustain your life in Christ so that your roots may grow deep and your life and leadership may be fruitful and steady.

The Flourishing Leaders Retreat will bring you to the intersection of spiritual formation and human flourishing. We are biological-psychological-social-spiritual creatures. All of these dimensions are interconnected and essential to the life-long process of formation. As leaders, it is especially important that we learn to live in healthy step with the Spirit across the changing seasons of our lives.

Drawing upon his research and over ten years of work with senior leaders, Miller addresses the most common drains upon our lives as leaders. This retreat will help you not only identify those drains, but will also equip you with the two basic, life-nurturing ways to respond.

This retreat is designed not only to teach you about human flourishing, but to nurture you personally in the good life which Jesus opens up for us in the kingdom of God. You will have the opportunity to worship, experience contemplative practices, and receive private ministry to assist your growth through the particular challenges you are currently facing.

What is your well-being as a leader worth?

This three-day retreat is for all leaders, whether you are on a church staff or a volunteer leader. Discover how you can participate in the formative work of the Spirit during this season of your life for God’s glory, your good and the good of those you lead.

Kris Miller has 24 years of ministry experience as a minister, professor and administrator. He worked for eleven years for Vineyard USA, the national office of Vineyard Churches in the United States. He served as theologian and as retreat director, providing intensive retreats for the care of Vineyard senior pastors. Kris also teaches systematic theology for Fuller Theological Seminary’s regional campuses. He has nine years of experience as a spiritual director and has been training other spiritual directors since 2010 with Sustainable Faith. He is the founder and president of Flourish which exists for the formation and well-being of Christian leaders (www.flourishingleaders.org). Kris has a B.A. in biblical studies, an M.Div., an M.A. in history and theology all from Abilene Christian University, and a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Durham University (UK).
Senior Minister’s Sabbath

A Nine-Day Retreat for Healing and Renewal

Facilitated by Kris Miller

Senior ministers and their spouses face unique pressures on top of the challenges common to leaders today: conflicts and betrayals, financial instability, health problems, difficulties in marriage or with children, a scarcity of friendships, vocational uncertainty, lack of spiritual vitality. These are just a few of the trials commonly faced.

Given their public role, where can senior ministers safely go to receive help and healing? Kris Miller and his retreat teams have been providing those places for over ten years.

The purpose of the Senior Minister’s Sabbath Retreat is to provide a directed experience for the healing and reorientation of battle-weary ministers and their spouses. Senior ministry couples facing a broad variety of challenges, crises, and transitions are welcome. This retreat provides nine days to slow down, be with God and receive the intensive care needed.

The retreat team consists of licensed professional counselors, marriage therapists, trained spiritual directors and those who specialize in prayer for healing. This retreat also includes life coaches to assist participants in moving forward in a most-needed area of life for three months after the retreat.

Participants will experience group activities, private ministry and quiet space to encounter the life-giving Spirit of God. All things shared at the retreat are kept strictly confidential, creating a uniquely safe place.

If you or your spouse are a senior minister and have been facing some form of crisis, experiencing burn-out or simply know that you need to take an extended retreat, then you are invited to the restoration and healing that Jesus provides through Sabbath.

Kris Miller has 24 years of ministry experience as a minister, professor and administrator. He has directed intensive retreats for the care of senior ministers for ten years. Kris also teaches systematic theology for Fuller Theological Seminary’s regional campuses. He is the founder and president of Flourish which exists for the formation and well-being of Christian leaders (www.flourishingleaders.org). He has a B.A. in biblical studies, an M.Div., an M.A. in history and theology all from Abilene Christian University, and a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Durham University (UK).
The Ministry of Spiritual Direction

Training and Transforming for Pastoral Care

A ten-month certificate program led by Randy Harris and Kris Miller

Many leave the church because they feel deeply disconnected. It’s not because they quit believing in God (although some eventually do). They often walk away from church because they are basically unknown, like sheep without a shepherd. Their stories go unheard, their questions unanswered, their longings unaffirmed and their wonderings unprocessed. In short, they become estranged.

- Where in your church can someone go to be deeply known and find the companionship needed to navigate the complexities of following Christ in our world?
- Where can Christians in your larger community find personal assistance in discerning the presence and activity of God in their ordinary lives?
- Where are those who will shepherd the sheep?

A specialized type of pastoral care that is being renewed in our day is the ancient Christian practice of spiritual direction.

Training in the ministry of spiritual direction is more than acquiring information or learning skills for excellent listening and question-asking. Becoming a spiritual director is first and foremost about the formation of the director. As one learns to be attentive to God in his or her own life, she or he will become more skilled in helping others become more attentive. As one learns to recognize the movement of the Spirit in joy and pain within oneself, so one will become adept at noticing the workings of the Spirit in others.

The ministry of spiritual direction requires formation and training; it involves
transformation and education. Participants will acquire the skills of asking good questions, listening attentively, and fostering stillness as they facilitate deep and meaningful conversations. Participants will also read and discuss many of the best books about this type of pastoral care.

Our design for renewing the ministry of spiritual direction reflects this primary need for formation. Over the course of ten months, participants will participate in five two-day intensives. These intensives will provide an atmosphere of deep, personal reflection, discussion, and growth. They will be a place for experimentation with various contemplative exercises and growth in the knowledge of God and ourselves.

The intensives will also prepare participants for where the actual training in the ministry of spiritual direction will occur: in offering spiritual direction to a few others in their own contexts. Hence, the intensives are like laboratories along the way as you learn to provide direction for others. Between the intensives, participants will also receive spiritual direction.

To receive the certificate of completion, there are seven requirements:

1. Participate in all five modules.
2. Experiment with and engage in chosen spiritual disciplines.
3. Receive regular spiritual direction.
4. Offer spiritual direction (two directees, at least ten sessions total).
5. Submit two recordings/verbatims for feedback.
6. Read the required books.
7. Submit seven monthly general reports via email.

In his book The Contemplative Pastor, Eugene Peterson described spiritual direction as a “cultivated awareness that God has already seized the initiative” in someone’s life and that God “has been working diligently, redemptively, and strategically before I appeared on the scene, before I was aware there was something here for me to do.”

God is already at work deeply and personally in the lives of the people around you. If you and your church would like to learn better ways to accompany others in discerning and enjoying God’s work in their lives, consider participating in this formational experience.

In his book The Contemplative Pastor, Eugene Peterson described spiritual direction as a “cultivated awareness that God has already seized the initiative” in someone’s life and that God “has been working diligently, redemptively, and strategically before I appeared on the scene, before I was aware there was something here for me to do.”

Randy Harris is a popular speaker at conferences, churches and college campuses across the United States and around the world. He is a professor of theology and ethics at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, and has received numerous awards for his classroom work. He holds degrees from Harding Graduate School of Religion and Syracuse University, and is the author of God Work: Confessions of a Stand-up Theologian (2009), Soul Work: Confessions of a Part-time Monk (2011), and other books.

For ten years Kris Miller has organized and led intensive retreats for the care of senior church leaders. He has nine years of experience as a spiritual director and has been training other spiritual directors since 2010 with Sustainable Faith.
Learn More

Our programs have various formats and costs.

Healthy Churches, The Ministry of Reconciliation, Enter the Story, Pilgrims Together and Nurturing the Soul are hosted at your local congregation. Our facilitators come to your location and participants are gathered from your immediate community. If you think one of these offerings would bless your congregation, contact us to explore what the partnership looks like.

Flourishing Leaders, The Ministry of Spiritual Direction and Senior Minister's Sabbath are all hosted in the Nashville area. If you would like to participate in one of these programs, contact us for the offering dates and costs.

Contact Information:
Kate Watkins
615.966.5752 • ics@lipscomb.edu