

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE LIVING SCHOOL

Rev. Elizabeth Pankey-Warren recently graduated from the Living School, a 2 year program in Contemplative Spirituality

I knew I was being called to apply to the Living School after I first read this description of the program from the Center for Action and Contemplation's website:

Do you seek contemplative grounding and purpose?

Do you long for wisdom elders and companions to share your spiritual journey?

Are you willing to be shaken and changed at your very foundation?

The Living School for Action and Contemplation offers a unique opportunity to a select group of students to deepen engagement with their truest selves and with the world. Discover your authentic identity and grow in your capacity to embody this calling in the world. Through rigorous study and contemplative practice, awaken to the pattern of reality—God's loving presence with and in all things.

Learn from three of the greatest living contemplative teachers, Living School core faculty Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and James Finley.

Living School students are those who are committed to both contemplation and action, who are willing to receive the lessons of darkness and suffering, and who are open to profound transformation and change of consciousness.”

Graduating from the Living School a couple weeks ago was exhilarating and yet there was a touch a sadness that something so powerful was coming to an end.

The Living School at the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico proved to be a consuming 2 year program in study, daily contemplative spiritual practices, annual meditation retreats and group gatherings at the Intensive weeks and Symposiums. Being part of the Living School required an average of 10 hours a week of spiritual reading, lecture, small group conversations, meditation and action. The goal of the commitment to contemplative practice, study, community, and solidarity was to help disrupt ego-based habits and reorient our perception to be more consciously connected to Spirit while grounded in the world.

Being guided by Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, and James Finley has been transformational. In a deeper way than I have ever been able to feel before, I can hear James Finley say that we need to “die to the illusion that anything other than love has the ability to name who we are”. At our graduation on August 8, I was brought to tears, as the culmination of my Living School studies, the spiritual companions I made on the way, and the way that God's tender love has changed my life, all came together. — **Elizabeth Pankey-Warren**