

HELP IN FINDING YOUR SPIRITUAL PATH

Before Christianity was even known by that name, followers simply called it “The Way,” meaning a way of life. How appropriate then that spiritual director Elaine Ramshaw would refer to what she does as “wayfinding,” helping people to find their spiritual path in the midst of everyday life.

By listening to people’s stories, Ramshaw helps them reflect on what is most important in their lives in order to find what God is calling them to be. “Spiritual life is not separate from the rest of life,” she emphasizes. “It’s in everything that happens in your life — your relationships, work, hobbies.”

With a master’s degree and A Ph.D. from the University of Chicago’s divinity school, including a three-year internship in pastoral psychotherapy, Ramshaw taught pastoral care in seminaries for 16 years. A bout with cancer and the death of family members brought her back to Connecticut, where she had grown up.

After a two-year practicum in spiritual direction at the Mercy Center in Madison, she became affiliated with the Annand Center at the Yale Divinity School, working the seminarians in spiritual formation. (Note: the Revs. Ted Coolidge and former Holy Trinity associate rector Jane Stickney have both been active there.)

Ramshaw avoids describing what she does as spiritual direction — a term she says can be off-putting. She explains, “The term doesn’t fit what we do. We don’t tell people what to do.”

“What people need is a good listening to,” Ramshaw says, crediting Jane Stickney with the line. Wayfinding gives participants “a chance to be listened to, whatever part of your life you want listened to by someone else — and the Holy Spirit.”

The vestry has approved a program that will enable parishioners to work with Ramshaw. The church will cover half the cost, with participants paying the remaining \$25. Sessions normally last about an hour once each month.

Ramshaw, a Lutheran layperson, will preach this Sunday (JULY 4) and will be available after the service to discuss wayfinding with anyone interested. She can also be reachED by email (elaine.ramshaw@gmail.com). She is willing to meet with anyone initially for one hour with no commitment involved.

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