

## What is it?

Tending the Soul is a program designed to train individuals in Spiritual Direction and Congregational Formation. "We define Christian spiritual direction as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."—William A. Barry & William J. Connolly

The two-year training program offers learning and formational experiences in classroom and small group settings. The training includes home-based reading and reflection, experiential learning, and attention to the practice of spiritual disciplines. Participants will receive guidance in discerning their sense of giftedness and call to one-on-one spiritual direction and congregational direction and formation.

## Where and When?

All six training retreats will be held at Casowasco Camp and Retreat Center in Moravia, NY ([campsandretreats.org](http://campsandretreats.org)). Attendance is required at all six retreats. Retreats will be held on:

- November 14-17, 2022
- February 24-27, 2023
- April 17-20, 2023
- November 10-13, 2023
- February 19-22, 2024
- April 8-11, 2024

## How to Apply

The application form can be found on the Upper NY Conference website or you can contact Nancy directly for an application. The questions are designed to help you in your own discernment and sense of readiness for training in personal spiritual formation and companioning others.

**Send your spiritual autobiography, along with two recommendations to:**

Nancy E. Dibelius  
Program Director  
198 Truesdale Hill Road  
Lake George, NY 12845

**Or send them via email to:**  
[nancyd@unyumc.org](mailto:nancyd@unyumc.org)

**Applications are due by:**

September 1, 2022  
(or earlier if the class fills as space is limited)

Upon acceptance to the program, a non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due. The first payment of \$700 is due by November 1, 2022. All checks should be made payable to Upper New York Annual Conference.

**For more information please contact**

**Nancy Dibelius:**  
[nancyd@unyumc.org](mailto:nancyd@unyumc.org)  
(518) 369-9147

**12 CEU credits can be earned by successful completion of the program.**

# *Tending the Soul*

Spiritual Direction &  
Congregational Formation  
2022-2024



A two-year training program  
for lay and clergy



## Why Tending the Soul?

In a world that seems driven by division and enmity, a world that seems busy, chaotic, distracted, do you seek to live your life in a closer relationship with God? Have you wondered lately...

- *"How do I listen deeply for God's invitation for my life, my ministry?"*
- *"How do I companion others as they seek to hear God's invitation for their lives?"*
- *"How do I find sacred spaces where I can hear God, where I can invite others to hear God?"*

Tending the Soul is designed to offer tools and space for discerning God's invitation for your life, to offer tools and practices for weaving an awareness of God's presence into all the ministries of a congregation. It teaches you to listen deeply, to be the non-anxious presence who can gently and prayerfully hold sacred space for others. It invites you into a ministry of healing and wholeness.

Hear what others have said about the impact of this program on their lives and their ministries...

*"I have learned to ask different questions... 'what is God up to?' ...I can offer hope in places of despair and have peace within myself"*

*"The immediate urgency of the world has been replaced by God's vision"*

*"It has taught me to be more God aware; I have learned to pray and wait upon God"*

*"It has changed how I see the world, but more importantly, it has changed how I respond to the world"*

*"Windows and doorways have opened; I no longer need to 'be God' in my work; I can be open and reflective with God as my guide"*

*"I have become healthier (emotionally/mentally/spiritually) and so I function better in my ministry"*

*"I know that I cannot 'fix' things for folks, but I can offer a place of sacred listening where their stories can be heard and they can be invited to look for what God is doing in their midst"*

*"Through the multiple complex challenges that come to me in my role, I have learned to lean into God's grace and power to shape the way forward."*

## Who Can Apply?

Both lay and clergy persons from the Upper New York Conference as well as other United Methodist conferences are welcome to apply. There are no specific educational requirements, but those who apply should have an active, growing spiritual life, a deep love for all of God's people, an ability to embrace diversity, and strength in deep, purposeful listening. Participants should also be grounded in their own understanding of Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit, and be able to allow space for others to come to their own relationship with the Divine. Spiritual direction with a trained director is required of all who enroll in the program. Applicants are expected to commit themselves to participation in all retreats, home-based work, and personal spiritual formation.

## What Does It Cost?

The cost of the program is \$2400. A deposit of \$100 is due upon acceptance to the program. The first payment of \$700 is due November 1, 2022. The remaining two payments of \$800 each are due April 1, 2023 and February 1, 2024. Tuition covers six training retreats, food, and lodging. Books and other incidental costs are not included. Upper New York Conference clergy can access their Ministerial Education Funds to pay for tuition costs. Other individuals may apply for scholarship funds through UNYAC Vital Congregations by contacting Aaron Bouwens:

AaronBouwens@unyumc.org,  
(315) 424-7878, x2014.

## What Topics Will We Study?

Topics for the six training retreats and home study will include:

- Introduction to Spiritual Guidance: Learning to Listen
- Spiritual Companionship and the Journey of the Soul: Learning Multi-faceted Listening
- Spiritual Companionship During Difficult times: Learning to Listen in Painful and anxious Places
- Spiritual Discernment and the Contemplative retreat: Spiritual Discernment within the engaged Community
- Spiritual Discernment Amidst the Changing Church and Community Landscapes
- Missional Imagination of the Spiritual Director in Context

## Dr. Heidi Miller

Through her teaching, scholarship, and ministry, Dr. Heidi Miller focuses on bridge-building between academia and the church, and the church and the world. Her emphasis is in the area of missional spirituality and embodied worship practice. A graduate of Goshen College, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, and The Catholic University of America, she served as assistant professor of Christian Worship at Perkins School of Theology. She has taught at Duke Divinity School and is co-founder of the Neighborhood Seminary, a two-year program to empower laity for contextual mission. She is currently on the faculty at Pfeiffer University and serves as its director of the Master's in Practical Theology. She is a licensed minister of the Virginia Mennonite Conference and has served as a spiritual director and supervisor for more than 20 years. She and her husband live in intentional community in North Carolina.