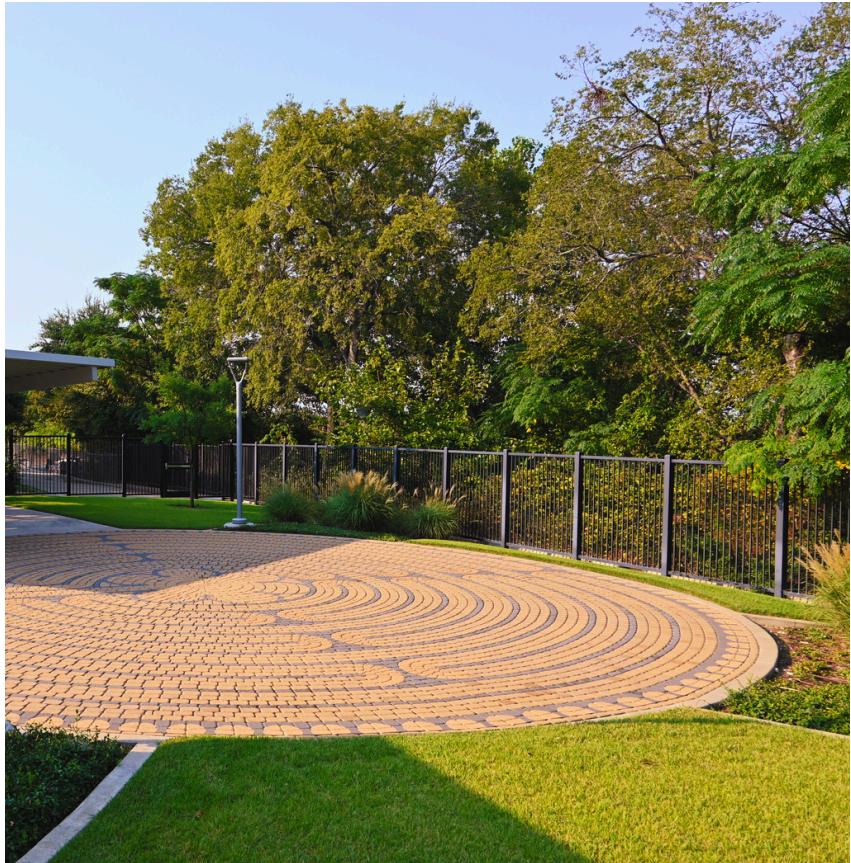

JOURNEYS

Spiritual Formation Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2026



“Spiritual Formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”

Richard Mulholland in *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*



JOURNEYS

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Journeys is a publication offered by First Presbyterian Church's Spiritual Formation subcommittee as a tool to encourage spiritual growth.



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Questions about *Journeys*?

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HAVE YOU HEARD about First Pres' School of Spiritual Formation?



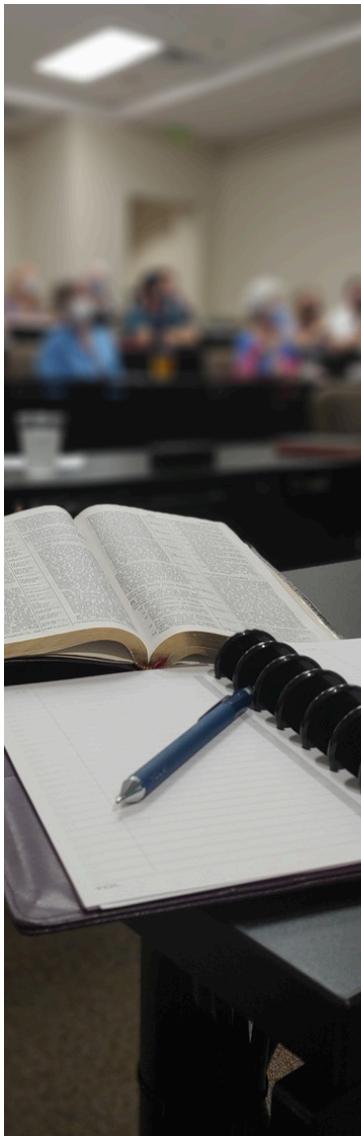
“To be conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”

This is Robert Mulholland's definition of Spiritual Formation and is truly our call if we are to be true disciples of Christ and not just spectators—or even ardent fans of Jesus. It is a call for nothing less than personal transformation into ever greater Christlikeness. Transformation of this sort is always God's work within us, but it takes our acquiescence to God's desire for us, and our intentional cooperation with God's plan for us, for this sort of transformation to occur.

Facilitating the congregation's answer to this God-given call is the purpose behind Spiritual Formation and its School of Spiritual Formation. Classes are held on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 p.m. because soul work is deep work and deep work takes time. Classes are taught by spiritual directors, Christian educators, certified facilitators, and fellow seekers. The curriculum is built on First Pres' mission statement, “Inspiring Disciples/Engaging the World,” and takes participants from **foundational** experiences, through **enriching** experiences, and finally to **deepening** experiences in each of these sections.

School of Spiritual Formation

(continued)



In the fall of 2025, the School of Spiritual Formation offered a foundational course on *Shalom*, God's will and desire for how we are to live with one another to bring about God's kingdom come to earth. This spring, we will offer *Follow Me*, an in-depth exploration of the spiritual and life disciplines Jesus used while on earth and an invitation to practice those same ways of living and praying today.

Spiritual Formation, a sub-committee of the Adult Christian Nurture Work Group, offers additional classes during the Church School hour, covenant groups, workshops and retreats.

You'll find a preview of Spring/Summer 2026 offerings on pages 10-11 of this issue. Our full curriculum guide for Program Year 2026-27 will be available in August. Listen to God's call on your life and sign up early for what tugs at your heart. It might be God calling.

“I took the Shalom class almost four years ago, but it remains pivotal in broadening my spiritual understanding of what God wants for us. Shalom's meaning is much richer than its translation as "peace." Thematically Shalom weaves through Scripture (both Old & New Testaments) and is revealed in Jesus' teaching and in the early church. It calls us to grow into a right relationship with God with humility, embracing inclusion, justice, mercy/grace, and generosity among other God-called traits. Don't miss out on an opportunity to participate in this class—it's so worth the effort.”

Mark Beasley



PRACTICES

LENT AND THE LITURGICAL RHYTHM

by Karen Hosch

Although we are now in Ordinary Time in our liturgical year, within a month Ash Wednesday arrives as the beginning of Lent, a space for 40 days of soul work before Easter. Churches, since the fourth century, have designated this time for self-reflection and examination. Considering who we are and who God is seems a worthy approach to the mystery and joy of resurrection and Easter. We practice different spiritual disciplines, then, hoping this work will aid us in becoming the expression God intends to make with us.

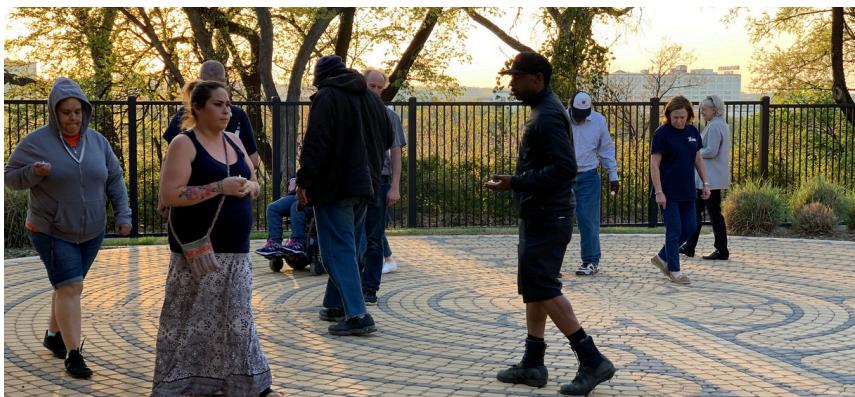
Today, however, we feel we are barely out of Advent and Epiphany, or we may be wondering, “How is this ordinary time?” Nothing about living today seems ordinary. In fact, everything seems so entangled in everything else. How can we enter into enough silence to think—much less practice the disciplines of the Lenten season like prayer, fasting, devotional reading or almsgiving?

The question may not be, “Can we do this?” but rather “Will we do this?”



PRACTICES

We find our lives entangled positively (with relationships) and negatively (with anxieties and instabilities). Our desert wilderness seems to be a mix of busyness and the impermanence of everything. Lent enters this wilderness of activity with an interruption and request—**Let go**. Let go of our intricate web of entanglements long enough to rest and ponder. Let go and try discovering a new holy habit—a spiritual discipline. The result of this disciplined work: greater relationship with God.



What are other disciplines for Lent's 40 days? While prayer quickly comes to mind, would prayer walking be a new prayer form to try? Or contemplative prayer? We've learned that Lent is often a time of giving up certain things—what if this Lent practice was detachment from social media for a specified time each day? Or perhaps we could fast from resentment and worry. We could also choose celebration in our surroundings each day as a way to increase our pleasure in and gratitude for God and God's creation. Remember the discipline we choose can be as unique as we are. Our spiritual practice increases our alertness to the Holy each day. And, we might just be surprised at our joy in this awareness.

PRACTICES

WAYS TO PRACTICE

Prayer Walking

This is a type of intercessory prayer that requires walking through a specific area while praying for the people and places within it. What's the discipline here? Remembering to steadfastly set a time, a place, and those you intend to lift in prayer. Keeping open or paying attention to your surroundings is necessary because God may use this discipline to reveal more of Godself and God's needs of you.

Walking Meditation

This walk differs from prayer walking in that it is a form of contemplative prayer. You set a time and place to meet God in silence. You walk with God and companion Presence in nature. Here the focus is simply that you are, not who you are or what you do. Self emptying allows space for you to experience Presence.

Contemplative Prayer (also known as Centering Prayer)

Contemplative prayer is the practice of self-emptying as you sit in silence for a set time. The following guidelines are from the Center for Contemplative Outreach:

1. Choose a sacred word as your intention to consent to God's presence and action within you.
2. Sit comfortably with eyes closed, settle, and introduce the sacred word to your consciousness.
3. When engaged with your thoughts, feelings, images, and/or reflections, return to the sacred word and release these thoughts from your mind.
4. At the end of your designated time/meditation period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a few minutes.

RETREATS & ACTIVITIES

MONTSERRAT JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE: SATURDAYS OF REFLECTION

Monthly (visit website for details)

600 N. Shady Shores Drive, Lake Dallas, TX 75065

Montserrat's Saturdays of Reflection provide opportunities for prayer and reflection. The morning's activity often consists of two talks on Ignatian Spirituality. In between the talks is time for silent reflection. The morning is also concluded with Mass. Saturday of Reflection sessions are offered monthly with exception of the months of January and July. The event always starts at 9 a.m. and ends by noon. Check-in starts at 8:30 a.m.

Learn more at montserratretreat.org/days-of-reflection



DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Bestselling author and Professor of Religious History at Duke, Kate Bowler provides a free, downloadable resource for lent each year which includes daily prompts, scripture readings and reflection questions suitable for individual or group use.

To obtain her 2026 Lenten Resource, visit katebowler.com/lent

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION

SPIRITUAL FORMATION COURSE OFFERINGS

SPRING OFFERINGS

LOVE GOD: HEART, SOUL, BODY, AND MIND (one-day workshop)

Saturday, February 21, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

(Coffee, pastries, and fellowship begin at 8:30 a.m.)

This 5-hour workshop is offered on a Saturday with lunch provided for a fee. The morning is given over to familiarizing yourself with Corrine Ware's Four Quadrants of Spirituality, doing an inventory to determine in which quadrants you are naturally open to receiving and responding to God, and those in which you are currently closed and in need of growth. Using this information, you will be given the opportunity to prepare a growth plan which best brings you into loving God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your strength, and all your mind. The afternoon provides an opportunity to learn various contemplative prayer types that encourage growth in each quadrant.

FOLLOW ME (School of Spiritual Formation)

Sundays, 2-4 p.m., March 15 – May 31 (no meeting Easter Sunday, April 5)

This course turns to scripture to discern the spiritual disciplines Jesus followed in his own life of faith and which he taught his followers to emulate. The course will explore core practices of a Christian life such as, Sabbath-keeping, silence/solitude, discernment, obedience, humility, simplicity, compassion, hospitality, service, justice, discipling, and balance). In following what became known as Jesus' Way, or simply "The Way," we are transformed into ever-greater Christlikeness. Using the work of various spiritual mentors, we learn what each discipline entails and how to incorporate these practices into our lives.

LECTIO COVENANT GROUP (Sunday School Hour; covenant group)

Sundays, 10-11 a.m., February 22 - March 29

Join and listen for God's word to you within the lectionary scriptures.

"The Follow Me class taught by Carol Toombs and Martha Newman brought me closer to God and heightened my spiritual being. I was able to create a space that was calming and inspiring and learned how to pray and connect with God. I also learned the joy of saying little words of kindness to friends and to others I meet. This has become a habit, and it brings a lot of smiles."

Sandra Davis

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION

SPIRITUAL FORMATION COURSE OFFERINGS

SUMMER SEMINARS

ENNEAGRAM: KNOW YOUR NUMBER (one-day workshop)

June (date TBD), Saturday, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

(Coffee, pastries, and fellowship begin at 8:30 a.m.)

Learn Enneagram basics: Centers of Intelligence, Triads, Stances, and discover your type. Cost: Free (includes resource notebooks)

ENNEAGRAM: GROWING INTO YOUR HEALTHIEST SELF

July (date TBD), Saturday, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

(Coffee, pastries, and fellowship begin at 8:30 a.m.)

Explore how to use Wings, Stress/Security numbers, and address childhood messages and wounds. Cost: Free (includes resource notebooks)

**Register for these courses
at fpcfw.org/spiritualformation
or by calling the church office (817.335.1231)**

“I have been involved in Spiritual Formation classes for several years and I have found them to be deep, thought-provoking exercises in my continuing faith journey. The recent Enneagram classes this summer were particularly helpful in helping me to understand both myself and how and why I tend to interact with those around me. They were especially helpful for the communications between my wife and myself, exploring the topics in the class.”

Patrick Sheppard



A GIFT FOR YOU...

In each issue of Journeys, the back cover will include a visual of a scriptural verse or an encouraging quote for reflection as our gift to you. Cut it out and post it somewhere you'll see it often.

