

Way of the Spirit Midwest 2026-2027

Prayer, Retreats and Learning for Living Spirit-Led • Curriculum Overview

→ PROGRAM FOCUS ↓TIMELINE	Personal Development <i>Focus for spiritual growth</i>	Spiritual Practices <i>Individual and communal prayer</i>	Study Content <i>Readings, presentations, spiritual exercises</i>
JAN Online Session 1 <i>Spiritual Awareness for Discernment</i>	Recognize and articulate personal spiritual experience Grow in spiritual awareness Set intentions for daily prayer Contribute to group culture of authenticity, mutual upholding, and spiritual exploration Listen and share in the Spirit	Daily personal prayer practice of choice Group culture—listening in tongues, tolerating ambiguity, RESPECT guidelines Contemplative listening to others	Quakers’ everyday mysticism Spiritual discernment I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview models of self, God and transformation • Personal experiences of discernment Intro online community <i>Scripture:</i> inner journey, discernment
FEB Online Session 2 <i>Prayer Styles and Stretches</i>	Examine personal prayer style strengths and challenges Follow the Life in personal prayer Engage the Bible in the Spirit Listen and share in the Spirit	Prayer styles and stretches: words, images, silence, movement Lectio Divina Ignatian imaginative prayer w scripture Centering Prayer Contemplative listening and response in pairs	Spiritual Discernment II Mapping prayer styles in human experience of the Divine: head/heart, tangible/intangible Helpful and healing approaches to the Bible Contemplative prayer, “time of retirement” <i>Scripture:</i> prayer and contemplation
MAR Online Session 3 <i>Identity-in-God</i>	Name and celebrate one’s unique sense of self in God Recognize patterns of limited sense of self (“ego”) and paths for growth Listen and share in the Spirit	Prayer practices for diverse temperaments Welcoming Prayer Practice open, honest, and evoking questions in small groups	The Enneagram as a tool for spiritual growth toward “Essence” or True Self in God. Prayer for transformation of the limited sense of self (“ego”) <i>Scripture:</i> identity in God

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APR Residential Retreat <i>God Between Us / Spirit-Centered Communities</i>	Reflect on self in community Grow in sense of the Holy in relationships Forgive self, others and the Divine Discern personal spiritual giftedness Recognize and affirm others' gifts Listen and share in the Spirit	Embodied prayer/spiritual practices: Praying with sight, sound, texture, smell, and movement Prayer on behalf of others Discerning and affirming spiritual giftedness in self and others Contemplative listening and response in small groups	Relational spirituality Gospel Order (Beloved/Blessed Community) Embodied prayer forms Forgiveness Intercessory and healing prayer Spiritual giftedness as natural, joyful flow of Divine Love <i>Scripture:</i> spiritual giftedness and communities of Christ
MAY Online Session 4 <i>Listen: Thoughts and Feelings in Discernment</i>	Grow in capacity to sort Divine Guidance within from other influences. Listen and share in the Spirit	Examen of consciousness Discernment of self-directed “experimenting with leadings” Contemplative listening and response in small groups	Spiritual discernment III • Thoughts and feelings in discernment: desert monastics and Ignatius Loyola • Ignatian Examen Intro “Experimenting with Leadings” <i>Scripture:</i> stories of discernment
JUN - AUG SUMMER <i>Individual Spiritual Experiments I</i>	Practice discernment in action: • Listen for and following unique daily Guidance • Reflect on your faithfulness • Encourage others' faithful efforts • Articulate learning	Experiments with discernment and giftedness initiated by participants Online personal written reflections and responses on experiments Encouraging others' faithfulness	Participants' experiments with leadings <i>Focus:</i> discernment and spiritual giftedness <i>Scripture:</i> participants' exploration
SEP Online Session 5 <i>Living Leadings I</i>	Synthesize and articulate growth in faithfulness and action Listen and share in the Spirit Test leadings and encourage others' faithfulness	Participants present reflections on following leadings Testing leadings in community Affirming others' faithfulness	Participants share learning and questions about their experiments Giftedness in community, examples

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NOV Online Session 6 <i>Faithful Action: Models of Ministry</i>	Increase reliance on and confidence in God in service to others Recognize self in varieties of forms of faithfulness Listen and share in the Spirit	“Testing” leadings in community Fostering others’ faithfulness Contemplative listening and response in small groups	Models of Spirit-led service in Quaker-Christian heritage Universal ministry– “ <i>lived faith, intentionally exercised toward others</i> ” <i>Scripture:</i> ideals of service or ministry
HOLIDAY BREAK			
JAN Online Session 7 <i>Suffering and Trust</i>	Recognize helpful/healthy God-images, and heal distorted personal images Integrate experienced “failure” and suffering into relationship w God Listen and share in the Spirit	Living in the cross Lament Contemplative listening and response in small groups	God concept vs. God image Failure/Suffering - a theology of integration and trust <i>Scripture:</i> lament, Christ’s Passion, trust
MAR RESIDENTIAL RETEAT <i>Spiritual Accompaniment / Quaker Eldering</i>	Grow in spiritual awareness in accompanying others Practice non-mutual presence, listening & responding to others Self-reflection in practice of eldering Engage spiritual accountability or “answerability”	Contemplative listening & response II - non-mutual presence, listening and responding to others Prayer for others, continued Collaborative discernment Self-reflection in practice of eldering	Models of Quaker “Spirit-led eldering” Intentional spiritual companioning in spiritual and secular contexts Spiritual discernment IV • Presence and collaborative discernment <i>Scripture:</i> spiritual accompaniment
APR Online Session 8 <i>Befriending them ol’ Hebrew Prophets</i>	Align actions with Divine justice, mercy, and humility Self-examination of growth with prophetic models Stretch into prophetic prayer Listen and share in the Spirit	Grow in empathic relationship to the Bible Prayer and the Powers (Walter Wink) Personal anchor committee - testing leadings in community Contemplative listening and response in small groups	“Be-Friending them ol’ Hebrew prophets” • “Yeah, right!” and “Who, me?” (reframing and relevance) Prophetic prayer forms <i>Scripture:</i> prophetic justice and prayer

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MAY Online Session 9 <i>Everyday Prophets</i>	Align actions with Divine justice, mercy, and humility Stretch into prophetic action as led Increase reliance on and confidence in God in service to others Listen and share in the Spirit	Prayers of protection Contemplative listening and response in small groups	Everyday Prophets and contemporary Spirit-centered activism Quaker models of prophets and elders Prophetic prayer forms cont. Forming a personal Anchor Committee* in home faith community <i>Scripture:</i> prophetic justice and prayer
SUMMER <i>Individual Spiritual Experiments II</i>	Practice discernment in action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for and following unique daily Guidance • Reflect on your faithfulness • Encourage others' faithful efforts • Articulate learning 	Experiments with leadings initiated by participants Personal/local anchor committee - testing leadings in community Online personal written reflections and responses on faithfulness with experiments Encouraging others' faithfulness	Participants' experiments with leadings <i>Focus:</i> Everyday Ministry ("faithfulness intentionally exercised toward others") Form and begin meeting with personal Anchor Committee* <i>Scripture:</i> participants' exploration
SEP Online Session 10 <i>Living Leadings II</i>	Synthesize and present growth in faithfulness and action Listen and share in the Spirit	Participants present reflections on following leadings Affirming others' faithfulness	Participants share learning and questions about their experiments Participant examples of faithful action in service to others

Notes:

- An Anchor Committee is a small, local or online circle of support for personal discernment in faithfulness. Quakers have also called them ministry support committees. These groups will meet with program participants for at least three months, but may continue after the *Way of the Spirit* program cycle.
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