**Overview: Journey Partners**

**Training in Spiritual Direction and Congregational Formation**

**An Offering of the Center for Ministry & the Episcopal Diocese of MS**

**(WJM, adapted)**

**Introduction**

Welcome to Journey Partners! Over the next two years you will be immersed in a rich learning community together with others who desire both a deeper personal connection with God and a greater capacity to guide others on their spiritual journey. These two pages outline the format and flow of our times in and between each retreat.

**Instructional Gatherings**

Each instructional gathering will include:

* instructional sessions (presentation, discussion, and participatory/ experiential learning)
* personal reflection in solitude (attending to your own spiritual formation and formation as a spiritual director)
* small group experiential work

The instructional, personal, and small group work will be framed by generous spaces for worship, rest, and creative expression.

**Training Retreat Themes**

1. Introduction to Spiritual Guidance

2. Journey of the Soul and the Ministry of Spiritual Direction

3. Tending the Soul during Dark Nights of the Soul

4. Spiritual Discernment and the Contemplative Retreat

5. Spiritual Formation in the Congregation: Restoring the Soul of the Church

6. Spiritual Formation in the Community and the World

Reading lists and assignments for each retreat will be provided well in advance.

**Home-Based Ministry and Practicum**

Spiritual direction is a practice which belongs at the center of all acts of ministry. Out of this center, as we attend to God’s presence and work through the Spirit of Christ, all ministry is shaped and finds its true expression.

Throughout the process, you will be invited to spend time in prayerful discernment regarding how you will begin weaving spiritual direction and spiritually formative practices into the area(s) of ministry in which you are active. In the months between training retreats you will give attention to this ministry of weaving spiritual direction/formation into certain acts of ministry. Journey Partners instructors and staff will guide your discernment and your home-based ministry practicum assignments.

During each training retreat, you will

* receive an orientation to the assignments and resource materials for your home-based work
* reflect on your current practice of ministry and discern how you can weave spiritual direction/formation into that practice
* decide on the kinds of support and self-care you need during the months between retreats
* share your intentions with your small group and small group supervisor

**Companioned learning**

Training in spiritual direction and formation includes an intentional component of learning in community. From the outset you will be part of a small group, learning together as peers in covenant relationship.

Each small group is facilitated by a supervisor who is trained in the ministry of spiritual direction, and who has gifts for the ministry of guiding others. Like the disciples who followed Jesus, you may have questions about your call to this work, wonder where this training is taking you, and find yourself floundering. At times like these we need of a companion and who listens deeply. We do not walk this journey alone; we are embraced by loving guides and sustained by the Spirit at every step.