

# *Transforming Community:* Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats



## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION & APPLICATION CLASS OF 2023



1226 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005 | (301) 897-7334 | [www.shalem.org](http://www.shalem.org)



## TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY: LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUPS & RETREATS SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*“The ultimate leader of the group is God’s Holy Spirit blowing through us... If people come ready to be vulnerable to God’s life in them and the world, if they desire more than fear God’s call to deepening liberation, intimacy, and compassion, then we can trust that grace will abound.” — Tilden Edwards*

Is the Spirit drawing you into deeper personal prayer and meditation? Does your experience of this inward deepening enliven your desire for authentic spiritual community? If your answers are yes, then the Spirit may be calling you to create contemplative community by leading groups and retreats. Shalem’s 18-month program offers you the opportunity of transformative spiritual community and deep contemplative practices in small groups, as well as the training for contemplative leadership every step of the way.

Perhaps the simplest definition of “contemplative” is direct awareness of God. This is the heart of contemplative prayer and contemplative leadership. *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats* is for those who are committed to this inward journey and its overflowing expression in the active life. Most participants are in a place of transition, seeking new meaning through an experiential learning community and leadership training. It is a treasure to stand at the threshold of discovery in a community of committed explorers.

Begun in 1987, this ecumenical program provides spiritual deepening and leadership preparation through two eight-day residencies with seminars, a guided silent retreat, and the support of a small peer group and peer group leader who will serve as a staff mentor to you. In the spiritual laboratory of a small peer group, each participant facilitates a contemplative prayer experience and reflects on leadership considerations. The small group remains the same in both residencies and is a good training ground for leading the at-home groups that are a program requirement between residencies.

Our graduates have come to this program from around the world and from all walks of life—professionals and volunteers, clergy and non-religious, educators and artists. They testify to the distinctive combination of experienced staff, inspiring seminars, extensive reading list, mentoring for the at-home leadership and reflections, and the life-changing experience of spiritual community. No other program, they find, focuses as this one does on nurturing awareness of the Living Presence and openness to the leadership of the Spirit.



## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

*Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats* is a program which spans eighteen months, with two residencies, both of which are preceded and followed by at-home work.

### Program Timeline

- **Early Bird Deadline:** November 1, 2021
- **Regular Deadline:** December 5, 2021
- **At-Home Work** February - May 2022
- **First Residency** June 1-8, 2022
- **At-Home Work** June 2022 - February 2023
- **Retreat Reflection** December 2022
- **Second Residency** March 14 -21, 2023
- **Leadership Paper** June 1, 2023

*I felt encouraged in my leadership ministry, equipped in terms of practical wisdom and resources and empowered by staff and a group of colleagues who believe in and live through the contemplative path.*  
A Participant

### Who Should Apply?

The *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats* Program is open to people of all faith traditions, vocational situations, and geographic locations who

- are called or want to test a call to lead contemplative prayer groups or retreats;
- are willing to maintain a personal spiritual practice; and
- want to learn from the Christian contemplative tradition and the wisdom of other traditions.

### Staff

**Ann Dean**, Director of *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats* Program, is a minister of the Church of the Saviour, in Washington, DC, and a member of the Dayspring Retreat Mission Group. She is a spiritual director and international leader of retreats/conferences for contemplative leadership and developing new structures committed to contemplative prayer, Earth care, and social justice.

**Lorie Conway**, Incoming Director for the Class of 2023, has a passion for listening and accompanying others on their spiritual journeys through spiritual direction, contemplative small groups, and spiritual retreats. She is a graduate of Shalem's *Living in God: Personal Spiritual Deepening and Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats* programs, as well as Lancaster Theological Seminary. Lorie considers herself a progressive Christian welcoming and embracing the wisdom of all spiritual traditions.

**Carole Crumley** is an Episcopal priest with leadership experience in three congregations as well as serving as canon educator and founder of the Center for Prayer and Pilgrimage at the Washington National Cathedral. A seasoned pilgrimage guide, she also serves on the staff of Shalem's clergy program and is a widely respected leader of ecumenical retreats, groups and conferences.

**Tilden H. Edwards, Jr.** is Shalem's Founder and Senior Fellow, an Episcopal priest, author or editor of six books on the spiritual life, and well-known leader of introductory and continuing spiritual formation/exploration groups at Shalem. He is a nationally respected speaker and helped create the *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program*.

**Jim Hall** practiced medicine at an inner city health clinic associated with the Church of the Saviour in Washington, DC, for many years. These days he spends most of his time at Dayspring, the church's 200-acre retreat where he helps preserve and restore the land, tend a permaculture food forest and garden, and lead classes, retreats, outings and liturgies that link faith and ecology.

**Kevin Omi** is a United Church of Christ pastor and co-chair of a Committee on Ministry in California. He is a graduate of *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program* and leads retreats and gatherings using both Christian and Buddhist practices for the Pacific Center for Spiritual Formation.

**Leah Rampy** has a background in corporate management and leadership consulting as well as a deep passion for contemplative living and care of the Earth. She has a PhD in Curriculum from Indiana University and is a graduate of Shalem's *Living in God: Personal Spiritual Deepening and Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Programs*. She is also part of Shalem's pilgrimage team and a mentor in the young adult program.

**Trish Stefanik** is a graduate of *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program*. Raised Roman Catholic and nurtured by many streams of faith, she is an experienced ecumenical retreat leader and artist who delights in opening a way for creativity and contemplation. She enjoys being part of diverse communities and has a passion for the natural world, social justice, simplicity and silence.

**Liz Ward**, the long-time director of Shalem's *Nurturing the Call: Spiritual Guidance Program*, is an Episcopal layperson and also is on the staff of Shalem's clergy program. She is an experienced spiritual guide and retreat leader and has assisted several local churches desiring corporate discernment. She has served for many years as a spiritual director at the Virginia Theological Seminary and leads discernment groups for the Diocese of Virginia as well as serving on their Commission on Ministry for many years.

## Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion will be awarded to those who satisfactorily complete the measurable objectives of the *Transforming Community: Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program*. This is not intended as an objective certification of the associate as a leader of contemplative prayer groups and retreats, since we believe that the final confirmation of this gift and call is known in the fruits of the ministry and is clarified through the Spirit of Truth alive in the leader and a group. However, the Certificate does represent a significant exposure and commitment of the participant to a program of study, personal discipline, reflection, and evaluation from others concerning his/her spiritual understanding and leadership.



## Program Fees

Tuition and Residency Fees	Early Bird <u>11/1</u>	Final <u>12/5</u>
Deposit, due upon acceptance (non-refundable)	\$ 550	\$ 550
Remaining fees, payable in 4 installments*		
<b>Total price</b> of the 18-month program (includes start-up materials, program staff and administration and residency fees):	<b>\$6,580</b>	<b>\$6,780</b>

The program fees shown above cover about 75-80% of the total costs. The balance is funded by gifts from donors, and as a result, their prayers as well as their financial support accompany you in this program.

\*The standard installment payment plan for the program fees:

	<u>11/1</u>	<u>12/5</u>
Upon acceptance & commitment	\$ 550	\$ 550
2/1/22	\$1,507.50	\$1,557.50
4/1/22	\$1,507.50	\$1,557.50
8/1/22	\$1,507.50	\$1,557.50
11/1/22	\$1,507.50	\$1,557.50

Please contact the Finance Office for more information.

**Tuition Assistance:** Shalem is able to offer limited tuition reduction depending on your need and the number of other requests for assistance. We ask that you prayerfully consider the amount you are able to pay and the amount you are requesting. We also encourage you to look for sources of funding from your spiritual communities. If you wish to be considered for reduced tuition, please submit a completed Tuition Assistance Form at the time of your application; the form is provided in this packet.



*Aspects of what we learned and read and wrote and did find their way into almost everything I do as a minister (and as a human being). There is contemplative silence and aspects of going deeper that Shalem more fully and strongly equipped me to share—in every retreat and service I conduct.*  
A Participant



## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

### At-Home Work

**READING.** We will provide a bibliography of required and recommended readings, part of which you are to read during these beginning months. This will require roughly an hour a day, depending on what you may have read already. (Graduates of other Shalem long-term programs will find overlaps in required background reading on spirituality, and you may find that you have already read some of the list on your own apart from Shalem.) The amount of required reading after the first residency will be much less.

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICES.** We will send a series of audio files, designed especially for the program, with selected spiritual practices drawn largely from Tilden Edwards' *Living in the Presence*. These will be examples of practices that could be used in leading a group. You will be asked to let yourself be led into prayer through these meditation/prayer forms/spiritual practices. This will help give us a common experiential reference point upon which we can build at the first residency. The time required is about half an hour a week before the first residency.

**PREPARATION FOR FIRST RESIDENCY.** You will be asked to come prepared to lead one spiritual practice session with your peer group during the residency, utilizing a particular "way in" to God's presence (scripture, sound, the body, image, word, etc.). We will send you a choice of themes from which to select so that you can prepare prior to the residency. Part of your preparation will involve becoming clear about some of your own assumptions concerning the Divine-person relationship and group process that inform your words and way of leading.

**PERSONAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE.** We deeply value the importance of spiritual direction/guidance and expect you to be meeting at least monthly with a spiritual director/guide/companion beginning in February. If you do not already have such a relationship and are not able to find an appropriate person, we can provide recommendations to you. If you have never had a director before and feel the need to understand what spiritual direction is about and what to look for in a director, you might benefit from reading the relevant sections in Tilden Edwards' *Spiritual Director/Spiritual Companion: Guide to Tending the Soul* (Paulist Press 2001) or visiting the website of Spiritual Directors International. You also need to have a personal prayer/meditation practice that includes some unambiguous time each day for presence to the Holy. You further are asked to take at least two days of silent, guided retreat, sometime before the end of the Program, and to explore some form of journal keeping. In addition, we believe that you can benefit greatly from forming a prayerful support group for yourself that meets regularly, if you do not already have one.

**COMMUNICATION.** Your Peer Group Leader will schedule two short calls prior to the first residency.

The first one is to welcome you to the Program and the second is to meet all members of your peer group prior to the residency. You will also complete a brief Situation Sheet that you will send to your Peer Group Leader in April to describe how your work for the program is coming along and any questions that may be arising, as well as a short preview of your plans for leading your spiritual practice session at the residency.

## First Residency

**PLACE.** Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville, Maryland, is accessible from Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport with shuttle service available. You will have a private room with linens furnished. The center and grounds are very spacious and include walking paths through woods and fields.

**SCHEDULE.** A day will include at least one guided meditation/prayer/spiritual practice session led by the staff, with reflection on the background of that form of prayer and its various uses in group settings, along with discussion of leadership considerations and intent. Theme areas in the first residency will normally include retreat design and leadership, scripture, body awareness, intent of prayer and discernment, sound and silence, interior words and images, exterior seeing, and body movement meditation.

Both staff- and participant-led sessions will emphasize becoming aware of our underlying intent to realize our desire and open presence for God. All methods used are for the purpose of fostering this intent.

The other major focus each day will be on the participant-led sessions in your peer groups. These will be real prayer sessions for everyone in your group, and will also include a careful process of responses from both staff and peers on the ways leadership assisted the participant's willing presence for God.

The guided, silent retreat will be held in the middle of the residency and will be based on a theme related to the Program.

There will be some free hours each day, as well as informal opportunities at meals and elsewhere, for fellowship and discussion. You will have a private meeting toward the end of each residency with your Peer Group Leader, who will be your staff mentor throughout the Program. Preliminary plans for leading a group at home will be discussed at the end of the first residency.

## Between Residencies

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICES GROUP.** You will organize and lead at least one contemplative prayer group between the two residencies. The intent and content will follow in a very flexible way what we have been doing during the residency and your own experience. Normally this will be a two-hour group, meeting weekly for a minimum of six weeks, plus an extended introductory session of four to eight hours. You will need to ask a spiritually mature person to be a participant-observer in the sessions. A learning report will be sent to your staff mentor before the second residency. Staff will be available for consultation as any special questions and problems arise.

**READING.** A light load of reading will be required.

**MONTHLY PEER GROUP REFLECTION MEETINGS.** These meetings will offer opportunity for deepening connection through sharing reflections on the readings and supporting one another on the journey of contemplative leadership.

**RETREAT REFLECTION.** You will write a two-page reflection on your contemplative retreat experience.

**PREPARATION FOR SECOND RESIDENCY.** You will again prepare to lead a spiritual practice session of your choosing for your peer group.

**PERSONAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICE.** This will continue as before.

**COMMUNICATION.** Another brief Situation Sheet will be sent to your Peer Group Leader in January to describe how your work for the program is coming along and any questions that may be arising.



## Second Residency

**PLACE.** Bon Secours Spiritual Center in Marriottsville, Maryland, is accessible from Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport with shuttle service available. You will have a private room with linens furnished. The center and grounds are very spacious and include walking paths through woods and fields.

**SCHEDULE.** In addition to peer-led sessions, this second residency will include staff-led sessions that continue to consider our opening presence for God through such foci as spiritual discernment, prayer, noticing of subtle interior barriers to presence, contemplative earth prayer, practicing the presence in daily life, creativity and contemplation, healing, thanksgiving, leadership of retreats, and translation of groups into local faith and multi-faith communities and other settings. A silent retreat (Friday to Sunday) will be included mid-way through the residency. At the end we will discuss ongoing resources and networking together.

## Following Second Residency

After the second residency, you will write a practical five-to-ten-page paper focused on the design of a retreat or a new six-week group, including key assumptions that inform your design and based on your experience and learnings in the Program. Or you may write a research paper of equivalent length related to some aspect of spiritual leadership.



*What we absorbed, learned, and assimilated is applicable in a multitude of times, places, and settings, as well as to any and all faiths, ages, and cultures. It is not simply "book-knowledge" that is given and is learned but a depth-of-being that has become a core manner of functioning and enabled me to perhaps be more fully used-of-God in grace-filled overt and subtle ways.*

—A Participant





*TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY:*  
LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER GROUPS &  
RETREATS  
*Class of 2023*  
APPLICATION FORM — PAGE 1

*Please provide a copy of the completed application, including the essay, to Shalem.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Home City, State Zip

Work City, State Zip

PHONES \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home) (Work) (Cell)

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
(Denomination & Community/Congregation, if applicable)

Sponsoring Organization (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Earned Academic Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Major Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anyone connected with Shalem with whom you are acquainted?

How did you hear about this program?

Shalem participation, if any (*Please list events attended, Shalem authors read or heard. Also, if you have participated in Shalem's online programs, please share if/how that experience influenced your decision to apply to this program.*):

Outline the highlights of your formal and informal religious educational background after high school:

Outline your primary vocational history:

Are you applying for scholarship assistance? No \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ *If yes, please enclose the Scholarship Form.*

I consent to share my contact information with those in my program (to ride share and connect).



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY:  
LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER  
GROUPS & RETREATS

Class of 2023

APPLICATION FORM — PAGE 2

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write a short essay (up to two double-spaced pages) that includes answers to the following questions:

1. What attracts you to this program?
2. What important life experiences lie behind this attraction? Include the nature and extent of your participation in, study about, and/or leadership of groups relevant to group spiritual formation and exploration.
3. What is your current contemplative practice?
4. What specifically do you sense you need from such a program?
5. With whom and where do you expect to use your learnings?
6. What is your understanding, at this point, of the intent of contemplative group spiritual formation/exploration that defines its importance for you?
7. What do you feel are the most important qualifications for a leader of such a group or retreat?
8. How would you honestly assess your assets and deficits relevant to being such a group spiritual leader at this point?

Please list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two or three people whom you would trust to know your work or potential as a group spiritual formation leader. Ask these people to send us a letter of recommendation for you before the application deadline, using the guidelines on the Recommendation Form.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return completed application form to:*

**SHALEM INSTITUTE, 1226 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005**



*TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY:*  
LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER  
GROUPS & RETREATS  
*Class of 2023*  
RECOMMENDATION FORM

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As part of my application for the Shalem Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats Program, I am asking you to write a letter of recommendation for me. Please address the questions listed below and provide any additional information that might help Shalem evaluate my application. Please send your response to Shalem by the following deadline: \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant)

1. In what way are you acquainted with the applicant and her or his ministry?
  2. What is your personal appraisal of the applicant's gifts, calling, and actual work (if any) as a spiritual formation group leader (i.e., as someone who can create environments that assist people's direct presence for God, guiding them in prayer, silent meditation and reflection, and maintaining a prayerful presence as a leader)?
  3. Can you relate any comments from other people regarding the applicant's gifts and abilities as a group leader?
  4. What is your appraisal of the applicant's personal spiritual maturity and practice?
  5. What is your opinion of the applicant's psychological maturity and stability?
  6. Would you have any hesitation in referring someone to the applicant's group if she/he were leading one?
- Please mention at least one area of the applicant's way of being with groups that you feel may be in need of attention for the sake of furthering the quality of her/his leadership.

Thank you again for your assistance.

*Please send your response to:*

**Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation**  
1226 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: (301)897-7334 \* Email: [trish@shalem.org](mailto:trish@shalem.org) \* Website: [Shalem.org](http://Shalem.org)

# Shalem Long-Term Programs in the Contemplative Tradition

## TUITION ASSISTANCE FORM

*Shalem is able to offer reduced tuition for a limited number of participants. Reductions are limited to a portion of tuition and are not available for room and board for residencies. Please consider carefully and prayerfully your expenses and income as you apply for assistance. Information you provide relative to this request will be kept confidential.*

- Program to which you are applying:
- Spiritual Guidance
  - Leading Contemplative Prayer Groups & Retreats
  - Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Tradition \_\_\_\_\_  
Are You: Lay  Clergy  Religious   
If you are able to volunteer in the Shalem office, please add any days/times available here and add any particular skills you have to offer:

Cost of Shalem program tuition \_\_\_\_\_  
Your contribution \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount of reduced tuition you request for this program \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated family income for the program's duration \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated essential expenses, total \_\_\_\_\_  
Have you explored a potential contribution from other sources? Please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
If they are positive, how much might they contribute? \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments that would assist us in evaluating your request for tuition assistance:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR PROGRAM APPLICATION AND/OR REGISTRATION TO:  
**SHALEM INSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION, INC.**  
1226 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005