

**NOTE: This is a draft of the on-line course syllabus.
The final version for the course will be available Tuesday, February 5th at
<http://www.unitedseminary.edu/faculty/Keely.asp>**

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE TWIN CITIES

CL481: The Spiritual Life of the Congregation
Spring 2008

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(under reconstruction)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The spiritual life of the congregation is understood as the ways by which a community (and its members) becomes more acutely aware of God's presence (Holy Spirit), desires it as a way of life, and intentionally develops patterns that encourage faithful living together and in the world as the people of Jesus Christ. The course will explore spirituality grounded in the Holy Spirit, current understandings of church, how the spiritual life can permeate the life of the church, and what it means to live the spiritual life beyond the church.

TEXTBOOKS

- Diana Butler Bass. *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006.
- Elizabeth Caldwell. *Leaving Home with Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Our Youth*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002.
- Craig Dykstra. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices* Second Edition, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Ben Johnson & Andrew Dreitcer. *Beyond the Ordinary: Spirituality for Church Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001.
- Eric Law. *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St Louis: Chalice Press, 1993.
- Howard Rice. *The Pastor as Spiritual Guide*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1998.
- Daniel Wolpert. *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2003.
- Karen Marie Yust. *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004
- Yaconelli, Mark. *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

COURSE SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

- The course will meet on campus three times: Thursday evenings, 6:00 p.m. - 9:15 p.m., February 7, February 14, and May 15; attendance for all on-campus classes is required. The course requires on-line work during each week of the term. Most weeks, this will include readings, posting responses to questions regarding the readings, and responding to classmates' postings. Reading and posting groups will include approximately five students. Specific schedules for these assignments will be listed in the course assignments.

- Materials will be posted on the Moodle site for this course. Additional material will be located at www.congregationalspirituality.com, which is being reconstructed before the course begins.
- Students will be assigned to Spiritual Companion groups of three. These groups will meet on-line once a week for at least 30 minutes; the regular meeting time of these groups will be established by the group members. Using *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices* as the resource, each student will engage in a different spiritual practice each week, and will share their responses to these practices with their spiritual companions. This is also a time to share one's spiritual journey with others in a confidential setting.
- A mid-term paper on one's understanding of the theology of spirituality and ecclesiology will be posted by March 7, drawing on course work and discussions through February 28th. This paper is expected to be 5-6 pages and guidelines will be presented in class February 14th.
- A final paper/project will be posted before class May 15th, and will be presented in class. The paper will be a re-write/expansion of the mid-term paper, and will describe a three-hour event to nurture one aspect of the spiritual life of a congregation. Guidelines will be presented in class February 14th.

SCHEDULE

February 7 (class meeting) Theology of Spirituality

Topics include spirituality shaped by the Holy Spirit and the congregation as spiritual community. Also, this class will introduce the course syllabus and resources, as well as provide opportunities for community building.

February 14 (class meeting) Approaches to Spirituality

Topics include the Christian spiritual life; Benedictine values in community; and religious imagination and the artistic vision

Read: *Wolpert*, Chapter 1 and on-line material

February 15-21 What is 'church'?

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 2 and *Butler Bass*

Posting on reading by Tuesday (19th); responses by Thursday (21st)

February 22-28 The changing church

Readings: *Wolpert*, Chapter 3; identified selections from www.EmergentVillage.com and other on-line sources

February 29-March 6 Deepening the community's relationship with God

Readings: *Wolpert*, Chapter 4 and from on-line sources

Topics include community practices such as worship, prayer, and music. We will also explore ways groups in the church can deepen their sense of God's presence

Mid-term paper: posted by March 7th

March 7 – 13 Spring break

(no postings required)

March 14-27 Spiritual life of church leaders

(This a 2 week period, as it includes Holy Week and Easter)

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 5 and *Johnson and Dreitcer*

Posting will include a reflection on the readings, as well as a self assessment of one's own spiritual life

March 21-27 Living as Spiritual Community

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 6, *Rice* and *Law*

March 28-April 3 Spirituality of Education and Nurture

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 7 and *Dykstra*

April 4-10 Spirituality of Families

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 8 and *Yaconelli*

April 11-17 Spirituality of Youth

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 9, *Caldwell* and on-line sources

April 18-24 Spirituality of Children

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 10, and *Yust*

April 25-May 1 Spirituality of Ministries

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 11

May 2-8 The Church Dispersed: Living the Life

Reading: *Wolpert*, Chapter 12

May 9-15 (class) Project presentations and Conversations