



Spiritual Direction Certification Program
– Final Project Descriptions –
Graduation
19-February-2022
<http://metageminstitute.org>



Allison Exby (Huntsville, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Spiritual Direction with Contemplative Drawing”
- ◆ Allison’s idea for her final project came from noticing that the state of mind during a good painting session is very similar to a contemplative state of mind. She developed a creative approach to spiritual direction by incorporating an “awe-walk” done in silence with directees. Each directee was asked to be aware of God’s presence in nature and to select an object during the walk that speaks to them—or interests them—and can be used as a subject for art. Afterwards, each directee returned to an artwork space and continued the creative process by quietly working on a drawing. Each directee shared some thoughts, insights, and reflections on their spirituality. The process with these detailed drawings seemed to flow from a headspace toward an artistic space then further toward a spiritual space.



Rusty Bennett (Birmingham, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Southside Baptist Church Birmingham, AL
- ◆ This project involved a designed Group Spiritual Direction Series titled *What does the Lord Require?*, which was offered in conjunction with the church’s Thursday night Contemplative Worship Service.

Rusty led the series to provide an opportunity for explorers to grow deeper in their walk with God through the experience of spiritual practices combined with group spiritual direction. Themed after Micah 6:8, the spiritual direction and other practices centered around the explorers’ answers to “What does the Lord require?” The explorers practiced *Lectio Divina*, *Visio Divina*, and *Audio Divina*. During each group session, following the *Divina* practice, one person volunteered to be the explorer for group spiritual direction, for which Rusty served as the Spiritual Director.



Emmi Herrell (Montgomery, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Thin Places: Dreamwork and Expressive Arts in Spiritual Practice”
- ◆ Emmi’s project combined the Haden Institute’s dreamwork method with various methods chosen from Christine Valters Paintners’ use of the arts in dreamwork. The process was deeply informed by Carl Jung’s Depth Psychology. The project involved two separate dream groups, which met in two different church settings. While some participants had experience with individual spiritual direction, no participant had been involved in group spiritual direction. The core of the group practice was based on Emmi’s definition of spiritual direction as follows: “A confidential relationship in which a Spiritual Director allows through deep listening and conversation the spiritual story of the other to unfold. Through the relationship, the person (or group) seeking direction is empowered to explore a deeper relationship with the Divine Presence of their understanding.”



Lindsey Herring (Birmingham, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Taste & See that the Lord Is Good: Engaging with the Divine in Nature”
- ◆ Continuously drawn to the beauty of nature, Lindsey felt compelled to craft a final project that focuses on the movement of the Holy Spirit through all living things. *How does one respond to God and deepen one’s intimacy with God through nature? Does nature help one become more open, more present, more receptive to God’s love?* These questions and more were explored in a wilderness setting with individuals and as a small group. The project involved holding an introductory session on the concept of spiritual direction, followed by a series of sessions on various spiritual disciplines that lend themselves to outdoor exploration, and then meeting for one-on-one spiritual direction. Lindsey facilitated methods of engagement and opportunities for “holy seeing” with women who weren’t acquainted with spiritual direction yet were called to the outdoors as a means of obtaining peace.



Renae Perry (Moody, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Clergy Spouses in the Cheaha District of the United Methodist Church of North Alabama
- ◆ This project sought to offer Spiritual Direction to an underserved community who often experience spiritual and emotional isolation in their roles as clergy spouses. Spiritual Direction can potentially fill a gap in the care and support for men and women who serve alongside their ordained spouses. Renae collaborated the project with the Cheaha District Superintendent of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church. She met with clergy spouses at a local church on a monthly basis and provided them with spiritual companionship and direction. She offered silence, holy listening, spiritual practices, and prayer to help these spouses care for their souls. Renae continues to meet with directees and plans on expanding this project to include other churches and a Spiritual Direction booth for marketing at an annual conference.



Charles Youngson (Birmingham, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: "Liturgy of Healing at the End of a Marriage"
- ◆ This project involved the creation of a liturgy that a spiritual director can use with a directee who is going through a divorce, recovering from divorce, or ending a long-term relationship. The liturgy incorporates elements from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship, as well as original prayers. The project's purpose is to help directees heal from the pain of divorce, experience God's forgiveness, renew a sense of identity as a beloved child of God, and look to the future with hope. The liturgy was prayed in a small group setting. Then, through a holy conversation about the liturgical experience, the group members processed the benefits and suggested enhancements to the liturgy. Charles's prayer is that this liturgy can be a step toward resolution, healing, and God's peace in the lives of divorced persons.



Please contact us for further information about any of these final projects
or for details about Metagem's formation programs.

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