

A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM OF THE  
**CENTER FOR RENEWAL**  
AT GRAND VIEW COLLEGE IN DES MOINES, IOWA  
AND **THE ALBAN INSTITUTE**

# SACRED PRACTICE

## LEADERSHIP SERIES

1.

APRIL 26-28, 2009

### THE PRACTICE OF VISIONING

**Carol Merritt** • "Tribal Church: Generational Change"

**Craig Nesson** • "From Maintenance to Mission"

Covenant Group Webinars

2.

AUGUST 21-23, 2009

### THE PRACTICE OF DISCERNMENT

**Anthony Robinson** • "Discernment as Spiritual Practice"

**Graham Standish** • "Becoming a Blessed Church"

Covenant Group Webinars

3.

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2009

### THE PRACTICE OF RELATIONSHIP

**Karen McClintock** • "Healthy Disclosure"

**Doug Bixby** • "The Honest to God Church"

Covenant Group Webinars

4.

APRIL 18-20, 2010

### THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

**Dick Bruesehoff** • "Prayer as a Process of Formation"

**Jane Vennard** • "Becoming a Praying Congregation"

Covenant Group Webinars

5.

AUGUST 20-22, 2010

### THE PRACTICE OF PROCLAMATION

**Lillian Daniel** • "The Power of Testimony"

**Craig van Gelder** • "Reconnecting with Biblical Narratives"

Covenant Group Webinars

6.

NOVEMBER 12-14, 2010

### THE PRACTICE OF SERVICE

**George Hunsberger** • "The Missional Church"

**Susan Briehl** • "Service as Formation: Lessons from Today's Youth"

Covenant Group Webinars

All workshops will be held at the Sinsinawa Mound Center in Wisconsin.

Note: Since both clergy and laity are involved in the program, and in an attempt to balance time-off requirements for all participants, half the sessions run from Friday evening through mid-afternoon on Sunday, and half run from Sunday evening through mid-afternoon on Tuesday.



**ALBAN INSTITUTE**  
2121 Cooperative Way, Suite 100  
Herndon, VA 20171-3025

# SACRED PRACTICE

## LEADERSHIP SERIES

A **TWO-YEAR SERIES** for church leaders—  
laity and clergy—to cultivate **PRAYER,**  
**DISCERNMENT,** and other sacred practices  
for your congregation's life and ministry.

6 | **3-DAY WORKSHOPS**

FROM April 2009 TO November 2010

A COOPERATIVE PROGRAM OF THE  
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**IMAGINE** your congregation doing ministry based not on what has happened before, or even on what people want. Imagine your congregation growing in its ability to understand and plan its ministry based on God's call and on God's desire for the world around you. ●●●●●●

Leadership in the church is changing. In the past, leadership often meant knowing and following good business practices, reading the desires of members, and developing programs. Leaders were judged by their ability to keep people happy and to make numbers grow. Today there is a growing awareness that our emphasis on efficiency and success often leaves something important out of the mix—namely God and the sacred practices that express and form our ability to respond to God's call to us.

**THE SACRED PRACTICE LEADERSHIP SERIES (SPLS)** is designed for those who lead congregations, both in ordained and lay roles. Six renewal events over the course of two years—with online resources available between events—will feature twelve prominent authors and theologians inviting us into conversation and reflection on sacred practices like prayer, discernment, and service. Participants can expect to learn to use sacred practices as a means of shaping their own congregation's life and ministry by intentionally allowing God to be a more active player in the life of the congregation.

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### What you can expect

- Growth in your ability to respond to God's call in ways that are particular to your specific context
- Movement from a focus on accumulating knowledge and skills to the ongoing process of Christian formation
- Becoming as adept at equipping members for ministry as you are at providing ministry for others
- The series will focus on relationships, moving participants from an expert-driven, event-oriented educational model to ongoing peer-supported formation

### How we'll do it

SPLS (pronounced SPLASH) features six three-day workshops held over the course of two years. Each will focus on one sacred practice:

**The PRACTICE of VISIONING:** The series begins by lifting up a vision of what God is calling the church to be as we discover again that "what is or has been doesn't have to be what will be."

**The PRACTICE of PRAYER:** For many Christians, prayer has largely become a private practice. In congregational life it has taken a back seat to our ability to discover and "fix" whatever problems or conflicts we face—often without seeking God's involvement in our corporate lives through the practice of prayer in community.

**The PRACTICE of PROCLAMATION:** The Bible is more than a repository of narratives, poetry, or teachings. Scripture comes to life in community when it is proclaimed and interpreted through reading, hearing, preaching, and making connections between the stories of God and the life stories of the individuals who hear them. We need to learn again to experience the power of Scripture to renew and revitalize a congregation's faith and mission by actively listening to Scripture as it is read and preached and then interactively sharing with one another the places where the stories of God and the stories of our lives intersect.

**The PRACTICE of RELATIONSHIP:** Just as prayer and Scripture call us into a more faithful relationship with God, they also call us into the practice of healthier relationships with one another as we learn to engage in "holy conversations" that let both God's vision for us and our willingness to live with love and justice become the basis for congregational life and ministry.

**The PRACTICE of DISCERNMENT:** To discern God's call to us as followers of Christ we do well to begin not by asking what God desires for us to do, but by discerning who God has created us to be. In this way we learn to know and become who we are in God's sight, through a lifelong process of Christian formation of individual and congregational living.

**The PRACTICE of SERVICE:** As our lives are continually formed in the image of God, we grow in love, discovering God in caring for others as ourselves. The integration of our needs with those of others frees us for service that expresses the good news of God's love in Christ, moving from doing ministry on behalf of others to equipping people for ministry among others in their daily lives.

### Expectations

Participants should be committed to participation in all six onsite events. Each person will develop goals at the beginning of the series, work on those goals over the course of the series, and revise them as necessary in light of what they learn at the workshops. Participants will also work with others in covenant groups, both at the onsite events and then following each event through online seminars led by the presenters from the previous event. This will reinforce what is learned by applying that learning to the participants' contexts for life and ministry. Participants will also be asked to form a leadership team in their congregation (or to work through an existing team) to begin to employ the insights gained from the series.

SPLS is designed for leaders who come from congregations that are ready and willing to grow in health and faithfulness; it is not designed for leaders who come from overly conflicted congregations. Clergy participants will need to be able to demonstrate the support of their congregations in this venture, and lay participants will need to show the support of their congregational clergy. Each represented congregation is encouraged to send both clergy and lay leaders; this is vital for the effectiveness of the series and for the ongoing interpretive process through which congregations begin to implement what their leaders have learned.

### Cost

The cost of the entire series is only \$1,900 per person. This covers registration for all six events, housing and meals, as well as the web-based seminars offered between onsite sessions. Additional out-of-pocket expenses will include transportation and the purchase of recommended books. Some scholarships will be available on an as-needed basis. Participants may also wish to contact their judicatories about available financial support.

### Location

Designed for an ecumenical audience in the upper Midwest (Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa), all onsite SPLS events will be held at the Sinsinawa Mound Center in Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, just across the Mississippi River from Dubuque, Iowa.

### Application

Participants need to complete an application and send a \$100 deposit. The application is available online at [www.sacredpracticeseries.org](http://www.sacredpracticeseries.org). Space is limited and the application process takes some time to complete, so you are advised to apply as soon as possible.

**TO APPLY, VISIT:**  
[www.sacredpracticeseries.org](http://www.sacredpracticeseries.org)

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
Contact Dwight DuBois  
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