Resources for Spiritual Formation

IN-MI Mennonite Conference Annual Sessions, June 14-16, 2007

Tens of thousands of resources on Christian spirituality are now available, thanks to our innate desire for intimacy with God, growing popular interest, and the continuing development of spirituality as a distinct field of study. I've tried to list resources that may be especially worthwhile for people in our churches, although many others certainly could have been added. This list is introductory, not exhaustive.

—Dan Schrock,
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www.danschrock.org

A. Websites

1. *The Upper Room*, www.upperroom.org
   Daily reflections and an introduction to different prayer methods. Also MethodX, oriented to younger people.

2. *Practicing our Faith*, www.practicingourfaith.org/
   12 practices for a robust spiritual life, sponsored by an ecumenical organization based in Valparaiso, IN. Includes honoring our body, saying yes and no, testimony, household economics, and more.

3. *An Online Retreat*, www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html
   A 34-week online retreat, available for your computer, MP3 player, or handheld device. Offered by Creighton University.

4. *Contemplative Outreach*, www.contemplativeoutreach.org/
   The main website for centering prayer, a way of praying without words that has transformed the lives of many people.

5. *Renovaré*, www.renovare.org/
   Website of the organization founded by Richard Foster that unites contemplative, holiness, charismatic, social justice, evangelical, and incarnational streams of Christian spirituality. Has many short devotional pieces written by Foster.

6. *Sacred Space*, www.sacredspace.ie/
   Guides you step-by-step through daily prayer, scripture, and personal reflection. Changes daily. Comes from Ireland. Very well done.

7. *Pray As You Go*, www.pray-as-you-go.org
   Available in MP3 or WMA formats that you can download or listen to on your computer. A new prayer session is produced every day, lasting 10-13 minutes, that combines music, scripture and questions for reflection. The aim is to help you to become more aware of God's presence in your life, hear and reflect on God's word, and grow in your relationship with God. Produced in Britain with lovely British accents. Requires a high-speed connection.

8. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, www.ccel.org/
   Christians have been writing about spiritual formation for the last 2,000 years. This is the single best source for historical writings on the Internet.

9. *Accepting the Embrace of God: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html
   Lectio divina is a time-honored spiritual practice that combines Bible reading and prayer which can be done by both individuals and groups. This may be the best description on the Internet.

10. *SoulSpace*, www.emu.edu/soulspace/
    A thoughtful, well-crafted guide to daily prayer based on the rhythm that Jesus invited us to live: to come, to be with him, and to respond to his call. Prepared by Wendy Miller at EMU.

11. *Keeping a Spiritual Journal*, edge.edge.net/%7Edphillip/Journal.html
    Suggestions by Dan Phillips, a Baptist minister, for how to start and keep a spiritual journal.

12. *About Labyrinths* (including how to make one), labyrinthsociety.org/html/about_labyrinths.html
    Christians have long used labyrinths as a means of prayer, meditation, and transformation.

13. *Online Interactive Labyrinth*, www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/interactions/index.shtml
    Walk a virtual labyrinth using your computer's mouse. Music optional.

14. *Discernment: Grounded in God* (Mennonite Church USA)
    resources.mennonitechurch.ca/FileDownload/2017/Grounded_in_God.pdf
    resources.mennonitechurch.ca/FileDownload/2018/A_River_Runs_Through_It.pdf

B. Spiritual Direction

The practice of spiritual direction, or spiritual guidance, stretches back to Jesus. Often occurring in one-on-one settings, spiritual direction helps you discern, respond to, and participate in the mission of God. You can receive spiritual direction for longer or shorter periods of time. Spiritual directors usually have a Spirit-bestowed gift for this ministry, some kind of formal training, and experience. Fees for individual direction might range $10-$40 per one-hour session for directors who do not rely on this ministry as a major source of their income, and $40-$80 per session for directors who do. Often a director suggests a range based on your ability to pay.

1. General information on spiritual direction, www.sdiworld.org/
2. An ecumenical list of spiritual directors, organized by geographical location, sdiworld.org/seek-and-find
3. The list of Mennonite spiritual directors in the U.S. (soon to be updated), mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/2012_Spiritual_Directors_List.pdf
4. Some spiritual directors are not listed on these websites, but you might find them by asking people you trust for referrals and recommendations of spiritual directors in your area.

C. Spiritual Friendship

Spiritual friends are two Christians who meet once every week or two to share their awareness of God, one another's stories, and faith commitments. A two-page guide with resources is at:
www.mennoniteusa.org/executive/congregational_life/docs/MakingSpaceForGod-SpiritualFriendship.pdf

D. Printed Materials

1. Books
   a. Almost any book on spirituality by the following authors (who write from a variety of denominations) is worth reading. If books by these writers aren't in your local bookstore, you can always get them from Amazon.com or another on-line retailer.

- Cynthia Bourgeault
- Richard Foster
- Ben Campbell Johnson
- Thomas Keating
- Sue Monk Kidd
- Thomas Merton
- Henri Nouwen
- Eugene Peterson
- Marjorie Thompson
- Dallas Willard

b. Notable Mennonite authors with books on spirituality still in print include:
- Arthur Paul Boers
- Sally Weaver Glick
- Marlene Kropf
- C. Arnold Snyder
- Wendy Miller

c. Periodicals
- An excellent journal is *Weavings: A Journal of the Christian Spiritual Life*, which you can learn more about at www.upperroom.org/weavings/. Free group study guides are available.
- The first issue of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* (published by AMBS and CMBC), was on the theme of spirituality and is available at: www.mennovision.org/Volume1-1.htm
- The current issue of *Leader* (Summer 2007), published by our denomination, has several articles on spiritual formation.

E. **A Selection of Retreat Centers**, organized by geographical location from north to south. A more extensive list of retreat centers can be found at www.findthedivine.com/states/frameRetStates.html

Upper Peninsula of Michigan

Marygrove Retreat Center (Catholic), www.marygrove.org/index02.html
Garden, MI 49835; 906-644-2771

Northern Michigan

Little Eden (Mennonite), www.littleeden.org/
Onekama, MI 49675; 231-889-4294

Central Michigan

Emmaus Monastery Retreat Center (Catholic), www.emmausmonastery.org/
Vestaburg, MI 48891; 989-268-5494
Queen of Angels Retreat (Catholic), www.rc.net/saginaw/retreat/
Saginaw, MI 48605; 989-755-2149

Southern Michigan

Amigo Centre (Mennonite), www.amigocentre.org/
Of particular interest is Mirror Valley Retreat, www.amigocentre.org/Facilities/Mirror_Valley_Retreat
Sturgis, MI 49091; 269-651-2811

Camp Friedenswald (Mennonite), www.friedenswald.org/
Cassopolis, MI 49031; 269-476-9744

The Hermitage (Mennonite), www.hermitagecommunity.org/main/
Retreats for individuals and groups. Private rooms, prayer rooms, chapel, and trails for leisurely walking. Spiritual direction is available. Three Rivers, MI 49093; 269-244-8696.

Still Waters (privately owned, Seventh Day Adventist tradition), comebestill.org/
Buchanan, MI 49107; 269-695-REST (7378)

Northern Indiana

A Quiet Place (Church of the Brethren, Camp Mack), www.campmack.org/personal_retreating.php
Milford, IN 46542; 574-658-3342.

Pathways Retreat, (a Mennonite and Lutheran initiative)
Goshen, IN 46528. Ten acres on the north side of Goshen still under development and not yet available for retreats. The vision is a place for spiritual direction and day-long retreats (no overnights). Contact Linda Thomas, ljlthomas@msn.com or 574-534-7118.

Central Indiana

Quaker Hill Conference Center (Friends), www.qhcc.org/
Richmond, IN 47374; 765-962-5741

Southern Indiana

Saint Meinrad Abbey (Catholic), www.saintmeinrad.edu/monastery_retreats.aspx
St. Meinrad, Indiana 47577; 812-357-6611

Kentucky/Tennessee (retreat centers close to IN-MI Conference congregations)

cleftRock Retreat Center (Baptist; it begins with a little "c"), www.cleftrock.com/index.php?ID=1
Mount Vernon, KY 40456; 800-719-0600

The Ark Retreat Center (ecumenical; the director is Methodist), www.thearkretreatcenter.org/
Berea, KY 40403; 859-985-7419

Penuel Ridge Retreat Center (interfaith), www.penuelridge.org/
Ashland City, TN 37015; 615-792-3734