

# **Birmingham Forum for Spiritual Directors and Companions 2020-2021**



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## ***Spiritual Accompaniment***

***A one year ecumenical training course for lay and  
ordained Christians***

***September 2020 to July 2021***

### **Who is the course for?**

The course is open to Christians of any denomination. Those seeking a place would be people who:

- find others turn naturally to them to talk about their life and faith
- are stable and open to learning in their Christian faith, and keen to develop their knowledge and discipleship.
- already have, or are prepared to have, a spiritual director.

## **The Course Aims to:**

- Encourage each person to grow and develop gifts for spiritual accompaniment in various contexts.
- Offer knowledge, critical awareness and skills for spiritual accompaniment and direction

## **By the end of the course, participants will have:-**

- Broadened and deepened their understanding of Christian traditions of prayer.
- Experienced differing approaches to, and emphases within, Christian spirituality
- Explored the meaning of their faith and spiritual traditions and how these encourage growth and personal fulfilment.
- Practiced key skills as a spiritual companion, and supported others in this process.
- Developed a reflective approach to their work as a spiritual companion.

## **Could this course be for you?**

### **Some questions you might want to ask yourself . . .**

- *Do others come to share with you their hopes and fears about their faith and life journey?*
- *Have you felt that God may be calling you to 'companion' others in this way?*
- *Have you considered whether training might develop your gifts?*

## When and where?

The course consists of **14 Tuesday meetings**, over three terms, (avoiding school half terms) from 10 am till 3.30 pm. There will be a weekend retreat day at the beginning of the second term.

**Term 1: (2020)** 15<sup>th</sup> Sept, 6<sup>th</sup> Oct, 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov, 24<sup>th</sup> Nov, 8th Dec.

*Autumn School holiday Week: (28 Oct to 1 Nov )*

**Term 2: (2021)** Retreat Day - Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021

Then: 19th Jan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb, 16<sup>th</sup> March,

*Spring School hols: (17 to 21 Feb ) Holy week (28 Mar – 5 Apr 21)*

**Term 3: (2021)** 20 April, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 13<sup>th</sup> July,

*Easter hols (6 Apr – 17 April ) School hols ( 25-29 May)*

## Venue:

St. Luke's Church Centre, Great Colmore Row, Lee Bank, Birmingham, B15 2AT

**Cost:** £ 450 for the 14 Tuesday sessions. (payable in 3 termly instalments).

There is an additional cost of £20 for the Retreat Day.

Help with costs may be available within your church or diocese or through a small bursary fund.

## Course content

Each day will include teaching input, prayer and discussion, small group sharing and skills practice.

**Foundation:** *Introduction and Approaches to Spiritual Accompaniment, Human faith development, Images of God, Forms of prayer*

**Skills:** *Reflective Listening, 'presence', forms of communication, Discernment, Beginnings and Endings, Safeguarding Ethics and Boundaries, Making use of supervision,*

**Assessment:** Peer and facilitator feedback is continuous throughout the course. Towards the end of the course, participants are also asked to write a reflection on their learning.

## Attendance and Certification:

In order to protect the quality of the course, a Certificate of Attendance will be given where 80 % of the sessions have been attended. This will be presented after the written reflection on learning has been completed.

## **The Facilitating Team will include:**

**Maureen Slattery Marsh:** *Maureen is Catholic with a background in theology, therapy and training. A past member of the course, she works in spiritual accompaniment and pastoral supervision alongside her therapy practice. She has been involved in ecumenical and reconciliation initiatives for over 30 years.*

**The Revd Dr Sharon Prentis:** *Sharon is the Intercultural Mission Enabler & Dean of Black & Minority Ethnic Affairs at Church of England, Birmingham. After gaining qualifications in Sociology, Anthropology and Theology her work has mostly been in church, community and education contexts. Sharon has also worked for the Salvation Army, led retreats and supported local community groups in community development.*

**Eleanor Jackson:** *Brought up in a Methodist family, Eleanor is a Quaker married to an Anglican. She is a past member of the course and has been offering 1:1 accompaniment for many years. She completed Woodbrooke's Equipping for Ministry course in 2004 and joined their Associate Tutor team soon after. She is also a member of Manresa Link.*

We will also be drawing on the specialist skills and experience of other leaders and speakers from different traditions and denominations throughout the course.

**The course administrator is Revd Canon John Austen:** *John is an experienced spiritual director and chairs the Birmingham Forum for Spiritual Directors and Companions.*

## **Applying for the course**

Course places are limited to 20, and since we want to ensure that the course is right for each participant, admission is not automatic, and will include an informal interview. We need to receive applications **by Tues 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020** *Late applications may be considered subject if places are still available.*

For further information about the course, and details of how to apply, please contact: *Revd Canon John Austen by email: [johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk) or Tel: 0121-554-8882*