

2019 Discernment Retreat Summary

On January 11-12, 17 participants gathered at the Chiara Center in Springfield, IL for the first weekend discernment retreat. The purpose of the gathering was to help participants discern a call to ministry and learn more about the Certificate program.

Friday, January 11, 2019

The agenda began with introductions of the facilitators and participants. This was followed by exercises designed to establish ground rules and break the ice. Other activities, led by Jim Olson and Teresa, focused on centering, covenant, and community formation.

We broke for dinner at 7 p.m. The dinner hour provided opportunities for the group to interact informally and get to know each other. After dinner, Lorrie introduced the School. This was followed by a Q and A period. Al Keeney led Night Prayers.

Saturday, January 12, 2019

The Saturday morning session began at 7:15 a.m. with Morning Centering consisting of body movement and silent reflection led by Al Keeney. This activity was optional. Breakfast began at 8:00 a.m. Participants had additional opportunities to get to know each other.

Following breakfast, Al led a guided meditation. After this, Theresa led a poetry writing exercise and facilitated a scripture-based study of call stories – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, the disciples. After each call story we completed an art project and had additional opportunities to interact informally.

We broke for lunch at noon and reconvened at 1 p.m. By then, snow had started to fall heavily. By a show of hands, members of the group decided that, because the weather was bad outside and the roads were dangerous, we would take part in the planned worship and communion services. Jim Olson led the worship and communion.

Participants left the Center and began to make their way home through the snow. We were all blessed by the experience.