

**Sacred Encounters**  
**A CPE Alternative Program**  
**Fall 2025 Syllabus**  
**September 16 – December 1, 2025**



**Course Information**

Supervisor: Dr. Joy Kreider

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**Communication**

You can expect an email response within 24 hours.

**Course Description**

This course will provide clergy with a foundational understanding of holistic pastoral care skills, including foundational scripture and theology, boundaries, self-care, group dynamics, supervision, and emotional intelligence, preparing them for ordination and full membership.

**Purpose**

To offer an experience where individuals can grow their effectiveness in pastoral care and leadership by:

- a. Creating space in the unknown for the Spirit to work, bless, challenge, and heal
- b. Growing in self-awareness and becoming more authentic
- c. Trusting and being open to the work of the Holy Spirit in one's ministry
- d. Learning from relationships with others: peers, congregants/clients/and students

**Structure of the Course**

This is an online course. There are required real-time meetings with the group, supervisor, and teaching assistant. Other elements of this online course can be completed through the online learning modules on the [vaumc.org](http://vaumc.org) website.

To sign up for the online course, go to: <https://vaumc.org/courses-archive-gutenberg/sacred-encounters>

Hit the button, START COURSE, and follow the prompts to sign up to be a student for this class.

All modules and written materials must be completed during this course. There is an outline of when materials are due in each module. Practice hours are submitted each week.

### **Program Requirements**

#### **Group Meetings (7.5 hours)**

You will meet with your group members and supervisor on five scheduled dates (as listed below). During group meetings, you will be asked to present one verbatim. You will also discuss what you have learned through the didactics and ask one another self-awakening questions about your verbatims and your experience of practicing ministry within your setting.

#### **Dates: Meetings Will Take Place Over Zoom (Your TA will send you the Zoom info)**

September 16, 2025, 7:00-8:30 P.M

September 18, 2025, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

October 7, 2025, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

October 9, 2025, 7-8:30 P.M.

November 4, 2025, 7-8:30 P.M.

#### **Verbatims**

Throughout the course of this program, you will present three verbatim documents (see Sacred Encounters Verbatim Template). One will be presented during your group time, and the other two will be given to your supervisor.

#### **Supervisory Meetings (8 hours) Via Zoom**

You will meet with your supervisor for four two-hour meetings. During this time, you will share your progress on your learning goals and any other self-discovery related to this experience that you would like to process. Your supervisor will submit a final supervisory evaluation to the Center for Clergy Excellence, which will assess whether you have met your learning goals and the criteria for receiving credit for this alternative experience. You will receive a copy of this evaluation and be asked to sign it.

**Themes of Supervisory Meetings:**

Meeting 1: Includes a time of introductions, setting your learning goals, sharing about your ministry context and how you will live out your hours, and a time to get to know one another.

Meeting 2: You will submit your verbatim ahead of time and discuss it, along with any other aspects of the program you would like to review. You will be asked about how your learning goals are going.

Meeting 3: You will submit your verbatim ahead of time and discuss it, along with any other aspects of the program you would like to review. You will be asked about how your learning goals are going.

Meeting 4: You will share about how you have met your learning goals and your experience in the program. You will receive feedback from the supervisor about how you have grown and some areas for continued growth.

**Didactic Trainings and Self-Reflective Work (50 hours of class work, reflective readings, and writing)**

Throughout the program, you will be assigned modules to complete. This will include watching a didactic presentation, reading the assigned reading, and writing a 1-1.5 reflection (12-point font, double-spaced) paper on what you have learned for each of the seven modules.

<b>Module and Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Due date for Reflection Paper</b>
Module 1: Healthy Boundaries	Rev. Deborah Lewis	9/26/25 at midnight
Module 2: Grief, Loss, and Suffering	Rev. Dr. Ryan LaRock	10/3/25 at midnight
Module 3: Cultural Competency	Rev. Lan Wilson	10/10/25 at midnight
Module 4: Empathetic Listening	Rev. Meghan Roth Clayton	10/17/25 at midnight
Module 5: Family Systems	Rev. Dr. Rhonda VanDyke	10/24/25 at midnight
Module 6: Ministry in the Midst of Trauma	Dr. Joy Kreider	10/31/25 at midnight
Module 7: Spiritual Disciplines	Rev. Bob Chapman	11/7/25 at midnight

### **Additional Papers**

You will be assigned two additional papers to complete—one in the middle of our program and one at the end of your program.

1) The first paper includes your learning goals and your experience of the program so far (2-3 pages) due October 1, 2025, at noon.

2) Your final paper will include a self-reflection of how you met your learning goals, your experience of the peer group, your interaction with your supervisor and teaching assistant, your interactions with your ministry setting, and your most important learnings from the program (including the assigned reading and didactics). This paper will be 8-10 pages (12-point font, double-spaced) and will be due on November 18, 2025, at noon. There is a format for this paper with questions that will be provided to you in the learning module.

This self-reflection paper and your supervisor's evaluation will be required for your application for full membership and ordination or transfer.

It is optional to keep a reflective journal through this process to capture your experience.

### **Format of Paper Submission**

All papers are to be submitted in 12-point font, Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins on each side, and double-spaced. Students are not required to complete a bibliography with any paper. If you have quotes in your paper, make sure to endnote them in the following format:

Author Last Name, First Name, Book, Publishing Company, Year Published, page number.

If you use a source consecutively, you can use the last name of the author and page number (i.e., Wesley, p. 27).

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and can result in not finishing the program. Carefully review your written materials and avoid using Artificial Intelligence (AI) or others' work. Make sure to cite sources and attribute credit accordingly.

**Ministry Setting Hours: 150 hours**

During the course of this two-month program, you must complete 150 contact hours in your ministry setting. See the schedule below for the hours that need to be completed each week. You will complete a JotForm found in the “Hours” module of the learning platform each week to turn in your hours.

Week of September 15: 20 hours due by September 19 at midnight

Week of September 22: 20 hours due by September 26 at midnight

Week of September 29: 20 hours due by October 3 at midnight

Week of October 6: 20 hours due by October 10 at midnight

Week of October 13: 20 hours due by October 17 at midnight

Week of October 20: 20 hours due by October 24 at midnight

Week of October 27: 10 hours due by October 31 at midnight

Week of November 3: 20 hours due by November 7 at midnight

**Debrief Meeting with Teaching Assistant**

Your last assignment is to meet with your teaching assistant and talk about next steps from here. What other areas of ministry would you like to grow in and explore? What resources do you have to set up for self-care? These meetings will be scheduled to be completed by December 1, 2025.

**Criteria to Complete and Pass the Program**

- 1) Attendance at all group meetings.
- 2) Attendance at all supervisory meetings.
- 3) Complete modules and turn in materials on time.
- 4) Attendance at the final debrief with the Teaching Assistant.
- 5) Make progress on learning goals.
- 6) Active engagement and participation.
- 7) Articulation of how this program has informed the student’s practice of ministry.
- 8) Openly receives feedback from peers, teaching assistant, and supervisor.
- 9) Growth in emotional intelligence and the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- 10) Ability to name at least two clear and specific goals for integration in their continued learning and practice of ministry.

**Required Reading**

Boomer, Elaine & Galindo, Israel. *A Family Genogram Workbook: An Exciting Tool for Understanding Your Family and How it Works*. Israel Galindo, Self-Published, 2006.

Bowler, Kate. *No Cure for Being Human (And Other Truths I Need to Hear)*. Random House, 2021.

Brown Taylor, Barbara. *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. Harper Collins, 2009.

Chittister, Joan. *The Monastic Heart: 50 Simple Practices for a Contemplative and Fulfilling Life*. Convergent Books, 2022.

Craddock, Fred, Goldsmith, Dale & Goldsmith, Joy. *Speaking of Dying: Recovering the Church's Voice in the Face of Death*. Brazos Press, 2012.

Dombkowski Hopkins, Denise and Koppel, Michael. *Grounded in the Living Word: Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010.

Foster, Richard A. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. Harper San Francisco, 1998.

Grant, Risha. *Be Better than Your B.S.* Hayhouse, Inc., 2023.

Kornfeld, Margaret. *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities*. Continuum International Publishing Company, 2000.

McClintock, Karen A. *Trauma-Informed Pastoral Care: How to Respond When Things Fall Apart*. Fortress Press, 2022.