The course introduces students of the New Testament (NT) to the diverse portrayal of the spirit in NT texts. We will survey its role in biblical narratives as well as in prayer, vision, worship, conflict, and practice. Course participants will investigate select NT passages from historical critical, literary, theological, and social science perspectives to understand both the historical and contemporary significance of biblical reasoning and deliberate implications for contemporary experience. The course includes in-class exercises of *lectio divina*, an ancient contemplative prayer practice.
Creativity in Contemplative Life

THL 8540-010

Dr. Margaret Mell

Wednesday, May 30  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Wednesday, June 6  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Thursday, June 7  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Friday, June 8  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Wednesday, June 13  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Friday, June 15  4:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Saturday, June 16  8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Summer Session I

The subject matter of this course is creativity in contemporary contemplative life. Its primary focal points are learning and practicing (experiencing) contemplation—engaging our inner lives by means of creative artistic expressions. Specifically, we

1) begin with various practices of contemplative prayer (from ancient traditions in Christian and other faith/cultural communities);
2) explore various creative/expressive arts to express our spiritual experiences;
3) learn ways to pay attention to various elements of our “Inner Teacher’s” still, small voice;
4) fine-tune our abilities to see (to behold, to gaze), and, to listen (contemplative, deep listening);
5) receive and notice personal, experiential data consciously and without judgment;
6) discern and differentiate between “receiving intrapersonal data” and immediately and unconsciously interpreting what we are seeing, hearing, and/or knowing;
7) interweave elements of diverse perspective-taking with skill and simplicity; and,
8) read and write about, also share and discuss, what we are learning and the different ways we are coming to know and to understand ourselves and God as we engage inner and outer movements of God’s Spirit with respectful, responsive awareness.

With this course, we join the growing number of individuals and communities who are

1) engaging contemplative prayer practices in their individual and corporate lives; and,
2) becoming more aware of the importance of immersing themselves in diverse creative art mediums to express their experiences of God.

Course requirements include 100% attendance of all students. We form an intentional community for the duration of time we are together (7 class meetings inside of 2 ½ weeks). Offered in block scheduling format with contents that unfold from meeting to meeting, this course’s retreat-like ethos enhances the intermixture of experiential learning with the accumulation of academic information. Results of this melding include

1) practical and adaptive integration of experiential learnings/knowings; with
2) academic information from this and other academic courses (via course-required writing and creative arts’ expressions), as they flow smoothly into each student’s daily personal and professional life.