

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024



Gestalt Pastoral Care rests on the belief that God's grace is constantly at work in each person. Although we can't predict just how you will be healed, you can expect to be touched in the body, mind, spirit, emotions, and social/relational context in a process unique to you alone.

GPC is rooted in the Christian ministry of healing and integrates Gestalt growth work, spiritual companionship, and prayer for healing. We are greatly enriched by the wide diversity of theology and worship styles of our participants.

Greetings and Happy New Year

I find myself resistant to offering this greeting. My resistance comes with a counter exclamation that God is creating all things new, all the time, not just once a year. What do we hope to gain with resolutions at this opportunity for another chance to correct past mistakes? It is our human drive to gestalt, coming to wholeness and unity with God's spirit that we long for.

Scripture offers the affirmation with the word BEHOLD! This is instruction to stay awake, pay attention, something new is happening. It is also a message of Hope. This message from Isaiah 43:19 is spoken to the people who live in exile and a foretelling to the coming incarnation of God through Jesus. We see and know this presence historically and in times of exile ourselves. We proclaim BEHOLD each spring when creation is renewed. As we offer GPC work in sessions and retreats we can exclaim, BEHOLD to the healing in persons. As we continue to train and encourage those who have been called to this ministry, we can exclaim, BEHOLD and praise God for our three newly commissioned GPC Ministers and the many in training.

And so, each of us, you and I, as we seek to be awake to what God is creating as new in us, it is also vital to continue to do our own growth work. Paying attention to what God speaks to us in times of quiet and by attending retreats, sessions, and work with a GPC Minister and/or Spiritual Director.

We are a culture, world and planet experiencing exile. Divisiveness, loneliness, and fear on individual levels expressed globally in war, planetary dis-ease, and broken social/political institutions. So, it is a prophetic call we may feel to be active and engaged in the healing work of individuals, families, and communities that God can use to heal our world. It can begin, one person at a time.

This is my prayer: Use us, O God, as your instruments of healing, peace, love and hope to be awake to your Kingdom, that has come, is coming and is present in each moment of our lives.

Grace and Peace of Christ,
Susan Silhan GPC Minister/Trainer
President GPCA BoT



Uniting Spiritual Direction with Gestalt Pastoral Care

Betty Voigt is an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) with two validated ministries, Spiritual Direction and Gestalt Pastoral Care. She has been a GPC Minister/Trainer since 2012.

Spiritual Direction: listening to God on behalf of another

My calling to spiritual direction began in the early 1990s when several people asked me if I would consider being their spiritual director. I had no training at this point, but I was one who personally attended to the movements of the Spirit in my own life and had my own spiritual director for many years. As I honored the requests of others to walk with them, I decided to enroll in the Shalem Institute's one-on-one spiritual guidance program. I came away from Shalem with 1) an affirmation that I had the gifts for this ministry; 2) that the way I would develop this charism was through my own practice of silent prayer and attending to the voice of the Holy Spirit in my own life; 3) that it was important to have a peer group for supervision; and 4) that I could trust Christ to send the people who needed me. Now, some thirty years hence, I continue to honor these learnings, and God has never stopped sending people my way.

Gestalt Pastoral Care: assisting others to pay attention to their own wounded places in need of healing and trusting this is where the Spirit is at work

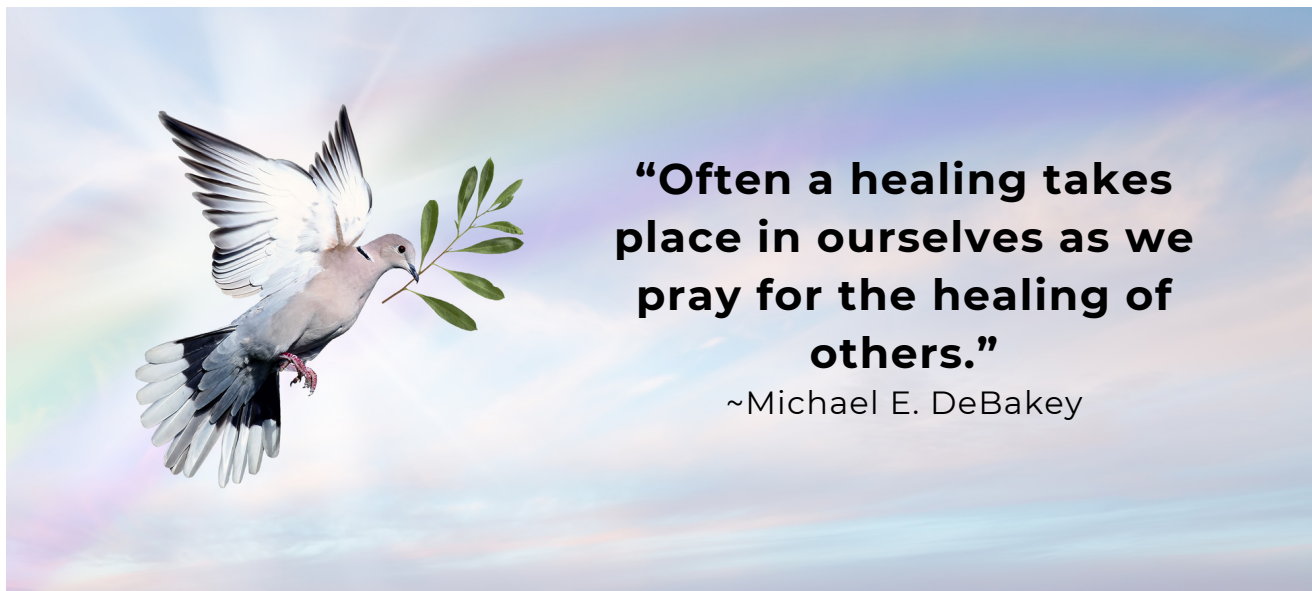
As I began to notice my own need for inner healing in my late forties, God led me to Tilda Norberg and her Gestalt work combined with Christian spiritual practices. I was awed by the effectiveness of Tilda's ministry and I did all I could to get others to go to her retreats and experience this spiritual healing power for themselves. I started taking the courses Tilda taught. Eventually, with encouragement from Sara Goold (a Tilda-taught GPC Minister), I began to believe I too could use this healing modality to assist those who came to me. I had noticed that with some who sought me out for spiritual guidance, it was easy to listen for the movements of the Holy One in their lives. However, with some others, emotional and psychological wounds took over and drowned out God's whisper. In the beginning, when this happened, I encouraged them to go to Tilda and later to one of my Open to Grace retreats, to take advantage of GPC work. But as I became more comfortable with my skills and understandings of Gestalt work I began to introduce GPC in the spiritual direction session. For example, I say, "would you be willing to try a little experiment?" This almost always leads to

Uniting Spiritual Direction with Gestalt Pastoral Care

some awareness and then willingness to keep on the path toward discovering more and more about how God is inviting them out of their stuck places toward greater wholeness. **Today this is how I unite spiritual direction and Gestalt Pastoral Care. They fit easily together...GPC being a kind of psychological support to the deep spiritual listening and formational work of spiritual direction.**

I do know that GPC is not therapy and there are times I send folks to a practitioner with greater skills in working with deep psychological woundedness.

To any spiritual director who wishes to discuss the uniting of these two spiritual, healing modalities, I am open to further discussion about this topic. Feel free to email me at betty.voigt@gestaltpastoralcare.org.



Communities of Practice

Western Pennsylvania (WPA)

Leaders of the WPA Community of Practice

Clarejean (CjE) Haury, Joan Prentice and Susan Vande Kappelle

The Western PA Community of Practice began in 2008 after a large number of pastors and licensed professional counselors were trained in the GPC Foundation course by Tilda Norberg and Sara Goold. Under the leadership of Betty Voigt we met about eight times a year to increase our knowledge of Gestalt, grow spiritually and continue the practice of work and guiding in GPC. We assisted the growth of the organization of GPCA through hosting the "Celebration of GPC at Thirty" in 2014 and another in 2017, participating in the Templeton sponsored research, and leading several Foundation courses as well as educational events for pastors, counselors and others in the area. GPC Ministers from WPA have taught at all levels of GPC Training as well as leading on the many boards and committees of the organization of Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates, Inc.

Shenandoah

Leaders of the Shenandoah Community of Practice

Roy Hange, Paula Stoltzfus, Sheryl Shenk, Robin Rio, Brian Burkholder and Pat Hostetter Martin

The Shenandoah Community of Practice generally meets every month for three hours. About half of our time together, we share personal updates and plan for retreats and trainings to which we have committed. The other half of our time, we often have someone—either in our group or from the outside—who have expressed interest in doing GPC work.

This was a year of change—of growing and reassessing our strengths and potential outreach. Roy Hange finished the required training to become a GPC Minister but has so far decided not to proceed with becoming a commissioned GPC Minister. Paula Stoltzfus completed her internship and was commissioned in December. Robin Rio and Brian Burkholder are at various stages in the training to become GPC Ministers.

Advent Appeal

Thank you from Gestalt Pastoral Care

As we gathered in the Advent season, our hearts were open and our minds refreshed by the experience of the manifestation of God through the felt senses of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. And we asked you, our family, and friends of GPC to share your gifts toward the healing work to which we are called. The response filled our hearts and our financial cup.

The Appeal was enhanced by a challenge grant offered by the generosity of many in our GPC Community. It began with the trust of sharing funds offered through the GPCA Endowment Fund Four County Foundation, which in turn encouraged others to give generously. Thank you to our Challenge Fund and other contributors: The Rickard Family, Bishop Jane Middleton, Trinity Great Swamp, Darlene Meyers, Tammie Wisniewski, Rev. Betty Voigt Family, Rev. Debra Jameson, Rev. Cynthia Filmore, Sandra Dickson, Carol Croteau, Selah Healing and Wholeness Ministry, Jeanne Fiery, MaryLou & Donald Hastings, Kim Snyder, Sheila & Jim Farrer and Rev. Yuri Ando. Your financial support is appreciated.

Some of our donations were made in honor of, or memory of, individuals who have been a blessing in their own lives.

Sisters of St. Joseph	In Honor of Betty Voigt
Marilyn Bender	In Memory of Wanda Craner
Carol Croteau	In Honor of Jen F
Corrine Dautrich	In Memory of Wanda Craner
MaryLou & Donald Hastings	In Memory of Hal Vink
Rebecca Stephens	In Memory of Wanda Craner
Rev. Debra Jameson	In Honor of Jen F
Denise Yarrison	In Honor of Ann Few and Larry Ercolino
Ann Few	In Memory of Wanda Craner
Shenkel United Church	In Memory of Wanda Craner

We are happy to report that our total amount raised for the Advent Appeal is \$15,535. These funds will go a long way toward the goals for GPC's work of training, and supporting our programs. So Thank you! And it's not too late to give. If you missed the opportunity to share please visit the website to make your donation. <https://www.gestaltpastoralcare.org/support-gpc> Or you can mail your check to:

Gestalt Pastoral Care
P.O. Box 140636
Staten Island, NY 10314

Thank you again for your generous donations to Gestalt Pastoral Care.

On behalf of GPCA, Inc. The Grow Team
Liz Brunton, Teresa Hughes Martin, Pamela Kavanagh, George McClain, Susan Silhan

Upcoming Events and Trainings

All retreats, events, and training programs of Gestalt Pastoral Care are open and inclusive. Please visit www.gestaltpastoralcare.org for more information and registration.

Opening to Grace Retreats

March 15-16, 2024

Burdett, NY

Led by Susan Silhan

Fees include light meals | \$125 Full Participant | \$100 Intercessor observers

April 11-13, 2024 (Contemplative)

Pittsburgh, PA

Led by Rev. Betty Voigt & Rev. Darlene Meyers

Fees includes housing and meals | \$350 Full Participant | \$250 Intercessor observers

Registration Deadline: March 24, 2024

September 22-29, 2024, Retreat Week (Contemplative)

Chautauqua, NY

Led by Susan Sihan

Foundation Training

February 9, 2024 - (Check websites for schedule)

The format focuses on ample time for participants to do their own work, guide others, and learn through a group process following each session. Undergirding this training will be morning/evening prayer, time for rest and reflection, good food and fellowship.

12 Zoom sessions & 3 in Person Retreats (Mount Savior Monastery, Elmira, NY)

Led by Susan Silhan and Yuri Ando

Fees \$3500 includes \$650 housing costs

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Practicum Training

The format focuses on ample time for participants to do their own work, guide others, and learn through a group process following each session. Undergirding this training will be morning/evening prayer, time for rest and reflection, good food and fellowship.

February 29, 2024-March 2, 2024

Pittsburgh, PA

Led by Rev. Susan Vande Kappelle

Fees includes housing and meals | \$550

March 18, 2024 - March 20, 2024

This 25-hour practicum is for GPC trainees who have completed the Foundational Training and been approved for continued training. This is one of three modules needed to complete the Practicum Level.

Reading, PA

Led by Darlene Meyers

Fees \$400 + 160 for housing and meals

Registration deadline: March 4, 2024

Advanced Training Modules

Module #1: **May 23 - 25, 2024**

Module #2: **August 22 - 24, 2024**

Module #3: **November 14 - 16, 2024**

Pittsburgh, PA

Led by Pittsburgh, PA

Gestalt Pastoral Care Ministers

For more information about each Minister and Trainer, visit
<https://www.gestaltpastoralcare.org/ministers-trainers>

Tilda Norberg, Staten Island, NY
Betty Voigt, Bridgeville, PA
Clarejean Haury, Washington, PA
Darlene Meyers, Glendale, MD
Donna Mast, Goshen, Indiana
Kathryn Dickinson, Brooklyn, NY
Melissa Boyer, Long Island, NY

Pat Martin, Harrisonburg, VA
Paula Stoltzfus, Rockingham VA
Sumika Sase, Tokyo, Japan
Susan Silhan, New York
Susan Vande Kappelle, Pittsburgh, PA
Yuri Ando, East Stroudsburg, PA

Anyone wishing to speak with someone directly, please call 929-944-6539 on Wednesdays between 8:30 AM and 10:30 AM to reach Jennifer. Otherwise, leave a message, and someone will get back to you.

Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates, Inc.
P.O. Box 140636
Staten Island, NY 10314
Phone: 929-944-6539

[gestaltpastoralcare.org](https://www.gestaltpastoralcare.org) * <https://linktr.ee/gpca>

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Contact us at info@gestaltpastoralcare.org.