

INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY: Navigating by Heart

2017 Maine Conference United Church of Christ Pre-Meeting Retreat
Friday, October 20, 2017



*We're all in uncharted territories—
individuals, churches, communities,
and the whole wide world.*

*Come join an important conversation about
how the church lives on the edges of our culture,
where all renewal begins.*

Introduction to the Retreat: Walking the beaches of the NC Outer Banks, one can find the historic 19th century Life Saving Stations. Handsome, sturdy and built by the local population, they have a peaceful, hermitage-like allure that belies the terror and loss of the endless shipwrecks along the shore.

With each new Life Saving Station built, a head life-saver, called the Keeper, would assemble a team of trained sea-goers, small boats and tools, ready at moment's notice, to navigate wildly inhospitable waters in search of a sinking ship and its crew.

What if our churches became life saving stations we were all Keepers?

Here's a dream: Life Saving Stations popping up along all our back roads and desolate street corners where contemporary 'cultural shipwrecks' are underway. The new Keepers, navigators of soul and spirit, have satchels filled with tools, maps and experience—and they go out two by two into the storms, fearless and with endless courage.

How do navigate in unknown and troubled waters?

We'll share and work with some of the experiences of the Alcyon Center's Contemplative Spiritual Direction training programs, developed over the past five years to meet the needs of a new generation of spiritual leader, whose calling is to the suffering edges of our world.

In 2016 the Center received a Cairn Grant from the BTS Center's *Innovation Incubator* program. This support gave us courage to see how a formation program grounded in ancient contemplative practices could actually meet the profound spiritual hunger and thirst of today.

In the April 2017 cohort we found the term Spiritual Cartography to describe the new maps, cairns, conversations and guidebooks that are needed for creating **centers that can hold** in the present stormy times.

Schedule for Retreat:

Our time together will include:

*time for talking and sharing,
time for silence and listening,
time to work and pray alone,
and time to work and pray together.*

8:30 am	Registration and Gathering
9:30 am	Mapping the Uncharted Territory: Gathering our collected experiences
10:00 am	Life-Saving Stations & Keepers: Models for training and being spiritual leaders at the [heart-breaking] edges
10:30 am	Break
10:45 am	Navigating by Heart: two simple practices of heartfulness Accepting the embrace of silence Listen and speaking from the heart (in groups of 3)
12:00	Lunch & Conversation: "How is it with your soul?"
1:00 pm	Spiritual Cartography Building centers that can hold—the churches' tradition and gift What is in my soul satchel—maps, practices, traditions
3:00 pm	Assembling the Maps and Prayers for the Keepers