



Forum for  
Theological  
Exploration



# School of Immersion

Niner United @ UNC Charlotte  
Rev. Stephen Cheyney

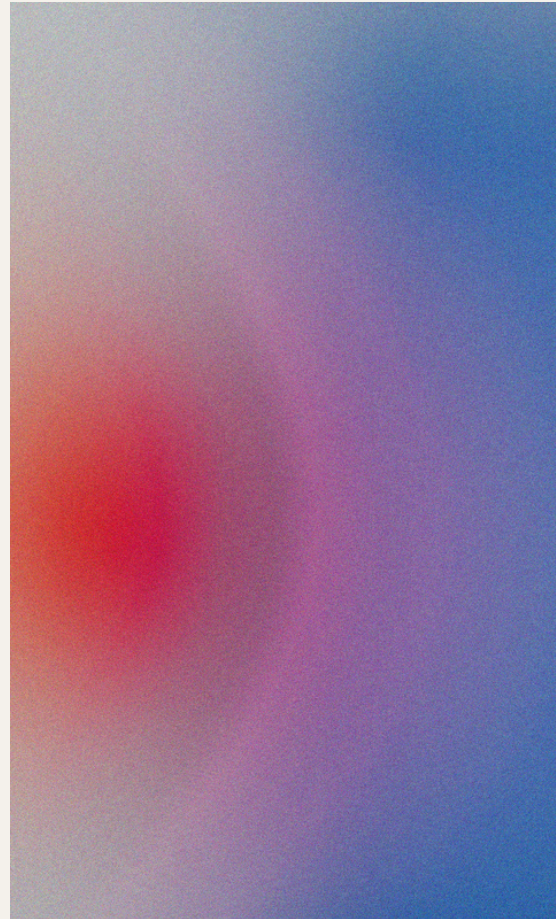
Part of the UKIRK Launch Series

INVITING STUDENTS TO DISCOVER WHO THEY ARE,  
WHO GOD IS,  
THE GIFTS GOD HAS GIVEN THEM,  
AND HOW THEY ARE CALLED TO SERVE AND LEAD



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# School of Immersion

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## Basic summary of the program:

The School of Immersion is intentionally structured as an intense, six-day experience that combines academic rigor with spiritual reflection. It's not built like a conference or a retreat, but more like a short, immersive residency, a pre-seminary crash course that integrates head, heart, and community. We organized it this way to disrupt the tidy categories students often hold: sacred vs. secular, intellectual vs. emotional, calling vs. career. The pace is fast, the content is weighty, and the design is relational by necessity. We wanted to create an environment that felt more like fieldwork than a classroom, more like pilgrimage than program.

The cost of the program is approximately \$850 a student, and there have been between 12-20 students that have participated each time we have offered it. More details are on the attached flyer.

## Brief description of why the program is designed or organized the way it is:

The School of Immersion is a six-day, pre-seminary crash course designed as a fast-paced, relational residency that fuses academic rigor with spiritual reflection to disrupt students' tidy categories and awaken deeper vocational questions.

## **What do you hope the students discern, discover, or reflect upon during their participation?**

We hope students wrestle honestly with the question of calling—not in abstract terms, but in the guts-and-grace kind of way that ministry demands. That they discover theology isn't reserved for the pulpit or the academy, but is lived out in late-night debates, awkward prayers, and questions that don't resolve neatly. We want them to reflect on the shape of their own stories, the needs of the world around them, and how God might be stirring in the tension between the two. Ultimately, we hope they leave with a deeper awareness of how vocation is discerned not by clarity alone, but through courage, community, and a willingness to stay in the discomfort of not-knowing.

## **What action(s) do you hope their participation inspires after the program or experience is over in both the short-term and long-term?**

In the short-term, we want students to return to their campuses more awake, asking better questions, initiating deeper conversations, and seeking out mentors and spiritual guides. We hope they stay curious about theology and more attuned to the suffering, wonder, and injustice around them. In the long-term, we hope this experience helps shape the trajectory of their lives. Whether they pursue seminary, social work, medicine, or something else entirely, we want them to lead with theological imagination and moral courage. For those who do enter ministry, we hope they remember this week as the moment they saw the beauty and the cost, and still said yes.

## **What have you discerned, discovered, seen or reflected upon as you have engaged students in this program/practice?**

We've seen students arrive unsure, skeptical, or simply curious, and leave changed. Not always with answers, but with better questions. We've discovered that the hunger for meaning is real and deep, even in students who've grown up in skeptical or disenchanted spaces. Many are longing for places where faith is neither shallow nor rigid, where they can be intellectually honest and spiritually alive at the same time. We've learned that community accelerates clarity. Students often name the relationships formed during this week as the most transformative part of the experience. And we've reflected on how vital it is to hold space where doubt isn't feared, complexity isn't avoided, and calling is treated not as a lightning bolt, but as a long unfolding.

# THE SCHOOL OF IMMERSION

An accelerated introduction to Christian faith and leadership  
**May 10-15, St. Francis Springs Prayer Center**

## WHAT IS THE SCHOOL OF IMMERSION?

The School of Immersion is a unique opportunity for young adults to immerse themselves in the study and practice of Christian formation and leadership. Over a period of six days participants are exposed to serious theological and leadership themes. In addition to the academic nature of the School, each participant has access to spiritual advisors and vocational discernment specialist. The School of Immersion is perfect for college students who are contemplating seminary, ordination or vocational service to the church. The School is also a great option for church-related interns, campus ministry leaders or young adults who simply want to increase their knowledge of the Bible, theology and Christian leadership.

### Learn the basics of christian formation

- Introduction to Old Testament
- Introduction to New Testament
- Introduction to Christian Theology
- Introduction to Church History
- Christian Ethics
- Social Justice
- Preaching & Communicating

### Strengthen leadership development skills

- Making Better Decisions & Problem Solving
- Social Psychological Issues in the Church
- Leading & Managing Change
- Conflict Management & Transformation

### Keynotes & learning labs

- The Biblical Narrative Everyone Needs to Know
- The Future of Faith and the Emergence of a New Christianity
- Creating Incarnational Ministry
- Life with God: On Creativity, Mystery & Spirituality

### Apply Now

Space is limited. Applications are online only. Once accepted the participant will be given a secure online invoice for payment within ten days.

### Cost

\$125 for qualified participants (after April 1, \$150). Includes lodging, food and all program costs. Does not include travel. The full cost for this program is \$850, but has been underwritten by grants. Non qualified participants may pay full price if space is available.

### St. Francis Springs Prayer Center

The event will be held at the St. Francis Springs Prayer Center north of Greensboro. This is a beautiful and ideal setting. Participants will be housed double occupancy.

### Primary Funders

The Lilly Endowment  
The United Methodist Church's Young Clergy Initiative.

### Sponsors

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Duke University Divinity School, Emory University Candler School of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Iliff School of Theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Princeton Theological Seminary, Saint Paul School of Theology, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Union Presbyterian Seminary, and Virginia Theological Seminary.

**[campus-ministry.org/immersion](http://campus-ministry.org/immersion)**



### Accelerated Ministry Project

a program of Cooperative Christian Ministry ([campus-ministry.org/amp](http://campus-ministry.org/amp))  
(Charlotte's Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Methodist Campus Ministry)

# Should I attend the School of Immersion?



**School of Immersion Schedule**

<b>SUNDAY MAY 10</b>	<b>MONDAY MAY 11</b>	<b>TUESDAY MAY 12</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY MAY 13</b>	<b>THURSDAY MAY 14</b>	<b>FRIDAY MAY 15</b>
	8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast	8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast	8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast (shared)	8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast	8:00 – 8:45 Breakfast
	9:00 – 10:15 <b>Ethics &amp; Social Justice</b> Kate Murphy	9:00 – 10:15 <b>Christian History 1</b> Brad Busiek	9:00 – 10:00 <b>Theology 1</b> Kevin Matthews	9:00 – 10:15 <b>Conflict Management</b> Tim Bostick	9:00 – 10:15 <b>Preaching 2</b> Robert Brewer
	10:15 – 10:45 Break	10:15 – 10:45 Break	10:15 – 10:45 Break	10:15 – 10:45 Break	11:00 – 12:00 Closing Worship
	10:45 – 12:00 <b>Ethics &amp; Social Justice</b> Kate Murphy	10:45 – 12:00 <b>Christian History 2</b> Brad Busiek	10:30 – 11:30 Small Group (3)	10:45 – 12:00 <b>Problem Solving</b>	
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (Staff)	<b>12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (3)</b> Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago	<b>12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (6)</b> Emory University Candler School of Theology	<b>12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (9)</b> (shared) The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia	<b>12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (12)</b> Virginia Theological Seminary	12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
1:30 – 3:00 Check-In	1:30 – 2:00 Afternoon Prayer Outdoor Chapel	1:30 – 2:00 Afternoon Prayer Indoor Chapel	1:30 – 2:00 Afternoon Prayer Outdoor Chapel	1:30 – 2:00 Afternoon Prayer Indoor Chapel	
	2:15– 3:30 <b>Old Testament</b> Jacob Pierce	2:15– 3:30 <b>New Testament 1</b> Ward Misenheimer	2:15– 3:30 <b>Theology 2</b> (Peace & Justice Rm) Kevin Matthews	2:15– 3:30 <b>Psychological Issues</b> Steve Cheyney	
4:00 – 5:00 Welcome Orientation	3:30 – 4:30 Small Groups (2)	3:30 – 4:30 Discernment	3:30 – 4:30 Discernment	3:30 – 4:30 Discernment	
5:00 – 6:00 Small Groups (1)	4:30 – 5:45 <b>Old Testament</b> Jacob Pierce	4:30 – 5:45 <b>New Testament 2</b> Ward Misenheimer	4:30 – 5:45 <b>Leading Change</b> Tim Bostick	4:30 – 5:45 <b>Preaching 1</b> Robert Brewer	
<b>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner (1)</b> Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary	<b>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner (4)</b> Saint Paul School of Theology	<b>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner (7)</b> Garrett Theological	<b>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner (10)</b> Duke Divinity School	<b>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner (13)</b> Trinity Lutheran Seminary	
7:30 – 8:45 <b>The Biblical Narrative</b> Steve Cheyney	7:30 – 8:45 <b>The Future of Faith</b> Jonathan Coppedge-Henly	7:30 – 8:45 <b>The Shaping of Things to Come</b>	7:30 – 8:45 <b>Life with God</b>	7:30 – 8:45 <b>Blueprint for Solving Problems</b>	
<b>9:00 – 10:00 Social Hour (2)</b>	<b>9:00 – 10:00 Social Hour (5)</b> Union Presbyterian Seminary	<b>9:00 – 10:00 Social Hour (8)</b>	<b>9:00 – 10:00 Social Hour (11)</b> Illiff School of Theology	<b>9:00 – 10:00 Social Hour (14)</b>	
11:00 Lights Out	11:00 Lights Out	11:00 Lights Out	11:00 Lights Out	11:00 Lights Out	
Overnight: Kate Murphy	Overnight: Brad Busiek, Jacob Pierce		Overnight: Tim Bostick		