



Forum for  
Theological  
Exploration



# Vocational Retreat

The Table at the University of Georgia  
Rev. Will Norman

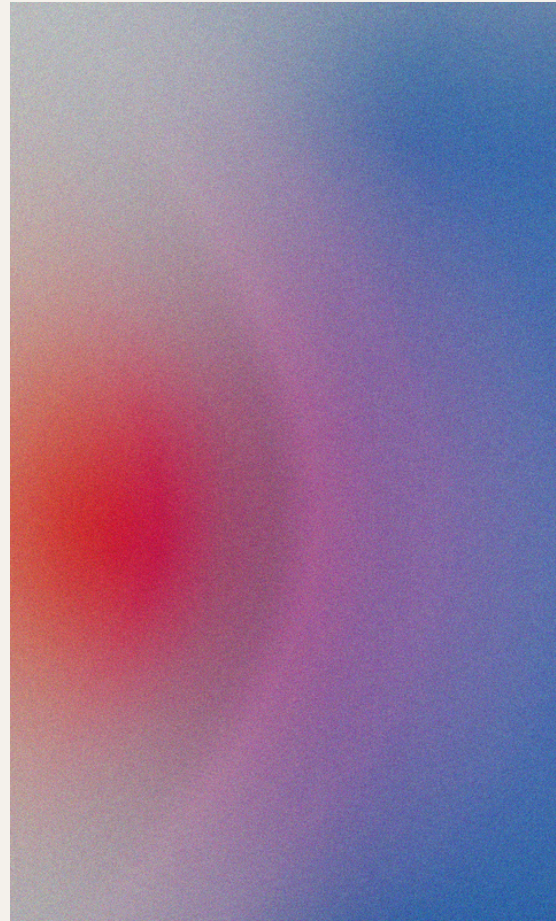
Part of the UKIRK Launch Series

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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# Vocational Retreat

The Table at the University of Georgia

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## Basic summary of the program:

The Waddel Vocational Retreat is a weekend at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA, during which students consider how the call of God and their personal faith impacts their life and career, whatever direction it may take. Thanks to a generous donation from Mary Elizabeth and Randy Sadd, this retreat is free to any and all Table students. In the course of the weekend we'll meet with seminary students, staff and faculty, who will guide us through various experiences of 'vocational discernment'.

**This retreat is NOT only for people who want to go to seminary;** anyone who is interested in thinking about their future through the lens of their faith is encouraged to attend!

In 2025, we also included time at Candler School of Theology in Decatur, Georgia.

The seminaries are contacted several months ahead of time, and we work with the appropriate people to schedule housing and on-campus meals. As the pastoral staff at The Table graduated from Columbia and Candler, they reached out to people they knew and had worked with to coordinate plans. Leaders who would like to organize a seminary visit to a school they did not attend should begin by reaching out the Director of Admissions who can provide guidance as to housing, meals, and connecting with faculty and staff.

## **Retreat Schedule - March, 2025**

### **Friday, March 21**

4:00-5:45pm Arrive and check in at Harrington

7:00-8:30pm Dinner at Dr. Martha Moore-Keish's home

### **Saturday, March 22**

9:00-10:00am Breakfast with EMVO staff and current students

10:15-11:30am Faculty mini lecture

11:30am-12:15pm Campus Tour

12:30-1:30pm Lunch

1:30pm-2:30pm Panel discussion with local ministers

2:30-2:45pm Break

2:45-3:45pm Reflections and discernment (President Victor Aloyo joins)

4:15pm-7:00pm Conversation & Service opportunity at Candler followed by dinner

7:30pm Explore/Ice Cream in Decatur

### **Sunday, March 23**

9:00-10:00am Breakfast & checkout

11:15am Worship with First Baptist Church, Decatur

## Final Reflections

Even though Candler School of Theology and Columbia Theological Seminary are both located in Decatur, Georgia, which is less than 2 hours away from UGA, it felt very rushed to visit both seminaries in one weekend. We have determined we will plan two separate trips next year to allow time at each seminary.

We work really hard to share with students this retreat is not only for those who are considering ministry as a career or vocation after college, and we ask our guest speakers to talk about vocational exploration and discerning one's call from a broader perspective. We also ask them to specifically share why attending seminary could be an option even for those who do not plan to go into congregational ministry.

This retreat used to be only for a select group of student fellows, but we have now opened it up to all students who are interested.

The total cost of the weekend depends on transportation needs, the cost of housing and meals at the seminary (which have often been discounted or provided at no charge by the seminary), the evening recreation on Saturday night (TopGolf, ice cream, etc...), the number of honorariums we provide to speakers, and the donation amount we give the local congregation where we worship. The total amount can be as high as \$3,000+, but is often less than that.

Other college ministry groups will plan a seminary/divinity school tour over a long weekend and visit several seminary campuses. Or, if you are close geographically to a seminary/divinity, a day-long retreat can also introduce students to the idea of a graduate theological education and other programs like a year of service they could consider after graduation.

If your college ministry is too far from a seminary to visit in person, consider inviting Admissions staff or seminary alumni to visit your UKirk Network Ministry throughout the year. They will often provide a meal for you and your students.

# WADDEL LEADERSHIP RETREAT

**@ COLUMBIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY**

***March 21-23, 2025***

