

SIGNPOSTS: APPROACHING FICTION AND POETRY *RECREATIVELY*

INSTRUCTOR: Steven Geitgey

DESCRIPTION:

One of the values of reading is its ability to entertain us and to provide us with opportunities for recreation. But it can be *recreative* at a deeper level when our reading is open to the significance of fiction and poetry as signposts to the issues, resonances, and life-meanings we grapple with and search for as people of faith. This course will consider short stories and poetry as important catalysts for personal reflection and formation, as well as useful resources for those accompanying others' formation.

We will be enjoying and discussing stories from noted authors including Sarah Orne Jewett, Isak Dinesen, Leo Tolstoy, Charles Chesnutt, and Mary Wilkins Freeman, with accompanying passages from mystical and spiritual writers spanning the 2000 years of Christian history.

In the final project students will reflect on their experience and the themes of the stories and poetry; they will also consider what they would include in a reading program of their own design.

MEETINGS: Tuesdays, April 21, 28; May 5, 12, 19, 26; June 2, 9. 6:30-8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Online via the free Zoom video platform (available at www.zoom.us), and in person at the Living Water Association Support Center (960 Portage Trail, Cuyahoga Falls 44221). If you are unfamiliar using Zoom, please contact Dean Gene McAfee for details (deanofschools@livingwaterone.org).

REQUIRED TEXTS: Students must supply their own copy of Isak Dinesen's short story *Babette's Feast*. All other stories and poetry used are public domain and will be emailed to students in the appropriate format to enable class discussion.

BIO: Steven Geitgey spent 22 years as a UCC pastor before moving into academic and ecumenical teaching in the area of spirituality. He has an MDiv from Lancaster Theological Seminary, an MA in English literature, a post-graduate teaching certification in spiritual direction, and is currently a PhD candidate at Duquesne University with a dissertation focused on several late medieval and early modern mystical writers. Steve teaches courses for the spiritual direction certificate program at Epiphany Academy, Pittsburgh, as well as leading adult faith formation sessions for an Episcopal church in Youngstown.