***Birmingham Forum for Spiritual Directors***

***and Companions 2022-2023***

**

*Soul Boats* ©Jake Lever [www.jakelever.org](http://www.jakelever.org)

***Spiritual Accompaniment***

***A one year ecumenical training course for lay and ordained Christians***

***September 2022 to July 2023***

**Who is the course for?**

The course is open to Christians of any denomination. Those seeking a place would be people who:

* find others turn naturally to them to talk about their life and faith.
* are stable and open to learning in their Christian faith, and keen to develop their knowledge and discipleship.
* already have, or are prepared to have, a spiritual director.

**The course aims to:**

* Encourage each person to grow and develop gifts for spiritual accompaniment in various contexts.
* Offer knowledge, critical awareness and skills for spiritual accompaniment and direction

**By the end of the course, participants will have:-**

* Broadened and deepened their understanding of Christian traditions of prayer.
* Experienced differing approaches to, and emphases within, Christian spirituality.
* Explored the meaning of their faith and spiritual traditions and how these encourage growth and personal fulfilment.
* Practiced key skills as a spiritual companion, and supported others in this process.
* Developed a reflective approach to their work as a spiritual companion.

**Could this course be for you?**

**Some questions you might want to ask yourself . . .**

* *Do others come to share with you their hopes and fears about their faith and life journey?*
* *Have you felt that God may be calling you to ‘companion’ others in this way?*
* *Have you considered whether training might develop your gifts?*

**When and where?**

The course consists of **14 Tuesday meetings**, over three terms, (avoiding school half terms) from 10 am till 3.30 pm.There will be a Saturday retreat at the beginning of the second term.

**Term 1**: (**2022)** 20 Sept, 11 Oct, 8 Nov, 29 Nov, 13 Dec**.**

*Autumn School holiday Week: (24 Oct to 30 Oct 2022 )*

**Term 2**: **(2023)** Retreat Day - Saturday 14Jan 2023

Then: 24 Jan, 7 Feb, 28Feb, 21March,

*Spring School hols: (20Feb- 26 Feb ) Holy week (2 Apr - 9 Apr 23)*

**Term 3: (2023)** 18 April, 16 May, 6 June, 27 June, 11 July,

*Easter hols (3 Apr – 14 April ) School hols ( 29 May – 2nd June )*

**Venue:** This will be a hybrid course- some days on zoom, others face to face in Birmingham at a venue tbc.

**Cost**: **£ 450** (payable in 3 termly instalments).

Help with costs may be available within your church or diocese or

through a small bursary fund.

**Course content**

Each day will include teaching input, prayer and discussion, small group sharing and skills practice. In Term 2 course members begin a 1-1 spiritual accompaniment practice with someone outside the course, supported and guided by the facilitating team.

***Foundation:*** *Introduction and Approaches to Spiritual Accompaniment,*

*Human faith development, Images of God, Forms of prayer*

***Skills:*** *Reflective Listening, Presence, Forms of communication,*

*Discernment, Beginnings and Endings, Safeguarding, Inclusion and Diversity, Ethics and Boundaries, Making use of supervision*

**Assessment:** Peer and facilitator feedback is continuous throughout the course.Towards the end of the course, participants are also asked for a reflection on their learning.

**Attendance and Certification:**

In order to protect the quality of the course**,** a Certificate of Attendance will be given where 80 % of the sessions have been attended. This will be presented after the reflection on learning has been received.

**The Facilitating Team will include:**

**Maureen Slattery Marsh:** *Maureen is Catholic married to an Anglican with a background in theology, therapy and training. A past member of the course, she offers spiritual accompaniment and pastoral supervision alongside her therapy practice. She has been involved in various ecumenical and reconciliation initiatives over the past 30 years and is also a member of Manresa Link.*

**Eleanor Jackson:** *Brought up in a Methodist family, Eleanor is a Quaker married to an Anglican. She is a past member of the course and has been offering 1:1 accompaniment for many years. She completed Woodbrooke’s Equipping for Ministry course in 2004 and joined their Associate Tutor team soon after. She is also a member of Manresa Link.*

***Phil Hoar :*** *Phil is a**Methodist minister and past member of the course. He has been involved in spiritual accompaniment, groups, workshops and retreats for many years, as well as involvement in the community among LGBT asylum seekers, and prayer guiding in prison. He is also a member of Manresa Link.*

**Magdalen Smith**: Magdalen is an Anglican priest and author. She has been involved in spiritual accompaniment within several parish settings and as a Director of Ordinands. She has a background in the visual arts and is particularly interested in the fusion between faith and ordinary life. She has recently returned to Birmingham after a gap of 18 years and is a new member of Manresa link.

We will also be drawing on the specialist skills and experience of other leaders and speakers from different traditions and denominations throughout the course.

**The course administrator is Revd Canon John Austen:** *John is an experienced spiritual director and chairs the Birmingham Forum for Spiritual Directors and Companions.*

**Applying for the course**

Course places are limited to 20, and since we want to ensure that the course is right for each participant, admission is not automatic, and will include an informal interview. We need to receive applications **by Friday 1st April 2022**

*Late applications may be considered if places are still available.*

For further information about the course, and details of how to apply, please contact:  *Revd Canon John Austen by email:* [*johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk*](mailto:johnausten151@hotmail.co.uk)

*Tel: 0121-554-8882*