



NEXT FRONTIERS

2025 BROCHURE

Be Renewed for Your Next
Faithful Step in Ministry.

RELATE . RENEW . REIMAGINE



Introduction

Next Frontiers is a 12-month program designed to help mid-career pastors thrive in congregational leadership during times of transition in ministry. The key features of the program include opportunities for reimagining our pastoral identity, fostering spiritual renewal and engaging in meaningful relationship with veteran ministers. The overarching purpose of this program is to provide resources that will sustain ministers in the “long obedience” of their profession.

Specific Focus

Transitions are moments of disruption. And while disruption by definition is stressful and unsettling, change also provides opportunity to embrace another and more sustaining kind of life.

We live at the mercy of our experiential Theology. To navigate change in a way that promotes thriving presupposes a personal theology that is healthy and life giving and a view of God who is present, active, communicating, and deeply loving. Our image of God affects profoundly how we live through our transitional moments in pastoral ministry.

To harvest the potential of transition will require time for intentional formation including: retreat, spiritual direction, mentoring, and the development and living out of a rule of life built around abiding in Trinitarian presence. This program will offer a curriculum of learning to lean into God instead of self-effort.

Defining Transition

The intent of the program is not designed to offer educational experiences, which are tailored to a particular transition, but instead to offer a way of living life with God that generalizes to a variety of seasons of disruption and change. Specific transitions may include: Church planting, women clergy stepping into senior leadership, pastors serving multilingual or multiethnic churches, pastors moving from urban to rural ministry or vice versa, assignment of increasing ministry responsibilities, etc. Our focus is less on the type of transition and more on abiding in God during the transition.

Program Features and Resources

The following are key components of Westmont College's Next Frontiers Program.

- **Assessment:** Next Frontiers will provide opportunities for assessment to assist ministers in discerning their unique skill sets and "expert specialties," and provide coaching for how to carry the necessary generalist responsibilities of the pastorate in a way that is informed by individual personality and temperament differences.
- **Retreat:** Two 3-day retreats will bookend this 40-week program. These retreats will include talks by a team of speakers, conversation with each other, experiential learning opportunities, corporate worship and times for personal reflection and prayer.
- **Relationship with Experienced Clergy and Peers:** Seasoned ministers will offer spiritual direction and mentoring to each participant. In addition, pastoral peer groups will be formed and meet together during the entire program for discussion and praxis.
- **On-line tools for spiritual formation activities:** *Conversatio.org* will be used to provide on-going input through the "classroom" and "exercise room" features.
- **Personal Agency:** Each participant will design a personal plan or "rule of life" for personal and spiritual formation that is rooted in the gospel rhythms of Jesus' life, as well as the particular season of ministry transition that they find themselves.
- **On-Going Learning:** Participants will read and study across a variety of topics that will include wrestling with questions such as: Where is my identity found and how? Where is God during this season? How do I harvest the potential of this phase of life? How do I apply "the Cycle of Grace" to learning to live a different kind of life?

Summary of Goals:

By way of summary, we offer a statement of program goals. New Frontiers strives to:

- Help pastors clarify their self-understanding, purpose and direction;
- Create space for retreat, to detach from current roles and contexts in order to participate in activities that facilitate joy;
- Provide experienced mentors for pastors facing mid-career transition;
- Build networks of ministry peers to overcome isolation and create a sense of belonging;
- Encourage pastors to discover (or rediscover) historic spiritual disciplines and practices;
- Provide teaching about life-giving virtues and principles of leadership and service;
- Prompt new ideas and strategies for how ministers and their churches can engage their communities and help address the world's problems.

Meet Our Mentors



Miriam (Mimi) Dixon began her ministry in 1979 serving as an associate pastor at Northminster Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington. From April of 1985 to May of 2019 she served as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Golden, Colorado. She earned both her MDiv and DMin degrees from Fuller Theological Seminary. Mimi is on the Renovaré Board of Directors and teaches for the Renovaré Institute. She is faculty for Next Frontiers, a ministry to pastors in transition, and actively promotes Christian Spiritual Formation, crediting Richard Foster and Dallas Willard for their influence in her life and ministry. Mimi has authored *Worth Celebrating: a biography of Richard J Foster's Celebration of Discipline*, available through Barclay Press.



Andrew Ranucci Andrew Ranucci is a pastor, teacher and Spiritual Director to Christian Pastors and Leaders seeking personal spiritual renewal. He is the founding director of SoulLife Ministries, a ministry offering retreats, spiritual direction, mentoring, and teaching in the areas of spiritual formation, soul care and discernment. Andrew loves to help people discover life giving spiritual practices, leading to a vibrant, interactive life with God. Andrew also serves through Partners in Ministry (Aus) a ministry designed to serve Pastors and Churches for their health and effectiveness in ministry.

Before devoting his time to serving Pastors and Ministry Leaders, Andrew pioneered Coast Community Church on the Central Coast of NSW (Aus) and served for 24 years as its Senior Pastor, from 1994-2018. During this time, by God's grace, the church grew to be multi-campus, including a Christian School and a Not-For-Profit Charity.

Andrew is married to Kerrell and they have three adult daughters, Ruby, Olivia and Lucy and a beloved dog called Murphy. Andrew loves paddling his sea kayak, cycling through the national parks around Sydney and escaping with his wife and dog in their campervan, looking for beautiful places to replenish their soul.

Andrew's studies include: Doctor of Ministry (Spiritual Direction) from Fuller Theological Seminary (USA); Master of Arts (Christian Leadership), Bachelor of Theology and Diploma of Ministry from Australian College of Ministry; Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Supervision from St Marks National Theological Centre; Andrew is also a graduate of Renovare International Institute for Spiritual Formation (Santa Barbara USA Cohort).



James Henderson is a spiritual director and co-founder of the Ashrei Center for Spiritual Formation in Mexico City. He has lived in Mexico City for 21 years with his family, where they deeply enjoy cross-cultural life and relationships among their wonderful Mexican friends. James has an MA in Global Leadership and a Doctor of Ministry in Spiritual Direction from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is an alumnus of the Renovaré International Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation.

James is married to Erin, and they have two children—Kate and Caleb, who are both university students. For fun, James loves to run, enjoys days-off and traveling with Erin and family, and eating great Mexican food.



Art Matheny Art Matheny has been married to Jennifer Matheny since 1996, and they have two adult children; Emma and Sam. Art believes it is important to keep the “play” in Contemplation. Art is a pastor, spiritual director, supervisor, mentor, and retreat leader. He is the lead pastor at Living Vine Church and Living Vine Center for Spiritual Transformation and Companionship in Napa, CA. He has had the gift of pastoring in the local church since 1996, within a variety of denominational, geographical, and ministry settings throughout the United States and Canada. He is the founder of Akouō life ministries, (akouolife.org) an accompanying ministry devoted to cultivating an integrated listening posture with God. Art serves as an adjunct professor in the areas of Spiritual Formation, Pastoral Formation, Applied Theology, and Spiritual Direction.

Art’s studies include a Bachelor of Biblical Studies (Ozark Christian College: Joplin MO), Master of Divinity—Spiritual Theology (Regent College: Vancouver, Canada), and a Doctorate of Ministry - Spiritual Direction (Fuller Theological Seminary: Pasadena, CA). He has also trained in spiritual direction supervision and accompanying people through the spiritual exercises. In his free time, Art enjoys watching, participating, and coaching sports, road trips, garage sales, and 7-11 Slurpees.



Brad Wong Brad Wong is the Lead Pastor of The River Church Community in San Jose, California, where he has served for 24 years. He delights in friendship, authentic conversation, teamwork, theological exploration, and cross-cultural adventures. He has an MA in Global Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary and his DMin project is on the topic of discernment. In recent years, he has enjoyed the privilege of serving as a spiritual director for Christian leaders in a variety of contexts that include university student ministry, global justice advocacy, and dialogue about human sexuality.

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PROGRAM FEATURES

- Assessment
- Retreats
- Relationship with Experienced Clergy and Peers
- On-Line Tools for Spiritual Formation Activities
- On-Going Learning

Admission Information

The application deadline for the class of 2025 is **November 7, 2024**.

CALIFORNIA/MEXICO CLASS OF 2025

Session One: February 24 -27, 2025 held in Santa Barbara, California

Session Two: November 10 - 13, 2025 held in Mexico City

Future locations will be announced.



Want to talk with someone about the program?

Please email Meg Wolfgram at mwolfgram@westmont.edu

