

40 years

of creating transformative space to connect with
God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world.

Two-year Academy for spiritual formation:

Offers a place for spiritually hungry pilgrims, both clergy and lay, to spend forty days in residence (five days every three months) deepening their lives in Christ, engaging in spiritual practices of body, mind, and spirit in a supportive community, and focusing on outward aspects of faithful leadership in the world.

Five-day/short-term Academy for spiritual formation:

A "taste" of the Two-Year Academy, the Five-Day Academy, Three-Day Academy, and other short-term offerings of the Academy rhythm are stand-alone retreats that invite participants (both clergy and lay) to spend up to a week in a Christian retreat setting with worship at its center. Each short-term Academy experience includes one or two faculty who present on a theme for the retreat and invites participants to respond to this theme through silence, written and spoken word, prayer, worship, and community sharing.

onLine Academy models: Multiple online adaptations of the Academy model provide opportunities for clergy and lay to experience the Academy rhythm of prayer and worship, silence and study, community and embodied practice from any location and without traveling to a retreat center. These online models make The Academy more accessible and more affordable to a broader audience, including those who cannot attend an in-person retreat. There are stand-alone retreats such as the online Academy Day Apart as well as multi-session, cohort-based models such as the online one-year journey called *Spiritual Formation in Today's World*.

Academy pilgrimages: Contemplative pilgrimages to places of spiritual significance offer participants the opportunity to engage spiritual practices based in the Academy model, learn from Academy faculty, and fellowship with other pilgrims on the journey.

international growth: Since 2003, The Academy has expanded to seven countries outside the U.S. and continues to receive international inquiries regularly, demonstrating its global, multicultural, multiethnic emphasis for the future.

what's next? The Academy continues to explore new iterations of its model and is focused on increasing its accessibility and sustainability in the years to come. The Academy seeks to be a movement that helps reshape the way people of faith conceive of and live out the Christian life—a way that is rooted in and flows from God's spirit and action in the world. Academy pilgrims are the leaven in the loaf of contemporary Christianity, helping lead the way into the next incarnation of the body of Christ. The Academy seeks to model and inspire the formation of Christian communities that embrace the multicultural, multiethnic, interfaith landscape of the 21st century for the transformation of the world.



The Academy
for spiritual formation®



1983

May 17, 1983

First Two-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation begins at Scarritt Bennett Center and The Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN, after five years of research, prayer, and discernment by founding Director, Danny Morris, and an ecumenical advisory board of spiritual leaders.



Linda Heist becomes the first Academy Administrative Coordinator, working closely with Danny Morris on the first iterations of the ministry.

1988

Two-Year Academy #5 begins in Madison, Wisconsin, expanding the Two-Year to the North Central region of the U.S.

1989

A Closer Walk with God is held as an adaptation of the Two-Year Academy for African Americans.

1991

Jean Poenitske becomes the second Academy Administrative Coordinator upon Linda Heist's retirement.

1992

Two-Year Academy #7 begins in Burlingame, California, expanding the Two-Year to the Western region of the U.S.



1992

1985

First edition of *Upper Room Worshipbook*, compiled and edited by Elise S. Slinger, is published.

First Five-Day Academy held in Mitchell, South Dakota. The Five-Day Academy was created by Academy #1 participant, Kent Millard, as his second-year covenant commitment to offer a more accessible, short-term adaptation of the model.

Two-Year Academy #2 begins in Gallant, Alabama. This Academy was initiated by a group from Alabama that attended

Academy #1 together. This moves the Two-Year beyond Nashville and demonstrates it can be an ongoing ministry rather than a one-off event.



Jerry Haas becomes second Director of The Academy for Spiritual Formation upon retirement of Danny Morris.

1999

2001

Two-Year Academy #17 begins in San Antonio, Texas, expanding the Two-Year to the South Central region of the U.S.

2002

First *Spirit Streams* (Three-Day Academy) held in California, further adapting the model to make it more accessible.



2003

2003

Academy receives Lilly grant to study impact of The Academy on clergy, which results in creation of a Lilly-funded program specifically for clergy called *Companions in Ministry*.

Two-Year Academy #21 begins in Marriottsville, Maryland, expanding the Two-Year to the East region of the U.S.

First Five-Day Academy in Puerto Rico takes place in partnership with the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. This is the first Academy in the Spanish language and the first Academy outside the continental U.S.

First *Sedibeng* (South African adaptation of Academy) in South Africa and first Academy outside the U.S.



2006

Companions in Ministry #1 begins, funded by Lilly grant.

First domestic Spanish language Five-Day Academy held in Florida.

First Korean language Academy held in Illinois.

Second edition of *Upper Room Worshipbook* is published; launch event held in Nashville.

2008

Donna Bryant becomes the third Academy Administrative Coordinator upon Jean Poenitske's retirement.

2009

Companions in Ministry #2 begins, funded by Lilly grant and includes first *Writing as Spiritual Practice* cohort.

The Academy hosts *A River Deep & Wide* conference in Nashville to explore being Christian in multicultural and interfaith contexts.

2010

First Five-Day Academy in South Korea.



Johnny Sears becomes third Director of The Academy for Spiritual Formation.

Im Jung hired as Academy Regional Coordinator.

2011

Two-Year Academy #32 begins in Leesburg, Florida. This is the first Spanish/English bilingual Two-Year Academy.

2015

2014

First Five-Day Academy in Cuba, which grew out of bilingual Academy #32.



2015

First Academy in Russia.

Academy launches monthly podcast based on recordings of faculty lectures from Academy events.

Academy begins offering regular contemplative pilgrimages to places of spiritual significance.

First Academy in Singapore/Malaysia.

2016

St. Paul School of Theology begins offering a Doctor of Ministry in Prophetic Witness and Service in partnership with the Two-Year Academy.

2017

First Five-Day Academies in Bolivia and the United Kingdom.

Two-Year Academy #39 begins in Malvern, Pennsylvania, expanding the Two-Year to the Northeast region of the U.S.

Claire McKeever-Burgett becomes first Associate Director of The Academy.

2019

The Academy develops the Academy Mentor Network to enhance support for leaders of local short-term Academy communities.

2020

All in-person Academies are ceased due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online Academy models are created. First online Academy Day Apart retreats are held.

2021

First *Spiritual Formation in Today's World*, the online one-year Academy model, is launched, making The Academy more affordable and accessible and drawing new people to The Academy.

Created and launched an online six-month Academy model and curriculum based on feedback from the Latinx community called *La Espiritualidad de la Resiliencia en la Comunidad Hispana y Latinx*.

In-person short-term Academies resume in late 2021 while online offerings continue.

2023

In-person Two-Year Academies return with the launch of Academy #42, continuing the lineage of Two-Year Academies.

The Academy celebrates 40 years of creating transformative space for people to connect with God, self, others, and creation for the sake of the world!

40 years