



**Metagem Institute Spiritual Direction Training  
Program Final Project:  
Prayer Clinic at Project Horseshoe Farm  
in Greensboro, AL**

**The Rev. John Ira Kennedy, III**

### Project Summary:

*Project Horseshoe Farm is a non-profit in Greensboro, AL that helps serve the health and well-being of the community, particularly vulnerable adults such as those who are elderly or live with mental illness or disabilities. In conjunction with Project Horseshoe Farm, I established a Prayer Clinic as part of their Tuesday morning programming. The idea was to complement the Health Clinic Project Horseshoe Farm provides for their programming and meet the spiritual needs, in addition to the health needs, of participants. The hope was to use the ethos and gifts of Spiritual Direction to provide a resource and service to a population that might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience anything akin to Spiritual Direction. This project could potentially provide the framework for other projects and programming to help disenfranchised and vulnerable adults experience and engage in Spiritual Direction.*

## Information about Project Horseshoe Farm:



Project Horseshoe Farm is a non-profit centered in Greensboro, AL. Part of their stated goal is to “improve the health and quality of life of our vulnerable neighbors”. The Fellows who lead many of the programs and work with community members as health partners are recent college graduates, many of whom go on to attend medical school.

Every Tuesday morning, Horseshoe Farm puts on programming for vulnerable adults at their facility in Greensboro, AL. Their programming includes arts and crafts activities, exercise, meeting with health professions, a cooked meal for lunch, and a variety of other activities that participants can choose from. The vulnerable adults who participate in the Tuesday Morning Program range from those who are elderly to those who live with mental illness and disabilities.



You can learn more about Project Horseshoe Farm and the services they provide online at [projecthsf.org](http://projecthsf.org).

## Origins of the Prayer Clinic:

From 2016-2019, I served at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Greensboro, AL. As part of my ministry there, I would occasionally stop by Project Horseshoe Farm's facilities on Tuesday morning and greet Fellows and Program Participants.



One day after the program ended, I met with Dr. John Dorsey, Founder and Director of Project Horseshoe Farm. During our conversation, we discussed my time working as a hospital chaplain as part of a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program during my seminary training. Dr. Dorsey loved the idea of meeting the spiritual needs, as well as the physical needs, of patients, and he asked if I would be willing to write a proposal to do a similar project at Project Horseshoe Farm.

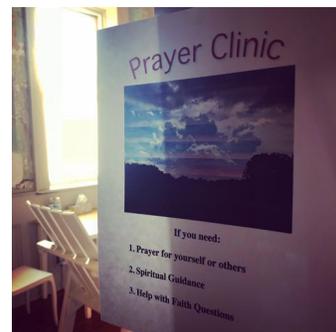


My hope for the Prayer Clinic was to use the tools I had developed in Metagem Institute's Spiritual Direction Training Program and my spiritual gifts as an ordained Episcopal priest to meet the spiritual needs of Program Participants and compliment the health clinic already present as part of Horseshoe Farm's programming.

My original proposal to Dr. Dorsey included the idea of advertising the program as

- 1) Time for Prayer
- 2) Help on the Spiritual Journey (Spiritual Direction)
- 3) An opportunity to ask questions on Faith

After discussing the idea further with Dr. Dorsey, as well as the leadership at Metagem Institute and other colleagues, we settled on an advertisement poster designed by me and listed on the following page:



# Prayer Clinic



**If you need:**

- 1. Prayer for yourself or others**
- 2. Spiritual Guidance**
- 3. Help with Faith Question**

## Prayer Clinic Period:

September 25, 2018- January 15, 2019

## Implementation:



The original plan for the Prayer Clinic was that Horseshoe Farm would provide me with a space to meet participants who wished to talk or pray with me. That approach changed quickly when I found it made much more sense for me to be out and present with participants in the main program area. This allowed me to develop relationships with participants of the program and for them to feel more comfortable interacting with me.

Project Horseshoe Farm's Fellows were highly supportive of this ministry as well. Each week they would announce my presence to participants and add my name to the day's program schedule. They also created a sign-up list for participants, mirroring their sign up list for their Health Clinic. Some participants utilized the sign-up list, while others simply pulled me aside during the program.

Each week, I had, on average, 2-3 people specifically pull me aside to share a situation in their lives and ask for prayer. There were many others who, when I sat down with them, would ask me to pray with them or who would talk to me about their faith.

Several participants took advantage of the opportunity for a one-on-one Spiritual Direction session. There were 2 of these participants who met with me regularly enough (either weekly or biweekly) to be called "directees". Generally, we met in a private space provided by Project Horseshoe Farm or in another area of the building that afforded



some privacy. Our conversations ranged from discussing what God might be calling them to do to discerning the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives or the lives of their families. My method of approach in these conversations was to ask questions and, at times, provide Scripture passages to meditate on that I felt were pertinent to the directee's situation.

## Response by Participants:

The majority of the participants of the Tuesday Morning Program came from some sort of religious or spiritual background. As a result, many took advantage of my presence among them, even if it was only to pull me aside one time to ask for prayers for themselves or their loved ones.

The response I received most often from participants was gratitude not only for the service I provided, but for my presence among them as well. Spending time with participants regularly during their programming allowed me to form bonds with many of them, which helped in being able to meet their spiritual needs.



Providing the Prayer Clinic has also helped me reflect on the nature of ministry. When program participants would reach out to me for prayer or guidance, it felt like they were reaching less for me and more for a connection with God. It reminded me of how through our Baptism, as well as for me specifically as an ordained minister, we are called to “represent Christ” to others (*The Book of Common Prayer*, 855-856). It was a great privilege of mine to represent Jesus Christ to others in this way through the Prayer Clinic, especially because it provided the means and opportunity of connecting to God that many participants might not otherwise have had access to through the means of Spiritual Direction.

## Possible Future Use:

I believe that Spiritual Direction is a spiritual resource that should, if at all possible, be available to all. I loved leading the Prayer Clinic because it was an opportunity for people to experience Spiritual Direction who might not otherwise be able to find a director. My hope is that I or another person might be able to replicate the work of the Prayer Clinic in another setting in the future.

In preparing and discussing this report, I spoke with Dr. Dorsey. In our conversations, we have both expressed a desire for the Prayer Clinic to continue as a part of Project Horseshoe Farm's Tuesday Morning Program. There is a possibility that the Prayer Clinic could resume at Horseshoe Farm under the leadership of other ministers in and around the Greensboro area.



One thing I would hope to add to the Prayer Clinic in the future is more formation and education on what Spiritual Direction actually is, especially for those who may have no prior experience of Spiritual Direction. This, of course, would need to be done with the permission of whatever organization hosts the Prayer Clinic. I was grateful Project Horseshoe Farm gave me time to briefly explain the Prayer Clinic to participants when I started the program.

I have continued to use the resources, tools, and gifts I developed while leading the Prayer Clinic in my ministry and interaction with others, particularly in Outreach settings.

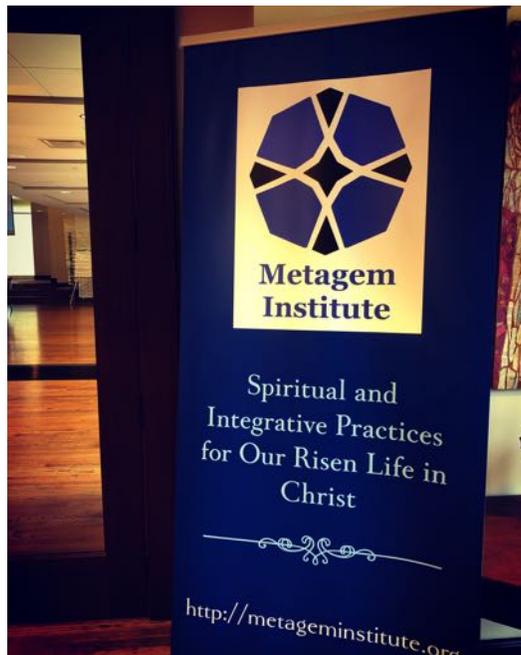


For example, when helping The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Rainbow City, AL serve meals at The Way of the Cross Ministries in Gadsden, AL, I sat with and spoke to several recipients of those meals. Making those connections with others has given me the opportunity to see where God is active in their lives.

I have no doubt that thanks to my time leading the Prayer Clinic my pastoral, ministerial, and spiritual direction skills have improved and advanced, and I trust that they will continue to do so in the future.

My suggestion to others who wish to start a similar ministry would be to:

- 1) Find a suitable partner organization or place in which to provide this ministry.
- 2) Develop relationships with those you work with.
- 3) Provide resources on the nature of Spiritual Direction.
- 4) Be open to the movement of the Spirit. Be willing to provide prayer, guidance, Spiritual Direction, or whatever participants in your program need.
- 5) Make sure you have access to resources, mentors, and directors who can help you in your own formation as you move forward with this project.





For questions and more information contact The Rev. John Ira Kennedy, III at  
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