



*The Institute for  
Spiritual Development*

**Ministerial Program**

**Procedures and Requirements**

The Lotus Center at  
The Institute for Spiritual Development

Oneonta, NY 13820  
[www.isdoneonta.org](http://www.isdoneonta.org)

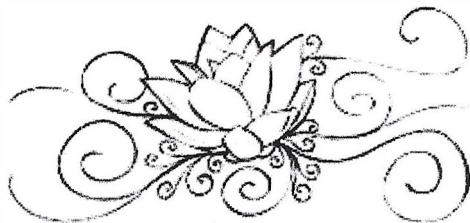
---

The ancient Masters  
didn't try to educate the people,  
but kindly taught them to not-know.

When they think that they know the answers,  
people are difficult to guide.  
When they know that they don't know  
people can find their own way.

If you want to learn how to govern,  
avoid being clever or rich.  
The simplest pattern is the clearest.  
Content with an ordinary life,  
you can show all people the way  
back to their own true nature.

Tao Te Ching



---

## A Program of Service

**Those who are called to service** know who you are. An ordained minister at the Institute knows him or herself to be destined to serve the metaphysical and spiritual needs of others. As a minister of the Institute, you are expected to see yourself as one whose hand is extended to your fellow human beings, a way-shower.

*This is not a program that develops stars.* It is a program that develops spiritual connection through service. We move from simple understanding of the laws of metaphysics to being a demonstration, an initiate on the way to mastery.

This brochure will explain the requirements of the program and what is expected of ministers and ministerial students. The Ministry at the Institute is a deeply-rooted brother and sisterhood of spirit, a connection of souls who are meant to be together in their spiritual journey. We are the ones who find our own pathway by helping others to find theirs.

**How we define metaphysics:** *Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy which explores the nature of God, The Universe and Humanity, and the interrelationship between them.*

---

## Introduction:

This Ministerial Program at the Institute is a program that:

- demands participation at the highest levels,
- requires extensive coursework both inside and outside of the Institute,
- expects participants to bring joy and humbleness to every endeavor,
- anticipates the unfolding of greatness in every student,
- views personal prayer and meditation as elemental to the program,
- see its students as curious, open-hearted, and willing,
- legally and spiritually prepares students for ministerial service to their congregation and the wider community, and
- looks forward to ordaining candidates who are ready to be intelligent, informed, well-prepared representatives of the Institute, and a voice of Divine connection for all with whom they interact.

---

## Objectives:

The goals of the program are met through:

1. Classes in a variety of areas including but not limited to those listed in this booklet,
2. Projects that students take on to benefit the Institute,
3. Demonstrated leadership of students in Institute programs and activities,
4. Discovering over and over again an ability to bring forth the highest levels of demonstrated spiritual connection through loving service,
5. Successful participation in delivering homilies and acting as MC for Sunday services, and
6. Senior level responsibility for the well-being of all who enter the Institute.

*The Institute was established in 1974 as a metaphysical church as well as a place to learn. This means we are a church and learning center committed to exploring within to discover and expand the true Divine nature of human existence.*

---

## Crediting and Requirements:

Anyone who has been a member of the Institute for at least one year is eligible to apply to the program. Candidates are chosen for participation in the program solely at the discretion of the Institute. Each candidate is required to complete the Institute-offered courses listed in this brochure. Service to the Institute and its members and congregants is also a key part of the program.

**In addition** to the course requirements administered under the auspices of The Institute, candidates will be required to provide evidence of the successful completion of college-level courses in:

- English Composition
- Psychology
- Public Speaking

These courses may be completed at any accredited institution of higher learning of the candidate's choosing.

Candidates are expected to assume a leadership role in the activities of the Church, and are subject to periodic evaluation and review by the Pastor and Director as to their progress and continuation in the program. The Institute's Board of Spiritual Advisors will also review and evaluate the candidate's progress periodically. Candidates may be terminated from the program at any point if it is determined by the Board of Spiritual Advisors that their progress is not sufficient. Again, the continued participation in the program is always at the discretion of the management of the Institute.

Finally, each candidate for ordination is expected to demonstrate a professional competence in one or more areas of esoteric ability, such as healing, mediumship, inspirational speaking, etc. It is anticipated that most students will complete the program within four years.

---

## The Required Program

*Classes may not be offered in this exact order.*

### Phase 1 — **The Order of the Cleric**

#### 1. You Are On A Journey (*home study*)

A primer of the philosophy, goals, and guiding principles of the Institute, designed to help the student understand the background and founding beliefs.

#### 2. Fundamentals & Principles of Metaphysics (*home study*)

A survey of the essential beliefs, practices and principles of the modern metaphysical movement, especially as presented by ISD, including all phases of spiritual manifestation.

#### 3. The Process of Self-Awakening

A study of the motivations and processes of human development keyed to the use of metaphysical approaches in controlling life, the mind, emotions, and spirit, establishing balance in oneself and others.

#### 4. The Laws of the Universe (The Kybalion)

Also known as "Hermetic Philosophy," the laws of the universe are the foundation for all metaphysical thought. The seven laws of Hermes are reviewed and discussed.

#### 5. Platform Preparation

Covers deportment, protocol, and presentation for all who appear in the public eye, and training for the function of MC at the Institute.

6. Elective: Please choose from a variety of metaphysical subjects. Not intended for repeated classes in mediumship or healing.

---

# The Required Program (continued)

## Phase II — The Order of Missionary

### 1. Metaphysical Interpretation of the Bible

A review of many of the more well-known stories of the Bible, and how to interpret them metaphysically. The concern is not which interpretation is correct, but how does the message of the Christian Bible fit into our lives.

### 2. Homiletics

Training in the preparation and delivery of a homily (sermon.) Homiletics is an art form not easily mastered, and students are expected to prepare and deliver several successful homilies before they will be asked to speak from the podium. Students may be asked to repeat the course before being invited to speak.

### 3. The Esoteric Nature of Humanity (The Chakras)

A holistic consideration of the true nature of humankind and the energy centers and forces which produce human actions and attitudes. An examination of the chakras as well as the aura.

### 4. Survey of the Esoteric Sciences

Survey of many different kinds of divination such as the runes, Tarot, numerology, etc.

5. Elective: Please choose from a variety of metaphysical subjects. Not intended for repeated classes in mediumship or healing.

---

## Phase III— The Order of Deacon

### 1. The Faith By Which We Live

A comprehensive study of how religions come to be formed from a sociological, economical and political viewpoint. Examines the psychological, sociological, and cultural imperatives which dictate the context and content of faith and organized religion.

### 2. Comparative Religion

A survey of the great religions of the world which have shaped mankind and the Avatars around which these religious philosophies are centered.

### 3. History of the Christian Era

A study of the life and history of Jesus and the formation of the Christian religion.

### 4. Apologetics: A History of the Modern Metaphysical Movement (home study)

A review of the rise of spiritualism from about 1860 through 1960 covering various authors, speakers, and celebrities of their time.

### 5. Contemporary Metaphysical Thought

Survey of leading metaphysical thought of the current age. Students will choose authors to focus on and present information to the class regarding their contribution to modern thought.

6. Elective: Please choose from a variety of metaphysical subjects. Not intended for repeated classes in mediumship or healing.

---

## The Required Program (continued)

### Phase IV – The Order of Minister

#### 1. Prayer and Meditation

Discusses different types of meditations, parts of a prayer, prayer treatments and practicing extemporaneous prayer.

#### 2. Ethics

The codes of conduct and behavior appropriate to ministerial service, and the limitations that apply in the execution of pastoral and legal responsibilities.

#### 3. Church Management

Church organization and operation, including the duties and responsibilities of all designated officers, trustees and pastoral staff; plus a review of the legalities of church function.

#### 4. Preparation for the Ministry

A practical experience in designing and conducting special services including baptisms, weddings, funerals, memorials, etc. which are required in the functioning of the ministerial office.

#### 5. The Art of Counseling

Dealing with people and their situations with care, respect, caution and consideration. Practice sessions are required for this course.

#### 6. Elective: Please choose from a variety of metaphysical subjects. Not intended for repeated classes in mediumship or healing.

---

## The Required Program (continued)

### ELECTIVES

The intention of the elective program is to permit the student to pursue special interests, and to broaden one's exposure and experience. Subject to the approval of the Director, and with prior permission, students may receive accreditation for seminars and classes (whether offered by the Institute or not) which are in keeping with the tone and quality of the required program.

Such elective courses, each carrying a maximum of one credit, might include but are by no means limited to:

The Art of Healing	Church Music
Review of Psychic Literature	Astrology
Numerology	Tarot
Palmistry	Advanced Hermetic Philosophy
The Human Aura	Huna
Reflexology	Eastern Philosophy

### Ordination

*The Certificate of Ordination* shall be granted to those who hold the position of Deacon for one year, and have successfully completed the required courses and evaluations of Phase III. In addition, Candidates for ordination must complete all outside course requirements, must rate satisfactorily in psychological profile, and must receive final approval of the Board of Spiritual Advisors.

*Maintaining Credentials:* Certification and registry of an individual's ministry must be maintained by continued membership in the organization. Lapse of membership shall result in invalidation of the minister's certificate.



---

## Examinations and Credentialing

Examination may be required for course work. Students are expected to perform satisfactorily in all courses to receive credit for the course.

At the completion of the program, and prior to ordination, each candidate must be prepared to complete a Comprehensive Qualifying Examination.

Each candidate seeking ordination is encouraged to serve at another approved Church in ministering and serving in the capacity of a "Guest Minister."

The Board of Spiritual Advisors reserves the right of final decision for ordination of any candidate after a review of the candidate's credentials, performance, and fitness.

The Board holds ordination as a commitment at the highest level, and for those who demonstrate and know themselves to be leaders. The Ministry at the Institute is an opportunity for those who know themselves to be called to the service of humanity in partnership with the Divine.

---

## Continuing Education and Ordination by Sanction

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

All active, full-time ordained Ministers are expected to:

- Re-take the Homiletics and Platform Preparation courses as needed, and if requested.
- Continue to participate as a student and/or teacher in Institute and outside metaphysical classes.
- Attend the Ethics class when it is given, and
- Be prepared to participate in an ongoing program of peer review.

The intention of this requirement is that we understand the critical nature of the quality of the service we present, and are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional public presentation.

### ORDINATION BY SANCTION

From time to time, solely at the discretion of the Institute's Board of Spiritual Advisors, people who have been ordained in another church may be invited to be sanctioned and become an ordained minister of the Institute. Usually there will be certain courses and projects such candidates will be asked to complete before such an ordination will take place.

---

## Attendance and Service

Attendance is expected at all classes taken for credit. Regular attendance at all worship and spiritual functions of the Institute is deemed essential, and active participation in the church's ongoing activities is required. As the Ministry is a dedication to a life of service, a willing availability to serve must be the hallmark of every candidate.

During the program, ministerial students are expected to take a leadership role in the functioning of the church. This means serving as the head of a committee and/or special project as needed and determined by the Director. Each Minister and Ministerial student is expected to create a tangible contribution to the future well-being of the Institute out of their commitment to service.

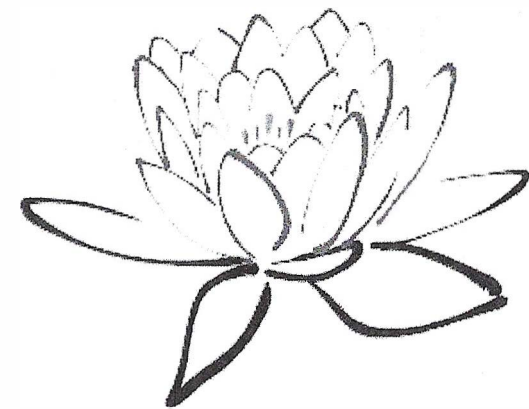
### TRANSFER OF CREDITS

At the discretion of the Director, the Institute will accept credit for course work satisfactorily completed outside of this program. The student must provide a course description, proof of completion or letter of completion by the instructor and may be expected to pass a qualifying examination for the course before credits will be accepted.

### COST

Tuition and costs are established by the Executive Board of the Institute for Spiritual Development and are subject to change and review.

While students are expected to be financially self-sustaining, the Institute recognizes that from time to time there are situations in which financial assistance may be appropriate. In such cases, a request for scholarship assistance may be addressed directly to the Pastor.



THE LOTUS

Symbol of the Institute for Spiritual Development, this ancient flower symbolizes rising from a dark place into spiritual awakening, beauty and rebirth.



---

IT IS ONLY WITH  
THE HEART  
THAT ONE CAN  
SEE RIGHTLY;  
WHAT IS  
ESSENTIAL IS  
INVISIBLE TO  
THE EYE.

*Antoine de St. Exupery*

**The Institute for Spiritual Development**

Oneonta, NY 13820

[www.isdoneonta.org](http://www.isdoneonta.org)

[isdoneonta@gmail.com](mailto:isdoneonta@gmail.com)