



**INTRODUCTION: THE JOURNEY GROUPS PROGRAM AT WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY—
A partially funded Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Grant through Lilly Endowment**

The Journey Group process focuses on the premise that learning happens with peers around a common learning goal; occurs as the group journeys together over time; and then transforms ministry settings as pastors and laity learn together.

JOURNEY GROUPS are groups of 6-8 pastors, gathered around common learning themes, who journey together for two years, giving each other mutual encouragement, support, challenge and accountability. Together, Journey Groups have the chance to develop a learning plan to explore their chosen theme, and then, through a variety of media, to study this theme in depth. Assisted by a Journey Group facilitator, groups develop learning covenants, in order to ensure intentionality toward learning throughout the group's learning process. Journey Group members invite members of their congregations and/or colleagues from their home ministry contexts as companions on the journey, whose learning will parallel that of the Journey Group.

THE JOURNEY GROUP MODEL

Journey Groups gather together for five face-to-face gatherings over the two years. Two of these gatherings will be held at Western Theological Seminary; two will be held at a retreat or conference center in the home region of group members (the first gathering in your region will be the Journey Group members alone, and at the other regional gathering the JG will join with three representatives from the congregation or home ministry of each group member and a resource person in order to increase and expand the learning in your ministry context); and at the midpoint of the journey, group members will travel together to meet with another resource person chosen by the group. The two year process begins with Formation, grows into Cultivation, delves into Exploration with a resource person, and then Transformation occurs as the group meets with their ministry companions with a resource person and then end with Celebration. Time is given as each journey comes to a close for each group member to both evaluate the learning journey, and to envision next steps in professional and personal development and study.

FEES AND APPLICATIONS

The fee for pastors who take part in the Journey Groups program is \$1100 per year for each of two years, a total of \$2200. Additionally, the congregation or ministry context of each Journey Group will be asked to contribute \$600. For groups beginning in 2013, the application deadline is April 1, 2013, and pastors will be asked to confirm their plan to participate by letter and financial deposit by May 15, 2013. The first gathering will occur in June or September 2013.