

School of Theology and Ministry
CMI 6077: Congregational
Discipleship and Formation
3 Units- Spring 2026, Quad II



Instructor title and name:	Dr. Jennifer Guerra Aldana
Email:	jenniferguerraaldana@pointloma.edu
Office location and hours:	Online office hours: Wednesdays 1:30 pm-3:00 pm Other times, by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An exploration of congregational practices that form persons and communities into faithful disciples. Attention is given to how theology informs local congregations' educational and formative practices.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Incorporate Christian formation in the local congregation and the minister's life.
2. Interpret Scripture, especially regarding preaching and teaching in the local church.
3. Explain the nature, mission, and social context of the Church, especially as related to ecclesial practices and the pastor's leadership in the local congregation.
4. Analyze theology, ethics, and Church history, especially related to the Wesleyan tradition and contemporary ministry.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Define discipleship within the local ministry contexts. (PLO 1 & PLO 3)
2. Describe the stages of human development and apply that knowledge to leading people in Christian maturity. (PLO 1 & PLO 3)
3. Understand the formative practices in the church that form faithful disciples. (PLO 1 & PLO 3)
4. Analyze and evaluate community assets and their impact on congregational formation. (PLO3)
5. Demonstrate how congregations engage in spiritual growth and formation. (PLO 3)

Course Philosophy

Learning is a communal and collaborative process. Therefore, I hope we can co-construct

an environment of rich conversation and critical engagement. I expect students to engage deeply with the readings, come ready to have meaningful discussions and engage the content with curiosity and effort. *I believe in active learning.* I recognize that I will ask you to engage in theological reflection and conversation in this course that may feel beyond your level of expertise or comfort- embrace it! Lean in, take risks, and give your best effort. As your professor, I commit to providing feedback and being a partner in learning. *The best learning happens when we are stretched beyond what we know or are comfortable with but not to the point of becoming overwhelmed.* Communication will be critical; the more you choose to share, the better I can partner with and support you.

Required Texts

- Gonzalez, Catherine (2014). *Resources in the Ancient Church for Today's Worship*. Abingdon Press. [ISBN:978-1-4267-9565-7]
- Powell, Kara; Mulder, Jake. and Griffin, Brad (2016). *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. [ISBN: 978-0-8010-1925-8]
- [Conversational Toolkits](#): pick one from the collection.
- Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth; Kang, Steve; and Parrett, Gary (2004). *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*. [ISBN: 978-0-8010-2743-7]
- Thompson, Marjorie (2014). *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. [ISBN-13: 978-0-664-26115-3]
- *Additional readings and electronic resources as assigned via Canvas*

Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

Assignments:	Grading Scale:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7 D-Board Posts, 20 points each (140) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 points for original post ○ 5 points for each peer-to-peer interaction ● 14 Lecture Interactions, 10 points each (140) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two touch points with the weekly lecture through canvas studio. ● 2 Assignments, 60 points each (120) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusion & Marginality Ecosystem ○ Sabbath & Fellowship Examen ● Community Exegesis (200) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Research (50) ○ Community Walks, three total (45, 15 each) ○ Community Event (55) ○ Community Conversation (50) ● Final Reflection (400) <p>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 1,000</p>	<p>A=93-100% A-=92-90% B+=87-89% B=83-86% B-=80-82% C+=77-79% C=73-76% C-=70-72% D+=67-69% D=63-66% D-=60-62% F=0-59%</p>

In-Person Gathering Days Schedule

March 4, 2026

1:00-3:00 pm	Introduction to Course and One Another
3:00-3:15 pm	Break
3:15-5:00 pm	Discipleship and Spiritual Formation

March 5, 2026

08:00-9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00-12:00 pm	River of Life Reflections Barriers to Holistic Spiritual Formation
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch Break
1:10-3:00 pm	Defining Reality: Intercultural Dynamics
3:00- 3:15 pm	Break
3:15-5:00 pm	Defining Reality: Intergenerational Dynamics

March 6, 2026

8:00-10:00am	Breakfast Engaging the Means of Grace
10:00-12:00 pm	Trauma-Informed Discipleship
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00-3:00 pm	Church and Context
3:00- 3:15 pm	Break
3:15-4:00 pm	Introduction to Community Exegesis
4:00- 5:00 pm	Next Steps and Assignment Overview

Date	Content & Activities	Reading
Roots: History & Community		
Week 1 (3/16- 3/20)	Historical Roots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture Part 1 & Part 2 ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Early Church in your context.” Post by Wednesday, and respond to two classmates by Saturday. ● Engage: Community Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Resources in the Ancient Church for Today’s Worship</u> Ch. 1-6
Week 2 (3/23-3/27)	Formation & Education in Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture “Human Development Approaches to Christian Maturity” ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Faith Formation in My Community” Post by Wednesday, and respond to two classmates by Saturday. ● Engage: Community Walk #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Soul Feast</u> Introduction, Ch.1 ● Read <u>A Many Colored Kingdom</u> Ch. 3
Spiritual Practices & Rhythms		
Week 3 (3/30-4/3) Easter Break (4/2-3)	Liturgy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture Part 1 & Part 2 ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Worship” Post a 5-minute video by Wednesday. No response needed this week. ● Engage: Community Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Soul Feast</u> Introduction, Ch.4 ● Read <u>A Many Colored Kingdom</u> Ch. 6
Week 4 (4/6-4/10)	Sabbath & Fellowship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture on Sabbath and Fellowship Practices ● Create: Sabbath & Fellowship Examen ● Engage: Community Conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Soul Feast</u> Ch. 5 & 9

Fruits: Mission, Service & Justice		
Week 5 (4/13-4/17)	Scripture & Proclamation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture on “Preaching as Formation” ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Scripture” Post by Wednesday, and respond to two classmates by Saturday. ● Engage: Community Walk #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Soul Feast</u> Ch. 2 ● Read <u>Santa Biblia, Authority and Perspective</u> Pg. 1-11
Week 6 (4/20-4/24)	Solidarity & Hospitality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture “Hospitality & Solidarity” ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Intergenerational Bridges” Post by Wednesday, and respond to two classmates by Saturday. ● Create: Inclusion and Marginality Ecosystem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Soul Feast</u> Ch. 9 ● Read <u>Growing Young</u> Ch. 1-4
Week 7 (4/27-5/1)	Intercultural and Intergenerational Witness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture “Intercultural and Intergenerational Witness” ● Reflect: D-Board Discussion “Dreams for the Church” Post by Wednesday, and respond to two classmates by Saturday. ● Engage: Community Walk #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read <u>Growing Young</u> Ch. 5-8 ● Pick one of these toolkits. ● Read <u>A Many Colored Kingdom</u> Ch. 8
Week 8 (5/4-5/8)	Community & Congregational Final DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen: Lecture “Tying it All In” ● Reflect: Overall Reflection 	

D-Board Discussions

Title	Description
Early Church in Your Context	Describe how you see the early church practices in your community today.
Faith Formation in My Community	Describe the spiritual practices or activities your community employs for discipleship.
Worship	Post a 5-minute video reflecting on the elements of a worship service of your congregation. Why are these present? Which would cause conflict if removed or changed?

Sabbath and Fellowship	Post a 5-minute video reflecting on the challenges you have encountered with sabbath and fellowship; where do you see your gaps make their way into how you lead others into discipleship? What strengths do you bring to the practice of rest and fellowship, and where do you see your strengths shine in your leadership?
Scripture	Choose a scripture practice you have not engaged with before. After you engage with it, write a word response or record a 3-minute audio recording or video that captures your experience. How did you encounter scriptures in a new way?
Intergenerational Bridges	Choose someone of a different generational cohort than you. Use the question bank from your chosen toolkit and engage them in a conversation. Write a 250-word response to what you learned from the conversation.
Dreams for The Church	Post is a 5-minute video in which you reflect on your dreams for the church. What do you pray the church is known for? How do you dream of the church's influence in your community?
Tying it All In	Looking back at the past eight weeks, reflect on the following questions: 1. What have been your biggest takeaways? 2. What questions remain?

**Community Exegesis
Community Research**

1. Look up the history of the city you minister in, when it was founded, and who the first nation inhabitants of the land were.
2. Research the history of the church building. When was it built, by whom?
3. Look up [Census data](#) for the zip code your church gathers. Pay attention to demographics like gender, socioeconomic status, poverty level, and population age.
4. Look up local news articles on the zipcodes that the church ministers in. What are the top concerns? What are the top stories? What is being celebrated?
Document what you found in a 5-page, double-spaced, 12-font paper document. Include census data charts, news clippings, and other visual aids to tell the story you captured.

Community Walks (1-3)

Take a 30-60 minute walk around the neighborhood. Look up, look down, look for beauty, look for hope. Where is God at work in the neighborhood? Pray as you

walk, as if it feels natural, and start conversations with those with whom you seldom interact.

- Notice whether what you see matches or contrasts what you saw in your research.
- Take pictures (with non-identifiable persons).
- Collect reflections via voice memo or notes and submit them to Canvas.

Community Event

Look up the event calendar of the city you minister in. Attend a community event that you are not hosting. Submit a report with a picture of the event, a picture of you attending it, and your overall impressions. Who attended? Who was missing? Who did you meet? What did you learn about the community? What was affirmed about the community?

Community Conversation

Reach out to a local pastor of a different tradition, a local business owner you have met on your walks, a city leader, or a local school/college/university leader/educator. This assignment aims to encourage you to connect with someone in your community with whom you would have never or barely interacted before.

Question bank:

- What is your favorite thing about our city?
- What is your biggest concern about our city?
- What are your hopes for this community?

In a 3-page, double-spaced, 12-font paper document, what did you hear, where did you feel the resonance, and where were you challenged?

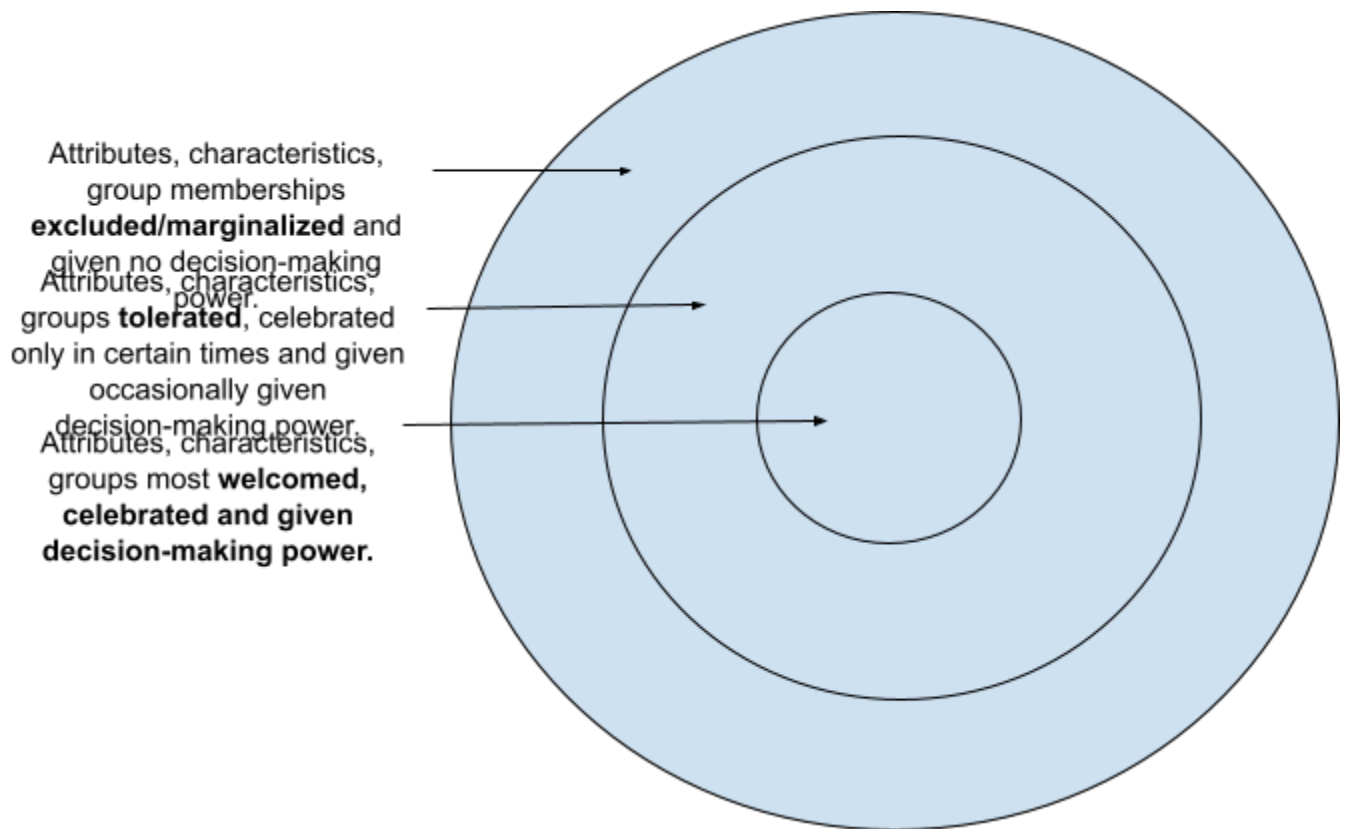
Sabbath & Fellowship Examen

1. Take a look at your calendar this past month. Identify when you have been able to find rest.
 - What brought you joy?
 - What brought you peace?
 - What brought you wonder?
 - What brought you rest?
2. Take a look at your calendar this past month. Identify when you have been able to find connection or fellowship.
 - Whose table did you sit at?
 - Whom did you invite to your table?
 - Whom did you play with?
 - Whom did you confide in?
3. Take in what you identified. Submit a 10-minute audio recording or video sharing the strengths and gaps of your current sabbath and fellowship practices.

Inclusion and Marginality Ecosystem

Based on the community walks you have engaged in, your research, and your awareness, create a three-ring ecosystem that names the communities you would consider to experience the most inclusion and those in the margins.

Example:



In a 3-page, single-space paper or a 15-minute verbal reflection, students will reflect on the following questions:

1. Who have you identified at the margins of your community?
2. How did it feel to name and identify the various groups?
3. What newfound awareness are you walking away from from this exercise?

Community & Congregational Final

Tying it all together, Gather your findings from different assignments throughout the class to complete this report using the following format. Engage 5-7 sources.

Defining Reality: Introduction to the Ministry (4 pages or 5 minutes)

- Include census data, the church's history, and pictures from your neighborhood walk and community event you attended.

Defining Discipleship: Congregational Discipleship Approach (4 pages or 5 minutes)

- Include your definition of discipleship (Use course readings and your own denominational or theological frameworks)
- Include intergenerational and cultural considerations

Defining Practices: Congregational Rhymes(4 pages or 5 minutes)

- Describe the different spiritual practices you will employ for the spiritual formation of your community. How will they be facilitated to be inclusive of generations and cultures?

Conclusion: Your Dreams for the Church (4 pages or 5 minutes)

- Describe your dreams for the church. What do you pray the church is known for? How do you dream of the church's influence in your community?