



“For everything there is a season”

In the words of the author of Ecclesiastes, “For everything there is a season, and time for every matter under heaven.” (Eccl. 3:1) Thus the time has come when I will be retiring as Director of Companions on the Inner Way. I have informed the Companions Advisory Board that I will continue through the Companions Retreat in August 2012. As I look back over my years with Companions, I see quite a history!

In the early 1980’s Morton Kelsey joined with Professor Roy Fairchild at San Francisco Theological Seminary to develop the concept of Companions on the Inner Way. They saw the advantage of offering a retreat experience that gave people the time in which to address their spiritual issues and attend to their own personal growth. Roy was assisted by Andy Dreitcer and later, Elizabeth Liebert, in providing Companions and other programs under the umbrella of San Francisco Theological Seminary’s Center for Christian Spiritual Disciplines, as the Program for Christian Spirituality was then called. In those early years, Companions was eight full days, and drew many SFTS students during their January intersession to what was often their first spirituality course.

By 1993 Morton was ready to retire and Howard Rice, Chaplin as well as Professor of Ministry at SFTS, became his successor. The length of the retreat was cut back to five days and now held off campus at various retreat centers. In March of 1995, the program saw its way clear to hiring a part time Director and I stepped into that position, joining with Ann Pope as Program Manager. A core staff was soon developed with the addition of Liturgist Jeff Gaines, Musician Ruthanne Svendsen and Art & Movement by Marjorie Hoyer Smith. It was at this time as well that a second event was added to the year and even an occasional third. The Zephyr Point Presbyterian Conference Center on Lake Tahoe became our summer location while our winter site has been at retreat centers in Sierra Madre, San Juan Capistrano and Malibu in Southern California. On one or more occasions Companions has traveled to Portland, OR; Issaquah, WA; and Ghost Ranch in New Mexico.

In March of 2004, Companions went through another transition, moving to San Francisco and coming under the auspices of the Seventh Avenue Presbyterian Church where it enjoys a close relationship with both the congregation and its pastor, Jeffrey Gaines.

Seventeen wonderful years in which I had the privilege of working with such a talented staff, hearing such fabulous presenters and preachers, and meeting so many beautiful participants. I have truly been blessed! Thank you all for being part of my life – I will not forget you.

Joyfully,

Joan

Joan Currey, Director

Companions on the Inner Way Retreats