



Michiana Spiritual Director's Network

Spring 2026 Newsletter

Spring Conference - April 16 - Lindenwood Retreat Center

Register by March 25 via the following link!

[Membership-Conference Registration](#)

Check out our website at: <https://www.MichianaSDN.org>

You are invited to the MichianaSDN 2026 Spring Conference: Serving the God who Suffers

We are excited to announce the MichianaSDN Spring 2026 program, "Serving the God who Suffers: Providing Spiritual Direction in the Context of Anxiety/Depression/Trauma". Plan to join us on **Thursday, April 16, 2026, at Lindenwood Retreat Center, Plymouth, Indiana from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM (EST)**.

Our presenter, Deborah Byler, is preparing an interactive session that will begin with sharing important information on how to work in spiritual direction with people who are experiencing anxiety or depression, or who have experienced significant trauma. Her presentation will include topics such as theology of suffering, seeking God in our suffering, forgiveness, atonement theories, and when to refer a person to a therapist. There will be hands-on exercises, case studies, and time for small and large group discussion.



Deborah has 16 years of experience working with women of Mayan descent in the Kekchi Mennonite Church of Guatemala. She has also served for 14 years on staff with Mennonite Mission Network. She holds a Master of Divinity as well as Doctor of Ministry degrees. She now lives in partial retirement in Goshen, IN. She currently has a part-time role with the Doctor of Ministry program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN. Deborah has done extensive study in the areas of anxiety, depression and trauma. She is the author of "God's Wounded Servants: Hope for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse". She has been a Spiritual Director (SD) since 2016.

We look forward to seeing you there! Registration and payment are due March 25, 2026. Again, the Conference will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at Lindenwood Conference & Retreat Center, 9601 Union Road, Plymouth, IN 46563 from 9:30A to 3:30P (Eastern time). To register online, click the following [Membership-Conference Registration](#). You can also call or text 219-512-5286, email michianasdn@gmail.com or print the form included in the email with this newsletter and send it to the address indicated.

The cost to attend is \$35 for dues paying MichianaSDN members and \$65 for non-dues paying members. New with this conference, we are also introducing a discounted rate of \$10 for students actively participating in spiritual direction training – see registration form. Also, should a dues paying member invite a non-MichianaSDN Spiritual Director friend who attends, both the member and the friend will receive a \$10 refund on their registration fee when both attend the conference. Simply denote appropriately on the registration form and send your SD friend a registration form to submit. Finally, when registering, be sure to indicate if you wish to purchase lunch for the additional cost of \$9.50. Thank you!

SEE YOU THERE!



News from the MichianaSDN Coordinating Council

Jennie Peyton, Coordinator

Eileen Wayte, Registrar/Communication

Joanne Hayden, Assistant

Christina Rhebergen, Webmaster

Coordinating Council Update: The new Coordinating Council continues to seek members to better serve MichianaSDN membership. The team has the privilege of identifying/choosing conference speakers two times a year and organizing those events with the intention of enriching members' Spiritual Direction practice. We ask that you give this prayerful consideration and text Jennie Peyton at 317-478-7127 to request more information. Team members typically commit to serve 2-3 years based on the needs of the organization at the time. Note: A current member of the Council completes her 3 years with the Coordinating Team at the end of 2026.

MichianaSDN Dues: In early January, an email was sent requesting payment of 2026 MichianaSDN membership dues.... dues that remained unchanged from 2025 at \$45/year. As a reminder, members who pay annual dues participate in networking events at a discounted rate (\$35) since they contribute toward the organization in covering expenses. If you opt not to pay dues, the non-dues paying member cost to attend bi-annual conferences is \$65 (the guest rate). 2026 dues can be submitted using the Membership-Conference Registration form located here: [Membership-Conference Registration](#).

MichianaSDN Website: New Features Make Finding a Spiritual Director Easier: We are excited about enhancements now live on our public website at <https://www.Michianasdn.org>. Specifically: 1) Spiritual Director (SD) listing page now includes filtering options that allow seekers to search by their preferred meeting format (in-person, online or phone) or by geographic area, making it easier to find a director who fits inquirer needs. 2) The enhanced listings also provide at-a-glance information, including each director's availability for new directees, session formats, and profile previews with a "read more" button to take visitors to complete profiles.

Important Reminder for Listed Directors: Website listing renews annually. If you haven't already done so, please use this link ([MichianaSDN Website Profile Information](#)) to update your information and make payment. The \$10 annual fee can be paid via Zelle using our email address (michianasdn@gmail.com) or send your check made payable to MichianaSDN to MichianaSDN, c/o Eileen Wayte, 9409 Sunrise Blvd, Gary, IN 46409. Please indicate "website listing" with your payment (on check or Zelle message). Note: Listings not paid by January 31 will be removed from site and will be promptly re-added upon payment receipt.

We ask that everyone complete the profile form to ensure all online information is kept up-to-date. Again, you can access the form at ([MichianaSDN Website Profile Information](#)). It leads you through every step. You can check out your current listing at <https://www.MichianaSDN.org> to review and/or replicate information you presently have posted.

Ready to add or renew your listing? Simply complete the form located at [MichianaSDN Website Profile Information](#) and submit your payment – no contact needed. Have questions or suggestions? Contact us at MichianaSDN@gmail.com.

Member Survey Summary Fall 2025:

Prior to the Fall 2025 Conference, members of the MichianaSDN were surveyed to assess ways to improve bi-annual conferences. Following summarizes feedback received:

Format of Conference - Feedback was positive with some participants noting that time constraints make it difficult for them to come to the conference. The current format is well-liked though other formats were not known.

Newsletter - While some comments leaned toward receiving information via email only (more likely to read), many comments were positive noting that newsletter contains enough information to be helpful to them. One comment noted that those who are not affiliated with Christianity are left out of our conferences and communications.

Lack of Attendance - While comments noted that the “rhythm” of our conferences felt good, scheduling conflicts were the primary reason for lack of attendance.

Website - While comments were generally positive, most members are not utilizing the website. It was recommended that, in addition to serving as a helpful tool for people to find Spiritual Directors, to include helpful articles, reflections, resources, stories of personal impact, etc. to attract someone to consider spiritual direction in their own life. One comment suggested we have past conference topics listed on website to spark interest.

Conferences are helpful - Value of conferences was noted to be dependent on topic. Meeting together in-person is felt to be a positive for our conferences. Time in small groups was suggested.

Relevance – what topics would members see as supportive of their work - Suggestions include: ethics, learning to facilitate retreats, forming peer groups, group spiritual direction, intercultural spiritual direction, dealing with anxiety in directees and ourselves, nature-based work, religious trauma, silence, self-awareness, emotional intelligence (how this impacts one’s spiritual life), challenges in providing spiritual direction. Newer directors felt the conferences were especially helpful with opportunity for group discussions to be more diverse.

Social networking at conferences – When able to attend, members feel conferences are helpful. They appreciate meeting other Spiritual Directors as through discussions at conferences, they often discover special niche programs offered by others. Opportunity exists to use social networking more to enhance links with others.

Speakers – Want speakers who have delved deeply into Spiritual Direction as a ministry. Note: Coordinating Council is very open to suggestion for topics and suggestions for speakers.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT!!!

MichianaSDN Financial Report:

Our July 2025 report showed a balance of \$2034.11. Since that time, MichianaSDN received \$1011.00 in income (through 1/18/2026). Expenses incurred include conference expenses totaling \$1063.85. Income related to the conference fell short of covering conference expenses – shortfall of \$52.85. As of 1/18/2026, the MichianaSDN bank account balance is \$1981.26.

Fall 2025 Conference Summary:

Sr. Luisa Derouen provided expert, valuable, experienced based information on providing spiritual direction to the unique community of LGBTQI+ individuals. Her stories brought a deeper understanding of the struggles these individuals endure and how each of them is unique and the gifts that can bring when providing spiritual direction.

From the evaluations, attendees “like” comments include: excellent presenter, very organized, provided valuable information, she was passionate and knowledgeable.

From the “Could be better” section: lots of comments stating session was excellent/great. There was comment about how Christian this session was and ask that it would be helpful for speakers to be available after their presentations.

Mark your calendars to join us April 16, 2026

MichianaSDN 2026 Spring Conference

Lindenwood Conference & Retreat Center

Plymouth, IN

[Membership-Conference Registration](#)

