History

Gestalt Pastoral Care started to evolve in the early 1970’s, when the Rev. Tilda Norberg began integrating her pastoral role as an ordained United Methodist minister with her training as a Gestaltist. Into the mix also went some experiences she had with healing prayer that were both compelling and challenging.

Despite her personal resistance to such integration, and despite the taboos of both the religious and the therapeutic communities, eventually Tilda was convinced that in order to be faithful and responsible, her work had to reflect the new thing that God seemed to be creating. (See Consenting to Grace pp. 3–12.)

As the new integration became clearer and more finely-tuned, Tilda noticed that people were growing more quickly and holistically than before. She also saw that many persons were hungry to combine their emotional and spiritual growth. Soon she began offering weekend retreats in a format called “Opening to Grace;” these retreats still continue with various leaders and locations.

In 1984 a small group of clergy and therapists who had experienced the healing benefits of the new synthesis (which did not yet have a name) asked Tilda to teach them this approach to healing ministry. From this initial class evolved the Gestalt Pastoral Care Foundational Training Course which has been offered every year since. Along the way other courses were added, including an internship program.

By 1990 a group of women who were using GPC as the focus of their ministries began to work together to expand the training program and to plan for the future of GPC. They came to call themselves Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates.
The growth of the training program revealed a need for printed material about Gestalt Pastoral Care. Among other books, Tilda wrote our basic text called Consent to Grace: An Introduction to Gestalt Pastoral Care, published in 2006.

Over 300 people have completed the GPC Foundational Training, and many draw on it in their various ministries. At present, seven Gestalt Pastoral Care Associates administer GPC, teach in the training program, lead Opening to Grace Retreats and maintain private practices both on the East coast and in the Midwest.

http://www.gestaltpastoralcare.org