

Circuit Ministry Report

This report comes from Rev. Bill Poland, Director of New Faith Communities, and Rev. Dr. Jaye Johnson, Director of Congregational Excellence. Both are members of the Circuit Ministry Transition Team.

The Iowa Annual Conference's newest set of Lay and Clergy Circuit Leaders began their first round of training on September 26, 2020. And currently, all nine of the newly formed circuits have started meeting together. The Appointive Cabinet formed the Circuit Transition Team to facilitate the formation and implementation of Circuit Ministry in the Iowa Annual Conference. The team members are Jaye Johnson, Director of Congregational Excellence; Ryan Christenson, Associate Director of Congregational Excellence; Lanette Plambeck, Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence; Bill Poland, Director of New Communities of Faith; and Paul Wilcox, Conference Superintendent.

The Circuit Transition Team and District Superintendents meet monthly with the Lay and Clergy Circuit Leaders to prepare for the circuit meetings and discern what works well. For success, adjustments will happen frequently. Helpful feedback from the first Circuit Leaders implemented changes and adjustments.

Among those adjustments is a move from a single-day training followed by the launch of circuits to having monthly district training with potential Lay and Clergy Circuit Leaders, Superintendent, and a coach from the Circuit Transition Team. Then, after a period of training and relationship building, the Circuit Leaders will be identified by their Superintendent and appointed to respective circuits with the Superintendent and the Transition Team coach's support. These meetings will begin in February 2021. If you feel called and gifted to co-lead a circuit, you are encouraged to consult your Superintendent or a Circuit Transition Team member.

Circuits' formation is for support and mutual accountability to the missional priorities identified in each pastoral charge. These three to five priorities are identified by the Staff Parish Relations Committee in consultation with the Superintendent and local church leadership. These are the identified priorities that must be accomplished if the local faith community is to achieve its mission to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

Within the Circuits, Pastoral Leaders will be equipped to develop strategies with their congregations to prioritize and form adaptive strategies for implementation in Ministry Action Plans (MAPs). To implement these strategies, each ministry will be encouraged to develop ministry teams of laity working with the pastor to grow in our discipleship and become better leaders for the cause of Christ.

The pastoral leaders, facilitated by Lay and Clergy Circuit Leaders, will meet for approximately eight hours each month in the process of loving God and each other, learning to become better

disciples and more effective leaders, and leading adaptively in today's rapidly changing context. Fundamental essentials to this process are prayer and worship, spiritual accountability, a shared covenant, reflecting, adjusting, and doing our Ministry Action Plans. While maintaining these critical essentials to the process, circuits will be free to adapt their meetings to their needs and context.

In addition to support, mutual accountability (spiritually, relationally, vocationally and to the mission of the church), and intentional leadership development; the hope is that, in the sharing of Ministry Action Plans, members of the circuit will discern the Spirit's leading into collaborative ministry with those outside our churches. Just as Iowa United Methodist churches and faith communities are the primary places of discipleship development, the hope is circuits will become the primary places of connection. Working there, the circuit will develop shared ministry and resources for the Iowa Annual Conference's mission.

This transition to the way Iowa United Methodists are in relationship and mission is developing at one of the most challenging times and circumstances. It will take nothing less than the Spirit of God to empower and lead us through it.

Members of the IAUMC Circuit Ministry Transition Team:

- Rev. Bill Poland, Director of New Communities of Faith,
- Rev. Dr. Jaye Johnson, Director of Congregational Excellence,
- Rev. Dr. Lanette Plambeck, Director of Clergy and Leadership Excellence,
- Rev. Paul Wilcox, Transitional Superintendent
- Rev. Ryan Christenson, Associate for Congregational Excellence.

If you have questions or comments, please email them to vision2032@iaumc.org.