

Conference Connectional Ministries Council Report

This report comes from Jeff Branstetter and Ian Montgomery from our Bishop's Operational Team and Duane Daby, chair of our Connectional Ministries Team.

A task team, led by laypersons Jeff Branstetter of the Harlan UMC and assisted by Ian Montgomery of the Cedar Rapids St. Paul's UMC, and made up of clergy, laity, and Conference staff, has been meeting over the last few months for the purpose of reimagining the Conference Connectional Ministries Council (CCMC). The task team has gained feedback from over 25 CCMC representatives.

This feedback indicates that CCMC needs to be more flexible, adaptive, and relevant to local church needs in today's context and be aligned with the emerging Circuit Ministry. With CCMC funding significantly reduced due to lower Apportionment giving, some prioritization is needed in order to be "difference makers" around important Conference missions and ministries.

CCMC can no longer function primarily as a "granting" agency. A reimagined CCMC needs to be able to inspire, equip, and connect local communities to live into the ministries to which God has called them. The following are emerging themes:

- Our Conference Camping program provides critical discipleship formation for youth and is worthy of continued investment.
- Changing demographics in Iowa are creating a strong need for diversity and inclusion of immigrant and ethnic populations while concurrently helping local churches understand different cultures and becoming an antiracist Conference.
- The consolidation of similar ministry areas will simplify communications and align diminishing financial and human resources.
- We need to bring clarity to the ways that CCMC boards, agencies, and committees might walk alongside and resource local churches and circuits.

As for next steps, the task team has begun to assemble and draft criteria for assessing if, how, and where each existing CCMC ministry fits into a reimagined CCMC, such as:

1. Is there a reasonable, objective, and positive prognosis that the ministry will contribute to the Vision of the Iowa Conference for the foreseeable future?
2. Is the ministry nimble in its execution? Is the ministry able to move quickly and effectively with changing circumstances and not be bogged down by slow, unresponsive, or unproductive behaviors? This implies that a ministry's structure is simple and adaptable.
3. Does the ministry area duplicate another CCMC ministry? Are funding resources available outside of the Iowa Conference? If so, consider consolidation and partnerships where appropriate.

4. And, finally, where does the ministry area best fit within the future Iowa Conference structure? Does it reside at the Conference level or within one or more of the new circuits, or with a specific church? This might address start-up or ongoing funding sources.

The Task Team will continue to work with the CCMC representatives to finalize a new structure, which will be presented to the Bishop's Operational Team no later than April 1, 2021.

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