**2020 Annual Report**

**St. Louis Association Committee on Ministry: Preparation**

The Committee on Ministry, an Association committee granted authority in the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws for authorization and oversight of clergy and churches, has been divided into two entities in the St. Louis Association for practical reasons. With Eden Seminary in our association, the number of student candidates for ministry is much greater than in most associations.

The Committee on Ministry: Preparation (COM:P) has responsibility for the preparation and authorization of Members in Discernment on behalf of the wider United Church of Christ. The COM:P meets monthly. When a candidate feels called to authorized ministry and has the support of their local congregation, they meet with the COM:P and then undergo a professional psychological evaluation.

Upon successful completion of this initial process, they then become a Member in Discernment (MID). Each MID is assigned an advisor from the COM:P, continues their formative relationship with their home church and pastor ‐‐ and continues to meet at least annually with COM:P until all the many requirements have been met. At this time, they have an ordination interview and are ‘approved for ordination pending a call.’ They meet at least annually with the COM:P until a call is received. Then we have the privilege and joy of participating in a service of Ordination!

During the past year we welcomed one new member to our COM:P team: Rev. Doni Driemeier-Showers, Triage Chaplain at St Louis University Hospital and member of Samuel UCC. She brings her gifts and passions to our holy work, for which we are grateful.

In addition to engaging in our ongoing relationships with our MIDs (see complete list below), during the past twelve months we have:

• Partnered with Care and Counseling (St Louis) for psychological evaluation of MID candidates and follow‐up counseling as needed

• Maintained ongoing communication with SLA Committee on Ministry: Oversight.

• Initiated meetings with individuals in the MID pipeline and their pastors to help clarify the MID process and establish earlier, stronger relationships with eventual MIDs

• Continued to explore and discuss possibilities for alternative venues within which MIDs could complete their Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) requirement

• Participated in the Conference‐wide Committee on Ministry Covenanted Ministry to better align our practices across all three associations of the MMS Conference

• Represented our committee on the St Louis Association Council

• Attended a day long virtual retreat on August 1 with colleagues from the other associations’ COMs. The event was led by our new Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Damien Lake, and included presentations from three of our National UCC MESA (Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization) staff: Rev. Dr. Renee Jackson, Rev. Dr. Tony Clark, and Rev. Tara Barber. We were reminded that the Marks of Faithful Ministry are assessment tools used throughout the ministry arc to become clear about what a candidate/person in ministry brings to the table, what they need, and where they are growing. In this age of Zoom/Video Era, we discussed boundaries and confidentiality as relates to our work. Behavioral Covenants for Committees on Ministry were introduced, and committees were encouraged to develop their own covenant for committee work. Concerning discernment and oversight, we were reminded that we are saying “yes” and “no” for the sake of a healthy United Church of Christ. All the work of the COMs is on behalf of the church, and committee members are *called* to this work. The suggestion was made that the Nominating Committee have the Marks of Faithful Ministry competency areas before them as they do the work of discerning the next class of Committee On Ministry members.

**Here is a recap of our St. Louis Association MIDs and Candidates as of August 31, 2020...**

MID Candidates – Initial interview complete, MID Status pending (4):

Timica Emerson, Christ the King UCC, St. Louis

Ashley Moore, Christ the King UCC, St. Louis

Deon McKenzie, Christ the King UCC, St. Louis

Diane Yanczer, Hope UCC, St. Louis

Members in Discernment (8):

Phil Barbier, Hope UCC, St Louis

Erick Falconer, First Congregational UCC Webster Groves

Jack Farrell, Christ UCC, Maplewood

Ben Favre, Samuel UCC, St. Louis

Steve Garcia, First Congregational UCC Memphis TN

Tracey Harris, First Congregational UCC Webster Groves

Matthew Helis, St. Paul’s UCC St. Louis

Tanya Jeffcoat, Kirkwood UCC, Kirkwood

Approved for Ordination Pending a Call (2):

Chuck Lindsey, First Congregational UCC, Memphis TN

Dr. Bella Winters, Epiphany UCC, St. Louis

Ordained during the last year (0):

Released from the MID process during the past year (2):

Valerie Jackson, First Congregational UCC, St. Louis

Cherie Stolze, Parkway UCC, St. Louis

***Respectfully Submitted, Carole Barner and Mike Roth, Co-Chairs***

Committee Members: Carole Barner, Doni Driemeier-Showers, John Gandy, Betsy Happel, Debby Harness, Sharon Love, Carolyn Mulhall, Jack Nobles, Joe Pfeiffer, Hannah Rice, Michael Roth, Sandy Stevenson, Douglas Anders, Damien Lake and Ginny Brown Daniel. Note: Debby Harness and Jack Nobles are completing their terms or service at this time. We name our gratitude for their faithful work in this holy work of discernment and support! We also give thanks for Jack and Betsy and their leadership as co-chairs of the committee these past two years!