



Thriving in Church Ministries Cohort September 2021 – April 2022

Ohio Mennonite Conference, in collaboration with Ashland Theological Seminary, is exploring a six month *Thriving in Church Ministries* cohort for interested pastors from September 2021 – March 2022 (taking the month of December off). This cohort is being offered to Ohio Conference pastors by Ashland through a Lilly Foundation grant. It is anticipated that the cohort will consist of 12 - 15 pastors with three main areas of focus: 1) Cultivating Conditions that Bring Well-Being; 2) Effective Ministry in Practice; and 3) Spiritual Well-Being and Pastoral Leadership. The facilitator will be Rev. William Beachy, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pastoral Leadership and Spiritual Formation at Ashland, with input from Ohio Conference leadership.

Rev. Beachy grew up in Ohio, has a Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary and a graduate degree from Duquesne University. He has many years of experience as a pastor with the United Methodist Church and teaching in spiritual formation at both Asbury and Ashland theological seminaries. He has now served as facilitator of several cohorts of pastors with varied years of experience and from many different denominations.

A tentative schedule would include meeting one week a month Tues. & Thurs. evening (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.), as well as Saturday morning (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.). Most of the meetings will be held via Zoom with the possibility of some in-person, including an opening and closing banquet. The Saturday morning sessions are ministry exchange workshops with guest speakers covering a variety of topics. Recent topics have been on such issues as congregational stewardship, spiritual well-being of pastors, ministry in the digital age, preaching calendar, legal issues in the church, etc.

Due to the generosity of the Lilly Foundation there is no cost to participants who will receive a Thriving in Church Ministries Advanced Certificate from Ashland Theological Seminary upon completion. The cohort is limited to a maximum of 15 congregational pastors and is open to all who might be interested. We will be giving preference to persons in their first five years of pastoral ministry.

If this is something that you feel you might be interested in please contact Conference Minister Dick Barrett at ohioconferenceminister@gmail.com ASAP so we can get a gauge on the level of interest, a schedule that will work best for those participating (see draft calendar), and possible topics of interest for the ministry exchange workshops. We will also be scheduling a Zoom meeting with Rev. Beachy to answer any questions you might have.