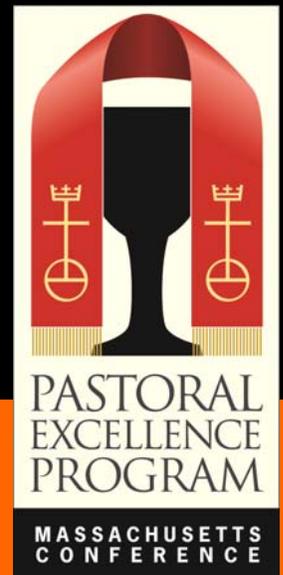


THE MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE OF
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Sustaining Pastoral Excellence
Endowment Campaign**

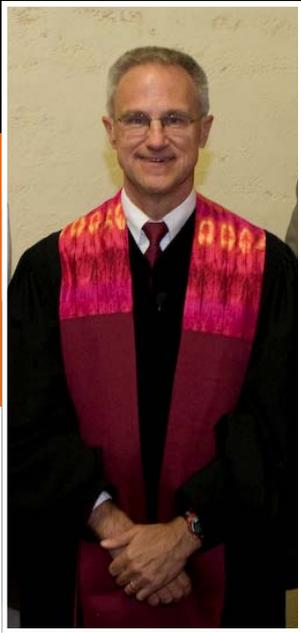


Send Forth Ripples of Faith

Creating
Excellent Churches
and
Excellent Pastors
for the
21st Century



The Pastoral Excellence Program has changed the culture of ministry



I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth....

Isaiah 43:19

EXCELLENT CHURCHES NEED EXCELLENT PASTORS

“Raise your hand if you want your pastor to be excellent.”

That's easy! We all raise our hands! Of course we want our pastor to be excellent.

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ is now a nationally recognized leader in nurturing pastoral excellence. In our grant request to Lilly Endowment, Inc., we asked them to invest in our hunch that excellent pastors are indispensable for creating excellent churches. Since receiving that initial major grant in 2002, Lilly has renewed funding for this project. Why? Because the Massachusetts Conference has shown that it's true – excellent pastors are indispensable for creating excellent churches.

Now well over half our pastors who serve churches – and nearly 100% of our newly ordained clergy – are participating in clergy groups we call Communities of Practice. By sharing their wisdom, experience, struggles and plans, they form a circle of accountability that enhances their effectiveness and deepens their faithfulness. The benefits of these discussions are then lived out in hundreds of our congregations. Indeed, the Pastoral Excellence Program has changed the culture of ministry in the Massachusetts Conference.

Having created such a successful program, we want to make certain that it will continue to anchor ministry in Massachusetts for generations to come. By contributing to the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Endowment Campaign, your congregation can help to ensure that the UCC in Massachusetts will have the best possible pastoral leadership. Join other congregations who will make a pledge of support, payable over three to five years. Or take up a special offering for this Campaign over each of the next five years. Or if your congregation is planning your own capital campaign, commit a percentage of what you raise to this important ministry in a wrap-around campaign.

We are also asking individual UCC members to make a gift to this campaign. As I travel throughout the Commonwealth, I have heard again and again how much you appreciate the leadership your pastor offers your congregation. This is your opportunity to join with thousands of other UCC members in Massachusetts to ensure that our congregations will be served by excellent leaders well into the future.

As we celebrate the accomplishments, the testimony and the promise represented in this brochure, I hope you will join me in making a financial investment that will ensure excellent ministry in the UCC throughout Massachusetts for years to come.

Jim

The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal ,
Conference Minister and President

HONORARY CO-CHAIRS

Lay leaders throughout the Conference are offering their enthusiastic support of this initiative. I am particularly delighted that Dick Osterberg and Sylvia Ferrell-Jones are serving as Honorary Co-Chairs of this Campaign.

-The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal



Dick Osterberg
Honorary Co-Chair and
Member of
Newton Highlands
Congregational Church,
UCC



Sylvia Ferrell-Jones
Honorary Co-Chair and
Member of
Pilgrim Congregational
Church, Lexington



NEW CLERGY GROUPS

for clergy in their first three years of ministry, meet monthly in small groups of three to five, assisted by a more experienced pastor who is trained to serve as facilitator and mentor.



Here, new pastors find the support and guidance they need to navigate the transition from seminary into pastoral ministry. They will learn best practices for meeting the challenges of the first years of ministry and developing habits that will enable them to thrive for a lifetime of effective service.

CLERGY COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE offer more experienced pastors opportunities to hone their practices of ministry and develop meaningful collegial friendships.

Counteracting the risks of isolation and burnout, the Clergy Communities of Practice are designed to help clergy uncover the challenges of ministry and the possibilities of new growth.



The Ministry

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND LEARNING

EVENTS: Conference-wide learning events widen the circle of conversation beyond the clergy groups. In recent years, more of these Colloquies have been designed not just for clergy alone, but for congregational teams of pastors and lay leaders together.

Colloquies also offer opportunities for focused learning and discussion on particular topics, such as navigating conflict and change, or worship planning for liturgical seasons. An annual series for graduating seminarians helps to equip them for the search and call process.





The Vision

We believe our Pastoral Excellence Program offers a profoundly hopeful vision for the future of the church.
We believe excellent pastors create excellent churches.



THE PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM is to develop, promote, and sustain pastoral excellence leadership for the churches in the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ.

Christian and pastoral excellence is a way of life marked by character, competence and constancy and is practiced in community. To that end, we have created a vibrant conference-wide network of small groups and large learning events for clergy in every season of ministry, offering opportunities for collegial support and ongoing development in the practices of pastoral ministry.



IN THE PASTORAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE, UCC:

- Our pastors are **intentional about sharing** with their colleagues their resources for ministry and ideas of things they have tried with their own congregations.
- Our pastors are **growing in faith and wisdom**, finding their commitment to pastoral ministry reaffirmed and their appreciation of one another as friends and colleagues deepened.
- Our Pastoral Excellence Program groups are nurturing a **more generous and compassionate spirit in our clergy**, enabling them to more fully inhabit a pastoral identity and to stay in touch with the real joy of ministry.



EXCELLENT MINISTRY NEEDS EXCELLENT SUPPORT

There is an increasing sense that this ministry in which we are engaged is a shared endeavor, a communal venture, a covenantal commitment. Together we are exploring what it means to live faithfully as Christ's disciples in this day and what it is that God is calling the church to be and do at this time.

Excellent ministry:

- requires practice;
- is collegial;
- is embodied;
- operates best with a balance of agency and accountability; and
- must be properly resourced.

We will increase our efforts to broaden and deepen our program, to make its practices and resources available to the wider church, and to follow the implications of our insights into new areas of inquiry regarding pastoral excellence and congregational vitality.





Benefits To Your Pastor

YOUR PASTORS TELL US THE PASTORAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM HAS BEEN AFFIRMING AND ENERGIZING.



Sue Dickerman
Program
Coordinator,
Pastoral Excellence
Program

Our pastors in the Pastoral Excellence Program are critical to the vitality of our congregations. This ministry supports and equips them more fully to express the Conference's gratitude of their ministry.

These faithful pastors love ministry, merit the respect of their colleagues, serve healthy congregations, demonstrate emotional maturity and are intellectually curious.

The clergy groups offer sanctuaries of refreshment as well as providing space devoted to developing the craft of pastoral ministry and engaging in theological reflection on congregational life.

Our pastors say they use their groups to process the challenges of congregational life and to share resources, to encourage one another, and to learn together.

The community of practice model nurtures vitality and builds covenantal relationships among all our churches.



"The other members of this group are landmarks, touchstones, sacred cairns for me. We provide role models for each other of integrity, spirituality, humility and good ministry."

"This old dog is learning some new tricks, and taking new (and sometimes critical) notice of some old tricks that in some instances were getting a little stale. My congregation will benefit – indeed is already benefiting – from the fresh ideas and energy I bring to my ministry because of this group."



*"This group is 'the balm in Gilead that heals the sin-sick soul.' It is healing to hear that **my** struggles in ministry are **shared** struggles that others experience also."*

"This group reminds us of why we do what we do. So often, these group sessions are a re-affirmation for me of the power and beauty of parish ministry..."

"...the primary impact has been breaking down the isolation that so naturally occurs with clergy."



"Being a member and facilitator of the group has made me more self-reflective and self-aware about aspects of my leadership style, pastoral responses, and ways of doing ministry..."





Benefits To Your Congregation

OUR CHURCHES TELL US OUR PASTORS
ARE OPEN TO INQUIRY, MORE CURIOUS, GENEROUS AND HOPEFUL.

"Our pastor is in her 'first call'. She has explained to us that the New Clergy Group has been a reliable and essential source of support, helping her develop good ministry habits and her identity as a pastor."



"We've noticed that our pastor brings us renewed energy, wider perspective, fresh insight, and creative ideas she receives in her clergy group and continuing education."



"My pastor is in a clergy group and he is definitely inspired and energized as a result!"

"It seems like since he joined the clergy group he is just more vital, more healthy. He brings that into worship, meetings and the care he gives our members. We believe that vital pastors lead vital, healthy churches."

"This program has helped us understand that excellent clergy don't just spring up fully formed — they emerge from nurturing relationships and communities."

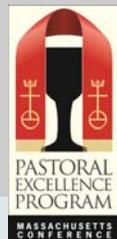


"This program has helped us better understand ministry as a shared endeavor between our pastor and our congregation."



Who Has Participated?

- 117 newly ordained clergy have participated in 27 New Clergy Groups.
- 373 pastors have participated in New Clergy Groups or Clergy Communities of Practice.
- 356 local congregations have been represented in the New Clergy Groups or Clergy Communities of Practice.
- There have been 120 Colloquies — or learning events — in which 337 pastors have participated, representing 210 congregations.





Your Gift

Our pastors and church leaders tell us that the Pastoral Excellence Program has been both affirming and energizing. To sustain and deepen this program will be to empower pastoral leadership and in turn vitalize our churches for generations to come. Our goal is to create a 3.5 million dollar endowment which will support this vision.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO MAKE A GIFT TO
THE SUSTAINING PASTORAL EXCELLENCE ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN**

*Your gifts will send forth ripples of faith...
sustaining and nurturing excellent pastors for excellent churches today and tomorrow.*

WHO CAN GIVE?

Whether you are a congregation or an individual, a lay person or clergy, your gifts are needed and valued.

HOW CAN WE GIVE?

For Congregations:

- A pledge over a three to five year period
- Participating in our Special Offering over the next five years
- Including this vision as a mission component of your church's Capital Campaign (Wrap-Around Capital Campaign)
- A gift from your invested funds

For Individuals:

- A pledge over a three to five year period
- A one-time gift
- A gift of stock or other asset
- A planned gift, such as a gift annuity or bequest

To make a pledge or a gift, or to learn more, please contact Andy Gustafson at (508) 875-5233 x 231; gustafsona@macucc.org.

To learn more about Wrap-Around Capital Campaigns, contact Margery Williams at (978) 582-6870; mcwms1@gmail.com.

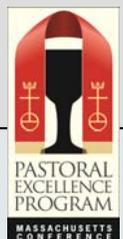
The Goal

**"SEND FORTH
RIPPLES OF FAITH"**

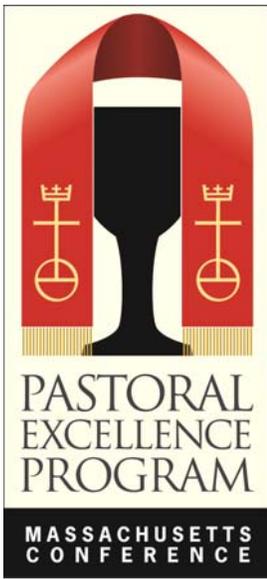
**THE SUSTAINING PASTORAL
EXCELLENCE ENDOWMENT
CAMPAIGN**

Our Goal is to raise \$3,500,000 for the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Endowment Campaign starting in 2010 and completing the campaign by 2014. Your gift to this fund will provide a permanent source of income for programs designed to nurture pastoral excellence for this and succeeding generations.

In addition, as part of the wider church, we commit to tithe 10% of the income from this fund to support leadership development with our partners in other parts of the world, such as the Pentecostal Church in Chile. In this small way we begin to fulfill Christ's prayer that we "may all be one" (John 17:11).



**PLEASE BE A PART OF OUR DRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE WITH A GENEROUS GIFT OR PLEDGE
TO THIS PASSION PRODUCING PROGRAM!**



THE MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE OF
THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Endowment Campaign

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GET INVOLVED.

Make a gift to the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Endowment Campaign and send forth ripples of faith forever.



For more information contact:

Andy Gustafson, Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship and Financial Development
at (508) 875-5233 x231; gustafsona@macucc.org

www.macucc.org/excellence