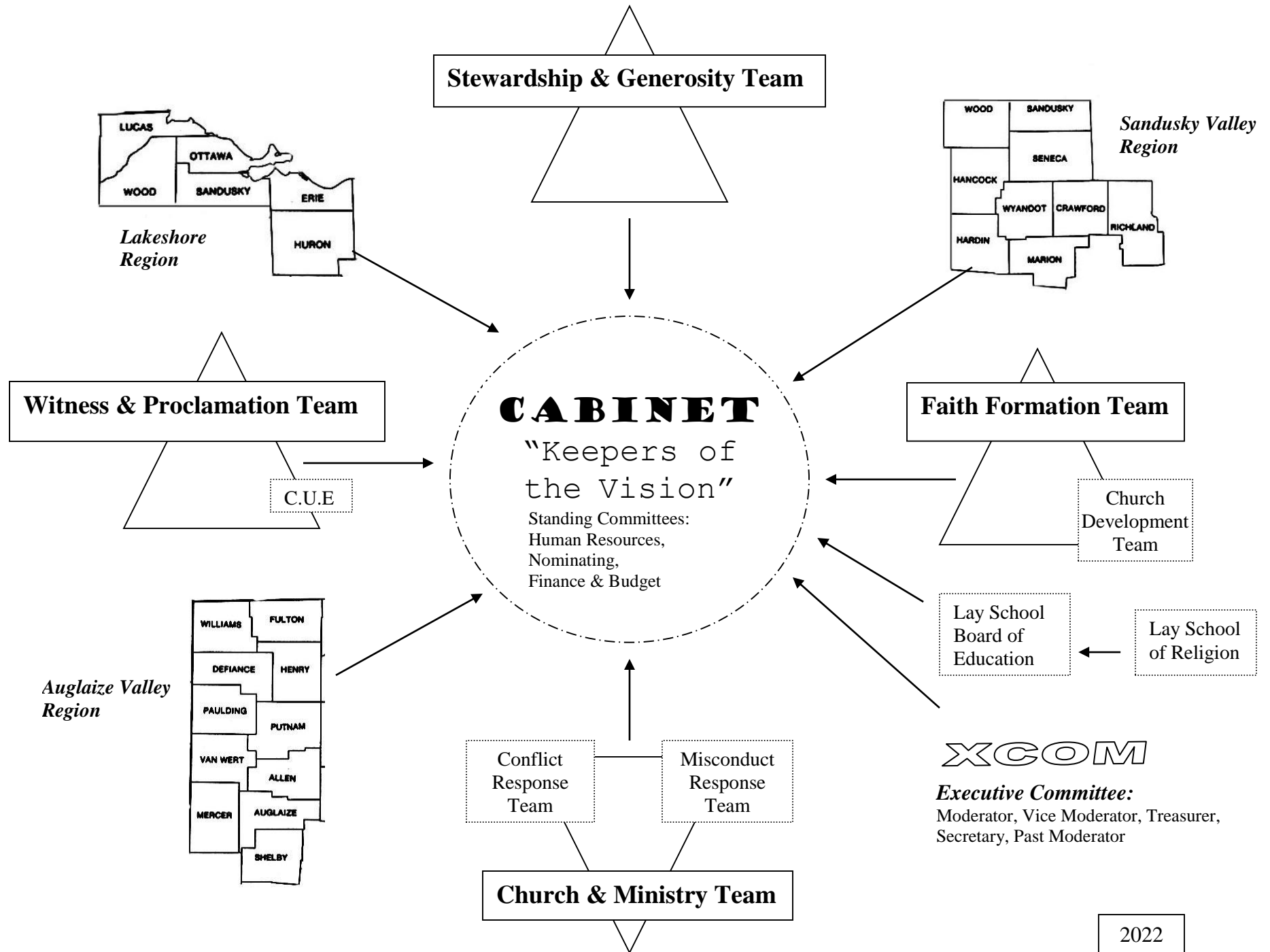
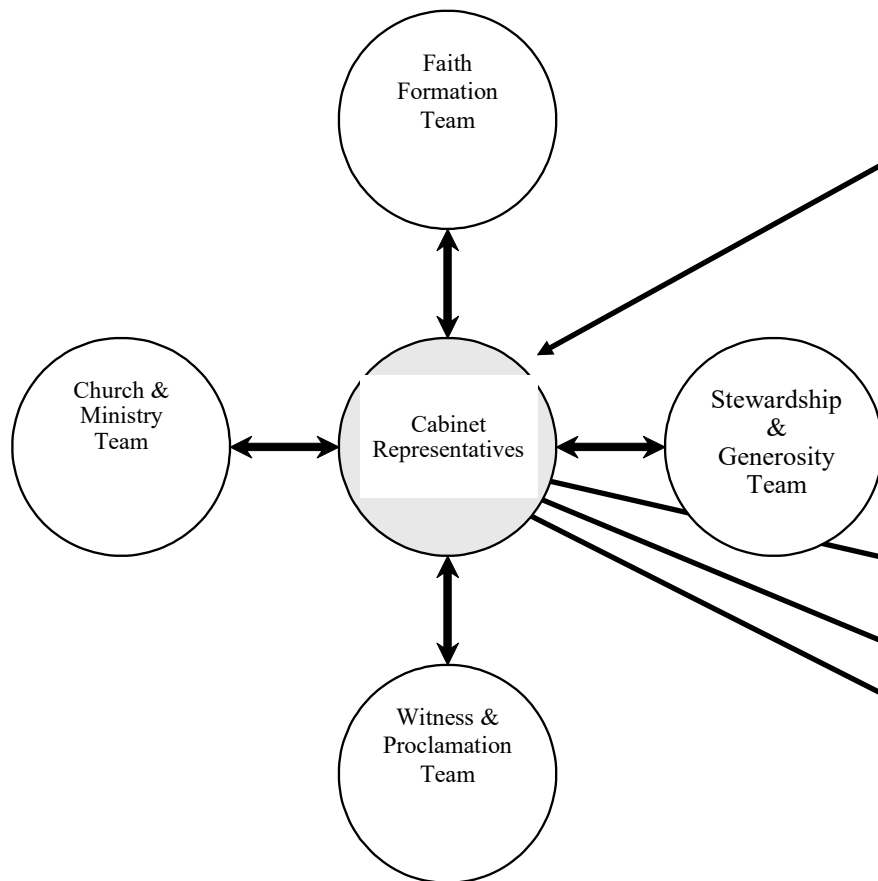


SECTION E

TEAM REPORTS

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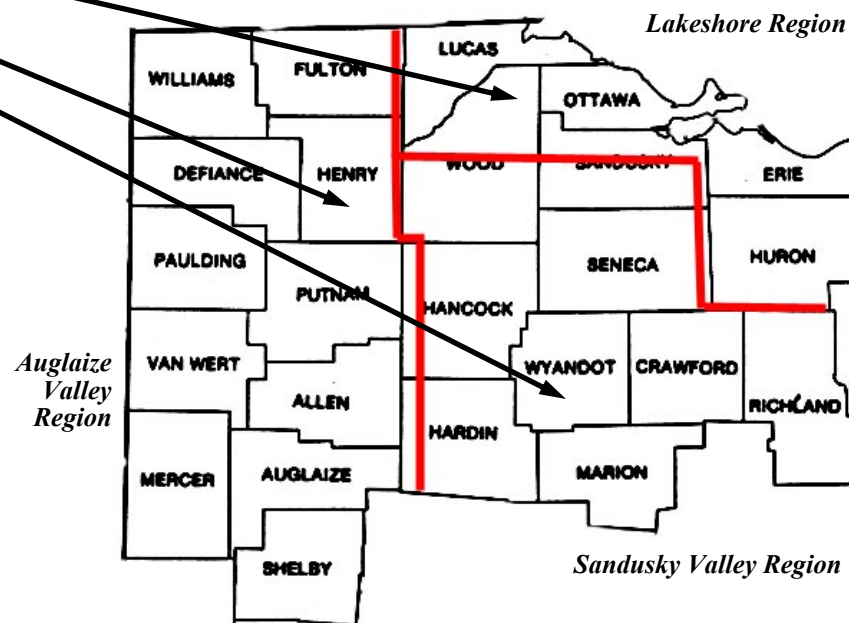
Relationship Between REGIONS and MINISTRY TEAMS

The Three Regional Representatives

- Each Regional Representative serves on the Association Cabinet

The Four Ministry Teams

- The Church and Ministry Team has 15 representatives... 2 laypersons & 2 authorized ministers from each Region and 3 additional persons at-large
- The other three Ministry Teams have 9 representatives, at least...1 layperson & 1 authorized minister from each Region
- One member from each team serves on the Association Cabinet



NORTHWEST OHIO ASSOCIATION

ROLE AND MISSION

*"In light of the vision, who are we, and what do we do
as we look to the next five to ten years?"*

Called by God as the United Church of Christ in Northwest Ohio, we covenant together to embody God's Gospel in our various settings and communities.

Our role-and-mission is to build and nurture connections between congregations, clergy, other leaders and groupings for the purpose of supporting one another as we:

- ✓ Proclaim God's Word in worship and worshipful ways.
- ✓ Strengthen our witness to the Gospel in the world.
- ✓ Discern God's will for faithful and effective ministry.
- ✓ Manifest faithful, wise and responsible stewardship of all God's gifts.
- ✓ Demonstrate care, compassion, forgiveness and accountability to and for one another.

KEY RESULT AREAS and GOALS

*"In what key areas of our Association's life must we achieve results in order for our
role-and-mission to be accomplished?"*

Proclamation:	To proclaim the Gospel, worshipping God in communion with Jesus Christ and each other; so that nourished and strengthened by the Word, we participate together in Christ's ministry - living the Gospel each day.
Public Witness:	To demonstrate and facilitate a deliberate, informed, and continuing Christian presence in the world. To confront and engage the sin and evil of this world with the power of faith, hope and love.
Discernment:	To cultivate communities that discern the will of God, embrace a renewed vision of obedience to Christ and provide all generations with the language, the knowledge, and the tools to nurture communities of faith.
Stewardship:	To encourage communities to be thankful for and generous with the many gifts entrusted to us by God for God's mission. We accept God's sacred call for the faithful, wise, responsible and just use of these gifts.
Caring:	To strengthen the Body of Christ by demonstrating care for leaders and congregations and by holding each other accountable to God and to the responsibility with which each has been charged. To follow the example of Christ through a ministry of presence and forgiveness in times of conflict, peace, sadness or joy.

VISION

“What we perceive that God is calling the Northwest Ohio Association to become.”

We, the Northwest Ohio Association, are a faith-filled community of congregations, pastors, lay leaders, and believers of all ages. We are a community of communities within **the** United Church of Christ, who covenant with each other embodying God’s promises and hopes.

We are a community of communities: We proclaim and celebrate the Biblical story, through praise and worship. We inspire one another to act boldly, responsibly, and faithfully. Flowing from the same living water as our scriptural ancestors, we demonstrate God’s promises and compassion to others, as Jesus taught us through his own acts of mercy, healing, and justice. Though we are a people who may sometimes fall short of God’s mark, we are conscious of our inadequacies. We hold one another accountable for our actions, encourage each other to get back on the path, and forgive one another as God forgives us.

We are a community of communities: We are agents of transformation—beacons of hope in a secular society of turbulent waters. Together and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are forged, tempered, and made stronger by acts of justice and liberation. We actively seek to spread the Gospel, including to those at the boundaries, those who are hurting, the forgotten, the lost, and those shunned by society—we offer room at our tables of hospitality.

We are a community of communities: We give each other courage to confront the evil that assaults us and leads us astray from God’s love and God’s ways. We are shaped and reshaped for mission as we prayerfully discern God’s will. As a community that is inclusive and accessible to all, we nurture and encourage each other’s leadership in Christ’s church. Recognizing God’s love for all, we listen to each other, and seek to enable each other to be all that God intends.

We are the Body of Christ: a community of communities that freely shares of itself with others—a community that will shatter the complacency of this earth and bring God’s intended peace and justice to all.

Church and Ministry Team

The Church and Ministry Team is a touchpoint for the churches and authorized (or seeking to be authorized) ministers of the Northwest Ohio Association. Yes, at times it can seem like just another “committee” (because we don’t have enough of THOSE in our churches!). But I have come, over my six years on the Team, to see it as a point of connection. It was my first contact with the NWOA when I began my search over thirteen years ago—as it is for many of our new-to-the-area clergy. The Church and Ministry Team is an immediate “safety net,” a group that hopefully lets pastors know that they are not alone. This is a service to our churches as well, as your pastors are better able to serve you knowing that there is support behind them from the NWOA via the Church and Ministry Team. The institutional work that we do with questions of standing, licensing, ordination, etc. are really (ideally) about that—serving our churches by making sure our clergy are supported, nurtured, and accountable. And I hope that the Team will also take seriously questions about how we can serve our churches even more by being a more assertive contact point for you.

What do we do? We hold welcome and exit interviews with pastors. Beyond establishing contact and sending with blessing, these give us insight into our churches—what we have in one another, what we need, and where we are struggling. We have had the blessing of discerning and celebrating one ordination this past year. This is by no means a rubber stamp. We due our due diligence of discernment along with our Members in Discernment so that churches can trust that their pastors are held to the high standards of preparation and character necessary for faithful and fruitful ministry. We stay connected with our clergy through annual reviews, the retired clergy luncheon, and support of Excellence in Ministry groups. In all of these ways, we hope that we are contributing to the health and growth of our clergy and churches.

As I step off the Church and Ministry Team, I am grateful to have had this window into the Northwest Ohio Association: our clergy and churches, the gifts and graces, the fears and struggles. And I leave with a prayer that we will continue to learn and grow into who we are: a community of communities where Christ is known.

Gratefully Submitted, The Rev. Jon Komperda, Chair
Pastor, Point Place United Church of Christ

Pastoral Relations Working Group Church and Ministry Team

The Pastoral Relations sub-committee of Church and Ministry offered two Periodic Support Sessions for the Association this year both via Zoom. We offered and reviewed the yearly Periodic Support Survey’s from our authorized ministers. Most gratefully, we were able to have our Retired Minister’s Luncheon in person this year. We gathered with retired clergy at Trinity UCC in Tiffin for a nice meal, fellowship and musical program in October. Thank you to all who offer support of our authorized ministers.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Wendy Schindler-Chasney

Pastoral Relations Working Group: Rev. Wendy Schindler Chasney (chair), Mary Ann Ewing, Nanette Warnecke-Flood, Rev. Mark Bishop, Rev. David Plant

Credentialing Working Group
Church and Ministry Team

The Credentialing Working Group meets monthly to review issues related to the standing of authorized ministers in the NWOA, this includes ordained, commissioned, licensed pastors as well as those seeking Privilege of Call, Dual Standing or Partner Standing. The working group considered and granted requests for transfer of standing which are listed in the Registrar's Report (blue pages), and processed several requests for status as licensed ministers.

Granted status as a Licensed Minister in Northwest Ohio Association

Elyse Cramer	McCutchenville, Trinity UCC
+Pat Danner	Tiffin, Second UCC & Bettsville, Zion UCC
Ron Jesse	Steuben, Steuben Congregational UCC
+Tom Kagy	Bloomville, Bloomville UCC
+Bill Kerr	Wauseon, Congregational UCC
Amy Kinney	Fostoria, St. John's UCC
+Margaret Mills	Elmore, St. John's UCC
Niebanck, Bryan	Bellevue, Lyme Congregational UCC
Osborn, Barb	Bettsville, Zion UCC & Bascom, Union UCC
+John Paputza	Castalia, Congregational UCC
+James Robinson	Shelby, First UCC
+Jay Scott	Upper Sandusky, Emanuel UCC
Adam Shanaman	Buckland, Buckland UCC
Ryan Shields	Elliston, Trinity UCC
+Granted Licensure for the duration of their call	

Commissioned Minister

Margaret Mills	Elmore, St. John's UCC
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Ecclesiastical Endorsement with the UCC Professional Chaplains

Rev. Dr. Robert Bottoms	Bellevue
Rev. Dr. Diane Christopherson	Toledo/Michigan

Ecclesiastical Endorsement with the UCC Professional Chaplains-Supervisory Level ACPE

Rev. Faith Proietti	Mansfield (Retired)
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Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Michael Ebersole

Credentialing Working Group: Rev. Michael Ebersole (chair), Vicki Ohl, Doug Court, Pastor John Paputza, Rev. Joel Fetter

Discernment (Formerly In-Care) Working Group
Church and Ministry Team

The Discernment Working Group walks with members in the Northwest Ohio Association through a process of discernment when they sense a potential call to authorized ministry in the UCC. There is a procedural component to this work (making sure they fulfill the requisite steps and protocols as they move toward ordination) and a pastoral component (responding to the various and inevitable questions, joys, and twists and turns that come with discerning God's call upon one's life). We do this with the help of Member in Discernment advisors, who provide more personal support and guidance through the process. The process can lead either to new and different directions for a Member in Discernment or to presentation to the Church and Ministry Team for approval of ordination (pending a call to a local congregation). One of the ways we come alongside candidates is an annual review, in which MiDs are invited to share with the working group where they find themselves on the path of discernment and how the group can help.

We were able to celebrate the approval and ordination of one Member in Discernment in 2022: Mike Ebersole. Mike was approved at our November 29th meeting and was ordained at St. John's UCC (Baseline) on February 19th, 2023. He serves at both St. John's and College Hill UCC (Bloomville).

We received two new candidates into the Discernment process, both of whom have membership with St. Paul's UCC in Bellevue (Way to go, St. Paul's!). Adam Shanaman was approved at our November meeting. He is pursuing his M.Div. (mostly virtually) with Chicago Theological Seminary. We also welcomed Liesl Higgins at our November 29th meeting. Liesl is pursuing her M.Div. at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana. They are two really great candidates.

One of our little projects has been revising the ordination paper prompts for our MiDs approaching their ordination interview. We are really looking at what kinds of guidance and questions help the Discernment Working Group, Church and Ministry Team, and the candidate themselves explore and see what most helps us in this mutual work of discernment.

Thank you for your continued support for the nine Members in Discernment currently on our roster. These individuals are at various points on their journeys, but each is supported by their local church, a MiD Advisor, and the NWOA as a whole. Discernment is a communal process.

Gratefully Submitted, The Rev. Jon Komperda

Members in Discernment

Name	Advisor	Home Church	Seminary/School
James Robinson James was received as a member in discernment April 2015 and serves as Pastor at First UCC, Shelby		First UCC, Shelby	
Amy Kinney Amy was received as a member in discernment October 2017 (Alternate Path)	Kathryn Helleman	St. John's UCC, Fostoria/ Union UCC, Bascom	Winebrenner Theological Findlay
Elyse (Everhart) Cramer Elyse was received as a member in discernment November 2018	Darla Metz	St. John UCC, Tiffin	Winebrenner Theological Findlay

Members in Discernment

Name	Advisor	Home Church	Seminary/School
Kristen Levertson Kristen was received as a member in discernment January 2019	Katherine Beckett	Sylvania UCC, Sylvania	Chicago Theological Chicago, IL
Ryan Shields Ryan was received as a member in discernment August 2019 (Alternate Path)		Trinity UCC, Elliston	
Anthony Spearhart Anthony was received as a member in discernment November 10, 2020 (Alternate Path)	Rev. Mark Bishop	St. Paul UCC, Wapakoneta	Pathways Theological Education Program
Donald B. Clark Donald was received as a member in discernment December 1, 2020	Rev. Ed Heilman	Calvin UCC, Toledo	Winebrenner Theological Findlay
Adam Shanaman Adam was received as a member in discernment November 1, 2022	Rev. Jeremy Mann	St. Paul's UCC, Bellevue	Chicago Theological Chicago IL
Liesl Higgins Liesl was received as a member in discernment November 29, 2022	Rev. Margaret Mills	St. Paul's UCC, Bellevue	Bethany Theological Richmond, IN
Discernment Working Group: Rev. Jon Komperda (chair), Rev. Jenny Jackson, David Weininger, Rev. Rhonda Hainer, Terry Rettig			

Faith Formation Ministry Team

The Team has had much discussion over the past year about what the term Faith Formation means. We continue to review the role and mission of the team. Faith Formation goes beyond traditional Sunday School and should be lifelong learning.

We sent a survey to 72 member churches asking about Faith Formation needs and what we might be able to assist with. We received and reviewed 16 responses. We compiled a list of needs and began to ascertain what we could address.

We met with Rev Dr Marian Plant from the Heartland Conference Faith Formation Team for further guidance on the committee's role. We offered to be of assistance to the Heartland Conference Team if there is a need. She provided many ideas and helped to further define the Team's purpose.

We decided our theme for 2023 would be 'Connect' as this word kept coming up in our discussions. As a committee, we spend time sharing what is going on in our local churches. In 2023, we will look for ways to better connect within the association. Ideas included providing resources for churches and communicating what different churches are doing.

The committee recognizes that many churches are in a transition period after Covid and some are struggling to provide traditional Sunday School. We will continue to seek other relevant ways the Team can assist with Faith Formation.

We continue to meet quarterly over Zoom.

Respectfully submitted, Stacey Hocker, Team Chair

Team members: Pastor Margaret Mills, Rev Jeanette Tangeman, Kevin Gehres, Rev Mary Meadows, Pastor Amy Kinney, Rev Mark Bishop, Stacey Hocker, Rev Dan Busch, Pastor Elyse Cramer

Stewardship and Generosity Ministry Team

As we move from the Covid experience of always online to the new “normal” of electronic and in person interactions, the team is looking forward to reestablishing the celebration of OCWM and 5 for 5 giving at the Association Annual Meeting. One of the key celebrations of the Annual Meeting is lifting up the faithful giving of our churches, which, in 22, saw an increase in giving to OCWM. Like the previous time before Covid, churches present at the Annual Meeting will have an opportunity to have their certificate presented in person with a picture being taken along with the church being promoted in upcoming Vine additions. Those not in attendance will have the certificates mailed to them.

Another thing the team has worked hard at involves making available through the Vine, and the skilled efforts of Joan Davidson, a wide variety of resources that you may use in your local church to spark interest in Stewardship and Generosity. Some of them are conversational in nature, some in written forms. Many of them can be adapted for use in worship as snippets to promote the giving of time, talent and treasure or can be used in committee or study groups for the purpose of a deeper dive into the important work of lifting up Stewardship in its complete sense. A new addition to the on-line resources is the national Stewardship and Generosity newsletter that promotes thoughtful insights, and increasingly, specific “how to” resources for the local church. It is encouraged that you take time to register yourself to receive many of the resources so that you don’t have to wait for the Vine to come out. And don’t forget to dig deep into the list to look what is in the resource section beyond some of the more current offerings.

A feature you will also note in the Vine is a prompt about upcoming special offerings in the hopes that you will have an early jump on promoting them as well as stories from our churches on some of their successful efforts to promote Stewardship and Generosity. These are written by members of the team and/or special contributors. You have full access to these to use creatively in your communications. Simply be sure to acknowledge the appropriate source.

The team is looking forward to the chance to gather people in person in the coming year, for large group training events, individual church consultations (perhaps in a small cluster cohort with coaching), as well as looking forward to an annual Stewardship and Generosity event that we might do in conjunction with the National, Conference or other Association efforts, all the better to share wisdom and insights that can impact a local church.

As I finish my time as chair of the team, we have a wonderful collection of diverse people and gifts, ready to help our local churches find a way to gather in the much needed resources of time, talent and treasure to further the kingdom work of each setting. Each of the people listed below is willing to take a call and aid you in finding the best way to meet whatever need you might have.

Sincerely, Rev. David Plant, Team Chair

Team members: Rev. David Plant (chair), Mike Fonner (vice chair), Pastor Jay Scott (secretary), Fran Brodman, Donna Dorsch, Bob Rettig, Ruth Novak, Ron Geiser, Rev. Doug Williamson, Pastor James Robinson

Witness and Proclamation Ministry Team

In 2022 our team had a turnover in leadership in the fall. Rev. Darrin Harvey is now chairing the team. Beginning this spring we will have a different representative for the association's cabinet as Darrin has been doing that for a few years. We want to delegate our responsibilities a little more on our team. Our team now consists of Andrea Mericle, Bryan Niebanck , Dawn Balduf , Fred Coulter, John Mummert, Paul Stark, Scott Johnson, Anthony Brookhart and Darrin Harvey. Rev. Dan Busch also attends our monthly meetings.

As always we try to communicate what many of our churches are doing in the association that is mission related and community building. We also communicate to the association through our Facebook page and monthly articles in the Vine what is going on with our mission partners such as El Salvador, Back Bay Mission, and several others.

This year we highlighted the immigration crisis at our southern border, Ukraine and trauma ministry. We hope to share what we have learned with these specific things and we would like to host an online seminar late this spring or summer.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Darrin Harvey, Team Chair

Team Members: Rev. Darrin Harvey (chair), Anthony Brookhart (vice chair), Pastor Bryan Niebanck, Rev. Dawn Balduf, Rev. Paul Stark, Rev. Scott Johnson, Rev. Fred Coulter, Rev. Andrea Mericle, Rev. John Mummert.

El Salvador Coordinating Team Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena - Our Global Partner

Our El Salvador Coordinating Team hasn't met for over a year. It has been almost 20 years since Joyce and I have been leading mission trips to El Salvador. We have both hit the age of 87 and are still in good health but feel it is time for some others to lead these trips. It has been a rewarding experience to be able to travel with many new made friends through all these years. We have met two US ambassadors, a Spanish ambassador and an Italian ambassador plus other influential persons from other countries who were sending aid to El Salvador. Each person, who traveled with us, usually had two suitcases filled with different sizes of articles of clothing, soccer balls, a lot of school supplies and medical supplies for doctors and nurses for clinics and hospitals. \$50,000.00 was given by our NWOA to help build their new cathedral church building. It is now where they have their worship services. Many others have donated money for the health clinic, the church schools, soup kitchen and for other needs of the people. I remember one young man had been cutting wood with a machete and hit his foot. He had a bad wound on his foot. He lived a long way from the city so we collected money from our group and gave it to their pastor to see that he got to the city to see a doctor. This is just one of the many memories from experiences that we had from former mission trips.

Life in El Salvador is not easy for the average person. If you have a job, the wages are very low with long hours. We know some doctors are lucky to make \$30,000 a year. The poverty and living conditions for the average person needs to be improved. There is a small portion of the population that are very wealthy. A little larger part of the population are middle-class people and 27.4% of the population are living on less than \$5.50 a day. This is the problem. The wealthy control all the banks, most of the newspapers, most of the farmland and are in control of the government of the country.

The government is now building a new prison to hold over 60,000 prisoners. A pastor and a church worker have been put in prison because someone didn't like them. They were accused of

doing something bad. Without a hearing, they were incarcerated. Our friend, the Rev. Christian Chavarria got in to visit the one pastor over a year ago and she still has not had a hearing. There are many innocent people in the prisons with the gang members.

The relationship with the El Salvadoran Lutheran Church and our Northwest Ohio Association is still strong. Well over 200 people, including youth groups from our association and a group from Heidelberg University, have traveled with us to El Salvador through these years. We know this is a worthwhile mission that should continue. It is now time for a new leader or leaders to step up and say, "We Can Do It!" Joyce and I will help the new leaders any way we can. Our many friends in El Salvador are waiting for the next group to return and will welcome each one with a big smile and a hug. We have never been afraid in El Salvador because the church leaders would never put us in a dangerous situation.

Thanks to all who have supported the El Salvador Mission through the years. We pray that this mission will continue for many years. In Christian friendship, John and Joyce Gilberg

Contact John or Joyce Gilberg at 419-629-2947, 419-230-8177 and if no answer, leave a voice mail or e-mail jjgilberg@nktelco.net.

Team Members: John & Joyce Gilberg, Rev. Frank and Jo (Kries) Isaacs, Dr. Alan Mikesell, Sharon Fiely, Rev. Adrian & Rev. Becky Sunday, Rev. Darrin Harvey, Gail Puckrin, Rev. Darla Metz, Rev. Daniel Busch

Excellence in Ministry Program

My friends, I am sure that you are very good and that you have all the knowledge you need to teach each other. - Romans 15:14 CEV

Excellence in Ministry is an innovative program which is supported and resourced by National Ministries of the United Church of Christ. In Northwest Ohio Association, nine trained facilitators lead regular gatherings of three to seven authorized ministers in "communities of practice." These groups, generally meet for at least two hours a month between September and May.

Blending personal support and professional development, Excellence in Ministry groups offer ministers the opportunity to gather in a supportive and confidential setting to be renewed in worship, share their questions and experiences, and support one another in facing challenges. Groups foster the sharing of ministry resources and best practices. Because ministry is often an isolated calling, these communities of practice provide opportunities for fellowship and help maintain high standards of pastoral practice.

49 members and leaders in Northwest Ohio make up the eight groups participating in the program during the 2022-23 program year. Although this is down very slightly from last year, our association is fortunate to have a very high percentage of pastors involved.

Facilitators this year are Wendy Schindler Chasney, Ken Daniel, Joel Fetter, Ed Heilman, Darla Metz, Margaret Mills, David Orr, Becky Erb Strang, and Diane Thomas. Facilitators meet quarterly. In August they participated in training provided by Rev. Tara Barber, UCC Minister of Support and Accountability.

Congregations can help their pastors by encouraging them to join a group and by covering the cost of their participation. Summer is the ideal time to start as groups are realigned each September. Applications are available from the Northwest Ohio Association office.

Rev. David Orr, EIM Facilitator Coordinator

Lay School Board

The aim of the Lay School of Religion Program has been to maintain quality instruction, to create an atmosphere for Christian fellowship and dialogue, and to encourage growth in faith and understanding so as to enhance the local church's efforts to develop deeper and stronger faith communities for nurture, witness, mission and leadership. All persons are welcome to enroll in the Lay School of Religion Program for personal enrichment.

The Lay School offers classes in the spring and fall of each year, typically on Tuesday evenings twice a month for six to eight sessions. Anyone may enroll in classes for personal enrichment. However, to graduate from the program students must complete all ten offered classes plus approved workshops in the areas of Stewardship and Evangelism. Here is the current schedule, subject to change. Instructors TBA.

Spring 2023	Faith Formation
Fall 2023	Preaching
Spring 2024	Liturgy & Worship
Fall 2024	Theology, Christian Ethics & Morals
Spring 2025	Old Testament 1
Fall 2025	Old Testament 2
Spring 2026	New Testament 1
Fall 2026	New Testament 2
Spring 2027	UCC History & Polity
Fall 2027	Caring Ministries

In 2022, our classes were UCC History & Polity taught by Rev. Dan Busch, and Caring Ministries taught by Dr. Traci Stark from Heidelberg University. We also sponsored an evangelism workshop on “Ministry to Millennials” with Steve Lawler of The Walker Leadership Institute at Eden Theological Seminary.

One ongoing project is to clarify the mission and purpose of the Lay School, particularly in conjunction with the work of Church and Ministry and Faith Formation teams of the Association in order to offer programs to benefit all members of the Association. We have also looked at the Living Water Association model called S.P.I.R.E. and encourage others to look at their offerings as well, many of which are offered virtually.

We hope more folks from the churches of Northwest Ohio Association will consider deepening their faith and growing in leadership through the Lay School. Together, we can enhance the ministry of our local churches.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Wayne Chasney, Team Chair

Board Members: Rev. Wayne Chasney (chair), Pastor Terri Wies-Haithcock, Regena Mummert, Rev. Darla Metz, Rev. Mark Bishop, Pastor Amy Kinney, Rev. Bob Bottoms (Lay School Dean), Rev. Daniel Busch (Association Minister)