

The Congregational Development Commission
Report to Convention
2009

The Congregational Development Commission was developed to provide support, resources and education to parishes and other entities within the Diocese of Western Michigan. Specifically, the commission addresses the portion of the Diocesan Vision Statement that says that " We will intentionally develop new models of ministry, plant new congregations and creatively support existing parishes."

The Commission reports to the Executive Council of the Diocese. Members of this commission for the 2008-09 year included. The Rev. Cindy Nawrocki, St. Mark's Grand Rapids, The Rev. Kathleen Kingslight, St. Barnabas, Portage, Al Wilson, St. Peter's Montague, Steve Wade, Grace, Traverse City, Musette El'Mohammed, St. Martin of Tours, Kalamazoo, Nate Dawson, St. Mark's Grand Rapids, The Rev. Susan York, Liaison to Executive Council, The Rev. Anne Reed, Diocesan Staff.

Our work in this past year focused on reading and discussing recently published books on Congregational Development, including "Christianity for The Rest of Us" by Diana Butler Bass, and "The Emergent Church" by Phyllis Tickle. We also reviewed Natural Church Development materials which is a program focused on identifying strengths and growing edges within congregations in 8 Quality Characteristics of Growing Churches. Subsequent planning and efforts focus around improving the areas identified as growing edges. We also reviewed the Percept program and data for our Diocese and discussed the potentials for usefulness in the Diocese this year.

Our focus has been and will be, to train coaches to be a support system for parishes and to communicate the availability of Percept data for individual parishes to use as they plan and strategize for the future. Within the coming year we hope to provide a conference day for parishes with a speaker who can offer insight and creative approaches to parish discernment and redevelopment and growth. We plan to develop a communication tool to keep parishes informed of current information and resources and to encourage parishes to think creatively and healthy ways to fulfill their mission and ministries in the community and the world. We hope to have a trained team of individuals who can assist with that work in the coming year. It has been our privilege as a Commission to serve the mission of the Diocese of Western Michigan in this way.

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Susan S. York, Executive Council Liaison.