

2022-2023 Annual Report

Associate Conference Minister Kelly Gallagher

I have completed my first year and then some as Associate Conference Minister here in the Minnesota Conference. It continues to be a great joy to work with the staff, clergy, lay leaders and churches of this amazing Conference. My family joined me here last summer and we have enjoyed learning together about the many blessings of Minnesota. We are truly looking forward to this coming summer as an opportunity to explore even more.

One significant piece of my portfolio is to staff the Committee on Ministry. I encourage you to read the reports of this committee and to have a look at the Registrar's report. This is the committee tasked with the standing, authorization, health and well-being of our churches and clergy. I am continually amazed at their care and dedication to these important tasks. I serve in a supporting role to all they do – helping to guide new candidates toward the committee and, together with See Chang, our amazing administrative assistant, keep the paperwork and structure moving. I am also called upon to be liaison to the National UCC for resourcing and support.

A part of my COM work is supporting our Members in Discernment seeking both ordination and Privilege of Call. It is a great joy of mine to walk alongside these amazing people as they discern God's call upon their hearts and lives. We are blessed in this Conference to have strong, faithful candidates in the discernment process.

Supporting and connecting with churches and clergy is also a large piece of the work I do. Most Sundays I visit one of the churches in my care, sometimes preaching, always bringing greetings of thanksgiving from a grateful Conference. When I visit, it is my hope to build relationships with clergy, lay leaders and members to empower the Conference as a whole. When we know one another and can support one another, the whole body is stronger. I also hope to connect churches together so that we know that we are not alone in whatever we are going through.

I have been able to offer a number of workshops and conversations for our churches over the last year. Through Covenant Day and individually with churches I have led Presiding Officer trainings, Pastor/Parish Relations trainings, discussed sabbatical plans as clergy prepare for their time away, and walked with leadership as they seek conflict transformation and visioning support.

My wider community work includes a continued relationship with United Theological Seminary and Leaderwise; connections to Faith and Prejudice in Minneapolis, RenderFree and Ace in the City. I was also blessed to be invited to Iowa to lead a workshop on polity at the Tri-Conference Annual Meeting.

This coming year brings hopes of establishing Communities of Practice for our clergy and working to streamline reporting and tracking clergy standing requirements. I will continue to visit our churches, meet with clergy and MIDs, connect people and organizations, and learn more about how to equip this courageous church, that is alive with Christ's transforming love!

In gratitude for my colleagues on the Conference staff, and the clergy and churches of the Minnesota Conference,

Kelly Gallagher, ACM