



## **Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Development Program**

Thirty-one people were involved in the Journey program during the 2016-2017 year, including 13 participants and 10 mentors. There were three participants and two mentors from Central District Conference, seven participants and five mentors were from Indiana-Michigan Conference, and two participants and two mentors were from Illinois Conference. Central District Conference participants were: Marci Frederick, Steven Mares, and mentor Orlando Redekopp, Dennis Miller and mentor John Heyerly. Three conference ministers and five seminary staff also participated.

All participants gathered at Amigo Centre for the fall Weekend Learning Event. Gilberto Flores led four sessions on “Your Ministry Is Not Your Life”, Eleanor Kreider led worship sessions throughout the weekend, assisted by Bob Rosa. It was a time of great learning, worship, and friendship-building. Saturday afternoon, Brent Graber, AMBS Director of Information Technology, led an orientation to Moodle. This was preparation for the participants to access the curriculum online. Cohort sessions followed, providing opportunities for participants to work on their personal timelines, take personality inventories, and explore spiritual direction. Mentors and mentees also met together to work on and update their learning covenants.

Following the fall gathering, new participants studied a unit from the AMBS Missional Leadership Development curriculum, while the returning participants continued their studies in the Leading God’s People curriculum, also provided by AMBS. As part of these studies they carried out a wide variety of ministry tasks in their congregations and communities. They met with their mentors, typically bi-weekly, to discuss the study materials and their experiences in ministry.

The spring Weekend Learning Event began with a Friday evening visit to Menno-Hof. The weekend presentations focused on Anabaptist history and theology led by Jamie Pitts of AMBS. Eleanor Kreider and Bob Rosa, also of AMBS, served as worship leaders. The participants reported learning a lot and deep appreciation for the learning community that has developed among these sisters and brothers in Christ. Each mentee submitted a reflection paper focused on her/his learning from the previous unit of studies, and each mentor submitted reflections on the learning of her/his mentee.

Following the spring Weekend Learning Event mentor-mentee pairs again met bi-weekly to discuss curriculum and to reflect on their ongoing ministry experiences.

The Journey Board continues to play a vital role in keeping the program running. Many thanks to Nina Lanctot for chairing the board. Members of the Board include Ardean Friesen (Central District Conference rep); Phil Bontrager (Indiana-Michigan Conference rep); and staff representatives to the board include conference ministers Doug Luginbill, Dan Miller, and Michael Danner; AMBS Academic dean, Rebecca Slough and me (AMBS Dean of Life Long Learning).

According to our Journey participants and alumni, Journey is a tremendous opportunity for pastors, emerging pastors, and other emerging leaders. If someone you know wants to develop ministry gifts or is exploring a call to ministry, please encourage them speak to Doug Luginbill about whether the Journey program might be the right next step.

Respectfully submitted,  
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