

NEWS

CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP FORMATION

A Texas Annual Conference Publication – Winter 2022

YOUR INNOVATIVE IDEAS CAN TURN INTO CASH

The Texas Annual Conference invites church leaders to harness their creativity by submitting grant requests to the Innovation Sub-team of the Conference Leadership Team. Innovation grants will be awarded twice a year – the first cycle concluding before Annual Conference 2022 and the second in the fall of 2022.

To help churches prepare grant requests, the conference is offering two Innovation Labs. The lab will help participants better understand what is meant by innovation and how to submit a request. The first Innovation Lab is slated for March 26 at the Texas Museum of Broadcast and Communications, 416 East Main Street in Kilgore. The second lab will be held on Aug. 27 in the greater Houston area at a location to be determined. Both events are free to attend; however, space is limited. Reserving online in advance is required.

The Innovation Labs are designed to help churches sharpen and broaden their plans for the new ministry. The events are an opportunity for clergy and lay leaders to meet, brainstorm, collaborate, motivate and support each other. At the end of the lab, participants will present their project to a

panel of creative experts, who can further guide ideas. The only requirement to attend is being open to go where the Holy Spirit might take you.

The goal of the innovation funds is to help congregations thrive, now and in the future, explained Rev. Morris Matthis. He, along with Bea Garza, lead the Conference's Innovation Team.

"The hope of these innovation funds is to encourage fresh energy, ideas and risk-taking ministry throughout our conference," Matthis said. "The money granted will go to churches to help them do things they've never done before in ministry. There's no better time than now to encourage churches to try an innovative idea."

He challenges every congregation to consider itself a new church start, having to adapt to a new normal with the pandemic. "How providential that as a Conference we began to talk about this well before COVID," he said.

To learn more about the Innovation grants and reserve a space at the Innovation Lab, register online at: txcumc.org/tac-innovation-lab.



March 26
Museum of Broadcast and Communications
Kilgore

August 27
Location TBA
Houston area

Greetings from the Center for Leadership Formation!



We want you to know who we are and how ready we are to do everything we can to support you in the kingdom work to which God has called you.

Here's the official sounding language regarding the purpose of our center: "The Center for Leadership Formation exists to recruit, develop, and support clergy leaders; and to equip and empower the lay and clergy leaders of the Texas Annual Conference."

In some ways we are the former Centers of Clergy Excellence and Congregational Excellence that have been brought together in one department.

But there is so much that is new! We work with many of the committees and teams that have been around for years. What's new is the Church Leadership Team, the Clergy Leadership Team, the Racial and Ethnic Ministries Team, and the Board of Laity. We support many of the same functions that have been a part of our conference life for years. But we are excited about the Ministry Specialist Initiative, the Innovation Grants, and the efforts to expand our conference's Racial and Ethnic Ministries.

We hope you will read this newsletter carefully and begin to think and pray about how we might help you in your ministry. Don't hesitate to reach out to our office so we can dream together about what God has for you in the new year.

May God bless you and keep you in 2022!

– Rev. Morris Matthis



CHURCHES MATCHED WITH MINISTRY SPECIALISTS

The Texas Annual Conference is devoted to helping congregations step into the future and rise to meet God's calling. The new Ministry Specialist Initiative (MSI) reflects that commitment, empowering churches with specialists and the tools needed for success.

"It's really about support and investment in ministry, the local church and our pastors," explained Rev. Robert Besser, Associate Director of Church Leadership in the Center for Leadership Formation.

He explained that the initiative was approved during the Texas Annual Conference in August 2020. After the Center for Leadership Formation was created, planning for the MSI began.

The MSI replaces the Vibrant Church Initiative (VCI). This previous structure offered a period of discernment. Then five prescriptions were determined to help the church. Specialists provided guidance for each recommendation.

With the MSI, the local church will be in the driver's seat. Clergy or a congregational leader, with the help of the District Superintendent, will assess their own needs for improvement.

Instead of responding to the five recommendations, the church can then focus all of its energy on one area at one time. The congregation is matched with a specialist to assist them through the journey.

Besser explained that there are two avenues to start the process. Either clergy or the congregation applies online.

After reviewing the applications, Besser will talk to the District Superintendent, who may either agree with the request for the MSI or can propose a different approach to benefit the church.

Besser will also gather input from each person involved. "We will talk about what they are expecting, what their goals and dreams are, as well as what is their timeline is," he explained. "Everyone needs to understand the scope of the project. Everyone needs to be on the same page."

The congregation is then matched with a specialist. There are 64 categories, each matches one of the Conference core values and strategic foci.

"We are constantly looking for people both in the Conference and outside of it, both clergy and laity to apply to be specialists.

— Rev. Robert Besser, Associate Director of Church Leadership in the Center for Leadership Formation.

For instance, within the core value of "radical hospitality," there are specialists available in communications, evangelism, hospitality ministries and marketing. Or for the focus on "investing in the young," specialists are experienced in developing programs for children, confirmation, family, weekday school, young adult and youth ministries.

The cost of the first consultation, or "engagement," with the Ministry Specialist is covered by the Conference.

The remaining expenses will vary depending on the congregation's needs and the expert involved, Besser explained. Each project will be different.



The first engagement may be virtual, in person at the church or at the specialist's office. After the first session, there is evaluation to ensure that the specialist is the right fit for the church. If not, adjustments will be made to continue to move forward.

If the pairing is successful, the process will continue. A covenant will be signed, and the work begins. Besser explained that after one area is addressed, churches may reapply and seek specialists for another concern.

"The MSI was developed before COVID," he said. "Now, because of the pandemic, more churches and clergy are struggling. The timing is perfect to make this resource available."

Already, Besser has retained 135 qualified individuals to become specialists. Many offer specializations in multiple categories.

More specialists will be added to the list, Besser explained. Interested individuals may apply to join online. "We are constantly looking for people both in the Conference and outside of it, both clergy and laity to apply to be specialists," Besser said.

The MSI is a vast resource for churches, providing expertise to take them to a whole new level and help them better serve God's kingdom.

For more information, visit txcumc.org/churchleadership.



HISPANIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY EMPOWERS LAITY

Racial and Ethnic Ministries was created to strengthen the local church through leadership training, small group work, worship, stewardship and spiritual formation. The division includes both the African American Church Initiative and Hispanic Ministries. The mission is to develop discipleship in the diverse community the Conference serves.

This year, Racial and Ethnic Ministries debuted a three-year program, the Hispanic Leadership Academy. The program incorporates theological and pedagogical tools to help laity reach their full potential as leaders in their home churches.

Rev. Dayimi Pimentel serves as Racial and Ethnic Ministries Coordinator for the Texas Annual Conference. She explained that the Academy is designed to assist members of Spanish-speaking congregations in the Conference, guiding lay leaders to take charge of missions and ministries.

“The Academy is an opportunity for leaders to grow both in their personal and spiritual life, and therefore strengthen the local ministry, raising a generation of disciples,” she said.

The Hispanic Leadership Academy strengthens students spiritually through

“The Academy is an opportunity for leaders to grow both in the personal and spiritual life...strengthen the local ministry, raising a generation of disciples.

– Rev. Dayimi Pimentel, Racial and Ethnic Ministries Coordinator, Texas Annual Conference.

conversations and discussions designed to inspire, challenge and equip them as leaders. A retreat for the program will be held on January 29, where participants will reaffirm their covenant to serve God.

The event will be hosted by Revive! UMC in Pasadena. “It includes very special moments that will surprise the participants and that – with all certainty – will mark their spiritual lives,” Pimentel said.

The Academy will continue with a course on Methodist doctrine led by Bishop Scott J. Jones. The second year of the program will also include sessions on servant leadership, the Old Testament, preaching, teaching, principles of Biblical interpretation and Synoptic Gospels. The third year is dedicated to the Letters of Paul, Johannine epistles, apocalyptic literature and liturgy, as well as current challenges facing the church.



EXPLORING MINISTRY THROUGH A COLLEGE INTERNSHIP

The College Pastoral Internship Project (CPIP) provides two avenues for students to discern their callings: first, a full-time summer internship and second, a new, part-time opportunity that coincides with a college semester. Both options introduce students to careers in church life and how they might become involved.

The 10-week summer internship is a full immersion for ages 18-24 in the daily operations of a congregation. While serving the church, participants also explore the possibility that God is calling them to vocational church ministry. Interns can choose the area of ministry they would like to explore in addition to general pastoral ministry, including youth, children and music.

The semester internship is designed for full-time college students who are interested in vocational ministry or working in the church in the future. The paid internships are completed alongside a student's college curriculum and are funded by the Center for Leadership Formation.

Congregations recruit the interns and offer a curriculum to help students with spiritual formation and discernment.

“God is always calling people, but there are certain settings where we can hear that call. CPIP opens the door, whether summer, spring or fall.

– Rev. Deborah Hawboldt, Associate Director of Clergy Leadership, Center for Leadership Formation

Rev. Deborah Hawboldt, Associate Director of Clergy Leadership for the Center for Leadership Formation, explained that the semester, part-time internship was designed to reach more youth interested in pursuing a spiritual life. She hopes that the part-time internship will serve as a launching pad for the summer internship. “The whole point of CPIP is to help young people hear if God is calling them,” Hawboldt said.

“God is always calling people, but there are certain settings where we can hear that call,” Hawboldt said. CPIP opens the door, whether summer, spring or fall.

Apply Now for Summer College Pastoral Internship

If you are, or know, a college student interested in serving in a UMC in the Texas Conference this summer, consider applying for a College Pastoral Internship (CPIP) no later than February 18. These full time, paid internships are available for students 18-24 years of age who want to explore pastoral or church ministry. Churches are also encouraged to apply to receive an intern for the summer. For more information and for student and church applications, visit: txcumc.org/internshipproject or contact Rev. Deborah Hawboldt at dhawboldt@txcumc.org.

Summer and Semester Internships Comparison:

Summer Internship	Semester Internship
Conference recruits, interviews, accepts interns	Local church recruits, interviews, accepts intern
Conference places interns in churches around Conference	Intern accepts position in local church
Church provides housing with guest family	No housing provided
Full time	Part time
Payment through the Conference	Grant to local church from Conference – local church pays intern

Applications for summer internships are now open. Churches may also apply to receive a summer intern. To learn more, visit txcumc.org/internshipproject or email dhawboldt@txcumc.org.



Summer College Pastoral Internship Application Deadline **February 18, 2022**

RECOMMEND YOUTH FOR MINISTRY SUMMER COURSES

Texas Youth Academy (TYA) invites youth to embark on a journey to ministry, starting with a two-week intensive academy during the summer. The program provides a window into a deeper life centered on faith.

The program is available to high school students, during their sophomore, junior and senior years. Most recently, participants attend classes in theology on a college campus affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Last summer, TYA was held at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University.

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– Rev. Robert Besser, Associate Director of Church Leadership in the Center for Leadership Formation.

“Many of the morning lectures are delivered by professors from seminary,” says Rev. Robert Besser, Associate Director of Church Leadership in the Center for Leadership Formation. “These students get a front row

seat in what seminary would be like – and they’re learning about campus life. The heartbeat of the program is run by dedicated lay and clergy that are gifted in walking along side our young people in helping them process their faith.”

The days in TYA are spent worship, prayer and discipleship. Afternoons are dedicated to local service projects and an arts village. These, together with the lessons and worship, assist students in processing the theology they are exploring. Students share their ideas and meet other youth who have the same calling. “They have in-depth spiritual conversations with each other,” Besser said. All these components work together to give the students a more comprehensive faith language.

He added that pastors or youth workers, small group leaders, parents, District Superintendents, nominate young people from congregation or district for the TYA. “It’s not for everyone,” he explained. “It’s designed for someone who is looking for a deeper spiritual life.”

Besser asks clergy to keep that in mind during the school year. “We need our pastors to help identify youth who are ready for the

next step on their faith journey,” he said. “For many of them, this could be it.”

The TYA allows students to work alongside distinguished professors and noted clergy to learn Wesleyan theology and tenets to Christianity. They also enjoy the camaraderie of others who also feel called by God. The community that is intentionally and expertly developed over the two weeks is what the alumni will recall as the most significant part of their TYA experience.

“Our Conference is dedicated to helping our future clergy. This is the first step in the Emerging Leaders Initiative,” Besser said. “We continue to invest in offering the TYA – and it has paid off.”

program have gone on to attend seminary and then become pastors in the Conference. Even if students later decide not to pursue an ordained life in ministry, they often become leading members in their congregations. “They are stronger because of the TYA,” he added.

If you have a student to nominate or questions about this incredible opportunity, you can find it at texasyouthacademy.com. The dates in 2022 are June 20 – July 2.



Texas Youth Academy
Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University
Dallas
June 20 - July 2



Texas Annual Conference
United Methodist Church

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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