

**Local Church Ministries Team  
2020 Annual Report**

*Your Local Church Ministries Team has been working diligently and faithfully to empower and encourage churches and their leaders to be healthy, have purpose, and to discern their mission and vision.*

*We hosted our second annual Pastor's Sabbath Retreat in January at Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia, Illinois where 25 of our pastors were led by the Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell in a time of reflection and renewal. The pastors who attended expressed their appreciation of this event and found it to be restorative. We are currently planning our third annual Pastor's Sabbath Retreat which will be held at The Mercy Conference and Retreat Center in St. Louis on May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> in 2021. The style of this retreat will be different, as it will include ample time for self-reflection and rest. The book "Pursuing Pastoral Excellence" by Rev. Paul E. Hopkins will provide a source for small group discussions.*

*After reviewing the Surveys that were returned after last year's Annual Meeting and working in conjunction with The Conference Gatherings Team, we designed two workshops slated for October 23<sup>rd</sup> to address the most significant concerns that were named in the surveys: engaging youth and increasing participation in the life of the church. The Rev. Dr. Chris Davies from our National setting will lead a webinar entitled: The Re-formation of the Church. The Rev. Debbie Jo Atkins and Julie Gvillo will sit on our panel and answer questions regarding ways to engage our youth. Both will be timely as we try to navigate these unprecedented times.*

*With the leadership of our Conference Minister, we offered two virtual worship experiences which we hope allowed pastors to take time away from the pulpit and engage in a needed break from the intensity of ministry during a pandemic.*

*Our most current endeavor is a Zoom Lectionary Prayer Group for the pastors. Our hope is to provide a time of comradery, prayer, and study. The Rev. Shana Johnson has volunteered to get this off the ground, and we appreciate her faithful support of our work as well as her compassion and care for our pastors.*

*I would like to thank Rev. Shana Johnson for her work with our Team and all who faithfully serve on Local Church Ministries.*

*Grace and peace,*

*Rev. Lori A. Schafer  
Chairperson*