

Communications Covenanted Ministry

Rev. Rick Oberle, Chair

After being chartered in late 2015, under the Local Church Ministries Standing Committee of the Conference Council, the Communications Covenanted Ministry spent most of 2016 trying to discern how we can best implement the communications aspects of the five mission imperatives presented to the Conference at the 2015 Conference Annual Gathering. In 2017, our focus was trying to establish connections with churches, individuals and instrumentalities of the Conference. We work closely with Rev. Nia Chandler, our Conference Communications Consultant. Our purpose statement is: "To develop and maintain an infrastructure for communications activity in the Missouri Mid-South Conference, and to discern means of communications support and interaction among our churches."

With Nia's help and the work of the Covenanted Ministry Team we have:

- Continued to utilize Zoom technology for electronic meetings. We transitioned to this new platform in late 2016; and in 2017 we refined it a bit, combining user accounts and opening it up to more individuals. We have found these meetings to be much more functional and user friendly than our previous platform was.
- Continued to enhance our Conference website, with more under development.
- Created new landing pages on our website for our Covenanted Ministries
- Sent three all-Conference paper mailings with more to come in 2018 and 2019. We are asking for materials for these mailings to be turned in by August 15, November 15 and March 15 each year, and the mailings will be sent out within a week of those dates. Thank you to Bethel UCC, Kansas City who collated our March 15, 2018 mailing; Columbia UCC who collated our November 15, 2017 mailing; and St. Paul's UCC, St. Louis (Giles and Potomac) who collated our August 15, 2017 mailing. We utilize churches across the conference to collate these mailings. Churches in the past two years who have helped include Zion, Union; St. Peter's, Washington; St. Lucas, St. Louis; St. John's Bem, Owensville;
- Continued to refine and evaluate methods of practice and distribution for the e-Courier and the Conference e-Happenings. We continue to hear lament about the lack of a print newspaper, such as "the Courier" was. We listen closely to this and are looking at ways to incorporate new communications methods to address this feeling of loss. We understand that many in our Conference still do not receive the e-Courier; and those who do, often do not read it. These are issues we struggle with and we are looking for new idea on how to address this communications challenge.
- Began working on the parameters for a one-page downloadable Adobe sheet with e-Courier stories reproduced that churches can print out for use in their newsletter, bulletins, or on an information table in their context. Production of this one sheet will begin this summer, with distribution to happen by the 15th of each month. Look for a sample copy on the Communications Covenanted Ministry table at CAG.
- Continued to moderate our closed Facebook group for MMS Clergy to enhance our shared communication. If you are Clergy in our Conference and are not part of this group, message Rick Oberle or Nia Chandler to be added.

- Enhanced the content of our MMS Facebook group. Are you using it?
- Asked every church in the Conference to participate in a survey, sharing stories of their involvement with other entities of the Conference and how OCWM is changing their lives. The purpose of this survey is not to accumulate data, but to build relationships. Only 10 churches responded to this survey. Thank you to St. Peter's, New Haven; Zion, Mayview; St. Paul's, Marthasville; Zion, Union; St. John's, Jackson; St. Peter's, Owensville; Faith, Wentzville; St. Paul, Herman; Zion, Oakfield and Columbia UCC for responding to the survey.

We have been laying the groundwork for many new things to happen in 2018/2019. As we move forward, you will soon see a completely redone Conference website, a reformatted e-Courier, and other online tools, videos, and other helpful materials. You will also see two more mailings sent in 2018 (deadline for submissions: 8/15 and 11/15) and a new Conference Directory, prepared by the directory company we have used in the past.

Reading through our Purpose Statement, we cannot do this alone. We are trying to establish webs of connectivity with churches across the Conference, but we need your help to make it happen. Give us input, give us advice, and please respond to our questions. We truly want to hear from you about ways we can be more connected as a Conference.

We are looking for new members. If you have a communications background or interest or just an interest in developing new relationships across our conference, email Rick Oberle at the address below. We are open to new ways of developing webs of connection across our Conference, and you may have the best idea how to do just that.

We are a relatively new Covenanted Ministry and are still looking for advice on how to best live into the charter set before us. We are open to ideas, advice, and especially new members! If you have a suggestion, email Rick Oberle at oberlerick27@gmail.com

Thank you!

The Communications Covenanted Ministry Team:

Bob Atkinson, Carole Barner, Laura Mignerone, Linda Stenger, Nia Chandler, Cherie Stolze, Mike Mueller, Nancy Litzinger and Rick Oberle