

Communications Covenanted Ministry

Rev. Rick Oberle, Chair

After being chartered in late 2015, 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.

Of these five “Mission Imperatives” one centers on enhancing communication. The Vision articulated by the Vision Team around this Imperative is: “Creating and tending a network of communication (both paper and digital) that connects congregations, lay leaders and authorized ministers.”

To that end, we have made several strides in 2016, and have several more things in the works for 2017/2018. Perhaps the greatest stride of all was hiring Rev. Nia Chandler to be our Conference Communications Consultant. Since beginning her employment with our Conference in the fall, Nia has enhanced our communications network using her technical knowledge and expertise to introduce new concepts, enhance existing platforms, and take us to the next level in communications support.

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

- Upgraded our electronic meeting capability by implementing Zoom technology, giving greater access to more of our Conference to meet electronically
- Enhanced our Conference website, with more enhancements under development. New plug-ins on our website allow versatility of content. A completely revitalized Conference website will be coming after CAG.
- New landing pages on our website for our Covenanted Ministries, allowing the Covenanted Ministries to update their page, avoiding a bottleneck at the Conference Office
- Sent four all-Conference paper mailings with more to come in 2017
- Produced training videos to be utilized at CAG and on the Conference website
- Introduced new methods of practice and distribution for the e-Courier and the Conference e-Happenings
- Established a 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?
- We asked every church in the Conference for stories to put together a “MMS Yearbook” about what our churches did in 2016 to present at CAG. Unfortunately only 5 churches responded (St. Luke’s, Independence; Ivy Chapel, St. Louis; Calvary, St. Louis; Bethel, Kansas City; and St. John’s, Bem, Owensville) so we will not present these at CAG, but use them elsewhere.

We have been laying the groundwork for many new things to happen in 2017/2018. 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 2017 (deadline for submissions: 8/15 and 11/15). We are working on- (drum roll please) A NEW CONFERENCE DIRECTORY! Hooray!

You may also get a phone call from us this summer. Following a model that John Dorhauer implemented in the National Offices, we are putting together a plan to call all 140+ churches of the MMS Conference to listen to their stories, and find out how the Communications Covenanted Ministry can implement Communications models that work for them. Start thinking about it- you will be hearing from us!

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 and Rick Oberle