
Report of the Commission on Ministry

Rev. Dr. Ann M. Van Cleef, Chair

The Commission on Ministry advocates for the New York Conference Authorized Ministers and Members in Discernment in all settings. The Commission meets four times a year, although we occasionally have extra meetings to discuss specific topics. All meetings, with the exception of our May meeting, are accomplished via Zoom. We normally have a face-to-face meeting the morning of the Consultation for Committees on Church and Ministry. We were not able to do so in 2020 or in 2021, due to the pandemic. This year, we will once again be meeting in person on Tuesday, May 10, at the Homer Congregational Church in Homer, NY. Here is a summary of our responsibilities, as well as what we have accomplished in the past year.

New York School of Ministry. Known as NYSOM, Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine of the Conference Staff serves as Dean.

On Saturday, January 29, Mary Hoadley was ordained at the United Church of Newport, in the Vermont Conference. Mary is the first person outside of the NY Conference to be ordained after receiving her education through NYSOM.

In the Christian Leadership Program, there were 6 participants from 6 associations (BR-SL, GVA, Metro, Suffolk, Susquehanna, and Western) this past year.

In the Word and Sacrament Program, there were 6 participants from 4 Associations (Oneida, Susquehanna, Western (4)) and a participant in the practicum from the Southern New England Conference.

Fall 2021 core courses included *Old Testament I* (Rev. David Cleaver-Bartholomew, PhD, instructor) and *Advanced Topics in Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Rev. Wayne Gustafson, D.Min., LMHC, instructor).

Fall Continuing Education courses, designed for NYSOM students as well as clergy, included *Religious Fundraising – Past and Present* (Rev. David Cleaver-Bartholomew, Ph.D., instructor) and *What does it mean to be both progressive and Christian?* (Rev. David Kaden, Ph.D., instructor).

The Fall Learning Event, designed for ministers as well as those preparing for ministry, was called *Prophetic Preaching: For Such a Time as This* (Taught by Rev. Michael L. Sloan, D.Min.)

Spring 2022 core courses were *Old Testament II*, (Rev. David Cleaver-Bartholomew, Ph.D., instructor) and *From Resurrection to Reformation: A History of the Christian Church* (Rev. Steven Johnson, Ph.D., instructor).

The Spring Learning Event was called *Engaging CARE Practices to reconnect with Purpose* (led by Rev. Marjorie Purnine, Ph.D.).

Additionally, an elective ministry course: *Family Systems and Pastoral Leadership* (Rev. Wayne Gustafson, D.Min., LMHC, instructor) was offered.

The good news about NYSOM is spreading; not only are there students from New York and New England, but there have been inquiries from other parts of the country as well.

The Commission on Ministry would like to express its deep gratitude to Dr. Marjorie Purnine for her excellent leadership of NYSOM.

Boundary Awareness Training (BAT): Longtime BAT Coordinator and Curriculum writer Penny Cannon announced to us in September that she would be retiring from her position as of

December 31. We thanked her for building this excellent program over the years. She will be missed.

The new BAT Coordinator and Curriculum writer is Rev. Gary Gossel, whom we welcomed at our April meeting.

Boundary Awareness Trainings were held on-line by most Associations, with the exception of the Suffolk Association, which did an in-person BAT / Clergy Retreat Day.

Rev. Gary Gossel will hold a training session for BAT trainers on Wednesday afternoon, May 11, to certify and recertify trainers. There will be a follow-up Zoom for those who cannot attend. All Boundary Awareness Training in the New York Conference must be taught by people who have received Conference training.

The Commission put special emphasis on retiree issues; we have learned that retirees face their own special set of boundary issues. A separate BAT curriculum has been developed by ACM Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams; the first training took place on April 28, 2022. This training is for retirees and those who are considering retirement within the next few years.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Webinars: New York State Labor Law, section 201-G(1) and (2) requires all people employed in New York State to take a sexual harassment prevention training class each year. This includes clergy and church employees. Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, Penny Cannon, and Charlene Apsel, of Practical Resources for Churches, have developed a curriculum for this, which is offered as a 90-minute interactive Webinar. Although New York State has a PowerPoint presentation for this, PRC's on-line class offerings will make it easier for churches to comply with this law.

Scholarship Program: Rev. John Hottenstein coordinates this program, with David Losito of the Conference Office assisting. In the past, this was a scholarship-loan program, but several years ago, the Commission voted to eliminate the loan repayment component. Scholarship funds are available for Members in Discernment who are enrolled in seminary or in NYSOM. Last year, we awarded four scholarships. Congratulations to the following recipients: Tina Bacon (Western), Brianna Darling (Susquehanna), Rosanne Lowder (Western), and Marcia Tolman (Western). Tina Bacon then received a substantial Brown Scholarship, so she did not need the scholarship that we were going to give her.

Compensation Guidelines. Rev. Dr. Ann Van Cleef works on the guidelines. The Commission updated them in 2014 so that people who pursue further theological education are compensated accordingly. In 2015, we added columns to accommodate people who had taken seminary classes beyond the M.Div level, but are not pursuing a Doctorate. For 2023, the suggested compensation will be raised by 3%. The new guidelines will be published on the Conference Website in August. People who need the guidelines prior to August should just add 3% to last year's numbers.

Consultation for Committees on Authorized Ministry. This Consultation is held every year, and is a training session for Association Committees on Authorized Ministry. Unfortunately, the 2020 Consultation had to be canceled due to the pandemic. The 2021 Consultation was held online with Rev. Tara Barber, from the Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization (MESA) Staff in Louisville, as the featured speaker. Other speakers included Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine, Rev. Joanne Ferguson, Rev. Shernell Edney-Stilley, and Rev. David Gaewski.

The 2022 Consultation will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 10 – 11, and will be hosted by the good people of Homer Congregational Church in Homer, NY. MESA Staff members Rev. Renee Jackson, Minister for Ministerial Formation will be with us in person, and Rev. Tara Barber, Minister for Ministerial Support and Accountability will join us on Zoom.

Conflict Mediation Team and Training. We have twelve people Conference-wide who have been trained in conflict mediation and restorative circles. ACM Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams has taken the training necessary to become a certified Conflict Mediation Trainer, which will save the Conference considerable expense by no longer having to use the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Our goal is to have at least one Conflict Mediation Trainer on each Association's Committee on Authorized Ministry.

Response Team and Training. The purpose of the Response Team is to conduct interviews when a Fitness Review takes place. At the present time, twenty-two people in the Conference have been trained as members of the Response Team. Associate Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams oversees the Response Team and conducts the training. New members are needed.

Unified Fitness Review Board (UFRB). As it is very difficult for members of an Association Committee on Authorized Ministry to conduct a Fitness Review for a colleague, the Conference-wide UFRB allows for people from other Associations to be trained to conduct a Fitness Review. Rev. Valerie Meyer chairs the UFRB. Various Conference Staff members are assigned to this Board, depending on the situation. New members are needed.

Continuing Education. Our Associations now require 25 hours of Continuing Education per year. (The Western Association requires 75 hours every three years.) The Commission on Ministry urges the Associations and Conference to distribute CE certificates that state the number of hours earned at the conclusion of workshops and BAT sessions. Continuing Education opportunities are published each week in Happenings, as well as on the drop-down menu under Ministries on the NY Conference website. In addition, Practical Resources for Churches offers many opportunities for CE credit through their webinars.

Communities of Practice (CoP). Communities of Practice are peer groups who share a passion for their work, learning how to minister more effectively through regular interaction with one another. We have two very active MID groups, but the clergy groups have been very slow in forming. We will be putting this on the "back burner," so to speak, for the time being.

Culturally Responsive Ministry Training for Authorized Ministers: Eight Association Committees on Ministry have voted to make this training mandatory for all Authorized Ministers, and, for Metro Association Clergy, Module 1 will fulfill the Anti-Racism training requirement."

Guidelines for Pastors Leaving a Call. These written guidelines clarify boundaries for clergy as well as congregations when a Pastor leaves a call. Rev. John Werley and Dr. Marsha Williams worked on this project for two years. The guidelines are available as a resource on the Conference website.

Commission on Ministry Personnel. New members: Rev. Hafidah Saadiqah is our new Hudson-Mohawk Association Liaison. Many thanks to Rev. Robert (Bob) Dievendorf for representing Hudson-Mohawk on the Commission. on the Commission. Rev. Gary Gossel is our

new Boundary Awareness Coordinator. We thank Penny Cannon for her years of service to the Commission and to the New York Conference.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Rev. David Gaewski for his years of service and devotion to the Conference, and to our Commission. Each year, we made room for David to speak on any topic he chose at our Consultations, and he always got rave reviews! David, you have been a gift from God to the Conference, the Commission, and to me, personally. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, but know that we are keeping you on our guest speakers list. This is “so long,” but not “goodbye.” “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

They say that God sends the right people, both clergy and lay, to churches at the right time. I believe this goes for Conferences as well. Again, I would like to thank Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, of the Conference Staff, for her untiring work for the Conference and for the Commission. She brings leadership, encouragement, fresh ideas, and a lot of energy to the table. It is a real pleasure to work with her. She has now been appointed as our Transitional Conference Minister, and I can’t wait to see her in action!

I would also like to thank each and every member of the Commission. It is a joy to work with this outstanding group of people.

The members of the Commission on Ministry include:

+John Werley	Black River / St. Lawrence Association
+Valerie Meyer	Genesee Valley Association
+Hafidah Saadiqah	Hudson-Mohawk Association
+Ruth Shaffer	Metropolitan Association
+Lynn Sullivan	Metropolitan Association
+Mike Grinnals	Oneida Association
+Julia Turner	Reformed Association
+Ann Van Cleef	Suffolk Association; COM Chair
Susan (Sue) Frost	Susquehanna Association
+Jeremy Lopez	Western Association
+Rev. Gary Gossel	BAT Coordinator
+Marjorie Purnine	NYSOM Dean
+Susan (Sue) Fast	NYSOM Student
Joanne Nugent-Ward	COM Secretary
+John Hottenstein	Scholarship Chair
+Marsha Williams	Conference Staff

(+ Denotes Authorized Clergy)

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Ann M. Van Cleef,
Chair, Commission on Ministry