

In this past year, the New York School of Ministry, the program through which the congregations of the NY Conference provide educational resources and foster leadership development for one another and for those beyond New York, was a flurry of activity. For authorized ministers seeking continuing education, NYSOM offered a variety of learning opportunities. We held 9 sessions of Boundary Awareness Training for 67 participants (1 session of Basic BAT; 6 sessions of BAT Refresher; and 2 sessions of Retiree BAT). We held 7 sessions of Culturally Responsive Ministry Training: Module 1 - Culture & Race for 104 participants. On June 15, just prior to the 2023 Annual Meeting, the Continuing Education Institute, supported by a generous grant from the Brown Endowment of United Church Funds, is offering three courses: "The New Face of Grief," "Forming a 21st Century Christian Religious Imagination," and "Culturally Responsive Ministry Training: Culture & Race," plus a morning workshop entitled, "Liberation Listening - A Spiritual Practice and A Model for Ministry." At the time of writing, we have 60 registrants.

For Members in Discernment preparing for ordination, for whom seminary is not a viable option, we continue to offer an educational and formational path that involves coursework, mentoring, supervised ministry, a ministry practicum, summer intensives and much more, to help them develop and demonstrate the capacities (the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers in the UCC) to minister in and on behalf of the UCC. We have 14 NY Conference MIDs on this path. Our 20-hour core ministry courses are open to MIDs from other conferences as well, and this year, as we offered Introduction to Christian Theology, Liturgy & Worship, Congregational Life, and American Church History, we had 4 students from Vermont and 7 from New Hampshire (many taking more than one course) whose participation has made the learning richer and more vibrant. These courses are open to everyone (MID status is not required), and this year I was delighted to see 3 New Yorkers take their first course as well as 3 authorized ministers use our core courses for continuing education credit.

Through a generous grant from the Jeanine Heller foundation, NYSOM has continued to be able to help with scholarship money, which often makes the difference for folks who want to take one of our core ministry courses or continuing education offerings. This grant also allowed us to offer a free Fall Learning Event for MIDs, "The Pastor as Teacher: Reclaiming a Neglected Call," led by Rev. J. Mark Lawson. 18 MIDs from 3 conferences participated.

Once they have completed the core ministry courses, MIDs preparing for ordination via NYSOM's path participate in the four-year ministry practicum. This year's focus was on preaching, with 3 New Yorkers and 1 MID from Connecticut, part of the Southern New England Conference, participating. It's a long path of preparation, and we were so pleased to celebrate Susan Fast's ordination on April 23, 2023. Susan is the 9<sup>th</sup> person to be ordained whose preparation is through the New York School of Ministry.

As year flows into year (I've been at this since 2007), I continue to be deeply thankful for everyone who helps sustain the New York School of Ministry: our core faculty, our Boundary Awareness Training and Culturally Responsive Ministry Training facilitators, our Continuing Education Institute instructors, our mentors and supervisors, the teaching congregations in which our students develop their skills for ministry, the members of the Committees on Ministry with whom we work, and Lisa Delgado and Aja Harris who provide administrative support to our educational efforts. I am grateful for the ongoing generosity of the E Rhodes and Leona B Carpenter Foundation which subsidizes the infrastructure of NYSOM and for the support provided by the Jeanine Heller Foundation. I give thanks, as well, for my colleagues on the Conference's Ministry Team whose care and counsel are priceless. Finally, I give

thanks for the churches of the New York Conference, who make the New York School of Ministry possible and participate in the essential work of forming gifted people for diverse ministries across the Conference and beyond, strengthening Christ's church far and wide.