

In this past year, the New York School of Ministry provided continuing education for our ministers and a path of preparation for Members in Discernment (MIDs) in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. For authorized ministers seeking continuing education, NYSOM offered Boundary Awareness Training, Culturally Responsive Ministry Training, and a self-care focused fall event. As we had the year before, we held 9 sessions of Boundary Awareness Training: Basic BAT, Refresher BAT, and Retiree BAT. We exceeded last year's participation with 95 ministers and MIDs participating. In the second year of Culturally Responsive Ministry Training: Module 1 - Culture & Race, we held 4 sessions for 49 participants on zoom (and for the final in-person session on May 30, we have 18 registered). We did find that most ministers and MIDs took CRMT during the first year it was offered, so we had to cancel 4 planned sessions, due to low enrollment. In the fall we offered two sessions (Friday and Saturday) of "Ministering to Minds and Souls" led by the Rev. Dr. Lisa Banks-Williams in which 36 ministers and MIDs participated.

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. Currently, we have 13 NY Conference MIDs (from 7 of our 9 Associations) on this path. Our 20-hour core ministry courses are open to everyone: NY MIDs, MIDs from other Conferences, lay people who want to gain knowledge and enhance the ministries in which they're engaged, and ministers seeking to polish some skills. This year, we offered Foundations and Practice of Pastoral Counseling, UCC (Post 1957) History & Polity, Introduction to Christian Ethics, and New Testament I and II. With the help of scholarship money provided by the Jeanine Heller foundation, we have continued to make learning possible for people whose finances are tight. I so appreciate the ability that money provides me – to lower the barriers to theological educational offerings (for I know that what we're teaching is flowing directly into our churches).

The big news this year is the completion of a revised path toward ordination. It's been a generation since we created our educational and formational path in 2008, and work needed to be done to broaden the foundation of learning and then streamline the path, smoothing out sticking points. This work involved the members of our Committees on Ministry at their Consultation in 2023, our faculty, and then our Curriculum Committee, who considered multiple versions before approving our new path this spring. I am so pleased with the revised path – it fits the educational needs and realities of MIDs in this time. In the next year, I'll be working with each of our Committees on Ministry as they decide whether current MIDs should remain on the old path or be placed on the new one.

It's been a year of celebration and transitions. In the fall, I was in Charlotte VT, delighted to be able to participate in Hadley Bunting's ordination (our second student from VT to be ordained), and in March, it was a joy to attend Krista Ulrich's ordination at Ebenezer UCC. Eric Gramse, a MID in Bridgeport CT, completed his work with us this winter (the core ministry courses and the W&S Practicum). We hope to hear of his ordination in Southern New England before too long. Rev. Dr. Eric Jackson has come onto our core faculty – he and I co-taught UCC (Post 1957) History & Polity in the fall. And, after many years, Rev. Dr. Steven Johnson is retiring. Steve has been an essential member of the core faculty since NYSOM was created in 2004. He has taught Theology, Ethics, and our history courses. His voice has been valued in our Curriculum Committee, as we have made countless decisions that have shaped our educational offerings and made our ongoing efforts sustainable. I am so thankful for his decades of commitment to

this small educational program and hope he knows how many ministers and churches he has impacted. He will be missed.

Lastly, I want to offer thanks to everyone who helps sustain the New York School of Ministry: our core faculty, our Boundary Awareness Training and Culturally Responsive Ministry Training facilitators, our mentors and supervisors, the teaching congregations in which our students develop their skills for ministry, and the members of the Committees on Ministry with whom we partner. I'm grateful that Barb Toll has become the point person for the Continuing Education Institute and the lead in CRMT curriculum creation and for Lisa Delgado's ongoing registration support and financial clarity. Heartfelt thanks to the E Rhodes and Leona B Carpenter Foundation, which supports the infrastructure of NYSOM through salary subsidies, and to the Jeanine Heller Foundation, for their ongoing support that helps so many students prepare for ministry. To all my colleagues on the Conference Ministry Team, it is a joy to work with you, and to the churches of the New York Conference who contribute to make the New York School of Ministry possible: thank you for looking beyond the cares of today to tend to the needs of the church of tomorrow.