

# Elisha intern experiences unique ministries

Lily Jones, Elisha intern, explored her call to ministry with Fusion Church and campus ministry at Dakota Wesleyan University. "I was blessed to learn a lot in these unique settings," said Lily.

The Elisha Project, now in its sixth year, aligns with the conference's desire to create a culture of call that actively encourages young adults to explore how God is calling them to build the kingdom. Last year five interns explored ministry through the internship program.

Lily Jones, a senior at Dakota Wesleyan University (DWU), spent time learning and practicing ministry with Rev. Eric Van Meter, campus pastor and Rev. Steve Trefz, Fusion. "There is pastoral ministry, which is great. There is another side of ministry, being a campus pastor. You are in ministry to those that are in this specific period of their life," explains Lily. "I really want to learn how to reach people who are going through something difficult in their lives. How to pray with them in a way that speaks to them and to who God is."

One of the things that she learned about herself is that she likes to connect people and their talents. "I really enjoyed getting to know people," she said. "I like to see where people fit. Where they enjoy serving and connecting them with those areas. I think that is really special."

Lily spent time learning and leading ministry at Fusion in children's ministry, technology, service projects and worship planning. Fusion is a United Methodist Church that meets for worship, small group activities and other ministry on the campus of Dakota Wesleyan University. The congregation is a blend of DWU students and people from the Mitchell community.

Lily sums up her Elisha experience this way. "You get to work with a lot of people who are invested in you. It is very enriching that people invest in you and they want to see you succeed. You get to learn and take ownership of some things. I really have enjoyed that."

The 2017-2018 Elisha interns were: Bryce Blank, DWU and Mitchell Fusion; Dylan Deflethsen, Rapid City First; Lily Jones, DWU and Mitchell Fusion; Tiffany Ortman, West Fargo Flame of Faith; Kara Togel, Box Elder The Bridge; and Cody Warns, Spearfish UMC.

The Thrive campaign will enable the conference to: start **10** new faith communities, assist over **112** churches in revitalizing their ministries and developing leaders for the future.

In 2018, over **\$220,000** of Thrive funds will be spent on establishing new churches (**\$155k**), coming alongside existing churches to enter a new era of growth (**\$32k**), and raising up and developing leaders (**\$33k**).



2017-18 Elisha intern, Lily Jones  
Photo by Dave Stucke, Dakotas Conference

Total Pledged	\$3,600,000
Total Collected*	\$1,800,000

\*as of June 30, 2018



# Thrive on the Move

Summer 2018

## GROWING A CULTURE OF CALL

### DISCERNING OUR CALL

Sometimes God nudges people along in gentle ways. God's call may come through an invitation to explore ordained ministry in the Elisha Project or by attending a discernment retreat. The nudge is often felt at a United Methodist camp. Inviting young clergy—under the age of 35—into ministry is part of the Dakotas Conference culture. The conference, for the past two years, has been in the **top ten** with a high number of young, new clergy. \*

\*Source: 2017 report from the Lewis Center for Leadership

### Youth Ministry Cohort:

**20** churches have engaged more than

**100** volunteers in

**30** hours of training

with consultant Stephanie Caro, Ministry Architects, to create plans to revitalize children and youth ministry at the local church.



### Living out our call by the numbers:

**19** new clergy



Clergy Leadership Academy averaged

**10** attendees previous year



now averaging **24**



### Discernment retreats provide entry point to lay ministry

Through baptism, all Christians are called to a ministry of servanthood. Some feel called to serve their own church or others in a deeper way. A one-day discernment retreat is the entry point for those exploring a call to lay ministry and provides an overview of the various lay ministry opportunities. Participants are equipped and inspired to serve as a leader in various ministry areas inside and outside your congregation. You may be called to serve as staff or volunteer in areas like community advocacy, social justice issues, earth care, as well as children/youth ministry, congregational care, hospitality, prayer, mission, and more.

This year the Dakotas Conference quadrupled the number of participants in lay training, discernment retreats and Breakthrough Prayer.

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# The Light reaches new people

"We are reaching people that might not have been reached. People experience the Holy Spirit in different ways. The Light worship service invites people to a multi-sensory—lights, sound, contemporary music and movement—experience that is not in a church sanctuary." That is how Pastor Taylor Johnson, leader of The Light worship team at Sioux Falls First United Methodist Church, describes The Light service that happens at 11:15 each Sunday morning.

Three years ago, Sioux Falls First redesigned their worship services. The congregation was involved in the Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI). MCCI is a revitalization process that involves self-study, intensive training, and a visit from a consultation team that gives recommended prescriptions.

Johnson has worked with volunteers to create a lead team that plans and carries out the worship each week. The space where worship takes place is used in multiple ways. So the stage, lights, chairs, and all of the other components the team plans, have to be set up and taken down before and after the service.

The new service has been evolving as leaders step up. Pastor Taylor, along with Rev. Bob Ruedebusch, lead pastor at Sioux Falls First UMC, has been involved in the Multiply Leaders compass group. The learning covenant group, led by Rev. Roger Spahr, district superintendent, connects knowledge and partnership.

"There have been six lessons that we listen to. Then we discuss the ideas and expand on them. The discussion that we have and the connections we make with each other have been helpful to me and I think to the others," said Johnson.

Taylor is quick to share that learning new ways to get new leaders has been a very beneficial part of the Multiply Leaders group. "It has been great to get ideas about encouraging people into leadership. When you are starting a new service, you are trying to get a group of people involved that are not a part of your church," he said. "People in similar situations reassured me. It was great to get feedback that you are doing things right. You have to keep pushing through."



Rev. Taylor Johnson shares a message during The Light worship service at Sioux Falls First United Methodist Church. Photos courtesy of Sioux Falls First UMC.

Rev. Ben Ingebretson, director of new church development for the Dakotas-Minnesota Area has shaped the content for the Multiply Leaders program. "The knowledge and gifts that Rev. Ben Ingebretson brings to the Multiply Leaders program have been very beneficial," Taylor shared.

The Light service has created a unique community. "There are still more people to reach," said Johnson. "I am so grateful for where we are but it would be awesome to see 100 people and outgrow our space. Maybe start another service."

The first ever Dakotas Conference Multiplying Matters Award was awarded to Sioux Falls First United Methodist Church for the expansion of their ministry with The Light service. Johnson along with Rev. Bob Ruedebusch, received the award at the 2018 Dakotas Annual Conference in Sioux Falls, South Dakota from Rev. Ben Ingebretson.



One of the prescriptions was to relocate the contemporary worship service into their multi-purpose room. The idea was to welcome people who might feel overwhelmed walking into a traditional worship service in the sanctuary. One demographic does not define the group of 50-55 people that gather in the multi-purpose room at Sioux Falls First United Methodist Church. "We're kind of a Motley Crew," describes Johnson. "There is a little bit of everybody. Some people come because they are new in town. Others come because they do not want to go to a traditional service in a sanctuary. And then there are those that wander in that have not heard about Jesus. They are curious and it feels comfortable."

# Interactive worship connects families

Worship attendance is up and space is getting tight at West Fargo Flame of Faith. Young families are coming to worship at 9 a.m. to interact as a family and then head out to other family activities.

"There is a lot of energy and it brings fun into worship," says Rev. Sara McManus. The music is contemporary and the kids are a key part of the service. They assist Pastor Sara by taking the offering, helping with communion, assisting with the kids moment or message, and any other ways that are needed. "I try to get the kids involved any way we can," said Pastor Sara.

When it is time for the sermon. The children leave and go to Sunday school. The adults stay and have a discussion. "I present some ideas and then we have a discussion in small groups," described Pastor Sara.

The service began in October of 2017 after some research and planning. "The administrative council began asking what could we do to get more families coming to worship and involved in the leadership of the church. We asked families what they would like and they told us. They did not like coming to a traditional worship service where there is not opportunity to interact. One of the things families are lacking is the time and opportunity to interact with family members and anyone else," said McManus.

Rev. Randy Cross, district superintendent in the North-east District, has involved McManus in the Multiply Leaders compass group. The group has provided a place to share

and bounce ideas off of other leaders who are talking about or involved with launching a new service. "It is nice to get ideas and to talk things through with different people. Everybody is in a different spot," she shared.



Rev. Sara McManus visit with the children at the interactive worship service. Photo courtesy of Flame of Faith UMC.

# Clergy Leadership Academy offers time for learning, renewal

Between serving as a licensed local pastor at First UMC in Mitchell, South Dakota and raising four children under the age of 6, Rev. Jerry Stravia IV doesn't have much time to retreat or gather with colleagues. That's why he's grateful for the Dakotas Conference's Clergy Leadership Academy (CLA). Twice a year, roughly 25 pastors—most in their first three years of ministry—gather at a camp to learn, worship, and recharge. "The goal is to allow clergy this time apart to not only learn from each other, but to dig deeper into topics that we know impact clergy effectiveness, clergy health, and clergy wholeness," said Deb Kjerstad, who serves as director of leadership development and leads CLA. "We want to give them an opportunity for ongoing learning that is in a safe, peer-shaped environment." Each gathering is centered around one of Bishop Robert Schnase's "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations": radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.

In addition to spending time in their clergy mentoring group and learning from speakers brought in to address the topic for that retreat, clergy participants have an opportunity to lead worship services at the gatherings and receive feedback from each other. "I value the diversity of CLA," said Stravia. "We all have different educational, personal, and relational backgrounds, plus we all have different theological, sociological, and political views, and it's a nice, safe place to be able to evaluate some of that stuff. I also value hearing the stories of others who are going through what you're going through. There's an opportunity for soul searching and navigating your journey with someone who is potentially where you're at. These gatherings have given me encouragement, courage, and clarity in my call."

