



**Heartland Conference Networks - Inspire, Connect, Equip, and Support  
For Vocational Discernment, Clarity, and Engagement**

For more information go to: [www.heartlanducc.org](http://www.heartlanducc.org)  
Also, sign up for Fast Five and Enews

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- **Pro-racial Equity Network** - Following Jesus' call to extravagantly love all God's children, this network seeks to engage, encourage, equip, and empower the work of antiracism in every arena in life. The Heartland Conference has now partnered with the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church to engage conversations that work to inform, form, and transform the world in response to racism. The Pro-racial Equity Network meets monthly on the second Thursday of the month at 7 pm via zoom. For more information contact Rev. Marla Flewellan at [revmarlaf@gmail.com](mailto:revmarlaf@gmail.com).
  - **Mental Health and Accessibility Network** - Working to cultivate Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE) congregations and communities around Mental Health and also to build spaces that are accessible to all (A2A) This network meets monthly via zoom on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm. Every other month we meet with the WISE team of the Indiana Kentucky Conference. For more information contact Carol Peterson at [carol.peterson57@icloud.com](mailto:carol.peterson57@icloud.com).
  - **Faith Formation Network** - This network brings together those interested in faith formation in every age and stage of life. Working from a model called "Learn It, Live It, Share It" this network hosts an annual conference in February or March and offers monthly gatherings for shared learning and idea exchange. For more information contact Rev. Mary Meadows at [mary@sylvanaucc.org](mailto:mary@sylvanaucc.org).
  - **Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Network** - This network has formed in response to the tragic reality of historic numbers of people dying from drug overdose. The HROP network has developed a congregational curriculum to help people better understand what harm reduction is and also clarify a call to this ministry engagement. The curriculum is free and can be found by going to <https://heartlanducc.org/hrop/>. For more information, contact Minister Blyth Barnow at [blyth@healoh.org](mailto:blyth@healoh.org).
  - **Environmental Care and Justice Network** - A network connecting individuals and congregations with a passion or a desire to tend the realities of climate change meets monthly on the second Friday of the month at 1 pm via zoom. In addition, this network has offered a day-long retreat to inspire, connect, equip and support people who have interest and passion to care for the whole creation. To find out more information contact Hank Stonerook at [hankstonerook@gmail.com](mailto:hankstonerook@gmail.com)
  - **Disaster Response Network** - This network connects for disaster relief in a wide variety of ways including long-term recovery efforts in Mayfield Kentucky, the Help Build Hope House build a 24 hour house build blitz in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, and Church World Service Bucket and Hygiene kit assembly. Teams for the Mayfield rebuild are now being accepted into the summer months. They are also helping congregations to consider how they can be more "disaster-ready". For more information, contact our Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, Kevin Gehres, at [gehreskb@gmail.com](mailto:gehreskb@gmail.com)
  - **Veteran Ministry Network** - Under the inspiration of the Rev. Dr. John Schluep, retired Army chaplain and former Sr. Pastor at First Congregational Church in Tallmadge and founder of Warrior's Journey Home, this network has formed to help congregations consider how to support veterans who carry moral injury due to their time of service. An introduction to this work focused on the book *Coming Home, A Ministry that Matters with Military Veterans and Families* by Zachary Moon was hosted by one of our members, retired Army Chaplain, Rev. Mark Roeder, pastor of Grace UCC in Forth Wright, Kentucky. The powerpoint for that presentation can be found by clicking [here](#). For more information about the Veteran Ministry Network contact Rev. John Schluep at [warriorsjourneyhome@gmail.com](mailto:warriorsjourneyhome@gmail.com).

- **Westphalian Partnership Network** - For over 30 years the Heartland Conference has had a full ecumenical partnership called *kirchengemeinschaft* with the Evangelical (protestant church) of Westphalia in Germany. This partnership includes the opportunity to form local church partnerships and opportunities for high school students to be part of summer exchange programs called "Young Ambassadors". Additionally, a global theological conversation happens every September. For more information, contact Rev. Dr. Sigrid Rother at [sigrid@westervillecucc.org](mailto:sigrid@westervillecucc.org)
- **SARA - Sharing America's Resources Abroad** - This long-standing global engagement has had vital connections with the people of Ukraine over the past 30 years. It is our primary conduit for gifts to aid in food, water, and shelter relief for Ukrainian refugees. To date, over \$107,000 has been contributed through this channel. To find out more, contact Dr. Jeannie Szilagyi at [szilsara@gwcmail.net](mailto:szilsara@gwcmail.net).
- **Generosity Network** - The Generosity network gathers for inspiration and practical ideas for financial development based on gratitude and hope. This group gathers four times a year for inspiration and idea sharing, including a yearly preaching challenge on the subject of generosity. is developed by Rev. Andrew Warner at the national setting which shares a wide range of practical generosity ideas. Working in partnership with UCC National Philanthropy Officer, Rev. Andrew Warner, this group helps coordinate online webinars and additional training like Cultivating Generous Congregations and coordinates the sharing of a monthly newsletter, "Heartbeat of Generosity". For more information, contact Rev. Mark Frey at [mwfrey73@gmail.com](mailto:mwfrey73@gmail.com).
- **Part-time Ministry Network** - Guided by the passion of Rev. Rachel McDonald, pastor of South Haven UCC, this network seeks to gather and support those who are in part-time ministry, yet full-time life. Finding the balance between one's various vocations can be a challenge. This network seeks to offer encouragement and insight into the unique gifts and challenges of part-time pastoring. For more information, contact Rev. Rachel McDonald at [revrachelmcdonald@gmail.com](mailto:revrachelmcdonald@gmail.com).
- **LGBTQI+ Network** - This newly formed network is gathering partners from across the conference to inspire churches to become Open and Affirming, create opportunities for connection between individuals and congregations, equip with resources for this commitment, and provide support for clergy and congregations for the ongoing journey. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Rev. Kay Albright at [pastorkay2@gmail.com](mailto:pastorkay2@gmail.com) or Rev. Bobby Burt at [bobby.burt@akronfcc.org](mailto:bobby.burt@akronfcc.org).
- **Youth Ministry Network** - A network in support of youth ministry across our life is beginning to emerge. There is a need for connection and encouragement of youth and leaders in our congregations and so an effort to gather folks is beginning in this area. For more information contact either Rev. Jonathan Bradner at [pastorjonathan.iucc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjonathan.iucc@gmail.com) or Rev. Joyce Wealand at [joycewealand@gmail.com](mailto:joycewealand@gmail.com)
- **STAR (Small Town and Rural) Church Netowrk** - A network tending the unique gifts and challenges of small town and rural ministry is in the early process of formation. The hope is to connect pastors and lay leaders in these settings for mutual encouragement and resourcing and to also connect to the wider conversations about rural and small town ministry that are happening in the wider life of the United Church of Christ. If you are interested in this evolving network, please contact Pastor Amy Kinney at [pastoramyk@cheerful.com](mailto:pastoramyk@cheerful.com).
- **Spiritual Companions Network** - This network is in formation seeking to gather those who have been trained as Spiritual Directors or have a special gift for spiritual companionship to cultivate opportunities for mutual encouragement and support. The group also envisions the development of resources and opportunities for spiritual retreats. For more information, contact Alejandro Rodriguez at [arodsr1957@gmail.com](mailto:arodsr1957@gmail.com).
- **Global Ministry Network** - This network is in formation and is seeking to gather people who have connections with our Global Ministry Partners or those who wish to develop those connections. For more information contact Rev. Dr. Dale Ann Gray at [daleann@gmail.com](mailto:daleann@gmail.com)