

## **ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO MINISTRY**

For the past few years, several of us have been exploring new models for ministry and alternative pathways to ministry. Essentially, we are thinking about how to equip the members of our congregation who might be called to serve—and who are already serving—but not necessarily taking a standard path (seminary, etc.) and not necessarily headed towards full time ministry, etc. While there are various labels that we could put on this, we are thinking of this as a kind of apprenticeship—people working in a congregation and being mentored by experienced pastors, while also taking classes and other training and meeting regularly with other members of the cohort to support one another, share experiences, and reflect on their call, but also to reflect on the process, what they need to be successful, etc.

The conference is also providing some funds to pay for classes (right now those classes are online at [Philips Theological Seminary](#), which are reasonably priced at \$100)

We started last Fall with four interested people—one in Colorado, one in Wyoming and two in Utah. Two left for different reasons, two are still in the program. Each of them is working as a lay leader in their congregation (preaching, leading worship, etc), and is following a course of study determined with their mentor. We hope to broaden the cohort this year.

- Members of the Cohort. People who want to explore a call to ministry within an apprentice-type program. Each one will work with two mentors, one local.
- Mentors. People willing to work closely with individual members of the cohort to help them determine what their call is, and what kind of education and training they need, as well as providing feedback and support.
- Congregations. This includes congregations where members of the cohort will work (likely where the person is already engaged in some form of ministry). But, it might also include congregations that are open to providing opportunities for ministry beyond a single congregation (e.g., members of the cohort might spend time in different congregations to broaden experience in preaching, teaching, worship, etc).
- Interested Parties. People who are interested in helping to develop these alternative pathways—best practices for individuals and congregations, covenantal relationship, accreditation, etc. This would include reflecting on our ongoing process in the RMC, as well as looking at what other Conferences and denominations are doing.

If you or your congregation wants to be involved, please reach out to Lisa Stenmark: [lstenmark@icloud.com](mailto:lstenmark@icloud.com).

You can also look for Lisa (or Beth Henson or Alexander Brown)