



## Journey program invites active leaders into further study

**Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program** is a non-credit program for people preparing for ministry. Central District Conference, along with Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, sponsors this program, which is offered by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Study involves coursework done online, meetings with a local pastoral mentor at least every other week, and twice-a-year gatherings with all participants.

Currently two members of the conference and their mentors are participating. JP Schumacher, First Mennonite, Bluffton, and Dennis Miller, Silverwood Mennonite Church, are students. Each has a mentor—Gloria Bucher for JP, and John Heyerly for Dennis—as they work through the five units of study.

These participants reflect for *focus* on why they are involved and the benefits to them and their congregations.

### Dennis Miller

I've been in construction my entire working life and have always had this desire to work in



John Heyerly (left) and Dennis Miller talk together about an assignment during a Journey Weekend Learning Event in September.

the church. The Journey program has given me that opportunity to explore this nudge I've felt through the years.

Journey has been eye opening for me in more ways than one. It has stretched and challenged me in my understanding of the Bible, it has given me better understanding of our Anabaptist heritage, and has been very inspiring for my own spiritual journey.

### JP Schumacher

I became interested in the Journey program after a conversation with Doug Luginbill at Builder's Retreat at Camp Friedenswald. Attending seminary was a very positive experience, but I did not feel settled about going back to start another term. I told Doug that my goals are to be better equipped/trained to help serve in the church and community. Doug then asked if I knew about the Journey program through CDC and AMBS. I did not, but would soon learn about this wonderful program that seems to be exactly what I had been searching for.

I am most interested in hospitality ministry,



Gloria Bucher (left) and JP Schumacher from First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, are mentor and mentee in the Journey program.

visitation and a possible sermon or two along the way. I do know that the three years of study will help develop and direct me.

### **John Heyerly**

In looking back on my own education, it would have been good to have such a structured mentoring program. I was asked by a friend and encouraged by pastoral leaders to become a mentor for Dennis. Such trust is hard to ignore.

Journey challenges me to refresh some of my long-forgotten scholarship. It's also good to work with a mentee who has not done as much study as I have. This makes me tone down my theological and churchly language.

My mentee readily takes responsibility in the church, which means he does much of what he always did, plus taking opportunities to teach adult Christian education classes. He will also join the church board in 2018, probably in part because his Journey participation is frequently mentioned.

### **Gloria Bucher**

JP has been a friend for some time. I have encouraged her as she has been challenged to clarify her calling, and so serving in the more formal role of mentor came quite naturally. Our discussions are mutually challenging and enlightening. It is our hope that her Journey experience will find an outlet in our local congregation and community.

### **Doug Luginbill**

*CDC conference minister*

The Journey program serves two purposes for members of our CDC congregations. First, it serves as an intentional and well-developed

program of training for lay leaders, which will enhance effectiveness in many areas of congregational leadership, including worship leading, visitation ministries, chairing meetings, teaching and spiritual disciplines. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to test a call to pastoral ministry, chaplaincy or other ministerial leadership roles and provides an excellent foundation for further seminary training or theological study.

### **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker,**

*Dean of Lifelong Learning at  
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary*

Journey is an excellent choice for leaders who want an overview of Anabaptist theological education but who are not looking for the depth and time commitment that a seminary degree demands. The program provides a framework for understanding Anabaptist theology and guidance for crucial ministry areas. It invites and encourages participants to be formed spiritually, theologically and practically for many types of ministries in their churches and communities.

Lay leaders, people exploring a call to ministry, people involved in community ministries and pastors without formal educational preparation for seminary could all benefit from participating in Journey.

### **For more information**

Because of CDC's sponsorship of Journey, any member of the conference who wishes to participate can do so at a discounted cost. For more information, visit <https://www.ambs.edu/lifelong-learning/journey-missional-leadership-development> and contact Doug Luginbill, [confmin@mcusacdc.org](mailto:confmin@mcusacdc.org).



*Journey participants gathered at Amigo Centre in September for the fall Weekend Learning Event. CDC participants attend two of these events each year during their study, the fall event at Amigo Centre and the spring event at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart.*

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Central District Conference  
[www.mcusacdc.org](http://www.mcusacdc.org)    [office@mcusacdc.org](mailto:office@mcusacdc.org)  
800.662.2264