

## Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

Thirty-eight people participated in Journey in 2021-2022, including 17 participants and 14 mentors in the North American program and six participants and one mentor in the Journey Southeast Asia program. One participant, **Charles Baraka** (Madison, Madison Mennonite) and his mentor, **Lavon Welty** (Goshen, Eighth Street Mennonite) are from Central District Conference.

Participants gathered at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Michigan, for the fall Weekend Learning Event. Worship sessions laid the foundation for our time together and took place four times throughout the weekend. Learning sessions, led by **Isaac Villegas**, focused on spiritual disciplines and character formation for ministry. Others led sessions on developing personal timelines, including significant points of spiritual and vocational growth; personality inventories; and exploring spiritual direction. Mentors participated in a mentoring workshop (co-led by **Conference Minister Doug Luginbill**); and mentors and mentees met together to develop and update their learning covenants, which help to guide mentees through the program.

Following the fall gathering, participants joined online missional leadership development classes developed by David B. Miller, Teaching Associate of the AMBS Church Leadership Center, and taught by Roland Kuhl, Journey Instructor. As part of these studies, students also carried out a wide variety of ministry assignments in their congregations and communities. Throughout the session they also met with their mentors, typically bi-weekly, to discuss their classes and their ministry experiences.

The winter Weekend Learning Event was held on the AMBS campus. On arriving, mentees submitted a reflection paper focused on their learnings from the previous online study unit, and mentors submitted reflections on the learnings of their mentees. These reflection papers are shared with mentees' conference ministers to help conference ministers stay informed of mentees' growth and development in the program.

The theme for the Weekend Learning Event was reading and interpreting scripture, and again included worship sessions, learning sessions led by **Susannah Larry**, mentor and mentee workshops, and work on learning covenants. During the Saturday evening worship time, mentees in their final term of the program, including Charles Baraka, shared a reflection, and conference ministers, including Doug Luginbill, provided a blessing and prayer.

Following the winter gathering, participants again joined online classes and continued to meet bi-weekly in mentor-mentee pairs.

The Journey Board plays a vital role in shaping and guiding the program. Many thanks to Doug Luginbill and **Gayle Gerber Koontz**, CDC Ministerial Committee representative, for serving on the board.

Journey participants and alumni frequently tell us that Journey is a tremendous learning opportunity for pastors, lay leaders, church planters, and other emerging leaders! If you or someone you know wants to develop or deepen ministry gifts or is exploring a call to ministry, please speak to Doug Luginbill about whether the Journey program might be the right next step.

Respectfully submitted,

Jewel Gingerich Longenecker  
AMBS Dean of Lifelong Learning