



2010 Conference Practice Modules

At the Calling Congregations Conference, we are inviting participation in a Practice Module to enable participants to build relationships, generate dialog and engage fully in a particular topic of interest through a series of facilitated conversations led by expert practitioners who are pastors, teachers and other leaders with skills and insight drawn from real-world experience.

Below is the summary of the Practice Modules for the constituents and capacities represented in the Calling Congregations network. During registration, participants select their top three choices for a Practice Module, and will continue with that group throughout the conference as relationships and conversations leading towards action continue.

Practice Modules and Facilitators

Facilitator bios are listed at the bottom of the page.

1. **Ministry with Teenagers - DaVita McCallister**

It is not uncommon for people to have their first inkling of a calling at age 13 or 14, if not younger. Well before a young person can choose a major or pursue a career, something within years to serve God's purposes in the world. This practice module will explore good youth ministry as an essential foundation for awaking young people to God's call.

2. **Ministry with Young Adults - Carol Howard Merritt**

The social phenomenon of "extended adolescence" in Western cultures means that young people are still asking vocationally significant questions well into their late 20s. Though the connection with young adults may be tenuous at times, communities of faith can be invaluable companions on the journey. This practice module will look at how faith communities accompany young adults when their time together may be brief and uncertain.

3. Campus Ministries as Congregations for College Students - Jan Rivero

There are few seasons in life that are as significant, vocationally speaking, as the college years. College is an ideal time for young people to encounter mentors and communities that help them ask the right questions and respond to their deepest longings, the needs of the world and the still, small voice of God. Campus ministers and ministries offer this for many college students. This practice module will explore campus ministries as a type of congregation where college students can ask their questions and explore the intersection between their faith and vocational aspirations.

4. Congregations Receiving Young Pastors - Geri McKenzie

Like many professions, the first years of service in pastoral ministry are often challenging. Young pastors must establish a new identity as pastor and develop the work and study habits necessary from providing leadership to their congregations. How congregations welcome and support young pastors are critical in their transition and longevity in congregational ministry. This practice module will look at the role of congregations in receiving and supporting young pastors for a lifelong service in pastoral ministry.

5. Leadership, Presence & Practice - William Lamar

Awaking and nurturing young people to respond to God's call is a collective effort, done best by communities of faith. But such work cannot truly take hold in a community without a shared commitment, authentic presence and congregational practices of its leaders. This practice module will focus on the role leaders and their practices play in cultivating their communities' care for vocation.

6. Spiritual Direction & Vocational Discernment - Patricia Lull

Good vocational discernment requires the capacity for deep listening – to the world, to oneself and to the whispers of the Holy Spirit. This personal effort is aided by companions who ask good questions and reflect our best understandings back to us. This practice module will focus on the practice of spiritual companionship for discernment, especially as it applies to young people and their particular questions.

7. Biblical Foundations for Calling Leaders - Shively Smith

Though the phrases “calling leaders” or “forming emerging church leaders” do not show up very often, if at all, in scripture, the Bible is without a doubt the story of generations that noticed, named and nurtured, as well as followed, leaders who listened to the voice of God. What do our ancestors of faith have to say about our role and partnership with God in calling and forming leaders for the church? This practice module will examine scripture for clues about communal practices that are important for calling and nurturing leaders for God’s church.

8. Foundation of Vocation CARE Practices - FTE Staff & VoCARE Practitioners

Is your faith community a safe, trustworthy space where the Holy Spirit is heard and the particular gifts and commitments of members, including clergy, are honored and called forth? Do you care for the vocation of all members? Young people grow strong in Christian identity, vocations, and the call to ministry where the vocation of every Christian is cared for. God calls us, but the congregation of God’s people notice, name and nurture the call of the next generation. This practice module will discuss four core practices for caring for vocation in one another.

9. Service to Others and Compassion to the World - Glen Balzer

Our Christian faith compels us to love of our neighbor, and acts of love and service – especially for those in greatest need — are often the sparks that ignite faith and brings it to life in real, concrete, vocational ways. This practice module will focus on a spiritually mindful approach to acts of service in the world and their capacity to attune young people to God’s call in their lives.

10. Mentoring Young People - Cynthia Lindner

Young people are navigating multiple, important life decisions as they explore their own vocational questions of identity, purpose and work in the world. They should not have to explore these questions alone. There are those who have traveled similar paths in pursuit of answers to life’s big questions and who now want to accompany young people on their journey as mentors. What is the role and practices of a good mentor? This practice module will explore what mentoring young people amidst their vocational questions and pursuits.

Facilitator Bios



Glenn Balzer is the National Director of Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection (DOOR) – a faith-based network of urban service-learning programs that expose participants to the issues and concerns facing an increasingly urban world. He has more than 20 years of experience working, living and pastoring in multi-cultural urban settings. He blogs about his work at <http://seethefaceofgodinthecity.blogspot.com>.



William H. Lamar IV is an itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and has served as pastor in three congregations. Currently, he is a Managing Director at Leadership Education at Duke Divinity where he designs resources addressing issues such as social innovation and the economic and communications challenges faced by denominations.



Cynthia Lindner is the Director of Ministry Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School and has worked for more than 20 years as parish pastor, hospice chaplain and pastoral psychotherapist. Her research interests include contemporary ministerial identity formation and she is the principal investigator on the Divinity School's "Border Crossing: Collaborative Theological Reflection for Ministry" – a Lilly Endowment project.



Patricia Lull is particularly interested in discipleship practices lived into for the sake of the world. Her pastoral vocation has been shaped by work with young adults in campus ministry and seminary settings – a vocation she most recently served as Dean of Students at Luther Seminary and as an affiliated pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. A lover of mysteries, she considers herself both a steward of the mysteries of God and a sleuth amid the ordinary mysteries of life.



Da Vita D. McCallister is the Associate Conference Minister for Youth and Young Adults in the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. She is also the founder of Magnificent Consultants, a consulting firm that specializes in empowerment for youth and young adults, and formerly served in the national office of the United Church of Christ as Minister for Youth, Young Adults and Outdoors.



Geri McKenzie is the Pathways to Ministry Administrator at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Geri works with Wilshire's Transition into Ministry Pastoral Residents, and to date Wilshire's TiM program has 14 Alumni and 4 current Pastoral Residents. Geri also works with Wilshire's seminary interns and college summer interns, and she is passionate about guiding and nurturing young people as they work to figure out where they are called to be.



Carol Howard Merritt is a pastor of **Western Presbyterian Church**, an intergenerational congregation in Washington, D.C. Carol is the author of *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation*, which was published by The Alban Institute in September 2007. Carol blogs at TribalChurch.org and she co-hosts The God Complex, a weekly Internet Radio Show with Bruce Reyes-Chow.



Jan Rivero is the United Methodist Campus Minister at UNC Chapel Hill and director of the Wesley Campus Ministry. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, Jan has pastored local congregations and college students for over 28 years. She has a profound passion for helping students find deeper faith in God, stronger connections to the church and clarity in their vocational callings.



Shively T. J. Smith is a doctoral student in Emory University's New Testament Studies Program. Originally from Kentucky, she completed her undergraduate degree in Nashville, TN at Fisk University. She received her master's degrees from both Emory's Candler School of Theology and Columbia Theological Seminary. Currently, Shively's interests include examining the speeches of Luke-Acts through the lenses of narrative criticism, historiography, and memory studies. She is also interested in the constructions of diaspora identities in texts such as James, the Petrine corpus, and the Daniel court tales. She is a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and a member of Greater Smith Chapel AME under Pastor Toni Belin Ingram.