

Report for the Transformation and Renewal Team

In September, the Transformation and Renewal Team partnered with the Penn West Conference Committee on Ministry to design a Pastor's Retreat at Antiochian Village, near Ligonier. This was held September 26 and 27 with 22 attendees. The retreat was truly that-an opportunity for ministers and Members in Discernment to retreat from the world, engage in the scriptures and prayer and be renewed in their relationship to God. The feedback from this was positive, as folks appreciated the opportunity to have time and space to connect with God. We thank the Brown Endowment of the United Church of Christ for providing funding for the retreat.

Early in January the committee met to discern and discuss further opportunities for transformation and renewal. We thank that Ackermans for hosting us in this time together. After much discussion about the need to reach out to Millennials, the group decided to contact Rev. Dr. Deidre King Hainsworth to see if she could help us in utilizing social media. After a good bit of communication via e-mail we asked Diedre to offer a training opportunity on March 28. There were about 10 people in attendance from around the conference. Diedre set up a Facebook group for those in attendance to work on goals that they set. We hope that out of this event, more people can be trained in the use of social media as a way to reach out into the community. This event was funded by the Strengthen the Church Offering.

The T and R team continues to discern ways to transform and renew the ministries of churches within the Penn West Conference. We are certainly open to suggestions and would welcome persons who might be interested in working with this team. We hope to focus on smaller groups of churches or churches that might partner in ministry, rather than the once a year events that we have designed and hosted in the past.

Jim Neatrour has graciously taken on researching demographics for communities through Mission Insight, a service that is available through the Penn West Conference. Mission Insight demographic breakdowns show the population, racial-ethnic trends, age trends, household incomes employment, charitable giving and religious preferences along with other information about a particular community. As churches think about their future ministries, this service provides helpful and concrete information about the present.

This year we welcomed Rebecca Cole-Turner into the group joining Jim Neatrour, Wilma Manchester, Brady Plummer, Nancy Harclerode, Rev. David Ackerman and me on the team.

Respectfully submitted,

Meredith Hutchison