

One Heart Working Group

Report to the Executives Teams of Heartland Conference and Associations of Central Southeast Ohio, Living Water ONE, Northwest Ohio and SONKA

September 9, 2020

The working group has met twice via online video conferencing since our last report. The minutes of those meetings are provided at the end of this report. This document is a summary of our on-going work.

Way Forward – Shared and Collaborative Ministry Updates (Celebrating Progress)

- The Association Ministers, Transitional Conference Minister, and Communications specialists from each setting met in August to determine the logistics for using Constant Contact as a shared resource as well as a process for sharing communication for wider distribution.
- The Anti-Racism Network held its initial gathering with over twenty attendees from our faith communities and more than thirty expressing interest.
- Stewardship and Finance continues to work in a shared and collaborative way. The Heartland Finance Committee and the Stewardship Working Group have been revitalized over the last several months. This not only has addressed the necessary financial concerns of the Conference but has facilitated collaboration and sharing.
 - Financial administration by United Church Homes for Heartland and SONKA is proceeding.
 - The Generosity and Stewardship Festival hosted by Living Water Association had conference-wide participation.
 - Living Water Association Investment Committee co-hosted (with Pacific School of Religion) a conversation about diversity and inclusion in asset management with the Knight Foundation, which included conference leadership (TCM and Stewardship WG Chair).

Way Forward – Restructuring for Long-term Collaborative and Shared Leadership

Our conversations have centered on how we might continue the momentum generated by the One Heart Working Group going forward. Many have expressed a desire to continue past the three month timeframe initially designated for this group. While there have been practical outcomes from our work, our meetings have focused on a larger vision for ministry for collaborative and shared ministry to benefit the faith communities served by our settings.

In our discussions, we have identified three functions needed in the fiduciary leadership of our settings: vision, administration, and ministry. The strength of the existing Working Group lies in created relationships and created spaces. It has been an organic process. By meeting regularly and intentionally building trust, the working group has not only been informed but has been transformed into a community that gathers for the purpose of visioning. In a moving forward structure, there needs to be a body focused on visioning that is not also weighed down by the necessary minutia of functional operation. In addition, in a legal structure, there are required responsibilities that must be met, such as the treasurer role. There are other administrative concerns that must be addressed, such as camp management, sell of properties, etc. Importantly, there are the programmatic aspect of ministry that is essential for our support of the local church and other faith communities. Any structure needs to account for these functions in a way that facilitates collaboration and shared ministry without overly burdening a small group of people.

Our growing consensus is that the Heartland Conference Board of Directors should draw from the leadership of the associations' governing bodies. This may mimic the current practice of NWA, which

currently has two members of its cabinet who also serve on the BoD. Alternatively, it may be two members of the association's Executive Team. Each association may choose how it designates that representation. Officers of the BoD may be elected separately by the conference. Heartland BoD then becomes the visioning body. The administrative and ministry functions are then designated as teams that report to the BoD.

Our hope is that, in the Executive Teams Meeting, we will have breakout groups to respond to and amplify this developing, proposed model of ministry. We ask the groups to begin a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Analysis and additional considerations:

- Group 1: STRENGTH
 - What strengths do we currently have in our settings?
 - What resources do we currently have to draw upon?
 - Additional Consideration: Begin a list of ministry functions for teams.
- Group 2: WEAKNESSES
 - What could be improved in this model?
 - What resources do we need to develop?
 - Additional Consideration: Begin a list of administrative functions for teams.
- Group 3: OPPORTUNITIES
 - How does this model position us for collaborative and mutual ministry?
 - How can we join in the movement of the Spirit in this season?
 - Additional Consideration: Dream a bit and consider what we might be able to do through collaboration and sharing.
- Group 4: THREATS
 - What is missing from this model?
 - How can we limit exposure to a breakdown in this model?
 - Additional Consideration: Consider potential pushback we might receive from our various constituencies.

Each breakout group should chose a recorder and a reporter to share with the larger group.

Finally, we were also led in devotions that reminded us, in part:

- Our work together is holy ground.
- Our wrestling with oneness is grounded in love.

Yours in Christ,
Cheryl A. Lindsay, Chair
One Heart Working Group

Why Statement:

Together in Christ love, we collaborate to reconcile and restore all God's creation.

Calling Statement:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit to connect, equip and support our faith communities to grow as faithful disciples and responsible stewards, following Jesus' call to extravagantly love all God's children and creation.

Minutes of One Heart Working Group Meetings ([August 26](#), [September 2](#))

[Restructure Proposal](#) (Please note: This was a document used to help facilitate our conversation; it is not our recommendation.)