

# Indiana-Michigan Conference Ministry Staff Structure

For several months, the Indiana-Michigan Transition Team has wrestled with how to structure future staffing in light of the *current economic realities*. As the Stewardship and Finance Commission has consulted with congregations about projected giving, it has appeared to us there will need to be a significant decrease in our conference spending plan. Even with cuts in other areas, we will still need to reduce the number of ministry staff in conference.

As the Transition Team struggled with this reality, we returned to an earlier idea that consisted of having a part-time "**cluster pastor**" in each cluster who would relate to those congregations. This idea generated a good deal of energy as we recognized the major shift this reflected within the conference. We had initially talked about this early in the process as a natural outcome of the Listening and Redesign Proposal. At the time, however, we felt that it was such a significant shift and the time was not right to move in that direction.

One of our struggles has been the realization that with cluster pastors there would be no place in this structure for Nancy Kauffmann or Tim Lichti, current Conference Regional Ministers, to continue in their present roles. They have done excellent work, but it became clear from budget realities that there will have to be a different alignment of staffing if we are to have a spending plan that we have a realistic chance of balancing.

We also realized this was such a change that we needed to bring it to the delegates for wisdom. There are both challenges and possibilities with this proposal.

## Possibilities

- more local empowerment in clusters
- better reflects spending plan realities
- has generated enthusiasm and energy in exploratory conversations
- more congruent with the emphasis on de-centralization in the Listening & Redesign Proposal
- local leaders will be closer to the missional possibilities within each cluster

## Challenges

- finding part-time cluster pastors
- complexity of working with a higher number of staff
- significant change from the past
- how to work at credentialing in a consistent way
- no placement for current Conference Regional Ministers Nancy and Tim

We bring this proposal for your prayerful consideration and feedback. We recognize there may be a lot of unanswered questions about the details of how all of it will work. We value your ideas. We want to test with you how this resonates with your sense of where the Holy Spirit is leading us as a conference.

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