

## Which of These Will Be Called to Ministry?

### A Summer Reflection on our Future Generation of Clergy

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It was a hot summer morning when my son, Solomon, and I packed up the van and drove to Merom for the day. We were greeted warmly by staff and youth. Susie gave us a tour through the Faith Journeys camp and allowed Solomon to jump into some of the activities. Each group welcomed him with open arms telling him how amazing camp was and why he should come back again. We ate lunch together with the wider group, singing songs and talking about our day. We went swimming in the pool and found it refreshing. We played 4-square and I, of course, kicked major butt until the seasoned professional youth came in and wiped the floor on me in a matter of seconds. And, finally, we got a wonderful tour of college hall. Near the end of my time there, Susie was called away for a moment and I spent some time in meditation and prayer on the “Fly With Jesus” bench and a strong Spirit moment came upon me.



It had only been a few short weeks since our Annual Gathering where we hosted two preachers that grew up in our conference and are both now serving in Illinois. Their sermons were so inspiring, and I am grateful for all that they are doing with their ministry. As I reflected upon the reality that our conference sent them out into ministry, I became profoundly aware that it was places like Merom that sent Leah into ministry. I could name close to a dozen pastors in our denomination whose young lives were impacted through this conference and have gone on to be successful clergy. As I walked the grounds to Merom and interacted with all the kids, I began to ask myself, “Which of these young people will be called to ministry because of what we are doing right now in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference?” Will it be him? Will it be her? Will it be them? Will it be my son? This is not limited to Merom, either. What are we doing in local churches to nurture our young people so that they will see and hear the call of God upon their lives? How about our college/university chaplains and all the amazing work they do in shaping the faith and thinking of young adults?

What about our Young Ambassadors program? What about the many other kinds of programs for youth, children, and young adults that we have yet to design that just might be so incredibly life transforming that they will see their call to ministry because we decided it was important enough to invest in the lives of young people.

Before going home from Merom that day, I sat on that bench by myself and I prayed for the lives that would be there this summer. I prayed for the future pastors, chaplains, and ministers that would be inspired by the work of that camp. I prayed for the Leahs, Vinces, Sarahs, Muriels, and Angies that have yet to claim God's call but for whom it is just now beginning to bud within. Maybe it will be my child. Maybe it will be yours. Maybe it will be you. God knows, and we simply get to play the role of midwife to these amazing lives that God uses in the United Church of Christ to transform and change the world into a more compassionate and just place for all. May it be so in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference and may it be so in all of our conferences in the United Church of Christ.