




Casting Your Nets on the Other Side
 An Initiative for Net Increase in Mission, Members & Money

...for the difference made in every life touched,
 ...for the vitality of our congregations, and
 ...for the capacity of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
 to preach and practice a powerful, progressive faith

“Casting Your Nets on the Other Side” (CYN) serves in **6 Ministry Areas** that are the foci of the conference-wide **Fishing Schools** and of each congregation’s **Action Plan**.

Focusing on Mission: reorienting churches to organize themselves around mission. *The Mission School* aims for congregations to see themselves as ‘gathered to be sent’ and ‘answering God’s call to do something for others.’ These are both the means and end of their existence. Despite our day’s hunger for personal spiritual experience, church must enable individuals to participate/invest in something greater than themselves. Serving intramural and extramural needs will be prescribed as making the church’s mission whole.

Growing Fellowship: deepening relationships, building trust/cooperation, sharing our lives, maintaining confidentiality, mediating conflict mediation, creating consensus, streamlining and adapting governance, instituting gift assessments, designing ministries that work for today’s volunteers. *The Fellowship School* aims to strengthen relationships, internal support and process so our congregations’ fellowship is worthy of being called ‘Christian’ and worthwhile to people whose lives are already too full and busy.

Strengthening Worship: evolving congregations’ practices of worship such that excellent services are more accessible and meaningful to a larger ‘audience.’ *The Worship School* aims to resource leaders for coaxing congregations towards updating liturgical traditions, developing deeper worship experiences, creating new practices customized for wider communities and opening more people to an experience of the holy (closeness to God and neighbor), not just for our minds, but also for our hearts/bodies.

Teaching Generosity: prompting people to dedicate their whole lives as generous stewards. *The Generosity School* aims to teach that 'giving of ourselves' (including specific dedication of material resources!) is crucial for faithfulness. Our congregations need to grow towards generosity in all things as a sign of our thanksgiving—but specifically, generously financing reinvigorated mission. Rather than asking for more money because 'we don't have enough,' the *Action Plan* process includes expense projections for each step towards additional mission and members, such that community members are contributing more for mission work they are committed to and proud of.

Inviting Others: intramurally, experiencing and talking with one another about the blessings of God working in our lives and of participating in the life of the church; and extramurally, sharing those blessings appropriately beyond our four walls. *The Invitation School* aims to teach individuals and congregations to speak in a natural, confident UCC way about their faith and how it impacts their lives. In some cases, this intramural piece is about prompting congregations to become better spiritual greenhouses. The second step for the *Invitation School* is outward-- helping our churches share the promise effectively in their broader communities. Our congregations must find appropriate ways to show/broadcast United Church of Christ faith as an invitation/promise to those whose lives might be enriched by participating, but do not know what the church can offer.

Leading for Change: pastoral survival while providing leadership to congregations in substantial flux-- leadership that prompts change while maintaining the assurance of relative continuity and stability. *The School for Pastoral Leadership* aims to provide our clergy with the support and skills needed for leading congregations facing significant challenges and substantial changes on the way to becoming more vital/effective.

The *Fishing Schools, Casting Your Nets on the Other Side's* learning communities, teach local churches' *Fishing Parties* (at least 6 leaders, including the pastor) how to bring local churches into *Casting Your Nets* and into 'doing church' in new ways. In *Fishing Schools*, leaders learn how their churches can use *Action Plans* to realize greater mission, reach new people, and raise new resources for ministry.

After the initial, three orienting *CYN* Sessions (in the first 6 to 8 months of the program), *Fishing Schools* meet three times a year. In their on-going work, *Fishing Schools'* participants support one another and the attempts of their local congregations to evolve core areas of church life, via evaluating, revising and living by their congregations' *Action Plans*.

"The Irish have a traditional blessing particularly apropos for our work in *Casting Your Nets*: May the holes in your net be no larger than the fish you hope to catch."

