

## **Palmer Institute Report to Metro NY District Assembly**

The Palmer Institute serves as the ministerial preparation and Lifelong Learning arm of the Metro New York District. Its current structure addresses four key areas: *Clergy Assessment*, *Clergy Education*, *Praxis for Ministry*, and *Clergy Lifelong Learning*. Clergy education, achieved primarily through the delivery of the denomination's Modules, has been the Institute's primary work over the last decade. The second most visible component has been clergy assessment, which aids the Board of Ministry in the discernment of a candidate's call, character, and fitness for ministry. The remaining two components — Praxis and Lifelong Learning — intend to support and encourage pastors in their vocational life and ministry.

The birth of the Palmer Institute played a critical role amid shifts in educational delivery systems over the last 20 years. (The reality of shifting delivery systems and expectations will continue into the future!) Additionally, the formation of an Assessment Weekend has strengthened the process for the discernment of clergy calls to vocational ministry. With these strengths in place the opportunity to revision and build upon the work of the Palmer Institute in light of 21st century ministry realities stands before us.

### **A Restructuring of Palmer Institute**

The next chapter of the Palmer Institute aims to nurture clergy and laity for faithful participation in God's life and mission in and for the sake of the world. Four foci will guide how this goal is accomplished: 1) *Clergy Discernment and Preparation*; 2) *Clergy Lifelong Learning and Formation*; 3) *Clergy Support and Accountability*; and 4) *Lay Formation and Licensure*. Each category responds to themes and concerns expressed across the district. These include, but are not limited to, clergy health and well-being (familial, economic, mental and physical), the absence of collegial connectedness, clergy loneliness, limited communication, needed coordination between the Palmer Institute and the Board of Ministry, increased lifelong learning opportunities, young clergy mentoring/ coaching, clear expectations for local pastors of students/ candidates preparing for vocational ministry, and greater lay training opportunities.

### **A Path Forward**

The primary objectives for the 2019 year are: 1) forge stronger collaborative work between the Palmer Institute (*Clergy Discernment and Preparation*) and the Board of Ministry so as to faithfully mentor, rigorously prepare, and carefully evaluate candidates as they discern a call to vocational ministry; 2) provide *Clergy Lifelong Learning and Formation* opportunities to aid both clergy and laity (*Lay Formation*) in the practice of a distinctly Wesleyan-Holiness vision of ministry in the Metro NY area; and 3) introduce opportunities for *Clergy* to *Support* one another as they hold each other *Accountable* in their life and ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

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