

The United Methodist Foundation of Michigan announces a new joint venture in partnership with the Bishop's Office of the Michigan Episcopal Area, the Michigan Conference Appointive Cabinet, and Dakota Wesleyan University. [*Stewarding the Church in the 21st Century*](#), a non-profit church leadership certificate program, enhances the ability of pastors to lead mission-focused, financially healthy, congregationally engaged churches. Ten Michigan Conference pastors were invited to participate in the graduate coursework over the next year. The learning sessions, taught onsite in Michigan by Dakota Wesleyan University faculty, will teach these pastors how to raise funds, recruit and manage volunteers, oversee budgets, create and use strategic plans, and develop a purpose-focused congregation.

Rev. Scott Harmon, Northern Skies District Superintendent, enrolled in the course a year ago. He stated, "The expectations around what ministry looks like or how it functions are expanding rapidly. We are once again in a time of rediscovering what it means to be the church. This initiative represents an intentional effort to foster excellence in leadership for ministry in today's context."

The Foundation has placed an increasing emphasis on fostering exceptional clergy leadership. Rev. David S. Bell, President and Executive Director, commented, "We are committed to helping pastors live into their calling and to equipping them with the skills necessary to be brilliant spiritual and congregational leaders. We are dedicating more and more resources, both financial impact and staff expertise, to pastoral leadership." This priority is reflected in their grant covering at least two-thirds of the tuition and related expenses for all enrollees.

"I am extraordinarily grateful to the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan for their encouragement and financial support," exclaimed Bishop David Bard, presiding bishop of the Michigan Episcopal Area. "As a bishop in the North Central Jurisdiction, I have heard wonderful stories about this certification program. I am delighted that we will have a cohort of leaders participating. Our entire conference will benefit from the experience of this group of leaders."

In addition to this continuing education, the Foundation provides numerous seminary [scholarships and other continuing education grants](#) – all of which are designed to build capable church leaders. Founded in 1925, the Foundation offers a full range of financial stewardship, value-aligned investments, planned gifts, and leadership development. For more information about any of these services, visit UMFMichigan.org.

Questions? Contact David@UMFMichigan.org