

# RETHINK CHURCH

## Rethink Church “reprise,” March 19 and 20, Springfield UMC A Laity Convocation presentation.

Rethink Church, a conference on welcoming and evangelism, will be held on March 19 and 20, at Springfield First United Methodist Church, in Springfield, Neb. Workshop leaders Kathryn Witte and Lisa Maupin will bring fresh materials they acquired from recent trainings with United Methodist Communications in Nashville. Special guest Barbara Nissen will also join the training team. This event is the spring Laity Convocation for the Nebraska Conference, but don't let the name fool you. This conference is for pastors and laity working together to create spiritual excitement in their congregations.

### What Pastor Nancy Flader had to say about Rethink Church:

*“As we continue to Rethink Church, suddenly new possibilities come flooding in. Our demographics are leading us into a new awareness of our community. Discussions flow between and around building issues to programs to people to marketing. We're much more intentional in our planning and our work. We're seeing with new eyes, feeling with new hearts, hearing with new ears, working with new energy and new hope.”*

Congregations are encouraged to bring as many people as possible to take part in this event. Friday, March 19 is a training session for those who want to train others with Rethink Church facilitation and materials. The conference begins in earnest on Friday evening and runs through Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m.

**Friday, March 19, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.**  
**Learn to fish, teach fishing.**

“Give a man (or woman) a fish and you feed him (her) for a day. Teach him (her) how to fish and you feed him (her) for a lifetime.” – Lao Tzu, Chinese Philosopher.

The idea behind training others to teach the Rethink Church campaign components is consistent with the Chinese philosopher's message and the Nebraska United Methodist Conference goal of revitalizing our congregations and growing new faith communities.

Friday will be a training day for individuals who plan to commit to presenting the Rethink Church program to congregations in their district or cluster. Each Friday daytime participant will be asked to sign a covenant agreeing to teach Rethink Church at least twice in 2010.

Friday, March 19, 5 p.m.

Preparing the boat.

- On Friday evening, at 5 p.m., registration will begin for Rethink Church for congregations. Dinner will be served at 6 p.m., followed by an evening panel discussion and entertainment.
- Panelists include Donna Carpenter from Chapman talking about her small church's revitalization, Big Garden workers from Auburn, Neb., and messages from new start congregations.
- Saturday begins with registration at 8 a.m. and then opening devotion at 9 a.m. and includes a full day of workshops including Welcoming as a Lifestyle; Identity; Discover/Design/Do; Children and Mission Insite, and more.

"I have found that the best way to create energy around new ideas taken from workshops is to make sure that a significant number representing a congregation takes part in the new learning," said Kathryn Witte, marketing communications director for the Nebraska Conference.

When one or two people from a congregation attend a workshop on their own, it is difficult to enlist the congregation in the new learning once the workshop attendees are back in their local church surroundings. Churchwide adoption of new ideas is made much easier when a group or team of people come to a workshop on behalf of a congregation.

Rethink Church is an extension of the Igniting Ministry campaign begun several years ago by United Methodist Communications (UMCOM). UMCOM offers a combination of training, resources, promotion and advertising, all grounded in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. UMCOM seeks to empower local churches by working collaboratively with conference communicators and staff to reach each congregation.

**Suzi Miller from Springfield, Neb., attended the Lexington event in November. She says:**

*"Rethink Church. What a great idea! I attended the Rethink Church conference in Lexington with six other highly involved members of our congregation. We didn't know what to expect, but we left the conference with a renewed spirit and excitement to go out and "make a difference." Just listening to the success stories of the other church's out-of-the-box mentality was truly inspirational. We met shortly after the conference to discuss what we had learned and how we can implement new ideas our church. It will take some time, as change and new ideas always do, but imagine the satisfaction if we can touch the lives of our congregation and community just a little differently than they have been touched before."*

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