

Loving, Learning, Leading

The Common Table

Common Table Members:

Bishop Ann B. Sherer, Rev. David Lux (convener), Rev. Galen Wray (district superintendent), Rev. Chad Anglemeyer (director of connectional ministries), Robin Kilgore (director of administrative services/treasurer), Rev. Kay Alnor (CCFA), Christine Hatterman (at-large), Rev. Sally Ruggia-Haden (Board of Ordained Ministry). **Leadership Development:** Tom Watson (conference lay leader), Bob Aderholt (director of Lay Speaking Ministries), Rev. William Williams, Marilyn Moore. **Congregational Development:** Peter Hedstrom, Rev. Tess Hufford, Rev. Russ Tompkins. **Risk-taking Mission and Justice Work:** Susan Schoen, Rev. Pauletta Lehn, Tim Shaw.

Staff Liaison: Rev. Chad Anglemeyer

The Common Table

The Common Table is a circle of spiritual leadership empowered by the Nebraska United Methodist Conference to coordinate and prioritize the ministries and resources of the Conference. The Common Table meets in open session at least quarterly. It reports annually to the members of the Nebraska Conference and offers recommendations for the goals of the Conference for the coming year(s).

The Common Table is a catalyst for the creative and cooperative functioning of the boards and agencies of the Annual Conference.

The Common Table interprets, engages and advances the mission and vision of the Nebraska Conference, as well as the mandates of *The Book of Discipline*, to benefit both the ministry of the local churches and the connectional ministry of the Conference.

The Common Table will base its work on the foundation principles of holy conferencing and the components of the L3 Leadership model—loving, learning, leading. Members of the Common Table and the three teams will be expected to possess the following characteristics:

- Will be actively involved in a United Methodist Church that pays its mission shares in full
- Will practice proportional giving working toward tithing
- Will practice spiritual disciplines
- Will commit to attending all scheduled meeting and participate in the work of the group
- Can work in the context of a covenant

Goals

- 1) Provide visionary leadership to energize and transform the Nebraska United Methodist Conference.

This is casting the vision—calling all United Methodists to the mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world—living out our core values. The Common Table will also expect administrative and fiduciary accountability from of the Leadership Development Team, the Congregational Transformation Team, the Risk Taking Mission and Justice Work Team, as well as staff members of the Nebraska Conference.

- 2) Align The Common Table work around the conference and general conference strategic initiatives.
- 3) Receive, evaluate and approve program and funding plan recommendations from the three teams using the general church and conference strategic initiatives as the guide.
- 4) Create an environment for integrated program development and funding plan design.
- 5) Approve a beginning program and funding plan by early 2009.

Strategy 1:

Casting the vision.

The Common Table will regularly assess the awareness and understanding of the conference mission statement, vision and core values. The mission statement should frame all dialogue and any goals and strategies set by the three teams and in alignment with the general church and conference strategic initiatives.

To do:

- Review and affirm General Conference and Nebraska Conference strategic initiatives as well as the conference mission, vision and core values statements. Apply this discernment to The Common Table and the Three Team's work.

General Conference adopted four strategic initiatives at the 2008 session in Ft. Worth. Determine what role they should play in focusing the work of the Nebraska Conference. They include:

- Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world
- Creating new places for new people and renewing existing congregations
- Engaging in ministry with the poor, and
- Stamping out killer diseases by improving health globally.

The Nebraska Conference strategic initiatives are Leadership Development, Congregational Transformation and Risk-taking Mission and Justice Work. Determine the overlap and commonalities between the General Conference and Nebraska Conference initiatives.

- Refine and approve job descriptions for the three teams, provide an orientation of expectations related to the job descriptions, offer opportunity for team input.
- The Common Table will utilize surveys, one-on-one meetings, district and conference meetings to assess the level of awareness and understanding by clergy and lay members regarding the mission statement.

- The Common Table will determine the overall impact on the annual conference as it relates to an increased awareness and understanding of the conference mission statement. Specifically the Common Table will monitor:
 - The number of new persons received into United Methodist congregations
 - The number of persons experiencing a deeper level of discipleship as a result of their understanding of the conference mission statement
- The Common Table will clearly communicate to the three teams that they are to align all of their work around the fulfillment of the Nebraska Conference mission statement.

Strategy 2:

The Common Table is the Nebraska Conference governing body. The Common Table will conduct the administrative functions determined by the Nebraska Conference. The Common Table will develop policy and clearly define the roles between the Common Table, the three teams and the Nebraska Conference staff. The Common Table will ensure that all Nebraska Conference missions and ministries are in keeping with the *United Methodist Book of Discipline*.

To do:

- The Common Table will determine the operation specifics of its role and authority as outlined in the document “A Common Table for Ministry.”
 - The basic expectations of those serving on the Common Table or one of the three teams
 - An overview of the basic tenants of Holy Conferencing.
 - Job description for the members of the Common Table and specific job descriptions for each of the three teams.
 - Articulate the roles and responsibilities of staff persons relating to The Common Table and the three teams.
 - In consultation with CFA and the Conference Treasurer/Conference Director of Administrative Services, and in keeping with the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* The Common Table, develop and enforce policies related to budget expenditures. The Common Table will also be in discussion with CFA when funds must be shifted from one category to another to meet emerging needs.

Strategy 3:

The Common Table will develop an evaluative tool aimed at assessing the level of effectiveness of every conference group receiving mission share funds. The evaluation tool will provide the Common Table and the three teams with adequate information to objectively evaluate the work of any group receiving mission share funds from the Nebraska Conference. This information will assist the Common Table in setting the strategic direction of the Conference.

To do:

Identify and customize an evaluation tool for our use.

Strategy 4:

Working in cooperation with CFA, The Common Table will develop a funding plan based on the team recommendations.

To do:

- Provide leadership and monitoring for the three teams so they stay on track to deliver a program and funding plan recommendation by early 2009.
- Evaluate and analyze each team's program design and funding plan, make any necessary modifications in collaboration with the teams, and approve team implementation.

Strategy 5:

The Common Table will work closely with the episcopal office, cabinet, and conference staff to guarantee close and cooperative working relationships, effective communication and clarification of roles.

To do:

- Commit to using the L3 Leadership model for Episcopal, cabinet, extended cabinet and staff meetings and staff development. (This will ensure ongoing spiritual formation, learning and leadership skill development.)
- Clarify roles and responsibilities. Understand expectations of each person's position. Understand episcopal office, extended cabinet and staff relationships to The Common Table and three teams.

Strategy 6:

The Common Table will develop a new process for identifying talented people with gifts and graces necessary for the fulfillment of the Nebraska conference ministry goals and objectives. In place of the current nominating and equipping team the Common Table will develop an ad hoc team of clergy and laity who will be trained for the purposes of identifying and recruiting new talent. Particular attention will be given to the development of young adults.

To do:

- A strengths assessment and/or a spiritual gifts inventory will be required of each person being considered for service within the Nebraska Conference. The results of these inventories will be shared with the individual considering service, the local church pastor where the individual attends, and the Nebraska Conference Office.

Strategy 7:

Creates multiple annual opportunities for members of the Nebraska Conference to offer input related to the issues and challenges within the United Methodist church. Persons will also have the opportunity to offer questions and input related to the quality of support given the local church by the conference staff.

To do:

- Offer at least one opportunity per year for clergy and laity to participate in listening events where the Bishop and other Nebraska Conference leadership receive ideas and opinions from across the state.
- Use surveys and other input devices to aggregate feedback on key issues.

Strategy 8:

The Common Table will monitor the work of the conference to ensure diversity and full inclusivity.

To do:

- Employ our core values in evaluating our work, our talent selection and our ongoing programming and funding.

Strategy 9:

The Common Table will oversee a communications plan for two purposes. First, the communications plan will keep United Methodists informed about the work of the denomination beyond their local church. Second, the communications plan will provide a consistent source of information for leadership and the general public. Communication will be aimed at offering persons the opportunity to help cast the vision and be a part of our mission to make and become disciples for the transformation of the world. There should be both internal and external audience components to the plan.

- Commission the communications department of the conference to help craft a communications plan.
- Discern what works best in communicating to the local church.
- Work collaboratively between The Common Table, the three teams, bishop, cabinet and staff to establish communication goals and implementation.
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Meeting Dates for The Common Table and the Three Teams

(Common Table convenes on Friday evenings from 5-9 p.m., full team participation on Saturdays from 9 a.m.-4 p.m.)

July 12	Common Table and the Three Teams
August 1-2	Common Table and the Three Teams
August 22-23	Common Table and the Three Teams
September 19-20	Common Table and the Three Teams
October 3-4	Common Table and the Three Teams
November 14-15	Common Table and the Three Teams
December	No Meetings

Dinner on Friday evenings and lunch on Saturdays will be provided.

Overnight accommodations:

Holiday Inn Express
 3939 North 26th St.
 Lincoln, NE 68521
 402-477-1100

Rooms are available on a first come-first served basis. As of July 10, 2008, they have vacancies for the above dates. Make your reservations soon as fall is a busy time for football in Nebraska. Be sure to mention the Nebraska United Methodist Conference to receive your discount.