

The Ministry Lab welcomes new leader, looks to the future

The Ministry Lab—an ecumenical organization that serves United Methodist, United Church of Christ, and Presbyterian churches in Minnesota—has hired a new executive director to resource and engage congregations and leaders around innovative practices and fresh approaches to faith formation.

Rev. Emily Meyer, an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), began the position in mid-December. She succeeds Lizabeth Bougie, who retired after nearly eight years in the position.

“I look forward to doing consulting and finding out what congregations are doing and ways that I can encourage them to try new things,” said Meyer, who was ordained in 1998. “I hope that this can be a place where we tackle the big questions and come up with hopeful, gracious responses to the challenges the church is facing right now.”

As she steps into her new role, Meyer is seeking feedback about the interests and needs of the constituencies she will serve. Whether or not you’ve ever engaged with The Ministry Lab, she invites you to take this [brief survey](#) to let her know how she can best resource you.

All Minnesota United Methodist clergy, staff, and lay leaders have access to The Ministry Lab’s wide variety of resources and free consultation through their apportioned dollars. Its hours recently changed (partly in hopes of accommodating more lay people) and are Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and by appointment.

“Our board is so grateful for Lizabeth Bougie and the ways in which she has capably and creatively resourced congregations and leaders through her dedicated service to The Ministry Lab,” said Christa Meland, president of The Ministry Lab’s board of directors and director of communications for the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. “We are also excited about the passion and skills that Emily Meyer brings to this position, and we look forward to working with her to bring to life our vision to make The Ministry Lab a place for church leaders to dream, explore, innovate, discover new ideas, and make ministry come alive in their unique contexts.”

Meyer has pastored several churches, including First Lutheran Church in Akeley, St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Bloomington, and Fullness of Good Lutheran Church at Holden Village in Chelan, Washington. More recently, she spent two years as pastor of life-long faith formation at Peace Lutheran Church in Plymouth and founded and led a cooperative Confirmation program. Through the program, called Confirmation Reformation, Meyer created an extensive curriculum for and led youth from 10 different congregations, thus allowing those with smaller numbers to still offer a dynamic learning and faith-building Confirmation experience.

Meyer is passionate about inter-generational approaches to faith formation and connecting worship, education, and mission together through a broad and holistic understanding of faith formation.

The Ministry Lab, formerly known as the Resource Center for Churches, last June changed its name and moved into United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in St. Paul through a dynamic new partnership with that organization. Church leaders can consult with Meyer, who brings an understanding of changing ministry contexts and knowledge of current, outstanding resources, digital and traditional. They also have access to United's Spencer Library and the collection of The Ministry Lab.

As she looks ahead, Meyer also hopes to lead monthly workshops for congregational leaders in partnership with United and has even floated the idea of taking The Ministry Lab on the road during the summer to engage congregations in Greater Minnesota. Ultimately, she wants The Ministry Lab to be a place for church leaders to discover new ideas and obtain the confidence and tools to try new things as they work to remain vibrant and relevant in a changing world.

"I hope to help congregations do things on purpose and do them well in their particular context," she said. "That doesn't mean it has to be shiny or professional. It does mean using the resources you've got to the best of your ability."

In the coming months, The Ministry Lab's board of directors will assemble a 20- to 30-person advisory board consisting of members of each denomination that it serves. The advisory board's role will be to give input that helps determine the future direction of The Ministry Lab, ensure that it meets the needs of its constituents, and identify new resourcing opportunities.

The Ministry Lab will host an open house at United Theological Seminary (767 Eustis St., Suite 140) on Tuesday, Feb. 4 from 1 to 3 p.m. All are invited to come learn more and meet Meyer. Obtain directions and parking information [here](#).

Consultations with Meyer can be conducted by phone, email (info@rcc-mn.org), or video conference—and physical resources can still be mailed to churches unable to obtain them directly from The Ministry Lab.