



## Empowering Laity

- There is a tremendous need for part-time pastors who believe in equipping laity for ministry. Fifty percent of Mennonite Church USA congregations are small in size—under 60 members. Sixty percent of the current openings for pastors are part-time opportunities.
- Using a part-time pastor can enhance rather than negate a sense of congregational vision. Stephen Norcross in an Alban Institute publication, “The Bivocational Option” contrasts the two positions a congregation might take:

*“For many years we have enjoyed the services of a full-time clergy person. However, the economy in our area has suffered some reversals, and it appears that we can no longer afford the compensation package of a full-time pastor. Therefore, we’ll just have to adjust our expectations, and do without much of what we used to enjoy.”*

Versus:

*“Though for many years this congregation has enjoyed the arrangement with clergy for full-time service, our circumstances are changing. Now, we can look forward to an enhanced ministry of the people of this church, living out our baptismal covenants in ways that have been previously reserved for the clergy. It’s an exciting time for our church, and we look for a member of the clergy who, employed with us part-time, will support our ministries as we grow and stretch into what God is calling us to.”*

- We need to train pastors who, first of all, can share leadership and then secondly, can implement practical leadership development from within the congregation.
- The Mennonite way of “doing church” has traditionally supported lay leadership; but nothing drives the urgency of utilizing lay leadership like a part-time, bivocational pastor who has limited time to give to the church.

### **Some guidelines for engaging and equipping congregational members to share leadership:**

- Preach, teach, and educate about shared leadership.
- Do spiritual gift discernment and assessment in the congregation.
- Nurture and encourage lay persons with gifts of leadership, shepherding, faith, & apostleship.
- Match spiritual gifts and passions of individuals with specific ministries of the church
- Do “shoulder tapping.”
- Allow space and time for development (trying out spiritual gifts).
- Provide a support group for leaders in training and give constructive feedback.
- Provide further training as desired and congregational resources allow.

### **Some resources for gift discernment:**

Bruce Bugbee and Associates, *Network: The Right People in the Right Places for the Right Reasons*  
Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Purpose #4—“You were shaped to serve God

### **Some HELPFUL IDEAS on how to become a TEAM PLAYER**

- Communicate, communicate, communicate...
- Work collaboratively.
- Develop a relational covenant with other staff members.  
(see sample covenant from Salem Mennonite Church included in this handbook)