

Imagine Indiana Web cast brings more than 1,000 viewers

INDIANAPOLIS – Lights, camera, Imagine Indiana. Six members of the Imagine Indiana Design Team took to cyberspace Sunday evening, March 30 for Indiana Area UMC's first Web cast. It originated in Bishop Mike Coyner's office in Indianapolis.

The results were impressive. The Web cast was viewed by more than 1,000 United Methodists gathered in 30 Web cast down site churches. Another 138 computers were also plugged into the hour-long Imagine Indiana Report summary including a half-hour of questions and answers.

Producer Winton Long of The Omni Centre of Carmel, Ind. said, "Out of the 168 computers connected to the Web cast, 164 stayed with the entire program. That's rare. I have never seen that high of a percentage to stay with a program." Long and his wife, Sandra, run Omni Centre and are members of the Carmel UMC.

At the beginning of the program, both conference lay leaders Kayc Mykrantz of Logansport, the lay leader of the North Indiana Conference and Ike Williams of Carmel, the lay leader of the South Indiana Conference were joined by Kokomo District Superintendent Frank Beard for a 20-minute summary presentation of the Imagine Indiana Design Team report.

Plan to unite

The proposal is a plan to unite the two Indiana conferences.

According to the Design Team

plan, the goal of the new conference is to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Williams said, "The Imagine Indiana Design Team believes that stronger congregations, better stewardship of God's resources, and a united voice for Christ working in and through The United Methodist Church across Indiana are the expected results of this new plan for a new Indiana Conference."

Mykrantz said, "The plan calls for the focus of the new Indiana Conference to be on congregations, their pastors, members and to the un-churched who live in our communities. The design team believes the new conference will be more conducive to responding to the needs of congregations than the two existing conferences."

Ministry clusters, composed of up to nine congregations, and self-selected clergy covenant groups are the foundation to more vital congregations, according to the report and proposal.

Structurally, the new conferences will have ten districts, instead of 18 districts, five resource center composed of two districts each, housing two district superintendents, an assistant to the two superintendents, and an administrative assistant.

A central Conference Center will coordinate and administer programs and services of the new conference, and contain the bishop's office, communications, human relations, finances, ministry programming and new congregation development.



Photo by Together

Imagine Indiana Design Team members (from left) Frank Beard of Kokomo, Ike Williams of Carmel and Kayc Mykrantz presented a summary of the Imagine Indiana live Web cast on Sunday evening, March 30, from Bishop Coyner's office in Indianapolis.

Q&A

The second segment of the program was a half-hour question-and-answer session with Dr. Cindy Reynolds, Warsaw District Superintendent; Dr. Adolf Hansen, Ph.D., consultant and Jennifer Gallagher, treasurer of the South Indiana Conference.

Viewers were asked to e-mail questions to the three-person panel during the live Web cast. More than 110 questions were received. Only a sampling of questions was answered on the Web cast.

Two reoccurring questions dealing with the financial aspects of the plan kept coming up. One concerned the offering tithe. In the proposed plan, the tithe model for churches to continue at ten percent of income excluding capital fund expenditures. The ten percent also will include the General Church apportionment for the denomination. One percent of each church's monthly income would be remitted to the conference treasurer as a district apportionment for the ongoing program ministry of the district.

Other finance questions dealt

with the budget. However, the two conference Councils on Finance and Administration, will only give the financial implications of this plan during the two annual conferences. The budget for the new conference will not be before this year's annual conference. The 2009 budgets will reflect the current budget. The 2010 budget will be approved during the new 2009 Indiana Conference scheduled to meet at Ball State University in June if the Imagine Indiana Design Plan is approved this June.

A question-and-answer sheet will soon be available on line and will be updated. Questions can be e-mailed to ImagineIndiana@inareaumc.org, faxed to 317-924-4859 or addressed to Imagine Indiana, Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church, 1100 West 42nd Street, Suite 210, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Revised report coming

The Imagine Indiana Design Team will be presenting a revised report with proposals to both the

"The plan calls for the focus of the new Indiana Conference to be on congregations ..."

– Kayc Mykrantz

North Indiana Conference and the South Indiana Conference sessions later this spring for their approval. If approved, a special session of both annual conferences will be held at the Indiana State Fairgrounds on Oct. 4. The special session would formally and publicly unite the two conferences.

During the Web cast, a number of United Methodist across Indiana were praying for the Design Team presenters. Paula Gast of the North Indiana Conference met with the Web cast participants. She led opening and closing prayers with the cast and technicians and walked around the Area office praying during the rehearsals and Web cast.

Following the Web cast, members of the Imagine Indiana Design Team met to review final changes to the 50-page report, which will be revised and placed on the Indiana Area Web site by April 15. For a copy of the newly revised report at that time, log on to www.inareaumc.org, click on the Imagine Indiana logo. A two-page summary is available online at the same location. Both conference centers also will mail a printed copy of the plan before annual conference.

The complete hour-long Web cast is archived online at www.inareaumc.org and can be viewed anytime using media software and a broadband Web browser.

For more information about the Imagine Indiana process, log on to the www.inareaumc.org and click on Imagine Indiana.

Both Indiana Conferences top Jurisdiction's VIM lists for volunteers, money

Lorna Jost, coordinator of the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission program for the North Central Jurisdiction, recently announced to Bishop Mike Coyner that the two Indiana Conferences surpassed any other in UVMIM teams and volunteers for the year 2007. North Indiana came out on top with South Indiana a close second.

Jost complimented the Indiana Area saying, "Thank you all for your leadership and tireless work through this United Methodist mission program."

The North Indiana Conference provided 2,980 volunteers (or 24 percent) from a total of

12,402 volunteers for the North Central Jurisdiction of the UMC.

The South Indiana Conference provided 2,234 volunteers (or 18 percent) from a total of 12,402 volunteers for the North Central Jurisdiction of the UMC.

North Indiana provided more than \$1.4 million in contributions and more than \$2 million in value of work. South Indiana provided more than \$1.1 million in contributions and more than \$1.3 million in value of work. A total of \$8.9 million in contributions and \$9.3 million in value of work was given by conferences of the North Central Jurisdiction.

Bloomington launches Spanish-language worship services

The Iglesia Metodista Hispana – a Spanish-speaking church designed to serve the growing Hispanic population in Bloomington, Ind. – met for the first time Palm Sunday morning.

Eleven people gathered in the chapel at the South Indiana United Methodist Conference Center to worship in their native tongue and culture.

Everything is in Spanish, and according to Pastor Ramon Tristani, the Latin American culture or "feel" of the church is almost as important as the language.

"Every culture of people has certain traditions, ways of doing things or not doing things. Hispanics... There's not much analysis of the other person before allowing them into the circle of friends," said Tristani, whose regular job is as an engineer at Crane.

Nine adults and two children might not seem like much, but Tristani, a native of Puerto Rico, started a similar church 25 years ago with a lot less.

The Rev. Bob Ostermeyer, superintendent for the Bloomington

District, attended the service Sunday, and although he doesn't yet speak Spanish, intends to learn the language this year.

We just got to the point where we said, 'We need to start an outreach ministry.' We've studied the demographics, and Monroe County is one of the places in Indiana where the Hispanic population is growing. Greene County also is on that list. So we feel there's a group not currently being reached with a Spanish worship service." – *Herald-Times of Bloomington*