

The Imagine Indiana Design Team Presentation Backup  
Sunday, March 30, 7 p.m. ET, 6 p.m. CT

Greetings to United Methodists in ministry.

Thank you for taking your time to find out more about the Imagine Indiana Design Team report and the future of our two annual conferences in Indiana.

Today, we will highlight the Imagine Indiana Design Team report giving a summary of what will be presented at both Indiana annual conferences later this spring at the North Conference session in West Lafayette and the South Conference session in Bloomington.

The entire 50-page report is available online at [www DOT i-n a-r-e-a u-m-c DOT o-r-g](http://www.imagineindiana.org). Click on the Imagine Indiana logo and then click on the report to download.

If you have questions during this program, please e-mail them to us at [Imagine Indiana, all one word, AT, i-n a-r-e-a u-m-c DOT o-r-g](mailto:imagineindiana@imagineindiana.org). That's [Imagine Indiana, all one word, AT, i-n a-r-e-a u-m-c DOT o-r-g](http://www.imagineindiana.org).

The Imagine Indiana Design team has been meeting since last summer working on a new conference plant to meet the needs of our goals while listening to Hoosier United Methodists and reading their e-mail concerning the Imagine Indiana process to unite our two annual conferences.

Bishop Mike Coyner chose this team to propose a design to unite the two conference into one new and unique conference. During this process, the team met at least monthly.

As part of the process, Bishop Coyner held 18 district sessions for both pastors and interested laity to present proposals on which the team was working to listen to people's responses. Hundreds of clergy and laity came and shared dreams as well as concerns. The Bishop and team members also met with district administrative assistants, young leaders and last year's discernment team co-chairs.

Each time the team met and each time Bishop Coyner met with leaders at district meetings and with others, the Imagine Indiana team and process was lifted up in prayer under the coordination of Paula Gast of the North Conference and Beth Ann Cook of the South Conference.

The team thanks each one of you that has been involved in this creative Imagine Indiana journey.

The Imagine Indiana Design Team is finalizing its report. The report now goes to our Annual Conferences for your approval in creating a new Indiana Conference.

Both sessions will consider the 50-page report now available online and will vote on a list of proposals printed in the report.

Each of the state's 1,200 United Methodist congregations is equally represented by clergy and lay members during the two annual conference sessions.

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." 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.

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.

The new conference plans to bring ministry resources closer to congregations, the place where people are welcomed into Christian faith and nurtured spiritually, to strengthen congregations. The team believes the more vital our congregations will become, the more vital district and conference ministries also will become. This means stronger volunteer in mission programs, more cooperation among congregations to be involved in community outreach ministries, stronger institutional ties, and ultimately more disciples for Jesus

Christ for the transformation of the world. Yes, we hope to make a profound difference in Indiana and around the world.

## **Support for Congregations**

The first area is support for congregations. This is a top priority of a new Indiana Conference. Strong congregations mean a strong church and more than we can now imagine.

The new conference will support congregations in a variety of ways. These include ministry clusters and clergy covenant groups. Each congregation will be part of a ministry cluster composed of four to nine congregations. In clusters, congregations will support each other and work together to minister to the needs of their communities. Cluster congregations will strengthen, cooperate, collaborate and hold one another accountable for outreach to their communities.

For example, the newly formed New Albany cluster will sponsor a community-wide Vacation Bible School this summer. Other cluster activities include combined worship services during holy seasons. Clusters also will work together to support community centers and youth programs.

The New Albany Cluster also has chosen to have a Cluster Council on Ministries to coordinate their ministries together. That's their choice. Likewise, congregations working together will choose and structure their own clusters.

## **Clergy Covenant Groups**

Another way to strengthen congregations according to this plan is through clergy covenant groups. All pastors will be a part of self-selected covenant group. Through these groups, pastors will support each other in their ministries.

This will be done through emotional, intellectual and spiritual support resulting in more effective leadership for congregations.

Several pastors already depend on a covenant group for their emotional, intellectual and spiritual support. This support has been reflected in more vital congregations.

## **Resource Centers**

To support congregations in clusters and pastors in covenant groups, the design team proposes five resource centers instead of all programming and resources coming from one centralized conference center.

Currently, congregations are divided into 18 districts state-wide each led by a superintendent. In this plan, a more efficient resourcing with 10 district superintendents will assist the bishop in overseeing and resourcing congregations and their pastors in 10 districts.

(A map of these districts is in the Design Team Report.)

The team proposes five resource centers for congregations placed across the state. Each center will house two district superintendents, at least one administrative assistant and a coordinator of congregational ministry.

Each center also will be a center for communications within those two districts, connected with conference communications.

A District Leadership Team will provide ongoing leadership and oversight of the resource center. Each resource center will develop its own program ministry in response to the needs and requests of ministry clusters and their congregations. They will connect with the greater resources of the conference.

### **Conference Center**

These five resource centers will be supported by a centralized Conference Center, for administration, resourcing and communication that will include the bishop's office.

Currently, most congregational resources are provided through two conference centers – the North Indiana Conference Service Center in Marion and the South Indiana Conference Center in Bloomington. The proposed Indiana Conference will have a Conference Center located in Indianapolis. It will include the bishop, the bishop's staff and a conference staff. The center brings together administration, finance, human resources, ministry programming, communication and new congregation development. Like the resource centers, the focus of the Conference Center will be resourcing congregations.

## **Conference Leadership Team**

To direct the conference in their service, a Conference Leadership Team of 26 members will provide oversight and ongoing leadership for the new Conference. Unique to this team is the inclusion of both program and finance at the same table. In this plan, communication will be coordinated through a single conference source. There will be strong communication ties with news and information among the five resource centers.

Conference communication will provide a unified Web site and e-mail list. We also hope to place communication conferencing centers at the five resource centers as well as in the conference center. The communication team will provide immediate information through an information service and also will advise congregations on their communication needs.

## **Pension and Health Care Benefits**

As one Indiana Conference, we will use the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for unified pension and health benefits programs incorporating the best of both existing programs. Both conferences now use the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits for both pension and health care benefits of clergy and staff employees. Each plan cost differently. The existing plans will be equalized in the new conference.

## **Outdoor and Retreat Ministries**

Another vital resource for congregations across Indiana is a strong outdoor and retreat ministry in each conference for children, youth, adults and families. For decades in Indiana summer camping programs have been an important to the conferences' goal of making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Together we will continue to build statewide outdoor ministries in quality modern facilities with camps that appeal to our children, youth and adults, as well as year-round retreat opportunities.

That's a brief overview highlighting the Imagine Indiana Design Team report. The Design Team provides this proposed plan for both annual conferences to take another step in creating a new Indiana Annual Conference by June of next year when, if approved, we will meet for the first time as one united Indiana Conference at Ball State University in 2009.

## **What's ahead?**

There will be a variety of time lines for implementing decisions related to insurance and pensions, asset management and other functions of the new conference that will be phased in over time.

Upon approval at this year's two annual conferences, Bishop Coyner will appoint a transition team to begin bringing these plans to reality. Open communication will keep each congregation and each leader apprised of the progress. Hundreds of decisions still need to be made as Hoosier United Methodists continue to shape their future.

## **What's the cost?**

But wait.

How much will this cost?

Can we afford it?

And what will be transitional costs?

Do we have income and expense budgets for the first full year of the new conference, which will be the year 20-10?

Rest assured. These have been real questions on the minds of both Conference Councils of Finance and Administration.

Both councils met this past week with the North Indiana Conference Treasurer Brent Williams, South Indiana Conference Treasurer Jennifer Gallagher and members of the Imagine Indiana Design Team.

Both Councils of Finance and Administration have been working on a realistic budget. Income will be based on the tithe model of congregations giving to the annual conference ten percent of each month's income.

Our expense budget will be built from income. We are looking at conference program and administration income for both conferences combined between 17 and 19 million dollars. This does NOT include pension and health care benefits, which also are administered through the conference treasurer.

The design team believes with good reason that the tithe model will work. If each congregation in both existing conferences tithed its monthly income, the conference income would be well over 20 million dollars, even more. The key to financial support of both the annual conference and each congregation is inviting our members to tithe their income as an expression of our good stewardship and God's generosity.

This budget does not include the transitional cost which both finance councils will be working on as much as they can between now and the annual conference sessions later this spring. But we can only go so far in suggesting what those transitions costs will be.

If approved, the next phase of uniting the two conferences will be taking this plan to a transitional team to work out details including answers to:

Where will each of the resource centers will be located?

Where will each of the ten district superintendents live?

Where will the new district boundaries be set by Bishop and Cabinet?

How many people will be needed to staff the new conference center?

Who will be moving from Bloomington and Marion to live in

Indianapolis? And, when will they be moving?

Just to mention some big questions about transitional costs.

Right now it seems that for each question we answer, creates one or two new questions.

We do know a new conference is affordable. We just don't know all the details. We do have reserve funds if needed. We also will have the sale of property moving from 18 district offices to five and from two conference centers and an area office to one conference center. All these transitional costs will not hit the same year, but will be spread over several years. Much of this will be the work of the transition team working within an affordable budget.

Will congregations be expected to pay more for district support and conference tithes?

Not necessarily, if each congregation tithes its monthly income.

Not necessarily, if health-care insurance costs remain manageable with clergy and staff employees striving for healthy lifestyles.

There are many variables that our Conference Councils on Finance and Administration must take into consideration.

This has been a highlighted summary of the Imagine Indiana Design Team report to the two annual conferences. Again, the entire 50-page report is available online at [w-w-w DOT i-n a-r-e-a u-m-c DOT o-r-g](http://www.iamc.org). Click on the Imagine Indiana logo and then click on the report.

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.

Design Team members who created this plan include:

Frank Beard, the Kokomo District superintendent;

James Bushfield, director of connectional ministries of the South Indiana Conference;

Jennifer Gallagher, the treasurer of the South Indiana Conference;

Mark Gough, director of connectional ministries of the North Indiana Conference;

Adolf Hansen, our consultant;

Kayc Mykrantz, lay leader of the North Indiana Conference,

Judi Purvis, the Vincennes District superintendent;

Cindy Reynolds, the Warsaw District superintendent;

Brent Williams, the treasurer of the North Indiana Conference;

and me, Ike Williams, lay leader of the South Indiana Conference.

Indiana Area leaders include:

Bishop Mike Coyner, Design Team convener;

David V. W. Owen, executive assistant to the bishop, and

Dan Gangler, area director of communication.

Also on the design team were Beth Ann Cook and Paula Gast, prayer co-chair representing both conferences.

A printed 50-page report will be distributed to conference members before the annual conference sessions and will include a report from each Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

Questions and comments about the report can be directed to the Reverend David V-W Owen at Imagine Indiana (all one word) AT i-n-a-r-e-a u-m-c.org or Indiana Area of The United Methodist Church, 1100 West 42nd Street, Suite 210, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

This ends the information segment of this presentation. Three members of the Design Team will answer the questions sent to the team at Imagine Indiana (all one word) AT i-n a-r-e-a u-m-c DOT org.