

GREAT and WIDE Strengthen the Church



Holy Spirit Calling

You might not think of a technical database as a conduit for Spirit-filled discernment, but the United Church of Christ's MESA team (Ministerial Excellent, Support, and Authorization) can tell you otherwise.

The MESA team manages and updates the United Church of Christ's Ministry Opportunities database system. With over four hundred open positions listed at any given time, each of these opportunities represent a unique location for ministry in the United Church of Christ. MESA's work isn't to force connections but equip congregations to practice discernment. As the Rev. Jeff Nelson, Minister for Ministerial Calls and Transitions, says, "The Holy Spirit has surprised us before."

Strengthen the Church funds help equip MESA to innovate and refine a tool like Ministry Opportunities. Positions listed on Ministry Opportunities include not only pastoral positions of all varieties but also non-pastoral church positions, wider church openings, non-pastoral ministries such as chaplaincies, and non-UCC settings that are widening their search. This puts into practice the idea that God's call can be great and wide.

Your support of the Strengthen the Church offering equips leaders, funds new churches, and fosters innovation. The offering is a celebration of who we are as church together, as money is shared between the National ministries of the United Church of Christ as well as with Conference settings.

Learn more about the offering at www.ucc.org/stc



God of Gracious Surprises,

You work through all things. Through trees and their leaves in all seasons, water that renews the earth and drips from our eyes, and air that fill our lungs and blows through the world - all of these are signs of your good presence. And you work through technology, too, using computers and internet access and websites that turn zeros and ones into tools of faith and discernment. Those tools in turn connect churches and leaders, opening up pathways and opportunities, cultivating visions beyond our current reckoning. Bless congregations, hospitals, and other ministry settings that search for new pastoral leadership through these systems, and bless clergy and members in discernment who are seeking new pastoral callings to live into their vocations. Through all of it, let your Spirit dip and sway, pour out and blow through, surround and suffuse - that your holy purposes would be realized.

Amen.

Prayer written by the Rev. Elizabeth Dilley, Minister and Team Leader for the Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) Team