

How do you maintain yourself in the midst of the demands of ministry?

Even at its best, pastoral ministry is a demanding profession. And when conflicts rage in a congregation ... when old solutions don't work any more ... when the sermon pool is running dry ... when you have cared for those in pain and those with questions that don't have easy answers ... how do you keep your balance in the midst of it all?

Some clergy meet these challenges for many years and continually demonstrate sustainable, healthy, life-giving ministry. Among these pastors, six characteristics consistently emerge: **a solid sense of one's call, good leadership and excellent self-knowledge, reflection and growth in fundamental ministry practices, opportunities for sustained spiritual growth, deep collegiality with other clergy and opportunities for sabbatical rest and renewal.**

***Tending the Fire* is a process of retreats and small group gatherings, designed to strengthen these essential aspects of ministry.**

"Tending the Fire is part of a process that will enable you to see the church, your family, and yourself from a different perspective. In the process you will grow more into the person God created you to be.

The Rev. Tim Wilcox, Fairfield ME

Retreat Leaders/Facilitators

Rev. W. Alan Delamater currently serves as a member of a pastoral team of the Shenendehowa UMC in Clifton Park, NY. Prior to this appointment he served eight years as a District Superintendent in the Troy Annual Conference. He has served as solo pastor in two UMC churches, in three churches as a member of a pastoral staff and in three churches as interim pastor during times of crisis. Following advanced training in family systems theory and therapy, Alan provided individual and family therapy in a residential adolescent treatment facility and worked as a pastoral psychotherapist on the staff of a Samaritan Counseling Center. He has continued to study systems theory through The Center For Pastoral Effectiveness in New Orleans and through the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center in Chicago.

Rev. Barbara Lemmel is an elder in the Troy Conference of the UMC. She has served rural congregations in Vermont and upstate New York. Most recently, she served as Troy Conference Minister, offering programming and spiritual guidance to churches and pastors. Barbara has studied Family Systems Theory with the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center in Chicago, and the Center for Pastoral Effectiveness in New Orleans. She is passionate about helping churches and individuals discern and implement their spiritual gifts and she is absolutely dedicated to the premise that church can be transformational and fun.

"TTF has been a positively stretching and enriching experience that has already impacted my practice of ministry."
Ed Farrell-Starbuck, Springfield MA

Tending the Fire



A process of education, formation, and growth, designed to support clergy in the practice of ministry.

Opening Retreat

November 26—29, 2007

Deepening Days

January 17, 2008

February 14, 2008

March 27, 2008

Sending Retreat

April 28—May 1, 2008

Retreats are held at
Rolling Ridge Retreat Center
N. Andover MA

What is Systems Theory?

Tending the Fire is based in family systems theory, developed by Dr. Murray Bowen and refined for congregational life by Dr. Edwin Friedman in his book *Generation to Generation*.

Systems thinking focuses on understanding one's own emotional system, and that of one's congregation. It recognizes that all pastors are simultaneously part of three interlocking families: one's own personal family, that "family" that is the congregation itself, and the families that make up the congregation. Each of these families operates in patterns that have been handed down for generations. Disturbance in any one of these families will affect the equilibrium of all three.

The more differentiated one is in these families, or systems, the more one is able to remain non-anxious in the face of conflict. At the same time, one can remain connected to the system, and provide leadership that offers healthy change to the congregation.

An effective pastoral leader will demonstrate these characteristics:

- **self-differentiated**
- **connected**
- **non-anxious**
- **visionary**

"I have looked forward to the time with my small group, and am very grateful for the experience. It has been centered in prayer and worship, and the learning has been accessible and insightful. Excellent resource - I recommend it highly."

The Rev. Linda Grenfell, Friendship ME



***Tending the Fire* helps clergy to grow in knowledge of themselves as leaders and as**

pastors, to deepen their spiritual life, and to gain practical skills for ministry.

Tending the Fire offers an experience of systems process that can be applied to one's personal and professional life. In the company of colleagues, clergy explore and renew their call to ministry and mature leadership skills. Special focus is given to spiritual formation, leading worship, and congregational dynamics, including addressing the specific ministry settings of each participant.

Tending the Fire is particularly useful for clergy who have recently moved through significant professional and/or personal milestones, who wish to understand themselves and their ministry in a new paradigm. It is also helpful for those just beginning in ministry.

"Even if you have to tap into two years worth of Continuing Ed money, take this offering. After 23 years of local church ministry it was a great 'reminder' as to the 'why's and how's' of my parish and personal struggles in particular appointments. But most especially it brought me back up to speed on the 'what to do's' to help myself and the churches that I serve."

Clergy member, New England Conference

Small groups will meet in one-day sessions set geographically.

Tending the Fire

Registration

Name

Address

Email

Phone

Fee: \$850 / 9 CEU's

\$900 after October 1, 2007

Send registration and \$100 deposit (\$150 after October 1) with check payable to:

**The Preachers' Aid Society
P O Box 3386
Plymouth MA 02361-3386
pas18@msn.com**

Presented by:
Preachers' Aid Society
And the New England
Board of Ordained Ministry

**Participation is required
in all retreats and
one-day sessions**