

# missionalseeds

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## The Vital Work of Regional Pastors Advancing the Conference Mission

Regional pastors play a key role in furthering the mission of IN-MI Conference. They serve as missional coaches for congregational leaders, encouraging them in their work and providing valuable resources for spiritual growth and leadership development. Functioning as the hands and feet of conference, regional pastors are out in the fields among the workers, sowing seeds of encouragement and direction.



John Powell

John Powell, regional pastor for the northern region, describes his work in this way, “I aid pastors and leadership teams in discerning their Christian calling in their particular setting. As I listen to their passion and vision, I provide missional resources that enable them to help their congregation engage in creative ministries.”

Often the work of the regional pastor involves brainstorming effective ways to connect congregations with the wider community, but it also consists in affirming what is already working well. Regional pastor for the southern

region, Mary Mininger, says that a large part of her work involves “helping congregations to see what is right with their world, and how they are connecting in already established roles and relationships.”



Mary Mininger

It takes dedication to do the work of the regional pastor. It means listening, encouraging, and providing guidance for many different people in different settings and circumstances. Ministering to between 12 and 19 churches on average in a given region, the role requires energy and flexibility. The work is also very rewarding.

Regional pastor for the western region, Jon Brown, says, “It’s exciting to see how God is working in and through His people and how congregations are receptive to the move of God among them.”



Jon Brown

Serving as interim regional pastor for the central region, Gilberto

Pérez says, “One of the joys I find in serving as a regional pastor is creating conversations with pastors and church leaders that inspire them to think creatively about how to speak to the humanity in their community and neighborhoods.”

Gilberto finds it a privilege to sit with pastors in his region. “I am inspired by the many pastoral gifts each pastor possesses. They are contributing to my own growth as a pastor.”



Gilberto Pérez, Jr.

Cultivating a missional imagination in congregations is a central goal of conference. Regional pastors work at this both in direct and indirect ways. Brent Eash, interim regional pastor for the eastern region (southern half),

*continued on back...*

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## From our interim conference pastor

It has been my privilege to serve as interim conference pastor while Dan Miller is on sabbatical. One of the highlights has been to participate twice a month in conference calls with the regional pastors as part of my supervisory responsibility. We are pleased that we have a full contingent of regional pastors at this time, with some serving on an interim basis. In this issue we get to introduce you to these wonderful Christian servants and their perspective on this important role.



One of the underlying values of the conference structure, adopted in 2009, was to decentralize staff. With the conference being made up of five regions, this provided an opportunity to incorporate that value by appointing a regional pastor in each region. This goal was accomplished but the need to stay within the parameters of the conference operating budget meant that one FTE was divided among the five regional pastors.

Part of the conference mission says, “we will cultivate a missional imagination in every congregation.” Our regional pastors help make this happen along with your financial support of conference through Missional Seeds. I’m sure you can see that the dollars spent for the regional pastors are well spent and you can also imagine that having even more funds for this ministry would extend these benefits even further—especially if we could one day expand the FTE.

Thank you so much for your regular gift to IN-MI Conference which supports these and other conference ministries. Feel free to invite your fellow Christian friends to consider joining and supporting the conference in this way. May God bless you abundantly!

why we give

“ We feel that Conference plays a vital role in assisting congregations and their members. In order to continue with that work, Conference needs our support, which includes financial contributions. While our church certainly contributes funds, Missional Seeds is a good way to show our direct support above and beyond that.”



—Dirk, Camden, and Amber Wolfer  
Pleasant View Mennonite

...continued from front says, “Being missional is embracing the many aspects of God’s redeeming, renewing work in the world as they are revealed to us. I have many opportunities to ask questions that might nudge pastors and congregations to reframe their purpose in that direction.”



Brent Eash

Mary also points out that, “being ‘missional’ can be as simple (and powerful) as bringing God’s Presence wherever we are. When we get that first step, we are well on our way to bringing healing and hope to all we touch.”

Although the work can be challenging, there is much to celebrate and be thankful for. John says he is inspired by the “life-giving stories of reconciliation” in the churches he works with. Brent is encouraged by the “creativity and openness to the Spirit’s leading” that he sees in his congregations. Jon sees God at work in his region in many ways too,

including ministries with youth, the elderly, cross-cultural outreach, care for the homeless, men’s and women’s ministries, and international missions. The list of missional manifestations could go on.

Twice a month, regional pastors have the opportunity to connect with one another through conference calls. This gives them a chance to share stories of success and struggle. Twice a year, they also gather in person, along with the conference office staff, to touch base, review common goals, discuss shared work, and do visioning for the future.

Helping churches on their missional journey is an ongoing and evolving process. John says, “I am continually discovering ways to help congregations connect with each other toward a unified Anabaptist-Mennonite vision.”

Your generous support of conference allows regional pastors to engage in this vital work, seeking to connect with church leaders and provide resources and encouragement to congregations under their care.

