

**Perhaps future ministers do not really grow on trees?
Perhaps they are grown in our own congregations!**

Where are the “call connectors” in our local congregations?

Are seminaries the only place clergy are trained? Of course not! Often times, the nurture and training of a clergyperson happens in the worship and community life of a local church. Perhaps one’s call and consideration of ministry comes like Moses’ when he was *seemingly* moving along and minding his own business. Whether it is a person discerning vocation after a service opportunity or a person finding their voice after being encouraged to share in worship leadership or.... The possibilities for the way in which a person might discern a call are endless when God and God’s people are open.

As many persons find themselves nurtured and developed in the local congregations, perhaps they are named there as well. While God does the calling, consider all the extraordinary call stories in the Bible where God has been using other people (“call connectors”) to prepare the way for the moment of call. That’s true with our present clergy, as well—another person was there to reflect with them what was happening, to ask questions or simply point out obvious gifts for ministry. ...One of God’s most effective tools for calling people to ministry is through the insight and voices of other people! So, if persons are assisted in their call through local congregations, other clergy mentors and laity who live and worship beside them...how might we prepare our congregations to notice, name a nurture candidates for ministry more effectively?

The Missouri Annual Conference of the UMC has adopted “The Hannah Project” as a challenge and tool for local congregations participating in the program of ministerial recruitment. The Hannah Project is named for Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, who handed her child into ministry. (Her story is found in I Samuel 1:1-2, 10.) ...We come from local churches that can offer our people into the wider ministry of the church.

“Call Connector” forums are being held around the conference to better equip local congregations and laity recognize their gifts and responsibility for helping people hear the invitation to become ministers of the Christian faith. Perhaps you or someone you know might be the instrument God needs!

thecalltoministry.org