

## **The Detroit, MI-Toledo, OH Second Chair Group First Quarter Report**

**(January 15, 2010-March 15, 2010)**

The Detroit, MI-Toledo, OH Second Chair Community is a group of people, all leaders in our congregations, who come together on a regular basis (bi-monthly) to share a meal and conversation, and to discuss the specific nature and calling of "Second Chair Leaders" (those who work as Ministers or Pastors in a congregation, but are not the Senior Pastor). Our guide in this process is the book *Leading From the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson. Our convener is the Rev. Jabulani McCalister. In the coming year, we will read the book and come together to discuss it, as well as gathering for some informal, relaxing activities, thus building friendships that deepen our learning and expand our understanding of ministry.

Our community is diverse, denominationally and racially, and includes a healthy balance of male and female perspectives. We are involved in many kinds of parish ministry, including part-time, full-time and volunteer, working with youth, administration, education and more. Some of us have many years of experience in ministry others are just getting started. Some serve as Ordained Pastors in our congregations, while others serve as Lay Leaders and Ministers. Some of us are comfortable in the second chair role, while others find the role of Second Chair an awkward fit. Some of us have ministries that go unrecognized officially, but are nevertheless vital pieces of what Jesus Christ is up to in our world. These differences are many, and enhance our learning from one another.

What we have in common is our passion to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, and to do so right here, and right now. We are in the place that we are, in the ministries in which we have been placed, "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:4), and we know that the Holy Spirit will and does enable us to do whatever God is calling us to do. We will not wait for it to get easier; we will not wait for our congregations to like us better; we will not wait for our first chairs to understand us and get in line with our ideas. Instead, we will seek ways in which we can serve even in the difficulties; we will pour out Christ's love on our congregations; we will seek to build relationships of trust and respect with our first chairs. God is at work in our congregations, our communities, and our world, and we are excited to be a part of it.

The group first met in January of 2010 at the home of the Revs. Jabulani and Nikita McCalister. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another and share a little about our contexts and what God has been doing in our various places of ministry. I found myself excited and inspired, not only by the opportunity to learn how better to fill my role as a second chair leader, but by the integrity, commitment and compassion of those gathered with me. These will be great people from whom and with whom to learn, and I look forward to seeing how God transforms us for the sake of the world in the coming months.

--Respectfully Submitted by  
Laura Strietelmeier  
March 4, 2010