



*A clergy leadership formation  
program of the Indiana Conference  
of the United Methodist Church*

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Wesleyan Connexion Project (WCP) of the new Indiana Conference is a venture in theological education and leadership formation that provides significant space and time in the fostering of excellence in ministry to those who are preparing for ordination in the United Methodist Church. Rooted in the church's mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ, the WCP builds upon a key foundational document by leaders in the United Methodist Church, which states that "the reform of the church and the nations and the spread of scriptural holiness across the lands remains an unfulfilled vision for the heirs of John Wesley and "the people called Methodists" in the 21st century ("A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century"). The Wesleyan Connexion Project has been created to address this concern and to find ways of fulfilling the church's mission in the world.

It also is within this stated concern and context that the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church, as well as selected deans and presidents of United Methodist seminaries, stated the need to cultivate new collaborations in the church to meet the challenges of ministry in this new day. As the authors of "A Wesleyan Vision" observed, "Clear vision and missional focus require leaders who know Scripture and tradition" on the one hand and who can articulate the witness of the church as "a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's reign in the world" on the other. The WCP, with its commitment to

fostering excellence in ministry, offers a creative response to this need as it provides a new model of theological education in the formation of leaders with the collaboration of institutions of higher education and ministry.

One of the primary goals, then, of the Wesleyan Connexion Project is to supplement already existing curricular programs in theological education. It is intended to assist the Indiana Annual Conference with the leadership formation of persons who are seeking ordination and to provide a space of hospitality and friendship as well as encouragement and support to those who are preparing for service in the name of Jesus Christ. As the authors of *Resurrecting Excellence: Shaping Faithful Christian Ministry* have stated, the way of excellence in ministry is the way of embodying God's love made manifest in Jesus Christ (p. 1). It is the "more excellent way," where the church learns to discover "the intersections that draw together people, practices, and understandings" and where "the life-giving journey of leadership" begins in earnest (p. 27). The Wesleyan Connexion Project has been created with this end and purpose in mind: to foster excellence in ministry within the Wesleyan theological heritage.

"All holiness is social holiness."—*John Wesley*

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WESLEYAN CONNEXION PROJECT

“Unite the pair so long disjoined,  
Knowledge and vital piety”

— *from Charles Wesley’s hymn “Come, Father, Son,  
and Holy Ghost”*

- **Leadership Formation:** The Wesleyan Connexion Project enables the creation of a time and space in which participants have the opportunity to rediscover and be enriched by the Wesleyan heritage of doctrines and practices as they prepare to offer themselves in leadership as part of the United Methodist Church.
- **Supplemental:** The WCP has been created to serve as a supplement to already existing programs of theological education that are administered by accredited seminaries. It is not intended to replace seminary education.
- **Mentoring:** The WCP makes it possible for leaders in the Indiana Conference to actively mentor a cadre of candidates in the process of ordination. Persons who serve as mentors will work to foster the kind of ethos of encouragement and excellence that will strengthen the connection of the United Methodist Church.
- **Holy Friendships & Hospitality:** The WCP provides a limited but significant opportunity for candidates for the ministry to form “holy friendships” with fellow candidates and mentors. The WCP trusts that this kind of venture will provide the kind of “radical hospitality” into the life of the annual conference that will further strengthen the common life of the annual conference as well as relationships conducive to lifelong friendships with fellow colleagues in ministry.

- **New Partnerships:** The WCP is part of a wider attempt to reconfigure theological education in the first part of the 21st century. As such, the WCP can be regarded as one of the ways in which annual conferences, seminaries, and church-related universities are engaged in the process of building new collaborations. This approach is part of larger efforts to imagine theological education in the church as a way of “raising up” a new generation of leaders in faithfulness to God throughout the United Methodist Church.

“Do no harm. Do good.  
Practice the ordinances of God.”

—*The General Rules of the United Societies*

## LEADERSHIP

The Leadership of the WCP comes from within the life of the Indiana Conference. The following Steering Committee members can answer questions or provide information.

- Rev. Arch Hawkins, Chair of Steering Committee
- Dr. Michael Cartwright, University of Indianapolis
- Rev. Brian White, District Superintendent
- Rev. Darren Cushman-Wood, Pastor
- Rev. Jacob Juncker, Pastor
- Rev. Jamalyn Peigh-Williamson, Pastor
- Rev. Marie Lang, Deacon
- Rev. Dr. Andrew Kinsey, Pastor and Dean of WCP

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*For more information, please contact the Dean of the Wesleyan Connexion Project:*

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