

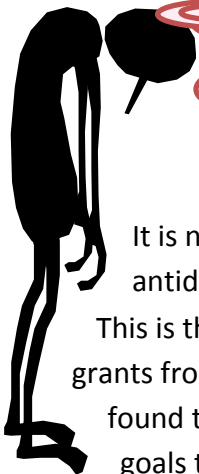
H HOPE IS FOR YOU!

HEALTH AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER ECUMENISM (H HOPE)

“If we are to turn the tide in the larger culture, moving people toward the kind of community that is life-giving, we clergy can benefit from first rediscovering such community for ourselves.” – M Taylor

Collegial respect and affection among local church leaders of varying traditions – these have been hallmarks of community life in Kentucky. Because of it we have many creative community ministries. Because of it there is a grace-filled voice for justice shared by many of our churches. Because of it we have many customs of worshipping together across denominational lines.

In recent years, these relationships have been under stress. Our ministries, and the hope we all have for our community life, may well hinge on what we do about that.



Is it not precisely when I feel most beleaguered and isolated that I most need to seek out the company of others -- peers who can readily understand my experience? But, how can I take on another commitment?

It is natural to think “what I need is fewer time commitments” when instead the antidote is to enjoy a small circle of trust and common purpose.

This is the lesson learned by thousands of clergy in peer learning groups sponsored with grants from the Religion Division of the Lilly Endowment. They have found the experience of meeting regularly with peers to pursue some goals together refreshing, enriching and even redemptive, with positive impacts for more fruitful ministry.

The Kentucky Council of Churches received a grant from the Lilly Endowment to help you make that happen in Kentucky in a way that builds community across denominational lines while you explore the deep connections between health and hospitality in “clergy peer learning groups”. We have budgeted to provide supports for a total of 70 participants, and expect there will be 10-14 peer learning groups in all.

Thank You for your interest in pursuing participation in this new program of the Kentucky Council of Churches. **WE CALL IT H HOPE, FOR “HEALTH AND HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER ECUMENISM.”** This three-year program is primarily intended for clergy serving at least half-time in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Other persons whose churches have given them analogous leadership roles may be considered on a case by case basis.



Church leaders

are not immune to the pressures that harm health and divide us from each other.

Studies have shown **clergy are often less healthy than the people we serve**, with a sort of “blind spot” about our own physical well-being. The **sources of pressure and anxiety** today are well documented, including:

- reduced funds,
- loss of a place of respect
- isolation from peers,
- decline in membership in many churches.

In such a context we need H HOPE!



The Kentucky Council of Churches

working for Christian unity and for justice, peace, and reconciliation

YOUR DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING

With this form you can notify the Kentucky Council of Churches that you are forming a peer learning group of *between four and nine persons* that will...

- *Show an appreciation for the value of diversity and specifically will be ecumenical in membership composition, i.e., include members from multiple Christian traditions*
- *Name and actively pursue goals related to the themes of health and hospitality*
- *Address your own physical health; all participants will take a health assessment which you will repeat at the conclusion to measure your progress (for your eyes only)*
- *Meet regularly during the program years 2011-2013*
- *Participate in an annual gathering for participating groups*
- *Include at least one member whose denomination belongs to the Kentucky Council of Churches and who is a liaison to the Council on behalf of your group.*

The Council will undertake to provide your group with:

- Assistance in forming your group if needed
- Reimbursements for travel and food expenses associated with your group meetings; on average each group will have \$350 per meeting to cover food and mileage, for a total of 12 meetings per group over the life of the program
- Optional readings for you to enjoy as you explore what the themes of health and hospitality mean to you and your peer group
- A program at the annual gathering of groups in October each year. This gathering will dovetail with the annual assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches. Peer groups gather on a Wednesday with all expenses paid through Thursday. We will partner financially with participants who stay through the Council event on Friday.
- An opportunity for your group to propose a final project for special funding in the program's third year; a total of \$10,000 can be distributed among the groups.

The form below begins your communication with the HHOPE Council¹, whose rolling admissions decisions about including peer groups are on June 1, August 1, October 1 and December 1.

¹ *The Executive Board of the Kentucky Council of Churches has established a four-person HHOPE Council to work closely with the our Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Marian M. Taylor, in making many of the decisions this program calls for. The members are: the Rev. Greg Alexander, Sister Mary Luke Jones, the Rev. Tobias Pace, and the Rev. Dr. Gregory Waldrop.

YOUR PROPOSED GROUP AND ITS GOALS

Please fill out this form and send it to:

The Kentucky Council of Churches
care of Ms. Jeanie Hartman at jlh@kycouncilofchurches.org
or by post to 1500 Leestown Rd. Suite 316, Lexington KY 40511

Please do not hesitate to contact her, or Executive Director Marian Taylor, with any questions.

Your Name:

Your Address:

Your Contact Information (including email and phone)

Your Current Service to the Church:

Your Denomination/Christian Tradition:

With whom are you in conversation about the formation of a peer learning group under this program? (please include their names, denominations, and locations)

Is this a pre-existing group? (if so, describe the history briefly)

Do you wish to have any help finding others for your group? (If so, what would help most?)

How soon will you be able to have your first face to face meeting together, and how often do you expect to meet annually?

Even if you have not yet found all the members of the group you wish to form, please answer the following questions together to the best of your ability, taking no more than a total of two pages for your answers:

1. What is the importance of being in such a group at this time, personally and vocationally?
2. What are some of the specific ways you anticipate exploring and practicing the themes of health and hospitality together?
3. What else would you like the HHOPE Council to take into consideration about your group?

THANK YOU!

Form date April 18, 2011