

Collegetown Institute Communities of Calling Hub activities from 2021

In 2021, we sponsored the **development of some resources on vocation, and also created online opportunities for our congregational teams** to experience the resources and engage with their authors. We discovered that the teams who participated in the online conversations were also those who decided to use the resources in the following year:

- [*12 Tiny Things*](#), by Ellie Roscher: practices to undergird vocational discernment and vocational liveliness
- [*“Trails”*](#) retreat on vocation for young adults (created by Jessie Bazan)
- [*Leading Lives that Matter*](#), 2nd edition, by Dorothy Bass and Mark Schwehn: an 8-module series for adult formation groups

Our **Annual Meeting** was held online in August, and included a **day-long retreat on living in liminal time, led by author Karen Hering**. Integrating prayerful retreat time into our work has been important for our congregational teams amid all the challenges of the last two years.

This fall we had planned a series of **retreats in Collegetown on sabbath as a vocational practice**, each retreat comprising 3-4 of our congregational teams. Sadly, the upsurge of the Delta virus caused us to cancel the in-person retreats and to re-imagine how we might create an analogous experience for the teams in the spring (see below).

Stina Kielsmeier-Cook, Director of Communications at Collegetown Institute, and Ellie Roscher, podcast host of Collegetown’s [*“Unlikely Conversations,”*](#) worked with us to conduct a series of **podcast interviews with members of our congregational teams** and others connected with them, discussing both individual and communal vocations.

This fall, we convened **two meetings with Jennifer McClure**, one to introduce our congregational teams to the resources provided by [*ARDA*](#), to help them connect more effectively with their communities; and the other to help congregations who received individual reports on the CLMPI quantitative research to interpret and respond to their findings.

Hub activities for 2022

For the spring of 2022, we are creating a plan, resources, and funding for our congregational teams each to conduct **a retreat at a location near them on the theme of sabbath as a vocational practice**. These are the reconfigured retreats from fall 2021, when we could not gather in person. One advantage to the local retreats is that not only their 3-person core teams but their full congregational teams will potentially be able to participate.

We are also creating **a guide to help our congregational teams in discerning whether or not they are called to participate in an additional year of the Communities of Calling**. We have funds still unused because of the inability to travel and meet in person, and our current plan is to use those

funds for congregational projects that will help them sustain their focus on calling beyond the initial grant period and embed practices of discernment in the functioning of their key committees and ministries. We are weighing the possibility of using grant funds to provide coaches for the congregations who decide to continue in this additional year.

As we did last spring, we will **introduce the congregational teams to a resource** created for the Called to Lives of Meaning and Purpose Initiative, [“Questions of Calling”](#), by Marty Stortz. This particular resource, which is a gentle introduction to vocational awareness and practices, is appropriate for use by groups from late teens to elders, as well as by intergenerational groups.

Our **Annual Meeting will be held June 20-22 in Collegetown**. For some, this will be their final meeting; for others, it will signal the entrance into the final year’s project.

Question for discernment

A question we are discerning is **whether to use grant funds in the final year to provide congregational coaches as an effective way to embed vocational practices in the day-to-day functioning of congregations**. We look forward to conversations with other hub leaders who have worked with coaches, to hear your experiences and learn some best practices in linking coaches with this vocational initiative.