



We invite you to two sessions (May 12 and September 29, 2018) which will encourage and enable churches to nurture and tend the work of our congregations.

If the fig tree is well tended, it can produce abundantly...

Creating a flourishing kin-dom in the world to the glory of God begins with flourishing institutions for the glory of God. The idea behind the ***FIGS for Christ Initiative*** is taken from Luke 13. We, like the farmer in the parable, hope and expect to see results and growth in our churches year after year, but we often neglect to tend the soil – to dig around and investigate, and tend matters related to faith and finance, inquiry and identity, guidance and governance, and support and sustainability. Attention to these vital roots of ministry, often the hardest to address in our individual contexts, is of utmost importance for our churches if we expect to produce any fruit worth tasting for our world, and hope to sustain a life-giving presence and witness for Christ and God’s kin-dom.

Church clergy and lay leadership are invited to participate together in a transformational opportunity that is sure to strengthen our churches and leadership for abundant and fruitful ministry. We will engage in learning and listening with expert consultants and with the stories of our lived experiences; we will share in a time of Christian spiritual practice and collaborative art; we will eat together and worship together as well – a reminder that everything we do as Christian institutions should be to the glory of God.

Join us! May 12th and September 29th – 9:00 am – 4:00pm
First Baptist Church in Needham
858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham, MA 02492
(also accessible by commuter rail)

Planned Speakers and Their Workshops

Please try to attend both days, as each day's wisdom complements the other.

Clergy and lay-leaders are encouraged to attend together.

Please make every attempt to participate as a team.

Saturday, May 12, 2018:

Money and Your Church's Ministry: Balancing the Books While Keeping Your Balance

Rev. Margaret Marcuson

Is your church facing a budget crisis? Does your church fight about money—or keep secrets about it? Do you dread board or finance team meetings? This presentation will help you learn a way to understand what's really going on (in us and in others) when money becomes an issue in congregational life, and how to lead around money with lowered anxiety and more clarity. What you will take away with you, whatever your role in your church: a new way to approach the money challenges we all face at church.



Rev. Margaret Marcuson helps clergy do their work without wearing out or burning out. She speaks and writes on leadership and church finance, and works with church leaders around the U.S. and Canada as a consultant and coach. Margaret is the author of *Leaders who Last* and *Money and Your Ministry*. An American Baptist minister, Margaret was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gardner, Massachusetts, for 13 years. She now lives in Portland, Oregon where she is active at First Baptist Church.

Cultivating Self-Differentiated Leadership

Rev. Dr. Meg Hess

What is leadership? How do we support the development of healthy leaders in our congregations? This workshop will explore these and other questions as we think of new ways to support the work of Nominating Committees.



The Reverend Dr. Margaret (Meg) B. Hess received her BA from Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. She also graduated from Andover Newton Theological School, where she received a M. Div. degree in 1981 and D Min. degree with honors, in Pastoral Counseling in 1994. She is ordained by the American Baptist Churches, USA, where she served pastorates for over twenty-five years in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Adjunct faculty in preaching at Andover Newton Theological School since 1983, Meg also received a Certificate in Homiletic Peer Coaching from Vanderbilt Divinity School. Dr. Hess is a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, a Licensed Pastoral Psychotherapist with a practice in Nashua, NH, and a Certified Life Coach with the International Coach Federation. Meg serves on the faculty of the Leadership in Ministry Workshops and facilitates Labyrinth retreats and workshops.

Saturday, September 29, 2018:

Called to Generosity

Rev. Stacy E. F. Emerson

At the heart of discipleship is a call to generosity. Generosity goes way beyond the traditional ways we have been taught to talk about stewardship. It's not about bills or budgets or buildings but about the generous abundance of God who equips the people of God with all that they need and more to answer the call of mission and ministry. More than ever, we need to learn how to re-frame our conversations around stewardship and generosity and see differently.



The Rev. Stacy E.F. Emerson is currently the Senior Minister of the First Baptist Church in West Hartford, CT. She has also served churches in Mystic, CT and Branford, CT. Rev. Emerson is a stewardship consultant within the Office of the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA, and is director of The Generosity Project. She is also Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the Ecumenical Stewardship Center in Richmond, IN, which is a network that invites, teaches, and celebrates the practice of Christian generosity as a way to change the world. Rev. Emerson holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Developmental Psychology from Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, PA, and a Masters of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, ...

Navigating Conflict During Times of Transition

Nancy Sayer, LCPC, PCC



Nancy is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor with a Master of Science degree in counseling and guidance from Indiana University, South Bend, IN and is currently a PhD. candidate in Values-Driven Leadership at Benedictine University. She is the director of SamaraCare's consulting services. She is also a Professional Certified Coach through the International Coach Federation and has received extensive training in organizational development.

May and September Sessions:

Spiritual Practice / Collaborative Art

Rev. Holly Benzenhafer



Holly is Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church in Needham. As a spiritual director, she seeks to incorporate intentionality, discernment, and compassion into holistic daily living and community. She develops contextually-oriented spiritual practices and spaces for balancing work, rest, sleep, and worship as sacred acts. Holly holds certification as a labyrinth facilitator through Veriditas and in Religion and Conflict Transformation through Boston Theological Institute. She was also a juried member of the Craftsman's Guild of Mississippi in Handweaving. Holly graduated *magna cum laude* from Boston University with her M.Div. specializing in Spirituality, and is currently in the final stages of completing her Ph.D. in Practical Theology and Spirituality, also at BU.

FIGS Sessions (May & September)

Coffee/Tea & Registration	9:00am	-	9:45am
Morning Prayer	9:45am	-	10:00am
Workshop	10:00am	-	11:00am
Spiritual Practice /Collaborative Art	11:00am	-	12:00pm
Lunch (provided on-site)	12:00pm	-	12:45pm
Workshop	1:00pm	-	2:00pm
Real Conversations with Real Churches	2:00pm	-	2:45pm
Snack, Fellowship & Evaluations	2:45pm	-	3:15pm

To register, please [RSVP at this link](#).
Each participant should register individually;
one fee covers all members of each church team

Sliding Scale Registration Fees (total per church or organization)

Again, we encourage you to enroll for both the May and September sessions.

- \$150** *(for churches with annual budgets below \$200,000)*
\$200 *(for churches with annual budgets between \$200,000 and \$400,000)*
\$300 *(for churches with annual budgets above \$400,000)*

If your group is only able to sign up for one session (specify May or September):

- \$100** *(for churches with annual budgets below \$200,000)*
\$150 *(for churches with annual budgets between \$200,000 and \$400,000)*
\$200 *(for churches with annual budgets above \$400,000)*

**One payment by check should be made per group,
payable to FBC Needham FIGS Initiative
at the door on the day of your first session.**

The FIGS for Christ Initiative is hosted by The First Baptist Church in Needham, funded by an Innovation Grant received by Reverend Daryn Stylianopoulos through Foundations of Christian Leadership. Leadership Education aims to create lasting change in US congregations by supporting Christian leaders and the institutions they serve. They design educational services, develop intellectual resources, and facilitate networks of institutions that cultivate a coherent vision of Christian institutional leadership and form Christian leaders. Leadership Education is a non-degree granting initiative of Duke Divinity School funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and based in Durham NC.

The Center for Practical Theology at Boston University School of Theology is also thrilled to support FIGS as part of the School of Theology's Stewarding Project and the Economic Challenges Facing Future Ministers (ECFFM) initiative.

**More logistical information will be provided
upon your registration.**

**Please direct all questions to the FIGS for Christ Initiative:
figsforchrist@gmail.com**