

**Conversation Guide for local churches to engage with the
Vision / Mission / Purpose of the new
Together, As One Conference**



This conversation guide is intended to help local church leaders, both clergy and lay, to engage with their members about the new conference in an effort to inform them about some of the initial work being done to bring together the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences, and also to ask for the thoughts and inspiration of the members for how this new conference might live into God's call in this new era.

<p>Opening</p>	<p>Open with a time of centering prayer, asking people to sit quietly and concentrate on their breathing. Ask each person to set aside their worries about their lives and about their church in this moment, and be open for the movement of the Spirit in this time and place.</p> <p>Once the room is quiet and contemplative, read the leading scripture from the TA1 Vision / Mission / Purpose statement</p> <p align="center"><i>Living the Love and Justice of Jesus</i></p> <p align="center"><i>Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into the one who is the head – into Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.</i></p> <p align="center">~ Ephesians 4:15-16 ~</p> <p>What words of this passage stand out for you? Why?</p> <p>How do you hear the Spirit speaking in this passage?</p> <p>Read the passage from Ephesians again. The TA1 team has stated that the Holy Spirit is blowing us in a new way. What new ways do you hear articulated in this passage?</p>
<p>Discussion</p>	<p>The new Vision / Mission / Purpose statement for the new TA1 Conference starts with the local church immediately after scripture. It states: “We understand the local church exists to make disciples of Jesus and we welcome all people unconditionally to share in this calling.”</p> <p>How is your local congregation working to make disciples of Jesus?</p>

	<p>How might the combined resources and reach of a new, larger, more powerful conference support your local church in those efforts?</p> <p>How might you expand on those efforts and what support could a new, larger and more powerful conference provide that would help with that expansion?</p>
	<p>Making God's love and justice real:</p> <p>"We commit to making God's love and justice real by loving our neighbors, children, and all of creation through our collective work, such as seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice."</p> <p>What does love and justice work look like in your setting of the United Church of Christ?</p> <p>What people are particularly in need of the love of God through the work for justice in your local church?</p> <p>Is your local church engaged in that justice work? If so, how? If not, why not?</p> <p>How do you imagine a new larger more powerful conference might increase the justice work that you do?</p> <p>What areas of justice should our new Conference be focused on in our time? How should the Conference partner with local churches in those areas?</p> <hr/> <p>Agents of change:</p> <p>"We believe God calls us to bring new life as agents of change and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformational leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered."</p> <p>How has your local congregation engaged in new ideas or practices?</p> <p>In what ways do you see a need for adaptive, transformational leadership in this local church?</p> <p>Who are the agents of change in this ministry setting? How might you empower them to spearhead innovations to build up the Body of Christ in this time and place?</p> <p>How is adaptive leadership different from the current leadership and what benefits might you gain from such transformative leadership?</p>

	<p>Covenant Partnerships:</p> <p>“We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good in their local communities and throughout.”</p> <p>How has your ministry setting formed covenant partnerships with other like-minded people of conscience to achieve the common good in your community?</p> <p>How can a new, larger, more powerful Conference support those efforts?</p> <p>What new partnerships would you like the new Conference to establish and toward what good should those partnerships be working?</p>
	<p>Questions and Answers:</p> <p>Using the FAQ document published on the Conferences' websites, answer any additional questions that participants may have. If the answers are not available on the websites, capture them for submission to the TA1 team.</p>
Qs & As	<p>Closing Prayer using the passage from Isaiah as a frame:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">~ Isaiah 43:19 ~</p>
Closing	