

## Mikes' Mission Notes



This past week I was witness to an important moment in the life of Prince George's County. Along with fifteen congregations of various denominations, including National Capital Presbytery members the Rev Dr. Ed Harding of Prince George's Community Church, the Rev. Denise Anderson of Unity Presbyterian Church, and with outer county support from the Rev LeAnn Hodges of Oaklands Presbyterian Church, a pre-sponsoring committee for a Prince George's Affiliate of the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) was formed. The pre-sponsoring committee is using the name Prince George's County Leadership Action Network (PLAN)

If you are not familiar with the IAF, you may be familiar with some of their local affiliates, organizations like Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), Action in Montgomery (AIM) and Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE), not to mention BUILD in Baltimore and PATH in Howard County. The IAF was started in 1940 by community organizer Saul Alinsky in Chicago as a broad-based community organizing effort, organizing organizations, utilizing faith communities as a central pillar. There are currently 65 IAF affiliates around the globe. IAF is different than a lot of current advocacy or organizing groups because they don't organize around an issue, they instead organize around people and relationships, building relational power.

A pre-sponsoring committee is the first step towards creating a full-fledged affiliate, like WIN, AIM and VOICE. The group is not afraid to take its time, with the goal of a founding convention (the moment everything becomes official) to take place in 2019.

During the pre-sponsoring phase, faith communities are being asked to engage with folks inside their faith communities and outside, with the goal of 1000 one-on-one meetings across the county. Beyond one-on-one meetings, there will also be house meeting, gathers of up to 20-30 people, to discuss the important issues facing Prince George's county. Also during the run up to the founding convention, leaders will receive training as well as engagement at the congregational level with the help of professional Community Organizer Coleman Milling.

Part of becoming a part of PLAN at this pre-sponsoring phase is a \$1000 commitment on behalf of congregations. The National Capital Presbytery, through its Mission Coordination Committee, is offering to split that \$1000 fee with any congregation that is interested in making that commitment, meaning that for Presbyterian churches in Prince George's County, the commitment fee will be \$500!

If your congregation is in Prince George's County and you are interested in learning more about PLAN, please reach out to me ([mmcnamara@thepresbytery.org](mailto:mmcnamara@thepresbytery.org)) or to the lead organizer Coleman Milling, 301 529 3425

If you are interested in learning more about the IAF affiliate in your area, let me know, and I can put you in touch with each affiliate's lead organizer!