

IN MISSION & MINISTRY

# United Methodists at Work Developing Disciples



Over the past year, Salem United Methodist Church in Newton has been participating in the L<sup>3</sup> Incubator process. The group is led by its pastor, Rev. Sherry Clemons, who was a member of Kansas West's first conference-wide incubator.

"Our church was fearful at first. It was new; we didn't understand it," said Terry Sauerwein, church member and incubator participant. "The camaraderie that is formed in the incubator group has spread to the whole congregation, and that's really wonderful to see."

The incubator process leads a group of up to 12 individuals through a process that highlights the ideas of loving, learning and leading together as a team. The goal is to develop spiritual leaders who model Christian community that learns and leads together; creating environments that foster transformation; and establishing processes that bear fruit.

"I think the incubator has helped us to start thinking in new ways and getting a new culture off to a start," said Marva Bever, church member and incubator participant. "Culturally, we fall into patterns or habits. I think incubator, for me anyway, has provided me with an alternative thought process."



**L<sup>3</sup> = Loving, Learning & Leading Together**

Sauerwein said through the lessons that have been taught in incubator, more people get involved in leadership in the church.

"We get more people less fearful of being part of that leadership," he said. "The more people we involve, the more excitement we have about things that are happening in the church that are wonderful. It just spreads."

Incubator groups often continue to meet after the first 12 months to continue to love, learn and lead together. Since Clemons started Salem's first incubator more than a year ago, the congregation has experienced renewed vitality and a sense of unity. That vitality and unity has continued to spread with the formation of Salem's second generation incubator this year.

"I think it's helped us to remember that it's not about us," Bever said. "It's easier now to focus on what our mission is."

Funding for the incubator process comes from two sources – the conference budget and the local churches whose pastors participate in a conference incubator group. Pastors are invited to participate in a

### United Methodists at Work ...

*Incubator funding is shared between the annual conference budget and the local churches whose pastors participate in an incubator before leading the process in their congregations. The incubator is a 2-3 year commitment for the congregation and its pastor.*

### Learn More About ...

The incubator process online at [www.kswestumc.org/incubator](http://www.kswestumc.org/incubator)

## Incubators Strengthen Leaders



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conference incubator group before leading an incubator in their own congregation.

"Certainly, it does take a commitment for the people's part that do sign up. It's so rewarding, you realize it wasn't a commitment, it was an honor to be a part of it. It's been a wonderful experience," Sauerwein said. ■