

IN MISSION & MINISTRY
**United
 Methodists
 at Work
 Calling New
 Disciples**



For three months, the Alden United Methodist Church was without a pastor. But thanks to lessons they learned through the ABIDE leadership development program for small-membership churches, the congregation has not lost a step.

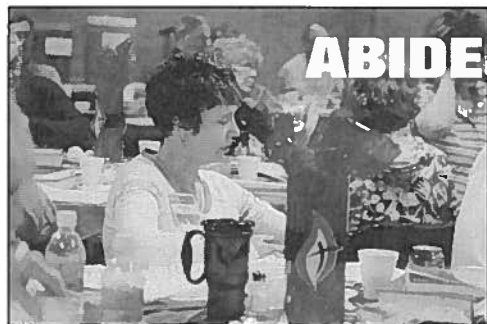
“They are learning to lead together as a team...”

“We’ve just done pretty well holding our own,” said Shirley Culver, staff-parish relations chairperson.

The conference started offering ABIDE in 2009, and a team of laity and then-pastor Debbie Arvelo attended the series of retreats. The ABIDE program uses the L³ Incubator process to help small-membership churches focus on their goals and reach them successfully.

“More than 50 percent of our United Methodist churches average fewer than 50 people in worship. I mean, this is the majority of who we are as a denomination,” said Ron Crandall, who took the L³ Incubator process and adapted it for work with small-membership churches.

“Our goal is in fact to create a team of people in a local church that know how to do three things well. They know how to love each other and love God. They know how to work together instead of simply expecting that this is what one person’s job is, namely, the pastor. And they are learning how to lead together as a team instead of expecting that they have a leader—and that’s called a pastor,” Crandall said.



**Leadership
 Development**

Church members attend an ABIDE retreat.

Those lessons have certainly served the Alden congregation. Kent and Nancy Shuyler participated in ABIDE and credit the process with their deeper involvement in leading the congregation.

“I think our church has done really well learning to take care of itself.”

“Kent and I have taken on a lot more leadership than we would have without this direction,” Nancy Shuyler said. “I think our church has done really well learning to take care of itself.”



ABIDE also helped the congregation start intentionally shifting its focus to reaching out to the people in the community.

“I think they’ve been made a little bit more aware of outside this building—outside the four walls,” Kent Shuyler said.

“I think there’s been more emphasis put on being a disciple—on what it really means—going out and reaching people and not sitting in our church waiting for people to come to us,” Nancy Shuyler agreed.



Churches participating in the ABIDE program do pay a fee, but the majority of the cost is subsidized through support from the Kansas West Conference budget. The conference also pays for



Alden United Methodist Church is in the Hutchinson District of Kansas West Conference.

MissionInsite reports, which are utilized in the ABIDE process to give local churches an idea of the demographics of their community. ■

United Methodists at Work ...

Through your congregation’s commitment to the conference’s mission and ministry, congregations just like yours can participate in ABIDE or other leadership development projects available through the annual conference.

Learn More About ABIDE... www.kswestumc.org/revitalizing