

# Equipping Missional Congregations

## Case Statement 2014



### Mission

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### Vision

Every congregation will become a vital expression of growing in loving for God and our neighbor, reaching new people, and healing a broken world.

### Vision Pathways

To increase the capacity of all churches, clergy, and laity throughout the Dakotas Conference to become vital by developing missional leaders, equipping missional congregations, extending missional impact, and generating missional resources.

If

we sincerely believe that God is calling us to passionately and respectfully offer Christ in a Wesleyan way that is relevant in our cultural context and that inspires hope and new life. . .

and

we are sincere in our prayers for God to send one more person, family, or child for us to love and disciple in Christ. . .

then

we are compelled to come together to plant new churches and nurture congregational renewal in order to reach new people of all ages and life circumstances and connect them with the body of Christ.



*"We are on a shared journey toward God's vision for us; a conference in which each of the 270 congregations is bearing kingdom fruit reflective of Jesus' missional imperatives to: grow in love for God and our neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world. "*

Bishop Bruce R. Ough  
Dakotas-Minnesota Area  
The United Methodist Church



*"I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans . . . to give you a future filled with hope."*  
Jeremiah 29:11

## Case Statement Summary

Equipping Missional Congregations is a focused plan to start new churches and increase the number of highly vital churches throughout the Dakotas Conference.

*Places where disciples of Jesus Christ are made through the power of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:18-20*



*"Most people today are unlikely to be part of a church body. We need to meet people right where they are. Just like Jesus, Wesley and Paul did."*

Rev. Adam Weber  
Embrace Church  
Sioux Falls, SD  
Glacial Lakes District



*"There are people that have lived here forever. They have no idea that there are a lot of people that don't go to church. I want people my age to come to church, just to get to know God and love their neighbor. We need to build a whole new church."*

Brett Rockman, 19  
Kenmore Regional  
Donnybrook, ND  
Sakakawea District

## Creating New Churches

The Dakotas Conference will launch specific strategies and steps to support development of new faith communities. Demographic and cultural needs will be considered when starting new faith communities to reach all people. New church starts typically fall into these categories:

**Chartered Church** —A church that is launched to reach a new geography-based demographic or lifestyle-based group and is led by appointed clergy. Churches normally become chartered when they reach 125 in worship and demonstrate sustainability.

**Partnered Congregation** —A church that focuses on reaching an underserved and/or economically challenged population group and receives ongoing support from outside of the people served—often from another “partner” church.

**Multi-site** —An extension campus of an existing chartered United Methodist Church. This is one of the most effective ways to reach new people and extend a church’s ministry beyond the doors to a new physical location. A new site is often launched in a neighboring community where there is no United Methodist Church. The new church may be started in the surrounding community to better connect with younger generations. An intentional effort to start a new worshipping community increases congregational vitality for the parent congregation. The church renews focus to reach new people.

**Restart**—A previously chartered church that goes through an intentional rebirth by ceasing regular worship and programming. The church starts over in an effort to reach a new group. Typically, the process involves relocating, renaming, and welcoming a new leader.

## Fruitful Outcomes

### Equipping Missional Congregations will:

- Establish ten new churches and/or multi-site ministries over seven years. Conference leaders and local church leaders will work together to determine opportunities based on demographics and growth.
- Prepare and mentor effective leaders through leadership development processes which identify, assess, cultivate, mentor, and equip passionate leaders in covenant with God, one another, and The United Methodist Church. Eighteen pastors have already completed a church planter assessment workshop. Five additional pastors will complete the assessment of their skills for starting new faith communities.

## Vital Congregations have:

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Effective, equipped, and inspired clergy leadership
- Gifted, empowered and equipped lay leadership
- Small Group ministries
- Strong children's and youth ministries

*Spirit-filled, forward-leaning communities of believers that welcome all people. Galatians 3:28*

# Strengthening Current Churches

The Dakotas Conference will focus on strengthening existing churches that desire to reinvent or re-envision their mission and ministry. The conference's consultation based programs for strengthening existing congregations are:

**Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI)** —This process resources churches and their pastors with an intensive consultation and clergy coaching model. MCCI is designed to intervene in local churches that are currently plateaued, are in decline, or are on the way "up" but are not sure what should come next. These churches have the pastoral leadership and potential resources to jumpstart a new life cycle of fruitful ministry. The consultation process involves extensive assessment and recommendations. A key component is ongoing coaching and support throughout the implementation process.

**Journey Renewal** —This is a streamlined version of the MCCI process that is tailored to fit churches that are less complex in their systems. Leadership and congregational readiness will be key factors to inviting churches to be a part of a process that will lead congregations to take the next step in their ministry.

**Readiness, Resourcing, and Re-Tooling** — These processes are designed to evaluate a congregation's readiness to take that next step towards transformation and determine what resourcing and re-tooling strategies are needed. The church is guided to look in the mirror of self-evaluation and out the window at the community for ministry needs. Specialized coaching and equipping strategies assist churches to the next level.



*"Dwelling on the past does not help but learning from the past does. It propels us forward. Visioning a future offers us hope. The only way to live life is looking forward, being guided by God to the next amazing thing He is doing."*

Rev. Kori Ann Lehrkamp  
Highmore/ Harold / Blunt UMC  
Highmore, SD  
Prairie Hills District



*"We need to take a look at new things. I visualize kids running down the hall of the church, rooms full of families laughing and loving God. I visualize the church alive."*

Larry Ritgarn  
Fargo First UMC  
Fargo, ND  
Eastern Sunrise District

## Fruitful Outcomes

### Equipping Missional Congregations will:

- Enable 5-8 churches each year to participate in the Missional Church Consultation Initiative process. Five to eight churches will participate in Journey Renewal each year. There are currently 6 churches participating in MCCI and another 5-8 churches are slated to begin next year.
- Enable 40% of our congregations to become vital according to the denominational Vital Congregation indicators.
- Enable 75% of clergy to be assessed and participate in peer learning and/ or a coaching relationship, in order to provide effective leadership for new ministries or new life cycles of current ministries.

# Startup Costs and Investment for Fruitfulness

*"Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest?' I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."*  
**John 4:35**

## Cost Basis for the Seven Year Equipping Missional Congregations Plan

- The cost of starting a new church and/or multi-site ministry varies based on the model, but ranges between \$300,000 and \$500,000 over a 7 year period. Funding is released as the new church or ministry meets predetermined benchmarks.
- The costs associated with strengthening existing churches is \$10,000 per year for each church involved in the MCCI process, and \$3,000 a year for each church involved in Journey Renewal. Funding is made available for various stages as churches reach designated benchmarks.
- Developing leaders and coaching is allocated at \$100,000 per year.

## Summary of Expenditures and Funding for the Equipping Missional Congregations Plan

### Seven Year Expenditures

A. 10 new churches and/or multi-site ministries	\$5,000,000
B. 112 churches strengthened and revitalized through MCCI and/or Journey Renewal	\$ 728,000
C. Leadership development and coaching	<u>\$ 700,000</u>
D. Total Seven Year Plan Expenditures	\$6,428,000

### Seven Year Funding Sources

A. Already apportioned budgeted amount for equipping missional congregations @ \$448,500/yr.	\$3,206,000
B. Funding from a potential conference initiative to close the gap between planned expenditures and amount available through apportionments.	<u><b>\$3,222,000</b></u>
C. Total Seven Year Funding Needed to fulfill the Equipping Missional Congregations Plan.	\$6,428,000



*"If we're going to be bold followers of Jesus, then we have to be like Peter—brave enough to step out of the boat—even if we end up splashing around for a while. He asks us to have a vision that is bigger than our budget so that we remember it will take God's power to accomplish it; to have a HEART for others who are far from God or from a church home."*

Rev. Rebecca Trefz  
Director of Ministries  
Dakotas Conference

## Fast Facts

The number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever (*Pew Research Center, 2012*).

Among those people who do claim a church affiliation, only 43% attend church regularly in North Dakota and 44% in South Dakota (*Gallup in collaboration with Pew Research*).



## Prayer for Unleashing New Life

I will pray daily for the Holy Spirit to:

- Break through and renew our churches, unleashing fearless, Spirit-led congregations!
- Empower our clergy and lay leadership with the contagious, miraculous, saving message of Jesus.
- Boldly use me, without limits, to reach new people and heal a broken world.
- Create in me a joyful heart for all that God is doing in and through us to change lives and transform the world.

I pray in the precious and powerful name of Jesus.  
Amen.



**Dakotas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church**  
1331 W. University Ave., Mitchell, SD 57301  
www.dakotasumc.org | (605) 996-6552