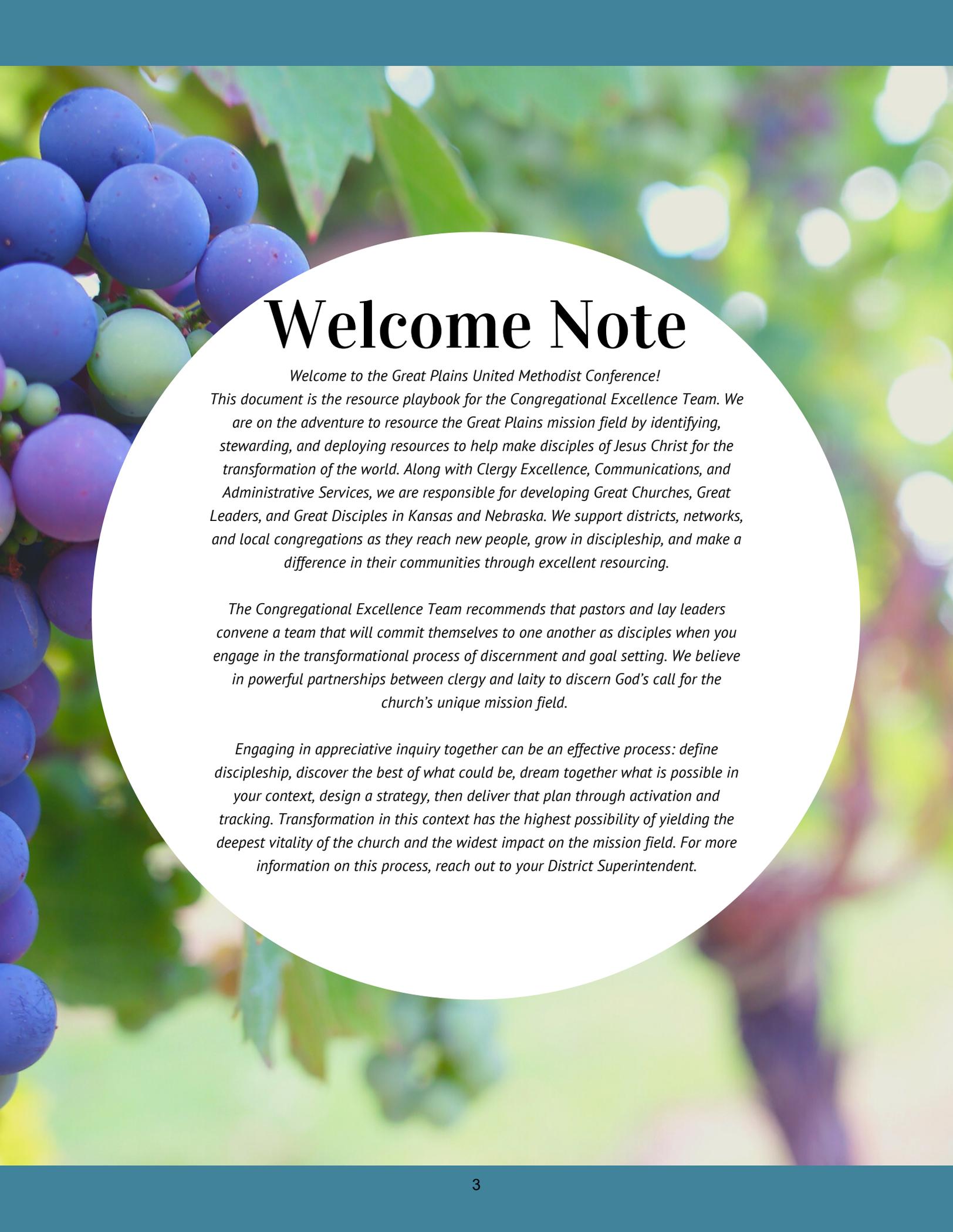




Congregational
EXCELLENCE

CHURCH PLAYBOOK

GREAT PLAINS UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE



Welcome Note

Welcome to the Great Plains United Methodist Conference!

This document is the resource playbook for the Congregational Excellence Team. We are on the adventure to resource the Great Plains mission field by identifying, stewarding, and deploying resources to help make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Along with Clergy Excellence, Communications, and Administrative Services, we are responsible for developing Great Churches, Great Leaders, and Great Disciples in Kansas and Nebraska. We support districts, networks, and local congregations as they reach new people, grow in discipleship, and make a difference in their communities through excellent resourcing.

The Congregational Excellence Team recommends that pastors and lay leaders convene a team that will commit themselves to one another as disciples when you engage in the transformational process of discernment and goal setting. We believe in powerful partnerships between clergy and laity to discern God's call for the church's unique mission field.

Engaging in appreciative inquiry together can be an effective process: define discipleship, discover the best of what could be, dream together what is possible in your context, design a strategy, then deliver that plan through activation and tracking. Transformation in this context has the highest possibility of yielding the deepest vitality of the church and the widest impact on the mission field. For more information on this process, reach out to your District Superintendent.

Your Congregational Excellence Team

➔ VISION



Vision: The conference vision of **Great churches, great leaders, great disciples, transformed world** drives our content creation and curation.

➔ ECOLOGY

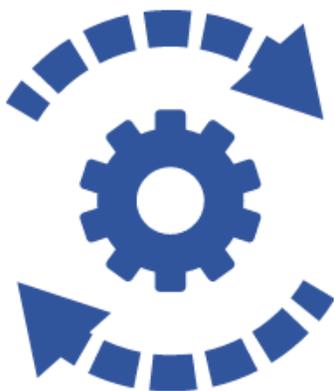


Our ecology of resources includes age-related ministries, church administration, church development, lay development, community engagement, and conference level programming. This ecology cultivates environments of an IDEA:

Innovation Ecology

- KNOW GOD

New Places, New People, New Ways to Engage New Younger and Diverse People with the Gospel of Jesus Christ



Discipleship Culture

- PROCLAIM

CHRIST

Maturing in Marks of Discipleship: Praying, Worshipping, Giving, Serving, Witnessing



Episcopal Priorities

- SERVE OTHERS

and DO JUSTICE

Prioritizing at the heart all we do, developing resources, relationships, and team, with those who are not yet in relationship with Jesus Christ, and not yet part of a faith community



Activation of District Strategies

Activating Innovation, Discipleship, and Engagement in 100% of Great Plains Districts (Our IDE is not fully an IDEA without activation)



Each District has key strategies to support innovation, discipleship and engagement in all United Methodist congregations in the area. There are three key strategies:

DISTRICT STRATEGY

In consultation with the District Superintendent and District Strategy Teams, each district has key strategies and resources to guide work in resourcing congregations in the area. The District Superintendent (DS), Congregational Excellence Liaison to District, and District Strategy Team (DST) hears and resources the district with conference tools adapted for the district.

MISSION INSITE

A cloud-based technology platform that bridges the gap between data and decisional information by answering the “where” and “what about” questions in your organization and community. Mission Insite provides a deep-dive into the community where the congregation is located.

NETWORK RESOURCING

Every United Methodist congregation is in a network of churches that are connected as small groups of leaders who come together for covenant, accountability, resource and mission to the community. A network gathers United Methodist leaders together to identify issues and address ways to work together collaboratively for the kingdom of God.

The following resources are available to your congregation, contact your District Superintendent for further information:

Resources

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Readiness 360, Class Meeting, Rural Ministry Resources, Urban Ministry Grant, Multi-Cultural Church Accelerator, Fresh Expressions, Planter Incubator, Innovation Coaching, Planter CORE Crucible, Church Quest

LAY DEVELOPMENT

Laity Summit, Certified Lay Ministry, Lay Servant Ministries, Evangelism Resources, Ethnic Ministry Local Church Grant

AGE-RELATED MINISTRIES

Kids and Family Ministry, Youth Ministry, Conference Council on Youth Ministry, Summer Internship Matching Grants, Micah Corps, Colleges and Campus Ministry, Camping Ministry

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART), Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC), Mental Health Resources, Community Garden Resources, Ethnic Ministries, Racial Justice Resources, Mercy and Justice Ministry, Mission Agencies, International Mission Partners, Disaster Response

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Safe Gatherings, Simplified Board Structure, Vital Signs Dashboard, Church Council Resources, Trustees Resources, Finance Resources, SPRC Resources

CONFERENCE LEVEL PROGRAMS

GP Communications, Local Church Toolbox, Worship Planning

Church Development

READINESS 360

An online survey tool for mobilizing congregations multiply in ministry and missional impact

CLASS MEETING

Groups of people meeting for the building up of consistent discipleship

RURAL MINISTRY RESOURCES

Helpful links and information pertaining to the churches serving in rural areas

URBAN MINISTRY GRANT

Assists districts to 1) start new faith communities in urban areas, 2) develop ministries with the poor; 3) develop ministries with existing residents or newcomers in an urban area

MULTI-CULTURAL CHURCH ACCELERATOR

A year-long cohort to support and equip leaders in multi-cultural ministry settings

FRESH EXPRESSIONS

Established primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet part of any church

PLANTER INCUBATOR

Supportive 8-month process which includes teaching of new church planting/innovative ministry principles and competencies

INNOVATION COACHING

Year-long coaching for those who have pitched their idea and designated as a "planter"

PLANTER CORE CRUCIBLE

Following Innovation Coaching, the Planter's pitch is approved by NCD and Appointive Cabinet. The best use of this process is for parent church or satellite church to launch a new church/ministry

CHURCH QUEST

New church/ministry groups in years 2 and 5, who are becoming self-sufficient, self-governing, and self-supporting can be chartered United Methodist Churches

ETHNIC MINISTRIES

Grants and support to strengthen the ethnic local church

Lay Development

LAITY SUMMIT

One-stop virtual event for church and community leadership

CERTIFIED LAY MINISTRY

Laity have long been a part of ministry in Methodism. Lay preachers, exhorters, and class leaders have served the church since its earliest days

LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

Leadership development program focused on equipping and empowering lay persons who have responded to the call of God to serve in mission and ministry

LEARNING LAB

A new e-Learning platform that is free, accessible, and fun to use at your own pace

EVANGELISM RESOURCES

Resources involving telling the Good News, announcing the kingdom (reign) of God, and bearing witness

ETHNIC MINORITY LOCAL CHURCH GRANT

Grant is used to strengthen ethnic minority ministries

Age Related Ministries

KIDS AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Structure and resources for Kids and Family Ministry Workers

YOUTH MINISTRY

Structure and resources for Youth Ministry Workers

SUMMER INTERNSHIP MATCHING GRANTS

Church Matching Grants to churches who have identified someone to serve as a summer intern in Pastoral Leadership, Youth Ministry and/or Kids Ministry

MICAH CORPS

Summer opportunity for young adults to learn about connecting their faith with justice and practice leadership skills

COLLEGES AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

Missional outpost of the Church focused on developing young leaders

CAMPING MINISTRY

Provides a safe and sacred place apart from everyday distractions to encounter God while developing Christian spiritual leadership and nurturing each other's faith journeys.

LEADERSHIP LAB

A Christian Leadership experiment for high school students in the Great Plains Annual Conference.

Community Engagement

DART

Community organizing in urban centers to right issues of injustices

WORC

Community organizing in rural areas to right issues of injustices

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Helpful resources and initiatives addressing mental health in communities

COMMUNITY GARDEN RESOURCES

Helpful resources to assist local churches in developing a community garden

RACIAL JUSTICE RESOURCES

Helpful links and information pertaining to racial justice.

MERCY AND JUSTICE MINISTRY

Training and coaching for local congregations in the work of mercy and justice

MISSION AGENCIES

Funding for partnerships with ministries with the poor and ecumenical organizations

INTERNATIONAL MISSION PARTNERS

Conference-level missional partnerships focused on education for young people through scholarships

DISASTER RESPONSE

Ministry of care that responds to natural or human-made disasters that overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own

Church Administration

SAFE GATHERINGS

Required boundary awareness and abuse prevention program

SIMPLIFIED BOARD STRUCTURE

A streamlined form of congregational governance, formerly known as "One Board"

VITAL SIGNS DASHBOARD

Dashboard to measure local church discipleship

CHURCH COUNCIL RESOURCES

Resources for church council and leadership teams

TRUSTEES RESOURCES

Resources for local church trustees

FINANCE RESOURCES

Resources for local church finances and treasurer

SPRC RESOURCES

Resources for local church Staff Parish Relations Committees

Conference Level Programs

GREAT PLAINS COMMUNICATIONS

Communication Resources are available to every church and leader

LOCAL CHURCH TOOLBOX

Portal on the website offering resources in many areas of ministry to local churches

WORSHIP PLANNING

Resources available for worship planning to all congregations

Readiness 360

DESCRIPTION

Readiness 360 is an online survey tool for mobilizing congregations, multiplying in ministry and missional impact. R360 measures a congregation's vitality in four areas: spiritual intensity, missional alignment, dynamic relationships, and cultural openness. The survey takes a snapshot of the church's readiness to take bold steps forward in mission and ministry. When the survey is completed and results are generated, the leadership team meets with a coach to talk about next steps and visioning. Together, the leadership team and coach craft a strategic plan for the upcoming year.

TYPE OF CHURCH *(see appendix)*

Any size church: **family, pastoral, program or corporate**. Recommend at least 10% of worshipping congregation to take the survey.

Ideal for:

- Visioning or re-visioning process
- Starting a new ministry
- Taking inventory of what is currently happening with a church
- Before/after pastoral change
- Any time in the church life when there is desire to learn more about who the church is and what the next faithful steps are in ministry

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Initiate participation in the Readiness 360 survey and coaching
- Create the survey and publicize opportunity
- Church Council reviews the executive report
- Pastor convenes leadership council or nominated leadership team to draft a 90-day action plan Implement the 90-day action plan
- Celebrate and plan for the next 90 days. Continue coaching for 6, 9, and 12 months to discern next faithful steps in congregational life.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Pastor and Church Council agree to participate and promote the survey, name a group of leaders to interpret results, and meet with coach to discuss next steps and goals.
- Determine the timeline for the congregation to take the survey.
- Decide on 2 open-ended questions for the participant to answer.
- District liaison will send pastor or lay leader a link to the survey. We recommend up to 3 weeks for everyone to complete the survey.
- A leadership team is assembled to take a deep dive into the results of the survey. Each district has Readiness 360 trained coaches that the DS and Liaison can assign. With a coach, the leadership team reviews the results with your church council and/or visioning team and begins to craft next steps in each of the areas.
- The Church Council and/or Visioning Team create a plan to address the next faithful steps from the report over the next 6-9 months.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

Testimonies can be found at: www.greatplainsumc.org/readiness-360
 3 minute Testimonies: READINESS 360 TEASER on Vimeo
 7 minute Testimonies: <https://vimeo.com/478617362>

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/readiness-360>

Class Meeting

DESCRIPTION

Methodism started when laity would gather to give a Wesleyan witness in their communities. The class leader looked after their class to find ways to be disciples of Christ. A class leader is a lay person recognized by their community as being a person who is a witness of Jesus Christ, doing acts of worship and devotion, compassion, and justice. The Class Meeting enables Methodists to “watch over one another in love” or “mutual accountability for the building up of consistent discipleship.”

TYPE OF CHURCH *(see appendix)*

Family – Network Model - In lieu of a pastor, the class leader would oversee the congregation to ‘watch over one another in love,’ providing spiritual formation and oversight for the congregation gathered. The network can provide resourcing and pastoral oversight as needed and desired.

Pastoral or Program – Discipleship Model – Class leader leads and strengthens other laity in living out their faith and Christian witness.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Network models are under the supervision of the District Superintendent and a Network Class Leader.
- Class Leader will meet weekly with the Network Leader for resourcing and scheduling events.
- Class Leaders will meet every 6 months with the District Superintendent, Network Leader, and District Liaison.
- District Liaison is available for resourcing at any time.
- Each class leader and class meeting can pilot the structure for one year and revisit it within the year.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Class Meeting Training: one-hour virtual recording provides the initial understanding of a class meeting for interested clergy and laity available through Congregational Excellence
- DS meets with congregations
- Church enters into discernment with a Congregational Excellence coach
- Church identifies who they see as a spiritual leader in their midst to serve as Class Leader
- Church determines the relationship with the appointed network, where the network leader offers and blesses sacraments, shares resources, and offers support to the class leader. The class leader will build covenant with the network leader and shared expectations of what the network leader can offer to the class leader. The DS can help oversee this covenant.
- Churches beginning the Discipleship Model may contact their district liaison for resources.

STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION

For testimonies:

[Laity Summit Workshop - Class Meetings and Leadership Basics on Vimeo](#)

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/weslestyleclassmeetings>

Rural Ministry Resources

DESCRIPTION

United Methodist Rural Advocates is a United Methodist lay and clergy association that deals directly with issues that relate to small membership churches, rural communities, and local pastors. The purpose of the United Methodist Rural Advocates is:

- *To advocate, educate, inspire, and influence the United Methodist Church around rural issues.*
- *To be a fellowship (working network) that advocates, educates, inspires, and affirms rural and small membership churches, rural communities, and the entire United Methodist Church.*
- *To live as an advocacy group of United Methodist laity and clergy who are concerned with United Methodism's responsibility within the Church Universal toward nurturing Christian concerns in town and rural churches and communities of the United States and throughout the world. The group will interpret the Christian message as it applies to town and rural life; and we will be a voice for the rural church and community particularly in the support of General Conference legislation that will assist small membership and rural churches to minister effectively in their community for the Kingdom of God.*

TYPE OF CHURCH *(see appendix)*

Family and Pastoral size church

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Publicize information on rural church resources.
- Identify what particular needs and resources are desired for a curated package for the church.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Grants for innovative ministries can be through network grants, fresh expressions grants, serving with others grants, or innovation grants.
- Most resourcing is done through the networks
- The district liaison can curate resources for the district and network.

United Methodist Rural Advocates: <https://www.umruraladvocates.org>

Kansas Action for Children: <https://www.kac.org/>

Voices for Children in Nebraska: <https://voicesforchildren.com/>

Kansas Rural Center: <https://kansasruralcenter.org/>

Rural Poverty Research Institute: <https://rupri.org/>

Rural Church Network: <http://www.ruralchurchnetwork.org/>

Great Plains Resource Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/ruralministryresources>

Urban Ministry Grant

DESCRIPTION

The Urban Ministry Grant is funded by the sale and proceeds of properties abandoned by discontinued congregations in counties with more than 50,000 in population. Urban Ministry Grant funds assist districts to 1) start new faith communities in urban areas; 2) develop ministries with the poor that evangelize, advocate for justice, and work toward changing the community for the sake of the welfare of the people; and 3) develop effective and sustainable ministries with existing residents or newcomers a site in an urban area different from the original members. The dollar range of grants is up to \$120,000 per project over a 4-year period.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church can apply for Urban Ministry Grant. The church must be located and serving a population in an urban area. .

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Each year the church can reapply for grant funding with an update and renewal process due on April 1 (for grants that are June – July) and August 1 (for grants that are January – December).

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Apply for Urban Ministry Grant with a plan for ministry
- For the church to apply, they must:
 - Identify the people groups in the urban area mission field Using Mission Insite and the people groups who actively participate in existing churches
 - Identify churches that are capable of extending new missions or ministries to reach people outside the prominent people group of the church
 - Develop a plan to reach the people in the mission field with missions, new church, plants, and ministries
 - Develop long-term (7-10 years) funding plans for mission, church plants, and ministries among the people in the mission field
 - Set measurable goals and timelines
 - Assign specific responsibilities for carrying out the plan to individuals, team, and key stakeholders.
 - Evaluate the plan and its implementation.
- Urban Ministry Grants are due on April 1 and August 1 to Great Plains Vital Congregations.
- Interviews of applicants and approvals will be given in May and September of each year.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/urban-ministry-grant-application>

Multi-Cultural Church Accelerator

DESCRIPTION

This cohort experience provides walk-along-side coaching by two experienced Guides, framed in a well-honed and well-proven leadership model known as the L3 Model of Spiritual Leadership. Loving, Learning, and Leading is first about growing spiritual leaders in community who learn to create transformative environments that work with the Holy Spirit to empower the churches and to ultimately discover more fruitful ways of making disciples, other spiritual leaders, and leading churches. The two Guides journey with a new team of 12 minority and supporting majority church leaders for 1 year guiding them in this model and helping them implement it in their local church settings. At the end of the year the goal is to have 12 well-trained leaders who are implementing this model in their local churches thereby equipping a broader set of leaders with new skills tailored to our most challenged churches.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Churches that are already in the process of building partnerships with immigrant community fellowships to build a ministry plan together to reach the mission field they share.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- **September – November:** covenant developed by Congregational Excellence
- **December – February:** Clarification on context statement and shared mission field view. Values, vision, and mission, should start to clarify among the partner teams
- **March – August:** Mission field strategies, goals, and experiments. The reflect-adjust-do, an ongoing improvement process is practiced by the partner teams.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- The church will be nominated by a DS **OR** grant funding approved from NCD or Vital Congregations **OR** following the Planter Incubator, partner leaders participate in a 12 month process to build their ministry plan.
- Congregational Excellence Staff meets with projects to clarify the process as it pertains to each project.
- Ongoing monitoring and benchmarking throughout the year of participation and evolution of the ministry with the DS.
- Decision on the viability of the project and next steps for the 2nd year.

Fresh Expressions

DESCRIPTION

A Fresh Expression is a form of church for our changing culture. Fresh Expressions was established primarily for the benefit of those who are not yet part of any church. The Fresh Expressions US Movement provides resources to help churches begin Fresh Expressions' with people who are not likely to engage with an established church, or an ongoing community.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church: **family, pastoral, program or corporate.**

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- "Fresh Expressions events, classes, and resources are offered throughout the year.
- If participant registers for an event, Fresh Expressions contacts the participant directly through email for future events.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Churches, networks, or districts can sign up for a Fresh Expressions Event, as the Great Plains Conference is a partner with Fresh Expressions US.
- Access conference recordings, events, grants, Vision Day and future events on the GP Hub.
- Advanced Laity Servant Ministries course – learning about the Fresh Expressions lay movement
- Great Plains Online Coaching Cohort – for churches wanting coaching with Fresh Expressions staff
- Dinner Church Encounters – learn how to do a dinner church in your congregation
- Fresh Expressions Strategy Workshops – how to incorporate the strategy into church planning
- Grants are available for \$500 per church on the GP website.



Planter Incubator

DESCRIPTION

Planter Incubator is a supportive 8-month process that includes teaching of new church planting/innovative ministry principles and competencies. The teaching and learning will help individuals explore new ways to reach new people in current ministry settings. The goal is to develop congregational leaders through equipping the equippers with resources for church development and ministry innovation. The pillars of learning and focus are: Teaching, Planning, Goal Setting, and Coaching. Participants are supported and encouraged by conference staff, coaches, and outside resources to incorporate planting competencies in their current ministry setting. Each participant will leave the incubator with a ministry plan and pitch to reach new people where they currently serve.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of church. This is for potential 'planters' - clergy or lay - to explore what new ministry God is calling them to try at their current setting or beyond.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- During the 8-month incubator, a list of participants per district and current learnings are sent regularly to District Superintendent.
- All participants are strongly encouraged to do a Shark Tank 'pitch.'
- After the pitch, the idea will be vetted with New Church Development, District Superintendent.
- Next, the Planter is given a Planter Assessment through Path 1. With the pitch and the assessment, the Planter can be allotted financial resources and time in appointment for innovation and join Innovation Coaching cohort.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Entrance into the Planter Incubator will be discerned from questions based around strategic spiritual displays of leadership innovation.
- Individuals are strategically identified by District Superintendents & Congregational Excellence staff.
- The process begins with an application and interest from clergy and laity to engage. The application will be available online and the cohort is open to all interested in elevating their ministry. Interested applicants attend an informational Planter Incubator meeting.
- The 8-month cohort process begins with monthly teaching and coaching sessions. Each participant has an opportunity to pitch to New Church Development Board for financial support along with an assessment for planting with the Board and District Superintendent.
- Financial support offered is contingent on assessment for a Fresh Expressions plant or further development and training with Planter Crucible/Innovation Cohort.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/planter-incubator-cohort>

Innovation Coaching

DESCRIPTION

After active participants in the Planter Incubator have pitched their idea and they are designated as a Planter, they enter into a year-long coaching cohort called the Innovation Coaching Cohort. Paul Nixon from the EpiCenter Group encourages teams to keep their ministry idea simple and inexpensive. Innovators must be very clear on what ideas they are seeking to test. Whether it is a matter of tweaking or starting over, most groups can find the energy and focus for about three attempts (4-6 week tests) at a ministry idea before they will either (a) experience a sense that they are onto something, with increasing energy or (b) they will need to take a rest. Coaching with regard to innovation can be one coach: one ministry team or it can be group coaching (one coach: multiple ministry teams, each trying different things). The 12 months of direct coaching includes a variety of new church start competencies, including but not limited to team, covenant, context, mission, vision, values and impact.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church. This is for Planters – clergy or lay - who have graduated the Planter Incubator.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- **July – October:** pray, discern, develop a team in the mission field
- **November – March:** develop, deploy, test, learn from the mission field
- **April - June:** Provide results and reporting for the second year

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Following the Planter Incubator, the planters/innovators will enter into 24-month coaching to try out their idea of a plant.
- Ongoing monitoring throughout the year of participation and evolution of the plant.
- Provide quarterly reporting to NCD and clarity as the project progresses.
- Decide the viability of the project and next steps for the 2nd year.

Planter CORE Crucible

DESCRIPTION

After a pitch to NCD and a fully developed plant plan has been created and passed through the board and approved by the bishop and cabinet, the planter and their team are to be part of the CORE Crucible. CORE Crucible ensures that planters are part of an ongoing community of innovators where they experience the love of God, learn, and practice essential steps to creating a healthy core group.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Approved Planters and their team

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- **July – October:** begin accountability and gather a team for a Launch Pad event
- **November – March:** implement a discipleship system
- **March – April:** Launch Pad, Finalize Public Launch Timeline

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Approval of a plant plan or innovation by NCD, DS, or appointive cabinet
- Planters and teams onboarded before July kick-off retreat in conjunction with GP Planter Incubator
- Clarify check-in with NCD, conference staff, cabinet members before the plant gets to the following calendar year
- End of 1st quarter check-in; 2nd quarter check-in with NCD; 3rd quarter with stakeholders

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/planter-incubator-cohort>

Church Quest

DESCRIPTION

Church Quest is the time between years 2 and 5 for a church plant to meet ongoing benchmarks agreed upon by the planter, core team members, resident DS, and New Church Development Board reps. This group is to meet two times a year by Zoom or on site of the plant to review benchmarks at a stakeholders meeting. The Planter, core team members, and DS are to meet with the NCD board once a year to review the ongoing need for funding and growth of the church. By years 4-5, the new fellowship should show the capacity to fund itself and govern the day to day, processes of discipling new people in the mission field as well as the running the day-to-day administrative needs. Sufficiently showing this capacity over at least six months will determine that they are ready to be chartered as a church in the United Methodist connection.

TYPE OF CHURCH

New Church fellowships who are between years 2 and 5

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- **January – April:** First quarter benchmarks met that were decided upon in the previous calendar year.
- **May - August:** Second quarter benchmarks met with report to the NCD Board in August, with justification on what will need to happen to continue the plant beyond the calendar year.
- **September - December:** Fourth quarter benchmarks are to be met and lived out according to previous agreements on progress. November/December benchmark meetings will determine viability and continuation of the new start. This will be judged on the three previous benchmark meeting agreements
- By year 4 or 5, fellowship will show a period of at least six months (in practice – not necessarily policy) of self-sufficiency, self-supporting, and self-governing.
- Final metamorphosis of a plant is to become a chartered church community functioning in the Great Plains United Methodist Connection.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Newly launched fellowships who arrive at the end of year 1 meeting benchmarks, financial and discipleship marks
- The Appointive Cabinet and NCD board approves the ministry to go forward at the end of the calendar year
- Ongoing monitoring throughout the year of participation and evolution of the plant.
- Provide benchmarking and clarity as the project progresses
- Decide the viability of the project and next steps for the 2nd year.

Ethnic Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the Ethnic Ministry grants and cohort is to provide funding to strengthen the ethnic local church through leadership training, small groups, worship, stewardship, and spiritual formation as they engage in developing disciple making systems inside the church walls as well as in the community which it resides.

TYPE OF CHURCH

For any size church who is predominantly Hispanic Ministry, Korean American Ministry, Native American Ministry, African American Ministry and African Ministry.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Identify, support and uphold the ministries to new programs/ministries that grow and make new disciples of Jesus Christ who will transform the world.
- Discipleship Ministries has an additional grant available for a ministry or project for up to \$10,000 due every September.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- The Multi-Ethnic Leadership Accelerator provides onboarding and collaboration to strengthen the ministries of ethnic ministries, starting in September.
- Granting for churches is renewed each November with Vital Congregations Board
- Access to resources for Hispanic, Korean-American, Native American Ministries found on website.

Discipleship Ministries Grant: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/about/grants-scholarships>
Great Plains Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/racialandethnicministries>

Laity Summit

DESCRIPTION

The Laity Summit Planning Team endeavors to provide lay persons an event that inspires dynamic leadership, cultivates leadership, discipleship skills, and enhances resources and networking opportunities. Laity Summit is a one-stop virtual leadership event for church and community leadership.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All church sizes and for all laity. The event is for all lay persons, lay servants, lay leaders, lay ministers and for anyone discerning a call to leadership.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Workshops and recordings are available to participants after the event for future leadership development
- Stories of transformation during the event and after through evaluation and post-Laity Summit engagements

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- The mission of the Laity Summit is to provide lay persons of the Great Plains Conference a gathering that is accessible, affordable, and relevant and results in a more powerful dynamic in making disciples for the transformation of the world.
- The annual event will take place the 3rd Saturday every March and will feature various workshops focused on ministry and leadership development.
- Publicity begins in fall with an emphasis in January – March for participants to register.
- Encourage registration, cabinet onboarding and strategic district communication.

Certified Lay Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The certified lay minister is to "preach the Word, provide a care ministry to the congregation, assist in program leadership, and be a witness in the community for the growth, missional and connectional thrust of The United Methodist Church as part of a ministry team with the supervision and support of a clergy person." (2012 BOD, ¶1271.1)

TYPE OF CHURCH

Certified Lay Ministers (CLM's) are usually providing ministry in part-time or volunteer roles in a variety of formats:

- in visitation and care ministry
- as parish nurse (with appropriate training)
- as a small group leader
- in preaching ministries
- as a missionary or church planter
- in smaller new faith communities
- in Ethnic Ministries
- as Hispanic/Latino Lay Missioners
- as a pastor of a small church as part of a ministry team
- on a pastoral team on multi-point charges or parishes to assist in continuity of leadership
- as a pastoral associate in a larger church
- multi-cultural or cross-cultural groups by developing indigenous leadership

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- In consultation with the Great Plains Annual Conference Committee for Lay Servant Ministries, a CLM Visionary Team helps encourage the district to promote Certified Lay Ministry.
- An Annual Certified Lay Minister Retreat gathers CLMs for spiritual renewal and direction.
- To register for classes online and more information, visit the website below.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/CLMcourses>

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Written recommendation of the pastor and supporting vote of the church council or charge conference where he/she holds membership.
- A Certified Lay Minister must demonstrate appreciation of United Methodist history, doctrine, polity, worship, and liturgy through service in the local church.
- Register for CLM courses for Old Testament, New Testament and Preaching at Great Plains Online Learning
<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/CLMcourses> after completion of the 4 modules or The Academy for Small Membership Church Ministries at <https://www.tasmcm.org/>.
 - CLM Module 1: Call and Covenant for Ministry
 - CLM Module 2 The Practice of Ministry
 - CLM Module 3: Organization for Ministry
 - CLM Module 4: Connection for Ministry
- Note: Additional classes can be found at <https://www.beadisciple.com/certified-lay-ministry> and <https://greatplainsumclearning.org/>

Lay Servant Ministry

DESCRIPTION

Lay Servant Ministry training equips laypersons to use their spiritual gifts for various kinds of ministry within the areas of leading, caring, and communicating. Lay Servant Ministries is a leadership development program in The United Methodist Church focused on equipping and empowering lay persons who have responded to the call of God to serve in mission and ministry.

TYPE OF CHURCH *(see appendix)*

All church sizes and for all laity, specifically **family, pastoral and program** churches

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The Conference Director of Lay Servant Ministries aligning with the conference and episcopal priorities
- There is an internal Lay Servant Ministry database managed by Lay Servant Ministry District Directors
- Charge conference documents inputted into Brick River tracks certified lay servants.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Each district has a District Lay Servant Ministries Director who oversees the Lay Servant ministry courses and lay servants' progress.
- Encourage Lay Servant Ministries District Director to cast vision and offer Basic Courses for laity to engage in the discernment process.
- Certified lay servants who wish to develop their skills further may choose a track to become certified as lay speakers (those who are called specifically to pulpit supply) or as lay ministers (those who are called to long-term, intentional ministry as a part of a ministry team).

Learning Lab

DESCRIPTION

A new e-Learning platform that is free, accessible, and fun to use at your own pace! This new Learning Management System is an added platform and resource to support our laity with the mission of Great churches. Great leaders. Great disciples. Transformed world. There are a lot of possibilities with this platform that support our churches and laity.

Think of it is as a:

- **A virtual place** for congregational resources, classes, and training
- **A virtual place** for continued engagement and connecting
- **A virtual place** for leadership development youth and intergenerational leaders
- **A virtual place** for collaborating within and outside our conference

TYPE OF CHURCH (see appendix)

All church sizes and for all laity, specifically **family, pastoral and program** churches can utilize Lay Servant Ministries as a leadership development opportunity.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- The first step is to visit the Great Plains Conference website where you will find Learning Lab “tile” or box on the webpage.
- Once you have completed the registration process, you will receive your personal learning page where you can begin taking courses.
- Register here today - <https://greatplainsumc.myabsorb.com/#/login>

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The platform tracks individual engagement by building a transcript and offers certificates upon completion
- Courses will be developed and added throughout the year. Please let the Congregational Excellence Team know of suggested courses.

<https://greatplainsumc.myabsorb.com/#/login>

Evangelism Resources

DESCRIPTION

No ministry in the church is more vital than evangelism. Evangelism involves several key actions: telling the good news, announcing the kingdom of God and bearing witness.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All church sizes and for all laity.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Congregations are encouraged to undergo trainings or studies to strengthen the spiritual practice of evangelism. After the training, the congregation can measure the participants' increase in sharing faith and connecting people with Christ.

Resources:

- Evangelism Workshops are available on www.greatplainsumc.org/evangelism
- See All The People from Discipleship Ministries [SeeAllThePeople | Homepage](#)

Books:

- *Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism* by Martha Rice Reese
- *Evangelism for Non Evangelists: Sharing the Gospel Authentically* by Mark R. Teasdale
- *Faith Sharing: Dynamic Christian Witnessing by Invitation* by George Morris and Eddie Fox
- *The Logic of Evangelism* by William Abraham
- *Transforming Evangelism: The Wesleyan Way of Sharing Faith* by Henry Knight, III and Douglas Powe, Jr.
- *Reviving Evangelism* by Barna Resources

Foundation for Evangelism

- [Foundation for Evangelism - To promote, encourage and provide resources for Wesleyan evangelism](#)

One Matters Award: <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/about/one-matters>

Denman Evangelism Award: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/evangelism>

General Board of Discipleship: <http://umcdiscipleship.org>

ReThink Church: www.rethinkchurch.org

Great Plains Resource Hub: www.greatplainsumc.org/evangelism

- **Denman Evangelism Award** – The Foundation for Evangelism works with annual conferences to nominate Clergy, Laity and Youth awards. This is a meaningful way to honor and thank people who demonstrate evangelistic passion to reach others for Christ. Denman Evangelism Awards are due by February 1 and awarded at Annual Conference.
- **One Matters Award** – Awarded to congregations who are renewing their focus on discipleship where there was at least 1 Profession of Faith in the past year when there have been no annual baptisms and professions of faiths in the last 3 years. One Matters Award nominations are annually reviewed by April 1, with nominations and stories solicited by the District Superintendent, and awarded at Annual Conference

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Resources for leaders are available at the General Board of Discipleship and Great Plains website.
- Rethink Church has ideas of discovering new and exciting ways to nurture and equip people to become spiritual leaders by being inviting and welcoming.

Ethnic Minority Local Church Grant

DESCRIPTION

Established in 1984 by the Kansas East Conference, this grant is to be used to strengthen ethnic minority ministries. This grant is for programming and support for ethnic minority churches, leadership development, ethnic minority youth and ethnic caucuses.

TYPE OF CHURCH

- Any size ethnic minority church
- Any ethnic minority clergy
- Any ethnic minority laity

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Ethnic minority youth attending camps
- Ethnic minority clergy and laity attending development programs
- National caucus attendees
- New ethnic minority local church projects

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Qualifications include:
 - **Youth Development** – supporting ethnic minority youth development (e.g. camping, summer development programs)
 - **Clergy and Laity Development** - supporting clergy and laity to attend development programs
 - **Support for Participation in Ethnic Caucuses** - funds for laity and pastors to attend national caucuses: BMCR, MARCHA, Asian Pastors Caucus. Can create ethnic network or caucuses in GPUMC.
 - **Ethnic Minority Local Church** - projects and programming
- Grants open on May 1st of every year
- Grant amount is \$800/individual

Kids and Family Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Annual Conference is committed to investing in Kids and Family Ministry Leaders to disciple young people. The Kids & Family website serves as a hub for resources, grants, event information, and leadership opportunities. Kids & Family Ministry Leaders have the opportunity to connect with other ministry leaders in their area through the leadership of their Regional Kids Coordinator. The Regional Kids Coordinator serves as the resourcer and connector of Kids & Family Ministry Leaders workers with training modules and quarterly equipping events. Regional Coordinators work together with conference staff to ensure that each local Kids & Family Ministry Leader is equipped, empowered, and unleashed to do great ministry in the Great Plains.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All church sizes

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The local church Kids & Family Ministry leader is connected to Conference and Regional Coordinators for continued equipping, peer learning, connecting, and accountability.
- The local church Kids & Family Ministry Leader views themselves as a partner with young people and their guardians, equipping them for faith formation throughout the week.
- The kids and family ministry has established a clear discipleship pathway with age-appropriate milestones to equip children and their families for a lifetime of discipleship.
- The kids and family ministry has integrated the theological foundations for mercy and justice work in their community through opportunities to serve and work toward justice.
- The local church is invested in kids and family ministry through high-impact staffing

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- New Kids & Family Ministry Leaders are onboarded by local church
 - Local church reports new ministry leader's information to District AA's
 - Kids & Family Ministry Leaders subscribe to the monthly newsletter with links to conference opportunities and resources
- Kids & Family Ministry Leaders are invited to networking and equipping events by Regional Coordinators

Youth Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Annual Conference is committed to investing in Youth Ministry Leaders to disciple young people. The youth website serves as a hub for resources, grants, event information, and leadership opportunities. Youth Ministry Leaders have the opportunity to connect with other ministry leaders in their districts through the leadership of their District Youth Coordinator. The District Youth Coordinator serves as a connector and convener for networking. Additionally, districts are grouped into regions, led by a Regional Youth Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator serves as the resourcer and connector of Youth workers with training modules and quarterly equipping events. Both district and regional roles work together with conference staff to ensure that each local Youth Ministry Leader is equipped, empowered, and unleashed to do great ministry in the Great Plains.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All church sizes

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The local church Youth Ministry Leader is connected to Conference and Regional Coordinators for continued equipping, peer learning, connecting, and accountability.
- The local church Youth Ministry Leader views themselves as a partner with young people and their guardians, equipping them for faith formation throughout the week.
- The youth ministry has established a clear discipleship pathway with age-appropriate milestones to equip children and their families for a lifetime of discipleship.
- The youth ministry has integrated the theological foundations for mercy and justice work in their community through opportunities to serve and work toward justice.
- The local church is invested in youth ministry through high-impact staffing.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- New Youth Ministry Leader onboarded by local church
- Local church reports new Youth Ministry Leader's information to District AA's
- Youth Ministry Leaders subscribe to the monthly newsletter with links to conference opportunities and resources
- Youth Ministry Leaders invited to networking and equipping events by District and Regional Coordinators

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/youth>

Summer Internship Matching Grants

DESCRIPTION

Church Matching Grants for Pastoral Leadership, Youth Ministry and Kids Ministry are available for churches who have identified someone who could serve as a summer intern. The objectives for Church Matching Internship Grants are: 1) To help churches identify a young person with gifts for ministry, 2) To support a vibrant and creative summer season of ministry, 3) To connect interns with a learning community of other interns throughout the summer.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any church can identify a young adult to be a summer intern to learn and serve with kids' ministry, youth ministry or pastoral ministry. The church will need to raise matching funds.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The intern will attend a three day virtual retreat in May and weekly check-ins with conference staff.
- Mentor agrees to attend one session during the retreat, one mid-summer check-in, and an exit check-in.
- Mentor develops and submits a plan outline for the summer to the conference.
- Mentor remains connected to intern throughout the summer to provide support, guidance, and accountability at the local level.
- Intern is equipped with leadership development opportunities at the local church level throughout the summer that aid in the intern's call discernment.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- The church identifies a young person in their congregation and what area the intern would serve.
- The congregation identifies funding to provide half of the intern's compensation and arrange payroll with an hourly rate, at least minimum wage, for up to 40 hours per week for a minimum of 10 weeks.
- Someone from the church staff will be an assigned mentor throughout the summer and they will meet weekly with the intern for supervision and reflection.
- The congregation would apply for matching internship grant for funding up to \$1750 per intern, and the expectation is to match your church's contribution.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/matchinggrantinternships>

Micah Corps

DESCRIPTION

Micah Corps Internship Program is a summer opportunity for young adults to learn about connecting faith with justice and practice leadership skills by visiting, researching, and presenting key social justice topics throughout the Great Plains Annual Conference. The program is based on Micah 6:8: "Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God." Interns spend the summer living in community together and learning from nonprofits. They are split into teams and have a topic that they are focused on. Topics in past years included: environment, food insecurity, immigration, antiracism, and community reconciliation & restoration, peace and nonviolence, child welfare and poverty, the death penalty and gender. By the end of the summer the interns gain confidence when facilitating dialogue, theological language, and how to examine and critique the systems that create systemic suffering.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of congregation can nominate a young leader who is interested in growing in faith and justice work for the summer or receiving a Micah Corps internship presentation during the summer.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Micah Corps is led by two coordinators, young leaders (post-undergraduate) that may be in seminary or engaged in justice issues. One coordinator may begin work far before the summer (Dec./Jan.) to start program planning.
- Coordinators oversee intern recruitment, contact speakers and experts, plan the church visits, coordinate housing and travel, and guide the interns throughout their spiritual and educational growth.
- Coordinators maintain close contact with the conference Peace with Justice Coordinator and Mercy and Justice team, meeting with the Mercy and Justice Staff weekly for check in and ensuring progress on benchmarks of the program's goals and expectations.
- Interns keep close contact with the conference through social media, GP Connect, devotionals, and other communications efforts.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Congregations can receive Micah Corps presentations on an issue for a Sunday worship service, Sunday school class or workshop online or in-person.
- The congregation identifies a young person (18-26) who would benefit from a summer to grow in their spiritual walk with God, link faith with justice action, learn from social justice experts in Nebraska, Kansas and Washington DC, strengthen leadership skills and connect with Great Plains United Methodists across Nebraska and Kansas.
- The young person applies to be a Micah Corps intern from February - April.
- The applicant begins with an internship retreat at the end of May and plan on 10 weeks of employment and service in the summer.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/micahcorps>

Colleges and Campus Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Annual Conference partners with four United Methodist Colleges and operates nine state-school campus ministries in Great Plains United Methodist Higher Education and Campus Ministries, Inc. Campus ministries are an important missional opportunity in developing young leaders and a missional outpost of the church. Through student leadership, small groups, service and worship, students are invited, equipped, and sent to grow in faith and Wesleyan witness in the world. The vision of campus ministries is a movement of grace, empowering students to live transformed lives to transform the world.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of church can 1) connect college students with campus ministries, 2) support local campus ministries in the district and 3) reach out to any type of campuses near the church to offer the grace of Jesus Christ.

United Methodist Colleges and Universities include Nebraska Wesleyan University, Kansas Wesleyan University, Baker University, Southwestern College.

United Methodist Campus Ministries include University of Kansas: Wesley KU, Kansas State Campus Ministries; Emporia State: United Methodist Campus Ministries; Fort Hays State University: United Methodist Campus Ministries

Congregational Based Campus Ministries include University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Campus Connect / Motive; University of Nebraska-Omaha: Urban Abbey University of Kansas: Wesley KU

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Congregations can create their own campus ministry with a campus nearby with the Church-Campus grant. The Church-Campus grant establishes a community on campus to worship, study, serve and share.
- Congregations can partner with the United Methodist ministries on campuses through prayers, presence, financial gifts, and/or serve on local board.
- Congregations can invite campus ministries to worship to hear college students witness about campus ministry.
- Congregations can intentionally send students to campus ministries through local visits and developing relationships with the campus minister.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Connecting students with ways to explore their faith in college through campus or church ministries
- Following up with students who are in college to see how they are exploring faith and vocation
- United Methodist Colleges receive contributions from congregations contributing to the Mission Agency Support (+1%) and University Chaplain/Campus Minister.
- United Methodist Campus Ministries at state schools are partly supported by mission shares, local congregations, and donors.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/campusministries>

Camping Ministry

DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Annual Conference Camps' vision is to provide a safe and sacred place apart from everyday distractions to encounter God while developing Christian spiritual leadership and nurturing each other's faith journeys.

There are 5 Great Plains United Methodist Camps in the Conference:

Kansas: *Arkansas City, KS; Camp Horizon | Ottawa, KS; Camp Chippewa | Scott City, KS; Camp Lakeside*

Nebraska: *Chadron, NE; Camp Norwesca | Nickerson, NE; Camp Fontanelle*

Each camp is having its own unique atmosphere, activities, and volunteer opportunities offering many special events for groups. Camp Horizon offers high ropes course, hiking, mountain bike trails, adult friendly lodging, and cabin lodging. Camp Chippewa offers horses, hiking, canoeing, 365 cabins w/ kitchens. Camp Lakeside offers sailing, canoeing, lake views, great meeting spaces, 365 lodges w/ kitchen facilities. Camp Norwesca offers breathtaking views, great base camp for tourism in the area, great meeting spaces, hotel type lodging, and traditional summer camp cabins. Camp Fontanelle offers tree climbing, corn maze, tons of activities, great meeting spaces, traditional summer cabins, tree boats, and dorm type lodging.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of church can connect with camp by sending students in summer or connecting with a retreat place. All ages are welcome. All church group sizes are welcome. Each camp is a perfect place for: church groups, family retreats, summer camps, youth retreats, confirmation retreats, pastor retreats, and other groups.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

Campers and staff complete faith/culture of call cards and camp evaluations

Camper parents complete evaluations of the program and facilities. These evaluations help us do the best job possible.

Other guests are asked to complete evaluations

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Summer camp schedules are sent in the Spring of each year to kids and youth ministries for promotion.
- Congregations can send college students or high school seniors to serve as camp counselors or interns.
- Congregations can send kids/youth in the summer and use retreat spaces throughout the year.
- All GP Camps are here to serve you, your district(s), networks, and local churches.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/camps>

Leadership Lab

DESCRIPTION

Leadership Lab is a gamified, choose-your-own-adventure Christian Leadership experiment for high school students in the Great Plains Conference. High school students engage in a web of relationships, resourcing, and experiences that culminate in eligibility for a triennial trip to the Holy Land with other students, their mentors, and the key conference leaders. Eligibility is determined by completing the Leadership Lab curriculum.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church can encourage a high school student to be part of Leadership Lab. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- High school student
- Active member in local UMC
- Sponsored by a leader in their local church
- Complete the application process
- Commitment to attending: Annual opening retreat (first weekend in August); Annual Conference (end of May or early June); Quarterly Regional Team meetings; monthly meetings with mentor
- Commitment to pursue completion of ten or more Leadership Lab Quests

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- High school students apply for Leadership Lab in the Spring or Summer.
- Leadership Lab participants and their mentors gather for an opening retreat the first weekend in August.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Leadership Lab participants will complete a series of chosen “quests” each school year
- During each quest, they will learn something, experience something, and lead something – all with the help of their mentor they choose.
- Students will track their progress on Learning Lab e-portal.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/leadership-lab>

Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART)

DESCRIPTION

*DART mobilizes a collation of faith communities to right issues of injustices at the local level. Each local community decides their own issues to address. Through an intentional listening process, research development and advocacy with local leaders, DART focuses on urban locations to have a strategic platform to work collaboratively for collective impact in our local communities. The vision is to build power, win justice and transform communities through faith communities coming together and making a significant difference in their community. **Current and proposed communities:** Lincoln, NE; Kansas City area (Johnson County and Wyandotte County); Wichita, KS; Topeka, KS; and Lawrence, KS.*

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church in the urban areas is invited to join the DART justice ministries in their communities.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Monthly meetings of the local justice organization tracks current membership, process and season of the ministry life.
- National annual and bi-annual trainings provide orientation and training to clergy, organizers and lay leaders who serve on the congregation's justice ministry team.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- DART organizations are ecumenical and interfaith ministries who become their own non-profit chapters of the organization staffed and housed in the area to help better the community. UM Churches are invited to be founding and/or integral members of the ecumenical and interfaith justice organization in the community to supplement the mercy ministries of our mission teams.
- Membership to DART includes: 1) a congregation's financial commitment at a certain percentage of the annual budget; 2) Commitment to establish ministry leadership teams within each congregation; 3) Commitment to participate and lead in all aspects of the life of the organization including holding house meetings and establishing Justice Ministry Networks.
- DART trains community leaders and professional organizers to build power and take direct action on problems facing their communities.
- Each year the DART organization goes through three seasons of leading justice in the congregation and community: 1) Listen deeply to their community for what they are struggling with and what their vision is for the future; 2) Research effectively to better understand problems that members of the community face, and to determine what might be done to solve these problems; 3) Organize and take direct action so that those who hold the power of decision making are held accountable to putting people first and solving the problems that their community faces.

<https://thedartcenter.org/>

Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)

DESCRIPTION

WORC mobilizes a coalition of faith communities to right issues of injustices at the local level, with local communities deciding their own issues. WORC builds a grassroots base of concerned citizens working for stewardship and conservation of the land, water and energy resources; family farms and sustainable agriculture; and civic engagement. WORC's mission is to advance the vision of a democratic, sustainable, and just society through community action. Currently, conversations are ongoing to explore Lexington, Grand Island, and Norfolk as potential communities to launch local chapters of WORC in Nebraska.

TYPE OF CHURCH

WORC offers our churches in semi-rural locations intentional platforms where to work collaboratively for collective impact in our local communities.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Monthly meeting reports by the WORC organizer will be submitted to the Mercy and Justice Coordinator

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Currently, the WORC is exploring Lexington, Grand Island, and Norfolk as potential communities to launch local chapters in Nebraska. WORC will conduct deeper local assessments after the organizers are fully onboarded and trained. That local assessment process will ultimately inform where we establish our first 1-2 local chapters.
- These permanent, multi-issue, membership-based organizations help people analyze, solve complex problems, build local leadership, expand people's knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures, challenge people to act on their values and achieve long-term social change.
- Grassroots organizations of this type also hold corporate and government officials accountable for their decisions and actions, a necessary ingredient in making our democracy work for all Americans.

Mental Health Resources

DESCRIPTION

To equip and support clergy and lay leaders with tools, restorative initiatives and Christ's healing to communities. Mental health resources help congregations offer their community faith, hope and God's love by partnering with mental health initiatives in the area. Mental health recovery ministries can include addiction ministry, trauma ministry, depression ministry, anxiety ministry, and grief ministry.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Tracking the connections of the congregations with the mental health resourcing in the community
- Utilizing Assets Based Communication Development to make maximum impact on the communities' well-being
- Increase awareness about mental health in the community
- Build partnerships with mental health agencies in the community

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Mental Health resources are available conference-wide to equip lay and clergy leaders in the areas of mental health.
- Connect with National Alliance of Mental Health (NAMI) organizations in the community for resourcing and understanding of community health.
- **NAMI Organizations in Nebraska:**
 - **Omaha** - Cass, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington Counties
 - **Central Nebraska** – Adams, Blaine, Buffalo, Clay, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton and Harlan
 - **Lincoln**
- **NAMI Organizations in Kansas:**
 - **Hays**
 - **Central Kansas** – Saline County
 - **Reno County**
 - **Wichita**
 - **Butler County**
 - **Flint Hills** – all of Geary and Pattawatomie Counties
 - **Topeka**
 - **Douglas County**
 - **Johnson County**
 - **Kansas City** – Wyandotte County
 - **Northeast Kansas/Leavenworth** – Atchinson, Jefferson and Leavenworth Counties
 - **Southeast Kansas** -Crawford County
 - Starting a NAMI Chapter in Southwest Kansas – Dodge City, Garden City, Liberal

Home: <https://www.nami.org/Home>

Nebraska: <https://naminebraska.org/>

Kansas: <https://namikansas.org/>

Community Garden Resources

DESCRIPTION

Community gardens give us the opportunity to spread the good news of God's saving and liberating love and to grow in our own discipleship by cooperating with God in the ongoing transformation of ourselves, our churches, our communities, and all of creation. Community Gardens can be a locus of personal and relational transformation for each person who serves in and is served by the garden. It can be a catalyst for community transformation as entire neighborhoods, towns, and cities recognize our responsibility and ability to order our lives and communities around God's commandment to love one another in tangible ways.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Each community garden has the capacity to address food insecurity in their community, build relationships with others and provide love and understanding to diverse people.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Review the Community Garden Playbook for different garden models, review the Community Garden Checklist to understand how to create a garden, review the Community Garden Calendar with a garden team to access step by step activities to guide you through the season. Contact the Big Garden for further resourcing and potential grant opportunities.
- Many community gardeners, especially those from immigrant communities, take advantage of food production in community gardens to provide a significant source of food and/or income.
- Community gardens allow families and individuals without land of their own the opportunity to produce food and provide access to nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable to low-income families and individuals.
- Community gardens donate thousands of pounds of fresh produce to food pantries and involve people in processes that provide food security and alleviate hunger.

<https://biggarden.org/>

Racial Justice Resources

DESCRIPTION

“The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places.”- The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016, paragraph 5

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Grants for anti-racism education and advocacy are available to help congregations and networks learn about structural racism and develop strategies to overcome them for up to \$300.
- General Commission on Religion and Race can provide trainings for district upon request for free.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Start by recognizing racism is a sin. Commit to challenging unjust systems of power and access. Work for equal and equitable opportunities in full participation in the Church and society.
- Share the resource of Biblical-Wesleyan Theological Foundation of Anti-Racism Work
- Pray, Connect, Act and discover how this resource can be enacted in your congregation

Serving with Others Grant: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/serving-with-others-grant>

Biblical-Wesleyan Theological Foundation: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/biblical-wesleyan-theological-foundation>

Learning to be Anti-Racist: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/Learning-to-be-anti-racist>

Conference Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/racial-justice>

Mercy and Justice Ministry

DESCRIPTION

Mercy and Justice Ministry is charged with the purpose of “equipping and empowering local congregations in the work of mercy and justice ministries for the transformation of the world.” Mercy and Justice ministries offer training and coaching in the following areas: Volunteers in Mission, outreach training and progress-oriented justice ministries. The God who created all that is calls us (individually and collectively) to love mercy and even more so to do justice (Micah 6:8). When shalom is absent, the work of justice-making – the work of overcoming violence, greed, exploitation, oppression, and indifference – remains. Our discipleship is incomplete without both mercy and justice.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of church can do mercy and justice ministries.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Serving with Others Grant for mission trips, justice seed money, anti-racism, missional leadership, and educational partnership

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Great Plains United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (GP-UMVIM) is a deploying and receiving Volunteers in Mission organization of the Great Plains Annual Conference. GP-UMVIM offers trainings to equip, empower and resource team leaders to create spirit-filled and culturally relevant mission experiences.
- Work with the Great Plains Mission Agencies who work with the poor and ecumenical organizations such as Big Garden, Open Door, Immigrant Legal Center and several others.
- Relate with to our global mission partnerships in Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Haiti
- Advocate for justice concerns including, but not limited to: Creation Care, Racial Justice, Refugee Ministry, Peace with Justice, Immigration Justice, Global AIDS Fund, Restorative Justice, Health and Wholeness.
- Collaborate with justice organizations who have been organizing faith-based communities to do justice work such as DART and WORC.

GP Mercy and Justice: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/mercyandjustice>

Serving with Others Grant: www.greatplainsumc.org/serving-with-others-grant

Volunteers in Mission: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/vim>

Justice and Advocacy Concerns: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/justiceandadvocacy>

Mission Agencies

DESCRIPTION

Mission agencies are ministries with the poor and ecumenical organizations who have an independent board of directors and demonstrate a structural or historical connection to the Great Plains Annual Conference or its predecessor conferences, indicating a clear United Methodist connection. Each mission agency has both mercy - including direct services to those in need, such as supporting a food pantry or volunteering at a homeless shelter and justice - including working for social, political and institutional change, such as working to change the minimum wage or affordable housing.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Mission agencies have yearly check ins with the Task Force.
- Stories of success are submitted in the yearly application
- Audits & Financial Reports from the mission agency are submitted to the treasurer's office each year by June 30th.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- If an organization is interested in becoming a Great Plains Mission Agency, contact District Superintendent.
- The M&J Team reviews the application. A site visit is made. Additional information is collected.
- The M&J Team discerns whether the organization fulfills the Mission Agency requirements. If the decision is positive, the new mission agency will be included in the budget proposal that will be voted on at Annual Conference.
- A mission agency receives funding from +1% mission shares.
- Mission Agencies receive an online funding request and timeline in fall.
- Team members evaluate the funding requests and ask for additional information if needed.
- Task Force members develop a funding proposal which gets approved by the M&J Team and steps to be voted on at Annual Conference.
- The agency receives a covenant and Memorandum of Understanding between the M&J Team and the Mission Agency, detailing the funding and partnership for the next year.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/missionagencysupport>

International Mission Partners

DESCRIPTION

The three previous conferences that formed the Great Plains Annual Conference in January 2014 brought an international mission partner, the Methodist Church of Haiti with the Kansas East Conference, the Nigeria University Methodist Church with the Nebraska Conference, and the Kansas West with the Zimbabwe partnership. These partnerships have evolved over the years and now they all focus on education for young people through scholarships.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Each of the partnerships includes a protocol of funds transferring either directly to the colleges/universities or through the General Board of Global Ministries' Advance Office.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Churches apply through the Great Plains serving with others grants.
- Leadership teams provide international partnership conversations for accountability, policy changes and the promoting of these partnerships.
- The Great Plains has two endowments to support mission engagements.

GP Mission Partners: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/missionpartnerships>
Serving with Others Grant: www.greatplainsumc.org/serving-with-others-grant

Disaster Response

DESCRIPTION

The Great Plains Annual Conference Disaster Response is a ministry of care that has theological, material, mental health, advocacy, and social service components designed to provide for the spiritual, emotional, and physical recovery of disaster survivors and for the well-being of their caregivers. The ministry exists for the purpose of responding to natural or man-made disasters of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own and additional help is requested by the community.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size of church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Hold Connecting Neighbors Training at your local church
- Local Church Clergy Handbook
- Local Church Disaster Leader and Church Handbook
- Grants up to \$5,000 may be made to ministerial alliances, long-term recovery organizations or local United Methodist churches where major disasters occur.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- District Early Response Team Trainings for laity
- Trainings Available: Basic Disaster 101, Early Response Training (18+), Connecting Neighbors (planning for disasters for families and the local church), Until Help Arrives, Stop the Bleed, Active Shooter Awareness, Security and Site Assessment, Establishment of the Long-Term Recovery Committee
- Conference Disaster Response Protocol:
 - If a disaster happens in the local community and/or district of which the ERT resides, they may respond immediately.
 - If a disaster happens in another district, conference, jurisdiction, or out of the United States, ERT's may only respond after receiving an official invitation from United Methodist Committee On Relief or United Methodist Volunteers in Mission's individual in charge of the disaster. All invitations are made through the Great Plains Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.
 - Anyone self-deploying to a disaster in another conference, jurisdiction, or out of the United States will lose their ability to volunteer and their badge will be revoked.

GP Disaster Response: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/disasterresponse>

DS Handbook: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/files/disaster_response/2018+-+ds+handbook.pdf

Clergy Handbook: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/files/disaster_response/2018+-+local+clergy+disaster+response+handbook.pdf

Local Church Handbook: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/files/disaster_response/2018+-+local+church+disaster+handbook.pdf

Safe Gatherings

DESCRIPTION

Safe Gatherings is a biblically based boundary awareness and abuse prevention program developed to certify volunteer workers, staff and clergy enabling them to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The annual conference program applies to all conference, district events, all local church events, and activities. By completing this certification program, individuals are authorized to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults in any church-related setting.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All churches are required to abide by the Safe Gatherings program and policies. Clergy and volunteers who are 16 and older who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults are to be certified in Safe Gatherings.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Follow Safe Gatherings Best Practices and Policies for Children’s Ministry, Youth Ministry, Elders Ministry, Developmentally Disabled Ministry, and Survivors of Disaster
- Ensure that clergy and volunteers working with children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities are Safe-Gatherings certified.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- All individuals in the Great Plains Conference renewing or completing first time certification will complete their education and certification process online.
- Once registered with the online learning systems, applicants complete the online training process certification. Applicants may complete the training modules at own pace and request reference letters electronically.
- State and national background checks are completed for each applicant with a cost of \$35. We encourage the local church to cover this cost.
- Allow 30 days for certification after are submitted.
- Certification is valid for 4 years and must be renewed upon expiration.
- Create a Safe Gatherings Policy for local church
- Adopt Personal Conduct Policy

GP Website: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/safegatherings>

Safe Gatherings: <https://safegatherings.com/app/registration>

Conference Policy: http://gp-email.brtapp.com/files/cong_excel/safe+gatherings+policy+-+07-17.pdf

Best Practices: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/files/finance/policies/safe+gatherings+best+practices.pdf>

Personal Conduct: https://www.greatplainsumc.org/files/finance/policies/gp_personalconductpolicyproposedto4-21-14.pdf

FAQs: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/faqs>

Reporting Suspected Abuse: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/reportingsuspectedabuse>

Simplified Board Structure

DESCRIPTION

The Simplified Board Structure Model functions as one governance leadership board nominated by the Nominating Committee. Each member of the Simplified Board is fully accountable and responsible as a member of the Administrative Council, Board of Trustees, Finance Committee and the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church can have the Simplified Board Structure after discernment and charge conference vote.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Each member of the Simplified Board is expected to be fully familiar with the roles and functions of the church council, Board of Trustees, finance committee and Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- Leadership team members must make a commitment to be present at every meeting and the annual retreats.
- Hold an annual retreat for a time of reflection, planning annual goals, and conversations supporting the mission and vision of the church for the new year
- Leadership is placed in yearly classes, serves 3 years, and rotates off.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Intake call with liaison to hear background and notes
- Establish a training for pastor and key lay leaders for common understanding, timeline and next steps.
- Church council sends a copy of the structure you plan to populate as well as the missional reason you are moving to this structure to the DS for approval to move forward.
- Coach meets with training for Church Council, Nominations, Congregation on missional reason, specific structure, and timeline want to include for the whole church.
- Church council ensures every person is aware of missional reasoning, change in leadership structure and receives questions from congregation with prayer and discernment. Then vote at a charge conference. Work on implementation phase with nominations, and a year of walking with a coach on roles, agenda, and guiding principles.

If your church, network or district would like coaching or training on restructuring the committees into a simplified board model, contact your District Superintendent.

Vital Signs Dashboard

DESCRIPTION

Vital Signs is intended to assess the most basic functions of our congregations, including professions of faith, worship attendance, involvement in small groups, engagement in new ministries to reach new people and giving to support the ministry of the congregation. Vital signs are a measure of discipleship as reflected in the activities in which the members of your church are engaged.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All churches of all sizes are expected to enter church vital signs.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Track on Vital Signs Dashboard
- Measure a disciple's engagement through the weekly reporting of: worship attendance, online worship attendance, number of Fresh Expressions ministries, professions of faith and reaffirmations of faith, number of small groups and total offering received this week.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Contact District AA to sign up and be prepared with the name of your church and the email address of the person who will report weekly on behalf of the congregation.
- Each church has a unique username and password so you can access the site as well.

GP Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/vitalsignsdashboard>

Vital Signs Reports: <https://vitalsigns.trendsendapp.com/reports>

How to Enter Vital Signs: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/howdoientervitalsigns>

What to Report: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/whattoreportinvitalsignsdashboard>

Church Council Resources

DESCRIPTION

As the governing board of the church, the Church Council resources provide the oversight of the church in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Business matters, charge conference resources, staff parish forms and year end reports help keep accountable and connected to the work God calls us to do.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All churches have access to Church Council resources.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Charge Conference reports are reviewed and approved in each district in the fall of each year and held in file for the next annual year.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Agenda aligns with the mission, vision and planned goals of the church,
- For mission, vision and strategic planning, the Readiness 360 may be a helpful next step.
- Charge Conference Reports provide vision and goals, care of members and assets, annual reports, lay leadership nominations, financials and oversight annually reviewed and sent to the district
- Year-End Reports for statistical reports and local church audit reports provide an account of pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conferences according to prescribed forms.

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/churchcouncilandleaderresources>

Readiness 360: www.greatplainsumc.org/readiness-360

Charge Conference Resources: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/chargeconferenceresources>

Business Matters: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/businessmatters>

Staff Parish Forms: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/staffparishforms>

Year-End Reports: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/yearendreports>

Trustees Resources

DESCRIPTION

As the property of the church is a tool for ministry, the Trustees oversee the physical building and maintenance of the church. Resources are available to assist churches with sample policies, property and liability insurance, risk management and parsonages.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All size churches have access to the resources for Trustees.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Review and follow all documents on website. For churches who exploring closure, there are closing church documents available based on UM Book of Discipline with a checklist for District Superintendent, church and archives

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Access the following on the website:
 - Sample Policies for accountable reimbursement, facility use agreements, sexual ethics, local church media crisis plans, local church disaster response and child protection.
 - Property and Liability Insurance resources, including workers' compensation, foreign and domestic trip insurance, cyber-liability, parsonage insurance, and other property and liability insurance.
 - Risk Management resources, including legal manual, 15-passenger vans, accessibility audit, facility use agreements, local insurance inventory survey, winterization tips, maintenance and safety resources, protection policies, physical activity release forms, sexual ethics policies, volunteer liability release form.
 - Parsonage resources
 - Property Tax Exemption resources

GP Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/churchtrusteeresources>

Sample Policies: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/policysamples>

Facility Use: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/facilityuseagreements>

Property & Liability Insurance: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/propertyliabilityinsurance>

Trip Insurance: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/tripinsurance>

Accessibility Audit: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/accessibilityaudit>

Risk Management: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/riskmanagement>

Parsonage Standards: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/parsonagestandards>

Property Tax Exemption: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/propertytaxexemption>

Finance Resources

DESCRIPTION

As the finances of the church are tools for ministry, the Finance committee oversees and stewards the income and expenses of the church. Resources are available to assist churches with finance and giving, employment and staffing, statements and remittance forms, year-end reports, and local church treasure and finance committee information. Treasurer Resources are at greatplainsumc.org.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All size churches have access to the resources for Finances.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Statistical reports are due January 31
- Local church audits are due annually on June 30

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Access the following on the website:
 - Finance and Giving resources
 - Employment and Staffing resources
 - Church and Clergy Taxes
 - Great Plains Local Church Audit Policy/Procedures
 - Local Church Finance and Treasurers Guide
 - Records Management with Year-End
 - Church Statistical Reports
 - Statements and Remittance Forms, search for church to obtain mission share letter, remittance advice form and other monthly statements

GP Hub: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/churchtreasurerresources>

Giving & Resources: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/conferencegivingresources>

Employment & Staffing: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/employmentstaffing>

Church & Clergy Taxes: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/churchclergytaxes>

Great Plains Local Church Audit Policy/Procedures: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/localchurcaudit>

Local Church Finance & Treasurer's Guide: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/localchurchfinancetreasurersguide>

Year-end Reports: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/yearendreports>

Statistical Report Resources: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/statisticalreportresources>

Statements & Remittance Forms: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/statementsremittanceforms>

SPRC Resources

DESCRIPTION

As the staff of the church are sent to equip all for ministry, the Church Staff Parish and Personnel oversees and stewards the staff relations of the church. Resources are available for employees, forms, workplace posting, benefits and evaluations.

TYPE OF CHURCH

All churches have access to personnel and staff parish relations resources, the staffing may mostly pertain to pastoral and program sized churches.

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Staff-Parish Forms include:
 - Pastoral Assessment forms, ready by March 1 and deadline by May 15
 - Appointive Recommendation Forms by December 1

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Access the following on the website
 - Employment and Staffing Resources
 - Equitable compensation guidelines and application
 - Housing resolutions, labor laws
 - Mileage rates and reimbursement
 - New appointment checklist
 - Pension and Benefits for Clergy
 - Counseling, financial and legal services available to clergy serving half to full time in local churches
 - Death and Disability Comprehensive Protection Plan benefits
 - Health insurance and grants for clergy
 - Optional benefits information

Employment & Staffing: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/employmentstaffing>

Staff-Parish Forms: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/staffparishforms>

Equitable Comp Guidelines & Application: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/equitablecompguidelinesapplication>

Labor Laws: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/laborlaws>

Mileage Rates & Reimbursement: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/mileageratesreimbursement>

New Appointment Checklist: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/newappointmentchecklist>

Pension and Other Benefits: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/benefits>

Financial and Legal Services: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/counselingfinancialandlegalservices>

Death and Disability: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/cpp>

Health Insurance & Grants: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/healthinsurance>

UMPIP: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/umpip>

GP Communications

DESCRIPTION

Communication Resources are available to every church and leader. From GP Connect weekly e-news, daily emailed GP Devotionals, GP social media accounts, and prayer resources to use and share.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Spiritual fitness tracker app on Great Plains
- Licensing is needed for music, showing videos and broadcasting worship services online. Resources can be found on the GP website.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- Subscribe to GP Connect for conference weekly e-news
- Subscribe to the GP Devotional for daily devotionals from people in the conference
- Follow on social media: Facebook and Twitter: Great Plains, #GPUMC, @greatplainsumc
- View virtual workshops for maximizing social media and web ministry.
- Communication Resources include audits, CCLI licenses, creating websites, cross and flame usage, distance meeting options, Great Plains email, how to make a video, policies, guidelines, promotions, prayers and discipleship resources

GP Communications Resources: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/communicationresources>

Social Media and Apps: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/socialmediamobileapps>

Copyright Compliance: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/copyrightcompliance>

GPConnect: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/gpconnect>

Daily Devotions: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/dailydevotions>

Prayer Resources: www.greatplainsumc.org/prayerlife

Workshops: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/communications-workshops>

Worship Planning

DESCRIPTION

The United Methodist Church has many resources for worship planners, leaders, and pastors. From worship planning to special worship services provided by the General Board of Discipleship, worship resources are available to all congregations.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- The local church offers consistent meaningful worship experiences, both in person and virtually.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- For each church season, worship resourcing with special videos, services and sermons can be found in the GP Connect or the “Dynamic Worship” icon of the Great Plains Local Church Toolbox
- Through the Cokesbury’s Worship Connection and General Board of Discipleship, there are many tools, tips and resources available each week to assist with planning a meaningful worship experience.
- Board of Discipleship offers free choir music, worship planner, resources for worship related to current and world events, resources for worship related to liturgical season
- Other resources of the Revised Common Lectionary, The Text This Week and Midnight Oil Productions can be found in worship planning.

GP Dynamic Worship Toolbox: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/toolbox-dynamic-worship>
Ministry Matters Worship Connection: <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/topic/Worship+Connection>
Discipleship Ministries Worship Planning: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning>
GP Worship Planning: <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/worshipplanning>

Local Church Toolbox

DESCRIPTION

Ministry in service to Jesus Christ can be difficult – though incredibly rewarding – work. Browse the Local Church Toolbox for ideas on how to improve the efforts of the local church.

TYPE OF CHURCH

Any size church

TRACKING TRANSFORMATION

- Local church ministry impacts the community in ways that are appropriate to its context.
- Local church shares stories and tips of impactful ministry to the Toolbox for other churches.

ONBOARDING PROCESS

- View ideas shared by conference staff and people in the mission field.
- Any size of church can access or add resources to the following categories:
 - Bible Study
 - Camping and Retreats
 - Children’s Ministries
 - Church Administration
 - Clergy Resources
 - Communications
 - Disaster Response
 - Dynamic Worship
 - Justice Ministries
 - Leadership Development
 - Making Disciples
 - Multi-Cultural Ministry
 - Service and Mission
 - Youth Ministries

<https://www.greatplainsumc.org/toolbox>

Quarterly Timeline

JANUARY

Church Council and Lay Leadership Resources
Readiness 360 Visioning
Fresh Expressions Grants
Class Meeting Training
Recruit Lay Leadership for Laity Summit Training
Remittances due for Mission Shares
Year End Statistics with EZRA Tables Due (January 31)

FEBRUARY

Simplified Board Structure Training
Class Meeting Training
Community Garden Resources
Recruit Lay Leadership for Laity Summit
Micah Corps Application
Matching Grant for Kids and Youth, Pastoral Internships
Camp Counselor Application

MARCH

Laity Summit – 3rd Saturday in March
Nominate for Denman Evangelism Award (due April 1)
Matching Grants for Kids and Youth, Pastoral Internship (due March 15)
Urban Ministry Grants (due April 1)
Fresh Expressions Training

Quarterly Timeline

APRIL

Nominate for One Matters Award (due April 15)

Identify Annual Conference District Youth Representatives (due April 15)

Publicize and Endorse: CCYM Applications

Readiness 360 Visioning and Coaching

MAY

Identify District Youth Coordinator

Campus Ministry Site Visits

Publicize and Endorse: CCYM Applications

DART: Nehemiah Action Assembly

Class Meeting Training

Planter Incubator Proposals

Review Safe Gatherings

JUNE

Mission Agency Audits (due June 30) Vital

Signs Dashboard Review Information

DART: Nehemiah Action Assembly

Class Meeting Training

Quarterly Timeline

JULY

Publicize and Endorse: Fresh Expressions Resources
CCYM Applicants (due July 31)

AUGUST

Planter Crucible Begins
Planter Incubator Begins
Readiness 360 Visioning and Coaching
Urban Ministry Grant (due September 1)
Innovation Coaching Begins
Simplified Board Structure Resources
Safe Gatherings Reviewed
Youth Ministry Resources

SEPTEMBER

Multi-Ethnic Leadership Accelerator Begins (due September 1)
DART: Listening Sessions

Quarterly Timeline

OCTOBER

Receive Charge Conference Reports

Certified Lay Ministers

Certified Lay Speakers

Mission Agency Grants (due October 15)

NOVEMBER

Ethnic Ministry Grants Renewed

DECEMBER

Site Visits for Campus Ministries

Benchmark Meetings for New Church Development

Appendix - Church Sizes

**FAMILY CHURCH
FEWER THAN 50 IN AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE**

**PASTORAL CHURCH
50-149 IN AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE**

**PROGRAM CHURCH
150-349 IN AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE**

**CORPORATE CHURCH
350 OR MORE ACTIVE MEMBERS**