

NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Dr. Vona Wilson, Chair

The New Church Development (NCD) Team 2.5 comes to this 2022 TWK Annual Conference in amazement for all that God is doing. Despite a pandemic with the most bizarre disruptions we could have ever imagined, the clergy and laity of our new Conference continue to birth new faith communities and visions.

Our Vision and Mission remained unchanged, but our context has shifted our strategy and requires adaptive change. We encourage TWK members to pray for the church plants and faith communities being birthed. Check the website for a current list.

We are celebrating:

North-West Corridor Visioning team in the Red River District seeing fruit from their work. Ebenezer Iglesia Metodista and the Wesley Foundation of Tennessee State University birthed a new ministry with African American and Latino middle school girls called Growing in Grace. Eighteen students completed this adventure and are giving witness to their growing faith and spiritual development.

Home Church, a church plant in the Cumberland River District has matured and is preparing to charter. This is a great step in the church planting world!

Bluff City, a church plant in the Metro District has weathered the pandemic disruption and is exploring new partnerships for a future that gives them a home and new avenues for reaching people for Christ.

Cosecha, an innovative community partnership in the most diverse zip code of Nashville, has reignited a historic congregation while serving children, families, and neighborhoods with the harvest of food and love.

Our challenge in the past year has been shared by many across the TWK Conference. How do we respond to a new context in ways that glorify Christ and fulfill our call? While we continue discern and provide resources for new churches, the following descriptions are helping us develop strategies that launch a variety of ways God is calling us to be the body of Christ, the Church.

Traditional Church Plants. These are faith communities that make covenant with one another and the TWK Conference to be in communal relationship with Christ and one another as they grow in the faith and serve as the body of Christ in the world. Grounded in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, these faith communities practice rhythms of discipleship formation, service, and worship. Examples of recent traditional plants: Home Church Nashville and Bluff City in Memphis.

Essence Plants. New faith communities that exist in traditional or non-traditional ways and may or may not be able to support themselves. Examples of current Essence plants: Circle of Grace operates in a prison and meets once a month. Cosecha Community Center is a collaborative partnership that creates environments and fellowship for relationships to develop in the community.

Experiments that help people experience the love and grace of Christ. These creative expressions may lead to something else, but they may also simply serve as expressions that help us explore where we see Jesus being present. A portion of our funds help encourage the local church to lead faithful experiments. Example: Trinity Community Commons. TCC leverages sacred space in new ways that reconnect with the surrounding community and develop relationships that embody the kingdom of God on earth.

NCD Vision

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference unleashes, establishes and generates faithful strategies for the fulfillment of the kingdom of God on earth.

NCD Mission

Establish new faith communities in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference for the glory of the resurrected Christ; faithfully using what God has placed in our basket.

NCD Current Objective

Establish systems and strategies for sustainable collaboration and response to what the Spirit is doing right NOW, right HERE.