

## **New Faith Community Application**

### **A New Faith Community in the Virginia Conference...**

- Did not exist before
- Ministry is consistent with the doctrine and polity (disciplinary governance policies) of The United Methodist Church
- Is an entity that has a primary focus of reaching new people who are not in existing churches
- Is different from a parent congregation (geographically, language, ethnicity, and/or generational)
- Knows why it exists and has a clear sense of mission/vision and who God is calling to reach
- Gathers for regular worship
- Receives new members
- Has intentional disciple-making, mission and financial stewardship systems
- Has the understood expectation of starting a new faith community in 10 years
- **A New Faith Community in the Virginia Conference is not...**  
An additional worship service at an existing site *unless* this service is an intentional offering to identified groups of persons who are not significantly represented in the current church composition.

### **3 Key Preliminary Steps**

- 1) Prayerful discernment by all involved
- 2) Consider definition of New Faith Community:
- 3) Funds requested must be clearly stated and presented first to the District Board of Missions before the Conference Church Development Team may consider an application.

## **New Faith Community Location Process Form**

Each District seeking to begin a new faith community shall submit a *New Faith Community Application* to the Office of Congregational Excellence.

In order to complete such a task, District may choose to appoint District Discernment Teams. It is permissible for the District Board of Mission to serve as the District Discernment Team without appointing another group. District Discernment Teams are a group of clergy and laypersons that serve as an extension of the District Board of Mission or equivalent entity. The information gathered by this group will not only provide the basis for this application but will also help to provide the planter who may be appointed, a “jump start” on knowing their community. Conduct a “windshield drive through tour” to familiarize team with target community.

Below is a checklist to be utilized by District Discernment Teams as they carry out their work. This checklist is to serve as a basis for the team’s work together but additional information the team deems useful for consideration by the Church Development Team can be additionally supplied. The Virginia Conference has contracted with MissionInsite Corporation to provide demographics data to local churches.

Before any work is done please spend time in prayer that the Holy Spirit would lead in giving your team wisdom in this information gathering exercise. Continue to make prayer an integral part of the team’s work together. While the checklist below is an information gathering exercise on its face, it is really a spiritual exercise of discernment.

### **Community profile- Who are the people in the community?**

- What is the geographic location of the mission field? What are the geographic boundaries of this mission field?
- What is the current and projected population of the mission field?
- What is the makeup of that population (to include ethnic makeup, age, generation)?
- How many and where are the current schools in the mission field and are there projections for future schools?
- What is the overall education of the mission field?

- What is the average household income?
- What is the lifestyle exhibited in the mission field?
- Are there identifiable values held by the mission field?
- What are the “felt” needs of the mission field?
- Are there any large populations that relate to an institution such as a college, military base, club or other?
- Are there future developments planned for the area?

**1. What is the target mission field that a new church would try to reach in this mission field?**

- Using the above community profile, describe unchurched Sally and Harry that a new church would try to reach using the above community profile.
- What kind of church would be necessary to reach unchurched Sally and Harry?

**2. What are the existing churches in the area and where are they located?**

- Who are they currently reaching?
- Which ones are reaching the mission field?
- How many are new churches (begun in the last 15 years)?

**3. What about possible meeting sites. Where are they?**

- Are they currently being utilized?
- How much would it cost to rent them?
- Is there potential for expansion at identified facilities?
- Are there special county permit processes that would need to be followed?
- Is there a meeting space that will hold 250 people that you anticipate being available for a new church plant to utilize?

Please List:

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#### 4. Pastoral Leadership

*Affinity of the founding pastor with the target community is one of the most important factors in a new church start.*

Based on all the information you have gathered for the target mission field, describe the following for the type of pastor who would be most effective in reaching the identified mission field.

-What would be this person's...

- \* Education
- \* Abilities and skills
- \* Age
- \* Marital Status
- \* Does this mission field require an ordained elder or can the mission field be adequately reached through the leadership of a probationary member, local pastor, lay supply pastor, team of laity, or bi-vocational planter?

5. The CDT approved funding cycle is:

- Month 0-12 - 100%
- month 13-18 - 90%
- 19 - 24 75%
- 25-36 - 50%
- 37-48 - 25%

Please provide the District's funding schedule (if it differs from the CDT salary schedule) for financing the planter's housing allowance below.

Housing amount \_\_\_\_\_

Parsonage Provided \_\_\_\_\_ (yes or no)

6. Are there any members from the District Discernment team or others in greater area of the mission field who are potential launch team members (please note that it will be at the planter's ultimate discretion who becomes part of the launch team)?

7. Have area United Methodist churches been approached about the possibility of daughtering this new faith community or partnering to provide some degree of financial or human resources? To what degree will these churches partner with the new faith community to provide finances, people, and meeting space?
  
8. Assessment of growth potential. Give your best estimate for the number of adults in worship after...

One year\_\_\_\_\_

Two years\_\_\_\_\_

Five years\_\_\_\_\_

Ten years\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any reasons this new faith community could not be able to be financially secure in the typical time frame of 2-5 years?

If it is anticipated that the new faith community will not be able to be financially secure in such a time frame, what plans are in place for support after the first 3-5 years (for example, are there other churches that will partner with the new faith community once funding ends?)

*Monies granted by the Church Development Team (CDT) come from the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. The CDT has covenanted to spend these funds per the recommendations of the All Things New Document. By submitting this application for conference funds, you reaffirm your commitment to and covenant with the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church.*