

## **Great Plains Annual Conference**

Vital Congregations Team

2016-2020 Strategic Plan

“Truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even **greater things** than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12, NIV)

### **Vision**

A great church is a vital church. Vitality is intrinsically linked to a church’s local context; therefore, to be vital, a church must intentionally be on a journey of learning, growing and leading as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our vision is to see every congregation in the Great Plains Conference (GPC) be a great church for the transformation of the world.

### **Values**

- Wesleyan spirituality and practicing the means of grace for spiritual renewal/growth
- Honest assessment of current congregation reality in connection with community/context
- Creating a culture of high expectation and accountability

### **Mission**

The mission of the Vital Congregations Team is to equip and connect local congregations so that they may become more vital and effective in the mission of making of disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### **Definition of “vital” and “effective”**

Our ultimate goal is a transformed world; this necessitates great churches. We know that vitality and effectiveness are intrinsically linked to a church’s local context. We understand that the inputs will vary across the conference; however, we believe that, to be accountable to one another, there are certain universal marks of vitality that all congregations can and must exhibit. At this point in our work, the definition of effective and the markers for vitality are still in process. But as we move forward as one conference, the focus is to equip and connect local churches so that they can be healthy communities of faithful disciples, who are continually seeking and introducing persons to Jesus Christ; growing together toward spiritual maturity; making their communities and the world more loving and just.

### **Strategy**

To see our vision become a reality, live out our values and complete our mission, the Vital Congregations Team will intentionally be engaged in the following process:

- DREAM of what the GPC will (can/should) look like in 2020 and beyond
- DISCOVER places of fruitfulness and signs of vitality in the local context
- DISCERN the movement of the Holy Spirit in the GPC
- DEVELOP vital strategies for moving the local church forward
- DEPLOY spiritual teams of lay and clergy who are learning, growing and leading together

### **Sub-teams**

To better serve, equip and connect all local congregations of the GPC, the Vital Congregations Team will manage its work through a series of sub-teams (Hispanic, Small Church, Vitality). Each team will engage the strategic process above so that all work is in alignment with GPC’s missional strategies.

*Following are goals (with reference to our missional priorities in parentheses, and reference for which level of the church is responsible for the outcome: the Vital Congregations Team, Local Churches and Great Plains Conference) with lettered bullet points of measures and vitality markers.*

1. Increase the number of local churches with community partnerships each year. (Missional priority 1c, developing relations within the community)
  - a. Report the number of missional partnerships within the community each year (local church goal)
  - b. Answer the question: “How is the community different because of your partnerships?” (local church goal)
  
2. Every congregation will offer a NEW worship experience each year to reach NEW people. (Missional priority 1b, worship)
  - a. Report annually if goal is attained (Y/N) (local church goal)
  - b. Answer question: “Describe what was offered.” (local church goal)
  - c. Increase the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> time visitors. (local church report, conference goal) (2015 will be baseline, with the 2020 goal of 20% increase across the conference.)
  
3. Increase the number of opportunities for lay/clergy partnerships. (Missional priority 3c, building lay and clergy partnerships)
  - a. Current offerings include ABIDE, Small Wonders, Next Steps, Mid-Size momentum (Vital Congregations goal)
  
4. Increase the number of local churches who have a confirmation class. (Missional priority 3b, developing spiritual leaders)
  - a. Report annually if goal is attained (Y/N) (local church report, conference goal)
  
5. Increase the number of small groups. (Missional priority 3b, developing spiritual leaders)
  - a. Local congregation can self-define “small group.” Do not need “attendance” number (local church report, conference goal)
  
6. Increase the number of individual laity who attend/participate in opportunities for spiritual development and training outside the local congregation.
  - a. Annual report of number (local church report, conference goal)
  - b. Current examples include Certified Lay Ministries and Lay Servant Ministries