

I. Transition into Ministry Program Strategic Plan

Vision: Transition into Ministry (TiM) pastors will be excellent preachers, collaborative clergy, empower the laity, confident leaders and will flourish in ministry. The program will be a laboratory in which conference Clergy Excellence staff can identify best practices for training and developing clergy for maximum effectiveness in ministry and apply those practices to all clergy.

II. The Vision and Missional Priorities

The Great Plains Plan of Organization establishes the conference's first missional priority: "Enhancing the ministry of local churches." Fulfilling this priority depends largely upon excellent clergy leadership. TiM pastors are given an opportunity to learn from some of our best pastoral mentors and are placed in churches that provide a rich and supportive learning experience. They are given specific opportunities to learn excellent preaching practices through an annual preaching retreat, to receive training and experience in worship leadership, and to experience other educational opportunities.

Perhaps the missional priority with the most obvious connection is that of the Plan of Organization's third priority, leadership development. The intentional focus on developing spiritual leaders through the TiM program is shaped by the learning plan that each pastor creates after a 40-day season of discernment. One more notable leading edge is the significant opportunity to build lay and clergy partnerships. All TiM pastors have a transition team of church members who provide support, feedback and encouragement in relationship to their learning plan and also their practice of ministry. Clergy and laity gain much learning from the TiM program's targeted learning lab, learning that has relevance for all clergy. We are committed to sharing best practices, and we know that results from the TiM program ripple best formative practices to all clergy.

III. Goals

By 2020, TiM pastors will be excellent preachers, collaborative clergy, empower the laity, confident leaders and will flourish in ministry. The program will be a laboratory in which Clergy Excellence staff can identify best practices for training and developing clergy for maximal effectiveness in ministry that will apply to all clergy. The following strategies will be employed:

a. Goals for 2015

- i. **Numbers:** We will have 9 TiM pastors, 4 of which will be serving in solo appointments.
- ii. **Mentoring:** TiM pastors will be mentored for the first two years and will be assigned a coach in the final three years of the program. This level of support will help pastors "flourish" in ministry. (The definition of "flourishing" will be given in the section on measuring our progress.)

- 38 iii. **Transition Team:** This is new language for what we formerly called the Lay
39 Committee or TiM Committee, but it is a group of 5-7 members of the church
40 who provide support, feedback, and encouragement in relationship to the
41 pastor’s learning plan and her or his practice of ministry.
- 42 iv. **Cohort Meetings:** To provide a learning environment every other month during
43 which TiM pastors gather for collegial support and continuing education focused
44 on developing leadership capacity.
- 45 v. **Continuing Education in Phase One (first two years with mentoring):** The
46 mentoring pair creates a self-directed continuing education plan. Funds will be
47 available, and specific guidance will be given by the Clergy Recruitment and
48 Development Coordinator to facilitate optimal learning
- 49 vi. **Continuing education in Phase Two (years 3-5 with coaching):** **Once** during the
50 three years, the entire Phase Two group will participate in a study
51 tour/pilgrimage. It will include either a Wesley tour, an Israel tour, or a visit to
52 one of the three mission partnership churches (Haiti, Nigeria, Zimbabwe). The
53 first study tour/pilgrimage will be in 2017 and will be selected by the board.
- 54 vii. **To Identify Best Practices:** In mentoring, leadership development, and pastoral
55 transitions with relevance for the rest of the conference. Projected areas of
56 learning include the following: creating a Lay Transition Team, mentoring,
57 coaching, curriculum, and cultivating a culture of the call in local congregations.
- 58 b. Goals for 2016
 - 59 i. Goals i-vii of 2015 carry over with the addition of 2-4 new TiM pastors
 - 60 ii. Assess the effectiveness of the TiM Program by comparing the scores of the TiM
61 pastors with the national average for the *Flourishing in Ministry* data that is
62 listed in IV. d. below.
 - 63 iii. Continue to make program adjustments for goal attainment.
 - 64 iv. Follow up on congregations who have had a TiM associate or solo pastor to
65 identify ways that the culture of learning, support, and collaboration has
66 continued to be a part of the culture of their congregation.
 - 67 v. Introduce the Fruitfulness Grant into Phase 2. The Fruitfulness Grant will provide
68 an opportunity for TiM pastors to have an opportunity to learn about pastoral
69 leadership in collaboration with the congregation. The Fruitfulness Grant will be
70 made available in the amount of \$5,000-\$20,000 to be used in any of the three
71 years of Phase 2 (years 3-5 of the TiM program). Clergy/Lay teams (the pastor
72 plus a lay committee of 3-5 people with a lay chairperson) recipients would be
73 required to attend a pre-grant seminar for developing their grant proposal with
74 their teams of laity and elected chairpersons (not the pastor).

76 IV. Measuring Progress

77 How we will measure progress, include quantifiable measures when possible?

- 78 a. **Excellent Preachers:** Transition Teams will provide feedback every other month on
79 preaching that will include scoring/evaluation to be shared with the TiM pastor.
80 Additionally, the TiM pastors in Phase 2 will include as part of their gathering preaching
81 feedback. This will also be a part of the Lewis Pastoral Leadership Inventory (LPLI)
82 feedback (a 360 evaluation) that pastors will receive at 6 months, 24 months and 48
83 months.
- 84 b. **Collaborative Clergy:** Clergy will learn to collaborate with other clergy through the
85 cohort gatherings and mentoring meetings. The environment created will be designed
86 to be a supportive environment, and they will be asked to give an annual assessment of
87 that extent. We will look to see if their cohort reports an increase in their level of
88 collaboration. The hope will be that upon “graduating” from the TiM program, that
89 these clergy will initiate their own covenant group commitments for the length of their
90 ministries.
- 91 c. **Empowered Laity:** Empowerment of laity in Phase One will focus on the Transition
92 Team (formerly called the Lay Committee). Members will evaluate their own committee
93 (not evaluate the TiM pastor) every January and June. Empowerment of laity in Phase
94 Two will focus on the Fruitfulness Grant that was mentioned on lines 64-71 ¹. The
95 fruitfulness grant proposal will include structured guidance for empowering laity and
96 will depend upon an empowered group of church members. Each church will have an
97 elected committee chair (not the pastor) who will lead the project. The Fruitfulness
98 Grant team will submit an update every three months and a final report.
- 99 d. **“Flourishing” in ministry:** Our definition of “flourishing” is derived from the *Flourishing*
100 *in Ministry Project*², and we will assess a pastor’s progress by evaluating the following
101 categories in which we expect to see TiM pastors **score higher than average**:
- 102 i. General Happiness
 - 103 ii. Engagement at Work
 - 104 iii. Growth At Work
 - 105 iv. Subjective Well-Being
 - 106 v. Satisfaction with Family
- 107 e. **Flourishing in Ministry Project:** Data will show that TiM pastors collectively score **lower**
108 **than average** in the following categories:
- 109 i. Burnout
 - 110 ii. Exhaustion

¹ The idea for this grant comes from the *Flourishing in Ministry* study that identified 5 crucial components for a pastoral effectiveness program (you’ll see all of these components in the structure of the TiM strategic planning): 1.) highly effective pastoral training programs paired with (b) long-term coaching for pastor, (c) **state-of-the-art-educational and training programs that lay leaders of local church actually participate in and use**, (d)**provision of the financial and other resources that are necessary for local churches to actually undertake significant change**, and most importantly, (e) a commitment by the denomination and its leaders to a long-term vision for improvement.

²The research from this study is found here: <http://flourishing.nd.edu/>

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V. Funding:

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a. There will likely be about \$105,529 left from the Lilly Grant in 2016.

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b. Church contributions will be \$40,000 a year for an associate pastor.

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c. The budget is based on 3 new associate pastors in 2015, 2016, and 2 new solo pastors in 2016.

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d. The budget request is on the attached form.