

Launching New Worshipping Communities

in the Presbytery of Florida



A Manual of the
New Congregational Development Committee

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WHY START NEWWORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES?

We worship and serve a God who wants to be a blessing to the nations and who goes looking for lost sheep, coins, and people, calling them back into communion with God, with one another, and with the world. Part of being adopted into the family of God is participating in God's mission in the world. Mission then "is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God, God is a missionary God... Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission... There is church because there is mission, not vice versa" (David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 390).

Jesus was sent to be the incarnate mission of God. Jesus now sends us to be the incarnate mission of God. He came to seek and save the lost; not to be served but to serve and give up his life. "Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21-22). At the very end of Jesus' earthly ministry, he sent the disciples into the world just as the Father had sent him. He sent them and still sends us today with his peace and in the power of the Holy Spirit. He sends us proclaiming, "The kingdom of God has come near to you" (Luke 10:9). Filled with peace and the Holy Spirit, these followers of Jesus spread the gospel through a web of relational networks and saw exponential growth in a very short period of time. Therefore, if we are missionaries by our very nature; if we are in fact a people sent by Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit... THEN... to whom and where is God sending us?

Consider the United States of America as a new mission field. In their book *Lost in America*, Clegg and Bird state, "The un-churched population in the US is so extensive that, if it were a nation it would be the 5th most populated nation on the planet after China, the former Soviet Union, India and Brazil. Thus, our un-churched population is the largest mission field in the English speaking world and the 5th largest globally." What would it look like to partner with our missionary God and our sending Savior in the power of the Spirit to plant new worshipping communities in the largest English speaking mission field in the world? There is an enormous need in post-Christian America to plant new indigenous churches that will participate in the mission of God to reach this new un-reached people group. In addition to post-Christian Westerners, there are non-European, immigrant populations coming to the US in massive numbers. In fact, 90% of immigrants who arrived in the US after 1960 are non- European, from over 150 countries; 52% from Latin America and the Caribbean and 29% from Asia and the Middle East (Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*).

There is no better way to participate in the mission of God than to plant new indigenous churches. Tim Keller, has said, "All of our existing churches were at one point created and planted by people responding to the mission of God in the world. Planting churches has always been the best evangelistic strategy and remains so in the 21st century. 60-80% of people who join new churches were previously un-churched or de-churched whereas 80% of people who join established churches come from letters of transfer (Lyle Schaller, in McGavran and Hunter, *Church Growth: Strategies that Work*, p. 100). Church planting is also one of the greatest ways to renew and revitalize existing and established churches because it connects those congregations to the mission of God in their neighborhoods, while fanning into flame the missional Spirit of God in the local congregation. That excitement washes back into the life of the established church.

The planting of new worshipping communities will require fresh and innovative strategies and partnerships within our presbytery. We will likely not be parachuting into strategically predetermined neighborhoods with highly equipped and skilled pastors with an agenda. Rather, together we will be looking and listening for the wind of Spirit blowing and seeking to hoist our sails into that gust of God's Spirit. We will be identifying together emerging indigenous leaders in our churches, seminaries, and neighborhoods who are evangelists and apostles already at work building community and then asking one another how the Presbytery of Florida can come alongside the work of God in our midst. This missional leadership is about being prayerful, present, watchful, and attentive. It will necessitate adaptive and discerning leadership, attentive to the rumblings of God in our church and in our neighborhoods. This will require a true missional and connectional spirit among all our churches, together seeking the peace of our neighborhoods. It will require us to let Christ build the church while we make disciples and see more heaven on earth as Christ's kingdom comes near through his sent ones, the Presbytery of Florida, participating in the mission of God.

WHAT IS A NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY?

A New Worshipping Community is...

Brief Definition

- **New**
 - Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ
 - Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture
- **Worshipping**
 - Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament
 - Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world
- **Community**
 - Practicing mutual care and accountability
 - Developing sustainability in leadership and finances

Long Definition

- **New**
 - Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture
Living out the Gospel demands ministry which engages today's cultures (John 1:14). New ways of joining Christians together for contextual ministry will use current and historic ways of "being church" as springboards for creative innovation (Matt 9:17).
 - Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ
NWCs witness in word and deed (1 John 3:18), continuing Jesus' own mission of discipling, feeding, teaching, healing, welcoming, crossing boundaries, and proclaiming God's coming realm. Those with new and renewed faith join the Spirit's transforming work in the world.
- **Worshipping**
 - Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament
We seek to hear, come to believe, and are equipped to live the promises of God revealed in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. NWCs welcome new members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) through Baptism and are nourished by Christ's spiritual presence in the Lord's Supper.
 - Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world
The Spirit impels us outward, so that worshipers participate in the redemption of the world in Christ (Col 1:20). Therefore, the primary beneficiaries of the NWC are not its own members, but rather its community and world.
- **Community**
 - Practicing mutual care and accountability
We commit ourselves to love one another (John 13:34) in relationships of mutual care and accountability, as faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Entrusting ourselves and the church to the Holy Spirit, we seek to grow to maturity in faith and life.
 - Developing sustainability in leadership and finances
As distinct yet connected expressions of the body of Christ, NWCs have local leadership arising from their own community of faith (Exodus 18:21). Pastoral leadership, facilities, and programs are all appropriately structured in order to demonstrate good and faithful stewardship.

Responding to Christ's gift and call, we do all these things only by God's grace, seeking—above all else—to glorify God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

VISION

The vision of the New Congregational Development Committee (NCDC) is that the churches of the Presbytery of Florida will unite in their dedication to living out the Lord's Great Commission. At the core of that commitment is a passion to share the good news of Jesus in word and deed and to start new worshipping communities. These new communities will introduce people to the saving love of Jesus Christ, encourage them to put their trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, and stimulate their growth as disciples who love one another and participate in God's work in the world. This vision will connect with the denominational initiative, 1001 New Worshipping Communities.

The NCD Committee intends to lead the Presbytery of Florida to rededicate itself to the work of starting new worshipping communities. The NCD Committee will work to:

- Cultivate among the churches of the presbytery a missional commitment which values growth, dependency on the Spirit, and risk-taking
- Advocate in the presbytery for the dedication of financial resources to assist new worshipping communities during their start-up period
- Work with new worshipping communities to become sustainable in leadership and finance
- Encourage churches to participate in the denominational commitment to start 1001 new worshipping communities, by planting new worshipping communities or partnering with others to support new worshipping communities
- Identify and nurture evangelists and pastors who have a vision for starting new worshipping communities and nurturing their growth

DISCERNMENT OF PERSON & PLACE

Each NWC will emerge in different ways. Some will come from a move of the Spirit in a particular individual with a sense of call to a particular place or people group. Others may come from the need to put a NWC in a particular location that is discerned by the NCD Committee. Whatever the case special care and attention will be taken to process the person and place in question to discern the genuine nature of the call and the reasoning behind the desire to initiate a particular NWC.

- **Person;**

Upon coming to the NCD Committee will begin to engage in a discernment process with the group that will include a church planting assessment weekend. They will also have a mentor from the committee to help understand the nature of what is call and what is our own desire/preference.

- **Place**

The sense of call to a particular place is an important consideration in starting a NWC. When identifying a place special consideration will be taken in discerning why that place has emerged as a possible landing place for the NWC. This will include taking time to get to know the community, its people, its businesses, and its already existent churches.

Core Values & Benchmarks

CORE VALUES

In order to carry out its vision, each new worshipping community will hold the following core values:

- New worshipping communities have as their chief purpose the development of new disciples of Christ
- A new worshipping community offers a ministry that is shaped to reach a particular community
- A new worshipping community offers vibrant, culturally relevant worship experiences
- The participants in a new worshipping community continue to grow spiritually and numerically each year
- Both the pastor and the new worshipping community participants are actively engaged in ministry within the community
- The new worshipping community provides a variety of opportunities for discipleship and leadership development
- New worshipping communities will become sustainable and propagating.
- New worshipping communities are connected with the wider church through a congregation or presbytery in a relationship that includes care and accountability

BENCHMARKS

Getting started:

The Leadership Team uses *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, a discernment process of the PCUSA, to develop an identity statement, identify a target community, and establish a mission plan. See <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wpcontent/uploads/starting-new-worshipping-communities-discernment-booklet.pdf>

The NWC will work to meet the definition of a new worshipping community on p. 5 of this manual. By the end of its first full year of gathering, a new worshipping community will show:

1. Oversight

- Monthly meetings of the Task Force
- Regular meetings of a financial team, accountable to the Task Force
- Leadership group which meets regularly for prayer and planning
- New benchmarks for year two

2. Sustainability

- A disciple-making strategy which includes Bible study, prayer, Christian community, worship, and stewardship, with target dates for implementation
- At least 75% of participants actively engaged in ministry through use of their time and talent
- Active engagement in the local community
- A stewardship program which emphasizes generous giving and financial sustainability
- Participants support 25% of the church's budget

3. Outreach

- An outreach strategy conducted by leader and participants which includes reaching at least 100 people per month through e-mails, mail, and advertising, and at least 25 people through direct personal connection
- The number of people participating in the life of the community adequate to sustain the ministry, and the number of participants continuing to grow
- 10% of the community giving directed toward mission, including support of the Presbytery of Florida's Shared Benevolence.
- A visibility strategy developed and implemented
- Appropriate mission opportunities/events in the community

COVENANT

This is a sample covenant. An actual covenant will be developed in conversation between the NCD Committee and the leaders of a New Worshipping Community.

This covenant is between the Presbytery of Florida (through the NCD Committee) and _____ (name of new worshipping community).

The Presbytery of Florida (through the New Congregational Development Committee) will:

- Pray for the NWC
- Provide some funding for the NWC for a period of up to five years in varying amounts
- Provide Orientation and training with the NWC Manual of the Presbytery of Florida
- Support the NWC in requesting funds from the synod and General Assembly
- Act as session for the NWC until such time as the NWC is ready to become an organized congregation
- Provide training opportunities for leaders
- Engage a coach through the 1001 coaching program
- Encourage congregations of the Presbytery of Florida to develop partnerships with the NWC
- Participate in the development of a task force for each NWC, providing at least one NCD Committee member to serve as a member of the Task Force
- Provide payroll services for the staff of the NWC until the congregation is organized or until such time as the new worshipping community is prepared to assume that responsibility
- Maintain and administer the portion of the income that covers staff salaries
- Hold appropriate liability insurance for the NWC
- Authorize and supply leadership if necessary for the administration of sacraments
- Make decisions regarding geographical area and schedule for NWC starts
- Appoint NWC pastors and evangelists
- Approve hiring of non-ordained staff
- Approve NWC budgets
- Provide general oversight for all NWCs and task forces
- Provide Financial training on how to develop a budget and create budget reports.

The Task Force will:

- Provide prayer support and spiritual leadership for the NWC
- Consist of 7-9 members of which at least 2 are representatives of the NCD Committee and the remainders are members of the worshipping community. The organizing pastor or evangelist will serve as a member.
- Operate under the authority of the NCD Committee
- Meet on a regular schedule
- Provide leadership until the NWC becomes organized as a congregation
- Participate in the *Starting New Worshipping Communities* discernment process
- Work with a coach appointed by the NCD Committee
- Develop an identity statement and a strategy for the new worshipping community using *Starting New Worshipping Communities* as the guide
- Develop an evangelism strategy to be conducted by the NWC which includes reaching at least 100 people per month through e-mails, mailings, and advertising, and at least 25 people per month through direct, personal connection
- Provide monthly reports of attendance, finances, and mission to the NCD Committee
- Initiate grant applications to synod, PMA, and other sources of support

- Work with the NWC leader(s) to recommend hiring of non-ordained staff
- Work with the NWC leader(s), provide for the evaluation of the staff
- Recommend observances of sacraments to the NCD Committee
- Submit an annual budget proposal and progress report to the NCD Committee
- With the NWC leader(s), administer the budget approved by the NCD Committee
- Recommend an appropriate time for organizing as a congregation
- Develop and implement a plan for visibility and marketing
- Offer leadership development opportunities for the NWC
- Disband when the NWC becomes an organized congregation

The New Worshipping Community will:

- Work toward becoming sustainable in leadership and finance
- Engage the community through evangelism and service
- Reach out to un-churched and de-churched people, inviting them into relationship with Jesus Christ
- Participate in an evangelism program which includes reaching at least 100 people per month through e-mails, mailings, and advertising, and at least 25 people through direct, personal connection
- Appoint a treasurer
- Submit an annual budget proposal and the monthly NWC report to the NCDC.
- Provide vibrant, contextual worship experiences
- Offer a disciple-making process that includes Bible study, prayer, Christian community, and stewardship
- Offer discipleship opportunities for adults, children, and youth
- Contribute at least 10% of its budget to mission, including the general benevolence fund of the Presbytery of Florida
- Participate in a stewardship program emphasizing generous giving
- Evaluate and revise the community's mission every three years
- Consist of participants who are actively involved in ministry
- Consist of participants who develop transformative relationships with Jesus Christ

The NWC leader(s) will:

- Work with NCDC to develop the NWC
- Attend the "Discerning Missional Leadership" weekend within the first year
- Attend at least one training event per year
- Administer sacraments as authorized by the Presbytery of Florida
- Meet with the task force
- Provide pastoral oversight as prescribed by the Book of Order (PCUSA)
- Cultivate excellence in your leadership of worship, stewardship, discipleship, outreach, and mission

Signatures:

NWC Leaders(s)	Date
Task Force Chair	Date
NCD Committee Member	Date

Strategy for Starting New Worshiping Communities

Each New Worshipping Community is different. The order in which the activities are carried out may vary. These are guidelines rather than a recipe for starting new worshipping communities. This strategy assumes that groups will be using the Starting New Worshipping Communities resource from PCUSA:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/starting-new-worshiping-communities-discernment-booklet.pdf>

PHASE I

Who will do it?	Potential NWC leader, discernment group, partner congregation, or NCD Committee
Resource:	Task One, <i>Starting New Worshipping Communities</i> (pp. 5-16)
Outcome:	“Identity Statement”
Process:	Gather a discernment group that will commit to meeting weekly for Bible study, prayer, and discernment using Starting New Worshipping Communities: https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/starting-new-worshiping-communities-discernment-booklet.pdf Consult with the NWC Committee as early as possible in the process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covenant with a NWC coach (coordinated by NCD Committee)• Explore the definition of “new worshipping community” (p. 4 of this manual)• Write an “Identity Statement”

PHASE II

Who will do it?	Discernment Group with support from NCD Committee
Resource:	Task Two, <i>Starting New Worshipping Communities</i> (pp.17-36)
Outcome:	Vision Statement
Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to meet weekly for prayer and discernment• Consult with the NCD Committee• Explore demographics of target neighborhoods• Conduct site visits• Identify a prospective community and or neighborhood for NWC

- Meet with leaders of neighboring churches
- Commit to worshipping at least one time in those churches.
- Write a statement identifying the particular people/community God is calling you to reach
- Conduct a site visit with coach

PHASE III

Who will do it?	Discernment Group with support from NCD Committee
Resource:	Task Three, <i>Starting New Worshipping Communities</i> (pp. 37-44)
Outcome:	Analysis of experiments you have tried; creation of Task Force
Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm some possibilities for ministry among the people God has given you to reach • Try some new things (see 1001 NWC's <i>Ministry Recipe Cards</i> for ideas) • Evaluate the activities you have tried • Meet with the NCD Committee • Form a Task Force that includes 2 members of the NCD Committee, and set a monthly meeting schedule • Identify and meet with potential partner congregations • Apply for a Seed Grant, if appropriate

Phase IV

Who will do it?	Task Force with support from NCD Committee
Resource:	Task 4, <i>Starting New Worshipping Communities</i> (pp. 45-58)
Outcome:	Key leader identification
Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the NCD Committee • Define the missionary gifts needed to carry out the mission • Research competencies for successful church planters • Identify pastor or other appropriate spiritual leader to be the point leader of the NWC • Secure other leaders, including staff if appropriate • Enroll prospective leaders in a “Discerning Missional Leadership” assessment: http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/1001-2/assessment/

PHASE V

Who will do it?	NWC, Leader(s), and NCD Committee
Resource:	Task 5, <i>Starting New Worshipping Communities</i> (pp. 59-74)
Outcomes:	Statement of core values; identification of key behaviors of community; plan for engaging people and making disciples; strategy for financial sustainability; benchmarks for assessing the ministry
Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with NCD Committee• Develop a strategy for carrying out your vision• Develop a budget and a plan for financial sustainability• Decide when/how worship will be introduced or expanded• Propose a strategy for making disciples• Make plans to grow in your relationship with your neighbors• Decide on a location and rhythm for community gatherings• Review year 1 Benchmarks (see Benchmarks of this manual)• Apply for an Investment Grant if appropriate

PHASE VI

Who will do it?	Presbytery and new congregation
Resource:	p. 15 of this manual
Outcomes:	Organized congregation; called and installed pastor (if appropriate); called and installed elders; incorporation
Process:	<p>Not every NWC will decide to seek organization as a congregation. This involves a discernment process that includes the new worshipping community, partner congregation, and presbytery. Discernment and action steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discern God's will for the future of the community• Ask questions about the community's readiness for organizing• Consider all options• Meet with NCD Committee and COM• Carefully examine the guidelines on p. 15 of this manual• Apply for Growth Grant if appropriate

Guidelines for Organizing as a Congregation

1. NWC has been worshipping regularly for at least 1 year.
2. The number of people participating in the life of the community is adequate to sustain 75% of the budget. This number has been sustained for a year.
3. Organizing pastor (or other spiritual leader) has been in place for at least 1 year.
4. Potential elders have been trained in leadership and church governance.
5. Task force meets regularly and, with the pastor, effectively provides spiritual, financial, and strategic leadership for the community.
6. Vision has been effectively communicated to the community.
7. Community membership qualifications and processes have been developed.
8. Community holds appropriate liability insurance.
9. Financial procedures are in place and operating effectively with appropriate accountability and ownership.
10. Pastor/leader has received ethical training by the presbytery. Background checks for all leaders have been completed.
11. 10% of community giving is directed to mission.
12. Community is incorporated as a non-profit organization.
13. NWC shows evidence of consistently setting and reaching benchmarks.
14. Bylaws have been approved by the Task Force.
15. PIN number has been obtained from PCUSA.
16. Plan of union (for union congregations) has been approved by governing bodies.
17. Congregation has elected officers.
18. Congregation has obtained EIN# from IRS using form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number.
19. Pastor has been called by the congregation (if appropriate); call forms are signed; the pastoral call has been approved by presbytery.

NWC Task Force Responsibilities

(for NCD Committee Members)

Members of the NCD Committee serving on NWC Task Forces:

1. Will be the primary representatives of the Presbytery of Florida on the Task Force
2. Will attend Task Force meetings as voting members
3. Will attend worship services and other programs of the NWC when possible
4. Will stay up-to-date on NWC strategy through attending training events and reading relevant articles
5. Will take an active role helping the Task Force develop NWC strategies that reflect current NWC principles
6. Will pray regularly for the NWC
7. Will report to the NCD Committee at each committee meeting
8. Will assure that the NWC provides financial, attendance, and mission reports to the NCD Committee at least quarterly
9. Will assure that covenant and benchmarks are developed, adopted, and annually reviewed and revised and that progress toward meeting the benchmarks is regularly evaluated
10. Will provide pastoral support to the project