

Welcome to the Partnership for  
Missional Church<sup>®</sup>





## What is the Partnership for Missional Church®?

A network of congregations sharing this vision:

To listen to God's specific call to us, to let God send us and, through the Holy Spirit, empower us to participate in God's mission in the world, so that both our outreach and our life together as a church are a witness to Jesus Christ.

**It sounds ambitious. It is!**

This is a partnership of congregations on a shared journey. It takes time—even years. On this journey, congregations are changing, taking reasonable risks, trying something different, and giving long-term commitment (three to five years) to the challenges of becoming a missional church.

**We have a vision:**

Congregations reaching across boundaries as they live now according to the pattern that God intends for the whole world.

**We have a plan of action to get there:**

*The Partnership for Missional Church®*

**Ask yourself:**

“How will (your congregation) be a sign and an instrument of God's future?”

And then read on.

We are delighted to have partners who are wrestling with the same question, each in their own unique setting. We are grateful that God is calling you to become part of the Partnership for Missional Church®.

## Why the name *Partnership for Missional Church*<sup>®</sup>?

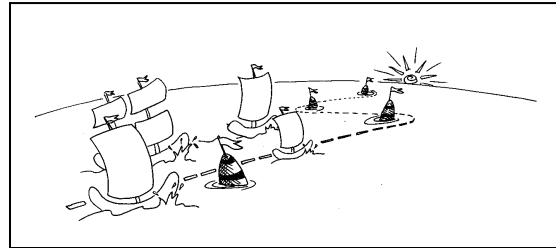
- Partnership:**
- You, your congregation, and others in this project work as partners with staff and consultants from Church Innovations.
  - We learn through sharing our stories and experience.
  - We support each other, gathering in worship, seminars, prayer, and keeping in touch along a Phone Loop.
  - Together we seek to become more missional.
  - Sometimes we're out on a limb, but we're never alone.
- Missional:**
- We want to participate in God's mission of reconciling, restoring, and redeeming a world in need of God's grace.
  - We engage in spiritual discernment to discover specifically how God is sending us so that we may be better partners for one another in God's work.
  - The mission field is not only in foreign countries but among us; congregations are the mission centers for the Christian church today.
- Church:**
- We are not making a "brand new church" from nothing. We are building upon the traditions of our congregation as we grow forward toward a missional church.
  - This project grows from the dedication of people in the pew (or folding chair), in partnership with their pastors, ministers or priests.
  - Partner congregations are pioneers, led by lay and ordained persons along the new mission frontier often referred to as "after Christendom." In other words, we prepare for a new age of mission in a time when the society around us doesn't look very Christian.

## How does the Partnership for Missional Church® work?

In the Partnership for Missional Church® (PMC), your local church is invited into a journey of spiritual discernment that engages both cultural change and transforms mission. Theologically speaking, you are being invited into a journey within the life of the living God. For many of you, this seems obvious because, of course, you know that you are already in that life. However, you might be surprised how seldom members of your local church consciously imagine and describe their lives as local church, both gathered and sent, as a journey within the life of the living God.

The Partnership for Missional Church® is not a program with clear steps and outcomes that are the same for every congregation. PMC is a process, or a journey, in which there is a fixed point on the horizon toward which you are continually moving, just as a sailboat moves across the open sea.

Your course isn't mapped out along a straight line. Your journey involves turns as you pass by markers, or phases, just as a sailboat tacks along its way, yet is always moving closer to the point on the horizon. Your congregation won't be



riding solo in the boat; there are multiple partners to this journey you will discover along the way. Your ship for this journey will not be powered by your own doing, but by the Holy Gust that fills your sail and keeps you moving as your congregation seeks to live out its calling as participants in the mission of God.

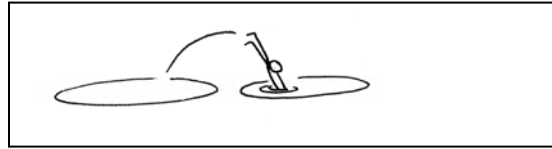
In PMC local churches seek to embody their missional vocation. Through a process of spiritual discernment and theological reflection you will seek to walk into God's preferred and promised future for your congregation. Such seeking requires asking, "What is God's preferred and promised future for our local church? What is our missional vocation?"

The four phases of PMC divide that basic seeking of a missional vocation in component parts.

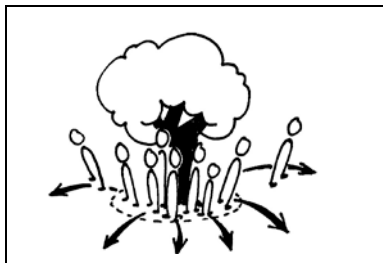
- The first phase, **Discovering Your Partners**, assists the local church and its leaders to discover its partners.



- The second phase, **Missional Experimenting**, guides those partners in experimenting with some challenges facing the local church in walking into God’s preferred and promised future.

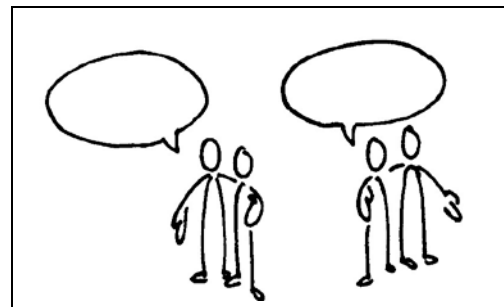


- The third phase, **Visioning for Embodiment**, learns from the second and puts that sense of missional vocation tempered by the experiments in the second phase into a plan of action.



- The fourth phase, **Learning and Growing**, helps the local church embody the larger sense of missional vocation.

Throughout these four phases mentors and teachers are discerned. In special workshops these mentors and teachers are coached and trained so that they can pass on the good habits and capacities for innovating a missional church. This is called **Sharing and Mentoring**, and it goes on throughout the Partnership voyage.



During each phase of the partnership you will gather with the partners from the other churches in your cluster for three 2-day events. In the first day of each cluster event, called **Spiritual Leaders’ Time**, pastors and ministers gather for specialized training in spiritual disciplines and leadership development. A summary of their time together can be found in this notebook in the introduction sections for each cluster event. During the remaining time allotted for each Cluster Event, called **Teams’ Time**, the Steering Teams of each congregation in the cluster join pastors and other local partners. By far the majority of your work as a Steering Team will take place between cluster events. Your

time at the events will be spent engaging in spiritual disciplines, reflecting on the journey so far, and receiving training for the next stages of the process.

## Who is involved in the Partnership for Missional Church®?

The Partnership is made up of clusters of 12-16 churches. The following people from your congregation will participate in the process:

- A Steering Team of five to seven people.
- Pastor(s). Your pastors will participate in the process as spiritual leaders, not process leaders. The Spiritual Leaders' Time of each cluster event is set aside to focus on their spiritual role.
- Local church partners. These are people from within your church who participate in the PMC process in various ways. At Cluster Event 1, these local church partners include a group called Listening Leaders. Later on in the journey, these local church partners will include your church's governance board, as well as some other specialized teams.

The PMC process will also include persons from your church judicatory body, leadership school, or other system supporting the cluster, and persons from Church Innovations. Church Innovations may supply these sorts of people:

- A Church Innovations consultant. Each cluster will be assigned a primary consultant who will be present at each cluster event and will be the primary contact with the sponsoring judicatory or leadership school.
- Trainers. These are trained Church Innovations consultants who are brought to lead specific pieces at each cluster event.
- Phone Loop consultant. This person is a trained Church Innovations consultant assigned one entire cluster. Phone Loop consultants rarely if ever appear at cluster events, but they are in touch by phone at regular appointed intervals to support the leaders engaged in the PMC journey.
- On-line meetings for steering Team leaders between cluster events will be hosted by a CI consultant and your Judicatory Support Person in order to answer questions and keep you moving forward toward God's Preferred and Promised Future.

## What resources are available to you and your local church partners as you move through the partnership?

- The *Local Church Guide for Spiritual Discernment*. This is the primary manual used by your Steering Team and the other congregation groups along the PMC journey. A printed copy is provided the congregation for each cluster event and distributed ahead of time through your sponsoring judicatory. You will also receive an electronic form of the Local Church Guide as a pdf. Each congregational team is responsible for making enough copies for you team. Bring it with you to each cluster event.
- *Spiritual Leader's Journal*. This will serve as a guide and journal for local church pastors. A copy is provided for the spiritual leaders at the beginning of each year.
- Church Innovations' online newsletter.
- Additional bibliographic references found at the end of each cluster event packet.
- The book *We Are Here Now* by Patrick Keifert (Eagle, Idaho: Allelon Publishing, 2005) is available for purchase through the Church Innovations website.

## What happens in a Partnership Congregation?

The **Partnership for Missional Church**<sup>®</sup> helps congregations grow by developing:

- ⇒ a God-centered, biblical vision for mission
- ⇒ a greater sense of God's activity in their congregation and community
- ⇒ ownership of the mission of the congregation by more members
- ⇒ members committed to and capable of making disciples
- ⇒ both a vision for mission and a practical plan of action to achieve it
- ⇒ strengths of the tradition of the congregation
- ⇒ practical skills for managing change and attending to conflict
- ⇒ dramatic expansion of lay involvement
- ⇒ a decision process for planning activities and budget
- ⇒ a faithful and hospitable congregation
- ⇒ relationships with other Partner congregations

## How do we know these things take place?

The Partnership for Missional Church<sup>®</sup> has been developing over twenty years. A longitudinal study done in 2002-3 found the following eight things to be true in congregations that had participated prior to 2000:

- 23-25% of congregations drop out by 24<sup>th</sup> month; 75-77% stay in
- 17% median growth in worship attendance over 5 year period in congregations who stay in
- high correlation (77%) between congregations who stay in and longevity of pastorate
- high correlation (64%) between congregations who stay in and growth in adult conversions
- high correlation (74%) between congregations who stay in and increased lay leadership base
- high correlation (73%) between congregations who stay in and increased participation of young adults after confirmation and high school
- high correlation (62%) between congregations who stay in and developing new constituency base in situations of high social change

- higher participation in other mission-oriented activities and continuing education

## What do you do now?

1. Create, with your church governing body, a **Steering Team** of five to seven members. Most congregations begin by selecting a Steering Team Leader. (See page 11 and following for guidance on selecting Steering Team members.)
2. Make sure each member of your Steering Team has a copy of this *Welcome to the Partnership for Missional Church*<sup>®</sup> document. You are free to make copies of this material for use in your congregation only. Make sure you have completed the “Before the event” items listed on page 16.
3. Select three to six people with listening skills for the **Listening Leader Team**. Consider asking your ministry leaders and church governance board for suggestions. (See page 13 for guidance on selecting Listening Leaders.)
4. Discuss with all selected members their roles and time commitments.
5. Invite **pastors, Listening Leaders, and Steering Team** members to Cluster Event 1, and give Listening Leaders Appendix B from the Local Church Guide for Event 1 prior to the event.
6. Invite **Steering Team** members to spend some time reading and reflecting on the Gospel according to Luke, particularly Luke 10:1-12. Private meditation on a passage we will share together throughout our Partnership journey is time well spent; however, it is in our dwelling in that story *as a group* that the Lord will reveal more to us. After all, we encounter God best in the face and voice of the other.

## ***Luke 10: 1-12***

<sup>1</sup>After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. <sup>2</sup>He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup>Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ <sup>6</sup>And if anyone is there who shares in peace your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup>cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ <sup>10</sup>But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ <sup>12</sup>I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

# Creating Your Steering Team

## *Steering Team leader,*

Congratulations on being chosen to lead a very important process in your congregation, Partnership for Missional Church®. The Partnership process is designed to help your church move from maintenance to mission and will generate change in the congregation. There is also the possibility of conflict when difficult decisions must be made. Experience has taught us that change must be led, or chaos will reign, and that conflict is not bad but gives a chance for learning and growth. That was why you were identified and approached to be the steering team leader.

This part of the Welcome Guide contains three sections:

1. Steering team leader role and responsibilities
2. Preparation for the PMC process
3. Digging deeper: steering team best practices

Thank you in advance for your participation.

## *Your Partners at Church Innovations*

### 1. Steering Team leader role and responsibilities

The role of the steering team leader has many components. These components change over time in complexity and difficulty. But always remember that you are not alone in this, as the whole team from Church Innovations and their consultants are here to support you and your team in this process. At the highest level, your role is to coordinate a number of critical components, which will be discussed in the process. We say this understanding that the Partnership voyage is a journey of spiritual discernment.

Your initial responsibilities as steering team leader include

- together with your church governance board, creating a steering team
- creating a team of Listening Leaders.
- mobilizing the congregation in prayer.
- reading and discussing relevant material.

As you move through the process you will also

- build commitment within the Steering Team.
- structure and lead steering team meetings between events.

You may be wondering whether you are the right person for person for this job especially when you are not sure where the journey will lead. Know this: You are not alone. The Partnership for Missional Church® is just that: a partnership. Your partners include: the entire steering team, your pastor (minister or priest), your local judicatory support person, the Church Innovations staff and our primary partner- God who is leading toward God's preferred and promised future for your congregation.

## 2. Preparation for the PMC process

### A. Together with your church governance board, create a steering team.

The role of the steering team involves

- **leading and coordinating the PMC process** in the congregation, guided by the direction given during the cluster events.
- **modeling new behavior.**

Each congregation that wants to move toward becoming a missional church needs a group of people who can function as a team to practice spiritual discernment.

The steering team consists of key lay leaders who, through Dwelling in the Word and prayer, set the initial course for becoming a missional church. In Partnership congregations steering teams have, in addition to a willingness to listen to God, certain characteristics:

- **Caring leadership.** People who embody genuine care for the church and the community they seek to serve.
- **Supportive and giving.** People who support the leader(s) and other members through a generous and effective gift of energy.
- **Analytical and diagnostic.** People who always look at the plans and the work with the eye of a realistic implementer who sees not only potential difficulties but also ways they might be avoided, and also potential joys and ways they might be found. (a person with these qualities may be a strong candidate to oversee the *Church FutureFinder* process – to learn more, see page 15.)
- **Social and Relational.** People who attend to the relationships on the team as well as the relationships in the congregation so that the work can move forward.

Every effective Steering Team has team members with specific skills. Sometimes one person has more than one skill. Sometimes it takes more than one person having any one skill to make an excellent team. The skills listed here are necessary for the steering team to get its work done.

- **Visionary**—able to catch and effectively articulate a vision for both the team and congregation.
- **Designer**—sees the vision and the system or steps required.
- **Number cruncher**—figures out the money, energy, and time that the vision requires.
- **Barrier buster**—is new enough to remember and attend to how new and other people are included and excluded.
- **Networker**— knows the congregational systems and the people who can influence talk and action.
- **Implementer**— initiates actual action.
- **Copy Cat** — has an attention to detail and makes sure that any documents needed for the team and PMC process are available and in hand in time.

Team members serve best if they can make a commitment of at least 12 months. After that they may withdraw, if they wish. By then you will have learned enough to replace them if necessary. Steering team members will attend three cluster events during the year. In addition, members should plan on meeting once a month between events.

## B. Create a team of Listening Leaders.

Together with your church governance board, create a team of 5-6 people to serve as your Listening Leaders for the Congregational Discovery process.

Listening Leaders should:

- be the best listeners in your congregation.
- not be perceived by others in your community as having an agenda or an axe to grind, so that the person being interviewed feels open to saying anything and feels free to disclose true opinions
- be able to listen, learn, and summarize an interviewee's response (Listening Leaders practice this in the training at Cluster Event 1.)

In addition, Listening Leaders must be able to:

- attend Cluster Event 1.
- participate in an additional meeting to select persons to interview.
- conduct 4-6 interviews each and turn in their completed interviews to the Listening Leader point person or chairperson.
- participate in a debriefing meeting with the Church Innovations reading team convener by speaker phone.
- Present their learnings and discoveries to the steering team.

## C. Mobilize the congregation in prayer.

Since the PMC journey is a spiritual discerning process, the prayer life of the congregation will play a pivotal role. A congregation unified in prayer is the heartbeat of the discernment process.

## D. Read and discuss relevant material.

Two resources that will be indispensable to your journey are the *Local Church Guide for Spiritual Discernment*<sup>®</sup> which you will receive at the first cluster event; and the book *We Are Here Now* by Patrick Keifert (Eagle, Idaho: Allelon Publishing, 2005) which you may purchase through Church Innovations website.

### 3. Digging deeper: steering team best practices

Please take time to read and discuss this section with your newly invited steering team members. It will help you and the team form a broader picture of your role. But also bear in mind that no Steering Team achieves excellence in every area.

#### **Effective Steering Teams develop an understanding of a missional church.**

Becoming a missional church will require a different mindset and different behaviors from members and the church governance board. The discussions during cluster events build a framework for a missional church based on an understanding of missional theology. Please address any uncertainties with your Church Innovations Consultant.

- read and discuss *We Are Here Now* by Patrick R. Keifert with the Steering Team as well as others in the leadership.
- recommend that all church members work through the material. This will be helpful when members are consulted on the various issues arising from the process.

#### **Effective Steering Teams develop the leadership skills of Steering Team members.**

Capitalize on the direct link between the behavior of the steering team and the progress of the process.

- ensure that the Steering Team has sufficient energy, desire, and authority to lead the process, while believing that change is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- lead in the practice of spiritual disciplines, and witness how this changes you.
- promote the importance of the process to the ministry leaders and be willing to act as coach and mentor to those who seek help.
- commit to develop your own renewal leadership by asking others for regular and frequent feedback.
- delegate – but don't abdicate.

#### ***Effective Steering Teams communicate that the compelling need for change is to be faithful to our Lord.***

Not every congregation member will have this insight, at least initially.

- Invest people, time, energy, and resources to spread the message throughout the congregation.
- Spend time in discussion with your church's various teams and ministries, bringing key members and leaders onboard.
- When communicating the message, balances the "what" with the "why." Frequently the "what" is over-communicated and the "why" of the renewal is lost, resulting in confusion and members challenging the need for change.
- Do not, under any circumstances, start the Partnership if the church governance board is not fully committed to the process. Take time to communicate the need for change instead.

#### **Effective Steering Teams develop support for the change.**

You will need to create highly motivated and energetic teams of influential supporters who believe that the status quo is unacceptable.

- hold one-on-one conversations with key supporters to allow them to voice concerns privately. then hold group workshops to come to consensus on the need for renewal.

- deal with any blocking behavior quickly, but with love and justice.

**Effective Steering Teams are steadfast in their personal commitment, enthusiasm, and energy.**

The steering team must invest more energy, enthusiasm, and commitment in the Partnership process than anyone else.

- Take any and every opportunity to instill an appropriate sense of urgency into the congregation.
- Inspire and encourage others to participate fully in the process.
- If necessary publicly pay a personal price for implementing the missional vision.
- Be patient while repeatedly covering the same ground to ensure understanding, commitment, and acceptance of the missional vision.
- Make your energy, enthusiasm, and commitment contagious.

**Effective Steering Teams make the PMC process the church's top priority and allocate appropriate resources.**

Steering Teams must prioritize the Partnership process relative to all other initiatives, including day-to-day activities.

- Work with your church governance board to clarify the consequences of the new priorities and then clearly communicate the results. There will be difficult decisions in this regard, but as the process develops, your members and leaders will discover that the process was indeed necessary.
- Provide clear and consistent guidelines to all team members and paid staff.
- Work with key supporters to ensure a clear understanding of the change and its cost in relation to ongoing ministries day-to-day activities.
- Publicly abandon or shelve low priority-activities and projects.
- Ensure that the most gifted resources are allocated to the Partnership process.

**Effective Steering Teams model new behavior.**

One of the most effective ways to bring about change is for leaders to model the behaviors that you wish to spread throughout the congregation.

- Solicit feedback on your role modeling and take corrective action when necessary.
- Assume that as a leader you are continually in the congregation's eye and act accordingly.
- Encourage all key staff to take every opportunity to link day-to-day activities to the process; for example, Dwelling in the Word even for seemingly non-missional meetings like the property ministry, teaching, preaching, small groups, and so forth.
- Model desired behaviors within the steering team and governance meetings.
- Ensure that all steering team members are available to ministry members at all times.

# Cluster Event

**Your Judicatory Support Person will communicate the dates and location.**

## ***Before the event ...***

### **The Steering Team will have done these things:**

Created, with your church governing body, a Steering Team of five to seven members.

Given each member of your Steering Team a copy of this Welcome To PMC booklet and Cluster Event 1- Local Church Guide packet.

Invited Steering Team members to spend time reading and reflecting on the Gospel according to Luke, particularly Luke 10:1-12. Private meditation on a passage we will share together throughout our Partnership journey is time well spent; however, it is in our dwelling in that story as a group that the Lord will reveal more to us. After all, we encounter God best in the face and voice of the other.

### **The Steering Team as a whole will have done these things:**

Read “The Phase 1 Journey” (pp. 5–6) before the cluster event.

Made extra copies of the SMART Plan form found in Appendix F of the Local Church Guide for Cluster Event 1 (which you will receive from your Judicatory Support Person before the event). Keep extra copies in the notebook to bring to each cluster event.

Selected three to six people with listening skills to serve on the Listening Leader Team.

Invited pastors, Listening Leaders, and other Steering Team members to Cluster Event 1, and given Listening Leaders the Congregational Discovery materials located in Appendix C from the Local Church Guide for Event 1 prior to the event.

## Getting to Know *Church FutureFinder*

A couple of members of the Steering Team will be responsible to lead the work required to complete *Church FutureFinder* (CFF), Church Innovations' online tool for congregational study.

This work is leadership work for a particular part of a spiritual journey. You and your partners on this journey will all become detectives of divinity – seeking out answers to a very important question, “What is God up to here?”

Church Innovations provides resources to assist you through your work with *Church FutureFinder*, including **e-mail support** and a **user's guide** that provides step-by-step instructions for creating an account, joining a group, gathering the information, and inputting it into the database. You can access the user's guide and other resources by visiting the Church Innovations Web site at:

<http://www.churchinnovations.org>

Once you have entered the site, use the menu at the top of the page to choose the “research” section. Once there, choose “Church FutureFinder” from the left navigation menu or from the center of the graphic in the main portion of the page. Explore the site before you start your congregational study.

Exploring the Church FutureFinder and even setting up a mock study can be an interesting way to get familiar with what you'll be doing. However, you cannot begin your actual study until after Cluster Event 1, when you will receive training and the passcodes for your church as a PMC congregation in your cluster. No information you play with while you explore can be transferred to the real study you'll begin after Cluster Event 1.

Thank you for your willingness to become a partner in the PMC journey in this way.

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