

Great Plains United Methodist Conference

Plan of Organization

Final Draft – August 23, 2013

Section 1

Mission, Calling and Vision

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The calling of the Great Plains United Methodist Conference is to equip and connect congregations to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The vision for the Great Plains – our preferred future – is captured in this phrase: Great churches. Great leaders. Great disciples. Transformed world.

Missional Priorities

Missional priorities are our preferred response to the present reality of our conference. They will be reviewed regularly and may be adjusted as our context for ministry changes.

1. Enhancing the ministry of local churches
 - a. Christ-centered excellence in:
 - i. Youth Ministry. We will seek to equip local churches to reach youth in their congregations and communities by providing support and training to both paid and volunteer youth leaders. We also will equip congregations that currently have no youth program to reach youth in their communities.
 - ii. Preaching and worship. We will offer opportunities for pastors to become more effective preachers, and we will connect pastors and other worship leaders with resources that will assist them in designing passionate, relevant, Christ-centered worship.
 - iii. Engaging the community. We will seek to equip local congregations to understand and to connect with the community, with a particular emphasis on going beyond the walls of the church to witness and to serve.
 - iv. Transforming service to the world. We will connect congregations to the needs of the world and offer them strategies and opportunities to address both immediate and systemic needs.
2. New Church Starts
 - a. Hispanic congregations. Our Hispanic/Latino sisters and brothers are the fastest growing population group in the Great Plains. We will continue and enhance efforts to be in ministry together through the establishment of new faith communities and congregations.
 - b. Other ethnic congregations. As part of our commitment to a diverse church, we will explore opportunities and respond to needs for the development of new congregations for underserved ethnic groups.

- c. Areas of population growth. As portions of our states continue to grow in population, we will work to offer a United Methodist witness to the communities by employing multiple strategies to establish new congregations including, but not limited to, multiple campuses of existing churches, parent/child new church starts, and new free-standing congregations.

3. Leadership Development

- a. Credentialing clergy. The demand for excellent clergy leadership will continue to grow over the next decade. We will seek creative and resourceful ways to raise up men and women who are passionate followers of Christ, called to serve churches of all sizes. We will pay particular attention to recruiting young clergy, to the need for diversity, and to the need for alternate forms of pastoral leadership in smaller congregations and communities.
- b. Developing spiritual leaders. Recognizing that the church is most fruitful when the gifts of all its members are employed in service to Christ, we will encourage the ministry of the laity with both leadership training and spiritual growth opportunities.
- c. Building lay and clergy partnerships. We will offer lay and clergy leaders processes and opportunities to strengthen their partnerships as spiritual leaders so that the gifts of each can be used to build up the whole body of Christ.

4. Global Mission Partnerships

As we seek both to serve our global sisters and brothers and to learn from their witness of faith, we will continue the formal covenant relationships established by our predecessor conferences in:

- a. Haiti
- b. Nigeria
- c. Zimbabwe

There are many other relationships that are important to various local churches, and United Methodists in Nebraska and Kansas are not limited to these conference mission partnerships. We hope not only to continue those but also to be open to new leadings of the Spirit.

Our legal name is the Great Plains Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. For communication purposes internally and externally, we will use Great Plains United Methodist Conference.

Section 2

Locations

Conference Offices

Any changes in the location of conference offices will be decided in 2015 or later. Staffing changes and the location of the Episcopal office will be considered as part of this decision.

Episcopal Office and Residence

The Great Plains United Methodist Conference Session in June 2014 will elect an Episcopal Residence Task Force. The task force will bring a recommendation for the location of the Episcopal Office and Residence to the 2015 Annual Conference Session. Any change to location will take effect on September 1, 2016.