

# PLANTING STRATEGY

FIND: Effective Leaders



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**Committee on New & Vital Congregations & Cabinet**  
California-Nevada Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

# FIND: Effective Leaders

*Calling, Exploring and Assessing Potential Leaders for Church Planting*

The California-Nevada Annual Conference is committed to calling forth, encouraging, equipping and positioning servant leaders to join with the movement of God's mission in the world. We are called to plant new churches and develop new faith communities that are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We seek to start new churches or faith communities that these characteristics according to our Path 1 United Methodist New Church Starts ([www.path1.org](http://www.path1.org)):

- Are theologically Wesleyan
- Worship regularly and celebrate the sacraments
- Have effective systems for developing disciples
- Teach and practice biblical stewardship
- Are missional and work toward community transformation
- Receive new members
- Will embed multiplying DNA in all ministries and will plant other new churches and/or faith communities in three to five years
- Will remain connected and accountable to The United Methodist Church

Within these broad definitions, there are many different models of new churches or faith communities. For a summary overview of some of the most prevalent models, see [Appendix 1: Church Development Strategies from Path 1, page 43](#).

Before we continue describing the church planting process, we need to consider how we find, assess and equip effective planters and leaders for starting new churches or faith communities.

Our **Planting Strategy – Find: Effective Leaders** is designed to guide the critical work of both the Cabinet and the Conference Committee on New and Vital Congregations of calling forth, exploring and assessing potential planters and leaders in church planting or starting new faith communities.

## Stage 1 – Calling (June–July)

This calling can come to every disciple of Jesus Christ, lay or clergy leaders, young or old men or women, people of any culture in any community of any economic status.

Our leaders will come from a variety of sources:

- Leaders may self-identify through their own process of discernment and spiritual practices

- The Bishop, District or Conference Superintendents, Pastors may suggest to some leaders that they consider leadership or participation in planting team in starting a new church or faith community
- Conference committees such as the District Committee on Ordained Ministry, Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, Lay Leadership Development Team, Conference Committee on New and Vital Congregations, Ethnic Caucuses & Ministries to name a few may help identify and recruit potential church planting leaders
- Circuits may find, recruit and encourage leaders to consider leadership in church planting
- Current new churches or faith communities and their partners may identify and suggest leaders to explore their calling in church planting

Our annual conference will hold an annual “Calling to Plant” event to help and guide potential church planters and leaders to hear their call to church planting.

## **Stage 2 – Exploring** (August-September)

Not everyone who comes forward and feels an initial call will decide to take the next steps in the process. Some of these leaders may choose to serve a new church as planting member, or to support church planting initiative in the District and/or Circuit in other ways.

The people who decide to follow the call of leadership in church planting and choose to continue in the process, they will be asked to do the following:

- Begin with Path 1’s online [assessments for discerning](#) to find his or her calling to be a church planter.
- Consult with the Pastor, District Superintendent, or Annual Conference staff person responsible for Church Planting to seek guidance in order to better understand the results of the assessment.
- Participate in the **Gathering of Church Planters**, where both active and prospective planters come together for mutual learning, sharing faith journeys, and encouraging one another.
- Enjoy the experience of making disciples of Jesus Christ and learn to live out the values, principles, and strategies for developing a new church or faith community by getting involved in a new United Methodist Church start.

- Learn more from the practitioners in the field of church planting. Find out what church planters are thinking about when it comes to new church development by visiting this site: <http://umcnewchurchstarts.org>
- Study the description of a high-potential United Methodist church planter by referring to *Appendix 2: High-Potential Planters, page 51*, or accessing this site: [http://www.path1.org/images/File/Hi-potential\\_planters\\_10-05-10.pdf](http://www.path1.org/images/File/Hi-potential_planters_10-05-10.pdf)

### **Stage 3 – Assessing** (October–November)

In this step we ask the potential planters to complete the following steps:

- Complete a California–Nevada Church Planter Application.  
*See Appendix 3: Planter Application, page 54.*
- Participate in church planting training events, such as the WJ Trailhead event (New Church Leadership Institute), the UMC School of Congregational Development, or other events designed to acquaint leaders with the principles and practices of church planting.
- Write a personal reflection describing his or her discernment about his or her calling to church planting.
- Review the Assessment Interview questions in preparation for an interview with Assessment Team.  
*See Appendix 4: Planter Assessment Questionnaire, page 55.*
- Meet with Assessment Team for interview.

This stage also involves the following steps:

- The Assessment Team reviews the interview and sends letter of recommendation to potential planter, Cabinet and Chairperson of Conference Committee on New and Vital Congregations.
- Potential planters are identified by the Committee on New and Vital Congregations and by the Cabinet, and will be enrolled in the California–Nevada Conference Church Planting Leadership Pool.
- Potential planters become available to the Cabinet for possible appointment, assignment or deployment to a new church start or faith community project when available.

The purpose of starting a new church or faith community is to make disciples of Jesus Christ that will become agents of God’s mission for the transformation of the world. Our mission field in our California–Nevada Conference is exploding with people, from all races

and walks of life, who many of them are seeking fresh expressions of a church or faith community.

Creating new places for new people is a significant enterprise, requiring a great deal of discernment and preparation on the part of the potential church planter. Thus, finding effective leaders, clergy and lay, are critical to the success of starting new churches or faith communities, and to our efforts of becoming agents of God's mission in the world so that our purpose – making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world – might be better fulfilled.