

“Church Planting 101” – Morning Session

Welcome to the first session of the Lay Missionary Planting Network, a training opportunity offered in partnership between your local United Methodist church, district or annual conference and Path 1, the United Methodist church planting movement within the U.S. Today’s topic, “Church Planting 101,” is the first of ten sessions for training lay church planters.

Church Planting 101 - Agenda

1. Welcome, Opening Prayer and Introductions
2. Introduction to “Church Planting 101”
3. Studying the Scriptures #1: Acts 2
4. “A New Thing”

Break

5. Lay Missionary Planting Network Overview
6. Studying the Scriptures #2: Acts 8

Break

7. Why New Churches Effectively Reach New People
8. How the Lay Missionary Planting Network Will Start New Churches
9. Affinity Activity

Lunch Break

10. 7 Seasons of Church Planting

Break

11. Studying the Scriptures #3: Seasons (your choice)
12. Top 10 Tips from Church Planters
13. Closing Covenant Ceremony



Opening Video: “To Galilee”

(Please watch the video according to the directions from the facilitator and prepare to share your responses to the following questions when instructed)

What words made an impression on you?

What images caught your eye?

What other questions do you have for today or for later in the training process?

(Please write them in the space provided here.)

What is Path 1 and how does it relate to the Lay Missionary Planting Network?

Path 1 is a team of mission-driven, passionate and diverse leaders drawn from national, regional and local levels of The United Methodist Church, providing collaborative leadership to **evangelize the United States through new congregations**. The Path 1 Team leads a denominational movement to **reach more people – more young people, more diverse people** – as disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, by creating new places for new people. Ultimately, Path 1 seeks to create the leaders, cultures and processes needed to regain our healthy denominational habit of starting at least **one new church each day**. By influencing the conversation, the agenda and the vision for church planting at many tables, Path 1 encourages investment in relationships, lay and clergy leadership, best practices and healthy partner churches, so that multiplication of world-transforming disciples happens in more places for more people. Visit www.path1.org to learn more about the ministry of Path 1.



As participants in the Lay Missionary Planting Network, you will receive ongoing support from Path 1, in the form of this curriculum and in relationships with the network design team, facilitators, and mentors. As you join this movement, you will learn from the best practices of planters in other parts of the country, as well as provide insights that benefit others.



What is a new church?

Good question. In order to allow for maximum creativity and movement of the Spirit, Path 1 (and, thus, the Lay Missionary Planting Network) defines new congregations in terms of key characteristics instead of strategies or models. We believe new congregations are more than mission projects, new worship services or new buildings. For us, new congregations are newly organized places for new people that are committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ and:



- Are theologically Wesleyan
- Worship frequently and celebrate the sacraments
- Have effective systems for developing disciples of Jesus
- Teach and practice biblical stewardship
- Are missional and work toward community transformation
- Receive new members
- Will embed multiplying DNA in all ministries and plant other new congregations in 3-5 years
- Will remain connected and accountable to The United Methodist Church

Studying the Scriptures: Exercise #1

Acts 2: The Birth of the Church

*(Please participate according to the directions from the facilitator and prepare to **share your observations about the characteristics of new churches** when instructed.)*

Considering the characteristics of new congregations listed above, read one of the sections of Acts 2 with your table group and note where you see signs of the characteristics in the passage.

Group 1: v. 1-13

Group 2: v. 14-21



Group 3: v. 22-31

Group 4: v. 32-41

Group 5: v. 42-47

A New Thing – How exciting!

Something to consider:

*(Prepare to **share your responses** when the facilitator asks for comments)*

Think of a time when you were part of something new – perhaps a new organization, business, club or church. What was most exciting about the experience?

What was most meaningful?

How did you get involved?

Did you invite others to join you?

What benefits were realized by those who participated?

BREAK



LMPN Curriculum Overview

The purpose of this session is to answer questions like:

- “Why are we doing this ministry of church planting?”
- “Why are laity being invited to plant new churches?”
- “What are the expectations of lay church planters?”
- “What do I need to know to plant a new church?”
- “What’s included in the next nine training sessions?”
- “How do I take the next step toward becoming a lay planter?”



What to Expect in “Church Planting 101”

In this first six-hour class, you will learn about the Path 1 church planting movement and why new church planting is an important, and perhaps unequaled, evangelism tool for reaching more people for Christ in the United States.

You will learn why church planting works. You will meet others who are exploring the possibility of serving as a Lay Planter. You will be introduced to many things you need to know to make you an effective church planter. At the end of the day, you will be invited to sign a covenant, committing yourself to complete the Lay Missionary Planting Network training curriculum and possibly, prepare to serve as a Lay Church Planter. The whole curriculum includes ten multi-hour sessions, along with homework assignments and practical ways to apply what you’re learning as you go through the process.

Today you will briefly learn what to expect from the other nine sessions, too. It’s going to be a day filled with many positive moments and “ah-has” as you receive details about God’s call, and as the Holy Spirit nudges you to become part of this exciting church planting movement!

Let’s start with an example from the Scriptures of how the Holy Spirit guides and directs.



“Come and See” – John 1:19-51**Write your notes here:**

Who are the key people in this passage?

What does the phrase “come and see” suggest to you in this context?

How do you see the Holy Spirit at work in this passage?

What other observations would you share about this Scripture?

Something to consider:

*(Prepare to **share your responses with a partner** when the facilitator directs you.)*

What are your expectations from this “Church Planting 101” class?

Why did you choose to “come and see” about lay church planting? Who invited you?

What about their invitation made you curious enough about the Lay Missionary Planting Network to check it out?

Something to apply at home:

(Save these questions for later, as you prepare homework and do assignments for next time)

Can you see how this experience of being invited (and coming) might be what it’s like to invite someone to join you in starting a new church?



How would you invite someone to “come and see” about being involved in a new church?

Prayer

Dear God, help me to receive what you desire for me to learn and experience in this training. I want to follow your will. Amen.

Lay Missionary Planting Network Training Session Overview

Session 1: Church Planting 101

Session 2: United Methodism 101

Session 3: Basic Wesleyan Theology

Session 4: Community

Session 5: Teaching and Preaching

Session 6: Caring

Session 7: Leadership

Session 8: Multiplication

Session 9: Christian Stewardship

Session 10: Celebration!



Studying the Scriptures: Exercise #2

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8:26-40

What you will need: Bible, pencil or pen, and a discussion partner. Use the space below to write your notes on the passage:

Something to consider:

Even before Philip approached the Ethiopian Eunuch's chariot, God was preparing the man to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ. The eunuch was seeking God, but did not yet know about Jesus Christ, nor had he been baptized as a Christian. God used Philip as a channel to the saving grace of Christ. Philip made himself available, and was obedient to his call from God. Because of this, the man on the chariot became a believer and was baptized.

(Discuss these questions with your partner.)

Do you think Philip exhibited any traits helpful to someone who is a church planter?

If so, what are these traits?

How would they be helpful when planting a new church?

Which of these traits do you see in yourself?

BREAK



Lay Missionary Planting Network



Why New Churches Are Effective at Reaching New People

Can you remember when a new restaurant or mega-department store or other store first opened in your community? Do you remember what happened in the first weeks and months after the grand opening? Did you notice the crowded parking lots, crowded aisles, and long lines of people waiting to check out?

It is not unusual for a new business to draw large crowds. People come out of curiosity, or because friends tell them about what they will find, or because the business provides products or services not previously available to them. There's a feeling of energy and excitement around new things that is not always evident around the same old thing. Something about newness itself draws us in



and people like to check out new things. So it is that when a new church begins in a community where older churches already exist, it often attracts people who have not been participating in any church, and it frequently grows bigger in people attending than any other church around.

About fifteen years ago, a new United Methodist church was planted in a town where two healthy United Methodist churches were already located. At first, members of these existing churches were fearful that a new church would affect their membership, worship attendance and finances. To the contrary, the new church has grown to have nearly two-thousand in worship each week, while the two older churches have continued to be healthy, growing, vital congregations. Rarely does the start-up of a new church harm an existing church. An unhealthy church whose members are dissatisfied may realize some negative effect, but people who are happy with their church home have little reason to abandon their church for another one. Frequently, weak or unhealthy churches become stronger in the years following the start of a new church nearby.

Today, most United Methodist churches in the United States are small membership, rural, or small-town churches started a century or more ago. Increasingly, these churches are getting smaller in size. Members of these churches are mostly senior adult age people. Activities in the churches are often limited to a single worship service, a Sunday School class or two, and essential pastoral care for ill, distressed, or bereaved members.



When these churches were created, the nation was largely farm economy-based; families tended to be large; and people generally stayed nearby their place of birth throughout their lives. In their day, they served their purpose well. So long as families were large, limited



travel options ensured the presence of multiple generations in the community from the same families, and church “brand” loyalty (“My parents and grandparents were Methodists, so I am too!”) was strong. These churches continued to carry on themselves by, quite literally, giving birth to new generations of church members. This method of membership growth led to

churches whose memberships lacked racial or socio-economic diversity. Acting very much like families, tribes or clans, these churches, usually unwittingly, made it difficult for *outsiders* and *newcomers* to feel welcomed or included within the close-knit family fellowship.

Despite the fact that most United Methodist churches are like those described above, more and more, people are attending medium and large-size United Methodist churches in suburban and urban locations. Increasingly, many of the fastest growing and largest churches within the United Methodist denomination are those most recently planted. Rarely are these growing churches gaining in membership or attendance due to the transfer or movement of United Methodists from nearby existing churches. Most of their growth comes from people previously inactive in church – some with no prior church experience at all; some who have been active elsewhere before moving as new residents to the new church’s community; and others who have been dissatisfied with their former church experience and who subsequently dropped out of church life for a while.

So much changed in the past century. We saw the advent of flight, television, computers, cell phones, and space exploration; the curing of many diseases; an increased lifespan; lessened racial segregation; and a rise in immigration bringing great diversity to communities throughout the United States. Few people continue to live their adult lives and work in the same places where they lived as



children and youth. No longer do *new* church members join churches because they are specific denominations, nor do they always join the church because of its convenience. More often, they select a church because of what it stands for; what it offers that meets their personal needs – spiritual, emotional, or social; or because being part of the church gives meaning to their lives.

Some of the reasons why new churches so effectively reach people for Christ include:

- New churches convey the expectation that something new may be better than something old
- New churches seem to some people outside the church as easier entry (or re-entry) points into a faith community than old churches
- New churches seem to be places where unchurched persons will have a say in how the church organizes and how they get involved
- New churches tend to be more diverse and inclusive in membership makeup
- New churches are high-energy places where everyone is newly engaged in the creation of mission and ministry activities
- New churches convey a genuine spirit of welcome and interest when newcomers visit
- In a new church, transformation of lives seems more important than preservation of traditions
- New churches tend not to be bound by phrases like, “We’ve never done it that way before,” and “We don’t do that around here.”
- New churches’ members are likely to invite others to join them, and show excitement when they do so because they want to share the Good News they’ve discovered



Something to consider:

If you were an unchurched person who felt an urge to get involved in a faith community, what would you be looking for in a church?

Do you know any people who are not regular church participants?



Why do you think they are not involved in church?

What do you think would cause them to get involved?

In your opinion is an existing church or a new church more likely to provide what they are seeking?

Prayer

Dear God, please bring clarity to my heart, mind and soul as I seek to know if you have a place for me in church planting ministry. Amen.

Something to consider:

List at least three reasons why you think God may be inviting you to help plant new churches.

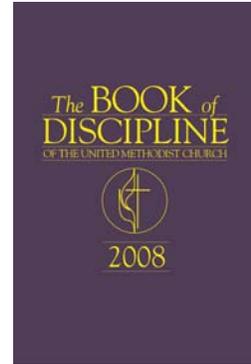
What knowledge, gifts, talents, or experiences do you possess that will help you lead someone into a closer relationship with God, or lead someone to be more active as a church participant?

How can these things aid you in planting new churches?



How Will the Lay Missionary Planting Network Start New Churches?

According to the *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (2008), which contains the official rules, direction, and doctrine for the denomination, the mission of the church is to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” The *Book of Discipline* also says that “local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs.” ¶120 (p. 87).



Church planting invites persons like you to become these United Methodist disciple-makers, and to form new faith communities (local churches) among these new Christian disciples.

- We United Methodists believe that God calls both clergy (those specially trained as pastors and preachers) and laity (those with gifts and skills to support the work of the church and pastor), to ministry roles: “All Christians are called through their baptism to this ministry of servanthood in the world to the glory of God and for human fulfillment.” BOD ¶125 (p. 89).
- “The ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ’s outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); every layperson is called to be missional. The witness of the laity, their Christ-like examples of everyday living as well as the sharing of their own faith experiences of the Gospel, is the primary evangelistic ministry through which all people will come to know Christ and The United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission.” BOD ¶126 (p. 89).

The task of planting hundreds of new United Methodist churches in the United States each year can be accomplished by both clergy and laity. Let’s consider some important tasks we carry out for the mission of the church:

- Proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ
- Lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ
- Nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace such as Christian conferencing
- Send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being



and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel

- Continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ [BOD ¶122.]

Can ONE pastor alone do all these things? Can any ONE human being do them? What does that tell us about fulfilling our mission?

Much of the work of relating to people, loving others, and building community will fall to lay people – and they may be more effective at it than clergy. Too often absent have been successful new church starts in places and among people where traditional approaches have not been effective. These include people of many races, languages, and nationalities; people with limited income, and little formal education; and people with lifestyles, worldviews, and beliefs that do not fit comfortably within the confines of traditional church life.

Although traditionally, most new churches in recent history have been started by clergy, these approaches to plant new churches among some people within the U.S. population have not always effectively reached unchurched people. When it comes to church planting, an affinity of those who organize the church with the target population of unchurched people is an essential component for success. This *affinity factor* is a foundational principle underlying the creation of the Lay Missionary Planting Network. This is why you, and others like you, may be far more successful in planting non-traditional churches than some clergy. Let's think about some of the reasons why that may be true.



If you are called by God to be a lay church planter, you will be driven to fulfill this call by your passion for sharing the Good News of the gospel; you will be compassionate for those who need Christ, and for those who are growing in their discipleship as Christians; you will possess the qualities, knowledge, character and experience required to successfully invite and engage unchurched people.



Applying What You've Heard: "Affinity" Activity

(Prepare to respond to the facilitator's cues as you participate in this group activity)

My Name is:

I am:

(How would you describe yourself in terms of heritage, life experience, education, job type, language, or whatever makes you who you are?)

In my free time I like to:



Think of others in your community who are very much like you. What are the affinities (or similarities) you see?

Perhaps you want to write them down for further reflection. How might your affinity with these people help you to be a successful church planter in this, or a similar community of people?

Prayer

Dear God, help me to have the ability to discover unchurched people who will hear the Good News of the gospel from me, and the courage to share the joy of Christ with everyone without prejudice, regardless of how different they may be from me. Amen.

After lunch we will begin to help you consider this possible calling by introducing a 7 season church planting process. It begins with Discerning, which helps clarify and affirm a church planter's call.

Enjoy your lunch!

