



The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

New Disciples • Vital Congregations • Transformed World

Proposed Ministry and Staffing Plan – District, Regional and Conference Center

Why

The world needs God's love and healing. God's love and healing works through passionate disciples who stir up faith, hope and justice in communities. We make passionate disciples in vital congregations. As we focus more of our attention on growing vital congregations and starting new faith communities, we make more passionate disciples that are transforming the world.

Our Challenge

Most of our attention, time and resources are directed toward maintaining, administrating and managing *what is* rather than focusing on *what we can become*. As a result, we are declining in the number of congregations, disciples, ministries and capacity to reach new people. In a recent study of superintendent's time, we found that most of their time is dedicated to administration and maintenance. Our challenge is to lesson superintendents' attention and time on maintenance and administration in order to focus more of their time on growing vital congregations and starting new faith communities.

Summary

Equipping spiritual leaders, making new generations of disciples, growing vital congregations and transforming communities require renewed focus and redirecting our resources. Regionalizing resourcing and creating shared services will enable superintendents and connectional ministry staff to focus on growing leadership, growing congregational vitality and starting new faith communities as well as helping the church engage today's mission field.

GNJ's commitment to equip spiritual leaders and resource congregations is limited by available resources. Rather than asking our congregations to fund this new focus through increased apportionments, this proposal will realign resources through regionalization and shared service without increasing apportionments.

Proposal – Connect with and grow in today's mission field - continue 9 districts, group superintendents in three regions, deploy connectional ministries staff into the regions, utilize circuit elders and provide shared services for all conference administration.

Introduction

United Methodism in Greater New Jersey is positioning itself for revival. Since 1965, United Methodism has followed a trajectory of slow decline. That decline has accelerated since 2002 in both number of congregations and number of worshipers. United Methodism in Greater New Jersey has experienced

the same realities. After decades of decline and challenges to connect with and thrive in today's mission field, GNJ developed and adopted a new strategic ministry plan to equip spiritual leaders to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world. Embedded in the GNJ Strategic Ministry Plan is the assumption that our future is predicated on connecting and thriving in today's mission field – *learning from and engaging with the “nones”, the non and nominally religious, and those seeking to connect with God through a non-traditional faith community*. In addition to exploring and engaging in these mission fields, we also need to grow the vitality of our current leadership and congregations. In short, we need to improve what we have been doing and create new ways to engage today's mission field just as John Wesley did in his day. The priorities of this plan reflect our strategic plan—*new disciples, vital congregations, transformed world*.

The following diagram illustrates how we propose to support and resource our congregations and spiritual leaders and engage in the mission field.



Focusing and Aligning Superintending and Connectional Ministries

Growing the vitality of our existing congregations and thriving in today's mission field is difficult, challenging and time consuming work. The Book of Discipline places this work in the role of superintending and calls for superintendents to be mission strategists. This role is most effective when it is fulfilled in collaboration with the connectional ministry staff team. Fundamental to our work is a team approach which relies on the gifts and graces of every team member rather than expecting one person to provide all the answers and resources. The regional teams will develop mission strategy and resource congregations as they are ready and willing.

The important work before us requires us to improve our effectiveness with those who are drawn to traditional congregational communities and at the same time to create new faith communities to attract new generations of believers.

As we engage ministry in today's mission field, we are building a bridge to the future while walking on it. It is hard and risky work and requires superintendents to be mission strategists and lead the development of new faith communities in the mission field.

To accomplish this, we need to enable superintendents to focus on:

1. developing leadership
2. growing vital congregations
3. starting new faith communities.

The ministry of superintending, while providing oversight, will need to delegate:

1. administration
2. conflict resolution
3. legal matters
4. shared ministry and billable payments
5. clergy remediation.

We also need to reinvigorate the development of our less than full time appointments by developing collaborative strategies and a different type of oversight. We need to enhance and grow the vitality of smaller congregations by supporting pastoral leadership development focused on small churches.

This delegation of work, while still providing oversight, will allow superintendents and our connectional ministries staff to focus more time creating new faith communities in the mission field and equipping spiritual leaders to grow vital congregations for ministry in the mission field. It will also enhance efficiencies and qualitative improvements in technology and administration. **At the heart of all change is our commitment to be relational and achieve greater fruitfulness and faithfulness.**

To take the next steps in our strategic ministry plan, which include improving and growing our current congregations and piloting new ministries in the mission field, we will organize responsibilities and staffing by districts, regions and conference. This will decrease the work superintendents do in administration and sustaining conference life so that they can focus on equipping spiritual leaders to grow vital congregations and explore new opportunities in the mission field. We will organize and carry out the following model for 24 months starting July 11, 2016 and evaluate its effectiveness.

Conference Ministry

- District Ministry – 9 districts comprised of 55-70 congregations. District responsibilities include:
 - Charge conferences
 - Circuit Elders/Leaders
 - Supervision and coaching meetings with clergy
 - Appointment making and transitions
- Regional Ministry – 3 regions comprised of 3 districts each: Southern (Cape Atlantic, Delaware Bay and Gateway South), Central (Northern Shore, Raritan Valley, and Capital) and Northern (Gateway North, Palisades and Skylands). The responsibilities in the regions will be divided into three areas of responsibility:
 - Thriving in today's mission field through new faith communities: **20%** of our resources,
 - Equipping spiritual leaders to grow vital congregations: **60%** of our resources, and
 - Maintaining conference life: **20%** of our resources.

Presently the 20% - 60% - 20% proposed new resourcing pattern looks like 2%-35%-63% (2% starting new faith communities, 35% resourcing vitality and 63% administrating and maintaining conference life). As long as 63% of a superintendent's time is focused on administration and maintenance, we will continue to decline.

The three areas of responsibility in each region will have specific objectives:

- *Thriving in today's mission field* -20% of our ministry
 - Defining and developing pilot projects to thrive in the new mission field
 - Starting new faith communities and church starts
 - Identifying and engaging new affiliate and edge leaders
- *Equipping spiritual leaders to grow vital congregations* – 60% of our ministry
 - Aligning with the conference strategic ministry plan
 - Resourcing the strategic ministry plan through coaching, Team Vital, PaCE, Communities of Hope and other resourcing
 - Enacting regional strategic plans and tactics to move the mission forward
 - Focusing on strategic ministries – ethnic ministries, rural and urban ministries, parishes, etc.
 - Training laity to lead congregational administrative and programmatic ministry
- *Maintaining Conference Life* – 20% of our ministry
 - Administrating building and church location committees and its activities
 - Working on conference nominations
 - Working with the superintendency committee
 - Conducting conference, regional and district meetings

In alignment with the conference strategic ministry plan, staff serving in the regions may have different responsibilities and spend time differently based on their gifts and passion. For example, connectional ministry staff may spend most of their time developing resources and equipping spiritual leaders and one or more superintendents may focus on thriving in the mission field. The percentages are a guide for ministry in a region.

- Conference Shared Services – Service provided by conference center staff to support district and regions include:
 - Administrative Support
 - Managing general office tasks including general administration and scheduling
 - Shared ministry and billable payments
 - Charge conference reports
 - VitalSigns
 - Statistical reports
 - Electronic filing and maintenance of the system
 - Legal matters
 - Conflict resolution in congregations
 - Clergy improvement plans

- Resourcing Support
 - Resourcing - preparation, registration, and follow up for coaching, PaCE, Team Vital and transition workshop
 - Clergy recruitment and enlistment
 - Candidacy and tracking local pastors, provisional, associate and full membership
 - Oversight and work with churches under 20 in worship attendance
 - Communication
 - District news letters
 - Web and social media

Staffing to Support the Mission

- Regional Staffing – Regional staffing will focus on resourcing spiritual leaders and starting new faith communities in the mission field and will include:
 - 3 superintendents: strategic planning, coaching, equipping, charge conferences and engaging the mission field
 - 1-2 rotating connectional ministries staff: resource development, coaching and equipping
 - 9 circuit elders/leaders: coaching, charge conferences

District administrative assistants will work out of the conference office through a shared services model. Superintendents will identify a location(s) where they will conduct office work and meetings. Most of the time, superintendents will conduct meetings and appointments in strategically located churches throughout their district and training and resource events will be by regions.

- Conference Center Staffing –The staffing will realign several positions internally to support regional staff from the Conference Mission and Resource Center and include:
 - 1 regional manager to oversee all shared services functions and projects for the district/regions
 - 1 administrative assistant for administration including statistics, vital signs, charge conferences, apportionment and billable collections
 - 1 administrative assistant for program administration including transition workshop, coaching, Team Vital, PaCE, Communities of Hope, Board of Ordained Ministry work
 - 1 administrative assistant for communication including district/region newsletters, clergy recruitment, data base management
 - 3 administrative assistants, one for each region to support the district superintendents
 - 5 part time consultants/coaches managed by the Episcopal Office to facilitate congregational conflict resolution and healing and coach clergy who need improvement plans
 - part time consultants/coaches managed through the Episcopal office to provide group coaching and consultation for staff parish relations and church council chairpersons.

Budget Implications - *This proposed plan does not increase the conference budget. It organizes and deploys staff differently.*

1. Staffing – there will be no budget increase for personnel and consultants/coaches. The plan will be handled through the present personnel budget.
2. Staff transitions – limited one time funds to train new staff in administrative roles and provide severance packages as needed for existing staff.

3. Offices – newly centralized staff will have offices in the new Conference Mission and Resource Center.

Next Steps

1. Identify, evaluate, and analyze present functions, responsibilities and activities in the district, region and conference center and test assumptions in the realignment proposal. Also study and learn from other conferences' practices in aligning staff for growing the mission. (3 months – April, May and June) - **Completed**
2. Modify the plan and communicate with staff. (1 month - July) - **Completed**
3. Receive feedback, modifications and support from staff, CFA, Episcopacy Committee, Commission on Communication, Chairs of the Superintendency Committees, and Connectional Table on whether to move forward or not. (2 months-July and August) – **In process**
4. Review, modify and/or rewrite position descriptions for all staff so the position descriptions align across the conference and reflect the new responsibilities. (4 months – September through December)
5. Identify space, staffing, reporting and transition plan to implement new staffing and ministry patterns. (3 months –October-December)
6. Identify staff transition plans and training needs for new staff roles. (2 months December – January 2016)
7. Advertise new positons and allow present staff to apply for positions. (1 month – January 2016)
8. Hire and train for new staffing positions. (4 months - February – May 2016)
9. End the former system. (2 months – May – June 2016)
10. Provide support for district administrative staff that cannot continue in the new ministry alignment because travel to the conference office is prohibitive. (July 2016)
11. Train and equip superintendents for:
 - a. Identifying new leaders that will attract new generation of disciples
 - b. Assessing the mission field and developing strategic pilot ministries
 - c. Starting new faith communities. (2017)

Proposal Benefits

1. Focuses on growing vital congregations and engaging today's mission field
2. Uses teams for strategy and leadership development
3. Engages superintendents as mission strategists
4. Deploys CMT as team members for leadership training and resourcing
5. Increases efficiencies and stabilizes budget
6. Pursues opportunities for growth
7. Aligns better with strategic plan
8. Enhances opportunities to serve Christ and the church.

Proposal Challenges

1. Creates a new model for superintendents and connectional ministry staff work
2. Requires special consideration for relating and serving well our congregations and clergy
3. Increases work load for the bishop's office, communication and administration
4. Has potential for staff transitions.

We believe we can manage the challenges and that the benefits outweigh the challenges. We also believe we can grow vitality and make new disciples if we refocus superintending.

Assessment of our Superintendents' Time

Present superintending ministry maintains or reinforces declines in congregations and the conference as a whole and prevents superintendents from giving sufficient time to growing congregational vitality and starting new faith communities – our mission, *to make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world.*

70% or more of superintending time is spent on

- Conflict resolution
- Answering questions about statistical reports
- Leading charge conferences
- Preparing information and materials for charge conferences
- Monitoring and collecting shared ministry and billables
- District newsletters
- VitalSigns dashboard
- Preparing for and managing complaints
- Development plans for and supervising underperforming clergy/congregations
- Yearly clergy one-on-one meetings
- Basic administration
- District boards and committees
- Conference boards and committees
- District events

If we are going to increase vitality and reach new disciples, 80% of their time needs to be given to

- Coaching clergy
- Leading Team Vital
- Leading Communities of Hope
- Facilitating PaCE Groups
- Identifying and engaging new clergy leadership
- Working with congregations and clergy to start new faith communities
- Making strategic appointments

Superintending will continue to be focused on maintenance and administration unless we move to a shared services model. At this point in our ministry as a conference this change is necessary to better fulfill our mission and meet our strategic ministry plan goals.