

## Central Plains Mennonite Conference Proposed Strategic Plan (2021-2023)

### **Vision Statement**

“God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.”  
(Mennonite Church USA)

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Central Plains Mennonite Conference is to create settings for our congregations and partners to grow in holistic witness to God’s reconciling mission in the world by developing leadership, encouraging fellowship, and promoting lifelong discipleship.

### **Priorities/Outcomes**

1. Leadership for Witness: Central Plains Mennonite Conference calls and equips pastors and congregational leaders with missional vision and leadership skills for the church.
2. Fellowship as Witness: Central Plains Mennonite congregations develop loving relationships with one another, as well as with Christians across the church and around the world, to discern a common way of life as a contrast society.
3. Discipleship for Witness: The members of Central Plains Mennonite Conference seek to grow continually in Christ-likeness in order to embody a holistic witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

To advance the mission and priorities of our conference, the ministry staff propose the goals that follow based on this guiding focus:

### **Imaginemos:**

Given the societal changes that have been affecting the church, and the unprecedented pandemic which has accelerated many of those changes, conference staff has adopted the theme *Imaginemos: Let us imagine together*. We seek to foster creative and imaginative communities that are biblically-grounded and led by God’s creative Holy Spirit to discern what it looks like to faithfully follow Jesus in our local contexts.

### **Our Covenant:**

*In response to God’s unqualified love for us, we covenant to common practices through which we submit ourselves completely to the purposes of God who longs to transform us into the likeness of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Imagination: We seek to foster creative and imaginative communities that are biblically-grounded and led by God’s creative Holy Spirit to discern what it looks like to faithfully follow Jesus in our local contexts.
2. Annual meeting will become a time of sharing testimonies of the way our creative God has invited us into the work of God’s Kingdom.
3. Communications will focus on imagination and building our capacity to engage creatively with our local contexts.
4. Connect with the racial/ethnic congregations in our conference to hear the ways in which the Holy Spirit is leading these congregations. Allow these congregations to help us think of different ways that we can be engaging and experiencing the creative work of the Holy Spirit in our faith communities.
5. Annual Leaders Gatherings and Pre-Annual Meeting Pastor Conferences will equip our pastors for leadership in imagining and engaging in God’s creative work in the world.

## Goals and Strategies:

1. **Holistic Witness:** The mission of Central Plains Mennonite Conference is to create settings for our congregations and partners to grow in holistic witness to God's reconciling mission in the world. (Lead Staff: Nathan)

### *Ongoing Activities:*

#### *Church Planting/Congregational Revitalization:*

- We establish Supporting Partnerships for all developing congregations.
- We support vision and strategy development for new congregations through the Church Planting Strategy Team.
- We encourage all Central Plains congregations to become a supporting partner in the development of at least one new congregation.
- We work with congregations at their request in developing vision for engaging their ministry context.

#### *Ministry of Reconciliation*

- We provide training for our congregations in conflict transformation
- We have trained a team Clergy Misconduct Investigation Team available to assist congregations in times of conflict.
- We offer one conflict mediation training workshop each year.
- We provide resources on our website to support congregations in welcoming immigrants and refugees into their communities.
- We will provide training for Circles of Trust(?) ministries to ex-convicts? (Faith Mennonite did one of these)

#### *International Ministry*

- We continue to be partners with the Colombian Mennonite Church and Mennonite Mission Network in support of a developing national Mennonite Church in Ecuador
- We continue to be partners with the Colombian Mennonite Church and Mennonite Mission Network in support of a developing Anabaptist witness in Venezuela.

### *New Initiatives:*

#### *Church Planting/Congregational Revitalization*

- Develop a model of coaching for congregations as they seek to discern how to share the good news of Jesus in their communities. Have Nathan train as a certified coach to be able to engage with folks in this way.
- Attend SENT church planting conference (with MCUSA and Mennonite Mission Network) and encourage others to do the same to learn best practices in planting peace congregations.
- Identify people interested in church planting and connect them with Mennonite Mission Network SENT training cohort for planting peace churches.
- Attend and encourage others to attend Exponential Church planting conference in order to learn best church planting practices from the broader church and to consider how those practices might fit within an Anabaptist framework.

#### *International Ministry*

- Work with Mennonite Mission Network to connect congregations with missionaries in order to broaden congregations understanding and engagement with churches around the world.

2. **Leadership for Witness:** Central Plains congregations train their members to teach theology and lead Bible studies so that people are invited to an Anabaptist expression of faith in Jesus. (Lead Staff: Susan, Ramiro)

### *Ongoing Activities:*

*Education:*

- We offer educational scholarship for students attending seminary.
- We participating in the Ministry Inquiry Program.
- We promote and support the *Instituto Biblico Anabautista (IBA)* training program for developing leaders in our Hispanic congregations.

*Ministerial Leadership Development and Credentialing:*

- We provide mentors for pastors who are licensed toward ordination.
- We schedule annual visits with pastor clusters.
- We schedule annual accountability visits with all active credentialed leaders.
- We guide the credentialing process for pastors, chaplains and those in specialized ministries and work with the core competencies for ministerial credentialing.

*Congregational Support Services*

- We offer trained support persons to work with congregations in pastoral search processes
- We counsel congregations in times of pastoral transition concerning best practices for pastoral searches.
- We encourage the use of intentional transitional pastors to help congregations prepare for calling their next long-term pastor.
- We assist congregations in developing a “road map” for the work of an incoming transitional minister.
- We monitor the national Ministerial Leadership Information registry to identify potential candidates for congregations seeking new pastoral leadership.
- We will develop and maintain an active list of trained transitional pastors living within CPMC

*New Initiatives:*

- Develop a new pastors’ cohort to resource new pastors with best practices as they engage in ministry for the first time.
- Develop a plan for working with bi-vocational leaders for our conference congregations.
  - Work at setting up a fund to provide scholarships for people to become trained tradespeople so that people can engage in work that allows them the flexibility to also engage in pastoral ministry.
- Visit with every pastor cluster group at least once per year to hear what is going well and what challenges pastors are facing. Using this information to refine the work of conference leaders to meet the needs of pastors and congregations.
- Resourcing webinars: Develop webinars for various church leaders (elders/deacons, church council chairs, church treasurers, Sunday School teachers, etc.) to provide resources so these leaders in their congregations can be effective in their jobs.

3. **Fellowship as Witness:** Central Plains Mennonite congregations develop loving relationships with one another, as well as with Christians across the church and around the world, to discern a common way of life as a contrast society. (Lead staff: Nathan, Amanda)

*Ongoing Activities:*

- We provide regular opportunities for our members for service, learning, and fellowship in Ecuador, Venezuela, and Congo.
- Our newsletters are produced in two languages, and we provide interpretation at Annual Meeting.

- We use our website, Facebook, newsletters and bulletin announcements to share testimonies, good news from our congregations, prayer concerns and resources for spiritual growth.
- We encourage congregations to get together with other Central Plains congregations and to report those activities in the *Scattered Seeds*.

*New Initiatives:*

- Learning Tour: Conference Ministry staff will embark on a tour of all the congregations in CPMC. We want to take this opportunity to point to the many ways that we see congregations engaged in the work of the kingdom in their communities and to hear what they need from conference.

4. **Discipleship For Witness:** The members of Central Plains Mennonite Conference seek to grow continually in Christ-likeness in order to embody a holistic witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. (Lead Staff: Amanda, Nathan)

*Ongoing Activities:*

*Christian Education*

- We provide a library of resources for congregational leaders for nurturing Christian discipleship for people of all ages.
- We provide and promote resources on conscientious objection to military service.
- We provide many practical resources for congregational formation leaders through [www.centralplainsmc.org](http://www.centralplainsmc.org) and [AnabaptistFaithFormation.org](http://AnabaptistFaithFormation.org).
- We work with congregations at their request in recommending or developing formation programs for their context.

*Christian Spiritual Practices*

- We will ensure that worship is a central priority in all conference meetings
- We promote *Discerning God's Will Together* a resource to equip congregations in communal, biblical discernment.
- We provide accessible, practical tools for the spiritual practices on the Word & Spirit pages of our web site.

*New Initiatives:*

· *Intercultural Competency Development:*

- We will provide a 3-year plan to have all staff, committee members and pastors go through the IDI. We will follow up the IDI with cohorts that work through the IDP and then engage in anti-racism work.
  - § Year 1 – Staff, conference board, discernment committee and committee chairs
  - § Year 2 – All committee members and new board and discernment committee members. Also, a first pastor cohort.
  - § Year 3 – Pastors and new committee members