

## Background

According to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the goal of each local United Methodist congregation is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." In pursuit of this goal, the PNW Conference and its Bishop have set the strategy to have local faith communities focus on moving out into the community to make disciples.

The community that surrounds our faith communities is being called the *mission field*<sup>\*</sup>. Effective mission-field congregations are making and supporting disciples in direct ministry in the community and world. Effective congregations are moving beyond an attractional model (if we build it they will come) to an incarnational model (the mission field determines the ministry) of church life.

This survey is intended to have local faith communities self-assess their mission-field effectiveness and to help its District Planning and Strategy Team (DPAS) provide resources for the faith community's next steps. After review by the DPAS your faith community will be contacted about training opportunities and other resources to help your faith community live into the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world.

In addition to how the DPAS might allocate district and conference resources, we anticipate that completing this assessment will have these important benefits for your faith community:

- Deepened understanding of the mission of a United Methodist church;
- Heightened awareness about how our faith communities engage our mission fields;
- Increased commitment to align attitudes, behavior, and resources towards making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

<sup>\*</sup>Note: The *mission field* of a local faith community is its parish, whether defined geographically or by affinity group. The mission field will change with the context of the local faith community. For example, in a densely populated urban area, the mission field may be a 1 mile radius around the local faith community; in a rural area, the mission field may encompass a 20, 30 or 40 mile radius. In other cases, the mission field may be a particular ethnic, cultural or linguistic group.

## Instructions

The process is pretty straightforward -- simply work your way through the parts of the survey. "Getting Ready" is a chance for a little Biblical grounding but also a chance to begin thinking about the kind of faith community you are today. Parts A-E take you on a journey of exploring your mission field experience.

As preliminary steps, review the demographic information about your mission field provided your faith community by your DPAS. Then review the information about your faith community's last 10 years' of growth, stability, or decline. You may find it useful to review your current faith community goals from the clergy evaluation process and your current mission statement.

Next, gather a group to help in completing the assessment. Select people who can provide a leader's view, but also seek out those who are comfortable talking about how your faith community is part of the broader community.

Assign a scribe or group of scribes to record the answers to the questions. The scribes listen to the conversation then propose a written answer to the group for approval. The scribes may record answers for your faith community in any written form – on paper or as an e-file. A survey form is available in MS Word format at [www.pnwumc.org](http://www.pnwumc.org). Power Point slides are also available.

The report should include Church/Faith Community Name, District, Pastor and Date completed. When you're done, send your report to your district superintendent by the date he/she has specified.

**If you have any questions about the process,  
contact your District Superintendent.**

**If you have questions about the questions,  
contact Revs. Julia Price or Daniel Foster  
Co-Chairs, Board of Congregational Development  
at [julia@firstumchurch.org](mailto:julia@firstumchurch.org), [revfoster@aol.com](mailto:revfoster@aol.com)  
or Kristina Gonzalez,  
Associate Director of Connectional Ministries  
at [kgonzalez@pnwumc.org](mailto:kgonzalez@pnwumc.org).**



**THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE  
of The United Methodist Church  
816 South 216<sup>th</sup> St. #2, Des Moines, WA 98198  
PO Box 13650, Des Moines, WA 98198  
1-800-755-7710 | FAX 1-206-870-6839  
<http://www.pnwumc.org>**

# Local Faith Community Self-Assessment

***The community that surrounds our faith  
communities is being called  
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### Getting Ready

- Tell about a time when you felt very proud or excited about your local church's effort to reach out to its neighbors, engage them and meet community needs.
  - What was going on, what happened, who was involved?
  - What do you value most about the contributions others made to achieve success?
- Which Biblical story best defines your current status as a congregation? Why? (Choose one)
  - o *John 15*: A vine bearing good fruit
  - o *Ezekiel 37*: Valley of dry bones waiting for new life
  - o *Corinth*: A church in conflict (I Corinthians 4-5)
  - o *Timothy*: Eager to engage in this new work, but wanting and needing guidance and instruction (2 Timothy 1)
  - o *The Disciples prior to Feeding the 5000*: Sensing the need, but overwhelmed by the task (Matthew 14, etc.)
  - o *Eli and his sons*: Difficulty in passing mantle of leadership to the next generation (I Samuel 2)
  - o *On the Road to Emmaus*: Sad and disheartened like Cleopas and companion as they walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Easter evening (Luke 24)
  - o *Fishing boat*: Tossed on stormy seas (Luke 8:22-25, etc.)
  - o *Jonah*: Avoiding God's call (Jonah 1)
  - o *Isaiah 40*: Waiting patiently on God
  - o *Laodicea*: A church with lukewarm faith (Revelation 3)
  - o Other:

### B. Incorporating and Discipling

- What is your faith community's definition of a Christian disciple?
- What process do you have in place for introducing new people to Christian discipleship?
- How many membership classes did you hold in 2009?
- Is an introduction to Christian discipleship part of your membership curriculum?
  - If not, do you have other methods for making disciples rather than a membership system?
- We measure numbers of new disciples each year in the membership category "Received on Profession of Faith." How many new members were received so far in 2009 on Profession of Faith?
  - How many were welcomed as new disciples who did not become members?
- What steps will you take in 2010 to continue to improve your process for making new disciples?
- On a scale of 1 to 4 please rate your system for making disciples:

We don't intentionally make disciples	We're considering starting a disciple-making system	We have parts of a system in place	Disciple-making is what we do
1	2	3	4

### D. Disciples Transforming the World

- How do individuals in your faith community live out their Christian discipleship in the world? Give some examples.
- How does your faith community facilitate engagement of members in responding to the hurts and hopes of persons in its mission field?
  - In the world?
- So far in 2009, how many individuals in your faith community participated in direct service missions organized by your faith community for transformation of your mission field?
- How many individuals participated in direct service missions outside your community in 2009?
- Other than giving money to other organizations, what success stories can you share about how your congregation is involved in mission beyond its walls?
- On a scale of 1 to 4 please rate your congregation's success at engaging people in direct ministries of transforming the world:

We give money but aren't directly involved in transformational missions	We have a few who are directly involved in transformational missions	Many are directly involved in transformational missions	Most are directly involved in transformational missions
1	2	3	4

### A. Engaging Your Mission Field

- What do you consider to be your congregation's mission field? (For example: 1 mile radius of the faith community? 2 miles? A specific neighborhood? An affinity, cultural or linguistic group?)
- How many people live within your mission field?
- What is their average age? Income level? Family situation? What are the main subcultures?
- How are these demographics and subcultures different than the make-up of your congregation?
- How has the faith community shown flexibility in the last two years in engaging its mission field?
- What are the top three most pressing needs of people who live within your mission field? Who, outside of the congregation, has confirmed these as pressing needs (school administrators; social workers; law enforcement; the persons with whom you might walk in ministry)?
- What are your strategies for ministering to the three most pressing needs identified in #6 above?
- On a scale of 1 to 4 please rate your congregation's connection to its mission field:

We do our own thing	We know we're disconnected	We're making adjustments to accommodate and/or invite our mission field	Our ministry reflects and is in touch with our mission field
1	2	3	4

### C. Supporting Disciples

- Small groups that involve Bible study and prayer are at the heart of supporting disciples. What percentage of your average worship attendance is involved in this kind of small group?
  - If not small groups, what other forms of disciple support do you offer?
- What kind of training for spiritual leadership do you offer to disciples in your faith community?
- How many lay leaders are involved in leading small discipleship groups?
- What percentage of your faith community's elected lay leadership is involved in small discipleship groups?
- On a scale of 1 to 4 please rate your small group and disciple support system:

We have no plans for disciple support	We're considering a disciple support program	We're starting a disciple support program right now	We have disciple support in place
1	2	3	4

### E. Overall Rating and Reflection

- How would you rate your faith community overall in its involvement with its mission field?
 

Won't leave the building	At the doorstep	On the sidewalk	Walking alongside the community in direct ministry to community need
1	2	3	4
- Is your faith community comfortable with this rating? Please explain.
- What do you think it takes to be or become a #4?