

Bringing the Strategy Home



**A Strategic Plan
for the
Oklahoma Annual Conference**

Bringing the Strategy Home

We are delighted to have you as the messenger of the “Strategic Plan” which was presented and voted at Annual Conference 2008.

We hope this information will help you share what you have heard and learned with your congregation so that they too might catch the enthusiasm of being and becoming a fruitful congregation.

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An 8-minute DVD

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Bringing the Strategic Plan Back to Your Church

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Checklist and Progress Form for Delegates

Complete this form and send it to your district superintendent no later than August 15, 2008.

Contact name: _____

Contact's role in church: _____

Contact phone: (daytime) (_____) _____ (evening) (_____) _____

Church: _____ District: _____

It is our hope that this brief checklist and accompanying materials will help you communicate the Strategic Plan and its impact on your local church in focused and meaningful ways.

- Delegate and pastor discuss the plan and how to introduce it to the congregation—including announcement and “40-Days of Preparation” for church conference (counting backwards from church conference 2008).
- Delegate presents report to entire congregation including the fact that this plan is the conference’s #1 priority.
- Delegate and pastor discuss the plan roll-out with church council:
 - D Review “Next Steps for Your Local Church” flow chart.
 - D Discuss launch and leadership expectations for “40-days of Preparation” for church conference.
 - D Determine who will serve as the point of contact for the fruitful congregation process **(Provide their contact information in the space above.)**
 - D Answer the two questions on the following page.
(you may provide your answers on a separate piece of paper);

For more information, contact: _____

1. When reviewing the “Strategic Plan” and “Next Steps for Your Local Church,” what is your congregation excited about?

2. When discussing the “Strategic Plan” and “Next Steps,” what concerns or questions emerged that weren’t answerable by the existing documentation?

Local Church Timeline

AFTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2008			
When	Who	What	Materials (and Notes)
June	Delegate	Discusses plan with Pastor and how to introduce it to the congregation—including announcement and 40 days of preparation	"Bringing the Vision Back to Your Congregation" (This is the first checkbox on the document); 2) Talking Points; 3) Announcement Draft; 4) 40 Days of Preparation.
June-July	Delegate	Presents report to whole congregation including the fact that this plan is the conference's #1 priority.	"Bringing the Vision Back to Your Congregation" (This is the second checkbox)
June-Aug	Delegate	Discuss Plan Roll-Out with Council and complete the Bringing the Vision Back to Your Congregation questions.	"Bringing the Vision Back to Your Congregation" (This is the final checkbox and where the blanks get filled in.)
15-Aug	Pastor	sends completed "Bringing the Vision Back" doc to their DS	
CHURCH CONFERENCES: 2008			
Sept-Dec 2008	DS	Conduct Church Conferences: a) repeat AC highlights via DVD, b) feedback their excitement & concerns, c) next step is that we'd like you to take a look at which phase in the assessment/discernment journey the congregation is currently.	1) DVD of Plan Highlights; 2) Assessment, Discernment, Improvement Journey flowchart (phases 1-7 are highlighted below)
	Administrative Council or designated taskforce	Phase 1: Within 3 months of Church Conference, Administrative Council leads provides feedback to the congregation on which phase it is on the journey and what is needed in order to continue.	<i>This marks the beginning of the Assessment, Discernment, Improvement Journey flowchart.</i>
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 2: Assess Against Mission to be Fruitful Congregations	Fruitful Congregation Assessment grid. Can use existing tools like: NCD, DNA, CVI, NOW, 5FPFC or create your own.
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 3a: Study Mission Field	Congregational Development provides: demographic support and walk-around tools.
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 3b: Inventory Resources (leadership, facilities, etc.)	Discipleship Ministry provides inventory form and tools. Congregational Development provides a list of resources/processes. <i>(Explore creative models for ministry including starting new congregations).</i>
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 4: Discern our Unique Opportunities	
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 5: Create a Plan with Benchmarks	Congregational Development provides examples of plan with benchmarks.
	Council/Taskforce and Congregation	Phase 6: Create a Timeline including resource and leadership requirements	Leadership Training, <i>(Explore creative models for ministry.)</i>
CHURCH CONFERENCES: 2009			
Sept-Dec 2009	DS and Congregation	Approves Plan with Benchmarks at Church Conference	
	Congregation	Phase 7: Implements Plan	<i>(DS quarterly checks for anticipated benchmarks.)</i>
CHURCH CONFERENCE: 2010			
Sept-Dec 2010	Congregation	Report Progress and continue annual process of discerning and assessing	<i>repeat phases 2-7</i>

Checklist for Delegate/Pastor Conversation

(The first check box on “Bringing the Strategic Plan Back to Your Church”)

- Review the materials distributed at Annual Conference:
 - Strategic Plan brochure
 - Supplement brochure
 - * Frequently Asked Questions
 - * Fruitful Congregations Grid
 - * Next Steps for Your Local Church Chart

- Review and modify the “Announcement Script.”

- Determine date this script will be read to the congregation.

- Review and modify the “Plan Rollout to Administrative Council Script.”

- Determine date this script will be read to the Administrative Council or Board.

- Lay delegate and pastor discuss:
 - Given our context, what questions will be raised that we want to be ready to answer?

On Tuesday, May 27, the Oklahoma Annual Conference adopted a strategic plan. Our Bishop, Robert E. Hayes, named this as the #1 priority of our Conference. Delegates that night covenanted to bring this back to every local church, to be adapted and implemented.

The Oklahoma Annual Conference embraces the Gospel imperative to make disciples of Jesus Christ who transform the world.

The Conference Strategic Plan has three parts:

- 1) growing fruitful congregations, which includes both a way to strengthen existing congregations, and a plan to plant new faith communities,
- 2) recruiting, assessing, equipping and sending spiritual leaders, and
- 3) providing ministry partnerships in the places where local churches are more effective together than apart. For example, it would be very difficult for a single local church to own a university, or own and maintain several campgrounds, or to keep ongoing missional relationships with United Methodists in multiple locations throughout the world.

We are being asked to work on the first part of the strategic plan, “Growing Fruitful Congregations.”

We will be working on specific answers to these questions:

- 1) How do we help people relate to God?
- 2) How do we relate to one another?
- 3) How do we help people serve God’s mission?
- 4) How do we as a church relate to our community?

This fall we will be having a church conference, where all members of the church are invited to attend. Beginning 40-days before that church conference, you will be invited to participate in “40-Days of Prayer and Preparation” for the church conference. We’ll share more on that later.

Between now and the church conference, we are asked to enter into a time of preparation, to pray, and to develop a like mind and spirit about what it means to grow this congregation into a more fruitful one.

In light of God’s call, we want to be a church that makes new disciples and helps existing disciples grow into the likeness of Christ, so that the world may be transformed.

Plan Rollout to Administrative Council Script

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(for local church presenters who prefer to work from a script)

On Tuesday, May 27, the Oklahoma Annual Conference adopted a “Strategic Plan.” Our Bishop, Robert E. Hayes, named this as the #1 priority of our Conference. Delegates that night covenanted to bring this back to every local church, to be adapted and implemented.

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We are being asked to work on the first part of the strategic plan, “Growing Fruitful Congregations.”

The “Growing Fruitful Congregations” initiative includes:

- 1) creating a shared understanding of what is a fruitful congregation,
- 2) encouraging fruitful congregations to multiply themselves through starting new faith communities,
- 3) inviting congregations that are not bearing fruit to enter into a discernment process, and
- 4) targeted spiritual growth training in churches of all sizes who desire to grow beyond their current plateau.

Our work here in _____ UMC, these next several months, is that first part of the “Growing Fruitful Congregations” initiative. That is, we are asked to look at the definition and using that as a framework to see where we are in the journey.

The Conference has approved a “Fruitful Congregations Grid” that is one helpful way of looking at fruitfulness in a church. (This grid is included in the supplement brochure.)

It has four categories:

- 1) How do we help people relate to God?
- 2) How do we relate to one another?
- 3) How do we help people serve God’s mission?
- 4) How do we as a church relate to our community?

We need to have a way to measure our fruitfulness in all four areas.

Churches that are already working a plan for fruitfulness are simply asked to see whether their plan includes attention to all four categories. Some existing plans in use around our Conference are the “Church Vitality Indicator,” “Natural Church Development,” the “NOW” model, “Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations,” and others.

We will create our own assessment tool using these four categories.

This fall we will be having a church conference, where all members of the church are invited to attend.

Between then 2008 church conference and the 2009 church conference, we will:

- 1) examine the “Fruitful Congregations Grid” and make whatever adjustments are appropriate for our setting,
- 2 identify and study the mission field we believe God is calling us to,
- 3) inventory our resources, including leadership, facilities, etc,
- 4) discern our unique opportunities for ministry,
- 5) create a plan with benchmarks, and
- 6) create a timeline, including resource and leadership requirements.

At our 2009 church conference, in consultation with our district superintendent, we will present and approve our own plan with benchmarks. Then we’ll implement our plan.

Our 2010 church conference will include a report and assessment of our work, and any adjustments we need to make for the coming year.

This process will continue each year, as we adjust our direction based on what God is teaching us, and as we make new disciples and grow existing disciples into the likeness of Christ.

The Conference will offer targeted spiritual growth training in churches of all sizes who desire to grow beyond their current plateau.

When a fruitful congregation is ready, it is encouraged to start new faith communities.

If a congregation persists in not bearing fruit, it will be invited into a discernment process.

- Regarding the Conference’s Strategic Plan, what excites you?
- What concerns do you have?

[Record these answers on the “Bringing the Strategic Plan Back to Your Church” form (item #2), and return to the Conference office before August 15, 2008.]

- Regarding these “Next Steps for Your Local Church,” what excites you?
- What concerns do you have?

[Record these answers on the “Bringing the Strategic Plan Back to Your Church” form, and return to the Conference office before August 15, 2008.]

Beginning 40-days before that church conference, you will be invited to participate in “40-Days of Prayer and Preparation” for the church conference.

Where does this need to go next, in order for us to get ready for the 2008 church conference?

Between now and the church conference, we are asked to enter into a time of preparation, to pray, and to develop a like mind and spirit about what it means to grow this congregation into a more fruitful one.

In light of God’s call, we want to be a church that makes new disciples and helps existing disciples grow into the likeness of Christ, so that the world may be transformed.

Other Resources

40-Days of Preparation (Available online or by mail)

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“40-Days of Preparation” is a guide for reading, meditation and prayer for all church members to use, beginning 40-days before your 2008 church conference.

The guide may be downloaded from the www.okumc.org Web site. Look for the link on the home page. You may also request a printed copy by calling (405)530-2019; bvenable@okumc.org

Frequently Asked Questions (Brochure supplement in packet)

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Frequently Asked Questions
Fruitful Congregations Grid (A starting point for local church assessment)
Next Steps for Your Local Church (Flow chart)

DVD (Available after June 15, through your local church)

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An 8-minute DVD will be mailed to your church the week of June 15, 2008. It will contain portions of the presentations from Annual Conference 2008 of Bishop Hayes, Judy Benson, Conference lay leader, and Craig Stinson, director of Connectional Ministries.