

Fruitful Congregations Grid

These are intended to be a starting point for your congregation for self-assessment

Community of Faith

Expression of Fruitful Congregations (Community of Faith Focused Outward)

Guiding Question: How do we relate to our community?

Proclaiming in Christ in Word and Deed

- How many professions of faith? (line 2a in the Conference *Journal*) How many of these are professions of faith of those 19 or older?
- How many visitors return for a subsequent visit? What is your visitor follow-up process?
- How many short-term mission projects?
- Long-term mission projects?

Radical Hospitality

- How do you measure your church impact in your local community (mission, social justice, witness/evangelism)? How do you plan to increase your impact?
- How are those outside your church invited to new studies or short-term classes?
- How is worship designed to welcome and include your unique mission field?

Global Church Connection

- What percentage of apportionments do you pay?
- Are you a five-star church? (see www.okumc.org for description)

Outward

The Congregation (Community of Faith Focused Inward)

Guiding Question: How do we relate to one another?

Shared Vision, Identity, Purpose and Plan for Ministry

- Does your church have a clear and shared vision for ministry? If so, explain how it is used to make decisions.
- How do you measure quality, participation and growth of faith formation?

Passionate and Participatory Worship

- How many people beyond the pastor participate in worship?
- How do you measure quality, engagement, and participation in worship?
- How do you evaluate and improve your worship service(s)?

Nurture and Caregiving

- What are the goals of your nurture and caregiving ministries?
- Do you have an intentional intercessory prayer ministry?

Gift Discernment and Leadership Development

- What percentage of active participants know and are using their spiritual gifts?
- How are you developing congregational leadership at all age levels?
- Does your congregation actively encourages people who are not in leadership to share their ideas?
- How are you cultivating the culture of call? How many from your church have entered full-time Christian service in the last five years?

Inward

The People are Dynamic Disciples (Individual Focused Outward)

Guiding Question: How do we help people serve God's mission?

Deliberate Faith Sharing

- What percentage of active participants share the story of how God is working in their lives?

Risk-Taking Mission and Service

- How does your congregation encourage and support people to step outside their comfort zone and get involved in acts of justice?
- How many people are directly involved in hands-on mission projects during the course of the year?
- What percentage of your average worship attendance does this represent?

Extravagant Generosity

- Does your church annually provide a financial stewardship campaign?
- How do you measure tithing in your congregation?
- How many of your leaders tithe?
- What percentage of your church membership tithe?
- If a non-operational need is brought to the attention of the congregation, how long does it take before funds are raised?

The People Developing Their Faith (Individual Focused Inward)

Guiding Question: How do we help people relate to God?

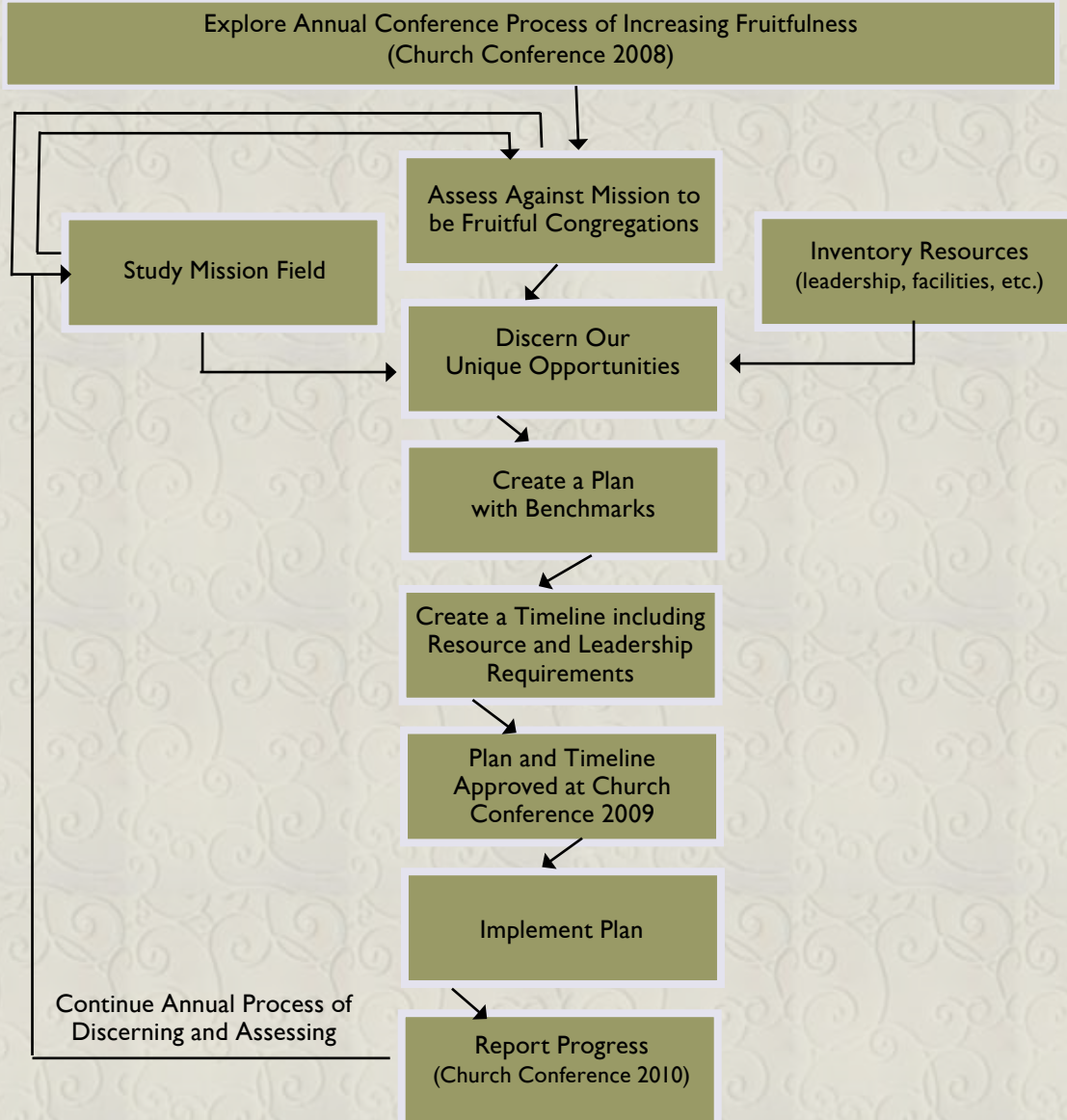
Practices Means of Grace (Small Groups: Prayer, Bible Study, Fasting, Tithing, Acts of Devotion and Worship)

- How many small group studies do you have? (line 23 in the Conference *Journal*)
- How does your Sunday school and other age group ministries equip children and youth to practice the means of grace? How many children (line 16a and b) and youth (line 17a and b) participate in this program?
- How many of your adults are involved in intentional discipleship outside worship? (line 19c in the Conference *Journal*)
- What percentage of active participants regularly spend time in prayer, Bible study and devotion?
- How are you teaching members to evaluate and live out their personal stewardship?
- How many people participate in worship? (line 10 in the Conference *Journal*) Is this number increasing from last year?
- Which spiritual practices are an integral part in the life of your congregations?
- In what ways are you inviting, encouraging, and supporting people in each stage of their faith journey?

Individual

If you are already implementing a strategic assessment process, make sure it includes items from all four quadrants

Next Steps for Your Local Church



A Strategic Plan for the Oklahoma Annual Conference Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: The gospel compels us to share the Good News with all and to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We believe we can do a much better job of reaching more people, more diverse people, and more younger people for Christ.

Q: Who is this Strategic Planning group and who gave them the authority to bring this before us?

A: The Bishop had a vision to move the Oklahoma Annual Conference toward a unifying strategic plan. Two years ago he called together a diverse collection of leaders in the Annual Conference to discern where God is calling us and to articulate the resulting strategic plan. Last annual conference the team was introduced and presented its initial understandings.

Q: How much will this cost?

A: The main cost will be the time your group spends in prayer, discernment, planning, and implementation. A church can do this plan for no financial cost at all. If you wish to use existing resources, those costs can vary from the price of a paperback book to the cost of hiring a consultant.

Q: How do we get started?

A: The first step is to familiarize your congregation with the plan and to invite them into the process of

discernment and assessment. See the “Next Steps for Your Local Church” within the document for these subsequent steps.

Q: When do we start?

A: Some preliminary work will be done this summer and early fall, but the real starting point will be your church conference in the fall of 2008.

Q: Who will determine if we are making progress?

A: The “Fruitful Congregations Grid” (inside page) contains the four areas you are asked to examine, along with some important ways of measuring progress. In consultation with your district superintendent, your local church will create or choose your own plan and will set your own benchmarks and timelines. These benchmarks determine if you are making progress.

Q: How long do we have to start showing improvement?

A: The Annual Conference will report its progress annually. Your self-constructed timeline will dictate how long you have to start showing improvement.

Q: Who do we have to share our plans and reports with?

A: Many measurements of Annual Conference fruitfulness are linked to local church fruitfulness. You will make a progress report at your church conference, and some of the data will be collected and reported at Annual Conference each year.

Q: How long will we be doing this?

A: This is not a program with a defined ending point, but a framework for understanding the movement of God within our midst. We expect each congregation to be in an ongoing process of discernment, assessment and improvement to be growing, vital centers of world-transforming disciples of Jesus Christ.

For more information, contact:

B. Craig Stinson, 1501 N.W. 24th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73106, (405)530-2020, cstinson@okumc.org

❖ Supplement to the Oklahoma Annual Conference Strategic Plan
Frequently Asked Questions