



## Mission at the Center

*Bishop Wayne N. Miller*

The Church exists for the sole purpose of...

CALLING THE WHOLE WORLD ...

INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST  
BY THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

My dream for our church is that we will find ways to blanket the territory of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod with Christian disciples, joyfully bearing witness to the love and power Jesus.

But Christian history makes it clear that disciples do not live or work or bear witness to the love and power of Jesus as isolated individuals. Christian witness requires Christian community

Christian Spiritual Communities are characterized by 5 marks:

- Spiritual Communities gather regularly for WORSHIP around prayer, the proclamation of the Word, and sharing the sacraments.
- Spiritual Communities are committed to the MINISTRY of nurturing, teaching and caring for one another.
- Spiritual Communities are actively engaged in the MISSION of calling others into relationship with God through Jesus by bearing witness to the Good News in words and actions.
- Spiritual Communities are disciplined and intentional about the STEWARDSHIP of what God has entrusted to them, liberally surrendering their own resources to be a resource for the mission and ministry of others.
- Spiritual Communities live and work in a network of RELATIONSHIP with one another. These networks are bound together by a system of faithful promises: God's promise to us in Jesus Christ, and our promises to each other offered in love and respect.

It is the driving desire and the profound wish of all Christian disciples to call everyone into participation in a Christian Spiritual Community.

But a "wish" does not become an authentic "hope" until it is rooted in real experience. Human beings have always wished for eternal life, but that wish did not become an actual hope until the real life experience of Jesus, crucified and risen.

Our mission work, then, must be more than a wish. It must be rooted in practical reality and actual experience.

This planning guide is offered as a resource to the Christian disciples of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA, who have heard the call of the Holy Spirit re-awakening the fire of passion for mission to the world beyond the walls of the room in which we presently live.

The focus of this planner is to provide a step-by-step guide, not for calling individuals into an existing Spiritual Community, but rather, for calling new Christian Spiritual Communities into being.

Although scripturally and theologically grounded, the guide is starkly practical, emphasizing the conviction that real experience also provides the soil for our boldest vision, our most energetic work, and our most profound hope.

The planning guide can be used by professional leaders, church councils, synodical mission teams or any other group of committed Christians who are seeking a way to step out into the adventure of mission once again.

The staff of the Office of the Bishop is ready and eager to guide and assist you in this process by way of consultation, planning sessions or retreats, and links to the outstanding resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

We are called to be your companions in the mission journey.

Disciples do not live or work or bear witness to the love and power of Jesus as isolated individuals. Christian witness requires Christian community

# Part 1: Know Your Mission Field

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod defines your approximate geographic mission field as:

- a. Six to Eight postal zip codes nearest your worship center... if you have off street parking for 50% of the families regularly participating
- b. Two or Three postal zip codes nearest your worship center... if you have little or no off street parking

Please define the geographic boundaries of your mission field.

Municipality:

Postal Zip Codes:

Your mission field is also defined by the demographic groups, cultural groups, and personal social or relational networks. Please indicate the demographic cultural or social groups that belong to your primary mission field (limit 6 groups).

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families/Growing Children       | <input type="checkbox"/> Euro-American    | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Owners             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Adults                   | <input type="checkbox"/> African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Renters                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-30 Adults                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Latino American  | <input type="checkbox"/> Household Income 60K+   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married/No Children             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American   | <input type="checkbox"/> Household Income 30-60K |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Adults                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American  | <input type="checkbox"/> Household Income 15-30K |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor/Homeless                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Adolescents      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Language/Culture Specific _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |  |

Based on demographic or census data (consult your Mission Director for assistance) please estimate the number of households located within your primary geographic/ demographic mission field:

\_\_\_\_\_

Based on demographic or census data (consult your Mission Director for assistance) please estimate the average household income within your primary geographic/ demographic mission field:

\_\_\_\_\_

Although this will vary widely, our expectation is that ELCA congregations will draw 3% to 7% of the households in their mission field into active participation in mission and ministry. The percentage will be highest if those who participate in the life of the community also LIVE and have a network of relationships inside the mission field.

Based on this figure, how many households can you realistically expect to be regular participants in your new spiritual community when it has fully matured?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Expanding Your Mission Field

We often define our mission field only in terms of where people LIVE. You can greatly expand your mission field by teaching people to see other relational networks as part of their mission field. Your extended family, your work environment, your internet chat circles, hobby and interest groups, and wider friendship circles can all be a vital part of your mission field. People will come a long way to share spiritual community with those they know and love!

## Part 2: Support and Financial Resources

For planning purposes, assume that your new community will grow toward its estimated potential evenly over 5 years.

Copying from the last line of Part 1...

How many households can you realistically expect to be regular participants in your spiritual community? \_\_\_\_\_

Year 1 (1/5)	Year 2 (2/5)	Year 3 (3/5)	Year 4 (4/5)	Year 5 (total)
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Using census data available through your Mission Director, calculate the total estimated aggregate income of the households actively participating in your mission and ministry in 5 years:

(Average household income x households in mission field x .05) \_\_\_\_\_

The estimates of free will giving potential to the church within the ELCA are calculated as follows:

- Average Household income 15K to 30K: 3.0%
- Average Household income 30K to 60K: 2.0%
- Average Household income 60K and up: 1.0%

Based on these assumptions, calculate the income potential from the free offerings of those participating in your mission and ministry after 5 years:

(Number of Households Expected x Average Household Income x Appropriate Percentage) \_\_\_\_\_

### Stewardship Education is NOT an Option

No matter what the income level of your households you can never stop teaching about Christian Stewardship and sharing in proportion to one's abundance. Aside from the fact that radical stewardship is necessary for faithful discipleship... as a practical matter, vital, growing Christian Spiritual Community is impossible without it.

Imagine what a difference it would make if your average household support level were 5% of income!

## Part 3: Expenses

The traditional model of congregation-based mission assumes One congregation/ One building/ One professional staff.

The cost of a simple professional staff (full time pastor, part time musician, part time secretary) is 100K per year.

The cost of a building (mortgage, rent, utilities, maintenance) varies widely but can be assumed to be at least 30K per year.

The cost of program (learning materials, worship materials, printed materials) can be assumed to be at least 10K per year.

The responsibility to share resources with other congregational missions in gratitude for God's abundance (Mission Support) should be assumed to be at least 10% per year.

The minimal annual cost for a conventional congregation-based mission is 150K per year... forever (in today's dollars).

Your **anticipated income potential** in 5 years, from the last line in Part 2 is: \_\_\_\_\_

Your **anticipated external income need** is (150K minus income potential):

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## Part 4: Partnerships

The gap between your anticipated needs and your anticipated income can only be overcome through PARTNERSHIP in mission and ministry.

### Possible Cost Reductions:

Sharing staff with another congregation:

Shared professional staff saves 25k to 90K per year: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-paid volunteer leadership saves 25K to 90K per year: \_\_\_\_\_

Sharing building with another congregation:

Shared building space saves 25K to 50K per year: \_\_\_\_\_

Adjusted Income Need after 5 years: \_\_\_\_\_

### Possible Income Enhancements:

Synodical and CSM Churchwide grants \_\_\_\_\_

Congregational partnerships \_\_\_\_\_

Mission Investment Loans ( add debt service to your expenses) \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 5: Your Outreach Plan — Connecting with the Field

### Gather Us In

Identify the strategies you plan to use to gather more people into participation in your mission and ministry:

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| ___ Day Care/Pre-school   | ___ Day School    |
| ___ Worship (what style?) | ___ ESL classes   |
| ___ Bible Study           | ___ Emergency Aid |
| ___ Recovery Groups       | ___ Prayer Groups |

### Send Us Out

Identify the strategies you plan to use to send those who gather out into the community to be witnesses:

- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ___ Personal Invitation   | ___ Community Organizing |
| ___ Community Health      | ___ Local Charities      |
| ___ Political Action      | ___ Local Schools        |
| ___ Work Place Evangelism | ___ Community Volunteers |

**Please attach detailed descriptions of your plans for gathering and sending outreach strategies - You are not limited to the suggestions offered here!**

### **Not Just Congregations!**

REMEMBER that not all Christian Spiritual Communities need to be incorporated as independent congregations! You can use this guide to help you imagine new communities rising up within the structure of your own congregation. Members of the Bishop's staff can help you with this imagining process.