Key Definitions

Faith Communities: Where individuals are gathered together for worship and study in the name of Jesus Christ. These communities are supported in a variety of ways by the New England Conference.

Congregational Development Committee (CDC) of the New England Conference: As a part of the five priorities of the Conference, CDC seeks to coordinate and provide resources to congregations seeking to revitalize their ministries and assist new efforts in establishing faith communities in a variety of settings.

New Church Development Task Force

Statement of Purpose

(Adopted New Ac 2003)

We are called to be courageous risk takers in the birth, revitalization, and resurrection of new faith communities throughout New England.

Vision Statement

In the New England Conference of The United Methodist Church we are called to fulfill the missional mandate to create new faith communities for making disciples of Jesus Christ and for the advancement of the reign of God.

"Encountering the past,
Engaging the present,
Embodying the future"
**Encounter**

"Who are we? What are our gifts for ministry? Whom are we called to serve?"

**Objective:** to assist persons and faith communities in a process of identifying and claiming their gifts and strengths for ministry in their particular setting, while also including a process for identifying the ministry needs of that setting.

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**Engage**

"Where do we go with the information? How does this help us to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ?"

**Objective:** to empower individuals and congregations in Birthing, Revitalizing, and Resurrecting faith communities and to offer tools for this process.

**Birth:** creating new faith communities. Churches, clusters, districts, putting at risk gifts of time, talent, and resources in response to the movement of the Spirit of God in the lives of unchurched people.

**Revitalization:** an eagerness to refocus the ways we do ministry in response to the real needs of real people in our communities. Transforming viable churches into vital congregations.

**Resurrection:** Recognizing that every church has a life cycle, some congregations may recognize the need to conclude their present phase with dignity and regenerate as a newly chartered body or to relocate its resources. From the valley of dry bones to the day of Pentecost, God has been working miracles of new life in the midst of God's people. Any church willing to die can be resurrected, any church.

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**Embody**

"Transforming from a program to a way of life as we strive as individuals and faith communities for perfection in love through Jesus Christ."

**Objective:** to live out an on-going process of fine-tuning, revising, and reassessing church development. To monitor and readjust initial “encounters” to better serve faith communities of the NEC.

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**A sampling of the tools available for the “Encounter” phase:**

- Perceptis - www.link2oose.com - Demographic program for local churches. Basic program provided at no cost by NEC
- A variety of resources available through General Boards and Agencies (i.e. General Board of Discipleship)
- Congregational Growth and Effectiveness Review - Rev. Dr. Wendell Luke
- Self-understanding through theological reflection - Central Maine District
- Equipped for every Good Work - NEC Resourcing Team

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**A sampling of the available tools for the “Engages” phase - Churches and Leaders**

- District Teams (where available)
- District Superintendents/Resourcing Directors
- NEC Congregational Development Committee
- School of Congregational Development
- General Boards of UMC (Discipleship, Global Ministry, Higher Education)
- Board of Layos
- Lay Speaking Program
- Board of Ordained Ministry
- Consultants of NEC
- NEC media library
- Boot Camp - The Church Multiplication Training Center
- Purpose Driven Church - R. Warren
- Willow Creek Association
- Boston University - Congregational Development Center
- Project 6:5 - Church Redevlopment
- Church Smart Resources - Natural Church