



Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church Strategic Plan Overview

Strategic Planning Team

CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Introduction

During the quadrennium ending in 2022, the College of Bishops of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church undertook a strategic planning project to define the long-term direction of the CME Church and to align resources in pursuit of goals tied to the direction. The project was initiated with a \$50,000 matching grant secured under the leadership of Bishop C. James King, Jr. Two consulting firms were engaged during the strategic plan development phase.

In preparation for the initial phase of the strategic planning process, Integrated Leadership Concepts, Inc. was engaged to work with the Bishops and General Officers in a Visioning and Planning meeting in August of 2018. During that meeting foundational principles of the denomination (mission and vision statements, and values) were defined and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was conducted and provided as input to the strategic planning process.

The initial phase of the strategic planning process was conducted under the auspices of Marshall and Associates Consulting, LLC, January 18-19, 2019 and paid for by the Lilly Foundation grant and matching funds through the Department of Finance and Investments of the CME Church. A Steering Committee of 81 representatives from the eleven Episcopal Districts met for 1.5 days in Atlanta to begin the process. Prior to the meeting an online survey was available to all CME members to provide the consultants with background information on the issues our congregants felt were important. Goals, projects and initiatives were identified during the session and the consultants issued an extensive written report that included a summary of survey results as well as recommendations for future considerations.

From these recommendations, the College of Bishops determined that additional work was needed to continue with the strategic planning process. Integrated Leadership Concepts, Inc. (ILC) was then engaged in August of 2019 to review the output of the previous phase and to guide the formal strategic planning process forward. ILC's guidance was to follow a tested approach that focused on alignment of the senior leadership team as a foundation for organizational alignment prior to creating a strategic plan. ILC also encouraged us to create a strategy that we would adopt as a living document; a plan that would be fully integrated into the ongoing operational management of our denomination. The process began with an in-person session with the College of Bishops in October 2019 that included a new SWOT analysis and the creation of a highest purpose statement, as well as the validation of the denomination's previously developed vision and mission statements. The foundational principles were finalized in another in-person session with the bishops in January 2020 with the refinement of the core values.

The general officers joined the January 2020 meeting to review and validate the foundational principles and to be briefed on the strategic planning process. With the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, the work continued virtually through the remainder of 2020, 2021 and into 2022. The core planning team, which now included the bishops and general officers, worked to craft the initial set of Strategic Goals, Initiatives and Critical Success Factors. The planning team was then further expanded to add members of the Commission on Life and Witness, the CIT president and the president/dean of Phillips School of Theology. This expanded core team worked to refine the initial Strategic Plan and build out action plans to support execution of the plan if it was approved. This work was then shared with the connection at-large through twenty-one virtual *Listening Tour* sessions. Recommendations and feedback received during those sessions informed the work and enhanced the final plan, which is being presented today.

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This document is designed to provide an overview of the Strategic Plan proposal, which is being presented for approval by the 2022 General Conference of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. The timeframe of the Strategic Plan is for the ensuing quadrennium.

Strategic Goals and Initiatives

Our strategic plan is designed to enable the growth and development of the CME Church by focusing on three critical areas:

- **Discipleship** to enable individuals in each local church
- **Vibrant Church Stewardship** to enable the congregations in each local church
- **Ministry** to enable the communities where each local church calls home

To mobilize the entire CME denomination toward the desired state of growth and development, an aggressive set of strategic goals and initiatives was developed. Each strategic initiative is a project with discrete actions, identified owners and target dates designed to achieve a goal and/or support a Critical Success Factor (CSF).

The following Critical Success Factors were identified as areas within the denomination’s infrastructure where focus is needed to enable the achievement of the strategic goals. These were all assigned to sub-groups of the core team, researched and discussed and brought back to the larger body. Some of the recommendations of the groups are included within this strategic plan:

- **Technology** – Leverage technology wherever possible to enable growth throughout the connection: e.g., decrease the dependency on face-to-face meetings, reduce printing costs, etc.
- **Training and Leadership Development** – Build the capability and capacity required to deliver the goals; for example, provide training aimed at building greater leadership capability and capacity at all levels.
- **Operational Excellence** – Ensure that the staffing, funding and organizational structures are aligned with the strategic priorities. Included in this category is the action required by legislation adopted in the 2018 General Conference (on page 214 in the 2018 Minutes) calling for committees to research and make recommendations to the 2022 General Conference concerning (a) redistricting episcopal districts, (b) restructuring general departments, and (c) establishing a plan for developing church growth and church planting for the denomination.

Strategic Goals for This Quadrennium	
By June 2026, the CME Church will have:	
1.	delivered and promoted a Spiritual Discipleship Ministry (SDM) in which 100% of our local churches will be active participants
2.	dramatically increased our impact internationally as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of focused missions and partnerships • # of operationally sustainable and funded projects
3.	increased the overall healthy church profile throughout the denomination by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Vibrant Church initiative with 80% of local pastors and churches • Deploying Vibrant Church standards • Planting new churches
4.	provided programmatic resources and ideas to enable local churches to identify new sources of revenue (e.g., online giving, grant writing, governmental programs, etc.) aimed at increasing funds for local ministries by 10% annually beginning not later than 2022

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5.	leveraged external funding sources like partnerships, grants, and governmental programs to generate an additional 10% of annual funding at the connectional level beginning not later than 2022
6.	engaged 75% of CME congregations in effective ministries aimed at meeting the needs of the local community in the areas of: justice, health and wellness or other concerns unique to that local community

NOTE: All printed manuals supporting the Strategic Plan will be available for purchase during and subsequent to the 2022 General Conference through the Department of Publications. Electronic copies will be available through the Communications and Information Technology Connectional Department.

It is our fervent desire that the 2022 General Conference will approve this strategic plan and commit to the implementation and evaluation of initiatives identified for the ensuing quadrennium. We further recommend that we adopt a philosophy of ongoing strategic planning whereby the plans are an inherent part of how we operate and are reviewed and updated each quadrennium to enable the denomination to reach our highest purpose: “to proclaim and demonstrate the liberating power of God’s love by offering Jesus the Christ, who transforms lives, communities and the world.”

Respectfully submitted,

The Strategic Planning Team