



Report of Metro D.C. New Connections Campaign
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Synod Assembly 2019

The **New Connections Campaign** continues to focus on *growing our church* in the Metro D.C. Synod with stated goals of 3000 New Connections (active participants) and raising \$2.25M.

Why are we doing this? All around us, people are longing for a deeper connection. We have much to offer in connecting these people with the church. They are people whom God has been preparing to become a part of our congregations and communities. They are looking for a way to explore their faith with others. Can we find a way to connect and invite them into our congregations without it seeming entirely out of context or weird? When they come, will they find a genuine welcome that will help them to feel at home and want to stay? Is there a way they can grow in their faith and become a part of the movement of God through a local Lutheran Church? Are there ways our local Churches can boldly bring new connections to surrounding communities? Many of our congregations have been struggling to make these connections. We must prioritize “connecting with new people”. No one knows precisely how to do this, but together we must try. **We are doing this for the future of the Lutheran church in North America and for the sake of people who, now more than ever, need to know the love, forgiveness, and hope of God.**

We continue to ask our congregations to Join us in the spirit of New Connections committing extra resources and effort into finding new ways to connect and evolve our faith traditions to shape our culture for generations to come. We are *two years* in, and this is how it is going in our four program areas:

1. GROWING & DEVELOPING CONGREGATIONS

The New Connections Campaign budget is focused primarily on helping our congregations to grow. We cannot do this without leadership. So, the bulk of our congregational growth focus this year was on developing leaders through leadership courses, coaching and sharing forums. We continued visiting councils and leadership teams as needed given the timing of new councils and readiness to participate in New Connections.



With the foundational agreement to “meet congregations where they are,” the direction of the campaign pivoted this year from singular New Connections campaigns to capital campaigns that incorporated a New Connections component and agreements to support the Synod-wide campaign. To date:

- Five congregations *have completed* the stewardship portion of their New Connections Campaigns and are now focusing on growth ministries. Thank you to:
 - + All Saints (Bowie, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Gary Rhinesmith who recently retired and now the Rev. Angela Shannon,
 - + First Trinity (Washington DC) under the leadership of the Rev. Tom Knoll,
 - + Grace (Fort Washington, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Greg Durig who also recently retired,
 - + Good Samaritan (Lexington Park, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Mitch Watney,
 - + Good Shepherd (Alexandria, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Jeanette Leisk.

- Nine congregations chose to run and *have completed capital campaigns* of which New Connections and growth is a part. Thank you to:
 - + Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence(Burke, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Meredith Keseley and the Rev. Heidi Eickstadt.
 - + Good Shepherd (Gaithersburg, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Dave Sonnenberg and The Rev. Kate Costa
 - + Lutheran Church of the Reformation (Washington D.C.) under the leadership of the Rev. Mike Wilker, the Rev. Ben Hogue and the Rev. Lisa Hufford
 - + Lutheran Church of the Redeemer under the leadership of the Rev. Sandy Kessinger and the Rev. Erin Sewnson-Reinhold
 - + Peace Lutheran (Waldorf, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Shannon Anderson
 - + St. Nicholas Lutheran Church (Huntingtown, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Ken Taylor
 - + Holy Cross Lutheran Church (Herndon, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Margrethe Kleiber
 - + King of Kings Lutheran Church (Fairfax, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Lynn Miller



- Seven congregations are in the process of setting goals and are discerning the scope and timing of running their campaigns. These include:
 - + Christ Lutheran Church (Washington D.C.) under the leadership of The Rev. Renatta Eustis and the Rev. LeeAnn Schray,
 - + Lutheran Church of the Covenant (Dale City, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Darcy Tillman,
 - + Christ the King (Falls Church, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Hank Langknecht,
 - + Shepherd of the Hills (Haymarket, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Darcy Percy,
 - + St. Stephen Lutheran Church (Silver Spring, MD) under the leadership of the Rev. Lamar Bailey,
 - + Christ the Servant Lutheran Church (Reston, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Phil Carl,
 - + Community Lutheran Church (Sterling, VA) under the leadership of the Rev. Joe Vought.

2. DEVELOPING LEADERS

We believe that when our leaders make “connecting with new people” a priority *and* through prayer and intentional planning, God WILL bring the growth. It just may look different and take longer than expected. Thus, developing our leaders in specific leadership trainings and coaching has been our focus this Synodical year. Specifically,

- **Intentional Impact leadership training:** We have trained 36 Rostered and two lay leaders in best practices in intentional, sustainable leadership. On a macro-level, Intentional Impact is about growing leaders to begin new Missional communities. On a micro-or congregational-level, it is about identity and aligning values with narratives and actions. It is also about learning how to mentor leaders with a a model that develops leaders...who develop leaders...who develop other leaders, and so on such that we ultimately grow the leadership of the church. This is an eight-month commitment and includes goal-setting and coaching to help achieve leadership goals. Cohort 3 started in May 2019 with 14 additional rostered leaders.
- **Coaching:** MetroDC Coaches under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Nathan Swenson-Reinhold and material from CoachNet has trained over 30 coaches who are active in coaching relationships with many rostered and lay leaders. The vision of creating a



coaching culture within the MetroDC Synod has taken root, and we continue to hope that coaching will become a bedrock of our Synod's growth and development culture. New Connections has extended coaching to small groups (e.g., church councils) to help discern growth ministry, set goals and take steps to achieve them. Ultimately, we employ coaching to help leaders lead their congregations towards growth. For more information go to MetroDC Coaching website: [MetroDC ELCA Coaches](#)

- **MOSAIX: Building a “healthy multi-ethnic congregation”** cohort training. Mosaix is a relational network of pastors and planters, denominational and network leaders, educators, authors, and researchers alike, that exists to establish healthy multiethnic and economically diverse churches for the sake of the gospel throughout North America and beyond. Six of our Congregations commenced a one-year cohort program led by Mosaix founder Pastor Mark DeYmas and Pastor Chip Freed in February 2019. The cohort is exploring and taking intentional steps towards building a healthy multi-ethnic congregation. Please pray for courageous leadership, spiritual growth and multi-ethnic development of the Rev. Jeanette Leisk and Good Shepherd (Alexandria, VA), the Rev. Shannon Anderson and Peace (Waldorf, MD), the Rev. Renatta Eustis and the Rev. LeeAnn Schray and Christ (DC). The Rev. Tom Knoll and First Trinity (DC), the Rev. Mitch Watney and Good Samaritan (Lexington Park, MD) and the Rev. Lamar Bailey and St. Stephen (Silver Spring, MD). For more information about Mosaix, please go to <http://www.mosaix.info/>
- **Stewardship & Major Donor Best Practices Training:** Last year we trained 81 congregational lay and rostered leaders from 24 congregations in stewardship best practices for running a campaign in their congregations. This Synodical year, we held two additional best practices trainings and a special training for relationships with “major donors” with the Rev. Mike Ward.
- **Engagement - Marketing for Churches and Leaders Sharing Engagement Experiences Event:** 54 congregational leaders from 32 congregations trained this winter in Marketing techniques that lawyers use to obtain new clients. The idea was to extrapolate these techniques to Pastors and churches wanting to draw in new connections. Thanks to Ben Glass Law Firm and the Rev. Meredith Keseley from Abiding Presence in Burke, VA, for hosting this event. In addition to the marketing presentation by Ben Glass, the workshop included spotlighting a couple of our Senior Pastor leaders (The Rev. Dave Sonnenberg and The Rev. Mike Gutzler) who have tried new engagement ministries. Additionally, a few



pastors brought growth topics they wanted help with in a “Hot Seat” forum. Sharing and collaboration was rich throughout the half day event. Past training material can be downloaded from [New Connections Tools](#)

- Book Studies – Bishop Richard Graham and the MetroDC ELCA staff held two Facebook Live Book studies to “widen the circle” of the leadership and growth material we have been using during the New Connections Campaign. Specifically:
 - + ***Lasting Impact: 7 Powerful Conversations that Will Help Your Church Grow*** by Carey Neuhoff, 2015, Orange Books.
 - + ***Multiethnic Conversations: An 8-week Journey toward Unity in Your Church*** by Mark DeYmaz, 2016, Wesleyan Publishing House.

3. NEW STARTS

New Connections embraces planting new ministries. Thus, "New Starts" includes new worship services, new discipleship groups and new congregations (starting out of existing ones as second sites). Funds are used for program development, not for buying new buildings. We delight in the progress of our three New Starts over the past year:

1. Swahili Lutheran Church worships weekly at Living Faith Lutheran in Rockville MD. They have 185 people connected to the ministry.
2. Mosaic Region Ministry with the Rev. Mike Gutzler at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Falls Church, VA has pivoted their plans incorporating worship in the Mosaic district as a Holy Trinity satellite vice separate plant. He and his team continue to build this out.
3. King of Kings (Fairfax, VA) hired Garrett Wolf to develop King of Kings 2.0 in Loudon County, VA. He and Senior Pastor Lynn Miller are actively engaged in mission community planning and worship.

4. SUPPORT GROWTH ACROSS THE ELCA

Because we are a community of believers, we recognize a need to join in the work of our brothers and sisters across the country. 10% of our fundraising monies received will be



directed to the ELCA to further God's work beyond our synod. To date, we have given \$39,070 to the Campaign for the ELCA.

FINANCIALS

Our over-arching financial goal is to raise \$2.25M over three years. The majority of funds raised by Congregations will remain within congregations and count towards this campaign goal. As of May 31st, 2019, the overall individual, congregational gifts and pledges/agreements respectively were \$1,579,663. Of that amount, \$472,775 is earmarked for Synod-level New Connections Programming. The New Connections Campaign dedicates 100% percent of monies received to our four campaign thrusts (Growing Congregations, Developing Leaders, Establishing New Starts and Tithing to ELCA church-wide growth ministry). The below chart is our actual accounting of New Connections funds received at the Synod.

		ACTUAL				
		2014-16FY	2017FY	2018FY	2019FY	Total to Date
					Feb-Apr	
70100 · New Connections Program						
	70110 · New Connections Program Gifts	123,194.06	169,296.00	142,697.10	37,588.70	472,775.86
	Internal Congregation Pledges and Gifts					1,106,887.00
	Total Towards Campaign Goal of \$2.25M					1,579,662.86
80200 · New Connections Program Expenses						
	80210 · NC - New Ministry Starts	1,955.93	29,600.00	37,122.42	45,000.00	113,678.35
	80215 · NC - Renewing Congregations		20,000.00	49,496.10	18,250.00	87,746.10
	80220 · NC - Coaching		14,728.96	29,253.25	7,453.50	51,435.71
	80221 · NC - Leadership			3,484.86	0.00	3,484.86
	80225 · NC - Gifts to ELCA Campaign		21,041.76	14,269.84	3,758.87	39,070.47
	Total 80200 · New Connections Programs	1,955.93	85,370.72	133,626.47	74,462.37	295,415.49
NET PROGRAM CASH ACTIVITY		121,238.13	83,925.28	9,070.63	(36,873.67)	177,360.37

WHAT'S WORKING?

Our rostered and lay leaders have demonstrated courage and willingness to explore and try something new around growth in themselves, their leadership bodies (e.g., Councils) and their congregations! Many have decided to take on larger capital campaigns to raise monies to make spaces more inviting and accessible as part of their growth strategy. Congregations continue to



incorporate engagement material including "radical hospitality" to their church services and special events. Many are improving their marketing and other outreach material and participating more in community events as a body of faith. Finally, some of our congregations are focusing on diversity and inclusion of the people geographically near their churches. They are exploring how to be a part of their lives in the context of community. They are seeking how to meet their neighbors where they are and to mature relationships to the point of inviting ethnically and socio-economically diverse people into and the ministry life of the congregation.

WHAT'S OUR FOCUS THIS NEXT SYNODICAL YEAR?

We are at the end of year two of our congregational phase of the campaign. We celebrate each rostered leader, lay leader and congregation active participant who has engaged in growth ministry this past year. We are steps closer to growing God's kingdom and bringing people to know God's enduring love and grace.

LASTING CHANGE TAKES TIME! Thus, we will continue all four program elements of the New Connections Campaign in 2019/2020! Our team held true to "meeting our congregations and their Leadership where they are" and being a partner in exploring growth ministry and setting goals. We will continue focusing on the development of our leaders and our councils to make intentional growth and outreach goals. We will continue to inspire them to try something a little different or new, and to learn and grow as a body of Christ.

We need three things from our leaders and congregations, **(1) Pray for one another;** **(2) Participate daringly** in stewardship/capital campaigns, engagement and growth; and **(3) Share your stories.** We need to share our stories across the Synod! What ideas worked, what didn't? What did we learn as individuals, groups, congregations that may help others.

Engage with us at <https://www.facebook.com/NewConnectionsMetroDC/>

We cannot wait to see what the Holy Spirit has in store as we imagine and experience the real fruit of this program: connecting more people with God's love and growing diverse congregations.

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And, discover more information about the New Connections Campaign including access to engagement and stewardship resources at <http://www.newconnectionsmetrodc.com/>

