

# Summary of 2019 ACST Prioritized Goals

## Goal 1: To Grow and Reach New Disciples of Jesus Christ

By encouraging individuals in the life-long practice of developing and strengthening a personal relationship with God;

By supporting congregations in fostering discipleship in all of their ministries; and

By sharing the Good News with people who do not know Jesus.



## Goal 2: To Live Out the Conviction that Racism is Incompatible with Christian Teaching

By encouraging individuals to engage in ongoing self-reflection, cross-cultural sharing, and growth;

By challenging the structures, practices and policies of the NIC and instituting necessary changes to ensure equity; and

By educating and equipping congregations, districts and the NIC to be prophetic leaders pursuing equity in society.



## Goal 3: To Increase the Number of Highly Vital Congregations

By actively and intentionally practicing stewardship of the NIC's ministry resources;

By conducting a comprehensive assessment of ministry resources and the future potential of every congregation; and

By creating and executing a plan with each congregation in collaboration with the district.



We recognize that the pursuit of these goals will be challenging and will require discipline, self-evaluation, self-sacrifice, mutual support and strengthened connection.



## Next Steps

Create teams to develop a 2-year implementation plan for the three interrelated goals.

## Action Plans

- Design structure, identify participants, and build accountability for all three goals
- Communicate and coordinate plans across the conference
- Establish measures to evaluate the progress of each goal and report to the Annual Conference

*We believe this work will be transformational for all people, congregations, and our conference as we define our future.*

Questions? Please contact the ACST using [shepherding@umcnic.org](mailto:shepherding@umcnic.org).

View the full report at [www.umcnic.org/shepherdingteam](http://www.umcnic.org/shepherdingteam). This measure will be voted on at AC2019 June 2-4, 2019.

# 2019 Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST) Strategic Goals



**Shepherding Team**  
Northern Illinois Conference

The Annual Conference Shepherding Team (ACST) is an adaptive learning team with a primary purpose to coordinate and communicate the ministry of the NIC in order to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The ACST's priorities focus on ministries and connections in four areas: Congregational Life, Clergy Life, Missional Life and Connectional Resources.

6/18/2019

## Our Mission:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by equipping our local churches for ministry and by providing a connection for ministry beyond the local church, all for the glory of God.

## Vision:

Making and supporting vital Christians in vital congregations that engage with their communities and the world for peace, justice and mercy.

## Making Disciples

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:16-20)*

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Congregations committed to growing and reaching new disciples of Jesus Christ will be actively engage in disciple-making activities, such as:

- Small groups focused on Bible study, book Study and accountability of spiritual growth
- Discipleship groups for congregational leaders
- Laity-led prayer in all meetings, events, and missions
- Committed stewardship
- Active participation in and service to the community
- Coaching individuals in their ability and confidence to articulate their faith.
- Developing awareness of the local church in the community
- Encouraging passion and vitality in worship

**“**  
**We must be disciples to make disciples.**

## Working Against Racism

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

(Matthew 22:36-39)

Of all the ways to love our neighbors, working actively against racism has the greatest potential to transform the world.

**“**  
**The Church is called to lead by our example within our own lives, our institution, and by prophetic witness in society.** **”**

Congregations will strive to identify, challenge and change values, attitudes, organizational structures, policies and practices that perpetuate systemic racism by engaging in:

- Prayerful self-reflection to identify racist attitudes and grow in relationship with Jesus and love of our neighbor
- Understanding the impact of racism, the concept of unconscious bias, how race shapes one's place and understanding of society, and the idea of privilege
- Peaceful yet active, prophetic resistance to racism in church and society
- Equitable sharing of power by ensuring meaningful access to positions of leadership

## Creating Vital Congregations

*All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body. (1 Corinthians 12:27)*

**Empowering congregations to assess themselves and imagine new possibilities.**

**”**

Currently, 360 freestanding United Methodist Churches exist in Northern Illinois. As a connection, the entire NIC is responsible for holding up those churches that lack signs of vitality. For long term sustainability, our Annual Conference must nurture spiritual vitality and exercise stewardship over all of our ministry resources.

To attain the goal of vitality, every congregation will undergo a financial, facility, and organizational assessment and, with the assistance of the District Superintendent, create a sustainable plan for the future. This plan is intended to optimize ministry potential, whether as a continued organized church, in cooperation with other parish(es), as a merged UMC church or in ecumenical shared ministries, through redevelopment, relocation, or discontinuance.