

# MISSION POSSIBLE!

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## **A Missional Approach to Church Planting**

The heart of church planting isn't just about starting a new service or finding a building; it's about **outward-facing evangelism**. To truly reach those outside the faith, we have to move past the "attractional" model—where we build it and hope they come—and embrace a **missional** mindset.

As we look toward the future of the [LCMS](#) and the wider Church, our goal must be to build bridges that connect our faith community with those outside our walls, rather than simply seeking to add seats through transfer growth. Here is how we can shift our focus to engage our communities effectively.

### **1. Intentional Community Presence**

We cannot expect the unchurched to walk through our doors if we haven't first walked through theirs. Building flourishing faith communities starts with faithful Jesus followers meeting people where they already are living their lives.

- **Identifying "Third Places":** We need to be present at local coffee shops, bowling alleys, golf clubs, sewing circles, parks, and community centers. The goal isn't an immediate sales pitch; it's about building genuine relationships and becoming a fixture in the neighborhood.
- **Service-Based Outreach:** Actions often speak louder than sermons. By partnering with local food banks, schools, or neighborhood associations, we meet tangible needs and show the community that we are for them, not just for ourselves.

### **2. Radical Hospitality and Low-Bar Entry Points**

For someone with no church background, a formal liturgical service can feel like entering a room where everyone knows a secret language. We must lower the barrier to entry without giving up what makes us unique.

- **Soft Openings:** Before launching a formal worship service, consider how you can build community. Events like "BBQs in the Park" or "Q&A Nights" at a local cafe. These non-threatening environments allow for spiritual questions without the pressure of "church" expectations.
- **Clear Language:** In the LCMS, we love our acronyms. We must audit our vocabulary. Avoiding "insider" jargon ensures that when a guest does join us, they don't feel like an outsider.

### 3. Every Member as a Missionary

Church planting shouldn't be a "solo performance" by the planter. It requires a cultural shift in which everyone in the pews sees themselves as sent. In Greek, the word for "church" is **ekklesia** (ἐκκλησία), which literally means "assembly" or "gathering." It is derived from two words: *ek* ("out of") and *kaleo* ("to call"), leading to the common interpretation of "called-out ones." It refers to a body of people gathered for a purpose, not a physical building. The church gathers to be strengthened by the Word, then goes out to share the hope we have in Christ Jesus with those outside the body of Christ.

- **Relational Evangelism:** We must train our launch teams to see their workplaces, gyms, and neighborhoods as their primary mission fields.
- **Invest and Invite:** It's about the long game. We encourage a culture of "investing" in the lives of non-Christian friends—caring for them through highs and lows—so that when an invitation to community eventually comes, it feels like a natural next step among family.

### 4. Digital Engagement

A dynamic mosaic of digital screens highlights the significance of an impactful online presence as the initial gateway for information seekers.

In 2026, the "front door" of the church isn't made of wood; it's made of pixels. Your digital presence is often the first point of contact for a seeker.

- **Content that Matters:** Our social media and websites shouldn't just be digital bulletin boards. We should share stories and resources that address real-life struggles—like anxiety, parenting, and finding purpose. This demonstrates that the church cares about the person's well-being, not just their potential membership.

**The Vision:** The goal of church planting is not competition. It is the courageous act of stepping into the harvest field to reach those who haven't yet heard the Good News.

By becoming **Bridge Builders**, we move the focus from the center of the sanctuary to the edges of the community, ensuring the Gospel is accessible to everyone.

#### Resources:

**Save the Date:** Engaged in Mission: Congregation & Community is a two-day gathering hosted by the Iowa District West and The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Office of National Mission. The conference will focus on strengthening mission engagement, community outreach, and congregational vitality within the LCMS. September 18-19, 2026, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Carroll, IA

The Concordia Center for the Family is hosting a powerful training event that will inspire and empower you to help all the families you serve grow as disciples of Jesus every day. This 3-day **Family Discipleship Facilitator Training** will equip you with the knowledge, resources, and support you need to better serve families, starting with your own, without adding to your plate. You already have so much to do. Wouldn't you appreciate a way to grow disciples without burning yourself out?

Training is available at several locations this year: Lee's Summit, MO, June 1-3, Heit's Point Camp, MO, June 15-19, Irvine, CA, Aug. 6-8, Rockledge, FL, Nov. 12-14.

The registration fee of \$500 covers all training, materials, lunches, dinners and follow-up cohort support for one year. The deadline to attend in MO has been extended to the end of May. Please register [HERE](#).

Your congregation can also benefit tremendously by taking our ***Faith & Life Survey*** to help you assess how effectively you're serving all your church members in their daily growth as Jesus' disciples. See info and how to contact us [HERE](#).

Check out all our resources, most of them free, at [concordiafamily.org](http://concordiafamily.org).

Call if you have any questions: 888-553-5133.

## **LCMS DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY**

CADDS for congregations

The Congregational Assessment of Development/Decline Status (CADDS) is a survey-based self-assessment tool designed to provide your congregation with a consistent and objective way of answering the question "Where are we ... really?" while providing a collaborative course of action. The survey is 95 questions and typically takes less than 30 minutes to complete. To learn more about CADDS, as well as other *re:Vitality* offerings from the Office of National Mission, please email [wor@lcms.org](mailto:wor@lcms.org).