

# Mission Shaped Future Community Engagement Team Report

## Called to be Prophetic

*The Lord God has told you, O mortal, what is good;*

*and what does the Lord require of you*

*but to do justice, and to love kindness,*

*and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8*

Throughout time, prophets have been called to bigger and greater things than they had ever imagined. Some prophets have been called to speak critical messages to God's children, while others have been called to stand with marginalized communities or to give life to something new. Today we, too are called into a prophetic engagement with people and communities. This call lifts us to be the best of who we are, and what we are called to do and be. Within the Mountain Sky Conference, the Community Engagement Team calls faith communities, affiliated organizations, the annual conference, our neighborhoods, and the world into active and mutual transformation.

## The Focus of Community Engagement

Engaging faith communities, affiliated organizations, the annual conference, neighborhoods, and the world for mutual transformation by:

**Living Faithfully:** Remaining true to Christ's teachings, a critical understanding of our Methodist heritage and the needs of our communities

**Acting Courageously:** Holding ourselves and others accountable for our actions while also offering resources for education and transformation

**Loving Boldly:** Living out intentional inclusiveness, breaking barriers and crossing boundaries as the Body of Christ

When we live faithfully, act courageously, and love boldly, we are drawn into relationships that offer opportunities for holding each other accountable, engaging communities, and honoring the uniqueness of all people. The 21st century requires organizations and churches to engage with a variety of communities through direct and dynamic partnerships. While we are doing this well in many areas, we struggle to engage effectively in others.

The Community Engagement Team will focus on equipping our faith communities, affiliated organizations, and annual conference to meaningfully connect with communities for mutual transformation.

The team will partner with numerous community entities to hear their ministry needs, and ensure resources are available to empower these entities as they engage communities. The subsequent community engagement teams will be great in both number and topics. They will be action-oriented, and while some will address long-held ministry commitments and priorities, others will

form to focus on new and emerging issues and ministries. Some teams will be ongoing and others will be created for very short and specific activities.

## Ministry Areas and Groups Included in Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Area will include these existing committees or groups:

Global Ministries (Missions)  
Volunteers in Mission  
Missionary Covenant Relationships  
Disaster Preparedness and Response  
UMCOR  
Advance  
Angola Pastors  
Intermountain Children's Home  
Mission u  
Church and Society  
Social Principles  
Immigration Task Force  
Commission on the Status and Role of Women  
Commission on Religion and Race  
Disability Concerns  
Committee on Native American Ministries  
Blackfeet United Methodist Parish  
Healing Relationships  
Hispanic/Latino Ministries  
Ethnic Local Church Concerns  
Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

In addition, new and emerging groups will also be included in the Community Engagement Area.

## Community Engagement Values

- **Speaking for Ourselves:** Individuals and groups are the ones best equipped to name their own realities and needs
- **Creating Space:** Making room for voices and the effective advocacy work of traditionally marginalized groups and issues

- **Seeking Collaboration:** What we do is enhanced and perfected by the active participation of many
- **Ministry WITH Partnerships:** Ministries should always be done in partnership WITH others and not TO or FOR others
- **Ministry is Contextual and Intersectional:** Each setting is unique and has overlapping concerns
- **Dreaming God-sized Dreams:** Creatively taking risks and experimenting with new things to maximize our potential for being on the edge of ministry innovation

## Community Engagement is Both Internal and External

To experience the fullness of God's love and calling for us, the Community Engagement Area must focus both internally as a church and externally throughout the wider society. A faithful response requires a critical examination of our priorities, words, actions and a clear understanding of who people are at the table.

### Internal

The Mountain Sky Conference, within the leadership and at all levels, must be held accountable to reflect the full diversity of the church as we are called to be. The internal Community Engagement work includes working with our faith communities, affiliated organizations and the annual conference to offer resources so they can reflect who they are currently, and who they want to be in the future. Faith communities of the Mountain Sky Conference will be stronger when they look more like their surrounding neighborhoods and care about issues that are of importance and concern to the surrounding communities. When we affiliate with other organizations, we must expect that their structures and approaches to ministry are consistent with our values, and when they are not, we must work with these organizations so that their work shares our values. The Annual Conference is at its best when it actively lives out the nature and values of the church as we are called to be. The Community Engagement Committee will pursue this call by educating, resourcing and providing transparency. When we dig deeper into the accountability for mutual transformation of our faith communities, affiliated organizations, and the annual conference, our outward actions in our surrounding neighborhoods and world will be better.

### External

The external Community Engagement work of the Mountain Sky Conference includes our partnerships throughout our neighborhoods and world. We partner beyond the church when there are shared values for mutual transformation. This is a two-directional ministry that offers opportunities for communities outside the church to see the life-changing engagement that local churches can have in the community and around the world. At the same time, Community Engagement is the avenue in which faith communities engage their surrounding communities and the world by offering faithful responses to the needs and cries of our communities. When our faith communities engage their surrounding neighborhoods, they will be stronger, more vital, and more relevant to the current-day issues facing those communities. In this way, Community Engagement is the counterpart to Congregational Vitality and the church cannot effectively function without both working together.

## Next Steps for Community Engagement

As the Mountain Sky Conference lives into a new priority of Community Engagement focusing on living faithfully, acting courageously, and loving boldly, there will be much work to do. The following next steps have been identified:

- Hold a Community Engagement Summit in the fall of 2018 to partner with existing groups within the broad area of community engagement to understand current values, priorities, ministries, plans and activities so they can be adequately equipped and resourced
- Partner with the Mountain Sky Communications Team to identify avenues for sharing successful Community Engagement ministry ideas and contacts for more information
- Establish working relationships with district superintendents, congregational resource ministers, and circuit leaders to hear the needs and concerns of faith communities and neighborhoods
- Develop processes that empower teams to advocate for system change within our conference, the worldwide church, and society that will lead toward ceasing harm
- Develop tools, resources, support, and coaching to be utilized by local churches, circuits and/or districts to identify opportunities for active engagement with communities
- Participate actively in the Mountain Sky Roundtable to assist in the naming of values for the annual conference as a whole and offering education and critical reflection related to diversity and inclusion
- Create space for intersectional advocacy work within the annual conference and assist faith communities in doing the same
- Identifying meaningful ways to reflect back to the church critical areas where it fails to be diverse or inclusive and offer support for correction
- Support existing mission priorities