



NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES PROCESS GUIDE

PRESBYTERY OF UTAH

New Worshiping Communities Working Group
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WHAT IS A NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY?

The Presbyterian Mission Agency's 1001 New Worshiping Communities team has helped us to define a "New Worshiping Community" as:

New:

- **Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture**
Living out the gospel demands ministry that engages today's cultures (John 1:14). New ways of joining Christians together for contextual ministry will use current and historic ways of "being church" as springboards for creative innovation (Matt. 9:17).
- **Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ**
NWCs witness in word and deed (1 John 3:18), continuing Jesus' own mission of discipling, feeding, teaching, healing, welcoming, crossing boundaries and proclaiming God's coming realm. Those with new and renewed faith join the Spirit's transforming work in the world.

Worshiping:

- **Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament**
We seek to hear, come to believe, and are equipped to live the promises of God revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. NWCs welcome new members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27) through baptism and are nourished by Christ's spiritual presence in the Lord's Supper.
- **Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world**
The Spirit impels us outward, so that worshipers participate in the redemption of the world in Christ (Col. 1:20). Therefore, the primary beneficiaries of the NWC are not its own members, but rather its community and world.

Community:

- **Practicing mutual care and accountability**
We commit ourselves to love one another (John 13:34) in relationships of mutual care and accountability, as faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Entrusting ourselves and the church to the Holy Spirit, we seek to grow to maturity in faith and life.
- **Developing sustainability in leadership and finances**
As distinct yet connected expressions of the body of Christ, NWCs have local leadership arising from their own community of faith (Exod. 18:21). Pastoral leadership, facilities and programs are all appropriately structured to demonstrate good and faithful stewardship.

WHY START NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES?

The Presbytery of Utah is a [Matthew 25 Presbytery](#)—called to love God and our neighbors, and dedicated to fostering communities of faith that actively demonstrate God’s love, justice, and mercy toward “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45). We are similarly compelled by **Jesus’ Great Commission** to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you,” believing that he will indeed be with us always, as he promised (Matthew 28:19-20).

As we seek to follow these commands under the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit—which is ever ahead of us in mission and ministry—we believe we are called to shape and reshape the church (i.e., to be “reformed and always reforming”) so that we can meet people where they are in order to address our deep hunger for meaning, foster compassion for our neighbors, and invest in the healing of our hurting world.

This formative process comes with an invitation to not only honor the ministries of our existing churches, but also to embrace the new and creative ways that faith leaders/communities are reaching out to others in our particular socio-religious context. We believe that New Worshiping Communities have the potential to offer creative, compassionate, and grace-filled alternative expressions of worship to those who are unfamiliar with the gospel of Christ or have felt hurt or disenfranchised by existing religious institutions.

To that end, we in the Presbytery of Utah commit to investing in the creative, risky, and joyful work of partnering with God to nurture New Worshiping Communities into being. This means we’re dedicating human and financial resources in support of emerging faith communities and their leaders. We are eager to find collaborators in both existing congregations and unexpected places throughout our state who will help us invite others into relationship with one another and with Jesus Christ.

In doing this work in prayerful collaboration and partnership with the Holy Spirit and our existing congregations, we hope that the process of nurturing New Worshipping Communities will fan the missional flame and breathe new life into all involved, to the glory of God.

VISION OF THE NWCWG

The vision of the New Worshiping Communities Working Group (NWCWG) is that the churches of the Presbytery of Utah will unite in their dedication to living out the Great Commission of Jesus. At the core of that commitment is a passion to share the good news of Jesus in word and deed, and to demonstrate our love of neighbor in gathering and nurturing New Worshiping Communities.

The NWCWG intends to lead the Presbytery of Utah in dedicating itself to the work of starting New Worshiping Communities by:

- Cultivating among the churches of the presbytery a missional climate of risk-taking, transformation, and dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Identifying and nurturing leaders who have a vision for starting NWCs
- Encouraging NWC leaders to think “outside the box” in their forms of creative ministry—to push the boundaries of our imagination, guided by the wild winds of the Holy Spirit out into the “plentiful harvest” (Matthew 9:37)
- Prayerfully identifying communities who have experienced injustice and exclusion and who are not currently being served by our congregations to discern potential opportunities for NWCs
- Offering support, accountability, prayer, and partnership to each NWC and walking with them on their own unique journey, in openness to the prompting of the Holy Spirit
- Advocating for start-up funding and additional resources for each NWC as needed
- Provide a liaison for each new NWC Leadership Team
- Fostering mutual partnership between NWCs and the Presbytery of Utah congregations in communication, prayer, and access to all resources that the presbytery has to offer (e.g., grants, training, all-church activities, retreats, etc.)
- Welcoming NWC leaders into the network of pastors and colleagues in ministry within the presbytery
- Encouraging NWCs to live into the values and principles of the PC(USA)—especially as they determine whether it serves the vision and sustainability of the NWC to become a chartered congregation within the PC(USA)
- Maintaining connections with the larger 1001 NWC Movement within the PC(USA)

DISCERNMENT OF PERSON & PLACE

Each NWC will emerge in different ways...

- Some will come from a nudge of the Spirit in a particular individual with a sense of call to a particular place or people group.
- Others may come from the need to cultivate a NWC in a particular location that is discerned by the NWCWG in partnership with the local community.
- Still others may be the result of an established congregation’s decision to expand or reimagine its ministry.

Whatever the case, special attention and care will be taken to assist the leaders to discern the genuine nature of the call and the reason behind the desire to initiate a particular NWC.

Person: a prospective NWC leader will...

- Begin to engage in a discernment process that includes a Discerning Missional Leadership (DML) Assessment
- Be assigned a liaison from the NWCWG to assist in discernment and guidance

Place: discernment of a particular place will...

- Include a contextual study of the intended location and the needs of its community
- Identify potential NWC leaders and community partners

STRATEGY FOR STARTING NWCs

Each New Worshiping Community is different, so the order in which activities are carried out may vary. The following are guidelines for starting New Worshiping Communities, based on the [Starting New Worshiping Communities](#) resource from the PC(USA).

Phase 1: Discerning

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| Who? | Potential NWC leader, discernment group, partner congregation, or NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 4-24 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and gather a discernment team to meet regularly for Bible study, prayer, and discernment using <i>SNWC</i> guide• Consult with NWCWG and establish a liaison• Review the NWCWG process guide with the NWCWG liaison• Connect with a 1001 NWC coach (coordinated by NWCWG)• Complete the DML process• Develop and sign a covenant with the NWCWG (on behalf of the Presbytery of Utah) |
| Outcome(s): | A discernment group (willing to pray and explore possibilities for a potential NWC who may not plan to participate on a long-term basis) A decision to move forward (signed Covenant with the NWCWG) |

Phase 2: Gathering a Team

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| Who? | NWC leader and discernment group with support from NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 25-35 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet weekly for prayer and discernment (consult with NWCWG)• Engage in a prayer walk in the community (if appropriate)• Determine leadership needs of proposed community• Develop a Leadership Covenant (see <i>SNWC</i>, p. 34)• Apply for a Seed Grant |
| Outcome(s): | Leadership team and covenant Seed Grant application |

Phase 3: Values

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| Who? | NWC Leadership Team with support from NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 36-42 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study theology of mission• Identify the core values of the leadership team |
| Outcome(s): | NWC Core Values Statement |

Phase 4: Vision

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| Who? | NWC Leadership Team with support from NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 43-63 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and carry out “neighborhood exegesis” visits using the SNWC guide• Identify the “who” (people God is calling you to engage)• Develop a statement that clearly articulates the overall vision for the NWC |
| Outcome(s): | NWC Vision Statement |

Phase 5: Embedding, Experimenting, Evaluating

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| Who? | NWC Leadership Team with assistance from NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 64-76 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with NWCWG & spend time in the community• Design and carry out experiments in engaging the community• Evaluate activities• Apply for an Investment Grant if appropriate |
| Outcome(s): | NWC activities designed with the intended community in mind Investment Grant application (if appropriate) |

Phase 6: Mission Plan

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| Who? | NWC Leadership Team with assistance from NWCWG |
| Resource: | <i>Starting New Worshiping Communities</i> , pp. 77-94 |
| Process: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with NWCWG & COM• Brainstorm ideas for putting values into practice• Draft a Mission Plan• Determine future milestones (in consultation with NWCWG)• Apply for Growth Grant if appropriate |
| Outcome(s): | NWC Mission Plan, which includes: leadership & decision-making structures, worship/community gathering, finances, milestones, accountability, and outreach Growth Grant Application (if appropriate) |

CORE VALUES OF NWCs

In order to carry out its vision, each NWC will hold and demonstrate the following core values (in addition to those determined by the NWC Leadership Team):

- **Discipleship:** creating a safe space for people to encounter Christ and be formed and transformed into his image.
- **Contextuality:** being attentive to the unique needs of the NWC and offering creative and culturally relevant faith practices that reflect that context.
- **Stewardship:** exhibiting faithful and sustainable stewardship of financial and environmental resources.
- **Inclusivity:** recognizing the beauty of diversity in unity and welcoming people of different gender, age, ethnicity, culture, and sexual identity and orientation as equal and valuable contributors to both membership and ministry.
- **Accountability:** understanding that God speaks through a community of believers, and thus establishing a team of leaders who are accountable to one another and the Presbytery of Utah, and for the well-being of the NWC.

SAMPLE COVENANT

[This is a sample covenant between the Presbytery of Utah NWCWG and the Leadership Team of a New Worshipping Community. Each NWC will collaborate with the NWCWG to adapt and create a covenant specific to their context.]

This covenant is between the New Worshipping Community Working Group (on behalf of the Presbytery of Utah) and _____ [name of NWC].

The Presbytery of Utah will:

- Cultivate a culture of risk-taking and shared wisdom throughout the work and congregational life of the Presbytery
- Encourage existing congregations to pray for, partner with, and otherwise support the vision and ministry of this NWC
- Empower the NWCWG to come alongside this new NWC in a relationship of mutual accountability and support
- Offer NWCs access to resources available through the Presbytery

The NWCWG (on behalf of the Presbytery of Utah) will:

- Pray for this NWC and its Leadership Team
- Assist NWCs in identifying and forming a Leadership Team
- Provide a liaison from the NWCWG to partner with the NWC Leadership Team
- Provide orientation and training with the NWCWG Process Guide

- Connect the NWC Leadership Team to a coach from the PC(USA)'s 1001 New Worshiping Communities team
- Use Presbytery funds to provide start-up funding and match 1001 NWC grants
- Support requests and advocate for other/additional financial support
- Invite the NWC to participate in Presbytery-related activities

The NWC Organizing Leader & Leadership Team will:

- Consist of at least 3 members (one of which is the organizing leader) who meet regularly with one another and the NWCWG liaison
- Work with and be accountable to the NWCWG in developing the NWC
- Attend the Discerning Missional Leadership Assessment (DML) within the first year
- Meet regularly with a coach from the PC(USA)'s 1001 NWC team
- Work through the "Strategy for Starting NWCs," as outlined on pp. 5-6 of this Guide
- Establish goals and milestones for the NWC, including (but not limited to) demonstrable growth toward financial sustainability
- Provide pastoral ministry to the NWC and leadership in the areas of worship, stewardship, discipleship, outreach, and mission
- Administer sacraments as authorized by the NWCWG

The New Worshiping Community will:

- Identify and deepen an understanding of its context and intended community—including plans to engage and foster relationships between members of that community
- Provide creative, dynamic, and prayerful experiences of worship/discipleship to all members of the NWC community
- Work toward becoming sustainable in leadership and finance
- Submit an annual budget to the NWCWG
- Determine what percentage of the NWC's budget will be contributed to mission (including the general mission of the Presbytery of Utah)
- Communicate and seek relationships with other churches in the Presbytery of Utah

NWC LEADERSHIP TEAM LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NWCWG MEMBERS

Members of the NWCWG acting as a liaison with a NWC Leadership Team will:

- Be the primary representative of the Presbytery of Utah to the Leadership Team
- Pray regularly for the NWC
- Attend Leadership Team meetings as non-voting members
- Attend worship services/activities and other programs of the NWC when possible
- Stay up-to-date on NWC strategy by attending training events and reading relevant educational resources

- Take an active role in helping the Leadership Team develop NWC strategies that reflect current NWC principles
- Report to the NWCWG at each of its meetings
- Assure that the NWC provides financial, attendance, and mission reports to the NWCWG at least quarterly
- Assure that the covenant milestones are developed, adopted, and annually reviewed and revised, and that progress toward meeting the milestones is regularly evaluated
- Provide pastoral support to the project

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING AS A CONGREGATION

We acknowledge that organizing as a formal congregation will not be a desirable goal for all NWCs. However, the following are guidelines for organizing as such if the NWC chooses to do so after it has been started:

1. NWC has been worshipping regularly for at least 1 year.
2. The number of people participating in the life of the community is adequate to sustain 75% of the budget. This number has been sustained for a year.
3. Organizing pastor (or other spiritual leader) has been in place for at least 1 year.
4. Potential elders have been trained in leadership and church governance.
5. Leadership Team meets regularly and, with the pastor, effectively provides spiritual, financial, and strategic leadership for the community.
6. Vision has been effectively communicated to the community.
7. Community membership qualifications and processes have been developed.
8. Community holds appropriate liability insurance.
9. Financial procedures are in place and operating effectively with appropriate accountability and ownership (see form XX)
10. Pastor/leader has received ethical training and antiracism training by the presbytery.
11. Background checks for all leaders have been completed.
12. 10% of community giving is directed to mission.
13. Community is incorporated as a non-profit organization.
14. NWC shows evidence of consistently setting and reaching benchmarks.
15. Bylaws have been approved by the Leadership Team.
16. PIN number has been obtained from PCUSA.
17. Plan of union (for union congregations) has been approved by governing bodies.
18. Congregation has elected officers.
19. Congregation has obtained EIN# from IRS using form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number.
20. Pastor has been called by the congregation (if appropriate); call forms are signed; the pastoral call has been approved by presbytery.

NWCWG MEMBERS

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