

New Business Item #3
THE DnA JOURNEY, next steps in the visioning/planning process
Saturday morning Business Session III
Updated to reflect District Conference action July 22, 2023

When Randy Yoder, our interim D.E.M. was hired it was with the expectation that he would lead us in a process of mission renewal. Alan Hirsch in *The Forgotten Way*, quotes C.S. Lewis about the importance of such an effort, “There exists in every church (district) something that sooner or later works against the very purpose for which it came into existence. So, we must strive very hard, by the grace of God to keep the church (district) focused on the mission that Christ originally gave to it.”

Leadership felt it was time for a major journey for discovery and action. Beginning in July 2021 a team of people was called out to assist in the journey. They had the job of leading us into a renewal and deepening process. That team consisted of Cheryl Mishler, Jon Tuttle, Keith Funk, Erin Flory Robertson, Pat Gong and Paul Cesare. This team has worked hard and faithfully toward these steps in the plan:

- Initial framework and information gathering, including multiple focus groups held around the district.
- Development of a purpose statement which was presented to District Conference 2022, modified slightly, and affirmed.
- Development of Core Values which were a subject of table talk at 2022 District Conference. Based on that feedback, the team added two more values to their initial list and brought the final proposed values to this conference, 2023.
- Development of a Mission Statement brought to this conference, 2023.

The next page shows the final composite plan as approved by 2023 District Conference.

Red print is original to the document, provided for emphasis. Green print represents modifications made based on this 2023 District Conference’s table talk feedback, subsequently affirmed unanimously by the delegate body.

The next step is the formation of an implementation team. Six members have indicated initial willingness to work on this next stage of our planning process. That team is scheduling meetings in August and will assist the September 2023 Leadership Forum in developing proposed priorities. That will, in turn, lead to concrete goals and objectives to guide the implementation process, the “action” part of the DnA initiative (Discovery ‘n Action).

Purpose Statement

The Western Plains Church of the Brethren in supporting our congregations in our life together. Reflects, Proclaims and Practices God's Love and Good News in Christ to all Creation.

Core Values

Overarching value: God as Creator, Christ as Center, and Holy Spirit as Guide

Core Value #1 – Christ-like Love

We are part of the larger Body of Christ who:

- Share a life together governed by God's Love
- Love all persons regardless of where they are on their journey
- Take Christ's Call to Love into our neighborhoods and our world without reservation.

Core Value #2 – Root Community in Scripture and Prayer

As the "Priesthood of All Believers" we:

- Receive Scripture as essential in pursuing and knowing God.
- Recognize prayer as an integral part of District life and mission.
- Hold each other and our world in prayer.

Core Value #3 – Building Bridges among communities

We are a *peace church* of disciples who:

- Embody peace and reconciliation in Christ for all.
- Commit to a culture of hospitality for those with whom we disagree.
- Pursue ministry in unity, to meet specific needs across the District and in our unique communities, *including those who are marginalized.*

Core Value #4 – Christ's Peace for all creation and relationships

In our Brethren Identity, we:

- Pursue the wholistic care of creation that nurtures its well-being.
- Are obligated to love all of creation
- Commit to a nonviolent way of living

Core Value #5 – Service

As communities of Brethren, we:

- Look to follow Jesus as our example.
- Serve others in Jesus' Name, that they might see the Kingdom of God.
- Serve others in obedience to Jesus, when he said, "Love God, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Core Value #6 – Living Simply

As the District family, we:

- Are centered in Jesus Christ as our first love, beyond cultural pressures and persuasions.
- Believe in God's provision for all our needs.

Mission Statement

Centered in Christ, we are a Church of the Brethren District, inspired to energize, empower and embolden congregations to follow Jesus in our varied neighborhoods in Western Plains.