

Church Planting Commission (CPC)
Caleb Yoder, Chair
2023 Annual Report

MISSION & VISION

The WDC Church Planting Commission (CPC) provides leadership and resources for church planting initiatives and fosters relationships with emerging Anabaptist/Mennonite groups. The Church Planting Commission helps emerging groups and their leaders connect with the congregations, resources, staff, and structure of Western District Conference.

CPC Members

Caleb Yoder (Chair), Karen Mascho, Alberto Parchmont, Tim Amor, Adela Gutierrez, and Kathryn Bauchelle. Staff: Sandra Montes Martinez (Associate Conference Minister), Violeta Ajquejay Suastegui (Spanish translation)

Current Church Plants

Palabra Viva, Liberal, KS, pastored by Jaime Rocha.

Casa de Restauración, Houston, TX, pastored by Aurora Parchmont – approved for certification by the Executive Board October 29, 2022

Arca de Salvación, Uspantán, Guatemala – approved for certification by the Executive Board June 17, 2023

We are committed to providing our church planters with missionary tools and spiritual support. Sandra Montes-Martinez and the WDC staff are attentive to the needs of congregations and pastors to provide this accompaniment through meeting on a regular basis, discerning strategies or action plans to respond to the challenges of church planting, facilitating Healthy Boundaries training, applications for the Hope fund, preparing the church plant to be received as an established congregation, and listening and praying together for the needs of the planters and their families as well as the churches in formation.

Commission Work (August 2022-July 2023)

CPC Strategic Plan

The commission continues to be guided in our work by our Strategic Plan which was completed and affirmed by the WDC Executive Board last year.

The Strategic Plan, intended to carry out CPC's mission and vision, identifies 5 FOCUS AREAS, each with 4 categories: Hopes, Goals, Initiatives, and Evaluation.

FOCUS AREAS:

1. Plant churches.
2. Empower Anabaptist Church Planters development through training and on-going support.
3. Strengthen communication and partnerships with WDC congregations around the mission/vision of the Church Planting Commission.

4. Encourage all WDC congregations (established & new) to be alert to unique opportunities and assets supporting potential church planting projects in their own church or community.
5. Make connections with communities and individuals who would feel at home in Anabaptism.

Last year, we were awarded a 3-year grant through the Schowalter Foundation to help implement the CPC Strategic Plan. A portion of the funds are intended for a church planting support person. Nita Nikkel continues in this role, which she began March 1, 2022. With the help of Nita Nikkel as church planting support, we are engaging WDC congregations in conversation with how to revitalize sister church relationships and imagine new emerging congregations in their communities. Additionally, grant funds enabled us to sponsor the church plant summit event which took place in Dallas in April 2023.

CPC Initiatives

Our initiatives this past year for engaging WDC in missional work included the following:

- ***Sister Church Ministry:*** we invited WDC congregations to a Youth Event during our annual assembly 2022. Over a dozen participants were introduced to the idea of Sister Church initiatives.
- Also at last year's assembly, Tim Amor and Sandra Montez Martinez of the CPC led the workshop, "**New Doors to the Church**" exploring new ways people engage church communities in our modern, post-COVID times. Drawing from experiences with the new Summit Street Church replant, the workshop explored ideas to make it easier to invite others to follow Jesus alongside us.
- We supported Associate Conference Minister Sandra Montes Martinez in the planning of a Church Planting Summit event. The event was called, "Be the Church: Meeting our neighbors where they are" and took place in Dallas, April 21-22, 2023. Thirty-six persons attended some or all of the event, representing a variety of ministry backgrounds. It was a totally bilingual event, communicating ideas of church planting from a variety of perspectives. Many stories were shared that added interest to the event.
- We processed the certification of two new church plants: Casa de Restauración in Houston, TX, and Arca de Salvación in Uspantán, Guatemala.

As members of Western District Conference, we urge you to join us in this missional movement! Support and promote our monthly prayer requests, articles, and announcements in the WDC website under **Networking Church Planting Partnerships**. Invest in church planting with your financial support.

The Church Planting Commission is committed to forming new communities of disciples called and sent by God to bear witness to Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit as they share God's grace and love. It is our desire to plant new congregations committed to God's calling that will equip, train, and commission the saints, growing into disciple-making communities. New emerging congregations are a sign of the new creation in the local context and beyond. May it be so!