

## Great Plains Mission Network

In the Fall of 2021, Archbishop Foley asked Bishop Steve Breedlove and Bishop Keith Andrews to lead the development of a forming a new diocese in North Texas. Abp. Foley asked us to serve because of DCOH DNA as well as the experience of Western Anglicans in forming a Missionary District through their diocese.

Previously an attempt was made to create a new diocese and the project fell apart.

In January of 2023, Bishops Hawkins, Andrews (Western Gulf Coast), and Breedlove meet with Clergy from the Dallas Area representing three jurisdictions (ADOTS, International Diocese, and The Diocese of Ft. Worth). Also present was Canon Jeff Bailey and Canon Ben Bowman.

Bishop Hawkins cast vision that this project would “use network language and primarily be focused on planting.” Structures inevitably will follow mission.

We embarked on a plan to assist, as a sponsoring diocese, a Mission Network that included a monthly visit from Bishop Hawkins as well as several “come and see” events. Our geographic boundaries are mostly East coast, so our work was designed from the beginning as “building to give away.”

There were nine (9) churches represented at the first meeting. To date that number has grown to thirteen (13), including a possible church plant location emerging. Additionally, three churches intend to transfer from the International Diocese (which will eventually wind down) to DCOH after July 2024.

There are a few churches also considering joining this network who are discerning about joining.

Bishop Hawkins has visited the region every month except July.

The working “convictions” of the network are as follows:

1. We have blessing, permission, and freedom to do ministry within our geographic region (North Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska) approved by Archbishop Foley and area Bishops who are supportive. This Mission Network was announced to the ACNA College of Bishops in June 2023.
2. The Primary function of this Mission Network is contextualized Anglican church planting.
3. The Mission Network will plant churches that are prayerfully discerned, faithfully led, financially resourced, thoughtfully planned and promoted vigorously within this network.

4. The Mission network will build an active lay and clergy team working together for mission fruitfulness.
5. The Mission Network will see our TELOS as every Tribe, Tongue, People, and Nation.

## **Big Questions**

### **#1 Growth Processes**

A Mission Network is a multi-jurisdictional activity. If a church is planted by the Great Plains Network, it will automatically be resident in the Diocese of Christ Our Hope and therefore governed by DCOH Canons and Constitution. The exception will be that the churches in the Mission Network will “tithe” not to the diocese but will “tithe” to the Mission Network for funds to be used accordingly.

When the churches of the Network grow and want more ecclesiastical unity, they will form a Missionary District of the Diocese of Christ Our hope.

The ACNA Canons set the parameters of a Missionary District: (specifically)

#### **Title 1. Canon 12. Section 2-3,6**

2. Missionary Districts are intended to advance the ministry of the Province in extending the Kingdom of God into new areas of the Province or beyond consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Mission of the Church.

3. A missionary district may be the initiative of one or more dioceses or may be the initiative of the Provincial Council on behalf of the Province.

6. In establishing Missionary Districts care shall be taken not to intrude or conflict with the ministries of existing dioceses, congregations or other missions within the Anglican Church in North America, or within any national or regional Church in communion with the Anglican Church in North America.

A Missionary District will be headed by a Canon Missioner. We are imagining that the Missionary District will have a sperate ‘smaller’ Synod due to distance constraints but our Bishop(s) and Treasurer will hold a Missionary District Mini-Synod to conduct official business.

### **#2 The Seven (7) Systems of the Network [From Always Forward].**

The following systems will be granted by DCOH and funded by the Mission Network/Missionary District/Diocese-In-Formation

- Leadership Pipeline
- Assessment
- Training
- Coaching
- Ongoing Support
- Funding
- Strategic Oversight

### #3 Canonical Residence in DCOH

All churches that want to be Canonically Resident in our Diocese must agree to our Diocesan Standards and Practices. They will also have to make application and be received by the Synod and Diocesan Council to fully join our Diocese.

### #4 Current List of Churches that have and are participating:

1. Redemption - Frisco, TX (*ADOTS*)
2. Christ Church - Rockwall, TX (*IDIO*)
3. St. Andrews - Grand Prairie TX (*Ft. Worth*)
4. All Saints - Springfield MO (*ADOTS*)
5. Christ Church - Plano, TX (*ADOTS*)
6. Resurrection - Flower Mound, TX (*IDio*)
7. St. Gabriel's - Springdale AR (*ADOTS*)
8. Faith Anglican - Fairview, TX (*IDio*)
9. St. Francis - Dallas TX (*Ft. Worth*)
10. Ascension - McKinney, TX (*ADOTS*)
11. Trinity Church - Arlington, TX (*ADOTS*)
12. St. Timothy's - Anglican Marshall TX (*Ft. Worth*)
13. Church Plant "Proposed" and being "Discussed" in Oklahoma City, OK

Some Quotes from Rectors:

I have been very blessed by how Christ Our Hope has kept this process all about mission and multiplication. The only path forward for the ACNA is to get busy with church planting and the proclamation of the Word. Church politics will slow us down and impede our progress. Christ Our Hope has kept the main thing the main thing and as a church planter that is deeply refreshing.

Fr. Seth Williamson+

Each meeting of the Great Plains Mission Network is even better than the one before. Trust continues to grow between leaders, vision is becoming more clear and exciting, and a culture of adventure and optimism is taking hold of our churches.

Dean Paul Donison+

I appreciate that the Mission Network is being born from the DNA of The Diocese of Christ Our Hope. From day one, the commitment to life on mission, developing healthy clergy, and building sustainable infrastructure has and will continue to influence us.

Fr. Justin Lokey+