

## **New Faith Opportunities and Communities Church of Excellence Award Criteria**

The following is a list of practices and resources believed to help United Methodist faith communities make disciples and experience transformation in Christ, specifically through **New Faith Opportunities and Communities**. The North Georgia Conference of the UMC has set these criteria in the form of an invitational challenge: UM faith communities who engage these practices within an appointment year can make application, and be recognized publicly at Annual Conference as a Church of Excellence in this area of ministry focus. **Level 1** is for UM faith communities just beginning to engage this focus. **Level 2** is for UM faith communities who have practical experience in this area and seek to deepen their engagement. **Level 3** is for churches who are ready to commission pioneers, planters, missionaries, and entrepreneurs to launch and lead **New Faith Opportunities and Communities!**

### **Level 1: (July – December 2023)**

1. Contact your District Strategic Growth Team. Ask them about the strategic growth priorities in your district. Talk with them about the opportunities and possibilities for ministry in your local context. Discuss the “Seven Strategies for Growth and Vitality”. Determine which strategies you’d like to learn more about.
2. Contact your District FX Cultivator or our Conference’s FX Specialist. Request resources and/or coaching for Prayer Walks and Community Exegesis.
3. Host a Prayer Walk in your community for members of your church/campus.
4. Complete the Remissioning Readiness Survey.  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1z1XQIC60QhWeZQcFovU16pfrY7bNKKMCqi7Bjs0Py3M/edit?t=s=636a56ff>
5. Participate in an immersive experience for starting new faith communities. Ex. Fresh Expressions Vision Day, an FX Local Church Workshop, MOSAIC Conference, Better Together Conference, Church of the Resurrection’s Leadership Institute, UM Planters Conference, etc.
6. Attend a Mission Insite Training. Either offered monthly online by the Center for Congregational Excellence, or by request for your leadership team.

### **Level 2: (July 2023 -March 2024)**

7. Form a *New Faith Opportunities and Communities* Task Force (title at your discretion) within your local congregation/context. This task force’s goal is to study the mission field, study strategies for creating new faith opportunities and communities, design a plan for “such a time as this”, and recommend that plan to your church’s/campus’ Administrative Board. This team should recruit for and acquire the following skills and competencies. Contact the Center for Congregational Excellence for continuing education opportunities and recommendations for resource persons on each topic.

# CHURCH OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

- Innovation and Design Thinking
  - Asset-based Community Development
  - Church Entrepreneurship
  - Intercultural Competency
  - MissionInsite
  - Discipleship
  - Evangelism (including Relational and/or Trauma-Informed practices)
  - United Methodist Theology, Doctrine and Polity
8. Have one or more lay members participate in a NGAC Academy for Leadership & Innovation OR a Fresh Expressions Cohort (or have successfully completed such experience within three years prior to the application deadline).
  9. Lead a Breakthrough Prayer Initiative in your context, using *OPEN ROAD: The Adventure of a Breakthrough Prayer Initiative (The Greatest Expedition)* by Sue Nilson Kibbey, 2021.

### **Level 3: (July 2023 - March 2024)**

10. Lead/Launch one or more of the following, in partnership with your District Strategic Growth Team:
  - Fresh Expression of Church
  - Better Together Strategic Merger or Cooperative Parish
  - Church/Campus Ministry Restart
  - Satellite or multi-campus plant
  - New Church Start
11. Successfully submit application to and receive funding for this work from North Georgia FXUM, the Barnes Fund, The Foundation for Evangelism, The Lilly Foundation, Global Ministries, General Board of Church and Society, Path1, or other connectional UM source for missional funding.

To apply at any level, please complete the online application, including uploading documents and supplemental materials illustrating what your congregation did to satisfy each requirement, and narrative reflection regarding the transformation that took place. Questions? Please email Dr. Richard Hunter, Associate Director for the Center for Congregational Excellence, [richard.hunter@ngumc.net](mailto:richard.hunter@ngumc.net).