

**Mission Congregation Designation ¶259 Policy**  
**North Texas Conference of The United Methodist Church**  
*October 7, 2018 approved*

The Book Of Discipline ¶259.1.a:

a) A mission congregation may be designated when any of the following conditions exist: 1) Membership opportunities and resources are limited and not likely to result in a chartered congregation for an extended period of time. 2) See Judicial Council Decision 976. THE METHOD OF ORGANIZING A NEW CHURCH 190 A strategic demographic, cultural or language opportunity for serving a limited population is present. 3) It is expected that long-term sustaining funding from sources outside the congregation will be necessary to enable the congregation to exist, and the assumption of full connectional support items by the congregation is unlikely. 4) It is probable that the annual conference will need to provide long-term administrative guidance, including attention to the distinctive property needs of the congregation. When any of these conditions exist, the cabinet, in consultation with the congregational development area of the annual conference, may designate an entity a mission congregation. The mission congregation may be organized in the same manner and have the same rights and powers as any local church.

The policy in the North Texas Conference is congregations must demonstrate ***all four conditions*** per ¶259.1 as interpreted, established, and explained in this document for the North Texas Conference cabinet to consider mission congregation designation. A congregation must make this request in writing through the District Superintendent explaining how the congregation qualifies through addressing the four conditions:

**1) Membership opportunities and resources are limited and not likely to result in a chartered congregation for an extended period of time.**

Congregations must demonstrate that their mission field is a lower income population without a historical or cultural connection with Methodism. Low income is defined by a population with a per capita income 75% or less of the state's per capita income. Special consideration will be given to those congregations reaching mission fields that are antagonistic to United Methodism and/or Christianity.

**2) A strategic demographic, cultural, or language opportunity for serving a limited population is present.**

Congregations must demonstrate that their mission field is underrepresented in churches in the North Texas conference when compared to the general population within the North Texas Conference boundaries or within a specific mission field.

**3) It is expected that long-term sustaining funding from sources outside the congregation will be necessary to enable the congregation to exist, and the assumption of full connectional support items by the congregation is unlikely.**

Congregations must demonstrate that at least 20% percent of the total income of the congregation comes from outside donors, grants, and/or not-for-profit agencies that serve lower income populations.

**4) It is probable that the annual conference will need to provide long-term administrative guidance, including attention to the distinctive property needs of the congregation.**

Congregations must demonstrate a compelling vision for, and a demonstrated history of, transformative ministries that are beyond the administrative and financial capacity of the local congregation and of those served so that conference or other outside administrative guidance is needed.

## **Appointments**

Whereas chartered congregations in the North Texas Conference pay apportionments per a formula based on expenses and membership, mission congregations pay a tithe of congregational giving into apportionments. Outside donations and grants would not be factored into the apportionment formula for mission congregations.

Chartered congregations that are currently paying apportionments, when designated a mission congregation, move from a membership and expenses apportionment formula to a flat tithe of congregational giving. All giving from congregants towards any and all operational expenses or programs is counted under this designation.

When a non-apportionment paying congregation (a fellowship or new congregation) is designated a mission congregation, the congregation enters into a five-year process towards a full tithe. The congregation will contribute 2% of congregational giving in the first year and an additional 2% added each year up to 10% in the fifth year.