

# JOIN THE CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT

## AN OVERVIEW OF PATH 1'S MISSION AND TEAM

### Who We Are: Path 1 Church Planting Team

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At Path 1, we are passionate United Methodist leaders on a mission to spark, equip, and multiply vibrant Christian communities. Our team partners with lay and clergy leaders, providing the tools and training necessary to birth and nurture new congregations across the United States and beyond.

Path 1 is part of Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church (UMC), aligning our work with the church's greater goal: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We are committed to responding to critical challenges—post-COVID-19 pandemic, disaffiliation, church closures, and the urgent need for greater racial, ethnic, and generational diversity in our congregations.

Through groundbreaking initiatives like Fresh Expressions UM (FXUM), we are working to build new places for new people—vibrant faith communities that break through traditional barriers and bring the gospel to life in an ever-changing world.

### Why Join the Movement?

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Our mission is driven by the Holy Spirit's call to reimagine the church for the next generation. This is your invitation to join a dynamic, Spirit-led movement that is reshaping the future of faith communities. Whether you're a leader, a potential church planter, or someone who simply wants to support this life-changing work, there is a place for you in this movement.

Our staff is an integral part of the World Service Team of Discipleship Ministries. From training and mentoring to innovative models of evangelism, we are here to help you create bold new expressions of faith that reflect the diversity of our world.

### Meet the Path 1 Team

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**Paul Nixon, *Director of Church Multiplication***

Paul leads efforts to create a network of healthy, thriving congregations. His work ensures that new churches are launched and sustained with solid foundations for success.



**Bryan Tener, *Director of Contextual Evangelism and Church Planting***

Bryan shapes strategies to reach specific communities, focusing particularly on racial, ethnic, and multigenerational expressions of faith.



**Isaiah J. Park, *Director of Church Planting Innovation and Diversity***

Isaiah advances innovation and diversity in church planting across the UMC by equipping leaders, developing resources, and fostering inclusive new faith communities.



**Michael Beck, Director of Fresh Expressions UMC**

Michael leads the FXUM initiative, bringing innovative ways for the church to connect with people in a rapidly changing culture.



**Jessica Taylor, Associate Director of Fresh Expressions UMC**

Jessica works with clergy and laity to build non-traditional, creative church plants in today's diverse world.



**Paige Ross, Team Assistant**

Behind the scenes, Paige ensures the smooth operation of all Path 1 initiatives.



**Rev. Bener Agtarap, Executive Director of Path 1 & Director of Connectional Mobilization**

Bener oversees the Path 1 team and collaborates with key United Methodist partners globally to mobilize the church planting movement.

Our team collaborates closely with the Path 1 Strategy Team, which includes Bishop Bob Farr, Bishop Frank Beard, congregational developers from each of the five Jurisdictions, as well as five church planters and five members-at-large. Together, this diverse group provides valuable insights and strategic guidance that shape and drive the broader work of the UMC Church Planting movement.

## Our Vision Moving into the Future

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We are not just dreaming—we are acting. Looking ahead, we plan to expand partnerships with annual conferences, resource emerging faith communities, and offer a one-stop digital platform for church planting resources. By setting clear goals, establishing assessment processes, and measuring our successes, we are committed to ensuring that the church planting movement remains a thriving, transformative force for years to come.

## How You Can Get Involved

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We invite you to stay connected and support the ongoing work of Path 1 at Discipleship Ministries by:

- Sustaining partnerships with annual conferences in reclaiming church planting initiatives, especially in places severely impacted by disaffiliation.
- Focusing on increasing the influence of the FXUM initiative and similar non-traditional models of connecting the gospel with new people.
- Advocating for the church planting movement consistently through direct engagement with episcopal leaders and other significant stakeholders in various levels of the United Methodist Church organization.

Through prayer, collaboration, and shared commitment, we can ensure that the mission of the church not only continues but flourishes in new and impactful ways.

For additional information, contact Bener Agtarap at [bagtarap@umcdiscipleship.org](mailto:bagtarap@umcdiscipleship.org).