

## Evangelism, Church Growth & Development (Revitalization and REC100)

To the 145th Council of the Diocese of the Northeast & Mid-Atlantic of the Reformed Episcopal Church:

*Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.  
Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.  
It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives to his beloved sleep (Ps 127:1-2).*

**1. Our Purpose.** The purpose of this committee is to offer assistance, advice, and encouragement to diocesan clergy and laity who desire to see their parishes or missions grow, as well as to assist those who are called to the important work of church planting.

**2. A Sampling of Works-in-Progress.** Looking back over this past year, there are a few works-in-progress to report upon (and doubtless there are others of which I am not aware):

*English as a Second Language Ministry at St. Luke's (PA)* – This ministry began as an effort to reach out to the neighborhood around St. Luke's. Chris and Naomi Morris (parishioners at nearby St. Mark's REC) lead this ministry, assisted by volunteers from St. Mark's and St. Luke's. Located in the Mayfair section of Northeast Philadelphia, the students are immigrants, mostly from South America.

Chris sends out a weekly email update and would be happy to add you to the list if you are interested (to receive them, write him: [cnmorris5@verizon.net](mailto:cnmorris5@verizon.net)). In September he wrote the following in one of his updates:



*Some remarkable events happened last Saturday, after the classes were over. One student stayed behind and asked Naomi "How can a person go to heaven?" "What is a spirit?" He is taking a class at his church, but not getting very good answers. When he found out that Naomi has a degree in Bible, he started asking her theological questions.*

*Another student stayed behind to review how to say the Lord's Prayer in English. This involved explaining what 16th-century thee's and thou's mean. What does "hallowed" mean? What are "trespasses?" It can get complicated.*

*Another student went up to the sanctuary, as he does after most classes, to kneel at the altar and pray.*

*These classes provide a language service for the student immigrants. But the classes are also a means of grace to the students, as they work their ways through very unpredictable conditions in America.*

Chris has also provided the following update: “In early 2022 St. Luke’s Bp. Hoffman REC church started giving free English classes. Located in the Mayfair section of Northeast Philadelphia, the students are immigrants, mostly from South America.

The classes grew from fewer than 10 students, to an average of nearly 40 students every week in 2024. Over 500 students have registered since 2022. They come from the local neighborhood, with many of them walking to the classes. The students are adults who came from as far away as Africa, and speak at least six different languages. (In 2025, attendance dropped by about half. So far we have had 60 registrations in 2025. Although students are fewer, the esprit de corps among them is stronger.)

These students are already inside the church at St. Luke’s, and are a great, untapped missional opportunity for the REC. The REC now has a Spanish version of the prayerbook, created for REC churches in Cuba. This would be perfect for the majority of our students. We are grateful for the constant support of St. Luke’s parishioners, and of St. Marks’s for most of the volunteer teachers.

Please uphold these English Academy students and teachers in your prayers throughout 2026.

Chinese Mission (Rydal, PA) – This church-plant initiative began just over 2 years ago. This small ministry continues to grow. There about 30 adults and children who regularly attend Sunday worship at St. Mark’s Church. During the first year we had an afternoon service each Sunday that was in Chinese, but about a year ago we switched to having just one service (Sunday 10am) in which both English and Chinese worshippers gather together. The service is in English, with Chinese translation and a bulletin in Chinese. Our hope is to see this core group continue to grow, and eventually become a church plant in the diocese. Our greatest need is for an Anglican church-planting pastor with Chinese and English language fluency.

The Lord be with you. 主與你同在。  
**And with thy spirit. 也與你的靈同在。**  
Lift up your hearts. 敞開你們的心扉。  
**We lift them up unto the Lord. 我們向主敞開心扉。**

Good Shepherd RE Mission (Harrisburg, PA) is a growing church plant under the leadership of Fr. R. McCarl (Vicar). In January 2025 Good Shepherd Anglican Mission moved into its new home (pictured on the right), the former St. Matthias Lutheran Church, and began a number of outreach efforts in the community. Good Shepherd has grown from a small Mission parish with an average Sunday attendance of 11 to an average Sunday attendance of 60 in five years. Currently Good Shepherd is the only classical Anglican presence in the lower Susquehanna region, but we do have plans for further growth in the future.

Grace Anglican RE Mission (Scranton, PA) is a mission of the diocese that has been experiencing revitalization and steady growth. This past month they hosted their 5<sup>th</sup>



theological conference. This year's title was "Generational Wealth: Preparing Heirs for the Unexpected Journey." This is an excellent example of a mission work that is actively seeking to engage their community.

Church of the Atonement (Philadelphia, PA) – The Vicar, Rev. Jason Holloway reports a growing ASA, and a waiting list for their popular after school program. Please continue to pray for this important outreach as they do have hurdles ahead in terms of City Regs with the after school work.

### **3. Church Plant Possibilities**

Brunswick, MD - A group of five families about 1 ½ hours west of Baltimore, have contacted NEMA for assistance with a Church plant. At least 2 of the five families are confirmed Reformed Episcopalians with a history at in the Diocese of Central States. Looking to begin a work that is closer to home for all of them, Bp. Jenkins is working in conjunction with Bp. Peter Manto, as this may fall under the purview of his diocese.

Williamsport, PA – This group of families has undergone some turnover in the last 6 months, but are still expressing an interest in establishing an Anglican testimony here. Rev. Lovell and McCarl have been advising this fledgling work.

Lancaster, PA – In August of 2025 the fall semester at Lancaster Bible Colle began with a brand new Anglican campus ministry called "Roots of Revival." The students involved are interested in turning this into a new parish and on the 8th of October Fr. Ricky McCarl along with Deacon Kevin Murphy met with these students and a number of interested people from the wider Lancaster County community to discuss the possibility of a church plant in the community. It is hoped that worship services will begin as soon as Advent. Please pray for this endeavor as we search for a location for this small Anglican community to meet.

### **4. Concluding Encouragement**

I urge Rectors and Vicars to prayerfully discern how to become more intentional and proactive in their efforts to reach the unchurched and the dechurched. We are called not only to warmly receive visitors and to evangelize the lost, but also to seek those who have wandered from the fold. The Ordinal charges every presbyter to:

*seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.*

How? Experience tells us that most who come to church do so because someone invited them personally. Yet for many people whom we hope to reach, an invitation to Sunday worship may not be the best first step. Why not prayerfully consider establishing a *front-porch ministry*, which is to say: a gracious threshold between the wider culture and the Church – a place where people can belong before they believe?

It may be that for many parishes, such liminal spaces are best cultivated in the homes of parishioners, where our friends and neighbors experience the (increasingly lost) art of hospitality at an unhurried table. In an age marked by loneliness and fragmentation, such hospitality may become a means by which hearts are softened to the gospel and lives are drawn once more toward Christ and His Church.

Please pray for the revitalization of the parishes of our diocese, for fruitful evangelism, for the steady growth of missions, and for God to raise up church planters to establish new works here.

Please also prayerfully consider how the Lord may be calling *you* to engage in this important and urgently needed work. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if there is anything that I or any committee member can do to encourage or support you.

*For Perseverance.*

O Lord our God, whose promises are true, be gracious to the work of Thy hands, and grant to us Thy servants a steady perseverance in doing Thy will, that in our days the people which serveth Thee may grow both in number and in grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Gelasian Sacramentary*)

Respectfully submitted,  
J. Patterson, *Chairman*