

STRATEGIC PLAN · 2025–27

FORMING
for the Future*The 2025–27 Strategic Plan for the Great Lakes Annual Conference of the Global Methodist Church.*

STRATEGIC AREAS	Cultural · Discipleship · Leadership · Local Church · Missional Formation
TERM	2025–2027

The Potter Is at Work...

“And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We all are formed by your hand.”

ISAIAH 64:8 (NLT)

The initial phase of the Great Lakes Annual Conference (GLAC) strategic planning process focused on gathering comprehensive input through listening carefully to collect feedback from intentional leadership conversations and a conference-wide survey of both laity and clergy aimed at helping form our future direction as a conference. From there, a strategic planning team broadly composed of laity and clergy from throughout the conference gathered regularly to discern the collected data, pray, and glean strategic areas with broad, general goals. The following is their collective summary presented for your prayerful consideration. The goals are organized into five strategic areas (Cultural Formation, Discipleship Formation, Leadership Formation, Local Church Formation, and Missional Formation) with five goals each.

Upon approval of the strategic plan, next steps will include naming and working alongside various teams, groups, and committees from the GLAC to articulate tactical objectives for each goal with timelines, as well as specific measurable actions that are attainable and in alignment with the goals.

The heart of the strategic planning team has been to invite those championing each goal to invest in the process by having ownership of the tactical steps and timelines for moving forward. This approach ensures that those who are most passionate about and knowledgeable in each area can contribute meaningfully to developing actionable plans that will bring the vision to life.

By empowering our teams and committees to develop specific objectives, we create broader buy-in, leverage diverse expertise, and establish a culture of shared ownership in our strategic direction. Each

produced tactical objective will include clear metrics for success, responsible parties, resource requirements, and realistic timelines to ensure accountability and progress tracking.

Strategic Planning Team

- Bridget Douglas
- Kara Bussabarger
- Tyler Best
- Ellen Harbin
- Scott Pattison
- Jill Davis
- Stan Pegram

Our Five Strategic Areas

In listening, reviewing, and praying, five strategic areas have taken shape, each designed to contain our collective goals...

NO.	STRATEGIC AREA	AIM
1	Cultural Formation	Continuing development of a distinctive, Spirit-led Wesleyan identity and culture
2	Discipleship Formation	Equipping faithful disciples who grow in their faith journey and make other disciples
3	Leadership Formation	Developing lay and clergy servant leaders of unique callings who are equipped to partner and guide the church effectively
4	Local Church Formation	Strengthening existing churches and planting new ones
5	Missional Formation	Facilitating the Great Commission in neighborhoods and nations

Cultural Formation

Continuing development of a distinctive, Spirit-led Wesleyan identity and culture

A Create a Cultural Playbook

Develop a comprehensive strategy that implements the use of our culture statement, communicating our theological anchors through shared vocabulary with consistent storytelling rhythms to reinforce cultural identity across the conference.

B Conduct a Cultural Audit

Systematically assess current state of values, practices, and spiritual identity across local churches and districts to identify alignment with the established culture statement.

C Equip for Theological Expression

Provide practical frameworks that empower local churches to authentically express the culture and values of the movement through worship, outreach, and community life.

D Foster an Experimentation Culture

Continue the creative and supportive environments that celebrate innovation, learn from failure, and maintain adaptability as the movement grows and evolves over time.

E Identify and Equip Culture Carriers

Recognize and empower individuals and ministry settings who embody the values of the movement, and provide them opportunities to equip the conference with living into the culture.

Discipleship Formation

Equipping faithful disciples who grow in their faith journey and make other disciples

A Define Disciple

Articulate and communicate a clear, scripturally-based understanding of what it means to be a disciple who makes disciples in the Wesleyan tradition.

B Emphasize Scriptural Holiness

Integrate biblical holiness and Global Methodist Church (GMC) catechism into our discipleship efforts in both instruction and practice.

C Implement Disciple-Making Training

Provide practical, intentional training resources and tools for local churches to equip disciples to make other disciples.

D Provide Adaptive Discipleship Frameworks

Equip local churches with flexible discipleship frameworks that can be tailored to their unique contexts, empowering them to shape meaningful spiritual formation journeys while cultivating deep accountability through Wesleyan band meetings and small groups.

E Create Wesleyan Resources & Catalog

Create resources that enhance understanding of Scripture and promote spiritual disciplines while compiling a trusted collection of endorsed discipleship resources aligned with Wesleyan Arminian theology.

Leadership Formation

Developing lay and clergy servant leaders of unique callings who are equipped to partner and guide the church effectively

A Define Servant Leadership

Establish a clear theological understanding of servant leadership aligned with the values of our movement.

B Strengthen Leadership Development Channels

Develop ways to raise up, discover, engage, and assess potential leaders while creating effective processes to match the gifts, training, culture, and experience of a leader with strategic ministry needs.

C Support Those Discerning a Call

Provide and communicate clear pathways and processes for ministry discernment and credentialing while building a strong support system and sustainable funding to ensure access to required training.

D Build a Leadership Support Network

Build systems to encourage ministry longevity, support co-vocational pastors, cultivate mentoring between experienced and emerging leaders, and strongly encourage covenant groups for ongoing support and spiritual formation.

E Create Leadership Growth and Multiplication Opportunities

Provide continuous growth and learning opportunities for leaders at all stages, using creative methods and feedback-driven development, while identifying high-capacity leaders to mentor and train others across the movement.

Local Church Formation

Strengthening existing churches and planting new ones

A Define Healthy Church

Generate and communicate what a healthy church looks like.

B Foster Healthy Church Environments

Develop a robust assessment resource for local churches to reflect on their current state and multiplication potential while forming a dedicated team with coaching capacity to help them become healthy, be fruitful, and discover their unique calling and focus.

C Solidify a Church Planting System

Recognize and support leaders with specific gifts and calling for church planting while strategically identifying areas without a GMC presence for districts, circuits, and existing local churches to establish new, innovative, multiplying communities, including house churches, Dinner Churches, and other fresh expressions.

D Build a Resource-Sharing Network

Create methods and processes for local churches to share best practices and resources across the conference, as well as within districts and circuits, while establishing mentoring relationships and immersive learning experiences between congregations.

E Provide Local Church Ministry Training

Deliver accessible training on practical ministry topics based on contextual needs identified by local churches.

Missional Formation

Facilitating the Great Commission in neighborhoods and nations

A Define Missional

Clearly describe what it means to be missional and how local churches and disciples can best live it out.

B Equip for Missional Effectiveness

Provide resources and encouragement to help local churches cultivate a Great Commission culture by discovering and developing their unique missional calling, serving effectively at local, regional, and global levels, and implementing clear evaluation tools to measure missional impact.

C Provide Evangelism Training

Offer training and resources to equip both clergy and laity in articulating their personal testimony, being a witness, and becoming intentional missionaries beyond the church walls.

D Support Global Annual Conference Partnerships

Grow and strengthen missional partnerships between local churches and the Ethiopia and Oasis Annual Conferences — not just monetarily, but incarnationally.

E Develop a Missional Connection Listing

Compile information about local, regional, and global serving opportunities within the conference with clear channels to connect people to them.
