

The Detroit Church of Christ



Purpose of this document:

From time to time the Detroit Ministry Leadership Group (MLG) has undertaken to define more clearly our common beliefs, vision and purposes. At this time we find ourselves at another crossroads of direction for our church and family of churches. This document is an attempt to sharpen our focus, define our vision, unify our efforts, and answer the questions of “Who we are”, “Where are we going”, and “How will we get there?” The answers to these questions defines the purpose and priority of our activities over the coming years. It is the result of many hours of personal prayer, Bible study, soul searching, meetings and personal conversations among our members and leaders on all levels. As such, it will never be complete or perfect. However, we trust God’s blessing for making the effort, and so we begin.

Pr 16:3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.

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Four Key Shared Beliefs

1. **Everyone on Earth is called to love God with a whole heart, turn to God in faith, repent, and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins. Those of us who have responded to the Bible message have been given the assignment by God to use our lives to help to reconcile the rest of the people in the world to Him.**

*Isa 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. Isa 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; **your sins have hidden his face from you**, so that he will not hear.*

*Ro 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes **through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe**. There is no difference, ²³ **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

*Ac 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—**for all whom the Lord our God will call.**”*

*2Co 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who **reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:** ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.** ²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. **We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.** ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

*Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and*

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of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ **and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"

2. **The Bible (= the scripture in its original form) is from God, not men. It contains God's plan for how to get to know God, come into the light and be saved. Disciples are those who have committed to personally reading, understanding and obeying the Bible.**

^{2 Tim 3:14} *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known **the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**¹⁶ **All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

^{1Co 15:1} *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.² **By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.***

3. **The Bible defines that once we are saved we become a part of the family of God, as his children, and become brothers and sisters to each other. Consequently:**
 - a. **A relationship with God is not just avoiding punishment, but about building a first priority love relationship with God.**
 - b. **It is not only about personally walking with him, but about aligning ourselves into special relationships with one another through the church. This includes deep, personal (discipling) relationships of love and trust with one another.**
 - c. **All parts of the church (the body) are to work at building up the church through serving, giving financially, and building of deep relationships with one another.**

^{Mk 12:29} *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.'³⁰ **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'**³¹ **The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** There is no commandment greater than these."*

^{1Jn 4:19} *We love because he first loved us.²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. **For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.**²¹ And he has given us this command: **Whoever loves God must also love his brother.***

^{Rom 12:4} *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,⁵ so **in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.***

^{1Ti 3:14} *Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that,¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in **God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.***

^{Eph 4:11} *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,¹² **to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**^{Eph 4:14} *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.¹⁵ **Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.**¹⁶ **From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.****

^{2 Cor 8:7} *But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—**see that you also excel in this grace of giving.***

^{1Pe 1:22} *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, **love one another deeply, from the heart.***

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4. **The Bible demands that there be repentance (= “Metanoia” = turning away from sin and toward God) in order to become, and stay saved.**
- a. **This is not about perfect outward performance, but about a decision of heart and change of attitude that is displayed over time by change of life.**
 - b. **There is to be great patience, kindness, humility and gentleness in our dealings with one another.**
 - c. **There is also to be a clear separation between God’s people and the practices of the world. This includes that we don’t date or marry anyone who is not also a disciple of Jesus.**

Eph 4:21 Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, **to put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ **to be made new in the attitude of your minds;** ²⁴ **and to put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ **not by works, so that no one can boast.** ¹⁰ For we are God’s workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

Gal 6:1 **Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.** But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ

Ro 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

2Co 6:14 **Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.** For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” *2Co 6:17* “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” *2Co 6:18* “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” *2Co 7:1* Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

1Co 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, **but he must belong to the Lord.**

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Statements of our ongoing Values and Commitments as a church

Interchurch Roles, Relationships and Functions:

1. The Michigan churches will work together cooperatively and share responsibility, according to their abilities, to evangelize the state of Michigan, and the Great Lakes Region.
2. Our unity, and the building of a loving fellowship of our leaders between churches will always be a crucial priority.
3. It is our goal to have at least a Church / Bible Talk within reasonable driving distance of everyone in Michigan by the end of 2025.
4. An important source for new leaders is our campus ministries. This is also a place where the most explosive growth can happen. Whenever possible, we will target campuses throughout the state as high priorities to determine which places to plant churches. Consequently, we will put our top priority effort toward building up our campus ministry. Our teen ministry is also a high priority as it can be a source of great disciples to serve and lead on our campuses.
5. We will expect our MLG and paid staff to cultivate relationships of love, encouragement and positive influence with leaders of our sister churches throughout the world. This includes participation in leadership training and discipling events with the ACR, due to our decision to be an active part of the ACR family of churches.
6. We will continue to support with encouragement and financial means the spread of the Gospel locally, regionally and around the world. Our current support internationally is to the churches in the Kerala region of India, and the churches of PNG.
7. We will remember, and support with our financial means, the poor, locally and around the world. We look for these efforts to be organized locally by HOPE *worldwide* of Michigan, and Internationally by HOPE *worldwide*, Ltd.

Local Church Relationships, Formation and Functions

1. We hold that every leader and member needs one or more special discipling relationships with another disciple involved in their day to day life, whom they trust to encourage and correct them. These relationships must be built to exhibit love and trust and true spiritual encouragement.
2. We believe in the Bible pattern of “one church for each metropolitan area”. This allows for a pooling of resources and spiritual strength, and encourages ongoing relationships in the church at all levels. It steers us away from the disunity and inward focus we see in groups that are organized with many small autonomous churches in a metro area. Consequently we will pursue a pattern of developing “regions” within the church of reasonable size (75+), located so as to best encourage the growth of the church in all areas of the metro area. Our Sunday and midweek meetings will most often be in these local settings, with some number of meetings each year of the entire metro area to encourage unity and cross regional relationships and cooperation.
3. We believe that Detroit is the key pillar church in Michigan, whose health will determine to a great extent the pace of growth in the rest of the state we are able to achieve. This is because over half of the population of the state, many major campuses, and a large percentage of the resources of the state are concentrated here. It is crucial that a healthy, mature and functional metropolitan church be built in Detroit that can evangelize the 5.5 Million people in the greater metro area.
4. Our goal is a healthy church, one where our energy is spent on reconciling the people of the Detroit metro area to God, and on strengthening the faith and lives of the saved of Detroit. This includes teaching disciples with kindness, gentleness and patience to build up lives motivated by love for God not guilt. We will strive to build up the spiritual lives and families of our members in order to make the Gospel attractive and exemplary to the world around us. We believe that disciples who are fully committed to love God first (Luke 14) yet have healthy careers, healthy relationships, healthy marriages and who exhibit excellent parenting will bring glory to God, and will be more easily equipped to lead our churches at all levels with faith and confidence.
5. Our goal is to have each region be led by a full time staff couple responsible to organize and direct the evangelistic efforts of the region. Our goal is to have one or more mature couples in each region to assist with the leading, shepherding and organization, and to have a healthy local discipling relationship with the paid leaders. Both couples should be a part of the overall church ministry leadership group, if that role is appropriate to their lives and maturity, or at least maintain a healthy discipling relationship with church wide leaders who help them with their regional role.

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6. We believe that the spread of the Gospel depends upon continually raising up new, visionary and faithful leadership, and appointing them to appropriate roles of service. We are committed to using our financial and people resources to raise up, teach and train everyone possible to become effective at building our churches. This includes training people to lead churches, whether in a fully paid, partially paid or un-paid role. This includes training some to become evangelists, some elders and some servants of various types, to meet the various needs of the body as it grows. We have therefore formed an organization called "The Detroit School of World Missions" to focus and organize these efforts.
7. Wherever possible we expect that man and women leaders serve in paid ministry roles in pairs – preferably as married couples, who devote themselves fully to the work of the gospel. Women are to lead the women.

Our Future Visions and Plans

- **By 2018 – have a BT on all 15K+ student campuses in Michigan**
- **By 2025 have a Church / Bible Talk in reasonable driving range of everyone in Michigan**

1 year goal – 2008

1. Detroit to become a healthy, growing church, and reach a membership of 340.
2. Take up a Special Missions of \$110,000
3. Assist Lansing to add a full time women's leader
4. Start a ministry at Kalamazoo / Western Michigan University -
5. Raise up one new couple to add to the MLG
6. Detroit to have a successful Mission PNG 2008 trip.
7. Detroit to sponsor "Mission Michigan 2008"
 - a. Michigan disciples to assist the evangelistic efforts of the Kalamazoo disciples through missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2008.
 - b. UM / Detroit campus focus on assisting Lansing to rebuild the Mich State campus ministry
 - c. Detroit assist GR at establishing a campus ministry at GVSU / HOPE college
8. Focus on raising up an eldership
9. Establish a growing campus ministry at Wayne State.
10. Have a 6 week marriage and parenting midweek workshop.

2 years – by 2009

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 380 members.
2. Macomb County, Downriver/Monroe have separate midweeks.
3. Start House Churches in Brighton / Flint and Port Huron
4. "Mission Michigan 2009":
 - a. Focus on building the GR / Holland / Muskegon ministry & campuses
 - b. Summer and fall push to build Kalamazoo / Western Michigan campus
5. Plant the church in Kalamazoo.
6. Have a life changing Mission India 2009.
7. Goal – appoint Elders in Detroit.
8. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2009 – 20th anniversary celebration
9. Michigan churches host in-state Teen / Preteen camp

A proposed timeline for future goals that meets the 2018 & 2025 timetables:

3 years – by 2010

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 425 members
2. Washtenaw & Macomb Counties become fully functional regions
3. Start a campus ministry at UM Dearborn & Oakland U
4. Start a Saginaw / Bay City / Midland ministry
5. "Mission Michigan 2010":

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- a. Michigan disciples assist the evangelistic efforts of the Saginaw / Bay City disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2010
- b. Special Campus advance on UM Dearborn & Oakland U
6. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2010

4 years – by 2011

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 470 members.
2. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2011
3. Detroit / Michigan appoint an Elder Couple
4. Start a ministry in Windsor
5. Monroe County, Port Huron begin to have separate midweeks
6. Plant the Saginaw / Bay City Church
7. “Mission Michigan 2011”
 - a. Focus on building Windsor ministry through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall
 - b. Focus efforts on building the Saginaw church through week long missionary visits over summer and fall
8. Establish a growing campus ministry at UM Dearborn
9. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2011

5 years – by 2012

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 520 members.
2. Port Huron/ St Clair County become a Region
3. Start a ministry at Mount Pleasant / CMU
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2012”:
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the evangelistic efforts of Flint disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2012
 - b. Special efforts in Windsor
5. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2012.

6 years – by 2013

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 575 members.
2. Monroe County and Windsor become fully functional regions
3. Plant the church in Mount Pleasant / CMU
4. Begin the UP: Marquette / Northern Michigan U ministry
5. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2013
6. Detroit / Michigan appoint an Elder Couple.
7. Michigan churches to sponsor “Mission Michigan 2013”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist Marquette / Northern Michigan U disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2013.
 - b. Special efforts in Mount Pleasant / CMU
8. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2013
9. Detroit hire a full time elder couple

7 years – by 2014

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 635 members.
2. Plant a church in the UP: Marquette / Northern Mich U
3. Brighton / Flint become a fully functional Region
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2014”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist Marquette / Northern Michigan U disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2014
 - b. Special efforts in Mount Pleasant / CMU
5. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2014.

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8 years – by 2015

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 700 members.
2. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2015
3. Start a Houghton / Michigan Tech ministry
4. Michigan disciples establish a ministry in Battle Creek
5. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2015”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Houghton / Michigan Tech disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2015
 - b. Special efforts in Battle Creek
6. Detroit / Michigan appoint an Elder Couple
7. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2015

9 years – by 2016

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 775 members.
2. Start a ministry in Traverse City
3. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2016”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Traverse City disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2016
 - b. Special efforts in Houghton / Michigan Tech
4. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2016.

10 years – by 2017

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 850 members.
2. Plant a church in Houghton / Michigan Tech
3. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2017
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2017”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Traverse City disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2017
 - b. Special efforts in Houghton / Michigan Tech
5. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2017

11 years – by 2018

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 945 members.
2. Plant the church in Traverse City
3. Start a ministry in Jackson
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2018”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Traverse City disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2018
 - b. Special efforts in Jackson
5. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2018.

12 years – by 2019

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1050 members.
2. Start a ministry in St Joseph / Benton Harbor
3. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2019
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2019”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Traverse City disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2019
 - b. Special efforts in St Joseph / Benton harbor
5. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2019

13 years – by 2020

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1165 members.
2. Plant a church in St Joseph / Benton Harbor
3. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2020”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Benton Harbor disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2020

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4. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2020.

14 years – by 2021

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1300 members.
2. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2021
3. Start a ministry in Battle Creek
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2021”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the St Joseph / Benton Harbor disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2021
 - b. Special efforts in Houghton / Michigan Tech
5. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2021

15 years – by 2022

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1440 members.
2. Start a ministry in Petoskey / Mackinac / Cheboygan
3. Plant the church in Jackson
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2022”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Petoskey / Mackinac disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2022
5. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2022.

16 years – by 2023

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1600 members.
2. Plant a church in Petoskey / Mackinac / Cheboygan
3. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2023
4. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2023”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Petoskey / Mackinac disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2023
5. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2023

17 years – by 2024

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1780 members.
2. Start a ministry in Escanaba (UP)
3. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2024”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Escanaba disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2024
4. Detroit host a successful Mission PNG 2024

18 years – by 2025

1. Detroit to continue to be healthy, while growing to 1980 members.
2. Plant a church in Escanaba (UP)
3. Start a ministry in Alpena
4. Detroit host a successful Mission India 2025
5. Michigan churches sponsor “Mission Michigan 2025”
 - a. Special efforts by Michigan disciples to assist the Escanaba disciples through week long missionary visits over the summer and fall of 2025
6. Detroit Host Great Lakes Regional Conference 2025

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Map of Michigan

