Strategic Initiative #3: Expansive concept of Church. Actively support new or different ways of “being church.”

Luke 10:1, 3a, 5-9
After this the Lord appointed seventy[a] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go…. Go on your way…. Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!” And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”

Guiding Image: Grafted Mango Tree

Many varieties of mango, with their lush foliage and sumptuous fruit, can be grafted onto an existing and well-established trunk of a tree that already has an extensive root system. The reality of such a tree is that each mango has a common and powerful history, heritage and energy emanating from that trunk and roots, yet each branch/mango has its own unique flavor, season and expression of vitality. Because mango trees, if left untended, can get so tall that the fruit becomes unavailable, such a tree will require constant pruning and adaptation in order to assure its continued relevance. Removing dead wood to allow for new growth gives the tree access to more light.

Context
If the Conference is to take the gospel to heart, we will need to meet people where they are, both within and beyond the church buildings. People who are currently unserved or underserved by “church” need to see how it is relevant to their lives today. The demographics for our denomination point to an accelerating decline in church membership that has not been adequately addressed. Significant energy and commitment will be required to reverse this trend. Initiative #3 encourages new ministries—both within our existing churches and in completely new forms. The HCUCC is open to many expressions of church and intends to explore what church can look like in the future.

Initial Responsibility
Formation Missional Team