

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORT

DR. RYAN NILSEN

This is an exciting year for our mission in North America. We are on track to see 3-4 new churches and campuses start in 2022 and there are promising leads for other plants in the future. We're also equipping established churches and their pastors for

effective disciple-making and ministry leadership. Here are a few of the major initiatives I'm involved with as I serve in North American Mission:

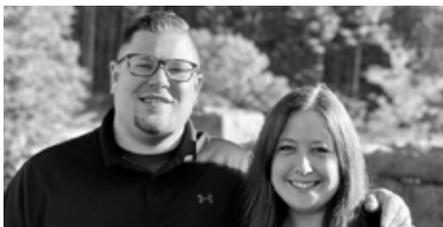
CHURCH PLANTING

Word of Life New Prague, MN



On March 27, Word of Life launched their new campus in New Prague, MN, about 25 minutes from their Le Sueur campus. They purchased a church building with land on the edge of town. In November, I took Nick and Brittany Olson through a four-day assessment and reviewed the results with Word of Life's leadership (hear their story in Episode 91 of the CLB Forge Podcast!). The congregation voted to call Nick as the Campus Pastor. I was privileged to attend their opening service. Since then they've had new guests from the community attending every week.

Grace Hill Community Church Boston, MA



Pastor Kristian Anderson is entering the final months of his pre-launch residency at Bethany LBC in Connecticut. He has shifted the bulk of his time away from ministry at Bethany and toward preparations for the plant. Kristian is carrying out fundraising plans for raising part of his support prior to moving to Boston. Kristian and Mary are planning to move to Boston in August.

Lincoln Church & Community Center Lincoln, ND Assessing candidate couple



I've been working with the gifted leaders of Grace LBC in Bismarck this winter and spring, and we've identified a potential church planter to serve as the pastor of the Lincoln church plant. Grace will always be Lincoln Church's sending, parenting church and will be cheering them on. North American Mission will directly oversee the plant and is preparing to assess the planter candidate couple. This assessment process will be taking place around the same time as the convention.

Longmont, CO Assessing candidate couple

For several years the Colorado CLB pastors have dreamed of starting a church in Longmont, a growing city of 95,000 north of Denver. Longmont is somewhat equidistant between our Colorado churches, and the pastors have a passion to reach this city. This past fall we began conversations with a CLB pastor to explore the possibility of serving as a church planter. Right now this pastor and his wife are going through a formal assessment process that may lead to a call to plant in Longmont.

Other Plant Possibilities

We're in early conversations regarding plants for the next 2-3 years, including plants and campuses in the Pacific Northwest, Phoenix, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Texas. We're also praying for and exploring more long-term possibilities for plants in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New England, Florida, and more in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Our Current Planters

Please keep our current church planters in your prayers as they continue the challenging work of starting new mission outposts in North America:

- Jason Rogness—Parker, CO
- Kristian Anderson—Boston, MA
(moving to Boston 2022)
- Nick Olson—New Prague, MN
(launched March 27, 2022)
- Harold Rust—Red Deer, AB
(CLBC plant)
- Bob Schultz—Regina, SK
(2021 CLBC plant)

Church Planting Systems

We are developing eight strategic systems to sustain higher levels of church planting in the future, with the goal of having all systems in place by 2026. Recently I've been focusing on developing the Funding System—how we work together to generate and distribute funds for church planting. A core part of this system is the Church Multiplication Fund which will be used to provide pay-it-forward grants for church plants. We have started this fund with CLB funds already designated or intended for church planting.

DISCIPLESHIP & VITALITY

I continue to be involved in several discipleship and church vitality projects for North American Mission, but I am ending some commitments in this area and training my replacements for others in order to focus more time on the quickly growing demands of church planting. Here's an update on these projects:

Disciple-Making Cohorts

I've been leading three cohorts of 20 pastors total through a process of learning about and applying disciple-making practices in their churches. These cohorts will all conclude this spring/summer. We're working on launching new cohorts led by some of the pastors who took part in these first groups.

Revitalization Consultant Training

Six CLB pastors are taking a revitalization consultant course developed by Church Answers, with a commitment to assist 2-3 CLB churches in the years to come. Two of these pastors have begun to apprentice with me in a CLB congregation. The goal is to establish several teams of pastors trained to come alongside congregations for an in-depth, 18-month assessment and ministry planning process.

CLB Forge Podcast

The podcast continues to grow its audience and has recently passed its 100th weekly episode. Mike Natale has taken a greater leadership role as the co-producer and does an excellent job helping guide our team of seven volunteers.

It is an honor to serve the CLB, and it is a great joy to work with fellow staff members and the many church leaders I get to interact with each day. Thank you for participating in the leadership of our church family by serving as delegates to this convention.

Rev. Ryan Nilsen, DMin serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Associate Director of North American Mission.

