



8.0 NEW CONGREGATIONS ADMISSION

Our canons provide for Local Churches to become members of the Diocese according to their own stage of development. What follows is a brief description of each. If admission is desired, a membership application is requested from the Bishop's office by contacting Jenna Vazquez, the Bishop's Assistant, at: jenna.vazquez@westernanglicans.org.

Mission Startup

A new Christ-centered community likely led by a lay leader or Lay Missioner with a vision for growth that leads them to corporate worship, disciple-making and mission. A mission startup is usually organically a part of a larger congregation or local church, but may be birthed through Kingdom-driven efforts by the Deanery or the Diocese. The trajectory for planning and development is toward a self-funding, self-governing and self-reproducing Christian community.

Missional Community

A Christ-centered community of 20-40 adults, likely led by a Lay Missioner, or mission-driven lay leader that grows in the Spirit through worship, disciple-making and mission, so that the Missional Community's members are impacting the world in visible and practical ways. Missional communities will likely form from a structured church plant, congregation or resource church and, in most cases, will continue to extend the reach of their sponsoring/birthing church.

Church Plant

A Christ-centered community, likely led by a Presbyterian called by God to plant a new church. A church plant is committed to growth in the Spirit and membership growth through conversion, progressing steadily through developmental stages of reproductive community life. Due to resource levels, a church plant is likely initiated by the deanery or a resource church.

Congregation

A congregation, likely led by a Presbyterian, is understood to have developed a system of worship, disciple-making and mission that fosters an environment for and momentum toward growth and reproduction. It may be networked with other congregations or it may stand on its own. Healthy development is usually dependent upon a minimum ASA of 75 and will be self-funding, self-governing and self-propagating. As growth is experienced, a congregation will sponsor new missional communities and congregations that may be released as a new church plant.



Resource Church

A resource church, led by a Presbyter, operates with multiple congregations and worship services (onsite and/or off-site) and/or missional communities to impact the wider culture with the gospel. A resource church is self-funding, self-governing and self-propagating with a minimum ASA of 200+ and accepts the responsibility to contribute generously in time, people and funding to the development of new church plants in the deanery and the diocese.

For Local Churches with fewer members, our Deaneries are available to assist with questions related to:

1. bookkeeping and financial management
2. administrative support
3. legal concerns, bylaws and incorporation

Our Deaneries, through their incorporation as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation, are being encouraged to assist new mission startups, church plants and smaller congregations with these basic services, so that the church developer's energies may be applied best to the work of developing a new congregation.

The Diocese will admit local churches according to the basic parameters presented above. For further review of the rationale of this, please refer to 'What is a Congregation.' (found at www.westernanglicans.org, click Resources then click Congregation & Deanery) In this document, congregations and resource churches should be sufficiently mature in their common life so that they are **self-funding**, **self-governing** and **self-propagating**. This means that planning and structures are in place for all three of these criteria.

The legal process of incorporation can be expensive in both time and money, but if your congregation needs legal assistance as they engage in this process, you may contact the diocesan office and we will provide referrals to qualified attorneys who have offered their services on a fee basis. In some cases, a reduced fee may be negotiated, but the congregation should expect to pay for these legal services.

There are individual circumstances with every mission startup, church plant, congregation and resource church, so we will do everything we can to provide the greatest level of support and encouragement in their development so that they may mature and reproduce.