

Natural Church Development

Natural Church Development (NCD) is for every congregation that seeks to be engaged in vital ministry in the world. It is for the local church, large or small, that desires to improve its spiritual health. NCD is for congregations that are just beginning their life together, those that are actively engaged in worship and ministry, and those that are seeking revitalization and new vision.

Wherever you are as a congregation, you will benefit from the NCD process of theological reflection and practical application.

At its heart, NCD is not another program for you to implement. It is a diagnostic tool available to churches who seek qualitative growth in all areas of their congregational life. NCD encourages authenticity, creativity, and diversity as members work together in service. The programs you already have in place are the very programs that will help you to grow into your full potential as part of the Body of Christ. The NCD process will help you to better understand the role and purpose of those programs within your congregation.

The Vocabulary of NCD

Churches engaged in the NCD process are assigned a trained **NCD Coach** who walks with you to provide guidance and support during the process. Your coach serves as a resource person who provides another perspective and connects you with resources available within and outside of your local body.

As the process continues, 5-7 Key leaders of the congregation will establish a **Health Team**. This team guides the church through the NCD process and mobilizes members to carry out their vision for ministry.

The NCD process engages churches in careful self-examination through the NCD Surveys. The result is greater awareness of your strengths and weaknesses and a clearer vision of where God may be leading your congregation to act. The surveys also foster communication between the pastor and key lay persons within the congregation, as you review your results together.

The results focus on **Quality Characteristics**: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship services, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism and loving relationships. The lowest of these eight characteristics is identified as a church's **Minimum Factor**, the area in which improvement is most needed and can most affect the overall health of the church. The idea is not to focus on the negative, but to use a church's strengths to improve the quality of its minimum factor.

For more information on NCD contact the Office of Congregational Development and Redevelopment at ncd@umcnic.org.

For information on NCD Training Events see the Events link.