



*Families on Mission Together,
Helping People Experience Jesus
and Discipling Those Who Do.
(Matthew 28:16-20)*

Oikos Church

Oikos Church strives to create familial relationships where Christ is in the center and the result is transformational. We look for people of peace and actively disciple those who are ready to follow Jesus.

Prepared For: The Texas District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Executive Summary

“Families on Mission Together, Helping People Experience Jesus and Discipling Those Who Do”

WHERE WE ARE

Six years ago, ninethirtyone began as a community within Trinity Lutheran Church. During this time, we have matured in how we experience Jesus. ninethirtyone began as a Sunday-focused ministry, but evolved into a community where disciples are made. When disciples are made, it is only natural to extend the mission of the church.

WHERE WE WANT TO GO

Through ninethirtyone, the Lord has developed leaders who desire to further spread His Kingdom through a new church community called: Oikos Church.

An oikos (ancient Greek: οἶκος, plural: οἶκοι) is the ancient Greek equivalent of a household, house or family. As families on mission together, Oikos represents who we are and how we will disciple others.

We intend to officially launch this new community on December 1, 2013. This is an exciting opportunity for Trinity to continue its storied church planting history. In the early 20th century, Trinity started many of the Lutheran churches in Houston. Building on the success of Trinity's past church plants, Trinity will launch Oikos by sending a leader and those who follow into the world to reach more people who do not yet know Jesus. Momentum for the launch has been growing with more committed individuals and families everyday. Over \$74,000 has been raised for the initial startup costs. Individuals have also committed to monthly tithing that currently totals over \$6,800. We anticipate both financial metrics to grow substantially in the month of November. In addition, a blessing of disciplined leaders and staff gives us the opportunity to begin pre-gatherings in homes on November 3, 2013.

We are families on mission together. Family is not bound through our blood lines, but is created through the blood of Jesus. In our culture today, one thing that many people are seeking is real relationships, a place to belong and be accepted. American culture would create a place where everything is accepted so that no one is offended, however Christ has called us to something that is counterculture. We need to invite everyone, but disciple them as we go. So as we create families on mission together, we'll follow the discipling process that was developed under the direction of Mike Breen and 3DM. The majority of Oikos leaders are in accountable discipleship relationships and are also investing in others. With this approach, we believe we are on the road to a major Kingdom breakthrough. We will stay faithful in making disciples who make disciples and then releasing them into an unbelieving world. We will see people gathering not to consume, but to celebrate what the Lord is doing through them to reach a world that does not know Him.

Geographically, we will focus on a 5-mile radius around Lutheran High North. This includes the Heights, Timbergrove and many other neighborhoods. People in this radius are diverse racially, economically and spiritually (see demographics attachment for details). Only 25% are connected to a faith community. Within Lutheran High North, only 50% of students are regularly connected to a Christian church. The mission field is wide open. Exciting times are ahead!

Values

Life Transformation: Without Christ we have no hope; we are in fact trapped. Galatians 5 teaches that we are free when we believe that Jesus has saved us. We are free to live a life led by the Spirit. We no longer conform but are transformed, Romans 12.

Making Disciples: Jesus did it. His disciples did it. We believe that we should live lives that focuses on making disciples of Jesus who will also make disciples.

Families on Mission: Relationships are important to God. He is our Father who sent His Son to die for us so that He could be with us forever. Building relationships is exemplifying what our Father has done since the beginning of time. We believe that relationships built in Christ with the purpose of reaching those who don't know Jesus, is a key part of our identity.

Goals

UP

- Create a culture who desires intimacy with Jesus
- Worship daily and weekly with others
- Listen to God's voice through his Word, prayer and other followers
- Recognize that every blessing is from God
- Be generous with what He gives us
- Let God break into our lives and the lives of others with His Kingdom

IN

- Create an environment where we accept people as they are
- Create a community that is relaxed and forgiving
- Learn together as we live life together
- Be transparent
- Learn through experience and being in the world, not of it
- Live in accountable relationships
- Believe in a discipling culture
- Expect to become more Christ-like

OUT

- Engage the current culture
- Become known in the community
- Be known as a safe place
- Reflect Jesus wherever we go
- Invite others into our lives
- Invest in leaders who are unleashed into an unbelieving world
- Multiply and grow

Year One

CREATING CULTURE

Culture will be defined from the start by focusing on discipleship as families on mission together. This means that we live lives devoted to God's Word, and we react and lead with prayer daily. We will develop a common language through 3DM's curriculum, and our vision of "Helping People Experience Jesus and Discipling Those Who Do" will be what guides our decisions as we move forward. We will establish mission marks to gauge our progress toward our vision.

Target: Every gathering will use this common language of discipleship. People will talk about *kairos* moments and ask two questions: "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?".

Who: Pastor Aaron Lytle (see attached church planter assessment for qualifications) and Jason Phelps, DCE (involved in church ministry development for more than six years, an instrumental team member in the creation and development of ninethirtyone, experience in an innercity ministry for at-risk youth, as the former spiritual care director at the Lutheran Social Services Krause Center, and as proven disciple-maker and devoted to following Jesus) along with all huddle leaders

REORGANIZING THE HUDDLE NETWORK

For those who are excited to join us on this new adventure, there will be opportunity to expand and invite new people into existing huddles. This new investment will provide an opportunity for individuals to experience growing in accountable relationships for the first time in what we call "huddles." Some huddles will have both members of Trinity and Oikos. This will help in developing continued partnerships. We will continue to invest in members of Trinity who desire to stay in their current huddles. For those who will want to be released, we will bless them and encourage them to continue the effort at Trinity.

Target: By the end of our first year, we will have 12 huddles with approximately 60 Oikos members participating.

Who: Huddle leaders team (Aaron and Sara Lytle, Jason and Ashley Phelps, Sylvia Schmidt, Ken and Dolores Rodgers, Christina Putman, Penny Mickel, David and Kindra LeFevre, Michelle and Jim Vanderwater)

FINDING A WORSHIP CENTER

We will find and secure a new place to gather weekly to celebrate what God has been doing in our community. We expect to see 125+ for our initial gathering. By the end of our first year, we expect to see that double to 250, as we will intentionally reach people who are far from Jesus through our families who are on mission together. We hope to secure a space within a local school where we will embrace and love that community like Jesus does.

Target: Secure a location and equipment to have a weekly worship gathering in the desired location.

Who: Aaron and Sara Lytle, Jason and Ashley Phelps, Kevin and Christina Putman, Michelle and Jim Vanderwater, Sylvia and Nelson Schmidt, Penny and Carl Mickel, Ken and Dolores Rodgers, David and Kindra LeFevre

Target: Grow the worshipping community numerically.

Who: All leaders, missional communities and huddles

EXPANDING STAFF

We will start with two people on staff, a pastor and worship leader. Both will focus on discipleship, but will also provide professional leadership within the church community. By the end of our first year, we hope to see the mission expand exponentially to the point where more staff are needed to push the mission forward. Not all staff will be paid, but everyone will be invested in and held accountable.

Target: Grow staff as needed to support the growth of the mission. We will make hiring decisions by assessing the character, capacity, calling and chemistry (4Cs) of new staff.

Who: Staff leadership

GROWING RESOURCES

We will start with an estimated giving of \$135,000 annually. This is a conservative number based on the fact that current offerings and tithes of ninetythree are approximately \$400,000 annually. We anticipate that 100 Oikos members will join the effort. Most who join will be disciplined members who are committed to the success of this new church plant. We will also utilize the Texas District loan of \$200,000. Our first year will operate on a total of \$335,000. We are expecting to exhaust \$250,000 in the first year between salaries, rent, capital expenses and mission. We hope to have a balance of \$85,000 after the first year of operations.

Target: We will work toward achieving self-sufficiency within two years. This approach involves capping spending at \$250,000 for the first year and growing Oikos' giving to mission and/or community efforts in the second year. The first year will require a monthly review of giving and adjusting spending accordingly.

Who: Board (see Governance on next page) and staff leadership

Year One Breakdown

FIRST NINETY DAYS

Governance: We will operate under a working board of appointed leaders assessed in the same manner as new staff, with the 4Cs. We will set out expectations of what it means to be on a working board. For spiritual oversight, we will be looking to Nelson Schmidt (Lutheran for over 50 years, past elder at Trinity), David LeFevre (life-long Lutheran, in and leading a huddle, founder of RighTrak Industries Missional Community and Band of Brothers-Houston), Jim Vanderwater (past elder at Trinity, Building Committee chair, in a huddle, Band of Brothers-Houston member) and Ken Rodgers (proven leader, disciple-maker, devoted to discipling youth, a man after God's heart).

Budget: We will make adjustments to our budget based on what offerings are collected within the first two months of operation. In addition to staff oversight of the budget, the board will appoint individuals who can oversee the fiscal side of Oikos. These individuals will be assessed according to the 4Cs, be committed to generous living, and show a history of competency in finance.

Staffing: We will evaluate additional staffing needs based on the number of individuals who are worshiping at Oikos and what needs have become apparent after a two-month period. We will not hire during this time unless absolutely necessary to continue the mission God has put before us. Salary scales and benefit packages will need to be clarified and communicated. Dolores Rodgers (life-long Christian, in a huddle, 25+ years of human resources experience with City of Houston and the Airport Authority, currently serving as an human resources consultant), Christina Putman (life-long Lutheran, in a huddle, formerly director of administration at Trinity and lawyer with 10+ years of experience), David LeFevre (see Governance above, lawyer specializing in employee benefits) and Sylvia Schmidt (life-long Christian, in a huddle, Texas District Mission Board member, proven leader in the church and business world) will lead this area of oversight.

Community: It will be essential that we make a large investment in the community that is blessing our mission. Staff and key leaders will spend time making our presence known within the community. We will seek ways to love the members of our community with all resources available.

Worship: Worship leaders, key staff and leaders in the worship community will develop and nurture a vision of our worship celebration. Jason Phelps and Pastor Aaron Lytle will lead a valued, inspirational and discipling worship gathering. The change from working together at ninethirtyone to Oikos will provide opportunities to make valued changes and seek input from those who have joined in the effort. Based on our sanctuary location and available technology, there may be adjustments to our worship service. There will be transparent communication about changes and challenges with the entire worship community.

Commitment: Leadership will need to stress the importance of commitment to the shared vision. It will be communicated and lived, especially by Pastor Aaron Lytle. A clear vision will be shared with staff, leaders, volunteers and the entire Oikos community on a daily basis within the first ninety days and consistently thereafter. Progress will be celebrated and adjustments will be communicated. Generosity and trusting in God's plan for Oikos will be central to this message.

FIRST SIX MONTHS

What we practice in the first ninety days will need to be emphasized throughout the first six months. We will also:

Assess Progress: It will be critical to assess the progress toward the stated goals and action plans in the first six months. This will be accomplished through surveys, meetings, reports and prayer.

Adjust Plans: After the initial assessment, some of our goals will need to be adjusted. These adjustments will be made in consultation with those who are involved and then communicated to the larger community. Our hope would be to (1) expand the budget to a much larger and robust one, (2) grow staff to further the mission with new opportunities, (3) find a new location due to outgrowing the current space and (4) adjust the needed funds from the district or reduce the time for repayment considerably.

Year Two

Year two will include laying out plans to expand mission, start new communities and prepare to respond if a permanent gathering place is identified.

LIVING AS FAMILIES ON MISSION TOGETHER

Our discipling language will be known and spoken. It will shape our identity and help us move forward in mission. We will measure success based on our cultural values of discipleship: up, in and out.

Target: Develop a measuring means to assess mission and ministry utilizing up, in and out. This could include recorded conversations, polling and creating access to leadership to continue to communicate the vision.

Who: Discipleship team

Target: Assess how we are becoming "Families on Mission Together" and record progress.

Who: Staff

Target: Count how many disciples are making disciples of their own. Expand the goal of 60 individuals if we are exceeding the target.

Who: Huddle leaders

GROWING RESOURCES

As we develop leaders who are on mission, we should anticipate that the need for resources will increase. Year two will move toward Oikos becoming self-sufficient financially and will also stretch us to give more to missional opportunities developed by our accountable leaders.

Target: Grow giving to \$275,000 by the end of year two.

Who: Board, staff leadership, huddle network

Target: Increase spending from \$250,000 to \$300,000, which would include increase in rent, salaries and staff. This would leave us at total of \$150,000 toward future capital expenditures and act as an emergency fund.

Who: Board, staff leadership

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

We want to be a place that plants new communities of faith as they mature and grow within Oikos. This includes developing leaders, saving resources and equipping groups to take risks for the Kingdom.

Target: Identify L200 (leaders who have the capacity to lead 200 people) individuals and begin clarifying their calling.

Who: Key leaders

Target: Invest in L200 individuals by sending them to 3DM learning opportunities, investing in them personally and working with the Specific Ministry Pastor Synodical process.

Who: Staff leadership

Target: Designate an account for missions with a dedicated 10% of the budget, so we can support missional opportunities when they develop.

Who: Board

Year Three

We see an explosion of growth as we are led by the Spirit of God. Our numbers will continue to grow in our weekly worship gathering as testimonies are given about what God is doing through His people. Our resources will grow as people are invested in and see how God loves a cheerful giver. Our count of disciples who are also discipling will grow and numbers will multiply. As our number of people within accountable relationships grow, individual ministry callings will clarify and mission opportunities will grow. Good stewardship of our resources during the first two years will bear fruit. God will find a permanent place for us to gather. We will fund families on mission together in new church communities within Houston. We will see God change the city, and we will celebrate the fact that we were a small part of it.

STABILIZING FINANCES

In year three we will begin to pay back our loan from the Texas District. Our goal would be to pay it off quickly. This would free up resources to help fund other mission opportunities that are developing within the Oikos community.

Target: Pay off loan and budget for mission opportunities. By the end of year three, we hope to see a budget of \$500,000. As the Lord blesses us, we will rapidly pay off the \$200,000 so that other ministries in the Texas District can benefit from this generous gift also.

Who: Oikos community as a whole

EXPANDING STAFF AND INVESTING IN NEW LEADERS

In year three, we will become a place for leaders to come and learn. We will invest in internships, so His church can benefit from our journey. We will also invest in our volunteers, offering full-time and part-time positions as they are needed to further the mission.

Target: Hiring for ministry-specific areas, but doing so within our discipleship framework. Every staff position will be required to understand that discipleship is not a department, but it is an expectation for every staff member. As youth ministry, children's

ministry and other ministries develop at Oikos, every ministry will also have the expectation that discipleship is not an add on, but actually breathes life into that particular ministry area.

Who: Spiritual Leadership Team

DEVELOPING NEW COMMUNITIES

In year three, new communities will develop. Some will fall under the umbrella of Oikos while others will be released, so their growth will not be confined to the Oikos community. We will work toward starting as many new Jesus-following communities as the Lord allows. We plan to begin by year three.

Target: At least one new community of followers worshiping together weekly.

Who: L200 and other disciplined leaders