

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (for congregations)



* *What is **Here We Stand**?*

Here We Stand is a campaign that when completed will assist the Michigan District carry out its mission and ministry to the fullest. **Here We Stand** provides a unique opportunity for the congregations and members of the Michigan District to bestow a wonderful thank offering as we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. We are asking each congregation and member of the Michigan District to make a difference for the future that can only happen through shared purpose and common goals.

* *What is the financial goal of the **Here We Stand** campaign?*

The financial goal of **Here We Stand** is \$10,000,000.

* *How will the campaign funds be distributed?*

\$3,000,000	Professional Church Worker Scholarships
\$3,000,000	Innovative Missional Ministry
\$3,000,000	Michigan District Endowment
\$1,000,000	International Ministry

* *Why do we need a campaign?*

In order to carry out the mission of the Michigan District, new money – over and above current funding levels – is necessary. The percentage of unchurched in Michigan continues to increase – 16 counties in Michigan have 70% or more unchurched individuals. That means 7 out of 10 people you encounter at the grocery store do not know/have a relationship with Jesus Christ. As our forefathers before us fulfilled the early purposes to disciple the saved and evangelize the lost, this need continues to increase. The annual cost of a future pastor attending the Ft. Wayne or St. Louis Seminary is nearly \$40,000. At graduation, when this pastor receives his first call his seminary debt could be more than \$100,000. This financial strain can cause stress to the newly ordained pastor, his family, and his congregation. Now is the time to plan for the future.

* *How can my congregation get involved?*

The first step is to present **Here We Stand** to your pastors, congregation leaders, and individuals who you feel have an interest in supporting mission work. A PowerPoint presentation is on the Michigan District website to assist you as is a campaign booklet and video. **Here We Stand** Circuit Coordinators, Steering Committee members and staff are all willing and ready to help you with a presentation and to answer questions you or your congregation leadership may have.

* *When will my congregation participate?*

We are asking for participation decisions by congregations to be received by the District Office by the end of 2018. A congregation can pledge now and begin fulfillment of their pledge at a time of their choosing. We are seeking 3-5 year pledges for greater flexibility for participating congregations.

* *Why should my congregation participate?*

In order for us to reach our \$10 million goal, congregations are being asked to do their fair share to reach this target. The only way we can do this is by all of us walking together through an equitable goal setting process.

** We are a small congregation. What can we do?*

Jesus loves you as His children, and He can use your gifts to do wonderful things. He used the young boy's fish and loaves to feed the multitudes. He praised the widow for the gift of her mite. Your congregation is situated exactly where God would use you as an extension of His mission arm. Participate and see how He can use you! This school year, the Michigan District is supporting Concordia University Ann Arbor Professional Church Worker students with average scholarships of \$1,680. A commitment of \$7,000 would provide one student a scholarship for four years! That is just one example of a commitment a small congregation can make.

** Our budget is already strained to the limit. So is each of our households. We are already having difficulty meeting our budget.*

When people are given the opportunity to hear what God is doing in His mission fields and how they can be a part of it, the Spirit can move their hearts in response. We can only be prayerful that will occur in your congregation. It's important to give God's people the opportunity to respond.

** Now is not a good time for us to start something new. Can we wait until later?*

By choosing one of the four proven, intentional participation plans a small team of volunteers can implement an appeal in a few short weeks. These appeals are straightforward in their approach. There is no need to clear your entire calendar of activities to conduct the appeal. Each congregation's participation is meant to be purposeful, mission-focused, and successful. It is also suggested that planning begin early, in the sense that your congregation can get appropriate approval to participate.

** We have just come out of challenging economic times. How can I ask my congregation to participate now?*

It is important to remember that over the long term, the economy will improve. Over the years, when we have seen recessions, giving to the church has remained constant in many cases or even increased. It is during these challenging times that individuals are more generous, because the need is greater. We are asking you to provide the *opportunity* and *invitation* to your members to support this historic mission effort. Your members cannot help spread of the Good News of Jesus Christ if not asked.

** We have to take care of the home fires first.*

How true. The harvest fields are ready right around you. Attention needs to be given right at home. And since God says that the laborer is worthy of His hire, you get to partake of the first fruits of the offerings of God's people. You may hear cynics counter the ***Here We Stand*** appeal by quoting the old saying, "charity begins at home." Quite true. However, the old adage does not say charity stops at home. From home we *begin* our sowing. My home congregation is the field upon which I can sow my offering to the Lord, which then in turn can sow in the community and in the Michigan District and beyond, which in turn sows in the world and back in our home congregation. The Lord's kingdom is a never ending, worldwide caring and sharing circle where He provides both the abundance and the privilege of sharing.

** If you are experiencing a pastoral vacancy you can still participate.*

There are lay leaders or other congregation boards that can be informed about ***Here We Stand***. Lay leaders are essential to participation, even if you do not have a vacancy. There are easy steps that lay leaders can take to ensure that the decision making and planning process continues. ***Here We Stand*** Circuit Coordinators, Steering Committee Members, and District Staff are all

ready and willing to make a presentation to a council to discuss the best way to get your congregation involved.

** As a pastor, I support **Here We Stand** and its goals, but my elders/board does not want to participate. What can I do to convince the leaders to take this important mission effort to the congregation?*

Ask your elders/board if you can present **Here We Stand** to the congregation after a worship service. There are many wonderful resource tools on the Michigan District website (www.michigandistrict.org) that can assist you in introducing **Here We Stand** to the congregation. District volunteers and staff will help you come up with the best way to proceed.

** As a pastor, I have the support of all my elders/board/lay leaders except for one who is quite vocal. How can I acknowledge his concerns and yet move the decision making process along to the entire congregation?*

Have a private conversation with this individual and see what specific concerns the individual has. Typically, it is a misunderstanding about some aspect of the campaign that a conversation can resolve. If the individual maintains a negative stance, ask that the congregation be allowed to hear and decide for themselves and for the individual to pray for our success.

** We (I as pastor) are too busy to get involved in this process. What should I do?*

Need help? We stand ready. Conducting **Here We Stand** is a marvelous opportunity to receive help from those who see your congregation as a mission outpost for sowing the seeds of the Word and beginning to reap the harvest. We have so many resources to share with you and such an exciting opportunity to include you in the worldwide harvest, but it is important to do so with a planned approach. Remember we can help!

** I have additional questions. Who should I contact?*

Please contact your **Here We Stand** Circuit Coordinator or contact Ray Zavada, Michigan District Campaign Director at 734-904-2773 or by email at ray.zavada@michigandistrict.org.