

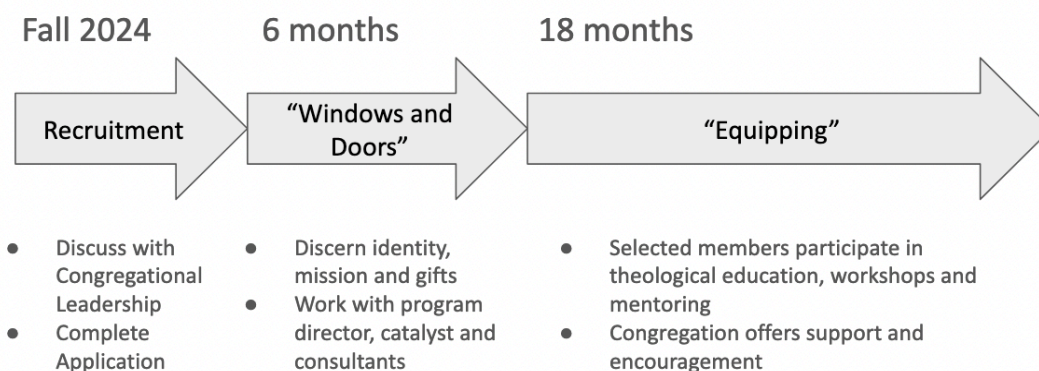
Plentiful Gifts

Nourishing Members for the Flourishing of Small Member Congregations

Is your congregation struggling to maintain worship, pastoral care and community life with fewer helping hands? Does your ministry feel less “full” because your church is served by a part-time pastor? “Plentiful Gifts” is a new grant-funded program for NACCC churches designed to enhance your congregation's vitality and help grow in service to one another. The program, a partnership between the National Association and the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, aims to sustain small-but-vital congregations with part-time clergy by exploring new ministry models and nurturing the gifts and talents of lay people.

Participating churches will work with the Plentiful Gifts team to explore their identity, community, challenges, and ministry gifts. A small group within each congregation (typically 3-4 people) will then receive training and support in one or more specific areas such as preaching, worship, pastoral care, faith formation, community engagement, and leadership. The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, a leader in theological education for clergy and laity, is developing a new curriculum, called the “Congregational Equipping Program,” to support this short-format training. The NACCC will work with UDTs to define a menu of training choices for our member churches. Each church will have a mentor, and participants will support each other through prayer and biannual gatherings for worship, fellowship, and encouragement.

The program requires a two-year commitment, starting with a six-month study phase followed by up to 18 months of tailored learning. Thanks to a grant from the Lily Foundation's "Thriving Congregations Initiative," there is no cost for churches to participate. In the first phase, approximately 4-7 churches will be selected from those that apply.



Mirrors & Windows Phase (Six Months)

Looking **in** the mirror at the congregation's members, spiritual gifts, resources

Looking **out** the window to the neighborhood and other context

- Explore Relationships, identity, vocation, & mission
- Demographic/contextual study results
- Discover gaps and bridges
- Discernment of individual calls (3-4) for training
- Create the congregation's strengthening/equipping plan

Strengthening the Body of Christ (18 Months)

Participating members grow in faith, wisdom, and calling.

- Cohort style training
 - Individuals from different churches training in common areas together, or targeted training limited among several in one church
 - Some training options might allow for broad congregational equipping- for example, a book group on caring
- Seven fields of equipping to strengthen churches
 - Preaching
 - Worship leadership
 - Pastoral Care
 - Community & Service
 - Faith Formation
 - Leadership & Governance
 - Communication & Technology

Wider Support for Success

Fellow churches, the Plentiful Gifts Team and the NACCC support the congregation's journey

- Kick-Off/Site Visit with Forest Walk Consulting
- Monthly meeting with mentor and catalyst (NACCC Program Manager)
- Virtual and In-Person Retreats for the Participants

For more information on Plentiful Gifts, contact Rev. Scott Chase, NACCC Catalyst (Program Manager) at sgc.bts@gmail.com or 978-880-2628.