



THE CHURCH LEGACY INITIATIVE

***“Providing a legacy to make disciples
in this and future generations”***

The Church Legacy Initiative (CLI) is a ministry of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church, supported by a grant from The Duke Endowment. Its purpose is to assist churches in making faithful decisions about their future and providing a legacy which will help to make disciples in this and future generations.

The need for CLI is critical. The Western North Carolina Conference reports more than 500 churches which average 50 congregants or less in worship each week. Many of these congregations have been in decline over a period of years and have reached a critical time in the life of their church. They know they need help, but they often have very limited means and opportunities.

The ministry of the Church Legacy Initiative is to come alongside struggling churches and engage in a systematic process of discernment to help the members of these churches discern an appropriate path forward. Many churches may discern they have resources and realistic possibilities for revitalization, and they will make a full commitment to that faithful path. Some churches may determine that they do not have sufficient resources or realistic possibilities for revitalization and that becoming a Legacy Church is the faithful path for them to follow. These are important conversations and commitments for churches, but they can know they will be supported by CLI personnel offering wise and compassionate counsel. And, if a church should decide to become a Legacy Church, then a CLI team member will walk alongside the pastor and congregants offering them support throughout the journey.

CLI works collaboratively with District Superintendents and district Church Vitality Strategists to determine which churches should participate in the discernment process, to review progress, and to determine next steps. CLI plays an important role in the Church Vitality process for the Western North Carolina Conference as churches purposefully discern the faithful path God is calling them to follow, either for intentional revitalization of their own church or to provide a legacy which will assist with the revitalization of other churches and the creation of new faith communities. Through loving faithfulness in this new ministry, the Church Legacy Initiative will provide the WNCC with greater opportunities to fulfill our mission of following Jesus and making disciples who will transform our communities and the world.