STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2022
The 2020-2022 strategic plan is the result of an involved review of Alliance New England (ANE) and its efforts to fulfill the mission of catalyzing a movement of Gospel-centered churches and leaders across New England and around the world through collaboration & communities of faith that bring hope to every part of society. While not exhaustive, the plan captures the primary initiatives of ANE in its effort to create a culture of engagement, movement and multiplication. The efforts of ANE leadership over the last several years can be generally categorized into three seasons.

DEFINING REALITY

The first of these had to do with defining current reality. In 2010, 79% of ANE congregations were in notable plateau and decline by the friendly metric of having not grown by 5% over a period of three consecutive years. The level of disengagement around gospel movement was alarming. The clarion call to leaders and congregations was engage or risk an unfortunate outcome of further decline or death. Indeed, many congregations did not survive. Local congregations and leaders were motivated to preserve their setting and any effort to engage them beyond this was met with skepticism or disinterest. Systemic issues that contributed to such a culture were identified and the full resources of ANE were directed toward reversing these. The role of ANE leadership was to create a culture of engagement around gospel movement and multiplication at a local, regional and global level. There was wide-spread doubt as to whether multiplication could occur within our region. A primary reason for this had to do with middle judicatory structure. In previous years ANE, not unlike other evangelical groups, had created a structure of dependence in areas where it should not have done so. There are appropriate places for dependence upon “the district”, but such outright dependence should not exist where it relates to kingdom multiplication. The movement of the gospel emanates from disciples who makes disciples, churches that plant churches and congregations that raise up, send and support the called ones. We had lost this historic emphasis and almost to our demise. ANE had an unfortunate track record of church planting and a use of resource that had not resulted in viable
congregations. As a district, we had not sent a C&MA global worker from one of our congregations in almost twenty years. This had resulted in waning confidence in ANE leadership and initiatives, and the accompanying resistance that can be imagined when a leader calls congregations to renewed engagement.

CREATING ENGAGEMENT

The next season left ANE leadership with the balancing act of addressing systemic issues within an organization that holds a long history. Wholesale efforts on the part of newly appointed leadership to reinvent the organization are typically ineffective and viewed as dismissive of historic values, accomplishments and process. At the same time, efforts to recapture the past are ineffective because during seasons of decline the organization typically fails to remain informed of trends sympathetic with its cause, or in our case, with what God is doing at this time in history. ANE leadership structured in a way that would create engagement around efforts where pastors and congregations could have the most confidence that engaging with “the district” and denomination were worthwhile efforts. Acts 1:8 became a guiding text for us and so when it surfaced as predominately as it has on a national level, this only enhanced the synergy we hoped to create with the larger Alliance family and its mission.

- Our initial efforts focused on global engagement which created a staff structure and model of reengaging congregations with Alliance ministry around the globe. Not only were we not sending international workers, our financial support of Alliance ministry had fallen to new lows and was declining each year. The good news is these efforts have borne great fruit. Two years ago ANE sent its first international worker with the C&MA in almost twenty years and we’re seeing a wave of people being prepared for ministry among the nations. Our giving to Alliance Ministries has hit historic highs and the establishment of Envision Providence has put an accessible rung on the ladder for congregations to have a cross-cultural experience that leads to further involvement with Alliance ministry throughout the world.

- At the same time, we created a plan for local engagement that assisted leaders and congregations in developing a pathway for disciple-making. Honest conversations resulted in admission on the part of congregational leadership that they seldom had an intentional approach to disciplemaking or their efforts had not proven to be as effective as they had hoped. ANE leadership undertook
extensive efforts to consider what resources would provide assistance in this area. It resulted in a two-year discipleship learning community that is in its third generation, lay leader workshops focused on discipleship, the development of a local church discipleship plan, weekly online discipleship sessions led by ANE staff, all of which provide a model that is scalable and effective for any size congregation in any cultural setting. One ANE staff member has taken this as a primary focus area and continued to train and resource leaders and churches throughout the region. These efforts have borne significant fruit and have informed the thinking of leaders in profound ways. ANE discipleship initiatives have required notable engagement and accountability. Participation by churches and leaders has reached 75.6%

- The remaining area of engagement revolves around church planting efforts throughout ANE. This has proven to be the slowest area for progress. The challenge has much to do with the mindset among congregational leaders that “bigger is better” and efforts to multiply the kingdom were sometimes seen as a threat to growth. Additionally, there was waning confidence around church planting efforts due to a poor track record. Finally, district structure and resource was being directed into global and local efforts and little remained to resource this area. However, during these preceding seasons much has been done to cultivate the soil for a regional expansion of the gospel and today we are poised to plant churches that will continue to plant churches. Enthusiasm and engagement for church planting is as high as it has been during the past ten years. Structures and people are ready to deploy throughout the six states of New England and the ANE staff structure has been reset to fuel this momentum. Such efforts are reflected in the organizational chart and stated initiatives of the overall plan.
TIPPING POINT

As Peter Drucker so famously said, “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” and where there is disconnect between the two, the mission of the organization invariably is compromised. The previous seasons were about disrupting the existing culture and this present season has everything to do with implementing strategies that tip ANE into even greater missional effectiveness. As the arrangement of ANE leadership has tenure attached to it, this will be a laser focus for the Superintendent’s remaining time of leadership. Support among ANE pastors and churches is as high as it has been in recent years and this credibility must be capitalized upon to cement the commitments necessary to sustaining a culture of multiplication and movement.

CONTEXTUAL DISCOVERIES

The Strategic Plan is written with our purpose in mind and through the lens of contextual discoveries made as we’ve worked among the churches and leaders of New England.

ACCESSIBILITY
- Resources need to be accessible to all, regardless of location, size or culture.

CATALYTIC LEADERSHIP
- Gospel-centered, catalytic leadership is our greatest asset.

COLLABORATION
- Collaboration increases effectiveness.

SUSTAINABILITY
- Sustainability is achieved when there is engagement at every level.

DEPLOYMENT
- Resources are best used for development & deployment, not subsidy.

ACCOUNTABILITY
- Mutual accountability is the right atmosphere.

PROXIMITY
- Proximity leads to relational influence.
ANE is arranged by geographic clusters of congregations for the purposes of building collective mission & relational connectedness among leaders and churches. At present there are five regional clusters within the district; New Hampshire Lakes & Maine; North & Central Vermont; Metro Boston, Cape & Islands and Rhode Island; Central New England; Connecticut. Where the term “cluster” appears, it is in reference to this grouping of congregations.

THE PROCESS

The process of drafting the ANE Strategic Plan included the following:

Current Reality
- Update & process current strategic plan
- ID areas of progress
- ID areas needing attention

7 Key Areas
- Does current staff structure support all areas?
- ID areas of strength
- ID areas needing attention

Key Leader Input
- Strategic Review Weekend with Key Leaders
- DEXCOM & LOCC Input
- Input from all Pastors in Fall Clusters

Draft Written Plan
- Revised Staff Structure & Position Descriptions
- Strategic Initiatives discussed & written

Review
- Ensure alignment between structure and initiatives
- Input from VPCM

Implement
- New structure effective 1/1/20
- Goals dates for key initiatives & milestones set
- Review progress annually & adjust
The ANE organizational chart reflects an updated structure that maintains a consistent focus on the seven key areas of emphasis for the work of our regional district.
Knowing that a picture is worth a thousand words, this image gives a glimpse of how we intend to facilitate movement among the leaders and congregations of ANE.
The ultimate measure of effectiveness for the work of ANE will be its ability to embed a culture of multiplication within the region. The reversal of decline that has been systemic for many years will only be reversed where disciples and congregations once again embrace the commission of Jesus to be a gospel-centered people who bring hope to every part of society. District efforts must fuel multiplication. Much can be said at this point about forms and trends and those should not be dismissed or denied. However, multiplication occurs where leaders and congregations elevate the work of Disciplemaking, Capacity Building & Mobilization (Todd Wilson, Multipliers).

Disciplemaking is achieved where a congregation has a clear and effective plan for equipping disciples to become discipllemakers. Upon entry to the community of faith, there must be a pathway that engages an individual in disciplemaking. You cannot expect the macro result of a movement without knowing how to turn the micro toward this stream.

Capacity Building is about the physical characteristics within an organization that enable future growth. Every organization builds capacity. The question is, “What type of capacity are you building?” Disciplemaking in itself does not guarantee multiplication. Where it results in growth without multiplication the inevitable is always subtraction. The work of ANE will be about building infrastructure and developing leaders that turn growth into going. We desire that our leaders and congregations build a similar culture within their local setting.

Mobilization assumes sent-ness on the part of each disciple and congregation and moves to the question of “Where are we sent?” It responds to the pragmatic objections toward
multiplication with an overwhelming culture of gospel values that *turn people into everyday missionaries who live deployed* for the kingdom of Christ. Where this occurs the church moves from having a cruise ship mentality to being an aircraft carrier that launches others on mission.

*Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

*Matthew 28:19-20*

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The ANE Strategic Plan was structured around the seven focus areas as discussed at Interchange 2018.
The strategic priority and centrality to mission of discipleship and multiplication are now embedded in the DNA of the district. Through prior efforts over 75% of churches in the district have engaged this foundational aspect of ministry. New initiatives are geared to engage the outlying 25% and to improve effectiveness for the 75% who have engaged by assisting them to move forward in their efforts.

- **ANE** will design a cohort experience to assist those who have been trained in or implemented disciplemaking methodology that will allow them to continue traveling together to continue their development, overcome barriers, and make necessary adjustments for their context. The cohort will be a place to learn together, experience community with other leaders and support each other.

- **ANE** will develop a portfolio of recommended disciplemaking resources for churches, to include discipleship methodology, tools, and other resources. Resources will be evaluated on basic characteristics that are most effective in discipleship efforts that multiply, and guidance will be provided on which resources meet those characteristics.

- An annual multi-day spiritual formation experience that gathers each spring and fall will be arranged to foster spiritual vitality among the leaders of ANE churches. The days will include a blend of prayer, worship, shared reading and experiences, along with teaching on the subjects of personal and corporate spiritual practices. A district ministry couple will co-facilitate the experience and provide leadership continuity in the absence of the Superintendent & spouse.
Each ANE Lead Pastor will be asked to draft an approach for instilling a consistent rhythm of prayer and “deeper life” emphasis that is personal and also for the congregation they lead. An online forum and resource portfolio will be created to provide pastors with ideas and resources that foster such dynamics among the people of God.

Shared experiences of prayer will be a part of the regularly scheduled gatherings of ANE and geographic clusters. Along with a prayer-focused communion gathering, the annual ANE conference will include a night of worship, with a prayer and deeper life focus that engages local congregations and the greater community.

A formal partnership will be established between ANE and a New England based counseling center that provides therapeutic services to licensed workers and families in need of emotional, relational and psychological support. This will replace an informal arrangement with a counseling center that is outside of New England that, while effective, has proven challenging to access due to distance and cost.

A portfolio of resources will be created to assist ANE leaders and congregations in finding supports for their personal well-being. The resources will be directed toward counseling referrals, support for sabbatical, financial planning, marriage health, addiction recovery, etc.
In cooperation with ANE, each geographic cluster will establish and resource a greenhouse church environment for the purpose of apprenticing a church planter. The planter will launch a new gospel community within 24 months of the start of the apprenticeship, ideally within the geographic cluster, or within one of the six New England states (three GHC have been established in CT, VT & NH and prospective apprentices are being interviewed for placement in these settings). This approach will allow five new church plants to be incubating at any given time throughout ANE over the next three years. The initiative will be reproduced to allow for a new church plant within each cluster every three to four years.

Through a cohort or coaching arrangement, the District Superintendent will secure additional training on leading a church planting movement. Simultaneously, he will develop a chosen group of ANE leaders in the areas of church planting and multiplication. The experience will be facilitated as a “think tank” with real and actionable objectives that engage these leaders and ANE congregations in planting gospel-centered communities throughout the region.

An annual “Renewing Your Church” cohort will be established to assist any pastor and congregation that falls into the plateau or decline category as determined by the ANE metric of less than 5% growth over a period of three consecutive years. Those meeting the metric will be expected to engage the ANE cohort or a similar initiative aimed at congregational development & sustainability. A proven “turn around” practitioner from within ANE will be
identified and trained to facilitate the cohort in the absence of district leadership or during the time of superintendent transition, allowing the cohort to continue as desired or appropriate.

An adapted form of the C&MA Fresh Start effort will be arranged among ANE congregations where it would be beneficial. This model may be used to bring renewal to a congregation in redevelopment status or where geographic proximity allows a healthy congregation to invest in substantive ways in a declining church body. The lead pastor of each congregation will participate in the “Renewing Your Church” cohort to provide shared direction, coaching and strategic focus for this mutual effort.

Any congregation classified as “developing” or “redeveloping” will be required to have their pastor participate in the “Renewing Your Church” cohort. This congregation will undergo a thorough review of its essential guiding documents to ensure alignment among governing efforts, staff structure and strategic initiatives. In conjunction with the cohort experience, district staff will facilitate a cultural health analysis of the congregation to identify dysfunction or deficiencies, and to ensure that renewal efforts are understood and clearly communicated. Metrics of effectiveness will be identified and worked toward so as to avoid a congregation remaining in non-accredited status longer than necessary.

To fuel growth and multiplication in the region, our efforts toward raising up indigenous, capable spiritual leaders in a strategic and mission-aligned way must be increased and improved. All efforts must take into consideration the perspectives, preferences and priorities of emerging generations, for they are the churches and leaders of today and tomorrow. New initiatives aim to take current efforts from episodic and piecemeal to organized, integrated and strategic.
ANE will develop a “Leaders are Learners” culture in the district. It will be a place where current leaders have impetus and opportunity to continue developing their capacity. To this end we will:

- Provide increased opportunities for current leaders to access on-going developmental opportunities in pivotal skill areas such as disciplemaking, strategic leadership, peacemaking, and communication. A variety of resources will be utilized, including district-led, C&MA-offered, and external sources.

- Leaders have been trained to think functionally – focused on generating and managing a cycle of activities within the church that are satisfying to members. We specifically need to grow our church leaders’ capacity to think strategically (Where is the church going? How will we get there?) ANE will develop and offer a more comprehensive, strategic resourcing system for local church leaders.

- Through appropriate field involvement, along with a training approach, the DS will identify, develop and equip leaders for district leadership roles, such as Superintendency, Multiplication Leader, etc.

ANE will work closely with pastors to identify emerging leaders in the district. (Emerging leaders can be any age – high school or newly retired; they may plan to enter or already be in vocational ministry, or they may not; they are ordinands and consecrants, “called ones”, lay leaders, and current or future global workers.) We will develop and implement pathways and opportunities for their on-going and holistic spiritual, personal and skill development.

ANE will initiate a thorough review of our ordination process to identify areas where improvement can be made in the training, mentoring and preparation of ordinands and consecrants for a lifetime of effective ministry.

Formal mentoring is one of the best tools for developing leaders that is currently underutilized in the region.

- ANE will develop a mentoring module to provide training and accountability for anyone mentoring current or emerging leaders including ordinands, multi-staff pastors, greenhouse pastors, and others.

- ANE will begin a mentor matching program that inventories skill/capacity areas for leaders in the district and matches them with other leaders seeking coaching or development in that area. The program will have guidelines,
expectations and structure to increase effectiveness and ease of utilizing the program for both mentors and mentees.

• ANE leadership will establish mentoring relationships for women in ministry roles which offer developmental opportunities that may be appropriate for female leadership or have been unavailable in previous times or structures.

In recent years, Global Engagement Pathways have been established utilizing collective partnerships with Alliance Missions, Envision Providence and International Envision sites. Since 2014 we have gone from 10% to 67% of churches that are involved in global partnerships. Most of these are partnering collectively with other Alliance New England congregations. Giving to Alliance Missions has increased. Numerous interns have been sent and we have more in the process of being sent, including five who are in an ALME arrangement. Though many of our churches are deeply engaged, we will continue building engagement with these strategic initiatives:

• Each year, pastors will be asked to use a template based on the five engagement quotients of relationship building, prayer, giving, sending and promoting to evaluate their global engagement. In an effort to create a common language, a global partnership engagement scale will be developed and communicated that establishes varying levels of engagement with Alliance Missions (i.e. Level 1 partners are engaged in at least one of the five engagements quotients, Level 2 partners are engaged in at least two quotients, etc.) District staff will work with pastors regarding their engagement level and resource them for even greater engagement in the future.

• ANE will sponsor and arrange vision trips to Alliance fields for emerging leaders who are feeling called to global vocational ministry. These trips will be designed to expose them to the work of an IW and provide training that will help them better understand what we do and why we do it. Trip frequency will occur as needed.
A portfolio of Alliance Missions global engagement training materials will be developed for use within ANE congregations.

- The training will be aimed at moving individuals and congregations along a proven pathway of global engagement. This training material will be used as field education on short term trips as well as in the local church to develop a greater understanding of global missions and an engagement with Alliance Missions in particular. It will be focused on the “why” & “how” questions of engagement with AM.

- Partnerships will be encouraged to hold an annual gathering of their congregations that fosters engagement with their Alliance field, including establishing a yearly shared initiative (i.e. resourcing an approved special, planning a short-term trip, providing member care, sending an intern, adopting a prayer focus, facilitating a field forum or participating in strategic review.)
A few years ago, at our annual gathering, ANE leaders were issued a call to action. It was not a call to give more or build bigger churches, it was a call to dream. Spirit-inspired dreams emerged throughout the room and within the hearts of those who had committed themselves to leading the church. In coming months these dreams took real form. They found their way to paper and before bodies of church leaders for consideration. They became the topic of conversation among ministry colleagues and with district personnel. Today, these dreams are coming true throughout New England and the world because leaders dared to believe God for something new. A wave of young leaders is being developed to lead Christ’s church outside of our nation. Multiplying environments are being established so churches can be consistently planted and disciples are making more disciples.

Recently, one ANE leader told me that when we began to dream together all he could see was a struggling sister congregation located a few miles down the road from the setting he leads. What he could not have known was that I was about to enter a time of lengthy discussion with the leadership of this sister congregation that resulted in them asking to be reclassified to developing status, allowing us to take responsibility for the renewal of the ministry. On more than one occasion, I sensed the need for this pastor to take a place of significant involvement with the struggling congregation. He and his leadership team unanimously agreed to do so! They hired an emerging ANE leader as an onsite campus pastor and this fall held the re-launch service after weeks of working to update facility and reset ministry structure. On October 20th I received a text update from the pastor telling me that 185 people showed up to worship, they were engaged and responsive, and the offering was more than double a typical Sunday. More important than the number of people or dollars is what happened in the hearts of those who were there that day after witnessing years of decline. They too will dream once again. They will dream of giving their sons and daughters to the cause of Christ, of bringing renewal to their city, of starting new churches throughout New England and sending the called ones to the nations.
It is a reminder that any plan begins with a dream. We dream of a day when there are more leaders and congregations in New England than we can keep up with. The initiatives of this plan are simply an effort to involve ourselves with the dreams we have been given from God. There will be goals that accompany each effort but the ultimate goal is the same as it has always been, bring Christ to the world. I am privileged to lead a team that is deeply committed to doing just that.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8