



# **ACTS 12:24 CHURCHES**

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LEADERSHIP TEAM HANDBOOK



N.E.S.T.

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N.E.S.T. HANDBOOK





The four stages of Acts N.E.S.T.  
Networking, Emerging, Stabilizing, Timing

- N**etworking  
a relational connection for churches to join together in mission to open new avenues for spreading the Gospel more effectively. In this network, church leaders are invited to regional and district gatherings as they deepen ministry relationships.
- E**merging  
a next step for new and existing churches establish the necessary organization structures as they progress toward affiliation status. The N.E.S.T. agreement solidifies your intention to become a member of the Acts 12:24 Churches and the Free Methodist Church.
- S**tabilizing  
a place where existing Acts 12:24 Churches can be located to address the organization and ministry needs for a hopeful return to full society status.
- T**iming  
The recognition that all Network, Emerging & Stabilizing Churches require a healthy place to prayerfully discern the church's next steps.





## **N**etworking

a relational connection for churches to join together in mission to open new avenues for spreading the Gospel more effectively. In this network, church leaders are invited to regional and district gatherings as they deepen ministry relationships.

### **Why Join a Network?**

Joining the Acts Churches Network can bring about significant benefits that not only enrich your church community but also extend its impact far beyond its walls.

#### **Here are six reasons why it's a good idea to consider this network:**

**Friends on Mission:** Just like Paul and Barnabas in the New Testament, who were sent out together to spread the Gospel (Acts 13:2-3), being part of a network means you're not alone in your mission. It's about joining hands with others who are equally passionate about making disciples, knowing that "two are better than one" (Ecclesiastes 4:9). This unity and partnership in mission can open new avenues for spreading the Gospel more effectively.

**Support and Encouragement:** Every church goes through highs and lows. Being part of a network means you have a family of fellow believers who can offer support, share wisdom, and encourage you during challenging times. It's like having Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms during battle (Exodus 17:12) – sometimes, we all need someone to help hold us up.

**Working Together to Advance the Gospel:** The early church modeled a powerful example of unity and shared purpose, gathering to pray, break bread, and share their possessions (Acts 2:42-47). Similarly, a network of churches combines resources, talents, and visions to advance the Gospel in ways that one church alone might not be able to.

**Celebrate What God is Doing in a Region:** Rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). When churches come together, they share stories of how God is moving in their communities, offering hope and inspiring each other to continue the work of the Kingdom. These celebrations become powerful testimonies of God's faithfulness.

**Accountability and Growth:** Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." Being part of a network encourages churches to grow spiritually, doctrinally, and missionally. It provides a structure for accountability that ensures the church remains true to its biblical foundations and mission objectives.

**Invitation for Acts 12:24 Affiliation:** Network Churches are not obligated to join the Free Methodist Church, however if Lord leads, this is the first step of discerning if affiliation is right for your church. Together, we can amplify our efforts to spread the Gospel and participate in the continuation of Acts 12:24, "But the word of God continued to spread and flourish."



# ACTS CHURCHES NETWORK

\_\_\_\_\_ acknowledges our participation in  
CHURCH NAME  
the Acts Churches Network, facilitating a cooperative relationship to advance the Gospel.

We agree to:

- **Mission Alignment:** The Church agrees to, and supports, the mission of the Acts Churches Network, which is the relentless pursuit of obedient disciples.
- **Participation:** The Church commits to actively participate in network events, activities, and initiatives aimed at advancing the Gospel both regionally and globally.
- **Support and Encouragement:** The Church will offer support and encouragement to other network members, fostering a spirit of unity and mutual growth.
- **Shared Resources:** Where possible, the Church and the Network will share resources such as training materials, mission opportunities, and ministry tools to benefit the wider body of Christ.

## Church Contact Information

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

## Church representative

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ PRINT NAME Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*This document is an acknowledgement of participation in a relational network. It is not a formal affiliation agreement.*

*Either party may terminate this relationship in its entirety, for any reason, at any time.*





This section is for the **Emerging & Stabilizing** Churches of the Acts N.E.S.T. (ACN) and is the pathway for affiliation with the Acts 12:24 Churches Conference and the Free Methodist Church.

## **N**etworking

a relational connection for churches to join together in mission to open new avenues for spreading the Gospel more effectively. In this network, church leaders are invited to regional and district gatherings as they deepen ministry relationships.

## **E**merging

a next step for new and existing churches establish the necessary organization structures as they progress toward affiliation status. The N.E.S.T. agreement solidifies your intention to become a member of the Acts 12:24 Churches and the Free Methodist Church.

## **S**tabilizing

a place where existing Acts 12:24 Churches can be located to address the organization and ministry needs for a hopeful return to full society status.

## **T**iming

The recognition that all Network, Emerging & Stabilizing Churches require a healthy place to prayerfully discern the church's next steps.







## **E**merging & Stabilizing Churches

**E**a next step for new and existing churches to establish the organizational structures as they progress toward affiliation status. The N.E.S.T. agreement solidifies your intention to become a member of the Acts 12:24 Churches and the Free Methodist Church.

**Stabilizing:** a place where struggling existing Acts 12:24 Churches can be located to address the organization and ministry needs for a hopeful return to full society status.

### **Church Status with Conference & Free Methodist Church**

We welcome, as part of Acts 12:24 Churches, the development of every new ministry started as a church. We count these new ministries as churches as the Kingdom of God expands here on earth. We empower every person the Spirit is leading to plant a new church. When the church planter is not an elder or candidate in the conference, the MEG provides the necessary guidance for such a ministerial outcome.

As new members, you are now an integral part of our conference, and we are excited to support you every step of the way as you mature and grow the Lord's kingdom in your community. Whether you are joining us with a wealth of experience or are just starting on your journey, know that you are valuable and we are excited to be friends on a mission.

Together, we have the opportunity to create meaningful change and leave a lasting impact on our community. By collaborating, learning from one another, and leveraging our collective strengths, we can advance to reach those who are far from God.

In the following pages, you will find everything you need to navigate your journey:

1. **Pathway for Affiliation and Society Status:** A description of some stages for your new church. Steps for your church to become a church plant project in Acts12:24 Conference.
2. **Roadmap for the Church (Church Circle):** This is a roadmap of what characteristics the church must have. This is a guide for a successful church.
3. **Five Strategies:** These are the strategies that were established by the apostles. For the church to be successful must teach and obey these simple strategies.
4. **Acts N.E.S.T. Agreement:** An agreement outlining the expectations, and responsibilities, ensuring transparency and clarity.

We are confident that these resources will provide you with the guidance and support you need to thrive in your region or community. Please remember that our doors are always open. Also, our R-Superintendent, regional district leaders, and MEG board members are here to support you and guide you every step of the way.

We are delighted to have you with us, and we look forward to growing, learning, and making a difference together.



## 4 Part Pathway for Affiliation

The Acts N.E.S.T. (ACN) is the pathway for affiliation with the Acts 12:24 Churches Conference and the Free Methodist Church.

### ○ Connection

In this stage, the church leaders attend regional and district gatherings as they deepen ministry relationships. The N.E.S.T. agreement solidifies your intention to become a member of the Acts 12:24 Churches and the Free Methodist Church.

### ○ Organization

In this stage, established churches confirm that they have healthy organization structure in place. Emerging churches form an official board, obtains an EIN, open a bank account, incorporate, and obtain insurance.

### ○ Participation

In this stage, the church demonstrates consistent participation in Acts 12:24 structures and systems. We get to know one another and build relationships, "Ministry advances along relational lines."

### ○ Celebration

In this stage, the church transitions out of the N.E.S.T. and gains official status with the Acts 12:24 Churches Conference and the Free Methodist Church.





# ROADMAP FOR THE CHURCH

## CHURCH CIRCLE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

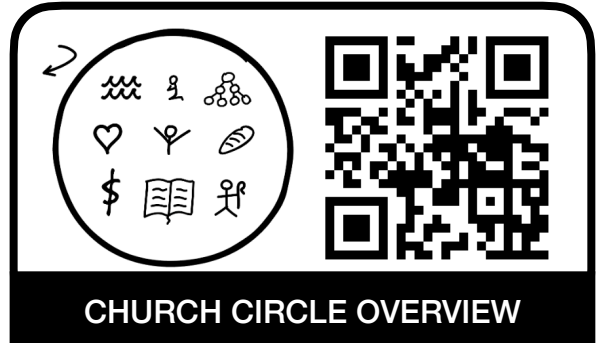
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_



CHARACTERISTICS		x	How we do it here...
1	<b>Repent &amp; Believe</b>		
2	<b>Baptism</b>		
3	<b>Prayer</b>		
4	<b>Discipleship</b>		
5	<b>Love</b>		
6	<b>Worship</b>		
7	<b>Communion</b>		
8	<b>Offering</b>		
9	<b>Bible Study</b>		
10	<b>Shepherding Leaders</b>		
11	<b>Belong</b>		



# 5 STRATEGIES

## CHURCH EVALUATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_




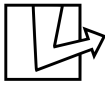
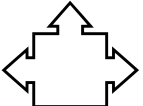
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Region: \_\_\_\_\_

5 STRATEGIES WORKSHEET		EVALUATION
1	 <b>Pray</b>	<p><b>How does your church saturate the work in prayer?</b></p> <p>What are your plans to prioritize and strengthen this area?</p>
2	 <b>Speak Out</b>	<p><b>What happens in your church that results in salvation and baptisms?</b></p> <p>What are your plans to prioritize and strengthen this area?</p>
3	 <b>Gather</b>	<p><b>What happens in your church that results in meaningful worship gatherings?</b></p> <p>What are your plans to prioritize and strengthen this area?</p>
4	 <b>Obey</b>	<p><b>What happens in your church that leads to transformed lives?</b></p> <p>What are your plans to prioritize and strengthen this area?</p>
5	 <b>Send Out</b>	<p><b>What happens in your church the results in the reproduction of disciples, leaders, groups, and churches?</b></p> <p>What are your plans to prioritize and strengthen this area?</p>





# N.E.S.T. AGREEMENT

We, \_\_\_\_\_, declare our intention to join  
the Acts 12:24 Churches of the Free Methodist Church, USA (FMCUSA) and bring our  
church to church plant status with all the rights and benefits this membership conveys.

CHURCH NAME

We agree to:

- Adhere to the Book of Discipline of the FMCUSA, including the polity, theology, doctrine, and oversight described therein.
- Faithfully submit to the structure and oversight of Acts 12:24 Churches, including pastoral oversight by the Acts 12:24 Conference Ministerial Education & Guidance (MEG) board.
- Faithfully participate in connectional giving by tithing to Acts 12:24 Conference.
- Participate in the life of Acts 12:24 Churches by attending required meetings and events such as district meetings and Annual Conference.
- Maintain a liability insurance policy as per the state and federal regulations and guidelines of the FMCUSA, listing Acts 12:24 Churches and FMCUSA as additional insured.

## Church representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acts 12:24 Churches of FMCUSA representative

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





# Pathway to Society Status

ACTS 12:24 CHURCHES

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>N.E.S.T. CONNECTION</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1	<b>Regular attendance at District Gatherings</b>		
2	<b>Signed N.E.S.T. Agreement</b>		

<b>N.E.S.T. ORGANIZATION</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1	<b>Completed "Church Circle" Worksheet</b>		
2	<b>Completed "5 Strategies" Worksheet</b>		
3	<b>Organized as outlined:</b> churchdevelopment.network/organize		
4	<b>Submitted proof of liability insurance policy</b>		

<b>N.E.S.T. PARTICIPATION</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1	<b>Demonstrate active participation in Acts Systems &amp; Structures</b>		
2	<b>Pastor in process in Ordination Pathway</b>		
3	<b>Regular attendance at Annual Conference, Regional &amp; District Gatherings</b>		

<b>N.E.S.T. CELEBRATION</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1	<b>Complete FMC Book of Discipline requirements</b>		
2	<b>Local Church Board affirms Acts &amp; FMC status</b>		
3	<b>Pastor appointed through MEG Board &amp; Conference</b>		
4	<b>ACN Coordinator recommends full church plant project status</b>		
5	<b>CPP status approved and recognized at Annual Conference</b>		



## Instructions for the Pathway Checklist

### #1 N.E.S.T. CONNECTION

#### Regular attendance at District Gatherings

- The church planter is expected to participate in district meetings and annual conference.
- The Regional Superintendent recognizes this new ministry as a church in development connected with Acts 12:24 Churches and introduces this new church to other nearby churches for fellowship and encouragement.
- A ministry visit for encouragement by the Regional Superintendent is suggested. This action materializes the conference's presence and relationship with every new ministry.
- Regional Superintendent communicates with the conference for database entry of the new church and its information

#### Signed N.E.S.T. Agreement

- Submit copies of church documentation to the conference office

### #2 N.E.S.T. ORGANIZATION

#### Completed "Church Circle" Worksheet

- Starts a new gathering. Communicate to the Regional Superintendent the information for the church plant.
- Submit Acts Connection Form (QR code).

#### Completed "5 Strategies" Worksheet

##### Organized as outlined: [churchdevelopment.network/organize](http://churchdevelopment.network/organize)

- Properly document it with the governing agencies: EIN, Incorporation, Bank account
- For convenience, fast service, and correct filing, we suggest contacting pastor Efrain Reyes for all incorporation and EIN documentation. There might be a minimal fee, but it will ensure documentation is filed as recommended in the Free Methodist Church USA. He is certified for such work and is approved to assist the conference in guiding churches with their government documentation process.
- Phone (862) 262-3481 (text or call) Email: [pastorreyes44@hotmail.com](mailto:pastorreyes44@hotmail.com)

#### Submitted proof of liability insurance policy

- Insurance is often under the mother church. As the ministry is formalized individual insurance is required (usually a renters policy for a church setting).
- Submit copies of church documentation to the conference office

### #3 N.E.S.T. PARTICIPATION

#### **Demonstrate active participation in Acts Systems & Structures**

- Starts giving a suggested amount towards the conference
- Continue developing the church for sustainable ministry
- Provides quarterly reporting to the Regional Superintendent
- Provides yearly reporting to conference

#### **Pastor in process in Ordination Pathway**

- Information online: [acts1224churches.com](http://acts1224churches.com).
- Menu Item > Ministry Resources > Pathway to Ordination

#### **Regular attendance at Annual Conference, Regional & District Gatherings**

### #4 N.E.S.T. CELEBRATION

#### **Local Church Board affirms Acts & FMC status**

#### **Pastor appointed through MEG Board & Conference**

#### **ACN Coordinator recommends full church plant project status**

#### **Society status approved and recognized at the Annual Conference**

- The conference provides organizational status, exempt status, and a church number.



## **T**iming

The recognition that all Network, Emerging & Stabilizing Churches require a healthy place to prayerfully discern the church's next steps.

**Prayerful Discernment:** Discernment and waiting on the Lord's timing are crucial aspects of a faithful and impactful ministry. Discernment allows us to seek God's wisdom and guidance in making decisions, ensuring that our actions align with His will and purpose. By relying on the Holy Spirit's leading, we can avoid potential pitfalls and stay true to the mission of advancing the Gospel.

**Patience and Trust:** Waiting on the Lord's timing teaches us patience and trust, recognizing that God's plans are perfect and His timing impeccable. This is not passive but active, filled with prayer, reflection, and preparation, enabling us to be ready for when God opens the right doors. Ultimately, discernment and timing are essential for fulfilling God's purpose efficiently and effectively, bringing glory to His name and strength to His people.