

## Thriving Congregations Partnerships

### Riverside Innovation Hub and the Minneapolis Area Synod

The Minneapolis Area Synod (MAS) and Augsburg University's Riverside Innovation Hub (RIH) are both launching opportunities for congregations to be a part of a two-year learning community. These opportunities are both funded by the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations grant.

The two initiatives will work in parallel for the five years of the grant. The hope is to learn with, beside, and from each other during the two, two-year cycles with distinct cohorts of congregational leaders. Both opportunities are for congregations interested in pursuing or deepening an orientation in their particular place, in relationship with the neighbor and neighborhood, leaning into God's promises and challenges that meet us there. The promotion and application processes are collaborative, through co-hosting information sessions and a shared application for congregations.

Each learning community will have two, two-year cycles of learning cohorts, composed of multiple congregations. The cohorts will be coached or facilitated by a staff member at each respective organization. Both learning communities will learn from and with each other, with shared learning Summits in the second year of each cycle of learning cohorts.

### Project Descriptions

#### RIVERSIDE INNOVATION HUB (RIH)

The Riverside Innovation Hub, stewarded by the Christensen Center for Vocation at Augsburg University, will learn and experiment with the Public Church Framework as a method for place based vocational discernment in the public square for the common good. This new opportunity is an invitation to congregations interested in pursuing or deepening this same orientation in their particular place, in relationship with the neighbor and neighborhood, leaning into God's promises and challenges that meet us there. The first learning community runs July 2021 – July 2023 and the second learning community runs September 2023 – September 2025. For more information on this project: [www.augsburg.edu/ccv](http://www.augsburg.edu/ccv)

#### MINNEAPOLIS AREA SYNOD (MAS)

Neighboring Practices and Faith Practices, stewarded by the Minneapolis Area Synod, will focus on faith practices and neighboring practices, because congregations connect best with their neighborhood when they practice their faith and they see with new eyes that God is already at work in their neighborhood. The first learning community runs September 2021 - 2023 and the second learning community runs September 2023 - September 2025. For more information on this project contact Nick Tangen ([n.tangen@mpls-synod.org](mailto:n.tangen@mpls-synod.org)).



**Riverside Innovation Hub**  
Augsburg University



**Faith Practices & Neighboring Practices**  
Minneapolis Area Synod

**Project Eligibility**

The RIH project is open to all Christian congregations within an hour of the Twin Cities Metro Area. Congregations outside this geographic area may apply but should know their experience in the project may differ slightly. Participation in the learning community will include bringing teams to Augsburg's campus 3-4 times a year (as COVID-19 allows.)

The MAS project is open to all Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) within the geographic boundaries of the Minneapolis Area Synod and African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregations within Minnesota.

**Project Distinctions**

- Focus: Place based vocational discernment in the public square for the common good through the Public Church Framework
- Three cohorts of four congregations (12 total) each facilitated by an RIH staff.
- Bi-Monthly meetings hosted by RIH, rotating between large group learnings events and cohort meetings
- Bi-Monthly congregational team meetings

- Focus: Faith practices and neighboring practices through Community Organizing
- Three cohorts of five congregations (15 total)
- Coaching for community organizing and Spiritual Practices
- Monthly meetings and four retreats
- Community Organizing Training

Both projects will lead and facilitate a regional Summit at the end of the two-year cohort experience.

**Application Timeline**

1. There is a joint application process for both projects that was released on Feb. 3, 2021.
2. Submit a letter of intent from the Senior Pastor. Accepted on a rolling basis.
3. The deadline for submitting the completed application is April 15, 2021.
4. Selected congregations will be notified on May 15, 2021 and have until May 28, 2021 to accept the invitation.
5. The first RIH learning community runs from July 2021 - July 2023. The first MAS learning community runs from September 2021 - September 2023.