



Northern Plains District District Superintendent Opportunity Profile

Evangelical Free Church of America

October 2019

The Northern Plains District (NPD) of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) is seeking its next District Superintendent (DS). This is a rare opportunity for an energized, inspirational leader to build on a healthy foundation, and to work with a region of pastors and leaders to make a transformational Kingdom impact.

OVERVIEW

After 11 years of faithful service, NPD Superintendent Daryl Thompson is retiring in March 2020. Daryl is a respected and faithful leader with a heart for pastors and a deep desire to see all district pastors thrive. As a former pastor in the region, he brought a unique, personal understanding of the small church pastor's realities which helped him build connections with others. He will depart with the appreciation of a grateful district.

Formerly part of the North Central District, the NPD stepped into independence in 1988 to provide more intentional support for churches in this region. The NPD consists of 35 churches in North Dakota, eastern Montana, northwestern Minnesota and northern South Dakota. Largely comprised of smaller congregations with an average attendance of 70-100 people, a handful of churches throughout the district average more than 200 attenders, and only four congregations draw between 500 – 1,000+ people to worship each weekend. In addition to the DS, the district employs a 20 hour per week administrative associate. Governed by a seven-member district board, the DS will report to, and work effectively alongside, this group.

Two-thirds of the NPD churches are located in the eastern one-third of the district near to the larger population centers, and one-third of the churches are located in the western two-thirds of the district. Geographically, churches are located many miles apart from each other so finding a way to build bridges and foster unity within the district is important. This starts with communication both in person and through technology, and carries into telling the stories of what God is doing, using media to help people connect and finding opportunities for churches to work or serve together. Each March, the district pastors and leaders are invited to participate in the Northern Plains District Conference, a key annual event that brings people together to strengthen personal connections, talk about district business, celebrate wins, inspire and motivate, and build relationships. It is essential that this conference be well-executed, relevant and meaningful.

It is important for the incoming DS to understand and appreciate the culture and dynamics of both large urban churches and smaller rural churches. It is also important for the incoming DS to understand and appreciate the dichotomy that exists within the district between the needs of smaller, rural churches and churches located in larger communities with access to more resources. Some pastors and churches feel isolated simply because of their location. Creating a sense of community, connection, meaning, and value for all congregations, pastors and lay leadership within the district will be an important priority for

the incoming Superintendent, one that will help to solidify the district's purpose and significance with pastors and churches moving forward.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Our varied landscape and demographics significantly influence the NPD culture. We have large urban communities in Bismarck, Grand Forks and Fargo with smaller towns scattered throughout the district. We have thriving businesses across the NPD, with agriculture being a foundational element of the regional economy. Both our economy and demographics are changing with the energy boom in the western part of North Dakota and dynamic business development across the state and region. The people of the district are hard-working and connect with those who know agriculture and other business sectors, like to hunt and fish, and are plain spoken. There is an independent, pioneering mindset that says, "I can do it myself." If the incoming DS is going to make an impact and be successful in this culture, he will have to make honesty, authenticity, reliability, wisdom, common-sense leadership, and follow-through the cornerstones of his relationships. The next DS must be comfortable in his own skin and able to engage with people in their unique context. Whether driving a tractor in a rural farm field, meeting a pastor over a cup of coffee in town, having a conversation with a business owner or executive, or working shoulder to shoulder at an outreach event, the incoming DS must be skilled in building relationships and initiating connections with people from many different kinds of backgrounds and contexts. Consistently relating to others with genuine interest, care and authenticity will set the stage for trust to grow.

The NPD is looking for a clear, shared vision for its purpose; one that all churches can understand and support. The NPD has been relatively stable over the years, but many pastors and church leaders express a desire to see existing churches multiply and new churches planted. There are many communities within the NPD that do not have an evangelical church presence, so the potential is real. The incoming DS will have an opportunity to spark fresh dialogue around how smaller or rural district churches can come together to participate in supporting church planting in a particular region, or to broker partnerships with larger ministries to accomplish more together for the Kingdom. Additionally, there is an on-going opportunity to find and recruit younger pastors with a passion for planting into the district, or to carry forward the ministries that have been established in smaller or rural communities as long-tenured pastors prepare to pass the baton of leadership.

Improving and enhancing effective, relevant communication is an ongoing challenge for the NPD. Resourcing new ways to foster connectivity and support pastors and churches through technology is an opportunity to explore. The DS will be called on to step to the forefront to communicate the vision for the district in ways that will inspire and motivate participation and missional alignment, helping create new avenues for pastors and churches to connect with each other, and work together to advance the work God has called them to. Establishing regular rhythms of communication, whether through technology or personal touches, will help the DS to build trust and affirm the value of each congregation, and to shepherd leadership in relevant ways.

The annual conference is well run and appreciated, but there is an opportunity for the incoming DS to innovate this gathering to increase attendance by helping the pastors who have not attended to recognize its value. Some suggested improvements include offering topical workshops on such topics as leadership development, conflict, management, succession planning and hot button issues related to current culture. These kinds of offerings may draw participation from church board members, associate pastors and lay leaders as well as senior pastors who have not previously engaged.

For the DS, knowing the stories of the pastors and their congregations will be vital. NPD pastors will appreciate a DS who knows them, cares about them and steps up to do the hard work of getting involved in difficult church situations when needed. They desire a DS who will proactively reach out with help, resources and prayer. Dedicating energy to revitalizing pastor cluster groups or taking the initiative to

bridge connections between pastors who have similar aspirations or who have gone through similar circumstances will be meaningful and helpful.

THE CANDIDATE

An exciting opportunity awaits the next DS as he takes the leadership reins. Pastors are looking for someone who can infuse the district with fresh energy, strengthen relational bonds with them, the lay leadership, and their congregations, and develop positive momentum toward church planting and multiplication in the region. The right DS will be a relational servant-leader who steps to the forefront to cast a refreshed vision for the untapped Kingdom potential that exists in the NPD, and creates an environment that promotes disciple-making and ministry multiplication.

The ideal candidate will possess a passion for each local church and sincerely desire to see it achieve its purpose and potential in its community. As someone who leads by example, the incoming DS is one who consistently points people to Jesus. Theologically trained and grounded in God's Word, the DS will be able to preach, communicate it effectively, and draw on it when counseling others. He will trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit as he prayerfully guides, challenges and supports others. The right person will be an outgoing leader who expresses a wise, mature leadership presence that inspires confidence as he reaches out to pastors, lay leaders and congregations to help them, care for them, and invite their participation.

The NPD pastors and lay leaders are looking for their next DS to be someone who is a servant-leader, one who will build relational connections, clearly articulate the vision and value proposition, and create an environment that promotes kingdom advancing initiatives. The right fit will work in concert with District Board and EFCA National Office to ensure the NPD is organized, aligned and effective. Able to develop and empower NPD staff and ministry teams, this leader will create and execute plans that reflect the steps necessary to accomplish objectives and achieve the greatest impact. He will then follow through to guide the NPD to take healthy risks to advance the Gospel in the region.

The incoming DS will use creativity to maximize resources and improve the quality and frequency of communication within the district. Quick to listen and eager to invite input, the ideal candidate will pace changes thoughtfully, being careful to honor the past, provide rationale, and attend to the input of those who have invested in the district over time. The next DS will be a learner, valuing best practices, but understanding how all good things must be contextualized to the culture, needs and expectations of this part of the world.

The Northern Plains District is ripe with opportunity to innovate and expand the good things that are already happening. The incoming DS will be able to have a shaping influence on taking what is good and elevating it to the next level. With the right person in place, the future is bright with possibilities.

Preferred Candidate Qualifications

- Clear understanding and support for the theology, doctrines and ethos of the EFCA
- Ordained, or willing to be ordained, in the EFCA
- Master of Divinity (or related degree) is preferred but is not required
- Strong demonstration of relational and influencing skills; organizationally adept
- Highly relational and gain energy from time with people
- Proven ability to mobilize both pastoral and lay leadership
- Adaptable and able to relate easily in a variety of contexts
- Open to frequent travel and a high degree of time on the road
- Enjoy the outdoors & winter

Inquiry Process

If interested, we would like to gather a more complete picture of you and your potential alignment with the District Superintendent position with the Northern Plains District. You are invited to submit the following information for consideration:

1. Your resume or CV (**in Word doc format only**)
2. Results of any personality or strengths assessments you have taken in the past three years (Ministry Match, StrengthsFinder, DiSC, Myers-Briggs, etc.)
3. A minimum of two links to audio or video recordings of a recent sermon or communication.
4. Five references, including: One supervisor or overseer (could be a board member), two or three staff associates, with at least one from someone you have supervised, and one or two personal. NOTE: *These references will be contacted later in the process and only with your prior approval.*
5. Written responses to the following questions (**in Word doc format only**). We believe that one can learn only so much from a resume. Your responses will help us to gain a more complete picture of you and your leadership:
 1. Please share an important part of your faith story and how that has shaped your call to ministry.
 2. Why do you aspire to serve as a District Superintendent? What about this opportunity draws your interest?
 3. How do you feel God has prepared you for this role? What specific strengths do you possess that will serve the Northern Plains District well if you were selected as the DS?
 4. Share two examples of your most innovative or creative experiences in ministry thus far. What made those experiences satisfying for you?
 5. What are your core strengths? How have you used your strengths to positively shape, elevate or change the organization you served?

Please submit your information to:

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