

TOP 50 CHURCH PLANTING TARGETS

Western States Conference of the Global Methodist Church

Criteria: receptivity to organized religion, population growth, conservative/traditional cultural, population density, and community age. This list is for non-ethnic churches and ranked by viability for a successful plant. States: AZ, CA, UT, NV, ID, WA, OR, HI, AK

| # | LOCATION | PLANTING RATIONALE |
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| 1 | Queen Creek, AZ | The strongest plant target in the conference. Queen Creek has explosive growth, a huge amount family-oriented activities, deeply conservative family culture, and a community actively looking for the kind of organized faith expression that GMC offers. Minimal traditional Protestant competition means a well-planted church here can become a community anchor quickly. This is the #1 immediate need. |
| 2 | Buckeye (Verrado / Festival Foothills), AZ | One of the nation's fastest-growing cities by percentage since 2020, with a conservative family demographic and master-planned community infrastructure that creates natural openness to organized church life. The sheer volume of new residents arriving without established community ties makes this one of the highest-potential plant environments in the West. |
| 3 | Maricopa (city), AZ | Growing at five times Arizona's statewide average with a conservative Pinal County base and a young family demographic that is actively building community identity. This area has exploded in growth over the past few years and has strong family values. Very low existing traditional Protestant competition relative to population size gives a new plant a significant advantage. |
| 4 | Folsom (East Folsom / Folsom Ranch), CA | The best overall plant environment in Northern California. This is a fast-growing, affluent, conservative-leaning area with a strong culture of organized community engagement and families who arrive expecting to find a church home. East Folsom and Folsom Ranch specifically represent the growth edge where new residents may not have been reached out to by existing congregations. |
| 5 | Surprise (Prasada / east-central), AZ | The Prasada corridor is one of the most active master-planned residential development zones in the Phoenix west valley, delivering concentrated waves of conservative families who are community-oriented and more receptive to churches. Large enough to sustain a growing congregation quickly and conservative enough that organized faith life is culturally expected. |
| 6 | Goodyear, AZ | Strong corporate investment is driving rapid, sustained population growth and drawing a conservative family demographic with high community engagement instincts, making this one of the most immediately plant-ready environments in the Phoenix metro. The combination of growth momentum and traditional values creates a wide open window for a quality traditional Protestant church. |
| 7 | Rocklin, CA | Placer County is the most reliably conservative suburban county in Northern California, and Rocklin combines that cultural lean with strong growth, high household incomes, and a family density that gives a plant real traction. The community engagement culture here means there is a great opportunity for a family-oriented church. |

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| 8 | Marana (Gladden Farms / Dove Mountain), AZ | Tucson's primary growth corridor is drawing conservative families into master-planned communities where traditional Protestant churches are few and far between in the growth areas. The Superintendent for the Western States planted a church for another denomination right outside this corridor 20 years ago and it became one of the fastest growing churches in that Conference. |
| 9 | Roseville, CA | Placer County's largest city brings the same conservative suburban culture as neighboring Rocklin with an even larger population base, sustained growth, and a long track record of supporting organized faith community. High household incomes and strong family density make this one of California's most viable plant environments. |
| 10 | North Phoenix (Norterra / Happy Valley), AZ | An established conservative family corridor in the far north Phoenix metro with high household incomes and a community culture that actively embraces organized faith expression. Strong population density and an underserved traditional Protestant lane give a quality plant room to grow quickly. |
| 11 | Murrieta / Temecula / Menifee, CA | The most church-receptive regional corridor in Southern California -- conservative by California standards with an existing Protestant culture that demonstrates the community is already oriented toward organized faith. Strong enough growth across this tri-city zone to support multiple plants, with Menifee specifically representing the most active new development. |
| 12 | San Tan Valley, AZ | This unincorporated Pinal County community adjacent to Queen Creek is growing rapidly with a conservative family demographic and virtually no organized traditional Protestant infrastructure relative to its large and growing population. A plant here captures the same cultural dynamics as Queen Creek at a slightly earlier stage of development. This would be a fantastic location to plant. |
| 13 | Meridian (Boise metro primary), ID | The primary growth suburb of one of the fastest-growing metros in the nation, with massive amounts of people moving from California, Washington, and Oregon. Many who have Protestant backgrounds who are actively seeking church community. Conservative, family-oriented, and large enough to sustain a substantial congregation with the right intentional transplant-targeting strategy. |
| 14 | St. George, UT | Unlike the Utah County corridor, St. George has a large and growing non-LDS transplant and retiree population from Arizona, Nevada, and California who are genuinely open to traditional Protestant church life. It resembles Arizona or Nevada more as a plant target than a typical Utah market. One of the fastest-growing small cities in the nation and significantly underserved by traditional Protestant options. |
| 15 | Henderson (West Henderson / Inspirada), NV | The Inspirada master-planned community anchors the most family-oriented and conservative quadrant of the Las Vegas metro, with new families arriving continuously who have not yet established community roots. This is an ideal window for a church plant as it is still in its explosive growth stage. Despite Nevada's broadly secular context, this specific corridor demonstrates strong receptivity signals. |
| 16 | Surprise (west of Prasad), AZ | The western extension of the Surprise growth corridor carries the same conservative family demographic and cultural lean as the Prasad zone, with slightly less developed. A plant in Surprise can see immediate growth, and still have an opportunity for explosive growth in the future. This is a solid location for a planter. |

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| 17 | Santa Clarita, CA | The most conservative large city in Los Angeles County by a significant margin, with an established family culture, meaningful existing faith community presence, and enough unchurched households to give a well-positioned GMC plant genuine traction. |
| 18 | South Jordan (Daybreak), UT | The Daybreak master-planned community has a significant and growing non-LDS transplant population of tech workers and relocating families with Protestant backgrounds who are actively looking for a church home in a community where traditional Protestant options are scarce. A plant strategy built intentionally around this transplant beachhead has real potential. |
| 19 | Summerlin (Village / active growth sections), NV | One of the top-ranked master-planned communities in the nation for three decades running, Summerlin's affluent family culture, continued high growth, high owner-occupancy rates, and strong community identity create the highest ceiling of any Nevada plant target. Harder to break into than Inspirada but with significantly more upside once a congregation establishes itself. |
| 20 | Lincoln, CA | A Placer County area growing faster than Rocklin or Roseville in percentage terms, with the same conservative community culture and lower market saturation. A plant here gets the Placer County advantage at an earlier stage of development. Conservative family demographic and strong community identity create natural receptivity to an organized church presence. |
| 21 | Casa Grande, AZ | Located at the Pinal County crossroads between Phoenix and Tucson, Casa Grande has a conservative demographic, steady growth, and affordable housing drawing young families with very limited quality Protestant church options for its growing population. The community's location as a regional hub gives a plant unusual geographic reach. |
| 22 | Enterprise (Mountain's Edge / Southern Highlands), NV | One of the fastest-growing communities in the nation with a population approaching 280,000, Enterprise's master-planned communities of Mountain's Edge and Southern Highlands are family-dense and community-oriented -- a large and underserved plant target hiding behind a Las Vegas mailing address. The family-focused culture of these specific communities is notably different from the broader Las Vegas context. |
| 23 | Gilbert (secondary corridor), AZ | Gilbert's secondary growth corridors has a robust conservative family culture and community engagement. A quality plant here benefits from established community infrastructure and a track record of faith community growth. |
| 24 | Bonney Lake / Tehaleh, WA | Tehaleh is one of the premier master-planned communities in the Pacific Northwest, drawing conservative families east of Tacoma into a purpose-built community environment where a well-planted church can become a foundational institution from the start. Our strongest Washington plant opportunity, the master-planned dynamic provides the concentrated new-resident audience that makes plants succeed. |
| 25 | South Reno (Damonte Ranch / South Meadows), NV | The most conservative and family-oriented quadrant of the Reno metro area, with master-planned communities drawing California refugees and Nevada transplants who prioritize quality schools, organized community, and faith as core lifestyle values. The Damonte Ranch and South Meadows corridors represent a genuinely different demographic profile than broader Reno. |

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| 26 | Post Falls, ID | Kootenai County is among Idaho's most politically conservative regions, and Post Falls is attracting a steady stream of Pacific Northwest transplants who tend to be more church-receptive than the Idaho LDS baseline which we feel is an ideal demographic for a GMC plant. Fast-growing and underserved by traditional Protestant options relative to its population trajectory. |
| 27 | Camas, WA | The most conservative and affluent suburb on the Washington side of the Portland metro area, with Clark County's traditional political and cultural values providing a great church-planting environment in Washington state. High owner-occupancy, strong family density, and a community culture that organically supports organized faith expression. |
| 28 | Anthem, AZ | An established master-planned community north of Phoenix with a conservative, family-dense population and solid physical and community infrastructure. Mature enough to support a plant immediately with significant unchurched households representing real mission potential. The community's strong identity and organized lifestyle culture make it naturally receptive to a quality congregation. |
| 29 | Brentwood, CA | One of the more conservative sections in the Bay Area's outer ring, Brentwood has been growing steadily with families priced out of closer-in suburbs who bring community expectations and faith instincts unusual for the California Bay Area context. Low competition with traditional Protestant churches and a community culture oriented toward family and stability. |
| 30 | Prescott Valley, AZ | Yavapai County is one of Arizona's most reliably conservative regions, and Prescott Valley's steady growth with a mix of retirees and younger families produces a community where organized faith life is culturally expected and actively sought. Underserved by quality traditional Protestant options relative to the genuine demand that exists in this community. |
| 31 | Ridgefield, WA | Clark County's fastest-growing community is drawing young conservative families who specifically choose to live where their values are shared while commuting to Portland, a community self-selected for traditional values and organized community life. A church plant here is swimming will find less resistance than other areas in Washington. |
| 32 | Nampa (north / new developments), ID | Canyon County is growing fast and Nampa is its primary area. More affordable than Meridian, drawing working-class conservative families who are church-familiar even if not currently attending and who respond well to a quality plant with genuine community roots. Lower competition than the Ada County corridor gives a plant more room to establish itself. |
| 33 | Wheatland, CA | An early-stage Yuba County area with a conservative demographic, very low traditional Protestant competition, and the kind of ground-floor positioning that rewards a patient long-term plant strategy ahead of the growth curve. The community's trajectory and cultural lean align well with GMC's Wesleyan expression. This could be a significant plant. |

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| 34 | Lacey, WA | The military-adjacent demographic around Joint Base Lewis-McChord creates a highly church-receptive population in the Thurston County growth corridor. Military families are among the most intentional church seekers of any demographic and provide a reliable founding base for a new congregation. A well-planted church here quickly becomes a community anchor for a transient population in need of roots. |
| 35 | Oro Valley, AZ | Tucson's most affluent suburb is politically conservative, high-income, and ready for a quality traditional Protestant plant with very little existing competition in that lane. High giving capacity and an established community culture create a strong foundation for a plant that is intentional about engaging both established residents and the younger families moving in. |
| 36 | Idaho Falls, ID | Eastern Idaho's primary metro is conservative and growing, with a significant non-LDS and nominally Christian population that is genuinely underserved by quality traditional Protestant options. A viable plant with the right planter who understands the LDS cultural landscape and can speak to people navigating it. The community's strong faith familiarity means the concept of organized church life needs no explanation. |
| 37 | Eagle, ID | The most affluent suburb in the Boise metro with strong conservative values and significant influx from states with deep Protestant traditions, family-oriented, community-engaged, and distinct enough from Meridian to warrant its own plant strategy. High household incomes and an established community culture give a quality plant real financial and relational runway. |
| 38 | Snoqualmie / North Bend, WA | The I-90 corridor east of Seattle is growing with families priced out of Sammamish who tend to be more traditional than the Seattle suburban norm. A better cultural fit for a GMC plant than most of the broader Seattle ring. Growing fast enough and conservative enough that a well-planted church can find its congregation without fighting the surrounding culture at every turn. |
| 39 | Lake Stevens, WA | The Snohomish County growth corridor is expanding with working-class and middle-class conservative families who are more traditionally minded than the Seattle metro area and they bring church familiarity from their communities of origin. A modestly sized but genuinely receptive market with low existing traditional Protestant competition. |
| 40 | Hillsboro (West / South), OR | New residential development in south Hillsboro creates a genuine plant window in Oregon's most economically active suburb, with conservative and Latino evangelical pockets that demonstrate real receptivity despite the state's broadly secular context. This is our strongest Oregon opportunity. The transplant population arriving in new development brings faith expectations the existing church landscape cannot meet. |
| 41 | Sammamish / Issaquah Highlands, WA | Affluent, family-dense, and with a strong community engagement culture -- but the progressive cultural lean is significant and requires a planter with exceptional cultural intelligence and a longer timeline before reaching critical mass. The unchurched family population is substantial enough to build on, but success here demands patience and strategic positioning. |

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| 42 | Wilsonville, OR | The most viable plant target in the south Portland metro corridor, with a more conservative profile than inner Portland suburbs and enough new residential development to provide a real growth window for a quality plant. A planter who can thrive in a secular environment will find more receptivity here than anywhere else in the Portland metro. |
| 43 | Bend, OR | Leans progressive as a whole but has meaningful conservative and outdoor-faith-community pockets, and fast enough growth that a well-positioned plant can find its congregation among the traditional-values population that is part of every rapidly growing Western city. Best suited for a planter with strong relational instincts who can build community organically. |
| 44 | Marysville, WA | A working-class conservative community in the Snohomish County corridor with strong family density and a community culture more receptive to organized faith than the broader Seattle metro. A steady, reliable plant opportunity. Low competition in the traditional Protestant lane gives a plant room to establish quickly. |
| 45 | Yelm, WA | A rural-suburban Thurston County community growing with military families and working-class conservatives who are underserved by any quality Protestant church presence and naturally receptive to a well-planted congregation that invests in community. The military-adjacent demographic provides a founding population with strong church-going instincts. |
| 46 | Kapolei / Ewa growth corridor, HI | Our best Hawaii opportunity by a clear margin. This is the fastest growing corridor on Oahu with a military-adjacent demographic and newer families without deep traditional Hawaii religious ties who are genuinely open to organized faith community. Plant expectations and timeline must account for Hawaii's broadly secular cultural context, but the demographic signals here are the strongest on the island. |
| 47 | Kailua-Kona, HI | An active faith community ecosystem driven in part by YWAM and other parachurch organizations gives Kona more spiritual openness than most of Hawaii, creating a beachhead population that is already oriented toward organized Christian community. A viable but challenging plant target for the right planter with strong relational and community-building skills. |
| 48 | Saratoga Springs / Eagle Mountain, UT | Explosive growth is happening here, but the LDS social gravity is intense and the non-LDS transplant population that represents the realistic plant audience is a small minority of the total community, making this a 5-7 year horizon plant requiring a planter with deep LDS cultural literacy and genuine patience. The opportunity is real but the timeline and difficulty level are significantly higher than most of this list. |
| 49 | Lehi (Silicon Slopes corridor), UT | The Silicon Slopes tech corridor is drawing non-LDS professionals with Protestant backgrounds, but the LDS social infrastructure is so dominant that breaking through requires exceptional intentionality and a planter who can speak fluently to people navigating faith transitions. A long-horizon plant that belongs on the strategic radar but not in the near-term priority queue. |
| 50 | Wasilla, AK | Deeply conservative and church-familiar, making it culturally receptive to a GMC plant, however Alaska's near-flat population growth and the logistical cost of conference support must be weighed carefully against the strategic investment required. Wasilla is on this list as a long-term strategic positioning plant rather than a near-term priority. |