

# Latinx Ministry Strategic Plan 2020

Prepared for: Rev. Lisa Batten, Young Adult Ministries, Sonya Luna, Missionary for Hispanic/Latino Ministry  
Rev. Elizabeth Hill and Rev. LuAnn Rourke, Heritage District Superintendent, Rev. Charles Boayue, Greater Detroit  
District Superintendent, and Rev. Margie Crawford, Midwest District Superintendent

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## OVERVIEW

Create a Strategic Plan and Strategy for Latinx Ministry in the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church for eighteen months July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. This specific timeframe reflects the unique moment as the General Conference has been delayed to fall 2021 and the National Strategic planning happens in connection with the GC. Reflecting the current National Strategic Plan and Strategy of 2017-2020, the focus of this plan will be Latinx young adults in Michigan.

To be clear, this is not a comprehensive plan, but rather a particular focus on Latinx young adults for three specific reasons. First, the median age of Hispanic/ Latinos in Michigan (and similarly in the United States overall) is twenty-four. Second, most of our churches, both majority Caucasian and Latino/Hispanic churches have a median age that is significantly higher and is not currently serving Latinx Young Adults reflective of the demographic information overall. Third, the strategy put forth in this document is for a discrete timeframe for an unprecedented moment. This plan seeks to respond to an unmet need for a large and growing demographic, Latinx young adults. This plan encourages collaboration across campus ministries, district ministries and reflects the digital shift all ministries have made. Through heightened online presence via the digital resource hub and ongoing Zoom connections, we may connect with a younger demographic previously we have not consistently addressed.

Review of the plan will focus specifically on the following three districts who have requested the recommendation and rely on collaboration with Campus Ministries in the districts:

1. Rev. Elizabeth Hill and Rev. LuAnn Rourke, Heritage District Superintendent
  2. Rev. Charles Boayue, Greater Detroit District Superintendent
  3. Rev. Margie Crawford, Midwest District Superintendent
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## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

### Latinos 2025 Demographic Summary

The demographic study of Michigan State University provided some overview information for the Latinx communities predominantly in that region but similarly reflected for the state as a whole. Areas specifically identified with sizable Latino communities were: Southwest Detroit, Pontiac Auburn Hills, as well as downriver communities of Lincoln Park, Allen Park, Melvindale, and Taylor with 11% of Latinos in Michigan living in Detroit, 2/5ths live in Southeast MI (which is the area of the Latinos 2025 study) and is seven counties: Wayne (especially Detroit), Oakland (especially Pontiac), Macomb, Washtenaw, Monroe, St. Clair and Livingston.

The study looks at the critical needs of Latinos, to assess the well-being of Latinos in MI and SE MI by identifying community issues impacting daily life in particular and in common with other populations. The study identified six areas of focus that may provide a starting point for conversations around relevant mission needs: education, economic well-being, health and health behaviors, civic engagement, community well-being and immigration.

Latinos are the growth demographic in the state of Michigan. While the total population in Michigan overall has been decreasing since 1990, between 1990 and 2013 the Latino population has increased each year. Specifically in SE MI, the Latinx population has grown about 40 percent while the total population saw a decrease of 3% between 2000-2013. In Detroit, the total population decreased 27% and saw an increase in the Latino population of 11% between 2000-2013. Latinos are not only the fastest growing population in the state of Michigan, they are the only growing demographic in the state of Michigan. The Latino population is younger, more diverse, has a smaller divorce rate. Latinos include folks from different Spanish-speaking countries though a majority are Mexican origin (74%) in Michigan.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Create a culture of inclusion through the connectional ministries of local churches starting in Heritage, Midwest and Greater Detroit districts. Churches who are interested in the work of anti-racism can build cultural competence and fluency being in partnership and learning about culturally appropriate ministries that may be added to the local church. Together they might have conversations about reaching young adults, a struggle for many congregations across ethnic lines. Specifically, many young adults are looking for spaces that are ethnically diverse and all of the congregations have the possibility to reach an age demographic that they are not currently serving or in numbers that they'd like.

Two predominantly white congregations committed to anti-racism work and one predominantly multi-ethnic or Latinx congregation. In each of the districts programs could include intentionally partner with each other over a specific time period committed to anti-racism and creating Latinx culturally inclusive worship and ministry offering in all three congregations. This could include three existing churches or two churches partnering to plant a third. This could include joint or individual offerings where planning is coordinated together to host las posadas, Dia de los Muertos altars, or quinceañera preparations as well as learning bilingual prayers, music and theologians influencing weekly worship. The hope is that the three congregations will all increase their Latinx membership in the congregation and especially Latinx young adults.

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## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

### MISSIONS

There are many service opportunities that the church may engage in together or individually that would both allow for deeper partnerships between the congregations as well as the local community outreach. Here are some examples:

- Programming to support bilingual/bicultural programming in schools
- Wellness opportunities including physical activities for communities, health screenings, options for food/ community gardening
- Education for clergy in Michigan of cultural celebrations honoring Latino heritage and culture in our worship and gatherings both secular and sacred
- Partner with community organizations that are currently engaged in work that churches could learn and participate alongside

### PLANTS

#### Latinx New Church Starts focusing on median age of 24

The hope to reach Latinx young adults may include a new church plant in one or all three districts with support from the conference and greater community to begin. Below is a sketch of the expenses and possible funding sources to begin. Some church start ups also include an outreach opportunity, such as owning a thrift store, tutoring center, or other service to the community that could also generate a modest income to support the ministry of the church.

Expense	Purpose	Cost
Pastoral Compensation	Pastor wages, pension, health care and housing	\$ 75,000
Staff	Worship Leader and Children's ministry part time	\$ 14,000
Church Building	Rent a storefront or hosted in current UMC	\$ 14,000

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Expense	Purpose	Cost
Adult Program expenses	trainings, supplies, out-reach	\$ 5,000
Marketing	Printing, banners, advertising	\$ 5,000
Children's Ministry/ Child Care	Supplies, furniture, programming	\$ 4,000
Worship Supplies	Lap top, AV, music license	\$ 3,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 120,000</b>

### Sources of Income

Anticipating that giving from the congregation initially could be low. Additional support could come through grant writing, a church plant grant, GBHEM or other general board entities, or soliciting donors of folks committed to racially inclusive ministry.

### Wesley Foundation Plan

Continue holding anti-racism book discussions, dialogue around equity and race.

Conversation around demographics of students of color engaged in leadership and participants in the ministry as well as board leadership.

Consider collaboration opportunities on campus with Latinx student groups, Latinx faculty and be in spaces that Latinx students currently are engaged.

Create space for culturally relevant worship elements

# LatinxT Movement

*#2. Planning and implementation of the LatinxT Retreat in consultation and coordination with Missionary for Latino/Hispanic Ministry and Young Adult Ministries leadership.*

The Retreat scheduled for June 2020 has been postponed until possibly 2021 or at which time there is option to hold an in person retreat for the Michigan Conference Latinx Young Adults. The planning for this retreat will resume sometime in the fall of 2020.

Since there is no current focused ministry for this demographic, the committee has shifted energy to plan a six week online series to introduce the three main emphasizes: Spiritual, Self and Community/Activism.

Recruitment and publicizing for this new ministry area will be Campus Ministry, Latino/Hispanic churches, and participants of the HYLEA program who have graduated from high school. The six week series will be offered on Zoom, recording the presentation portion when able to also offer this as a resource in the toolbox of the website. I offered the first presentation entitled, “God Does Not Want Your Hustle,” focusing on Sabbath practices for resilience and self care. Include an overview of the presentations and presenters. **Evaluation:** Include summary of the actual event -participants (total and make up), impact? Invitation to something next? Capture contact list? Follow up?

## LatinxT Retreat Overview

A group of Latinx/Black young adults will participate in a week long retreat that includes elements of rest including spiritual direction, Taize, labyrinth walking, space to create art, spoken word and storytelling, visio divina, yoga, breath prayer, meditative word prayer, guided and independent silence, each committing to a minimum of thirty minutes of personal devotion. The retreat will be ideally in person, but flexible to offer digitally as necessary during Advent or Lent and in the midst of regular daily schedules including family responsibilities, class, study and work. The week will begin with a meal and worship on Sunday evening, each participant committing to daily (Monday-Friday if

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digitally or over a three day weekend if in person) individual spiritual direction, at least thirty minutes of daily prayer, then a concluding worship and meal the following Sunday.

The retreat will have a booklet given at the meal (or via email) that includes an introduction to embodied spirituality, practices and scripture for each day of the retreat, and space for journaling. Each day will also offer practices within the chapels on campus (or local options for reflection), Zoom worship/practices to allow for communal worship. If in person, one chapel will have a labyrinth set up for the entire week of the retreat available for use communally and individually. The predominant approaches to theological reasoning and a theological method is theology in the vernacular and Praxis theology. A hope will be a theological grounding of sabbath and rest as spiritual practices essential to a mature adult faith. Additionally, it will be an introduction to decolonizing theology and centering the gospel through the marginalized lens. This is inclusive of Latinx, Black and Queer practical theologies including queer Latinx theologian Dr. Robyn Henderson Espinoza, queer women of color Rev. Mihee Kim Kort and Rev. Dr. Pamela Lightsey and Black theologian Rev. Dr. Barbara Holmes.

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# Latinx Ministry Digital Resource Hub

## SUMMARY

*3. Latinx Ministry Bibliography for clergy and conference leadership that may inform trainings and ministry growth for Latinx Ministries.*

### Goals

To produce a digital resource hub that will meet the unique needs of the Global Pandemic Covid-19, addressed the identified needs in the contract and build a positive and productive community of practice around Latinx Ministry for the Michigan Conference and beyond.

### Solution

Offer a website that hosts resources for Wesley Directors, local church pastors and laity with the following: training modules, Zoom connection, bimonthly worship offering Sabbath rest for church leaders, and LatinxT movement development that highlights Latinx voices across Michigan and nationally.

### Why Now?

The Latinx Ministry Strategic Plan for the MI Annual Conference is in process to be used for the time in between the National Plan cycles focusing on meeting a younger demographic. The Strategic Plan will be created for July 2020 through December 2021 due to the General Conference postponement.

Due to the pandemic, churches are feeling under resourced for a digital only connection with faith communities. Ten weeks in, the Michigan UMC Annual Conference has impressively created many resources, trainings, and gatherings for the local ministry sites to address the changing needs of the church. My hope is for the Latinx Ministries to join in this exciting time and provide culturally appropriate resources for the Latinx population as well.

Due to the current unprecedented time in the midst of the Global Pandemic, churches need digital resources right now. Many churches were not creating digital content prior to March

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2020 and as an Annual Conference we can best support the ministries of our local ministries through the creation of a central digital hub that includes bilingual and culturally relevant resources. Currently everyone is remote and a live digital space draws people into a place to gather, offer support and supplement what the local churches are providing. Some of the digital resourcing can think about options that may be used by families who may not have regular access to the internet as well for local ministers to print and provide to their communities.

### **Project Outline of Identified Needs**

The website can be the place for the terms of the contract to live and be accessible to anyone –conference staff, lay leaders, local churches and Wesley Directors as well as connect the Annual Conference to national conversations.

- Host the LatinxT Movement resources that lead to the LatinxT retreat
- Host the Strategic Plan and a rationale for this unique 18 month strategy, keeping current with the needs of our community
- Links to umcom, Marcha, and other UMC Latinx national resources as well as a Spotify playlist, podcasts, mental health and immigration resources, connections to missions
- Connections to training modules for anti-racism, church leadership and mentorship, and clergy excellence

### **Live Digital Space -Relevance for the Future**

The current reality for all ministries within the Michigan Conference is seeing that we are creating content for a digital presence in the immediate need while people are social distancing will continue to be a resource and need of the church when we return to gathering in person. Leaders in faith communities are connecting with those who are shut in, or have moved away in digital platforms and this also offers opportunities for folks across the conference to gather in real time without travel expenses.

As Latinx community is around 5% of the total population of the state, many can feel isolated in the local community and connecting on a digital platform can create space to connect and learn, grow in faith on college campuses, in our homes and take a five minute break at work. I am hopeful that this resource will exceed the needs we are even able to name at this time.

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I propose that we create a website that is the home of a variety of resources including training, prayer/meditation, bilingual and Spanish language worship resources, blogging from Latinx voices across the country and developing a stronger connection between the local churches in the state. The website could boost support for clergy excellence, local churches, missions, Youth and Young Adults, and Anti-Racism training.

#### DIGITAL HUB BUDGET

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Cost
Square Space	12	\$ 18	\$ 216
Honorariums for bloggers	25	\$ 50	\$ 1,250
Rights to music/musicians	10	\$ 150	\$ 1,500
Funds allocated to creating the hub		\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 4,466</b>

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## WEBSITE RESOURCES

[latixbibliography.org](http://latixbibliography.org) Search resources from Patinx theologians, a resource from ACHTUS, The Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States, an association of scholars dedicated to promoting research and critical theological reflection within the context of the U.S. Hispanic experience.

The Journal of Hispanic/ Latino Theology (JHLT) published by ACHTUS

Hispanic/ Latino UMC Authors  
Justo Gonzalez, The Story of Christianity

Hispanic Theological Initiative [hit.ptsem.edu](http://hit.ptsem.edu)

## PODCASTS

[htiopenplaza.org](http://htiopenplaza.org)

Examples of Topics

“Leadership and Youth Development in Local Congregations” Journeys Newsletter, February 2020. Dr. Elizabeth Tamez Méndez, Dr. Matilde Moros, and Dr. Daniel Ramírez share their *testimonios* <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/leadership-and-youth-development-in-local-congregations>

Stephen Rocco DiTrolio and Dr. Lauren Frances Guerra, “Millennial Latinxs Reconnect with Ancestral Wisdom” <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/millennial-latinxs-reconnect-with-ancestral-wisdom>

“El Grito del Silencio: La Rda. Dra. Loida Martell Agudiza el Oído Hacia Dios” <https://www.htiopenplaza.org/content/el-grito-del-silencio>

## LATINX CULTURE PODCASTS

@LatinatoLatina

@LatinoUSA executive producer and award-winning journalist Maria Hinojosa is the anchor

@basicbrownnerds

@SomosPadres -philosophy that parenting is a form of spiritual and personal development

@waitholduppod Wait, Hop Up podcast offer the perspective of two Latina journalists Yarel Ramos and Jessica Molina

@BeatLatino

The Latin American History Podcast

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Espejos de Aztlan -NPR Podcast focusing on Latinx social and political landscape

Emotions in Harmony podcast with Dr. Carmen Roman -mental health

Latinx Therapy podcast by trauma therapist Adriana Alejandra Alejandre

Latinx on the Rise hosted by Annabel Garcia Torres

¿Que Pasa, Midwest? is told in a bilingual format and also pushes on the 1.5 generation to reconnect with their roots.

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