



An Introduction To The ARC

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VISION

To see churches and leaders on the radical edge with God, kicking at the darkness until it bleeds daylight so the people of God live into their destiny as world changers, and the least, the last and the lost are touched by the love of God.

MISSION

To be a network committed to creating and sustaining an atmosphere beneficial for kingdom relationships, transformation, and mission.

IDENTITY

We are a network of kingdom friendships and strategic relationships among leaders and churches who:

- Live under the lordship of Jesus Christ and are radically dependent on the Holy Spirit
- Are kingdom-driven
- Embrace a convergence of the evangelical, charismatic, and sacramental streams of the Christian faith
- Are united by shared mission and vision
- Appreciate a shared Lutheran heritage

WHY A NETWORK LIKE THE ARC?

A BAND OF BROTHERS AND SISTERS – There are pastors and congregations who are looking for:

- A band of brothers and sisters who help one another stay equipped and focused on the mission at hand
- A band of brothers and sisters who will stand shoulder-to-shoulder, giving courage to one another as we engage in the great cosmic conflict of our age, because courage has a relational component to it
- A band of brothers and sisters who can pick us up and help carry us through seasons of life that are challenging, discouraging, and painful
- A band of brothers and sisters who will not let us settle for anything less than all God has for us
- A band of brothers and sisters who will not shame or discard us when we dare to bring things we've kept hidden in the darkness into the light of God
- A band of brothers and sisters who know that together we are a force to be reckoned with

A FAMILY OF DESTINY – There are pastors and congregations who are looking for:

- A family sharing their passion for Jesus and advancing His kingdom in our world
- A family committed to walking with each other, spurring one another on to do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission
- A family of friends and fellow followers of Jesus who are “closer than a brother”
- A family that is larger than our local family
- A family that is loving on pastors and leaders

COMING HOME – There are pastors and congregations who:

- Feel like they have been in a far country and want to come home
- Want to be ***celebrated, not tolerated***, for being fully evangelical, Spirit-empowered, and sacramental

A FRESH WIND OF FREEDOM – There are pastors and congregations who want to be free to:

- Walk in unity, not uniformity
- Discover and live out God's kingdom assignment for our lives
- Hear and follow God's voice
- “Do the stuff” and not become entangled in unnecessary hierarchical and bureaucratic encumbrances

BELIEFS

This We Believe

God is One, revealed in the Scriptures as three persons, the Father, the source and creator of all, the Son, our Savior and Lord, and the Spirit, who calls us to faith and empowers us for effective service.

Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, through His virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death on our behalf, and resurrection from the dead, offers eternal life to all who believe. We are justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, and the same grace that saves also empowers for victorious living.

The whole human race has fallen and cannot be rescued from bondage to sin and to Satan without Christ.

The Word of God, the Bible, is true, and we can therefore trust in it without reservation. We accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired and revealed Word of God and joyfully submit to it as the only infallible authority in all matters of life and faith.

The Church is composed of all those who have been born of the Spirit by believing in the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church is the Body of Christ, with Jesus Christ as the Head. We purpose to submit to Christ's headship in all things.

Baptism unites us with Christ's death and resurrection and the Lord's Supper gives us fellowship with the living Christ in His true body and blood.

The local congregation consists of true believers, submitted to Christ, and carrying out His ministry and mandates in the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Pastors help equip the members to do the ministry.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to all members of the Church to do the supernatural ministry of Christ until He returns. Christ will return for His Bride, the Church, and true believers will live forever with Christ, while unbelievers will be sent to eternal punishment.

The ecumenical creeds (the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian) are true declarations of the faith we affirm.

How we live affirms or denies what we profess. We do not want to deny the Gospel by wrong living. We adorn our creed with our conduct.

Right relationships are as necessary as right theology. We will not invalidate sound doctrine by unsound attitudes and actions toward others.

NON-NEGOTIABLES

The Lordship of Christ - We are committed to operating under the headship of Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church and to discovering and doing His will.

The Bible: God's Word - We believe the Word of God is without error. It works with the Spirit to equip and empower Christians for every good work.

Prayer - Everything Jesus said and did was birthed out of and bathed in prayer. The ARC itself was birthed out of prayer. We are committed to continually bathe all we say and do in prayer.

Radical Dependence on the Empowering Presence of the Holy Spirit - The ARC is a network in which the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are celebrated, not merely tolerated. We are committed to fostering a radical dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Revelatory Decision-Making - We choose to make decisions based on hearing God's voice. We believe we hear Him through His Word, prayer, fellow believers, circumstances, and personal encounter with the Holy Spirit.

The Empowering Grace of God - God's empowering grace enables Christians to live responsibly, victoriously, and in authentic relationship with one another.

Commitment to Growing in Health and Wholeness - In the ARC we are committed to helping our leaders and congregations grow in emotional, relational, and spiritual health and wholeness.

Developing a Kingdom Mindset - God's people are to be transformed, equipped, and released to go wherever God sends them in the world on special assignment with Him.

Ministry to Forgotten Ones

The ministry of Jesus includes: Feed the poor. Clothe the naked. Heal the sick. Cast out demons. Kingdom ministry touches the poor and homeless, the outcast and abandoned, the disenfranchised and marginalized. As we serve the forgotten ones, we recognize that we need them as much as they need us.

A Safe Place for the Dangerous Kind - We will be a safe place where people can live authentically as they are transformed by the outrageous love, empowering grace, and truth of God. We are committed to raising up dangerous people who are potent for the purposes of God and a threat to the enemy.

Real Encounter not Religion - Kingdom citizens respond to the presence of God without constraint from historical or societal inhibitions. The ARC encourages leaders and congregations not to allow that which once blessed them now to bind them.

STRATEGIES

Our God-given mission is to be a network committed to creating and sustaining an atmosphere beneficial for Kingdom relationships, transformation, and mission.

Intentional strategies to help us accomplish our God-given mission are:

- Inviting and nurturing healthy leaders and churches to network together through personal relationships, regional conferences, city gatherings, and retreats
- Exploring ways that the ARC can train, support and coach church planters to establish new churches in various forms
- Developing new approaches for raising up and training leaders within the church and the marketplace
- Being intentional to invest in the lives of young leaders and in the lives of those who give leadership to children, youth and young adult ministries
- Cultivating a kingdom atmosphere that enables us to be a safe place for the dangerous kind; followers of Christ who dangerous for and to – dangerous for the Kingdom of God and to the plans and dominion of the enemy
- Adopting a team, rather than individual, approach to ministry because a team can accomplish more than the most gifted individual person or congregation
- Providing opportunities to engage in cooperative ministry projects

WHAT DOES THE ARC PROVIDE FOR LEADERS AND CONGREGATIONS?

A place to belong where there is a shared spiritual DNA

- A place where being Spirit-empowered is celebrated as being a strength
- A place where our historic Reformation roots provide stability as we engage in ministry in an ever-changing cultural scene
- A network committed to kingdom advancement

The chance to be part of something more

- Kingdom ministry is not a solo endeavor; it is experienced and expressed in community
- There are some things a local church, no matter its size, can't do alone
- Being together brings a fresh set of eyes and a larger perspective on the work of God in and through local pastors and congregations
- Annual gatherings where we are being filled with the Holy Spirit, receiving strategic guidance from God, being set free from sin, healed from sickness and emotional wounds, and delivered from demonic harassment and oppression

Authentic relationships

- Relationships in which we do not have to wear a mask and be someone we're not
- Partnerships in which we encourage each other to press in for God's best
- A network where leaders of large congregations can hear God through leaders of small congregations, and vice versa, because they are connected with one another
- Relationships that can help us guard against becoming isolated and self-absorbed
- Relationships between pastors and leaders of congregations of more traditional structure and new forms who share the challenges of ministering in the 21st century

An opportunity to be cultural architects

- We fully expect ARC members (congregations and individuals) to participate in shaping the ARC's ministry and spiritual atmosphere
- A place where ARC members can invite the input and discernment of other ARC members into their decision-making processes
- A place where ARC members can extend their influence for the Kingdom of God beyond the borders of their own congregations and ministries

Encouragement and support for pastors and leaders

- Kingdom Life Together day-long gatherings for relationship building, ministry to one another, and missional teachings.
- Annual regional gatherings providing a place and time for ARC pastors and leaders to meet, begin new relationships, and nurture already existing relationships
- Periodic visits to leaders and congregations by the Director, ARC Leadership Team members, and other appointed leaders in the ARC for care-giving, relationship building, and teaching
- Ongoing relationship-building and prayer support
- Friendship-based safeguards and accountability for leaders

Atmosphere of freedom and creativity

- Freedom to dream and create what is received in revelation from the Lord
- Congregational freedom to decide on matters of adiaphora (those matters the Bible neither commands nor prohibits, things which are not of eternal consequence, and about which Christians may disagree; cf. Romans 14:1ff)
- Championing Spirit-led risk-taking

Leadership training and development

- A working relationship with The Master's Institute Seminary
- Building Healthy Leaders seminars
- Teaching seminars by ARC leaders

Shared ministries, expertise, and resources

- Retreats and gatherings
 - Regional men's retreats
 - Regional women's retreats
 - Regional youth gatherings
 - Mission opportunities
- Available teaching and training resources include:
 - Building Healthy Leaders - Robert Walter
 - Shame and Grace - Robert Walter
 - Authority to Heal - Joe Johnson
 - The Dangerous Kind — Graeme Sellers
 - Hearing God's Voice - Graeme Sellers
 - Pastoring the Prophetic - Eric Bluhm
 - Responsible Prophetic Ministry - Fred Thoni
 - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - Fred Thoni
 - Leading Worship - Bob Mabry
 - A Safe Place for the Dangerous Kind — Mike Bradley
 - Leadership in the Kingdom of God - Mike Bradley
 - Team Ministry — Mike Bradley
 - Daring to Dream — Paul Anderson
 - Conflict Resolution — Kevin McClure
 - Financially Free — Bob Blayter
- Consultations
 - General consultations
 - Conflict resolution
 - Vision Casting

Other resources

- A pension plan for those who do not have one of their own
- MinisterNet — helps connect churches who need staff-level personnel with ARC members who are open to moving to another church and locale

EXPECTATIONS

All ARC Members and Congregations Commit to:

- Partner together for strategic mission
- Share ministry resources with other ARC churches
- Participate in ARC gatherings for fellowship and growth
- Contribute financially to the ARC
- Communicate consistently regarding what God is doing among them

THE ARC AS A NETWORK

IS THE ARC A DENOMINATION?

Not in the sense that the word is normally understood. The ARC puts more emphasis on local church autonomy and on relationships between churches than on a centralized structure. Many of the responsibilities traditionally belonging to denominational headquarters reside with the local church, such as the training of church leaders, the planting of churches, and the sending of missionaries. The ARC is built on relationships and encourages churches to network together for strategic mission.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ARC'S UNIQUENESS?

It is more like a movement than a denomination. Because the ARC is decentralized, there are only a limited number of projects initiated from the organization. It is relationship-based and function/action-oriented. Most denominations gather around a theological statement. While the ARC has a Statement of Faith, its non-negotiables, mission and identity are its rallying point. People in the ARC are on a journey of discovery—to better understand what it means to be a Spirit-empowered church body in the 21st century. Networks like the ARC are being developed around the country and around the world. The ARC is not attempting to establish a “perfect church” but a proper wineskin for our day.

ARC LEADERSHIP

HOW ARE THE LEADERS OF THE ARC CHOSEN?

The Leadership Team (LT) of the ARC was initially recommended by the ARC Formation Team and affirmed by the ARC members at its inaugural gathering. The ARC Leadership Team chooses its Team Leader. New members are recommended by an LT or ARC member and affirmed by unanimous approval of the ARC Leadership Team.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM?

- Cast and refine the vision, mission, values and philosophy of ministry for the ARC
- Give oversight to the ARC, maintaining theological and ethical integrity
- Give oversight to the ARC's Administrative Team, including fiscal responsibility
- Serve as a court of last resort in judgments concerning conflict in pastoral accountability disputes
- Convene the major network meetings

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE ARC LEADERSHIP TEAM?

The ARC Leadership Team members are:

- Michael Bradley, Director for the Alliance of Renewal Churches and President, The Master's Institute Seminary
- Graeme Sellers, Lead Pastor at Wonderful Mercy Church in Gilbert, Arizona
- Fred Thoni, Senior Pastor at Elmwood Evangelical Free Church in St. Anthony, Minnesota
- Robert Walter, Director of Training and Resource Development for LeaderSource, SGA
- Bob Mabry, Lead Pastor at Hope Community Lutheran Church in Long Beach, CA
- Eric Bluhm, Pastor at North Heights Lutheran Church in Roseville, MN

ACCOUNTABILITY

WHAT DOES THE ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE LOOK LIKE?

The ARC contains two levels of accountability. The ARC Leadership Team gives oversight to the organizational aspect of the ministry. It also serves as a court of last resort for serious issues that may come up in a congregation or among its leaders, such as financial impropriety, moral failure, or theological issues.

PASTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Pastoral accountability is a relationship that a pastor voluntarily submits to for the purpose of spiritual health and protection both for the congregation and for the pastor. This kind of oversight is not instituted quickly. Rather, it grows over a period of time as relationships develop with respected people whom the pastor and the congregation learn to trust. Accountability partners are not mandated from the outside but chosen because of the value found in the relationship. Accountability is based on strong personal commitments rather than simply on formal agreements. Accountability assumes that both the pastor and the congregation understand the wisdom of third party involvement in the life of the church and they welcome it as God connects them to valued outside pastoral leaders. All ARC churches should have an accountability structure. It will not be imposed from without but developed from within. These leaders will be given the authority by pastors and congregations to speak into the pastors' lives, to hold them accountable.

PASTORAL TRAINING

WHERE WILL ARC PASTORS RECEIVE THEIR SEMINARY TRAINING?

The Master's Institute Seminary (MI) is closely related to the ARC and trains many pastors for the ARC. However, pastors are not required to graduate from MI, and each leader will be encouraged to seek out the best route to his/her own personal preparation for ministry.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE ARC

IS THE ARC LUTHERAN?

We love and celebrate our Lutheran heritage. We minister in churches in the United States and around the world across denominational lines. We embrace our Reformation heritage: Word alone, grace alone, faith alone. We recognize the Lutheran Confessions as an historic, faithful summary of the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.

ARE CONGREGATIONS BEING ENCOURAGED TO LEAVE THEIR DENOMINATION?

No. This is a question each congregation needs to answer for itself. Some churches have left their synod, but they prefer to maintain a Lutheran-Christian identity, and they can do this with the ARC.

ARE NON-LUTHERANS WELCOME TO JOIN THE ARC?

Yes, provided they share our values and vision, and embrace the Statement of Faith and expectations.

HOW WILL THE ARC ENSURE THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IN LOCAL CONGREGATIONS?

One of the strengths of the ARC is its accountability structure, to which pastors willingly submit. A network like the ARC has strong potential for the maintenance of theological integrity, because the relationships are in place to provide for accountability. The strongest basis for maintaining orthodoxy is relationship, not a statement of faith or constitutional provision for discipline.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THEOLOGICAL UNITY?

Theological unity on the essentials of the faith is important. But theology alone does not create a compelling vision. What also brings ARC churches together is our mission: Creating an alliance of likeminded leaders and churches who are fostering authentic relationships and aggressively advancing the Kingdom of God. The ARC and her member churches will seek to implement the long-standing practice of "Adiaphora." In the essentials, unity; in the non-essentials freedom; and in all things, love!

JOINING THE ARC

HOW DO CHURCHES JOIN THE ARC?

- The church and its leadership take time to get to know the flavor of the ARC and speak with the ARC Leadership Team until they discern a strong sense of unity with the ARC's mission, identity, beliefs and non-negotiables
- The church or the individual interested in joining requests an application from the ARC office
- If we are not familiar with your congregation or you as an individual, an ARC representative will visit you and meet with you
- The ARC Leadership Team will review the application and make a decision within one month after receiving the application
- Churches that vote must have a 75% affirmative vote, but a vote is not necessary if the leadership makes this decision

IS THERE A FEE TO JOIN THE ARC?

Yes. There is an initial application fee of \$100 for individuals and \$250 for congregations.

CAN A PASTOR JOIN IF THE CONGREGATION DOES NOT?

Yes, a pastor can join the ARC even though the congregation may not be ready to join yet.

SHOULD AN INDEPENDENT LUTHERAN CHURCH JOIN THE ARC?

Yes. While we encourage local autonomy, we also recommend the kind of networking in the ARC that provides prayer, accountability, and mutual encouragement. Healthy churches that are independent will see the strength of being interdependent. Just as individuals need a body (a local church), so churches need an association.

ARE THERE LIABILITIES TO JOINING THE ARC?

Yes. The ARC is a new wineskin, a new way of bringing churches together. Paradigm shifts take time to adjust to. The ARC is committed to helping congregations transition into a structure that is relationship-based rather than simply organizationally based. Such profound transformation is costly. Some congregations may be unwilling or unable to make this important transition, and they would not fit in the ARC family at this time. In addition, we encourage churches interested in joining the ARC to be at a place of congregational health in order to both give and receive in the network.

OTHER QUESTIONS

DOES THE ARC PROVIDE A PENSION PLAN?

Yes. The ARC provides a 403 (b) 9 plan to ARC ministers and ministry employees. For more details about this plan, please contact the ARC office.

DOES THE ARC PROVIDE INSURANCE?

No. However, we have established a partnership with a company to provide insurance products and other human resource services to our members, nationwide. Members are introduced to this partner and encouraged to develop the plans that best meet their needs.

IS THE ARC NATIONAL IN SCOPE?

The Leadership Team sees the importance of ARC being national rather than provincial. We also see the potential of ARC having an international dimension.

HOW IS THE ARC FUNDED?

The ARC is funded by the contributions of its members. We expect that all members of the ARC will count it a privilege to help financially support the ARC. ARC funds are supervised by the Leadership Team. An outside resource person retained by the ARC tracks funds monthly.