

## **The vision of BELOVED DISCIPLESHIP**

The vision of Beloved Discipleship is based on Jesus' directive to his followers to "*make disciples of all nations*," as related in Matthew 28. In other words, Jesus is telling us to venture out from our churches and make disciples of all the people in our communities, irrespective of their ethnicity, class, culture, or background. And in doing this, we will be helping to create the beloved community of Christ in our time and in our place.

To that end, Beloved Discipleship provides a year-long training experience to help congregations design and implement a plan to grow disciples, both in the congregation and in the increasingly diverse communities of Northern Virginia.

## **The process of BELOVED DISCIPLESHIP**

The Beloved Discipleship process involves 6 training periods, each about 2 months long, and each with its own Learning Goal and Objectives. Every training period begins with a 4-hour educational session for church ministry teams. In the weeks following this session, the ministry team uses what it has learned to engage the congregation or the community in work that addresses some aspect of the discipleship plan being created.

**Training period 1.** The introductory first session of the Beloved Discipleship process explores the concepts of discipleship and cross-cultural ministry, and provides preparation for the follow-on work. For this training period, the task is to design and implement 2 Bible studies of 4 weeks or more, one on discipleship and the other on culture and diversity in the Bible.

**Training period 2.** The second training period focuses on diverse cultures, building relationships, and embracing stories of diversity. The task for the ministry team following this session is to develop opportunities for members of the church and the community to tell stories about their faith, family, and culture. The team will make multimedia recordings of these stories, which will be used later, when implementing the church's discipleship plan.

**Training period 3.** Training period 3 explores ways of engaging the community in discipleship. During the weeks following the educational session, members of the ministry team will attend 3 to 4 culturally significant events in the community, record responses from those events, and then review the responses to see what can be learned from this research.

**Training period 4.** In the fourth training period, the educational session will look at how we model discipleship and how we make disciples. The tasks during this period are for the pastor to plan a series of sermons on discipleship and for the ministry team to create discipleship-making opportunities through ministry in the church and service in the community.

**Training period 5.** The fifth training period will involve assessing and engaging the community in discipleship. The educational session will provide the tools and other resources to be used for this work. The ministry team's follow-on task will be to identify gaps in the community that the church could respond to, and then set a goal and budget for doing so in the first half of the coming year.

**Training period 6.** The final training period will focus on best practices and models of discipleship. Using this knowledge and the experienced gained over all the training periods, the ministry team will complete and implement in the coming year, a comprehensive discipleship plan that is tailored specifically to the characteristics of the team's church and community.