

Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Starting New Worshiping Communities

A Resource Guide for Discernment and Formation

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) • Presbyterian Life & Witness
1001 New Worshiping Communities
newchurchnewway.org

1001 WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

Presbyterian Life & Witness
Serving God's Mission in the World

Copyright 2026, Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation

Scripture quotations marked NRSVue are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Table of Contents

Welcome 6
Introduction 7
Using This Resource 9
Discovering 11
Discovering: What are New Worshiping Communities? 12
Brief Definition 13
Long Definition 14
Discovering: Why Should We Create New Worshiping Communities? 15
Discovering: Building an Ecosystem of Support 18
Step-by-Step Activity: "Soil Check" for NWC Ecosystem 25
Outcome Checklist for NWC Ecosystem of Support 31
Discovering: Prayer Walk Guide: Vicinia Divina 33
Discovering: Neighborhood Exegesis Community Study 37
Site Visit Observations: A Windshield Survey 39
Site Visit Activities: Three Actions and Conversations 41
Site Visit Questions: Casual Community Conversations 42
Debrief: Telling a story of what you've learned 43
Beyond the Site Visit: What more can we learn? 44
Discovering: Discerning a Vision for the Community 45
Prayer 47
Who Are the People We Are Called To? 48
Who Are Your Partners? 49
Am I the one to lead this or be a supporter? 50
Discovering: Being a missional leader 53
Part 1: Personal Development 56
Spiritual Vitality 56
Motivational Fit 57
Emotional Resilience 58
Emotional Maturity 59
Social Base 60
Part 2: Missional Development 61
Entrepreneurial Experience 61
Missional Practice 62
Risk-Taking 63
Part 3: Leadership Development 64
Building a Successful Team 64
Grit 65
Leadership Development 66
Mapping 67
Mapping: Who do We Want to Be? 68
Start With Jesus 69

Incarnational Nature 70
Mapping: Gathering a Team 72
From Discernment Team to Core Leadership Team 77
Mapping: Being a Part of the Team 79
Sample Leadership Covenant 87
Mapping: Determining Your Core Values? 88
Values Exercise 91
Mapping: Creating a Vision for the Community 94
Vision Exercise 96
Mapping: Determining Possibilities 99
Mapping: Creating the Mission Plan 103
What Do We Want to Be? 104
Mapping: Creating a budget 108
Step 1: Identifying Potential Income Sources 110
Step 2: Identify Potential Partners and Supporters 111
Step 3: Estimate Income for a Two-Year Period 112
Step 4: Identify Ministry Expenses 113
Step 5: Estimate Ministry Expenses 114
Step 6: Budget Summary 115
Trailblazing 117
Trailblazing: Begin to Experiment 118
Trailblazing: Evaluating the Experiment 122
Trailblazing: Implementation 123
Gathering design guide: 127
Gathering debrief guide: 129
Trailblazing: Creating a Values-Centered Discipleship Pathway[1] 130
Activity: Designing Your Values-Based Discipleship Pathway 133
Trailblazing: Load Bearing Leadership 136
Activity: Load-Bearing Leadership Self-Assessment 138
Outcome Template: Leadership Development Action Plan 140
Trailblazing: Rhythm of Life 141
Scriptural Foundation 141
Understanding Your Rhythm 143
Reflection & Next Steps 144
Outcome Template: Identifying Your Support Needs 145
Trekking 146
Trekking: Creating the Structure of a New Worshiping Community 147
Trekking: Establishing Benchmarks 150
Trekking: Making a Stewardship Commitment 155
Flourishing 160
Flourishing: Multiplicative Leadership 161
Activity: Leadership Multiplication Map 167
Flourishing: Multiplicative Communities: Creating a Culture of Multiplying New Communities from Flourishing New Worshiping Communities 169

Reflective Questions for an NWC and Presbytery 170
"Readiness to Multiply" Checklist 172
Flourishing: Next steps 174
Scriptural Foundation 175
Understanding This Moment 176
Path 1: Organizing as a PCUSA Church 177
How to Begin the Process 178
Path 2: Continuing in Mission 180
Ways to Deepen Your Impact 181
Communal Discernment: Finding Your Path 183
Our Community's Discernment Summary 184
Flourishing: Funding Diversification for Long-Term Sustainability 185
Devotional Reflection: Ecclesiastes 11:2 and Faithful Stewardship 186
Exercise 1: Reflecting on Current Funding 188
Exercise 2: Bi-Vocational Leadership 189
Exercise 3: Entrepreneurial Possibilities 190
Exercise 4: Grant Opportunities 191
Exercise 5: Partnership-Based Funding 192
Exercise 6: Building a Diversified Funding Model 193
Recommended Books and Resources 195
Acknowledgements 201
Current Grant Information 202
Photograph Credits 203

Welcome

Welcome to the journey of starting a new worshiping community. As you proceed in this work, know that the 1001 New Worshiping Communities staff is here to help. Never hesitate to reach out to anyone of us, as we consider ourselves partners with you in this adventure.

Blessings,

Rev. Michael Gehrling

National Coordinator

michael.gehrling@pcusa.org

Rev. Dr. Gad Mpoyo

Associate for the Eastern Region & Immigrant NWCs

gad.mpoyo@pcusa.org

Rev. Shawn Kang

Associate for the Western Region & Pathways to Flourishing

shawn.kang@pcusa.org

Rev. Sara Hayden

Associate for Apprenticeships & New Way Podcast

sara.hayden@pcusa.org

Rev. Jeff Eddings

Associate for Coaching & Spiritual Formation

jeff.eddings@pcusa.org

Rev. Jeya So

Associate for Assessment and Recruitment

jeya.so@pcusa.org

Introduction

The 1001 New Worshiping Communities movement is transforming in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Across the denomination, God is raising up leaders in churches and presbyteries who are creating new forms of church for a changing culture. Primarily, they are seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ who will change and transform the world.

In June 2012, the 220th General Assembly declared a commitment to a church-wide movement to result in the creation of 1,001 worshiping communities. At a grassroots level, hundreds of diverse new worshiping communities have already formed across the nation. Presbyterian Life & Witness (an agency of the General Assembly of the PCUSA) is coming alongside to fan the flames of this movement, to inspire and equip the wider church to participate in the creation of 1001+ new worshiping communities.

What Does "Good" Look Like in New Worshiping Communities?

As of 2026, Presbyterians have started over 900 new worshiping communities.

A few years ago, denominational staff, mid council leaders, and new worshiping community leaders gathered together to consider the overall data of the movement, and the stories of transformation new worshiping communities are telling. Together, they asked, "What does "good" look like in 1001 new worshiping communities?" Six significant transformation indicators rose to the surface:

Constructive Disruption

New worshiping communities are making the PC(USA) more diverse culturally, ethnically, and generationally. Additionally, innovative new worshiping communities are challenging unspoken norms about what constitutes "church."

Vitality

New worshiping communities grow the church and bring new life. Nearly half of participants in new worshiping communities were not previously a part of a Christian church.

Meaningful Storytelling

Every new worshiping community has stories of innovation and transformation. (We've captured some of them on video. You can check them out here: https://vimeo.com/showcase/11426912)

Bridge Building

New worshiping communities don't exist in isolation. The most vibrant new worshiping communities build meaningful, mutually beneficial partnerships with long-established churches.

Entrustment

New worshiping communities have provided a pathway for individuals churches have historically overlooked to become leaders in the church. Through 1001, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, and others who have experienced significant hurt in the church are being recognized for their gifts and empowered to lead.

Justice

Most new worshiping communities report significant work toward eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, ending heteropatriarchy, addressing climate change, or pursuing peacemaking. For many NWCs, these efforts are not just one program among many, but the central passion around which the entire worshiping community is organized.

As you begin this journey, you will also join this movement! We look forward to hearing the ways your new worshiping community brings creative disruption, vitality, meaningful storytelling, bridge building, entrustment, and justice to the church and to God's creation. The guided discernment sessions that follow are designed to help you get there.

Using This Resource

This resource was designed to be used by a team. That team should include the new worshiping community leader(s) or potential leader(s) if in the early stages of discernment, the core team of individuals committed or actively discerning their commitment to working toward the fulfillment of the vision, and the members of the presbytery who might make up the discernment team. Please understand that discernment should ultimately be done in community, just like much of what we have done in Presbyterian circles. It may take an individual to get an NWC through its initial infancy, but individuals are highly encouraged to form a team. We are also reminded of this in Acts 4:13–14:

> *They couldn't take their eyes off them, Peter and John standing there so confident, so sure of themselves! Their fascination deepened when they realized these two were laymen with no training in Scripture or formal education. They recognized them as companions of Jesus, but with the man right before them, seeing him standing there so upright (so healed!) what could they say against that? (The Message)*

In the past, we expected "professional" clergy to be the ones developing and leading the start of new churches. That is no longer the case, and it follows a biblical precedent of God using ordinary people for extraordinary purposes. This process of discernment is about listening to the Holy Spirit and loving people as God loves them.

This guide is also designed to help you through the phases of the 1001 Pathway to Flourishing grants for new worshiping communities. It is our hope that as you journey through this guide, you will feel supported in all ways as a 1001 new worshiping community that will ultimately lead to the flourishing of not only the community but the leader(s) as well. Please take your time through this guide and revisit it as you enter different stages of the grants. Through this guide you will be led through a process that begins with discerning who and what God is calling you to be and do, and continues all the way through the actual implementation of a strategy.

• First Nurture Your Own Soul

Starting a new worshiping community is a movement of the Holy Spirit. We encourage you to nurture your souls as you go through this guide through prayer, Scripture, and other helpful spiritual practices. Make prayer a central priority, not an add-on activity. Wrestle with the Scripture, as Scripture speaks to the differing contexts in which new worshiping communities are being started. You will find Scripture prompts at the start of each session to consider for devotion and provide a framework.

• Work Through This Guide as a Team

This guide was written for teams of people seeking to start and sustain a new worshiping community. If you're the point leader of the new worshiping community, it may be tempting to work through this guide on your own. While there's value in reading through the guide on your own to familiarize yourself with the process, we'd encourage you to resist the urge to answer any questions on your own. New worshiping communities are at their best when the discernment of the vision, mission, and strategies is itself an expression of community. If you don't yet have a team, make it your first task to identify and recruit a discernment team of 3 to 12 others.

• Do the Work of Coming to Consensus

Consistently, we've seen that the new worshiping communities that get the most out of this guide are the ones that do the work of coming to consensus on their answers to each of the questions. This could mean that you spend multiple meetings on just one section of this guide. That's ok! One NWC told us how they spent weeks on the section "Who Is Jesus?", seemingly unable to find an answer everyone on the team agreed with. Finally, they arrived at an answer that got them all excited. They told us that working past the frustration and finally arriving at consensus actually served to be catalytic for their community. Resist the urge to plan in advance how quickly you'll work through each section, and instead take the time your team needs to arrive at consensus.

• Take Good Notes

This guide and the applications for Pathways to Flourishing grants available from Presbyterian Life & Witness are intentionally designed to mirror each other. If you take good notes through each section of this guide, you'll find that you will have already written much of your corresponding grant when it comes time to apply.

• Return to Relevant Sections When the Time Is Right

The discernment sessions in this guide may seem linear, but that's only because something has to be listed first and something has to be last. In reality, none of these questions of discernment are "one and done." We encourage you to return to sections of this guide as your new worshiping community evolves. New participants joining, changes to your neighborhood/context, and your own personal and spiritual growth are just some of the factors that will warrant revisits to portions of this guide.

Discovering



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Discovering: What are New Worshiping Communities?



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

From its inception, it was important to define what a New Worshiping Community actually is. The following definitions were created to distinguish between New Worshiping Communities and innovative ministries that are being developed within a church. A New Worshiping Community is defined by the PC(USA) once it strives for the following six marks:

Brief Definition

New

- Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ
- Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture

Worshiping

- Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament
- Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world

Community

- Practicing mutual care and accountability
- Developing sustainability in leadership, mission, and finances

Long Definition

New

- Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture: Living out the gospel demands ministry that engages today's cultures (John 1:14). New ways of joining Christians together for contextual ministry will use current and historic ways of "being church" as springboards for creative innovation (Matt. 9:17).
- Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ: NWCs witness in word and deed (I John 3:18), continuing Jesus' own mission of discipling, feeding, teaching, healing, welcoming, crossing boundaries and proclaiming God's coming realm. Those with new and renewed faith join the Spirit's transforming work in the world.

Worshiping

- Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament: We seek to hear, come to believe, and are equipped to live the promises of God revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. NWCs welcome new members of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27) through baptism and are nourished by Christ's spiritual presence in the Lord's Supper made accessible in varied forms.
- Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world: The Spirit impels us outward, so that disciples participate in the redemption of the world in Christ (Col. 1:20).

Community

- We commit ourselves to practice mutual care and accountability; loving one another (John 13:34) and the broader body of Christ including the wider community in which we are embedded. We are a group of people united in mission together recognizing that the primary beneficiaries of the NWC are not its own members, but rather its community and world. Entrusting ourselves and the church to the Holy Spirit, we seek to grow to maturity in faith and life.
- Developing sustainability in leadership, mission, community, and finances. As distinct yet connected expressions of the body of Christ, NWCs have local leadership arising from their own community of faith (Exod. 18:21). Pastoral leadership, facilities and programs are all appropriately structured to demonstrate good and faithful stewardship.

Discovering: Why Should We Create New Worshiping Communities?

"The planter must like and love those outside the church more than she likes and loves the churchiness of church. This is not only what makes the task of church planting possible, it is what makes the task worth doing."
Karen Rohrer, "Going After the One: Leadership Lessons for Church Planters"

Often, we put our ideas of developing a new worshiping community in front of the theological reasoning to do it. This section will build a theological framework for your presbytery to embrace the call to start new worshiping communities.

Read: Luke 15:3–7

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

1. Jesus told this parable in response to leaders and members of the religious institution objecting to Jesus spending time with "tax collectors and sinners." Do you think Jesus would tell a similar parable to church folks who object to investing energy and resources to starting new worshiping communities instead of investing those resources in existing churches? Why or why not?

2. When we imagine this parable, we tend to imagine the one lost sheep wandering away from the other 99, a result of its own actions. But if we read carefully, Jesus doesn't say that the lost sheep wandered away; it was just lost by the shepherd. As you consider your context, who are the "lost sheep"? How did they get "lost"? What role did the church play in that?

3. Going to find the one lost sheep meant leaving the 99 for a time. What might "leaving the 99" mean in today's context?

4. Finding the lost sheep leads to rejoicing and celebration. As you consider the possibility of spending more time and resources on "lost sheep," what celebrations can you imagine?

We start new worshiping communities because of Jesus. In the gospels, Jesus opted not to start a movement among those at the center of the religious establishment. Instead, Jesus formed a community with fishermen and tax collectors, widows and sex workers. We believe that the Jesus who did this in the stories of the gospels is the Jesus who is alive and leading the church today. And his methods and strategies have not changed. Jesus is still forming movements among people beyond the boundaries of our church institution.

Our ecclesiology, or understanding of the church, too often comes to the forefront when we discuss starting a new worshiping community. Many people come with a preconceived notion of what they want to create. Putting our understanding of church first instead of our understanding of God shifts the focus to us rather than God.

The stirring of the Holy Spirit in the souls of those who sense the urge to do the work of God among the people is often that which convicts a person to leave a familiar space of comfort. It is a yearning to serve God among a particular people in a prescribed location.

The leading of the Spirit to share the gospel in a way that is accessible to those who may have moved away from the church or may never have heard of or experienced a church family leads to the desire to develop a community that is accessible. This is part of the *Missio Dei,* that is, the mission or sending of God. "Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in the purposes to restore and heal creation. 'Mission' means 'sending,' and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God's action in human history."[1] Too often we believe that we are bringing the gospel to places that are without God. Our theology reminds us that God is always present. Our mindset needs to shift to one that we are joining God, who is already in the neighborhood.

[1] Darrell L. Guder (editor), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998, 4 to 5.

1. Write your understanding of Missio Dei in your words. How does your understanding of Missio Dei impact what this new worshiping community does, how it worships and how it interacts with the world?

Discovering: Building an Ecosystem of Support

Introduction

As Jesus tells the parable of the sower, the spotlight lands less on how capable the farmer is and more on the state of the soil, the conditions that either push back against the seed of the kingdom or welcome it and let it take root. Leaders of New Worshiping Communities often look like sowers, steadily scattering gospel seed with care and persistence. Presbyteries, in plenty of practical ways, set the surrounding "soil conditions" that those leaders have to work within.

This passage asks presbytery leaders to pause and take an honest look: What kind of environment are we building around these leaders, one that feels packed down and resistant, thin and fragile, tangled and competing, or deep, open, and able to sustain growth?

Intended Outcomes

Spiritual and Theological Outcomes

Participants can explain how the four soils in Matthew 13:3–9 connect to different presbytery "environmental conditions" for New Worshiping Communities, the hard path, shallow support, thorny systems, and good soil.

Participants can state at least one theological conviction about God's mission, the sower and the seed, that should guide how the presbytery shows up with NWC leaders.

Relational and Cultural Outcomes

A stronger sense of shared calling develops between presbytery leaders and NWC leaders, with less "they/them" language and more "we/us."

Participants name at least two culture shifts that need to happen, for example moving from suspicion to trust, from scarcity to generosity, from control to accompaniment, so the presbytery can become "good soil" for new communities.

Practical and Structural Outcomes

The group identifies 2 to 3 clear changes in presbytery practice, such as coaching habits, funding timelines, communication patterns, or peer cohorts, that would make the "soil conditions" better for NWC leaders over the next 12 to 18 months.

For at least one of those changes, the group names next steps along with owners and timelines, for example: "COM will pilot an NWC learning cohort by September."

Discernment and Listening Outcomes

Participants commit to at least one new listening practice, such as story-sharing, site visits, regular check-ins, or surveys, so the presbytery hears from NWC leaders before decisions are made that affect them.

The session brings forward 3 to 5 key questions that need more discernment, for example, questions about risk, metrics, or the relationship with existing congregations, and it also clarifies how those questions will be carried ahead.

The Parable of the Sower

Matt. 13:1: That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. [2] Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. [3] And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. [4] And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. [5] Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. [6] But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. [7] Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. [8] Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. [9] Let anyone with ears[a] listen!"

Matt. 13:18: "Hear then the parable of the sower. [19] When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. [20] As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21] yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.[a] [22] As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. [23] But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

Study Questions

Hard paths and institutional resistance

Verse 4 describes seed landing on the path and getting snatched up right away.

1. Where do those “hard-packed paths” show up in our presbytery life, policies, routines, or default attitudes that make it hard for the word of the kingdom to sink in through New Worshiping Communities?

2. If we had to name one path the presbytery should break up or turn over, what is it, so NWC leaders aren’t met with pushback the moment they step forward?

Shallow soil and thin support

In verses 5 to 6, the seed in rocky ground pops up fast, then dries out because there isn’t enough soil, no root can hold.

1. Where might our support of NWC leaders look like that, lots of excitement at the beginning, but not much staying power when it comes to ongoing care, coaching, or steady funding?

2. Over a 3 to 5 year stretch, not just year one, what would real root-support from the presbytery look like spiritually, emotionally, financially, and relationally?

Thorns and competing priorities

Verse 7 names the thorns that grow up and choke what's trying to live.

1. What thorns in our presbytery culture (institutional anxiety, budget strain, protecting what already exists, dodging conflict) tend to crowd out emerging communities and wear down their leaders?

2. What would it take to call those thorns what they are, then prune them on purpose, so New Worshiping Communities aren't slowly squeezed out by everything else we keep treating as urgent?

Good soil and a healthy ecosystem

In verse 8, seed falls into good soil and the harvest multiplies, thirty, sixty, a hundredfold.

1. If we pictured our presbytery as good soil for NWC leaders, what would we actually notice in real life, relationships, processes, shared posture, and available resources?

2. Of those marks of good soil, which one could we strengthen in the next year in a way that's concrete and doable?

Listening as ecosystem work

Verse 9 ends with "Let anyone with ears listen!"

1. How well do we listen in practice to NWC leaders, especially those closer to the margins, immigrant leaders, bi-vocational leaders, younger leaders, and lay leaders?

2. What new habits of listening, regular listening circles, cohorts with peers, site visits, or feedback loops that close the gap between hearing and responding, could help the presbytery stay close to what leaders are dealing with on the ground?

Content

You can think of an ecosystem of support for New Worshiping Communities as a presbytery learning how to become good soil for "the word of the kingdom" (Matt 13:1–9, 18–23).

Matthew 13 starts in a slightly different place than we often do. It doesn't open with soil conditions, it opens with "a sower went out to sow." The first move is God's. The seed, the "word of the kingdom," is thrown wide, landing in places people might predict and places they wouldn't. New Worshiping Communities are one sign that the Sower hasn't stopped. So a mid-council partner isn't manufacturing seed or forcing growth. The work is closer to joining what God is already doing by tending the field, paying attention to the practical conditions that help the seed settle in, take root, and produce fruit.

That's where mid-council partnership commitments land. Staff or committee oversight, a working connection with 1001, clear processes for care and accountability, hosting gatherings, trading best practices, all of it is a concrete way of saying, we intend to look after this field faithfully, together, in covenant with God and with each other.

Path, Rock, Thorns: Diagnosing the Ecosystem

Jesus names three kinds of unfruitful ground before he ever gets to the good soil, and they make a useful diagnostic tool for the health of an ecosystem.

First is the path (vv. 4, 19), where the word is heard but not really understood, and it gets snatched away. Something similar can happen when an NWC is treated like a side project, or when presbytery systems don't know what to do with it. Confusion, suspicion, or simple neglect can steal the moment. Regular meetings with leaders, clear covenants, liaison roles, and shared gatherings are not busywork, they are ways of softening the ground so the word is actually received and understood.

Then there is rocky ground (vv. 5–6, 20, 21), where things spring up fast but have no depth, so they collapse when stress hits. Launch grants, early excitement, even a beautiful commissioning service can become "rocky soil" if what follows is thin or short-lived. Office or meeting space, good fund management, insurance coverage, coaching toward realistic goals, and sustainability planning function like a root system. They give leaders and communities something to draw on when "trouble or persecution" shows up, in whatever form it takes.

Third is the thorny patch (vv. 7, 22), where growth is choked by "the cares of the world and the lure of wealth." In presbytery life, thorns can look like budget panic, institutional self-protection, or clinging so tightly to existing forms that there is no room left for new life. Encouraging congregations to share resources, give financially, send volunteers, and introduce NWCs to other churches for support is a kind of pruning. It shifts the posture from competition and scarcity toward shared abundance.

Good Soil: Mid-Council Partnership as Cultivation

Jesus' "good soil" (vv. 8, 23) hears, understands, and bears fruit "a hundredfold, sixty, thirty."

Some of it is relational soil: praying for NWCs, staying close through relationship-building, gathering together, and inviting NWC leaders into presbytery and congregational leadership. Those habits form the mutual, life-giving bonds Jesus assumes among people who truly receive the word.

Some of it is structural soil: a dedicated oversight body, a clear liaison with national staff, grant sponsorship, record-keeping for sacraments and baptisms, and careful plans for sustainability. These are the ordered supports that protect growth instead of smothering it.

And some of it is learning soil: assessments, trainings, residencies, workshops, story-sharing with the wider church, and a willingness to trade leadership and best practices. This is a presbytery staying teachable, living out Jesus' line, "Let anyone with ears listen!" and paying attention to what the Spirit is doing through new communities.

Put simply, Mid-Council Partnerships and specific care practices are a way for a presbytery to live inside the parable. They refuse to act like the path, the rocks, or the thorns, and they choose, with intention, to become good soil, where the word of the kingdom, sown through New Worshiping Communities, can go deep and bear unexpected, abundant fruit.

Step-by-Step Activity: “Soil Check” for NWC Ecosystem

Step 1: Name the Field (5 to 10 min)

Activity:

1. Put everything on the table first. On a board or a handout, write down every current NWC and any project that’s starting to take shape across the presbytery.

2. Next to each one, note the key leader, the sponsoring congregation or mid-council, and whatever formal ties already exist: covenants, grants, partnerships, the whole set of connections.

Guiding questions:

3. Which NWCs can we actually name, along with their leaders, instead of treating them like entries on a list?

4. Where are the blank spots, the places where a community has no clear sponsor, no liaison, no cohort, no real web of support?

Step 2: Map the Supports (10 to 15 min)

1. Activity: Hand each table a simple chart with three columns: Spiritual, Relational, Structural & Financial. Ask them to fill in, honestly and specifically, what the presbytery currently offers NWCs in each category.

Guiding questions:

2. Spiritual: In what ways are we praying with and for NWC leaders? Where do they receive spiritual direction, pastoral care, or a steady place to be held up?

3. Relational: Who is in touch with them consistently? Do they have peers they can call, mentors who know their situation, or a cohort where they're not alone?

4. Structural & Financial: What's actually in place, not what we assume is in place, for policy coverage, funding streams, insurance, reporting, and record-keeping?

Step 3: Identify Soil Types (15 to 20 min)

1. Activity: On a wall or big sheet of paper, make four headings: Path, Rocky, Thorns, Good Soil. Then invite people to write concrete examples on sticky notes and place them where they belong.

Path means misunderstanding, no traction.

Rocky means quick enthusiasm, thin follow-through.

Thorns means competing priorities, anxiety, scarcity.

Good Soil means steady, life-giving supports.

Guiding questions:

2. Where have NWCs hit “path” conditions, places where presbytery habits or decisions made it hard for the seed to even get into the ground?

3. Where have we been “rocky,” starting strong but not offering depth over time?

4. Which “thorns” (budget strain, institutional fear, pressure from existing congregations) have squeezed the life out of NWC work?

5. And where are we truly “good soil,” supports that are working and should be strengthened instead of taken for granted?

Step 4: Listen from the Edges (15 to 20 min)

Activity: If you can, bring in one or two NWC leaders to speak. If that's not possible, read anonymized quotes gathered from earlier conversations.

Guiding questions for them:

1. When has this presbytery felt like good soil for you and your community?

2. When has it felt like path, rock, or thorns?

3. What single change, in our behavior or in our structures, would make the soil better for your ministry?

Guiding questions for presbytery leaders (in silence, then debrief):

1. What did you hear that surprised you or sat heavily with you?

2. What are we noticing that we can't keep brushing aside?

Step 5: Discern Gaps and Priorities (15 to 20 min)

Activity: Back at tables, ask each group to name:

Send people back to their tables and ask each group to name three things.

One strength to celebrate and protect: a real "good soil" practice already happening.

One critical gap in care or accountability that, if addressed, would meaningfully improve the environment.

One realistic change the presbytery can take on in the next 12 to 18 months.

Guiding questions:

1. Where is there a gap between what our documents claim we do and what leaders say they actually experience?

2. If we could change only one thing this year to make the support environment healthier, what should it be?

Step 6: Assign Ownership and Next Steps (10 to 15 min)

1. Activity: Move from insight to commitments people can carry. Put names and structures next to the next steps.

Guiding questions:

2. Who is responsible for each step: a committee, staff, a small task force, or a specific set of people?

3. What's a reasonable timeline for a first action, for example, "pilot an NWC cohort by Advent" or "draft a standard covenant by summer"?

4. How do we make sure NWC leaders help shape the changes, instead of hearing about them after everything is decided?

5. Invite groups or individuals to write down what they will do, and then have them share two or three commitments with the whole body.

Step 7: Pray as Co-Gardeners (5 to 10 min)

Activity: Close with a short prayer or litany that stays with the soil image.

Guiding questions for prayer:

1. What do we need to confess: the moments we've acted like path, rock, or thorns?

2. What do we thank God for: the good soil that already exists, faithful leaders, small signs of fruit?

3. What do we ask God to grow in us as a presbytery that wants to support life, not just manage it?

Outcome Checklist for NWC Ecosystem of Support

Awareness & Theological Framing

Participants can name at least one way Matthew 13 (soils imagery) speaks to presbytery, NWC relationships.

Key leaders can articulate that NWCs are part of God's mission (the Sower's work), not just presbytery projects.

At least one shared theological/value statement about NWCs was voiced and recorded.

Clarity about Current NWCs

The presbytery has an up-to-date list of all NWCs, with leaders and sponsoring bodies named.

Each NWC has a clearly identified primary contact/liaison in the presbytery.

Gaps (NWCs with unclear sponsorship or support) have been identified.

Spiritual & Relational Support

A specific plan for praying for NWCs and their leaders (in meetings, worship, communications) is in place.

NWC leaders are invited into at least one ongoing relational space (cohort, mentoring, peer group).

At least one practice for regular listening to NWC leaders' experiences has been agreed upon (e.g., check-ins, listening sessions, site visits).

Structural & Financial Support

There is clarity on how funds for NWCs are managed and communicated.

Coverage for basic needs (e.g., insurance, sacramental records, meeting/office space) is confirmed or a plan exists to address gaps.

At least one step to improve financial sustainability support (grants, shared resourcing, donor development) has been named.

Culture & Partnership

Specific "thorny" dynamics (scarcity, fear, resistance) have been named and discussed.

At least one concrete culture shift goal has been identified (e.g., from suspicion to trust, from oversight only to accompaniment).

Existing congregations have been invited into some form of partnership/support with NWCs (sharing people, resources, stories).

Learning & Next Steps

2 to 3 practices that are already “good soil” for NWCs have been named to protect and strengthen.

1 to 2 realistic changes or new practices for the next 12 to 18 months have been agreed upon.

Owners (person/committee) and timelines for these changes are clearly assigned.

A plan exists to report back on progress at a future presbytery meeting or retreat.

Discovering: Prayer Walk Guide: Vicinia Divina



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

"There are parts of our calling, works of the Holy Spirit, and defeats of the darkness that will come no other way than through furious, fervent, faith-filled, unceasing prayer."
Beth Moore

Walking your neighborhood involves taking our prayers to the very place we feel God calling us. Take in the sights, smells and sounds to engage yourself in prayer for the neighborhood. You don't have to prayer walk by yourself. We encourage you to go with your small group, family, friends, neighbors or your discernment team.

Prayer walking is about taking our prayer to the place in which we desire to see God's presence manifested and answered. This is a slow, deliberate walk.

As you walk, pray for:

- The people in the neighborhood.
- For those in gathering places such as coffee shops, hair salons and liquor stores.
- Those whose homes and businesses you pass.
- Those who live in the neighborhood and the city.
- Schools, preschools, senior living facilities, and other places people live and gather.
- Those who work at City Hall.

- The ability to plan and work with minimal distraction, those who are participating in the prayer walk and the people whom you will encounter along the way.
- A keen sense of God's presence by each person as God challenges them to take the next step in joining the NWC, hearing the story of Jesus Christ, and beginning a new way of being with God.
- God's provision of time, energy and resources for each person who has stepped out in faith to embark on this journey.

Some Scriptures to pray:

Ps. 46:1–5: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.”

Zech. 4:6: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts.”

John 3:17: “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Luke 10:2: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Matt. 11:28–29: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest in your souls.”

I Cor. 15:57–58: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Ephesians 3:16–21: **16** I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit **17** and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. **18** I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. **20** Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, **21** to him be glory in the church and[a] in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

I Tim. 2:1–4: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

I John 4:4: “Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”

As you pray, remember:

- The worship of God is to be accessible and inviting, community, discipleship, a thriving ministry and mission, to be joyously lived out in each person's life to the glory of God.
- God's salvific action in the lives of each person who has moved away from the church or is unchurched. Pray for the gospel to be communicated in a clear, loving and powerful manner.
- God's preparation of everyone's heart to be open to God's guidance as each group discerns how this New Worshiping Community will conduct its ministry. Pray for each person who will participate in the ministry.
- The wisdom of God is not always how we perceive things should be. Pray for those in the leadership of the city to follow the leading that God has set forth.
- The Providence of God
- The establishment that provides space for the ministry.
- The businesses in the immediate neighborhood.

Discovering: Neighborhood Exegesis Community Study



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

"It is not the church which undertakes mission; it is the missio Dei which constitutes the church."
David J. Bosch

A neighborhood exegesis is not an all-encompassing demographic study of a particular community. Instead, it is an "interpretation" of a community in which you feel God has called you. There are many ways in which you could seek interpretation of the community, but one of the most important ways is to engage the community. You will not only be looking at demographic data but at the history and context of the area.

This is an activity that should be done more than once while discerning. Go out at different times and on various days. The rhythm of the neighborhood changes quite often. Take the time to get a good sense of the community.

Many have challenges at this point, once again saying things like "Aren't we for everyone?" The answer is yes and no. Yes, everyone is welcome, but no, you're not equipped to engage everyone. So, who is it that God is leading you to?

Dwelling in the Word

Read: Luke 10:1–11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves..."

Discussion

- Listen to the passage.
- Underline any words or phrases that stand out.
- Sit quietly with those words.

1. What message do you hear?

- Share with another person.

The following is a guide to your site visit. This is intended for you to get a subjective view of the people God may be asking you to engage. The first set of questions is what some people call a "windshield survey." The second part of the activity is to get you into the neighborhood through "neighborhood exegesis", getting a "read" on the people in a particular area.

Site Visit Observations: A Windshield Survey

Observe as you are making your way into the neighborhood. Fill out the observation questions prior to starting your walk. Let this be your first impression.

1. **Who do you see? Describe the people:**

2. **What are they doing?**

3. **What conversations/interactions do you observe?**

4. **Are they alone or in groups?**

5. **Are people walking on the streets, biking or running?**

6. **How are they dressed? Notice details like jewelry, name badges, shoes, styles, or technology:**

7. **What do you smell?**

8. **What does the infrastructure of the community look like?**

9. **Are these apartments, single family dwellings, gated driveways, townhouses, RV parks?**

10. **What types of signs do you see?**

11. **What types of businesses are in the area? (mom and pop stores, big box, etc.)**

12. **What gathering spaces do you see? (churches, library, coffee shop, etc.)**

13. **How does the community make you feel?**

Site Visit Activities: Three Actions and Conversations

While you are in the neighborhood, we encourage you to do these three actions.

- Have a drink or something to eat in a local establishment. Listen in on conversations. It's a chance to ask questions of locals.
- Talk with at least one person who is part of the group you believe God is asking you to engage.
- Bring back a token, something that represents what you learned about the people you met. You'll use this to tell part of the story you are learning about these people.

Site Visit Questions: Casual Community Conversations

- Find places where people gather and look for opportunities to ask people questions.
- Look for those people you have sensed God's call to engage.
- If you go into a business, be sensitive not to interrupt someone's work. Always ask, "Would you have time to answer a few questions about the area and the people who live here?"
- If someone asks you, "Why do you want to know?" be honest and tell them what you're doing. We would suggest that you delay asking questions about church and whether or not one is needed. This will change the conversation.
- Go out in groups of two and no more than three; don't overwhelm!

Conversation Starters:

- "Excuse me, do you work or live in the area?"
- "If I were to move here, what do I need to know?"
- "Who lives here?" (Age groups, race, class, families, singles, etc.)
- "What do people do for fun?"
- "Do you like living/working here?"
- "Do people live/work here for a long time?"
- "What are the challenges in the area?"
- "What are the benefits?"
- "What could make this community better?"

This list is not exhaustive. This should give you some ideas of a starting point. Simply be curious and attentive. Have natural conversations. Be aware that people love to talk about themselves and where they live. You are usually giving people a gift by doing this.

Debrief: Telling a story of what you've learned

The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you've had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.

Share what your token represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you've met and had conversations with on your visit. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

Beyond the Site Visit: What more can we learn?

1. Once you have done several site visits, there's still a lot more to learn. A comprehensive understanding of the community is not done through one tool. What questions have not been asked? Where and when do we need to go back to continue our learning? Interview people in person such as city leaders, nonprofit organizations, local schools, or other people that would have a good interaction with the community. Beyond asking questions in the community, there are other tools such as demographic information. You can use MissionInsite as well. Remember to use a balance of all the tools to get a good understanding of the neighborhood.

Before you leave this meeting, pair up and commit to going back and doing another site visit or two in the places and times you identified earlier. Have people volunteer to do calls with those you haven't talked with yet, educators, etc., to gather more information. One or two people need to collect the demographic information and be prepared to review it at the next meeting. Commit to praying for clarity as well as for those you continue to meet in this process.

* *Note: Although these two exercises (the vicinia divina and the neighborhood exegesis) seem similar, their intentions are different. One is to get to know and understand the neighborhood or context in which the NWC may be located and the other is to pray for the neighborhood. We encourage you to engage both exercises through the discovering phase and beyond.*

Discovering: Discerning a Vision for the Community

"If we think of belonging only as membership in a club, organization, or church, we miss the point. Belonging is the risk to move beyond the world we know, to venture out on pilgrimage, to accept exile. And it is the risk of being with companions on that journey, God, a spouse, friends, children, mentors, teachers, people who came from the same place we did, people who came from entirely different places, saints and sinners of all sorts, those known to us and those unknown, our secret longings, questions, and fears."
Diana Butler Bass

Read: II Cor. 4:1–12

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

Discussion

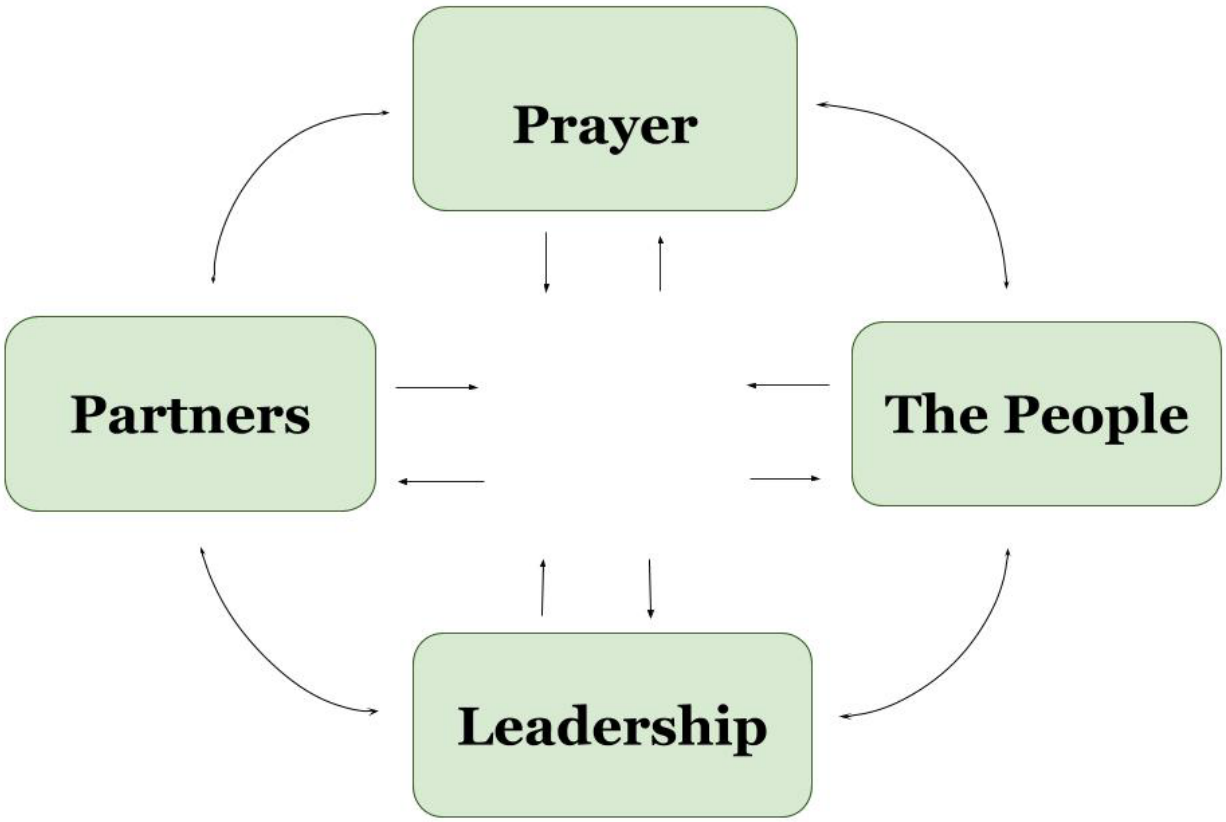
1. In what ways is your faith defined by how you handle hardships? What steps can you take to look at hardships and weaknesses as opportunities to rely on God's power?

2. Realizing that God is already working in a particular community, how is God shaping you to work in the community?

3. Are you all right with conveying the power to others? Share a time when you gave others power.

Content: Vision Discernment

The four sections of discernment overlap and spiral about. There is no specific order to working these discernment steps, nor will you and your team be done considering them after a once-over. Context, positionality and the people on your team will shift constantly, and these questions should be revisited often.



Prayer

Prayer should be central in all that we do. In Nehemiah we see a person with a God-given burden and a sensitive heart. Before Nehemiah ever set foot in Jerusalem, the Scripture tells us he wept, mourned, fasted and prayed for the city (Neh. 1:4). We should also be people of prayer. Be committed individually and corporately to the community you are being led to. Pray for the issues, people, hurts, wounds and celebrations that they have.

Action:

- Participate in prayer walks in the neighborhood (see the prayer walk guide, “Vicinio divina”). Walk regularly and at different times of the day.

1. Map out where these things are: services, housing, restaurants, nonprofits, communal areas, etc., and understand how your community fits in the area.

2. Understand your position: Are you a local? Commuter? Long-time resident? New on the scene? Who on your team lives or works here? How is their knowledge and experience centered? How do you fit (or not) with the people of this area? What is your impact on the community?

3. Who else should be with you on these walks?

Who Are the People We Are Called To?

1. Understand your context. What is the history of this community? What are the stories, myths and rhythms of this space? Who tells those stories? What are the different kinds of leadership in this community? Who fills those roles? Who is missing from that leadership? Who are you in relation to this context? Are you grass roots? Are you connected to grass roots? Are you parachuting in? Are you welcome here? By whom?

Where is God moving in this community?

2. What is the good and the beauty happening here? How might God be calling you to join with that?

3. Where are the most difficult and challenging spaces of this community? How might you be called to enter those spaces?

4. If you are called to seek the shalom of the community (Jer. 29:1–9), what do you or your team perceive to be preventing wholeness, health, joy, and peace in this community?

5. How will your new worshiping community fit, interface, and belong in this space?

Who Are Your Partners?

As you are dreaming and visioning about programs and ministries in the community, there are undoubtedly social organizations or people involved in those issues already. Seek people or organizations that you can partner with.

1. Who is already organizing in the community (if you say "nobody," look closer)?

- Community groups: nonprofits, neighborhood gatherings, both formal and informal organizing

2. Churches and other interfaith worshiping communities: Who is here? How do they fit in this space? How will you fit among them? What resources might you share? When do they meet?

- Other organizations: political groups, schools, scouts, etc.

Am I the one to lead this or be a supporter?

1. Do you have the skills, gifts, or the calling to lead or participate in a new worshiping community? Not everyone is called by God to participate in one. Simply because we feel this is something that we should do is not the best reason to start a new community.

- Revisit this often. The answer can change.

2. If you are the one to lead this, who will lead after you? Whom are you training?

3. Why are you the one? Do you have a community validating that call?

4. Is it just one person or many called?

5. Has anything changed recently suggesting that you should fall back or step forward?

Cultural Context.

It is easy to simply pass by and not acknowledge the cultural context of the community you are praying for. There are important questions that unlock the depth of the community that need to be asked. Please engage in this by answering:

1. What native groups originally lived on this land? Where are they now? What native groups currently reside in this area? What possibilities exist for communicating with tribal leadership?

2. Are you a part of the gentrification of a neighborhood? How does this affect how you are viewed?

3. How did this geographic area engage in and benefit from chattel slavery?

4. Whose labor built this area (farms, roads, railroads, schools, churches, homes)?

5. What are the demographics of the larger geographic area?

6. What is the history of Presbyterians in this area? Has there been education and work toward reparations?

Discovering: Being a missional leader



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

The initial development of a New Worshiping Community may often start with a point person. As the leadership structure matures, it grows more mycelial (polycentric) in nature. It is crucial that this leader be "missional," meaning they are continually paying attention to and participating in what God is already doing in and around them, and opening space for others to do the same. In these initial stages, you will explore the characteristics of a missional leader.

Read: Luke 10:1–11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. 5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'"

Discuss

1. Reflect on this verse. What do you hear and feel?

2. In verse 2, who are "the workers"? Describe them. What do they do, think, or feel about this new work?

3. What are your motivations to be a part of something new? Are you more interested in developing "what we are not" rather than "who you could be"? Describe your previous experiences with church and how it affects your motivations.

4. Read Matt. 28:16–20. How does being sent by Jesus to "go" influence who you are to be? What are some things that hold you back?

Content

A missional leader is described as "all about paying attention to and participating in what God is doing in and around you, and opening space for others to do so well."[2]

Oftentimes we believe that we are going to become the hero by bringing God into the neighborhood. Instead, we should try to sense what God is already doing in the neighborhood and participate in it. Being a missional leader in a community is not a short-term endeavor. Building understanding, trust and relationships can take years.

There are many different ways that people can be assessed for potential missional behavior, including through APEST (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers), Enneagram or StrengthsFinder. Please note that there is no singular type or result that makes better missional leaders than others. Regardless of the way you are examined, there are some basic questions and categories that can help you determine if you are a missional leader. The following is a list of the core competencies 1001 believes a missional leader needs.

2Ben Sternke, “What We Mean When We Say ‘Missional Leadership’,” New WineSkins, https://www.newwineskins.org/blog/what-we-mean-when-we-say-missional-leadership.

Part 1: Personal Development

Spiritual Vitality

1. How am I growing in my life in Christ? Do I have a rule of life that helps integrate disciplines of prayer, Scripture, and sabbath into my life?

2. Do you keep a sabbath weekly? (regular rhythm of sabbath)

3. Do you have a spiritual director/mentor who can help you recognize God's presence and direction in your life?

Motivational Fit

1. How can I grow in my knowledge of new worshiping community leadership to understand what I might be getting into? How can I examine my own motivations for this work?

- Perhaps meet with a New Worshiping Community leader to understand their daily rhythms.

2. Reflect on the appeal to this innovative ministry.

3. Reflect with a coach on this

Emotional Resilience

1. How can I grow in how I handle conflict, relate to failure and respond to stress?

2. What is your capacity to handle conflict?

- Learn to talk about failure and share with others.

Emotional Maturity

1. In what ways can I grow in my self-understanding and impact on others?

2. How can I grow in my capacity to receive feedback from others?

3. How can I grow in self-awareness of my natural strengths and weaknesses?

4. What will help me to self-regulate in times of stress?

Social Base

1. What can I do to build more relationships and strengthen existing ones so that I am well supported in this work?

2. How do you build meaningful spiritual friendships? Is hospitality a spiritual practice? If you're married, do you have honest conversations about the demands of this ministry? How do you set time apart for important relationships?

3. Who are the people that help "resource" me in this work (coaches, spiritual directors, therapists, presbytery leaders, etc.)?

Part 2: Missional Development

Entrepreneurial Experience

1. How can I grow in my capabilities to gather others around a vision and turn an idea into an action plan?

2. How have you tried to create community among a group of strangers?

3. What are your plans to bring others together?

Missional Practice

1. How can I grow in my ability to relate to unchurched and dechurched people, and have spiritual conversations with them?

2. Describe friendships with those outside the church.

3. How do you interact with those who do not identify as "Christian"?

- Build your capacity to relate to unchurched people from a place of powerlessness.

Risk-Taking

1. How can I get more used to living outside my comfort zone? How can I grow in discerning when risk-taking is necessary?

2. What have you done that has taken yourself outside your comfort zone and gives you the feeling of being vulnerable?

Part 3: Leadership Development

Building a Successful Team

1. How can I grow in my own understanding to know who I need on the team? How can I develop my skills in vision-casting? How can I grow in my capacity to build and maintain trust?

2. Reflect on healthy teams that you have worked on. What qualities helped the team flourish?

3. Do you have a vision that is percolating? Start inviting others to share in your vision.

Grit

1. How can I grow in my stick-to-it-iveness and my ability to keep myself and those I am leading on the right course even through challenges?

- Invite feedback and suggestions for a proposed vision that has been developing.
- Identify a project you left unfinished and return to it.
- Set multi-tiered goals.

Leadership Development

1. How can I grow in my ability to equip and empower others?

- Invite someone to take on a task that you are good at. Offer to help them prepare and debrief the experience at the end.

2. Reflect on the questions above. Make a list of people who are not yet followers of Jesus in your sphere of influence. What are they like? What are their interests? What are their joys? Challenges? Do they represent a larger group of people in your life? What do they have in common with each other? How are they different from each other?

Mapping



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Mapping: Who do We Want to Be?

Read: Matt. 16:13–20

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Discussion

1. What questions arise for you from these verses?

2. Who does Simon Peter proclaim Jesus to be (verse 16)? How does he know this (verse 17)?

3. Jesus asked his disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Share with the group your answer to this question: "Who do you personally say Jesus is?"

4. In response to question 3, how do you live out who Jesus is?

Start With Jesus

Often in the development of a new worshiping community, we come to the table with what we want to create rather than "why" we want to create a new worshiping community. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch describe this in their book "The Shaping of Things to Come":

> *Our Christology informs our missiology, which in turn determines our ecclesiology. If we get this the wrong way around and allow our notions of the church to qualify our sense of purpose and mission, we can never be disciples of Jesus, and we will never be an authentic missional church.*

Incarnational Nature

1. As New Worshiping Community Leaders, God's Spirit calls us to be present with the people. What does an incarnational ministry look like if we are called to serve with people who are different from ourselves? What if the people we are sent to look exactly like us? How do we ask the right questions about what is needed by the community?

2. Why is being incarnational important? How does it affect new worshiping communities?

3. How might your description of Jesus be lived out in the practices of this new worshiping community? How does your understanding of Jesus impact the identity of this possible new worshiping community?

Now, have each team member write down, in a few sentences, the answer to each of the following questions and have them ready to share:

1. Who is Jesus? What is Church? What is witness? What is "gospel" (good news)?

2. What does transformation look like in your context? What is a disciple?

3. What is stewardship?

4. What are sacraments?

When you have completed your responses, have conversations with those who are not active in a church and ask for feedback. Does it make sense to them? Can they understand what you are seeking to communicate?

Mapping: Gathering a Team



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Starting a New Worshiping Community is not solitary work. It requires the gifts and talents of a team.

Read: Luke 10:1–11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. 3 Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. 5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. 8 "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. 9 Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'"

Discuss

1. How many disciples did Jesus send out to the community? Was there a risk of conflict or failure by sending the disciples out? Describe it.

2. How did Jesus develop leadership beyond himself? How do you do it?

3. Compare this verse with another account in Matt. 9:35–37. What does "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" look like today? Who are those that you see?

4. Why do you want to be a part of starting a new worshiping community?

5. What are your initial hopes and dreams?

6. Have you prayed for "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers"? How can you make it part of your daily life?

Content

You feel that God is leading you to do something, but it's not something you can do on your own. You need a team around you to partner with you. God isn't sending you out by yourself! Who is God calling to go with you on the journey? It is an important part of visioning to develop a team that can develop the vision and work faithfully toward God's plan. Some will catch the vision quickly and others will take their time. It is not a race; it is more important that the right people are involved.

Discernment teams are essential because starting a New Worshiping Community is first a shared work of listening before it is a work of building. A discernment team gathers people who are prayerful, inquisitive, and rooted in the community to seek God's leading together, rather than relying on one person's ideas or energy. They help the church clarify why and for whom a new community is being formed, test assumptions through prayer and engagement in the neighborhood, and continually evaluate whether the vision, context, and gifts of the group align with God's call in this place. In this way, discernment becomes a communal spiritual practice that shapes both the eventual core leadership team and the culture of the new worshiping community from the very beginning.

A discernment team most likely includes people who are:

- Naturally inquisitive and interested in gathering and deciphering information and experiences. The earliest stages of the work are busy with tasks of listening, watching and learning.
- Good communicators of the vision to others. There will need to be those who know how to motivate others to join in the work.

Where can you find the people to be a part of the discernment team?

- Some will be in established churches.
- Some will be people you know with whom you share the initial vision.
- Some will be people whom you naturally share life with.
- Some you will find by being in conversation with those in community while participating in these exercises.
- Some might be members of a small group you participate in.
- Some might not be followers of Jesus.

The team is built out of relationships with those who share a passion for the community around them. One does not have to be ordained, in church leadership, or have special skills. Rather, they are following a God-given desire for those in their community. The team should be visionaries, workers and sent people.

There is no magic number for how many members should be on the team, but between eight and 12 would be reasonable. Have enough that if a third of your people are missing at any one gathering, there is enough energy to keep moving forward. At times it will be good to add to your team, as there is always attrition.

As you develop a plan through the discernment process, there will need to be continual and frequent re-evaluations of the team and the new worshiping community. As you begin your ministry, there will be changes in the community and the members of the team. There needs to be continual evaluation as new concerns arise.

Take time to personally and collectively consider the activities in the community and how God is using you. Jeremiah says, "Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (verse 7). The word "welfare" can also mean "shalom." A Jewish understanding of shalom is peace, harmony, wholeness and tranquility.

1. Who on the team has roots in the community?

2. What roots does the community already have that are important for this ministry?

3. Are there connections in the community that need to be made to help the team?

Prayer is central to God’s prompting to Jeremiah. It should not take a secondary spot to the other work of discerning. Pray for the neighborhood in your walks. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Pray Scripture for guidance and the manifestation of God in your community.

Look at the demographic information and review it. Jeremiah was not dropped in by parachute into a community, but first was a part of the community. For your new worshiping community to flourish in ministry, there needs to be a connection to the community with depth. It is important for the team to be inclusive of God's children.

The 1001 New Worshiping Community is designed to take on new and varied forms of church for our changing culture. Primarily, the community seeks to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ, to change and transform the world. Members of the team need to be open to the movement of the Spirit and cannot think of how we have always done it before.

Throughout the process, the team needs to continually explore if this is the correct group of people to lead this new worshiping community. There may be a need, but at times individuals may not be the best ones to respond. Each of us is called as disciples of Christ to follow. As part of our call as disciples, we sometimes are called to places that require work and commitment and dedication. Each one of us has gifts and talents that can and should be shared in a community. The team needs to explore and identify individuals to lead and participate. This is a way to express one's faith. (from written manual)

From Discernment Team to Core Leadership Team

As the work progresses, the initial discernment team will begin to give way to a more defined core leadership team. The discernment team's primary work is prayer, listening, learning the neighborhood, and testing whether there is a Spirit-led invitation to form a New Worshiping Community; the core team's primary work is to take that emerging vision and begin to shape the regular practices, relationships and structures of the community. Some members will move from discernment into core leadership, some will remain as supporters or intercessors, and others may step away, and all of those movements can be faithful.

During this transition, it is important to:

Clarify call and commitment

1. Who senses a sustained call to steward this vision? What level of time, presence, and responsibility is each person willing and able to offer?

Name roles and gifts

2. Based on what you have seen in one another, how might each person's gifts contribute to a balanced team (vision, pastoring, administration, hospitality, teaching, community connections, etc.)?

Revisit your covenant

3. Adapt your Leadership Covenant so it reflects the expectations, boundaries, and practices needed for a core team tasked with leading a new worshiping community, not just exploring a possibility.

Communicate with transparency

Clearly bless those whose role is changing, honor the discernment work they have done, and communicate to the wider circle who the core leadership team now is and how decisions will be made.

This transition is not a sudden hand-off but a season of overlap: discernment continues even as a core team forms. Throughout, keep asking together, “Is this still the right group of people to lead this new worshiping community in this season?” and stay open to adding, releasing, or reshaping roles as the Spirit leads.

Mapping: Being a Part of the Team

As a discernment team is prayerfully being assembled, there needs to be a discussion on the amount of commitment and boundaries that the team should have. This section will encourage those discussions.

Discuss

Read: I Corinthians 12:12–27 (NRSVue)

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many members yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, 24 whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, 25 that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Belonging and commitment

1. Paul keeps repeating that there is "one body" with "many parts" (vv. 12–14, 20, 27). What does that say about what it means to belong to this team, not just attend, but belong?

2. If you join this discernment team, what would it mean for you to move from "I come when I can" to "I am a part of this body"?

Dealing with comparison and insecurity

1. In verses 15 to 16, some parts say, "Because I am not a hand/eye, I do not belong." Where do you see that kind of comparison in yourself or others (e.g., "I'm not a pastor, so…")?

2. How could our team's covenant and practices help people who feel "less important" to know they are essential? What would we need to say and do?

Needing each other

1. Verse 21 warns against "I don't need you." In starting a new worshiping community, which kinds of people are you most tempted to think you don't need? Why?

2. If we really believed verse 21, how would that affect who we invite onto the team, how we listen to each voice, and how we make decisions?

Honoring less visible members

1. Verses 22 to 24 say the “weaker” and less honorable parts are indispensable and given special honor. In your context, who might those “less visible” team members be (roles, personalities, backgrounds)?

2. What concrete practices could we build into our life together to give greater honor to those who aren’t up front or loud (e.g., in meetings, communication, celebrations)?

Shared care and shared cost

1. Verse 26 says, “If one part suffers, every part suffers… if one part is honored, every part rejoices.” What kind of commitment does that call for in terms of time, emotional energy, and prayer for each other?

2. Thinking about the ups and downs of starting a new worshiping community, what do you personally need from the team so that verse 26 can be real for you, not just words?

Personal clarity for joining the team

1. Verse 27 says, “You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” As you hear that, what part do you sense you might be for this team (connector, organizer, pray-er, host, teacher, listener, etc.)?

2. In light of this passage, what are one non-negotiable and one boundary you need to name if you are going to commit to this team in a healthy way?

Who needs to be on the team?

1. Paul compares the church to a body with many parts (vv. 12–14). If you think about your new worshiping community as a body, what "parts" (types of people, gifts, perspectives) do you already have, and what seems to be missing?

2. Verse 18 says God has placed the parts "just as he wanted them to be." How does that reshape the way you think about who is already around you as potential team members?

Dealing with insecurity and invisibility

1. Verses 15 to 16 picture body parts saying, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong." Where do you see that kind of insecurity or comparison in yourself or others you might want on a team?

2. What could you do, practically, to help quieter or unsure people recognize that they truly "belong to the body" and have something needed to offer?

Challenging "I don't need you"

1. In verse 21, the eye says to the hand, "I don't need you!" Where are you most tempted, as a leader, to think or act as if you don't need certain kinds of people?

2. If you took verse 21 seriously in forming a team, who would you intentionally include that you might otherwise overlook (age, culture, personality, gifting)?

Honoring the "weaker" and "less honorable" parts

1. Verses 22 to 24 say the "weaker" parts are indispensable and that God gives greater honor to the parts that lacked it. In your context, who might those "weaker" or less-visible members be?

2. What would it look like, concretely, to give greater honor to those people as you gather and organize a team (e.g., roles, voice in decisions, public affirmation)?

Shared care, shared cost

1. Verse 26 says, "If one part suffers, every part suffers… if one part is honored, every part rejoices." How does that vision of shared suffering and shared joy challenge how you think about team life and responsibility?

2. When you imagine a new team for a missional community, how could you build in practices that help you actually live verse 26 (not just talk about it)?

Personal implication for gathering your team

1. Verse 27 says, "You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." As you hear that, what role do you sense you play in helping others discover and use their part?

2. In light of this passage, name one person you might have underestimated or overlooked whom you now feel prompted to invite into the team, and what first conversation you could have with them this month.

Content

Starting a New Worshiping Community is not an easy task. There will be ups and downs; frustrations and celebrations. In order for your leadership team to effectively move forward, you need to have some possibly difficult conversations.

As the team is created and developed, a covenant needs to be created and developed. Scripture contains many covenants between individuals and God. It is important that all participants on the team have a clear understanding of the expectations. A covenant, a written promise, helps to clarify what will happen and encourages accountability between the team members, the community and the presbytery.

The discernment team has begun to work together, and not everyone is going to make it to the finish line together. There will be turnover on the leadership team. Like God and Noah, we will create a Leadership Covenant. Using the following questions, make your own Leadership Covenant:

1. What are some non-negotiables for you to be a part of the team? What are some non-negotiables for the team itself?

2. What are your boundaries?

3. What strengths and weaknesses do you bring to the team?

4. What do you expect each other to commit to?

5. Share your responses and begin to build a leadership covenant.

Sample Leadership Covenant

The concept of a covenant between God and His people is one of the central themes of the Bible. In the biblical sense, a covenant implies much more than a contract or a simple agreement between two parties. There are many examples of covenants in the Bible, some of the most famous being God's covenants with Noah (Gen. 9), Abraham (Gen. 12), the Mosaic covenant of which the Ten Commandments are the foundation (Exod. 20), and the New Covenant (Heb. 8) between God and humankind based on the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

In this leadership community, a covenant is a solemn agreement between the discernment team to act together in harmony with the Holy Spirit as our guiding voice.

In covenant with God and with each other:

We affirm our unity in Christ and take faithful steps to live more fully into what it means to be a worldwide church in mission for the transformation of the world.

We commit ourselves to crossing boundaries of language, culture, and social or economic status.

We commit ourselves to being in ministry with all people, as we, in faithfulness to the gospel, seek to grow in mutual love and trust.

We participate in God's mission as partners in ministry, recognizing that our God-given gifts, experiences and resources are of equal value, whether spiritual, financial or missional.

We commit ourselves to full equity and accountability in our relationships, structures and responsibilities for the denomination.

We enter afresh into a relationship of mutuality, creating a new sense of community and joyously living out our worldwide connection in mission for the transformation of the world.

We commit ourselves to intentional spiritual development through regular worship or small groups.

We commit to supporting the New Worshiping Community with time, talent, treasure and attendance.

Mapping: Determining Your Core Values?



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Before you can begin to engage the community, your team must determine core values. These values will become the lens through which your team makes decisions, builds relationships and shapes ministries.

In this section, your team will 1) learn more about each other by sharing experiences and beliefs that have shaped you, 2) consider God's heart for the people you are sent to, and 3) learn how to define the values that will anchor everything your community does.

To begin, as team have each person:

1. Share an experience of feeling like an outsider. This could be moving into a new neighborhood, starting a new job, joining a new community, or entering a space where you were in the minority. What felt comfortable or uncomfortable? What did welcome look like or not look like? How did you find your footing, if you did?

Jer. 29:1–9: Study (New Revised Standard Version)

1 These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord.

Chapter 29 is basically a letter that the prophet Jeremiah wrote to those exiled in Babylon (modern-day Iraq) by Nebuchadnezzar (597 BC). The purpose of the letter is to encourage those in exile to accept their new reality and move forward with their lives, instead of clinging to the false hope that God will deliver them anytime soon. If they want to thrive amid their unfortunate circumstances, they will need to let go.

Questions about Jeremiah and starting a New Worshiping Community:

1. If Jeremiah wrote a letter to the Babylonians, what would he ask them to do for the Judean exiles living amongst them?

2. What do you think the Judean exiles would have had to sacrifice in order to live in the dominant Babylon culture?

3. How can those with privilege be sensitive and aware of the disparity for those who are marginalized and invisible?

4. Who are you and your NWC in Jeremiah?

5. How is your NWC different or similar to the community in Jeremiah?

Your New Worshiping Community:

"You might think they need you, but you really need them."

1. How can others be a source of blessings and help you to thrive?

2. How can your NWC partner with the local community to enable your NWC to thrive?

3. What kind of influence do you hope your NWC will have in your community?

Values Exercise

Instructions:

1. Read and sort the following words into one of two categories: core values (things I firmly believe in and value) or negotiable values (things that are open to discussion or compromise). If there are important values that are missing, please add them.

2. Pick the 10 most important words from the core values pile.

3. From these 10, identify the five most important things your New Worshiping Community values.

4. Describe why these five core values are important to you in the columns below.

5. How is this driving you?

Honor: A recognition for people who distinguish themselves from other people by living a life of superior standing

Justice: Behavior that conforms to what is right, fair and reasonable

Spirituality: Being in communion with, having obedience to and actively having a relationship with God

Passion: The "fire within" that brings rewards beyond any monetary gain or satisfaction from your work

Family: People with whom you have a bond and/or a biological bond

Humility: The ability to be honest with yourself; meek, teachable and open to change

Love: Unselfish devotion that freely accepts another person

Honesty: Truth, openness and fairness of conduct; integrity

Relationships: Being surrounded by people who like and care about you

Ancestry: Those who came before us; our line of descent

Altruism/Hospitality: Active concern for the needs and values of others

Dignity: Demonstrating behavior and stature that earns the respect of yourself and others

Aesthetics: Appreciation and enjoyment of beauty and artistic experiences

Autonomy: The drive to be an independent, self-determining individual

Health: Soundness of body, mind and spirit

Loyalty: Maintaining allegiance to a person, group, institution or idea

Emotional well-being: Inner peace, abiding confidence, freedom from anxieties, and tranquility

Recognition: Favorable attention and acknowledgement from others that makes one feel significant

Harmony: Unity in relationships; the absence of conflict and strife between associates

Achievement: Desiring outcomes resulting from persistent endeavor

Community: People who care about something and pursue it together

Wealth: An abundance of valued material possessions and resources; economic prosperity

Physical appearance: Concern for the attractiveness of one’s own body

Knowledge: Facts and lessons learned; understanding or awareness of principles that organize and explain

Creativity: The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods and interpretations

Generosity: The quality or fact of being plentiful or large

Authenticity: Being true to one’s own character or self

Joy: A source or cause of great delight

Empathy: The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experience of another

Additional Values:

Top 10 Values

Top 5 Values

Rationale for your top 5:

Adapted from Gallup's StrengthsFinder "Values" Exercise

Mapping: Creating a Vision for the Community

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Frederick Buechner

While processing the last few sections, you should feel a prompting for the community you are called to. You have walked and prayed in the community. Now you will begin to form a vision for the ministry you want to create.

Read: Jer. 29:4–9

4 This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7 Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." 8 Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9 They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the Lord.

Discussion:

1. Shalom means peace, completeness, prosperity, and wholeness. Take some time to look at what shalom is more deeply. In verse 7, shalom as translated is underlined. What would it mean to bring shalom to Babylon and to the Israelites?

2. What is required to bring shalom? What does shalom look like to you and to those around you?

3. How may you "seek the shalom" of your neighborhood? How do we do this together? How do we do this individually?

4. How can you care for your community physically? How can you care for your community spiritually?

5. In the same way that your NWC's answer to "Who is Jesus?" will be specific and not encompass all of who Jesus is, your NWC will also be called to seek particular elements of shalom for your neighborhood. Think back to the values you identified for your community in the previous session. How do these values speak to the particular elements of shalom that your NWC is called to seek for your neighborhood?

Content:

In this section, your team will begin to develop a vision. This vision takes into account the values, partnerships, prayer and prompting of the Holy Spirit. You are not committing to specific actions but beginning to dream about the possibilities. The primary goal of developing a vision statement is to begin to put actionable items to your values. The following activity is based on one designed by Communitas International.[3]

[3] 10 "Dynamic Adventure: A Guide to Starting and Shaping Missional Churches"; Daniel Steigerwald, Deborah Loyd, April Te Grootenhuis Crull and Michael Kuder

Vision Exercise

Instructions:

1. Break your team into small groups. Assign each small group a value you identified for your NWC in the previous section. Write it on the top of a sheet of paper, then write out the possibilities for living out that value in the community. What outcomes would be possible? What would it look like? Take five minutes for this activity.

2. When the time is up, have everyone pass their paper to the person on their left. Continue with the exercise until each person has a chance to read the values. Within your small group, develop a short paragraph that describes how that value will be lived out in the community as part of your vision. Write the vision on a sticky note.

- Come together as a large group. When prompted, have each small group tell their value, then post their vision on a whiteboard and read it aloud to the group. After each presentation, the large group may ask clarifying questions. Repeat the process through all of the values.

3. Compile all of the value/vision statements on the board. These represent your unique version of the values for your community. Be sure to write the values/vision statement below, so that you can reflect on it.

Values and Vision Statements

Value:

Possible ways to live out vision with outcomes:

Value:

Possible ways to live out vision with outcomes:

Value:

Possible ways to live out vision with outcomes:

Value:

Possible ways to live out vision with outcomes:

Value:

Possible ways to live out vision with outcomes:

4. Spend time in prayer over your vision/values statement. Begin to combine them into a concise statement that will be shared with the group the next time you come together.

Mapping: Determining Possibilities



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

After a time of prayer, listening, and understanding the context of the community, the next step is to begin experimenting with possibilities for interacting with and engaging the community.

Bible Study: Read Jer. 29:1–9

1 These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. 3 The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It said: 4 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord.

Discuss:

1. **Why do you think God called the Israelites to build houses and plant gardens? What is it about the marriage, harvest and settling that were so important to the Israelites?**

2. **What are the steps needed to accomplish what is needed in verse 6? How would they go about it?**

3. **Share a time when you were doing a project that you had no previous experience with. What did you do? Was it a success? What could you have done differently?**

Content:

In this section, you will brainstorm a list of possible ways to engage the community. Think of this new initiative as a way to serve the people God has placed on your heart.

1. **Brainstorming is a discipline in itself. Write down every idea and possibility the group suggests. There is no editing at this time. A true brainstorming session can generate hundreds or even thousands of possibilities very quickly if you don't interrupt each other or evaluate each suggestion. All ideas are shared and written down.**

Insight:

Think also about those whom you have encountered in the community and have spent time praying for.

Some areas to think of:

- **Service in the community**
- **Local event or community gatherings**
- **Classes or workshops**
- **Volunteering in existing community organizations**
- **Joining informal gatherings**
- **Community-building activities**
- **Establishing a presence at a community event**

2. **Give the team 10 minutes to brainstorm on the following page.**

- **Circle and number your personal top five.**
- **Take turns sharing your top five.**

3. **Did some similar possibilities rise to the surface?**

- **Pick two or three ways of engaging the community, making sure that you can accomplish them while staying within your resources.**

1. Based on your neighborhood exegesis and community conversations, what are the possibilities for ministry and engagement? Where are potential partnerships?

2. Brainstorm in the following areas

Acts of service in the community

Events

Classes

Volunteering in existing community organizations

Joining informal gatherings

3rd spaces

Community building activities

Establishing a presence at a community event

Mapping: Creating the Mission Plan

The purpose of developing a plan is to move from how you can harness your experimentation to creating a new worshiping community. In the previous sections, you have learned about the context in which the people you wish to engage are in, the values you hold onto and the vision you have cast. In this section, you will begin to develop specific plans to develop a new worshiping community.

Insight:

In developing the plan, it is important to spend as much time in the community as possible. Is there a restaurant, coffee shop or library in the community where the discernment team can gather for its weekly meetings? That venue choice will help you to stay connected in a very tangible way with the people you are called to engage.

Visit several church plants or new worshiping communities in your area to observe how they gather, lead, and engage their surrounding community. If none are nearby, learn about them through conversations, online gatherings, or recorded services. As you explore these communities, remember that each one emerges from a unique context, leadership team, and set of relationships. What works in one setting may not translate directly into another. Approach these visits with a posture of learning rather than replication, paying attention to the underlying principles that shape their ministry while remaining attentive to what is appropriate for your own people and context.

What Do We Want to Be?

"Christianity did not begin with a confession. It began with an invitation into friendship, into creating a new community, into forming relationships based on love and service."

— Diana Butler Bass, "Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening"

In this step, you will identify many possible ways to begin a new worshiping community and begin to distinguish specific strategies that will work in your context. Pray for the people you have been called to.

Bible Study: Read I Cor. 9:19–23

19 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

1. What does it mean to "become all things to all people?"

2. In what ways do you think Paul became all things?

3. What are some dangers of trying to "become all things to all people"?

4. Consider all the churches to which you have belonged or which you know well. What are some things they have in common? What key differences did you notice?

5. Tell some specific ways in which the ministry of these churches matched or did not match the communities they were trying to serve. What was your role in the church?

1. Develop a concise plan based on your experimentation, values and vision. This will be the basis for developing your worshiping community.

Based on all your discernment, prayer, community engagement, and experimentation, answer these foundational questions:

Context and Mission

1. **Who are we seeking to reach? Describe the people and community this worshiping community hopes to serve.**

2. **What is our primary missional focus? What need, opportunity, or calling is shaping this new worshiping community?**

Values and Identity

1. **What core values will guide the life and culture of this worshiping community?**

Worship and Spiritual Formation

1. **What will worship look like in this community?**

2. **What spiritual practices will shape the life of the community (e.g., prayer, Scripture study, fellowship, discipleship)?**

3. **How will we make and form new disciples?**

Community Life

1. **How will members of this community care for and support one another?**

Mission and Service

1. **How will this community serve and witness to the surrounding neighborhood?**

Leadership and Decision-Making

1. **How will leadership develop within the community, and how will decisions be made?**

Partnerships

1. **How will this new worshiping community stay connected with its partner congregation or sponsoring body?**

2. **What resources or capabilities are currently missing that partnerships could help provide?**

Sustainability

1. **How will we build stable financial support?**

Mapping: Creating a budget

Introduction

It is a practical expression of the community's mission, priorities, and stewardship. It helps leaders align available resources with the ministry they hope to cultivate while encouraging wise planning and long-term sustainability.

In the early stages of a new worshiping community, financial resources are often limited and patterns of giving are still emerging. For this reason, leaders are encouraged to develop a budget that is realistic, flexible, and closely connected to the community's core practices and priorities. The purpose is not simply to estimate expenses, but to thoughtfully consider how the community will support worship, discipleship, hospitality, leadership development, and service within the surrounding neighborhood.

A clearly developed budget also assists leaders in communicating with partners, sponsoring congregations, and potential supporters. It provides transparency regarding how resources will be used and demonstrates a commitment to responsible stewardship. As the ministry develops, the budget becomes a helpful tool for monitoring financial health, evaluating priorities, and adjusting plans as the community grows.

In this section, leaders will identify anticipated expenses, potential sources of income, and the partnerships or resources that may be necessary to sustain the work. The goal is to develop a financial plan that supports the faithful growth of the worshiping community while remaining attentive to the realities of the context in which it serves.

Luke 16:10–12

Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. [11] If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? [12] And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?

1. How does the call to humility in this passage shape the way this community thinks about its financial priorities?

2. In what ways can the budget reflect generosity toward those who cannot repay or benefit the community in obvious ways?

3. Are there areas where financial decisions might unintentionally seek recognition or prestige rather than faithful service?

4. How might the budget prioritize hospitality, care, and inclusion for people who are often overlooked?

5. What practices can help this community remain humble and faithful in its stewardship as it grows?

Content

Leaders should now revisit the ministry vision they have already written and carefully consider what resources will be required to bring that vision to life. The activities, practices, and priorities described in the vision should guide the development of the budget. As leaders review their vision, they should ask what gatherings, ministries, leadership roles, and community engagements will need financial support in order to happen consistently. The purpose of this step is to ensure that the budget reflects the ministry they hope to cultivate, rather than creating financial plans that are disconnected from the community's mission and practices. By grounding the budget in the previously articulated vision, leaders can begin to align their resources with the calling and direction of the new worshiping community.

Questions or activity

Step 1: Identifying Potential Income Sources

Before estimating expenses, leaders should consider how the ministry might be supported. New worshiping communities often rely on multiple sources of income.

Examples of income sources:

Offerings from participants, Support from a partner congregation, Presbytery or denominational grants, Individual donors, Fundraising events, Community partnerships, Foundation grants, Local business sponsorship, Online giving

1. Exercise: List possible income sources for the first two years.

Step 2: Identify Potential Partners and Supporters

Reflection Questions:

1. Which congregations might support this ministry financially?

2. Are there organizations already serving this community that might collaborate?

3. Who in your personal network believes in this vision?

4. Are there local foundations or donors who support community initiatives?

5. Exercise: List potential partners or supporters.

Step 3: Estimate Income for a Two-Year Period

Revenue Source	Year 1	Year 2
Individual Giving		
Partner Congregation Support		
Presbytery / Denominational Grants		
Individual Donors		
Fundraising Events		
Foundation Grants		
Other Income		
Total Revenue		

Step 4: Identify Ministry Expenses

Once potential income sources have been considered, leaders can identify the expenses required to support the ministry activities described in their vision.

1. Exercise: Brainstorm ministry expenses.

- Meeting space or facility rental
- Worship supplies or equipment
- Food and hospitality for gatherings
- Community outreach or service events
- Discipleship materials or study resources
- Leadership stipends or small salaries
- Website, communication, or printing costs
- Insurance and administrative expenses

Step 5: Estimate Ministry Expenses

Expense Category	Year 1	Year 2
Worship & Gatherings		
Hospitality / Meals		
Community Outreach		
Discipleship Activities		
Leadership Stipends		
Administrative Expenses		
Communication & Promotion		
Other Expenses		
Total Expenses		

Step 6: Budget Summary

Category	Year 1	Year 2
Total Revenue		
Total Expenses		
Surplus / Shortfall		

Final Reflection

1. Does this budget reflect the ministry vision that has already been articulated?

2. Are we trusting God while also planning responsibly?

3. Are leadership stipends realistic and sustainable?

4. What steps could strengthen financial stability in the coming years?

Trailblazing

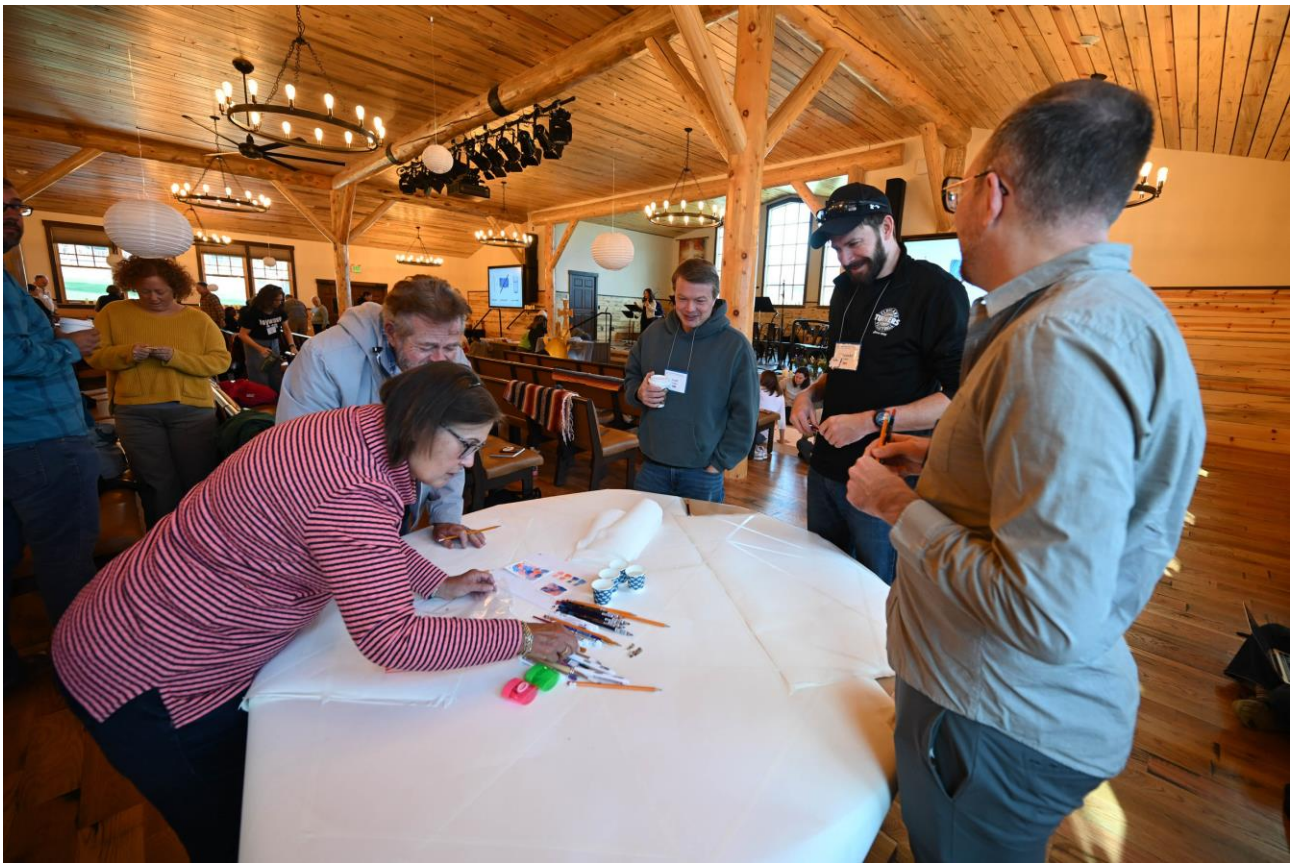


Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Trailblazing: Begin to Experiment



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Choose one or two small experiments to begin. Evaluate them after a period of time. These experiments should be low-cost, low-risk ways to test your assumptions about the community and your calling.

In this step, you will plan your first new initiative to engage with the community. Pray as a group for discernment, courage and passion.

Insight:

The experiment should not be something you do “to” or “for” people but something you will do “with” people.

> Read: Matt. 16:13–20
> 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Discussion:

1. Who do you say that Jesus is? Through this discernment and experimentation process, has God been central or off-center in your life? In your discernment team?

2. Share how your faith has grown, stagnated or decreased through the discernment process.

3. In declaring that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God," Jesus declares that Peter will be the foundation of the church. Through the development of the New Worshiping Community, have you been faithful?

Content:

1. What is the result of your Bridge Activity? Share with the team what God has been saying to you. Where is the group being led to? Which of these new initiatives is the one with which you want to experiment first? This does not mean that the others will not be done, but which becomes the collective focus of the team?

Then:

1. Pray and ask others to join you in prayer about the new initiative. This new initiative needs to be a movement of the Holy Spirit. Our tendency is to get to work. The church of the Book of Acts was told by Jesus to get to prayer first. Whom will you ask to join you in prayer?

2. Assign a date when the new initiative will take place or begin. The challenge here is to find a date that will allow you to prepare well. You want to gain momentum toward your start date. A date too far away will not be able to maintain momentum, while a date too soon will not have enough momentum. What date will this start?

3. Determine how long you will try the new initiative. A one-time initiative is easy: "We will do it and after we have done it we will decide if we ever want to try it again." Other initiatives will take a month, several months or a year to really gain traction. Build into the implementation a long enough time to truly try the new initiative, but a short enough time to end it if it is not fulfilling its goals. How long are we committed to this initiative? Is this reasonable?

4. Develop a list of the "pieces" that need to be in place before this initiative can start. Find people who have the ability to see the steps to get to where the dreamers are pointing.

5. Assign a date for when each "piece" needs to be completed. Many new initiatives never get off the ground because leadership teams do not have anyone who holds the rest of the team accountable to fulfilling each piece in a timely fashion. Go back to what you just wrote down. What needs to be done the month before the initiative begins? What needs to be done the week of the initiative? What needs to happen the day of the initiative?

- Determine if each "piece" is done by an individual or a team: Think of the complexity of the task. It is frustrating to have too few or too many people involved.
- Continue to pray. Pray without ceasing. Maybe this entire initiative is really God's way of teaching your team to come together in prayer.

6. Develop a list of the financial and people resources needed to begin the new initiative. Do you have the people and skills needed to move forward with the initiative? What expenses, facilities, supplies and equipment will you need? What community resources, approvals, permits and community leaders' participation do you need?

7. Determine realistic expectations and goals before the launch of the initiative starts. What is a short term "win"?

Trailblazing: Evaluating the Experiment

1. After your experiment, evaluate the results. What worked? What didn't? What did you learn about the community? What did you learn about your team?

Trailblazing: Implementation

Intended Session Outcomes

- Establish an ongoing community gathering

Bible Study: Acts 2:1–6, 12–18, 21, 36–47 Note: Selected verses of Acts 2 are included here for brevity's sake. But your group may choose to read the entire chapter.

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

…

12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 'In the last days it will be, God declares,

that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,

in those days I will pour out my Spirit,

and they shall prophesy.

…

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

…

36 “Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” 38 Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

43 Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

1. Often considered the Church’s “birthday”, Acts 2 tells the story of the first public ministry of the followers of Jesus after receiving Jesus’ commission. We know from the gospels and Acts 1 that it follows years of walking with Jesus during his earthly ministry, forty days of learning from the risen Jesus after Easter, and a ten-day-and-night prayer vigil after the ascension. From this text, what do you see as the indicators Peter and the other disciples saw that it was time to “start”?

2. Place yourself in Peter’s shoes. What do you imagine he was thinking and feeling as he began to speak to the people?

3. Were there any indicators that the disciples shouldn't be starting? How do you think they dealt with this?

- Now, consider yourself and your team, and the NWC vision you're about to implement:

4. What indicators do you see that it's time to start?

5. As you examine your own thoughts and feelings, how do they compare to what you imagined Peter's were?

6. Is there anything or anyone indicating you ought not to be starting? What do you make of these?

Content

Up to now, you've been in a rhythm of experimenting, debriefing, and trying again based on your learnings. As you do, a vision for an ongoing sustained gathering for your NWC ought to be emerging and being refined. Once it's clear enough, it's time to implement it.

To proceed with this stage, the vision needs to be "clear enough." It doesn't need to be perfect. Your vision doesn't need to account for every possible scenario. In fact, to think it does would be foolish. You will make mistakes, and most endeavors can still be course-corrected when those mistakes become evident.

For this reason, the spirit of experimentation that you embraced in the previous steps should still be practiced. The difference is that you're now creating a degree of sustained consistency in your NWC's life, as opposed to one-off or time-bound projects.

Activity

Review the definition of a NWC on pages 13 and 14.

Consider the experiments that you've done. Give time for each team member to respond to the following prompts:

1. In which experiment did you see the most evidence of the Holy Spirit? What was that evidence? Which activity most captured the excitement and interest of our neighbors? Of all the things we did, which one would you be most excited to do regularly?

2. As you listened to each teammate's reflections, what themes emerged?

3. As you consider the blueprint for a consistent gathering, what activities from your experiments does it include? (*Note: In this conversation, it's possible that folks might suggest activities that weren't a part of any of your experiments. That's OK! But those activities should be embraced as experiments. Try them when you gather, and debrief them like all of your previous experiments.)*

Use the template below to outline your first gathering.

Outcome Templates

Gathering design guide:

1. Title of your gathering:

2. Who is this for? How will you invite them?

3. Outline of gathering/activities:

4. When will this gathering be?

5. At what frequency? (Note: We recommend starting less frequently than you might intend long term. This way, your core team can meet between gatherings to debrief and refine the gathering. E.g., if you're intending to have a weekly gathering, start with every other week so the core team can meet and debrief during the off weeks.)

6. Where will the gathering take place? (Note: if you're using space lent to you by a church or other organization, we highly recommend developing a covenant, contract, or MOU specifying the terms of use.)

Gathering debrief guide:

After each initial gathering, the core team should meet to debrief. Use these questions as a guide:

1. Where did we see evidence of the Holy Spirit at work?

2. What are the best indicators that this gathering belongs to our neighbors and not just to us?

3. What, if anything, didn't go well, or at least not as expected?

4. In light of the above, what adaptations do we want to make? What experiments have we been trying that are worth repeating or locking in as consistent practices?

Trailblazing: Creating a Values-Centered Discipleship Pathway[1]

"Discipleship means to imitate Jesus within the context of a community for the renewal of the local place around you."

~ E.K. Strawser, Centering Discipleship

Introduction

New Worshiping Communities do not begin with programs but with relationships, people learning to follow Jesus together. In the early stages of an NWC, resources like this guide help leaders navigate the discernment and startup phases of a new community. Once the NWC begins gathering regularly with people from the wider community, it becomes important to systematize your practices.

For NWCs in the Gathering Stage, this means creating spaces where core team members can grow spiritually, deepen their understanding of the community's values, practice discipleship together, and learn to mentor others. At this stage, the core team should walk a defined discipleship pathway together that equips them to disciple others. This pathway should be grounded in the values, vision, and mission of your NWC. Its purpose is not only personal spiritual growth, but also the formation of leaders who can reproduce discipleship with others and develop second-generation leaders.

This reflects the pattern of the New Testament, where followers of Jesus learned in community, practiced their faith together, encouraged one another, and were sent out to participate in God's mission. Over time, this pathway becomes a reusable framework that emerging leaders can use to disciple new participants and cultivate a multiplying culture of discipleship.

Outcomes

The following template offers a simple structure that NWC leaders can use to guide their core team through this process. This session invites participants to explore Scripture, reflect together, engage spiritual practices, and discern how God is inviting them to embody these values in everyday life.

1. *As a team, share about a time when you felt truly known by someone in a Christian community, when you didn't have to perform or pretend. What made that possible?*

Or

2. *Think of the most formative season of your spiritual life; a time when you genuinely changed. What was happening around you? Who was there? What made that season different from others?*

Bible Study: Matthew 28:16–20

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This passage, often called the Great Commission, reveals that the central work of the church is making disciples**.** Jesus does not simply instruct his followers to gather people or build institutions. He calls them to form people who learn to follow him, live his teachings, and participate in God’s mission. Discipleship in this passage includes several elements: going into the world, baptizing people into the life of the Trinity, teaching others to live the teachings of Jesus, trusting Christ’s ongoing presence.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Jesus means by “make disciples”?

2. How have you experienced discipleship in your own life?

3. What helped you grow most in your faith?

4. What practices could help our community become a place where disciples are formed?

Activity: Designing Your Values-Based Discipleship Pathway

This activity helps your core team translate your community's values into a reproducible discipleship pathway.

The goal is to create a pathway that helps people grow in their relationship with Christ, practice the values of your community, develop leadership capacity, and learn to disciple others.

Work through the following steps together.

1. Step 1: Write down your Core Values (you defined these in the mapping section of this guide). Examples may include: Sabbath, Hospitality, Discernment, Justice, Prayer, etc.

Step 2: Define What the Value Means

For each value, ask:

1. What does this value reveal about the character of God?
2. Why does this value matter for disciples of Jesus today?
3. How does this value challenge common cultural patterns?
4. Write a short description of the value in one or two paragraphs.

Example: Sabbath teaches us to trust God's provision and resist the constant pressure to produce and perform.

Step 3: Identify Biblical Foundations

Choose one or two Scripture passages that ground this value.

Examples: Sabbath: Genesis 2:1–3, Mark 2:27; Discernment: Acts 10:9–16; Love: John 13:34–35; Wonder: Psalm 19, Matthew 6:26–29

Ask:

1. What does this passage reveal about how God invites people to live?

2. How does it shape our understanding of this value?

Step 4: Design the Learning Sessions

You can create as many learning sessions for each value as seem helpful to your team. Each session should explore a different dimension of the value.

Example structure:

Session 1 Biblical foundation of the value

Session 2 Practicing the value in everyday life

Session 3 How the value shapes community and mission

Session 4 (optional) Leadership and teaching others this value

This structure helps participants move from understanding → practice → leadership.

Step 5: Identify Practices and Experiments

Discipleship deepens when people practice what they learn. For each value, design one or two experiential learnings.

Examples:

Sabbath: turn off devices for an evening, share a meal without rushing

Discernment: practice a daily prayer of listening, reflect on where you sensed God's presence

Love: write a letter of encouragement, serve a neighbor in a practical way

These practices help participants embody the value rather than simply discussing it.

Step 6: Create a Communal Practice

Each value should include a shared community experience.

Examples: Sabbath retreat, Prayer walk through the neighborhood, Community service project, Shared storytelling night

These experiences reinforce the idea that discipleship happens in community.

Step 7: Prepare Leaders to Reproduce the Pathway

The final step is ensuring that this pathway can be led by others.

Ask:

1. What materials or guides would help a new leader facilitate this pathway?

2. What parts of this process could an apprentice leader practice leading?

3. Who in our community could help guide the next group through this pathway?

The goal is not simply to run a discipleship program but to cultivate disciple-makers who can guide others through the same journey.

Conclusion

A discipleship pathway helps translate the values of your community into lived practice.

Over time, these practices form people who are rooted in Christ, connected to one another, and equipped to participate in God's mission. As leaders learn to guide others through this pathway, the culture of discipleship within your NWC will continue to grow and multiply.

[1] Adapted from Rooted & Sent: A Discipleship Pathway Training Guide by Taeler Morgan for use by 1001NWC

Trailblazing: Load Bearing Leadership



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Most new worshiping communities start as an idea in the mind of a single person or maybe a small group of individuals. But that's not where we want a new worshiping community to stay. Whatever idea or vision we have, we want our idea to inspire others. We want our idea to become a reality in a gathered group of people. We want our idea to have impact. We want our idea to be sustainable beyond ourselves.

In other words, we don't just want an idea; we want a community. And for your idea to develop into a community, you need load-bearing leadership.

Load-bearing leaders are more than just volunteers who carry out tasks that you might delegate to them, though we do need volunteers. Load-bearing leaders are more than just a supportive group of people cheering us on and supporting us in the work, though we definitely need those folks too. Load-bearing leaders are people who will join together in bearing the weight of the community: discerning the mission of the NWC, and taking collective responsibility for the sustainable fulfillment of its mission.

Bible Study: Exodus 18:17–23

17 Moses's father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. 18 You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. 19 Now listen to me. I will give you counsel, and God be with you! You should represent the people before God and bring their cases to God. 20 Teach them the statutes and instructions and make known to them the way they are to go and the things they are to do. 21 You should also look for able men among all the people, men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain; set them as officers over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. 22 Let them sit as judges for the people at all times; let them bring every important case to you but decide every minor case themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 If you do this and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their homes in peace."

1. How do you imagine Moses hearing this advice from his father-in-law? What emotions do you think it stirred up in him?

2. How do you imagine the first judges appointed by Moses felt receiving this invitation and stepping into this new responsibility?

Activity: Load-Bearing Leadership Self-Assessment

Consider the following indicators of load-bearing leadership in a new worshiping community:

- Shared spiritual leadership: team members other than the NWC point leader lead elements of worship, Bible study, teach/preach, and/or lead the team in prayer.
- Shared decision making: the team has worked collaboratively to come to consensus on important decisions related to the NWC's identity, purpose, and plans. (Note: If you've used this guidebook as intended, this should be an easy question to answer!)
- Shared ownership of community needs: When someone on the team, or a participant in the NWC, experiences a crisis, various members of the team may respond, not just the point leader or pastor.
- Shared accountability for ministry and mission: team members each have specific responsibilities such as hospitality, finances, worship planning, community partnerships, etc. The work gets done without the point leader needing to remind them or micromanage them.
- Shared capacity to absorb disruption: The team is collectively empowered and equipped to keep going in the absence of one or more team members, especially the point leader.
- Shared responsibility for hospitality: When new people visit the NWC, they are intentionally welcomed by more than just the point leader.
- Shared ability to navigate conflict: The team is able and willing to name when disagreements, disappointments, or tensions arise, and knows the best ways to address them directly.

As a team, give space for each person to respond to these questions:

1. After reading the above indicators of load bearing, how "load bearing" would you say the team is currently, on a scale of 1 to 5?

2. If you scored anything less than a 5, what shifts in yourself or in the team would you need to see to score the team one point higher?

3. Sometimes becoming more load-bearing means recruiting additional leaders with particular gifts or skills. Are there any gifts or skills your team needs that are not present in your current group?

(Note: consider having each person first write their responses to these questions, then share with the group. It will encourage more honest responses.)

Outcome Template: Leadership Development Action Plan

1. Name no more than three shifts or practices the leadership team will put into place. Put it on the calendar to check in on these in about 90 days.

2. Make a list of the skills or gifts you need on your team that the current team doesn't have. Next to each gift, write either the name of someone with that skill whom you will invite to be on the team, or an action plan to ask your presbytery, partner churches, and/or community partners for help identifying this person. Spend time in prayer asking God to lead you to these people.

Trailblazing: Rhythm of Life

A Guide for New Worshiping Community Leaders

Sustaining Yourself in Ministry

Introduction

As a leader of a New Worshiping Community, you carry a meaningful and often demanding calling. You are forming, leading, encouraging others, and working to get your community off the ground, all while managing your own life, family, and personal wellbeing.

This guide is designed to help you understand your need for rest, develop a healthy rhythm of work and renewal, and build a sustainable pattern that works for your unique season of life and ministry.

The goal is not to add more to your plate; it is to help you develop a system that works best for you, fits your schedule, and allows you to serve from a place of wholeness rather than depletion.

Scriptural Foundation

Before reflecting on your own rhythm, take a moment to read and sit with these passages:

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

"For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance…"

Genesis 2:2–4

"On the sixth day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation."

Luke 5:16

"Meanwhile, he (Jesus) would slip away to deserted places and pray."

Mark 1:35

"In the morning, while it was still very dark, he (Jesus) got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed."

Reflection Questions

1. *What word or phrase stood out to you in these passages?*

2. *What did you notice about how God and Jesus approached rest and renewal?*

3. *How do these passages reflect on how you could spend time in silence and solitude while doing ministry?*

Understanding Your Rhythm

There Is a Season for Everything

Ecclesiastes 3:1: reminds us clearly that there is a "season and time" for everything. This is the season for you to think about sustaining yourself in and through ministry, by being intentional and aware of what you do to care for yourself.

This guide invites you to take time to practice self-care and incorporate rest into your ministry life. This is not optional for leaders; it is essential.

Jesus as the Model

There is no better model for the practice of rest than Jesus himself. After performing miracles and attending to the needs of others, Jesus consistently withdrew to be alone in silence and solitude. He did not wait until he was burned out to rest. He built renewal into his rhythm.

As you continue to serve others, consider how you might build similar practices into your own life. Time alone, time in prayer, time in stillness: these are not luxuries. They are the fuel that makes sustainable ministry possible.

Prayer as Communion and Burden-Bearing

Spending time in prayer is not merely a spiritual discipline; it is a form of communion with God, and a way of taking your burdens to the Lord. You are not alone in this ministry. Prayer is a reminder that you carry the work alongside God, not instead of God.

Seeking Support

In addition to personal practices of rest and prayer, remember that seeking support from others is a sign of strength, not weakness. Consider building a team of people around you who can help you sustain your calling:

Types of Support to Consider

- A Coach: to help you grow in leadership and navigate challenges
- A Counselor or Therapist: to provide professional mental and emotional support
- A Spiritual Director: to walk alongside you in your spiritual formation and discernment

Reflection & Next Steps

Activities

Take time to work through these questions honestly. You may want to journal your responses or discuss them with a trusted mentor or colleague.

1. What does your daily routine look like right now?

2. Describe a typical day, from morning to evening. Note the rhythms, the demands, the moments of rest (if any), and the times when you feel most depleted.

3. What improvements can you make to better incorporate Jesus' model of retreating to a quiet place and praying?

4. Think practically: Where could you carve out silence? What time of day works best for solitude? What would a weekly Sabbath practice look like in your current season?

Outcome Template: Identifying Your Support Needs

Review the list below and identify which type of support you currently need. Then take the next step of reaching out to a professional in that area.

- Coach: Leadership development, strategic thinking, accountability
- Counselor / Therapist: Mental health, emotional wellbeing, processing stress and burnout
- Spiritual Director: Spiritual formation, discernment, deepening your walk with God

1. My current support need(s):

2. My next step (person to contact / action to take):

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

Trekking



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Trekking: Creating the Structure of a New Worshiping Community



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

In order to sustain the new worshiping community beyond the first years, denominational grants, and through leadership transitions, it is important to think about the structure of the new worshiping community. An NWC's structure need not look like what traditional church structures have looked like, but we encourage NWCs to create ways to share vision and leadership, tasks and needs with one another in the community.

If you haven't yet started thinking about what systems will be in place as you start an NWC, now would be a good time to do so.

Consider the following structural elements:

- Leadership structure and governance
- Meeting times, locations, and frequency
- Worship style and format
- Community outreach and service

1. Relationship with the presbytery and PC(USA): which committees within the presbytery need to be aware of and caring for the NWC, and who will the point(s) of contact be?

Other administrative concerns could include:

1. Financial policies and procedures: who will hold finances, and how will oversight be done? How will donations be handled? Who will oversee banking information? (Needs to be more than one person)

2. How will public presence of the NWC be done? (social media, websites, etc.) Who will hold those accounts and passwords?

3. If you have payroll, how will payroll be done? What about other bookkeeping needs?

4. How will child protection and boundaries training be covered?

5. How will the community provide insurance for meetings?

6. Who are the community partners, and who will the point(s) of contact be?

Of course, these are not exhaustive. More information can be found through the 1001 Accelerator, Pathways to Flourishing, or other guiding partnerships.

Trekking: Establishing Benchmarks

As your NWC begins to experiment, not everything you try will work out the way you hoped. Failure is often one of the best opportunities for learning. As a team, you will need to regularly step back and honestly assess if what you are doing is bearing fruit.

This section will give your team the ability to develop goals and metrics that will help you evaluate your efforts, ask hard questions, and make adjustments without losing sight of the vision God has placed before you.

To begin, as a team have each person:

1. Share a time when you set out to accomplish something but the goalpost kept moving, either because circumstances changed, leadership changed, or maybe the original goal wasn't quite right. How did that feel to you? What did you learn about yourself? How did you stay accountable to your goal and/or your team?

Bible Study: John 15:1–17

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit (fruit that will last) and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

Discuss:

1. How has God provided and cared for you?

2. Have you ever gone through the “pruning” process so you can produce more fruit?

3. Jesus uses the word ‘remain’ 11 times in this passage. Remaining is integral to bearing fruit in the life of a Christian. What does it mean to “remain”? What is difficult about “remaining” in the ups and downs of an NWC as you experiment?

4. Where is your fruit? Or are you off course?

Content:

Success looks different in various contexts, but it always looks like faithfulness. What faithfulness looks like for a suburban house church will look different than what faithfulness looks like for an immigrant NWC meeting in a school gym. Such is the nature of contextual ministry. What matters most is that your team defines success in line with your values, vision, and calling in your unique context.

1. What are ways that churches usually measure success? Which of those feel faithful and which feel hollow?

2. What are some biblical examples of faithfulness in ministry that surprise or challenge your idea of success?

Benchmarks for an NWC might fall into any number of categories, but here are a few to begin thinking about:

- Relational: the number of meaningful relationships formed outside the church, partnerships established with community organizations, or new people welcomed into the community's life.
- Spiritual: Evidence of spiritual formation, such as people in discipling relationships, people being baptized, individuals moving from curiosity to commitment, the team developing a shared rhythm of prayer and worship.
- Missional: Signs that the community is engaging its context, such as presence in neighborhood spaces, service projects underway, conversations happening with people who have no church background.
- Structural: Practical markers of organizational health, such as a leadership covenant in place, a budget drafted, a meeting rhythm established, a presbytery relationship formalized.
- Numerical: Not the only measure, but not meaningless either, such as the number of people gathering regularly, frequency of meetings, number of leaders being developed.

Sit together as a core team and hold this question:

1. *"If this new worshiping community is faithful and bears fruit for the gospel, what will we see in the months ahead?"*

2. Without allowing for discussion or critique, ask each person on the core team to name one measure of faithfulness or fruit-bearing for the new worshiping community. Write down each suggestion so that all can see. Keep going around the circle until everyone has contributed all of the suggestions they generated. Do not debate or criticize the suggestions at this point. The goal is to generate ideas that would show that the ministry was bearing fruit.

3. Follow the same procedure for the signs that would show that the community was not bearing fruit or successfully making disciples. It is difficult to name these things, but it is important. Communities that cannot name what is not working cannot course-correct. And although it is difficult to define “success” in ministry, it is important to invest resources in places that are bearing fruit and transforming lives.

- From the ideas generated, work as a team to place your benchmarks into three timeframes. For each one, complete the sentence:

1. 3 Months *"Three months from now, if we are faithful to God and to our God-given mission, we will see ."*

2. 6 Months *"Six months from now, if we are faithful to God and to our God-given mission, we will see ."*

3. 12 Months *"One year from now, if we are faithful to God and to our God-given mission, we will see ."*

4. And for each timeframe, ask the harder question: *"If we do not see by this point, we will need to re-evaluate."*

Trekking: Making a Stewardship Commitment

Bible Study: Read II Cor. 8:1–12; 9:6–15

II Cor. 8:1–12

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints, 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything (in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you) so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something, 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

II Cor. 9:6–15

6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 9 As it is written,

“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed
for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every
way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; 12 for the
rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with
many thanksgivings to God. 13 Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your
obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing
with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you because of the
surpassing grace of God that he has given you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable
gift!

Discussion:

The saints in the mother church in Jerusalem are in great need and Paul has gone out to take a collection among the new churches in Asia to relieve their suffering.

1. Why would the Macedonian churches plead for the privilege of serving the saints in Jerusalem, and give beyond their ability?

2. What things did the Macedonian churches excel at?

3. How had the Macedonian churches become rich?

4. What is the ultimate result of the gift given by the Macedonian churches?

Content:

Ask one person to read aloud the draft of the mission plan to the entire group. Have the group sit in silence for a few minutes. Then ask the following:

1. What activities/events/meetings will this plan result in?

2. What funds would be required to execute the activities/events/meetings?

3. Will the time and talent of individual leadership be paid? At what level?

4. What level of annual expenditures will we commit to?

5. How will funds be raised to cover expenditures?

Despite the potential availability of outside grant funding, a financially sustainable community is one in which participants become stewards and give a portion of the resources that God provides. Faithful stewardship requires sacrificial giving, first and foremost, by the leadership team. And yet, the missional church does not teach stewardship primarily to float a budget, but as a way of life, because stewardship is formational for the steward and a witness to the community. To lead in this area, team members need to be able to openly and frankly talk about their posture relative to money.

Take some time to talk about money in your lives.

1. How and when was money spoken of in the house in which you grew up?

2. Did you grow up knowing your family's income or charitable giving practices?

3. How do you talk about money in your home today?

4. What does it mean to be a steward rather than an owner of all you have?

5. What role does money play in discipleship?

6. Will making a gift make it easier for you to ask others for a gift?

Bridge Activity:

1. Write a draft statement that includes 1) who your group is to be and what it is to do in the community; 2) what the annual budget will be to realize this; and 3) how much money you can provide from your own resources to fund that budget.

Insight:

The Stewardship Commitment is the foundational piece used in seeking future gifts from those both inside and outside of the community. Who we are, what we do, what it costs and how one can make a difference through a gift in support of our mission are key points in inviting others into our work.

2. As a team, commit to the time, talent, and treasure required to launch and sustain this new worshiping community. Document your commitments here:

Flourishing



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Flourishing: Multiplicative Leadership



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Introduction

Healthy New Worshiping Communities grow not only by welcoming new participants, but by developing new leaders.

In the early stages of a community, leaders often carry many responsibilities as they nurture relationships, shape culture, and establish rhythms of gathering and discipleship. As the community begins to flourish, the focus must shift from simply sustaining the ministry to multiplying leadership, ensuring that the work of the community does not depend on a small number of people. Instead, leadership becomes shared, distributed, and continually renewed. When disciples are formed to guide others, the community becomes more resilient, creative, and responsive to God's movement.

This pattern reflects the life of the early church, where leaders invested in others who were then sent out to guide new communities. Rather than concentrating authority in a few individuals, the church cultivated leaders who could teach, serve, and shepherd others.

This session helps NWC leaders reflect on how their community can intentionally identify, mentor, and release new leaders by recognizing emerging leadership within their community and designing simple pathways for leadership multiplication.

1. *As a team, share about someone who helped you grow into leadership. What did they do that helped you step into that role? What made their support meaningful?*

Bible Study

Read Acts 18:24–27

> 24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.
>
> 27 When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

This passage offers a powerful example of relational discipleship and leadership multiplication**.** Apollos already had passion and knowledge. Yet his ministry became stronger because Priscilla and Aquila invested in him. Discipleship in the early church was relational, intentional, and oriented toward equipping others for ministry**.**

This pattern is especially important for NWCs in the Flourishing stage so communities can grow as disciples begin to mentor and form new leaders.

Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about Apollos in this passage? What strengths or gifts does he already possess? What do we notice about the role of Priscilla and Aquila in Apollos' development?

2. What does this story reveal about humility and teachability in leadership?

3. Where do you see yourself in this story right now? Are you more like Apollos, eager and learning, or like Priscilla and Aquila, investing in others?

Content:

Leadership multiplication begins with a shift in mindset. Instead of asking, "Who can do this task?" leaders begin asking, "Who could learn to lead this in the future?"

Healthy communities cultivate what some church leadership practitioners describe as an equipping culture. In such communities, leaders focus not only on accomplishing ministry tasks but also on helping others discover and develop their gifts. This often happens through apprenticeship rather than formal training. Emerging leaders are invited to observe, participate, and gradually take on responsibility.

This might look like: co-leading a gathering, facilitating a discussion, organizing a service project, guiding a spiritual practice, mentoring newer participants. It's important for the opportunities to be intentional and guided experiences. Have the apprentice watch you do it first and observe/ask questions. Give them one part to lead and then give them feedback. Give them more the third time and meet with them to reflect on their experience. Do this until they are leading the whole endeavor. Observe their leadership and give them feedback and continued training. Allow them to lead without your presence to create a sense of ownership and self-differentiation.

Over time, these experiences help participants recognize their own capacity to lead and contribute to the mission of the community. Leadership multiplication does not happen accidentally. It grows through intentional practices such as mentoring relationships, shared leadership opportunities, and clear pathways for participation.

When these practices become part of the culture of a New Worshiping Community, leadership development becomes an ongoing and natural process.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you currently see leadership emerging within your community?

2. What opportunities already exist for people to practice leadership?

3. What barriers might prevent new leaders from stepping forward?

4. How could your community create clearer opportunities for apprenticeship?

5. What qualities do you look for when recognizing potential leaders?

Activity: Leadership Multiplication Map

As a team, create a simple map of leadership within your community. Draw three circles on a sheet of paper or whiteboard:

Current Leaders Emerging Leaders Future Leaders

1. Work together to place names in each category.

Current Leaders: people currently guiding or facilitating parts of the community.

Emerging Leaders: people who show initiative, curiosity, or relational influence.

Future Leaders: participants who may grow into leadership with encouragement and support.

Discuss the following:

2. What opportunities could help emerging leaders gain experience?

3. Who might serve as a mentor for each emerging leader?

4. What next step could help one person move into greater leadership this year?

The goal of this exercise is not to assign roles immediately but to begin recognizing how leadership can grow within the community.

Conclusion

Flourishing communities are not defined only by the number of participants they gather, but by the number of leaders they cultivate. When leaders invest in others, the work of ministry becomes shared and sustainable. New ideas emerge, new relationships form, and the community becomes more capable of responding to the needs of its neighborhood. By intentionally mentoring and releasing new leaders, NWCs continue the pattern found throughout the New Testament: disciples forming disciples who guide others in the way of Christ.

Leadership multiplication ensures that the mission of the community continues to expand, carried forward by people who have been formed through shared practices, relationships, and faithful participation in God's work.

Flourishing: Multiplicative Communities: Creating a Culture of Multiplying New Communities from Flourishing New Worshiping Communities

Biblical Anchor: Acts 13:1–3

Acts 13:1: Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler,[a] and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

The church in Antioch offers a clear picture of what a thriving community looks like when it learns to send. Instead of clutching its most gifted leaders, it lets them go, even when they're the "best" people in the room, and it does so for the sake of new mission. That's what sits at the center of a multiplying culture: a New Worshiping Community (NWC) that treats Spirit-led sending as ordinary, woven into the rhythm of its life, not as something reserved for special occasions.

It also puts words to something many people already know from experience. A lot of NWC leaders are, by both wiring and calling, serial church planters. A healthy environment doesn't attempt to keep them parked in one place indefinitely. It prepares ahead of time for their strengths to spread through new plants, through apprentices, and through intentional sending efforts.

Reflective Questions for an NWC and Presbytery

Use these in a joint NWC, presbytery conversation.

Identity & Imagination

1. Where do we actually picture ourselves, more like Antioch, a community that sends, or more like Jerusalem, a community that mostly stays in place?

2. When we talk about "success" for this NWC, are we picturing new communities taking root because of us, or are we only picturing this one becoming steady and secure?

Leadership & Serial Planters

1. Looking at the primary leader's gifts, wiring, and story, what hints do we see of a call toward repeated planting or movement-building, not only long-term settled pastoring?

2. If, in three to five years, our leader sensed a clear call to begin or mentor another new work, what would need to be in place (team, structures, funding, expectations) so it lands as a gift to the NWC instead of a destabilizing emergency?

Practices of Sending

1. Where are we already practicing this, even on a small scale, training people, apprenticing them, then letting them lead, whether that's groups, micro-gatherings, or neighborhood ministries?

2. How might worship, shared stories, and leadership development make sending feel normal and healthy, so "being sent" reads as growth and maturity, not as people disappearing or being taken away?

Partnership with the Presbytery

1. What would it take for the presbytery to relate to this NWC as a future hub for other plants, for example, a coaching base, a residency home, or an assessment partner?

2. How can established congregations and the NWC work side by side so that fresh leaders and new communities come from shared ministry, not only from one charismatic planter?

“Readiness to Multiply” Checklist

(For an NWC and the wider strategy)

Check what is true now, and what needs attention:

Spiritual & Missional DNA

The NWC consistently tells stories about God’s mission beyond its own internal needs.

Sending is celebrated, prayed for in worship, and marked in concrete ways, not quietly grieved.

There is a shared conviction that starting new communities is a normal, faithful response to the gospel.

Leadership Depth & Development

Two to three emerging leaders are being apprenticed with intention, not simply scheduled as volunteers.

The primary leader has margin, time, and energy to coach and raise others up, not only keep the current NWC running.

The community, and the presbytery, stay open to the possibility that the main leader might one day plant again or shift into a movement role.

Community Health & Sustainability

A core team exists that can carry the ministry if the primary leader steps back for a season, to coach, plant, or support another work.

Foundational structures, finances, communication, sacraments, record-keeping are stable enough that a new experiment will not put the existing community at risk.

The NWC has a clear missional focus, who and where it is called, and that clarity can shape how and where multiplication might happen.

Ecosystem and partnerships

The presbytery, and any sponsoring congregation, has named a shared vision for multiplication, not only for this one NWC’s survival.

Some kind of support framework exists (coaching, a peer cohort, a liaison) and it could also support new planters who emerge from this NWC.

Funding and grant conversations make room for future sending, apprentices, residencies, new plants, not only ongoing upkeep.

Discernment & Planning

The NWC and presbytery have agreed on discernment checkpoints, for example every twelve to eighteen months, to ask, “Are we being invited to multiply?”

A rough timeline or a few multiplication scenarios have been named out loud, for example, “Within three to five years we hope to host a resident or help launch a daughter community.”

It is clear who decides what: NWC leadership, session, presbytery, 1001 staff, when it comes to sending people, beginning a new site, or reshaping leadership roles.

Flourishing: Next steps

Organizing or Continuation of the Mission

A Guide for New Worshiping Communities

Discerning the Next Step in Your Community's Journey

Introduction

Congratulations, you have come a long way. Your New Worshiping Community has been formed, nurtured, and sustained through prayer, faithfulness, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Now you arrive at an important milestone: discerning what comes next.

This guide addresses two distinct but equally faithful paths forward:

Path 1: Organizing as a PCUSA Church

- Becoming a chartered congregation
- Joining the connectional body of the Presbyterian denomination
- Recommended for NWCs with regular worship services and an active congregation
- A joyful and significant step in communal identity

Path 2: Continuing in Mission

- Remain a ministry or mission of the presbytery
- Continuing to serve through the leading of the Holy Spirit
- A faithful calling in its own right

Neither path is lesser than the other. Both are expressions of the calling God has placed on your community. This guide will help you prayerfully discern which path is yours.

Scriptural Foundation

Before moving forward, take time to read and reflect on these passages:

John 15:15

"I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

Proverbs 3:5–6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Questions & Activities

1. *What word or phrase stood out to you in these passages?*

2. *How does Jesus' invitation to friendship (rather than servanthood) shape how you understand your community's relationship with God and the wider church?*

3. *In what ways have you seen God "make straight your paths" throughout the life of your New Worshiping Community so far?*

4. *As you read Proverbs 3:5–6, what feels uncertain or unknown about the road ahead? Bring those things to prayer.*

Understanding This Moment

This is an interesting and significant stage in the life of a New Worshiping Community. You have received varied levels of financial and other support through 1001 New Worshiping Communities. You have grown. You have learned. And now, it is time to prayerfully discern the next chapter.

Whatever path lies ahead, this is a moment to celebrate what God has done, and to lean into what God is doing next.

Path 1: Organizing as a PCUSA Church

What Does It Mean to Organize?

Becoming an organized church within the PCUSA means formally joining the larger body of the Presbyterian denomination. It is a step toward becoming a connectional church, the church Jesus has called you to be, in communion with fellow believers across the country and around the world.

This is a joyful occasion. By organizing, your community transitions from a New Worshiping Community into a chartered congregation with a functioning Session of ordained elders. You are then received as a member church of a Presbytery.

What Changes When You Organize

- You are no longer a New Worshiping Community; you become a chartered church
- A Session is formed with ordained ruling elders
- You are received as a member church of your Presbytery
- You enter into the full connectional life of the PCUSA
- You gain greater governance, accountability, and denominational support

Is Organizing Right for Your Community?

Organizing is highly recommended for New Worshiping Communities that have:

Signs Your Community May Be Ready to Organize

- Regular, consistent worship services with an active congregation
- A growing sense of communal identity and shared commitment
- Leadership that is ready to pursue elder ordination and Session formation
- A desire to be formally connected to the PCUSA and a Presbytery
- Congregational support and willingness to take this next step together

Note: Organizing is not recommended for independent ministries without an active congregation. If this does not describe your community at this time, Path 2 may be more appropriate for this season.

How to Begin the Process

Spend Time in Prayer and Discernment

Before any practical steps, bring this decision to God individually and as a community. This is a spiritual decision as much as a structural one.

Hold a Congregational Meeting

Organizing involves the whole community of worshipers. Present the idea, allow space for questions and conversation, and hold a formal vote. A majority approval is needed to proceed.

Identify the Right Leaders to Contact

Reach out to your executive presbyter, stated clerk, NWC commission, or another individual or committee assigned to be your point of contact to begin the conversation.

Begin the Official Process

Work with your identified Presbytery or NWC leaders to navigate the steps toward organizing, which will include forming a Session and preparing for reception as a member church.

Questions & Activities

1. *Does your community currently have regular worship services and an active, committed congregation? Describe what that looks like.*

2. *How does your congregation feel about becoming a chartered church within the PCUSA? Have those conversations begun?*

3. *Who in your Presbytery or network do you need to contact to begin the organizing conversation? Write their names or roles below.*

4. *What questions or concerns does your leadership team have about the organizing process? Who can help you answer them?*

5. *What would need to be true (spiritually, relationally, structurally) for your community to feel ready to move forward?*

Path 2: Continuing in Mission

A Faithful and Fruitful Calling

Not every New Worshiping Community is called to organize as a chartered church, and that is completely faithful. If you feel called to continue serving others in ministry in your current form, rest assured that you are in good hands. Trust that the Holy Spirit will keep guiding you.

This path is not a lesser calling. For many communities, continuing as a ministry or mission community is exactly the right expression of the work God has set before them.

Ways to Deepen Your Impact

Even without formally organizing as a PC(USA) congregation, there are meaningful ways to strengthen your ministry's connection and credibility:

Presbytery Partnership

- Reach out to your Presbytery to be officially recognized
- Validated status provides formal denominational acknowledgment
- Increases visibility and access to Presbytery resources
- Strengthens your ministry's credibility in the wider church
- Partner with the Presbytery for support and collaboration
- Access to coaching, resources, and community
- Opportunities for collaborative mission projects
- Accountability and encouragement within the broader body

Questions & Activities

1. *What is the specific ministry calling or population your community serves? How does that shape which path feels right for this season?*

2. *Have you explored validated ministry status with your Presbytery? What do you know about what that process involves?*

3. *Who in the Presbytery could you partner with to expand your ministry's reach or impact? What would that collaboration look like?*

4. *What resources, support, or recognition would help your ministry thrive in the coming year?*

5. *How do you help your community understand that continuing in mission (without organizing) is a fully faithful and valued path?*

Communal Discernment: Finding Your Path

Whichever direction your community is leaning, the process of discernment is itself a vital spiritual practice. This is not simply a logistical decision; it is a sacred one. Below are practices and questions to guide your community through this discernment process together.

Practices for Communal Discernment

Recommended Discernment Practices

- Spend extended time in corporate prayer, bring this decision before God as a community
- Hold a listening session for the congregation to share what they sense God is doing
- Invite a trusted outside voice (coach, Presbytery leader, spiritual director) to walk alongside your discernment
- Study together: explore what Scripture says about the nature of the church and Christian community
- Reflect on your community's history, unique calling, and the people you serve
- Allow adequate time, do not rush a decision of this significance

Our Community's Discernment Summary

After prayer and community conversation, we sense God is calling us to:

☐ Organize as a PCUSA chartered church

☐ Continue in mission (validated ministry or Presbytery partnership)

1. ☐ We are still in discernment, our next step is:

2. Key people or leaders we will contact:

3. Our target timeline for a decision:

Flourishing: Funding Diversification for Long-Term Sustainability



Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

In the early stages of a new worshiping community, financial support often comes from a limited number of sources, such as a sponsoring congregation, denominational grants, or a small group of committed donors. While these forms of support are essential for helping the ministry take root and establish rhythms of worship, relationship-building, and service, leaders are encouraged to begin thinking about diversifying financial support as the ministry matures. Developing multiple sources of support can strengthen long-term sustainability and allow the community to remain adaptable as circumstances change. Many new worshiping communities find stability through a combination of approaches, including congregational giving, bi-vocational leadership, entrepreneurial initiatives, grants, partnerships, and community fundraising.

Devotional Reflection: Ecclesiastes 11:2 and Faithful Stewardship

> "Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight; you do not know what disaster may come upon the land."
> Ecclesiastes 11:2

Ecclesiastes reminds us that wisdom includes preparing for an uncertain future. The writer encourages spreading investments across many ventures, recognizing that no single path can guarantee stability. For leaders of new worshiping communities, this insight offers an important perspective on sustaining ministry. Early support may come from one or two sources, but over time the community is invited to imagine a broader network of support, through partnerships, generosity, entrepreneurial creativity, and the gifts of those who share the vision. Diversifying resources is not simply a financial strategy; it is an act of stewardship that strengthens the ministry's resilience and allows it to continue serving its community faithfully. As you work through the exercises in this section, consider how God may be inviting your community to cultivate multiple streams of support so that the mission entrusted to you can grow and endure.

Reflection Questions

1. What sources of support currently sustain this worshiping community?

2. In what ways might the community be relying too heavily on a single source of income or partnership?

3. What gifts, skills, or relationships within the community could open new possibilities for sustaining the ministry?

4. How might partnerships, entrepreneurial initiatives, or bi-vocational leadership strengthen the long-term health of the ministry?

5. What steps can leaders take now to build a more resilient and sustainable financial foundation for the future?

Exercise 1: Reflecting on Current Funding

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the primary sources of financial support for this ministry today?

2. Which sources have been most reliable?

3. Are there any sources the ministry relies on too heavily?

4. Which funding sources have begun to grow within the community?

5. List the current funding sources for your worshiping community.

Exercise 2: Bi-Vocational Leadership

Many new worshiping communities are sustained through bi-vocational leadership, where leaders maintain employment while serving the ministry.

Reflection Questions:

1. Are there leaders already serving in a bi-vocational capacity?

2. How might bi-vocational work strengthen relationships in the surrounding community?

3. What types of employment might support the ministry's mission?

4. Identify possible bi-vocational roles or employment opportunities.

Exercise 3: Entrepreneurial Possibilities

Some worshiping communities develop entrepreneurial or social enterprise initiatives that both serve the community and generate modest income.

Examples may include community cafés, educational workshops, arts programs, community gardens, after-school programs, or event space rental.

Reflection Questions:

1. What gifts or skills exist within the community that could support entrepreneurial initiatives?

2. Are there ministry activities that could develop into sustainable programs?

3. What needs exist in the surrounding community that could be addressed creatively?

4. List possible entrepreneurial initiatives.

Exercise 4: Grant Opportunities

Public and private grants can provide support for ministries serving the broader community.

Reflection Questions:

1. What programs or ministries could qualify for grant support?

2. Are there foundations or organizations funding work in your neighborhood?

3. Who in your network has experience with grant writing?

4. Identify potential grant opportunities.

Exercise 5: Partnership-Based Funding

Some ministries develop financial support through partnerships with organizations that share similar goals.

Reflection Questions:

1. What organizations are already serving the same community?

2. Are there opportunities for shared programming or collaboration?

3. How might partnerships strengthen both mission and sustainability?

4. List organizations that could become partners.

Exercise 6: Building a Diversified Funding Model

Funding Source	Possible Amount	Timeline	Notes
Congregational Giving			
Bi-vocational Leadership			
Grants			
Entrepreneurial Ventures			
Partnerships			
Fundraising Events			

Final Reflection

1. Which funding sources best align with our mission and values?

2. How can we reduce reliance on a single source of income?

3. What opportunities exist for creativity and partnership?

4. How might God be inviting this community to imagine new possibilities for sustaining its ministry?

Recommended Books and Resources

In the 1001 movement, we assess, train, and coach leaders around 11 qualities and competencies that research has shown are essential for an NWC leader to flourish both in the work of starting a NWC and in their life while doing the work. They're listed below, along with recommended books and resources to grow in that area.

Faithfulness

The Bible Project Podcast

Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth by Richard Foster

The Centering Moment by Howard Thurman

The Common Rule by Justin Whitmel Earley

Discerning the Voice of God by Priscilla Shirer

The Divine Hours by Phyllis Tickle

Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scazzero

Hearing God by Dallas Willard

Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans

The Inward Journey by Howard Thurman

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Meditations of the Heart by Howard Thurman

PC(USA) Daily Prayer App

Practice the Pause: Jesus' Contemplative Practice, New Brain Science, and What it Means to be Fully Human by Caroline Oakes

Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer

Pray As You Go podcast: Daily 20 min guided prayer by Jesuit Media. Available in the Podcasts app, or at pray-as-you-go.org.

The Sabbath, by Abraham Joshua Heschel

Sacred Companions by David Benner

Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation by Ruth Haley Barton

The 7th Story: Us Them, & the End of Violence by Brian Mclaren and Garreth Higgins

The Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within by Christine Valters Paintner

The Way of Discernment by Elizabeth Liebert

Wholehearted Faith by Rachel Held Evans

Motivational Fit

Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger

Embracing the Mixed Ecology: Inherited and New Forms of Christian Community Flourishing Together by Dwight J. Zxheile and Blair A. Pogue

The Forgotten Ways by Alan Hirsch

The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch

Starting Missional Churches: Life with God in the Neighborhood, by Mark Lau Branson and Nick Warnes

Visions of Vocation by Steve Garber

Emotional Resilience

3 Vital Questions: Transforming Workplace Drama by David Emerald

The Anatomy of Peace by the Arbinger Institute

Boundaries by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Burnout by Emily Nagoski and Amelia Nagoski

"CALM" app

The Center for Non-Violent Communication: https://www.cnvc.org/

Conspire to Overcome Bias by Brian Mclaren

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High, by Kerry Patterson et al.

Difficult Conversations by Stone, Patton & Heen

The Empowerment Dynamic by David Emerald

Failing Forward by John Maxwell

Leadership and Self-Deception by the Arbinger Institute

Margin by Richard Swenson

The Monkey and the Fish: Liquid Leadership for a Third-Culture Church, by Dave Gibbons.

Option B by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant

The “Saboteur Assessment” from Positive Intelligence https://positiveintelligence.com/saboteurs/

See No Stranger by Valarie Kaur

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry by John Mark Comer

Thomas Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) https://www.cpp.com/en-US/Products-and-Services/TKI

Xealots: Defying the Gravity of Normality, by Dave Gibbons

Emotional Maturity

Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown

Clifton Strengths resources available at gallupstrengthscenter.com

DISC Assessment

Emotional Intelligence: Why It Matters More Than IQ, by Daniel Goleman

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ, by Peter Scazzero

The Gifts of Imperfection by Brene Brown

Guide to Whole Hearted Living by Brene Brown

Positive Intelligence by Shirzad Chamine

The “Saboteur Assessment” from Positive Intelligence https://positiveintelligence.com/saboteurs/

Thanks for the Feedback by Stone & Heen

“Use Situation-Behavior-Impact (SBI) To Understand Intent” from the Center for Creative Leadership: https://www.ccl.org/blog/feedback-you-can-fathom/

The Wisdom of the Enneagram by Russ Hudson and Richard Don Riso

Social Base

100 Lunches With Strangers by Kaley Chu

The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters by Priya Parker

Boundaries by Cloud & Townsend

“CALM” app

Emotionally Healthy Relationships by Peter Scazzero

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

The Gottman Institute’s resources for marriage and relationships https://www.gottman.com/

"In Praise of Scruffy Hospitality," blogpost by Robin Sheeves at https://www.mnn.com/your-home/at-home/blogs/in-priase-scruffy-hospitality

Listening When Parts Speak by Tamala Floyd

Networlding: Building Relationships and Opportunities for Success by Melissa Giovagnoli and Jocelyn Carter Miller

Never Eat Alone by Keith Ferrazzi

Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction, by David Benner

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas

Sacred Rest by Saundra Dalton-Smith

Who Not How by Dan Sullivan and Benjamin Hardy

Entrepreneurial Experience

"10 Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs" by Kelsey Miller https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/characteristics-of-successful-entrepreneurs

The Art of the Start: The Time Tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything, by Guy Kawasaki

Collective Genius: The Art and Practice of Leading Innovation by Linda A. Hill, Greg Brandeau, Emily Truelove, and Kent Lineback

Good Idea, Now What? How to Move Ideas to Execution, by Charles Lee.

How Big Things Get Done by Brent Flyvbjerg and Dan Gardner

The Lean Startup by Eric Ries

Start With Why by Simon Sinek

Unreasonable Hospitality by Will Guidara

Missional Practice

The Art of Gathering by Priya Parker

Assimilate or Go Home: Notes from a Failed Missionary on Rediscovering Faith, by D.L. Mayfield

Cherished Belonging by Gregory Boyle

Cultural Intelligence by David Livermore

Faith Rooted Organizing by Alexa Salvatierra

The Gospel Comes with a House Key by Rosaria Butterfield

The Great Search by John Philip Newell

Intercultural Competence by Mitchell Hammer

Making Neighborhoods Whole by John Perkins

Refresh: A Not-So-New Guide to Being Church and Doing Life, by Michael Moynagh and Rob Peabody

Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul by John Philip Newell

See No Stranger by Valerie Kaur

Surprise the World by Michael Frost

The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community and the *Tangible Kingdom Primer* by Hugh Halter

Risk Taking

Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone, by Brene Brown

Creativity Takes Courage by Irene Smit and Astrid Van Der Hulst

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead, by Brene Brown

Luke 16 and the Parable of the Shrewd Manager

The Faith of Leap: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure, and Courage by Alan Hirsh

Building a Successful Team

Developing the Leader Within You by John Maxwell

Discerning God's Will Together by Ruth Haley Barton

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, by Patrick Lencioni (See also the companion workbook.)

Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting Out of the Box by The Arbinger Institute

Sailboat Church by Joan Gray

Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action, by Simon Sinek (See also Sinek's TED Talk at Ted.com)

Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow, by Tom Rath

Personality/gift inventories that can help you and your teammates understand one another:

- CliftonStrengths: gallupstrengthscenter.com
- Enneagram, https://www.enneagramspectrum.com/testing/
- APEST: http://www.theforgottenways.org/what-is-apest.aspx

Leading for Sustainability

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership by John Maxwell

Canoeing the Mountains by Tod Bolsinger

Community: The Structure of Belonging, 2nd Edition by Peter Block

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance, by Angela Duckworth (See also Duckworth's TED talk and ted.com)

Fundraising for Social Change by Kim Klein

Funding Forward: A Pathway to More Sustainable Models of Ministry by Grace Duddy Pomroy

The Generosity Ladder by Nelson Searcy

Leaders Eat Last by Patrick Lencioni

Leading Change by John Kotter

Leading Change while Loving People by Yulee Lee

Leading Faithful Innovation by Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, and Tessa Pinkstaff

The Network for Good https://www.bonterratech.com/product/network-for-good

Switch by Chip and Dan Heath

Unicorns Unite: How Nonprofits & Foundations Can Build Epic Partnerships by Jessamyn Shams-Lau and Vu Le

Leadership Developer

Coaching for Performance by John Whitmore

The Coaching Habit by Michael Bungay

Developing the Leaders Around You by John Maxwell

Making Room for Leadership by Mary Kate Morse

Multipliers by Liz Wiseman

Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness, by Robert Greenleaf

Situational Leadership: https://situational.com/the-cls-difference/situational-leadership-what-we-do/

Acknowledgements

This resource was developed with the support and contributions of many individuals who are passionate about the 1001 New Worshiping Communities movement within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Special thanks to the staff and associates of the 1001 New Worshiping Communities initiative, the presbyteries and congregations who have supported this work, and the many leaders who have bravely stepped out in faith to start new worshiping communities across the nation.

We are grateful for the theological contributions of scholars and practitioners in the field of missional church, whose writings have informed and shaped this resource, particularly those on the writing team: Rev. Taeler Morgan, Rev. Dr. Chris Holland, and Rev. Sarah Lane.

For more information, contact the 1001 New Worshiping Communities team at **Presbyterian Life & Witness**

100 Witherspoon Street

Louisville, KY 40202

newchurchnewway.org

Rev. Taeler Morgan: Taeler is the Missional Cultivator of Olympia Presbytery in Washington State, planter of Gather Tacoma (a 1001NWC), and pastor of Fircrest Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Dr. Christopher J. Holland II, DBA: Chris is the Executive Director at The Common Place, a Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit; and the Executive Pastor at Salt & Light Church (PCUSA).

Rev. Sarah Lane: Sarah is the pastor of Zo Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA.

A Word of Encouragement

You have been faithful. Your community has grown, served, and worshiped. Whatever lies ahead, the God who called you into this work will not abandon you. You are not servants left to figure this out alone; you are friends of Jesus, guided by the same Spirit who has carried you this far.

Trust the path. Do the work. Lean into the community, both the local congregation you lead and the wider body of the church that surrounds you.

> *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and he will make straight your paths."*
>
> **Proverbs 3:5–6**

Current Grant Information

https://www.newchurchnewway.org/grants

Photograph Credits

Cover | Page 1
261014NWC-Gathering3-3757.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Discovering | Page 11
261014NWC-Gathering3-3751.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Mapping | Page 67
261014NWC-Gathering3-1091.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Trailblazing | Page 117
261013NWC-Gathering2-2090.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Trekking | Page 146
261014NWC-Gathering3-1107.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Flourishing | Page 160
untitled-1941.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 01: Discovering: What are New Worshiping Communities? | Page 12
untitled-1579.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 02: Discovering: Prayer Walk Guide, Vicinia Divina | Page 33
261013NWC-Gathering2-9179.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 03: Discovering: Neighborhood Exegesis Community Study | Page 37
untitled-1502.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 04: Discovering: Being a Missional Leader | Page 53
261013NWC-Gathering2-2267.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 05: Mapping: Gathering a Team | Page 72
untitled-1527.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 06: Mapping: Determining Your Core Values | Page 88
261013NWC-Gathering2-8940.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 07: Mapping: Determining Possibilities | Page 99
261013NWC-Gathering2-2345.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 08: Trailblazing: Begin to Experiment | Page 118
261013NWC-Gathering2-8957.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 09: Trailblazing: Load-Bearing Leadership | Page 136
261013NWC-Gathering2-2223.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 10: Trekking: Creating the Structure of a New Worshiping Community | Page 147
untitled-1515.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 11: Flourishing: Multiplicative Leadership | Page 161
261013NWC-Gathering2-8915.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)

Interior 12: Flourishing: Funding Diversification for Long-Term Sustainability | Page 185
untitled-1612.jpg | Photo: Rich Copley | PC(USA)