

MISSION ACTION PLAN PROCESS FOR PARISHES

Facilitator's Guide



ANGLICAN
DIOCESE OF
NIAGARA



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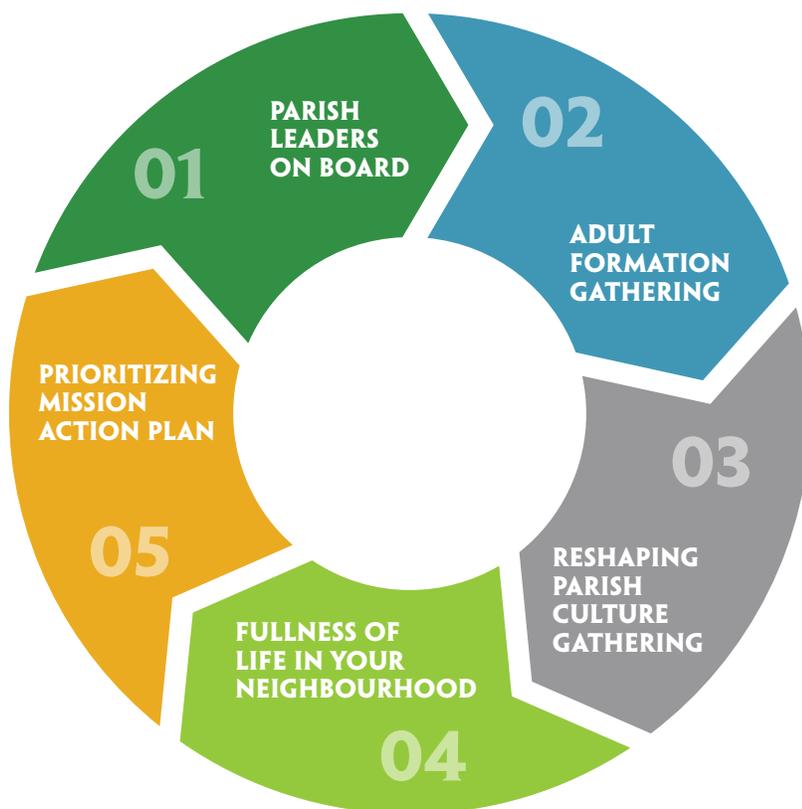


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parish Mission Action Plan process described in this guide is intended to move your parish through four sequential gatherings to a mission action plan that will serve the parish and God's mission for the next one to two years. The first three meetings allow people to participate in holy brainstorming that flows out of the parish's strengths, gifts and passions framed by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The final meeting leads participants through a prioritizing process that culminates in a plan with goals for three focus areas; Adult Faith Formation, Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry, and Fullness of Life in Your Neighbourhood. The plan will be simple, flexible, shaped to your parish's context, and reflective of God's unique call to mission for your parish. All the resources you'll need are available online or in a paper version.



Review and refresh MAP annually

** if the parish vision and mission is not reviewed in year one, it is highly recommended that year two include a review and potential restating of the parish's vision and mission in light of this work.*



PARISH MISSION ACTION PLAN PROCESS

OVERVIEW

Why is the diocese focusing on being missional?

Because research shows that churches who have a missional focus are growing faith communities, growing in faith and growing in disciples. Those communities are marked by:

- people readily sharing their stories of how God's unconditional love and the Way of Jesus has transformed them,
- an openness to hospitality that embraces and upholds seekers, questioners, neighbours, and strangers in language that they understand,
- porous walls that facilitate the flow of the parishioners out into the world to come alongside God's work and tell the story of God's love even as community members are drawn into the church to experience a sense of belonging and affirmation of both worth and gifts...where there's a sharing of strengths and gifts, and a recognition of and respect for the image of God in everyone, friend, and stranger,
- partnerships with community organizations, service groups, entrepreneurs, and other churches working together to ensure fullness of life for all,
- spiritual practices that ground risk taking and trust sharing in response to the voice of the Spirit
- stewardship of space, place, gifts, and treasures that responds generously to both the abundance with which God gifts us and the responsibilities of care that accompany those gifts, and
- intentional and diverse pathways that invite and enable people into a deeper relationship with Jesus and with God through which people become their most authentic selves, deeply immersed in God's fullness of life.

What missional means...

"At every stage in the biblical narratives is hope for a future reality toward which the people are moving. Being missional means we join this heritage, entering a journey without any road maps to discover what God is up to in our neighborhoods and communities." Alan Roxburgh, *Introducing the Missional Church* pg 15

It's hard to think about being invited to examine our ways of worshipping and discipling; maybe even our ways of being together as a community of faith, and our patterns of engaging with the world. Perhaps it will help a bit to consider that the early church was pushed into big changes shortly after Jesus' death. The early followers of Jesus continued to meet at the temple as well as in small gatherings of fellowship because they saw themselves as part of the continuum of the journey of the Jewish people. However, many of those followers found themselves in Antioch where they engaged with Gentiles who had heard about Jesus and wanted to know more. As Alan Roxburgh says..." the Holy Spirit fell upon them and a new kind of church was birthed at Antioch, comprised of mostly



Gentiles.” This was not what the followers of Jesus planned for or expected. Roxburgh continues, “The Spirit broke the boundaries that were already defining what it meant to be a Christian. The church was forced out of the box it had created for itself and would never have entered by itself.” Doesn’t that sound something like the church today?

Yet still you might be wondering what missional means. Again, Roxburgh comments “God is up to something in the world that is bigger than the church even though the church is called to be sign, witness, and foretaste of God’s purposes in the world. The Spirit is calling the church on a journey outside of itself and its internal focus.” Alan Roxburgh, *Introducing the Missional Church* pg 20

What does it mean to be a sign, witness, and foretaste of God’s purposes in the world? I’d suggest it is fairly simple. It means that the church, the people of God are called upon to tell the story of God’s love; to tell the story of how each one of us has been transformed...so beloved and forgiven that we awaken each morning delighting in knowing ourselves to be a loved child of God. To be missional is to tell others what the Good News of the gospels means in our individual lives and in our lives as a faith community.

It is critical that we remember that Jesus told the story of God’s love in language that was familiar to his listeners. It’s incumbent on us to do the same. We need to translate how we tell our story into the language of the context in which we find ourselves so that the people with whom we’re in relationship can hear what we are saying. How we tell our story will differ as we speak to fellow parishioners, our grandchildren, our neighbours, our co-workers, people we meet. How do we know what language will work in different contexts? We learn their “language and culture” by practicing deep listening; by developing relationships in which we hear people’s joys, challenges and worries.

In addition to telling the story of God’s love, we are called, as Paul says to the church in Corinth, to live as a testimony to Christ written with the Spirit of the living God on our hearts; in other words, we show the story of God’s love by embodying what that means; compassion, grace, humbleness, and care for and advocacy alongside the marginalized in the world.

Let’s be clear; we don’t know what that looks like for your parish. There is no “model” of missional church that is a template for success. Nor is there any biblical prescriptive of how to be the church that will ensure we are on the right path. Rather, like so many of the people in the biblical narrative, we are invited to journey with God on a path that has no roadmap, on a path that is revealed in the relationships we develop, the stories we hear, the whisperings of the Spirit we attend to, and the boldness with which we attempt to join in God’s restorative work of love.

While there is not a detailed roadmap to follow, the Mission Action Process is intended to illuminate a pathway that will allow your parish to develop its own unique mission action plan that could intentionally shape your shared ministry and growth over the next few years.



MAP TEMPLATE YOUR PARISH WILL HAVE COMPLETED BY THE END OF FOUR GATHERINGS

Map For (Parish Name): _____

Vision Statement: _____

Mission Statement: _____

PARISH INITIATIVES		
Adult Faith Formation	Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry	Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4



MISSION ACTION PLAN PROCESS GUIDE

Steps:

1. Read through the process so you can discuss it with others. Share the link so the parish leaders can also read it and remind them that the process is easy; three gatherings that are the same format followed by a prioritizing gathering that culminates in a parish mission action plan!
2. After providing your parish leaders with the material, meet with the leaders to ensure their understanding of and commitment to the process.
3. Ordained leaders should not undertake this process alone; empower the parish's lay leaders to share this work as a living out of their vocational call. Brainstorm names with your leaders for the parish MAP leadership team.
4. Recruit a parish mission action plan leadership team.
5. Orient the leadership team so you have buy-in with others before you gather the congregation.
6. If your leadership team feels that you need the skills of a diocesan facilitator, contact Canon Christyn Perkons at the Synod Office.
7. Ponder and pray about how to gather your community using the method of gathering and timing that makes possible the highest level of involvement and the greatest diversity possible. Congregational discernment is deeply enriched as the numbers and diversity increases when more people are listening for and speaking out of the voice of the Holy Spirit.
8. Schedule three sequential 60 minute gatherings (zoom and/or physical) in which participants will begin to reimagine the mission of their church:
 - i. Faith Formation/Discipleship
 - ii. Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry
 - iii. Fullness of Life in your Neighbourhood
9. Schedule a fourth 60 minute session, Prioritizing The Mission Action Plan, in which participants will choose which part of the missional plan they will engage.
10. Create the space and encourage the missional initiatives to begin!
11. Appoint an Advocate who will check in regularly with teams to hear about their progress, their challenges, and their support needs, and will communicate those to the corporation and to the parish, ensuring that successes are celebrated!
12. At six months and at one year, assess how the initiatives are going, and regroup when it's time to brainstorm next steps or new initiatives.



GETTING STARTED...FIRST THINGS

- Schedule a one-hour conversation with the parish leaders around missional church based on their reading of the overview as well as their familiarity with missional church thinking. You might want to invite wardens, parish council, and ministry area leaders.
- When you gather, after opening in prayer, invite the group to Dwell in the Word with one of these passages: John 20:21 or Luke 10:1–9.
- Move to an invitation to reflect on the following in light of the scripture passage:
 - What excites us about engaging in a parish mission action planning process?
 - What concerns us about this process?
 - How do we anticipate this process might transform us?
- Brainstorm responses to leaders' concerns recognizing they will be shared by the parish.
- Ask the group to commit to the MAP process and to pray for the parish as they move through this work.
- Recruit from the gathering (and/or beyond) a parish leadership team. Characteristics that will be important for your team:
 - an openness to attending to the Holy Spirit
 - a heart for discipleship
 - a willingness to regularly engage in prayer
 - the ability to listen to people's spiritual stories
- Introduce the process to the parish by sharing the overview, through preaching or by one of the leaders sharing their enthusiasm for the process.
- Set up the dates for the four 60 minute meetings and begin inviting participants! Remember select the method of gathering and the timing to maximize diverse involvement.
- It is not important that the same people come to each of the four gatherings so make your invitation to each gathering as open and broad as possible to ensure diversity.
- Decide how you're going to communicate the notes from each gathering to the parish. That might be through email, a newsletter, a news blast, worship service announcements and a handout – or all of the above. Your goal is to communicate as fulsomely and as broadly to parish members as you are able so that people feel engaged, heard, and eager to come to the next session.



GROUP NORMS FOR PARISH MAP GATHERINGS

- Come in a spirit of openness and anticipation knowing that Jesus is present when two or more are gathered in his name.
- Listen to others with respect.
- Seek first to understand not to be understood.
- Allow space for quieter or less extroverted participants to contribute.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Don't challenge or criticize the contributions of others but do ask questions of clarification if you're unclear about something that was said.
- Be honest; we can name our aspirations, but we must claim our reality - seeing where we are so we can hear where God is calling us next.

— FIRST GATHERING — ADULT FAITH FORMATION

IN THIS SECTION:

First Gathering

- How to Plan and Facilitate the Adult Faith Formation Gathering
- Faith Formation Reflection
- Facilitator's Agenda
- Additional Faith Formation Ideas

The following documents can be found in the Appendices:

- [Appendix A](#) - Adult Faith Formation Snapshot Tool
- [Appendix B](#) - Adult Faith Formation Resources



FIRST GATHERING

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Two to three weeks prior to your Faith Formation Gathering, ask people to respond to the **Adult Faith Formation Snapshot Tool** (see [Appendix A](#)). Responding to the tool is an invitation to people in your congregation to think about what adult faith formation looks like in the parish. The glossary on the back of the tool allows them to explore some of the resources with which they may be unfamiliar, and the work gives them a base from which to begin the conversation at the *Adult Faith Formation Gathering*. The tool is only intended for the use of the person using it. There is no need to collect it or collate the answers. It's solely to stimulate people's reflections on their own faith formation, their observations about the faith forming they see in the parish, and their sense of what's possible.

Faith Formation Reflection (*for use in sermon prep, to share with parishioners before they come to the Faith Formation gathering or to include in a news blast or newsletter*)

John 8:31-32

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Faith formation says a great deal about what kind of life we are called to lead as a Christian. Nish Weiseth captures this; "Spiritual formation is the process by which we are shaped by the power of the Holy Spirit into the image of Jesus for the sake of others...Not for us, but for our neighbours, for our communities, for the sake of doing the work of Jesus here on this earth in this time, to see the Kingdom of God break through...so that others might flourish...We are called to be made more into the image of Jesus for their sake, so that they may be blessed." From *A Rhythm of Prayer*, edited by Sarah Bessey, pg 95

Disciples are not mere followers nor are they simply participants in regular worship. The root of the word disciple is *discere* – to learn, and through faith formation, Christians learn the Way of Jesus. Faith formation is both guided participation in community faith practices and an intention and practice that attunes us to the presence of God, the sacred in everyday life, and service to others so that all may experience God's fullness of life. The joy of a community focused on faith formation is that faith formation envelopes the disciple in a process of experiencing, learning, and living the Way of Jesus. The faith community at its best is an incubator where we can practise spiritual disciplines, new ways of being compassionate with one another, and risk taking as we respond with increasing boldness to the Spirit's call to compassion, humility, and caretaking of others.

What does it look like to be one who is faith formed? A faith formed person lives a life that is shaped in every aspect by the love of God as shown to us by and through Jesus; a person who continues in the word of Jesus. Faith formed people, disciples, live a daily rhythm of spiritual practices and intention that inform each moment of their day. They seek the best for others. Is this about perfection or sainthood? No, it's about intention, and growing and deepening our sense of living in the fullness



of God; being whole and authentically who God is calling us to be - and supporting others in that same fullness! Discipleship is a journey for every one of us; each in a different place, but all moving towards God.

Frederick Buechner says in *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Faith forming invites us to lean into our deep gladness, to relish our own unique gifts and charisms, and to connect those in our families, our neighbourhoods and our faith communities in ways that feed people’s deepest hungers. Can you name your place of deep gladness? Can you identify where your deep gladness nourishes and responds to the world’s deep hunger...for food, for shelter, for safety, for love, for dignity, for reconciliation, for God?

Another way of thinking about this is to ask what rhythms of our day differentiate us from the others around us. Which rhythms in our day have grown out of our faith? Are there aspects of our daily rhythms that might intrigue people enough to ask us about them? Do we have spiritual practices that gently move us into the lives of others? What about our faith practices would identify us as a disciple of Jesus to others?

These are challenging questions for Anglicans, indeed for many Christians, because for too long we have behaved as though disciples were formed in a private relationship between an individual and God at regular Sunday worship. There might have been a time when there was an unspoken, shared social agreement about what it meant to be a Christian but, in this secular, post-Christian world, that’s just not the case. We are being called to live counter-cultural lives; lives marked by spiritual practices and a deep connection to God through Jesus – lives that are both the announcement and demonstration of God’s love.

Preparation

- Book a space in the church that’s big enough to accommodate the number of people you anticipate will participate **and/or** book a time via a digital meeting space like Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meets.
- Send invitations to the people you think are or could be excited about faith formation in the parish. The invitation should be clear that the person invited is being asked because of their interest in, gifts or passion for adult faith forming, and should convey that their presence will enrich the gathering and the ministry that grows out of the gathering. Relying solely on announcements about meetings that are open to anyone tends to be less successful than specific invitations to individuals. A combination of invitation and announcement may draw in interested people of whom the leadership team is unaware.
- Ask people who are coming to the gathering to complete the **Adult Faith Formation Snapshot Tool** ([Appendix A](#)).
- Two to three days before the gathering, remind people by email or phone call about date and time.
- The day before the gathering, send a last reminder to those who have said they’re coming, and include the link again if this is an online meeting so that it’s easy for people to access.



- For an online meeting, recruit someone to take notes of the responses to the questions either on flipchart paper or on a computer.
- For an in-person gathering, recruit 1-2 people to take notes on flip chart paper at the front of the room during the questions.
- For an in-person meeting, set up two flip chart stands and have ready ¼ sheets of flip chart paper and tape or large meeting sticky notes along with markers (thick tips so people can easily read what is written).
- Set up a parking lot page for ideas shared that relate to the other two action plan foci; Reshaping Parish Culture and Fullness of Life in Your Neighbourhood or instruct the person taking notes for the virtual gathering to keep those items related to the other two areas on a separate page to be shared with the leadership for those gatherings.

A “parking lot” is essentially a holding area for thoughts or questions that are important to retain for a subsequent conversation but don’t need to be discussed in the present conversation. It’s critical to attend to these thoughts so that people trust their contributions aren’t being disregarded. So, it’s important that the facilitator direct the notetakers to capture those on the parking lot page for a future meeting.

FACILITATOR’S AGENDA

Opening Prayer (led by one of the congregation or one of the staff)

Living God, bless this gathering –that through listening and discussing,
your will may be done and your mission embraced.

May our dreaming be creative and hope-filled,
and may we carefully hold the space so others may safely dream.

May the pathway we discern allow all to flourish
in this amazing life you call us into
through the way of Jesus, the wisdom of the Spirit, and
your unconditional and abiding love.

Amen.

Facilitator reiterates the purpose of the Faith Formation Gathering:

- As the first of a three-prong approach to developing a parish mission action plan, this group has gathered to discuss the current context of adult faith formation in the parish and to brainstorm ways to broaden and deepen the discipleship path for parishioners, for people new to the parish, and for people who are interested in becoming familiar with what motivates you as a parish. Those ideas which develop traction with the group will form the nucleus of the faith formation portion of the initial parish MAP.



Introductions *no more than 10 minutes, no notetaking*

- If the parish is utilizing an outside facilitator, the facilitator should introduce themselves and say a bit about their role in the gathering.
- If the rector or a parish leader is facilitating the meeting, that person should introduce themselves and be clear about their role as a facilitator not a parishioner/staff member in this gathering.
- If there are people in the group who don't know one another, take a few moments for people to introduce themselves and share what moved them to say yes to the invitation to join the gathering.

Norms *5 minutes*

- The facilitator should review the basic norms for group process to remind everyone of process “rules” that help people participate in dialogue and accomplish the objective. You might want to invite people to discuss the norms you've shared and to consider adding others if appropriate for your group.

Describing Our Current Context *10 minutes*

The facilitator supports the participants in a dialogue about the current context of adult faith formation in the parish using the questions below. The facilitator or the recruited secretary takes notes. Remember to reiterate that this is not about judging the parish, merely about describing what is, painting a picture of the parish's current faith formation practices. Pause after each question to hear responses.

- As you completed the Adult Faith Formation tool, what struck you about faith formation in our parish?
- What are we doing as a parish that is currently deepening your own faith?
- What are our discipleship strengths?
- Where are our growing edges in faith forming? What do we see little of in our parish?

Visioning our Future Adult Faith Formation *20 minutes*

The facilitator supports the participants in naming their aspirations and dreams for how to shape Adult Faith Formation over the next 1-2 years using the following questions to stimulate discussion. Notetaking again is important to capture people's hopes and desires.

Facilitators; don't be afraid of silence. Trust that God is at work in people, that they are thinking about how to respond to your question. If it feels as though everyone is stuck, feel free to invite someone from your leadership team to speak, or share something from your own life to help people feel more comfortable. Just don't jump into the silence too quickly!



Script

Let's root our aspirations and dreams in a scripture verse from John 8; *Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* (read by the facilitator or a participant)

Understanding that part of continuing in Jesus' word is our individual spiritual or faith practices, how might we strengthen what we are currently doing as spiritual practices that would deepen our spiritual rhythms...connect us more strongly to continuing in Jesus' word? *Pause for responses.*

What practices might we add or explore that would invite us into the growing edges of our discipleship walk? You might get at that by thinking about the practices noted on the Adult Faith Formation Snapshot Tool and remembering which ones intrigued you or even which made you feel a little uncomfortable. *Pause for responses.*

What might we do that could engage friends or people in the neighbourhood in asking questions about our faith practices? That's an interesting question, isn't it! So many of our faith practices are private that it might be hard to imagine what we could do that might intrigue our friends and neighbours. Here are some examples:

- you might begin walking the outdoor labyrinth in your community and you readily respond to questions from passers-by about what you're doing and why.
- You might be asked why you always say that you can't meet until after 9:30 when people try to book an appointment or meeting with you, and so you respond that you have committed your early morning to meditation and prayer so that your day feels more rooted in God.
- Or a neighbour might comment that she really enjoyed the BBQ in your backyard last night but she's really curious about why you invited Person X whom none of the neighbours know, and you might respond that you're feeling that God is inviting you to be more radically hospitable, to broaden your circle beyond family and friends.
- Another possibility is that your parish moves some of your Advent/Christmas celebrations outside so people passing can see what you're doing and stop to ask questions which you can answer while you invite them to join you.

So, back to our question; what might we do that could engage friends or people in the neighbourhood in asking questions about our faith practices? *Pause for responses.*

Let's stop for a moment and ponder in silence all that we've discussed. Give some thought to wondering if there is anything we might have missed? As you give God some space in your head and heart for the next minute or two, do you hear a call to explore any other practices or paths? *Pause for responses.*



Keep an eye on your 20-minute timeline. If the conversation looks like you're going to go over, ask the group if they're willing to add 10 minutes to your meeting time. If they say yes, continue but at the 30 minutes, invite anyone who still wants to share to send their thoughts to an email address that your team has agreed on ahead of time.

Wrapping It Up *10 minutes*

The facilitator helps the group close their discussion by moving them from broad visioning to a narrower focus. Again, notetaking is critical. Pause after each question for responses.

- In which of these ideas do you most clearly see or feel the presence of God?
- Which of these ideas draws your heart or soul?
- Which of these ideas fit readily into the God-given gifts already at work in our midst?
- Which of these ideas invite us to grow our skills and knowledge before we launch them?

Next Steps

- Tell the group how the ideas shared at this gathering will be communicated to the congregation.
- Share the dates/times and focus of the next two gatherings.
- Share the date/time of the Prioritizing The Mission Action Plan gathering at which the nucleus of the parish MAP for all three themes will come together, and animation teams will emerge around each theme.

Closing Prayer *preferably someone different from the person who prayed the opening prayer*

Loving God, we give thanks for our time together,
for careful listening to one another and to the Spirit;
for hopes and aspirations for leaning more deeply into the Way of Jesus;
for intentions around developing habits and rhythms that will bring us closer to you.
Bless us as we leave this gathering, empowered by our longing,
strengthened by our common life in you, and eager to be your presence in the world.
Amen.



Ideas to Consider including in your MAP

Use the glossary on the back of the Adult Faith Formation Tool for faith forming practices/resources

Other potential initiatives to consider:

- Inviting the parish council to read a faith forming book together over the course of the year using time at each meeting to discuss given chapters,
- Using video resources, for example from *The Work of the People*, to stimulate discussion with a regular adult faith formation group that meets between services on a Sunday or on a weekday morning, afternoon, or evening,
- Clergy and parishioners preaching about their spiritual journey and the faith practices that support their relationship with God,
- Inviting parishioners or others to share a faith practice story with the congregation during the service, in a video that's available on the parish website and/or in a regular parish newsletter, and
- Inviting parishioners and their family members and friends to regularly listen to podcasts, use apps, follow spiritual resources on Face Book or receive regular emails from spiritual leaders that you enjoy or those listed on the resources page.

— SECOND GATHERING —

RESHAPING PARISH CULTURE TO ENABLE MINISTRY

IN THIS SECTION:

Second Gathering

- How to Plan and Facilitate the Reshaping Parish Culture Gathering
- Reshaping Parish Culture Reflection
- Facilitator's Agenda
- Additional Reshaping Parish Culture Ideas

The following documents can be found in the Appendices:

- [Appendix C](#) - Parish Culture Snapshot Tool
- [Appendix D](#) - Reshaping Parish Culture Resources
- [Appendix E](#) - Reshaping Parish Culture Tools and Techniques
 - o [Dwelling in the Word](#)
 - o [Vision and Mission Statements](#)
 - o [Creating or Renewing a Vision Statement](#)
 - o [Creating or Renewing a Mission Statement](#)
 - o [Asset Mapping Tool](#)
 - o [Asset Mapping Agenda](#)
 - o [Asset Mapping Categories Handout](#)
 - o [Asset Mapping Thought Provoking Questions Handout](#)



SECOND GATHERING

RESHAPING PARISH CULTURE TO ENABLE MINISTRY

Two to three weeks prior to your Reshaping Parish Culture Gathering, ask people to respond to the **Parish Culture Snapshot Tool** (see [Appendix C](#)). Responding to the tool is an invitation to people in your congregation to think about what the culture of their parish is like. The glossary on the back of the tool allows them to explore some of the resources with which they may be unfamiliar, and the work gives them a base from which to begin the conversation at the *Reshaping Parish Culture* gathering. The tool is only intended for the use of the person using it. There is no need to collect it or collate the answers. It's solely to stimulate people's reflections on their own experience of the parish, their observations about the various aspects of the culture, and their sense of what's possible.

Reshaping Parish Culture Reflection *(for use in sermon prep, to share with parishioners before they come to the Faith Formation gathering or to include in a news blast or newsletter)*

Romans 12: 9 – 20a, 21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but give yourselves to humble tasks; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink...." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

When the whole people of God are freed to join the Holy Spirit at work in our neighbourhoods, communities and networks, a new future unfolds...the unfolding of God's kingdom as described in the passage from Romans. Our task in reshaping our parish cultures is to create the space for God's work and our parishes to intersect in the most magnificent blossoming. That blossoming is grounded in faith formation or discipleship, prayer, and a discerning use of our corporate and individual gifts, skills, and passions in the service of God's mission.

Sometimes, parishes respond to the anxiety of declining numbers, diminishing dollars, and rising age demographics with anxiety and a generalized discontent, and when that becomes the driver of change, the ensuing adjustments are like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Our anxiety and dread are temporarily assuaged by the busyness of changing things up until we realize that nothing real has



changed except that anxiety is increasing and despair often follows. Decisions about what needs to be reshaped and how that happens must be framed within the context of discerning how God is inviting a particular parish to engage with God's mission. A commitment to the unfolding of God's kingdom, a missional imagination rather than a commitment to the survival of a parish is the key to a renewed future.

What does it look like to free the people of God? Renewal or reshaping of a parish culture requires a willingness to examine and disrupt the old patterns, to ask questions like "how does this practice, behaviour, or expectation contribute to God's mission?" or "how does this help us to engage with God's people?" or "how does this help to transform us into a resurrection people?". And this means that parish leaders must create new space for missional imagination to weave its way into and through people and parish structures. This journey invites congregations to embrace the challenging task of living in the tension of disruption and uncertainty, of dwelling for a time in liminal space... on the threshold between the old and familiar and a future that is unknown, between a past that is comfortingly known and a shape that is as yet unknown.

Parishes will make choices along this journey guided by their readiness to live in the tension of uncertainty, by their sense of urgency around discerning God's call to them, and by their longing for transformation. Some parishes will be ready to take big leaps and others will venture smaller steps. Remember this is a journey God invites us to make; Moses took forty years to get to the promised land – just listen to God's voice and follow the path at whatever pace works. The most important thing is to refrain from getting mired in that sticky yearning for comfort and security!

Those parishes ready for bite-sized reshaping will want to focus their attention on reshaping parish culture in the following areas:

Stewardship - Attention to renewed stewardship practices that reflect giving as a manifestation of the gifts God gives will move parishioners to experiencing a sense of joy when they give to God's work. Our giving to God is meant to transform us! And that giving is about our gifts, strengths, passions, and experiences as much as it is about money. Parishes can enable people to identify their gifts, create opportunities for people to use and grow those gifts in service to God's mission, and grow people as disciples by helping them make the connection between God's mission and their daily lives.

Radical Hospitality – while parishes do need programs and ministries that support and nurture the faithful, Jesus intends us to be like Mary recognizing Jesus by the empty tomb...so transformed by God's love that we cannot wait to share the good news with our friends, our neighbours, and strangers we encounter! God calls us to embrace strangers, welcome outsiders, advocate for the marginalized, and see the image of God in everyone we meet. Our society is full of people yearning for meaning and connection; our tasks are to connect with them and share how the Good News has transformed our lives!

Ministry Engagement – followers of Jesus want to be involved in God's mission! Joining in the church's engagement in mission is a perfect complement to the ways in which people pay attention to that practice of engagement with God's mission in their home and work lives. Or engaging in the missional work of the faith community may trigger a deeper connection to God in someone's life outside of church. The most effective way to support people in their longing for meaningful engagement is a robust volunteer management program that includes job descriptions that use



missional language, a recruitment process that focuses on gifts, strengths and passions, a vigorous training/mentoring process that positions lay people for joy and accomplishment related to the mission, and frequent public and private affirmations of people and their contributions, again framed through a missional lens.

Governance – leadership and church management by the laity can be easily reshaped by missional practices, and governance practices and language that reflects God’s mission will transform the conversations a faith community has, and the work they engage in.

Resources for each of these areas are contained in the Resource section of the guide.

For Parishes Ready to Let Go of the Trapeze Bar...

Parishes that are ready to dive into missional change in a big way (rather than the gradual process described above) may want to embrace the experience described in *How Change Comes to Your Church: A Guidebook for Church Innovations* by Pat Keifert and Wes Grandberg-Michaelson. Their process is rooted in a deep focus on Dwelling in the Word whilst uncovering and discovering where the church is at, exploring from the inside-out and the outside-in. This journey of listening brings “moments of kairos when our life together is intersected by a holy wonder and spiritual discovery” leading to transformative missional practices. This book can be borrowed from the CSD Lending Library *How Change Comes to Your Church: A Guidebook for Church Innovations* by Patrick Keifert and Wesley Grandberg-Michaelson pg. 57

Preparation

- Book a space in the church that’s big enough to accommodate the number of people you anticipate will participate **and/or** book a time via a digital meeting space like Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meets.
- Send invitations to the people you think are or could be excited about reshaping parish culture in the parish. The invitation should be clear that the person invited is being asked because of their interest in, gifts or passion for process or structural reimagining, and should convey that their presence will enrich the gathering and the ministry that grows out of the gathering. Relying solely on announcements about meetings that are open to anyone tends to be less successful than specific invitations to individuals. A combination of invitation and announcement may draw in people whose interest is unknown to the leadership team.
- Ask people who are coming to the gathering to complete the **Parish Culture Snapshot Tool** ([Appendix C](#)).
- Two to three days before the gathering, remind people by email or phone call about date and time.
- The day before the gathering, send a last reminder to those who have said they’re coming, and include the link again if this is an online meeting so that it’s easy for people to access.



- For an online meeting, recruit someone to take notes of the responses to the questions either on flipchart paper or on a computer.
- For an in-person gathering, recruit 1-2 people to take notes on flip chart paper at the front of the room during the questions.
- For an in-person meeting, set up two flip chart stands and have ready ¼ sheets of flip chart paper and tape, or large meeting sticky notes along with markers (thick tips so people can easily read what is written).
- Set up a parking lot page for ideas shared that relate to the other two action plan foci; *Adult Faith Formation and Fullness of Life in Your Neighbourhood* or instruct the person doing notes for the virtual gathering to keep those items related to the other two areas on a separate page to be shared with the leadership for those gatherings.

A “parking lot” is essentially a holding area for thoughts or questions that are important to retain for a subsequent conversation but don’t need to be discussed in the present conversation. It’s critical to attend to these thoughts so that people trust their contributions aren’t being disregarded. So, it’s important that the facilitator direct the notetakers to capture those on the parking lot page for a future meeting.

FACILITATOR’S AGENDA

Opening Prayer (led by one of the congregation or one of the staff)

Living God, bless this gathering –that through listening and discussing,
your will may be done and your mission embraced.

May our dreaming be creative and hope-filled,
and may we carefully hold the space so others may safely dream.

May the pathway we discern allow all to flourish
in this amazing life you call us into
through the way of Jesus, the wisdom of the Spirit, and
your unconditional and abiding love.

Amen.

Reiterate the purpose of the Reshaping Parish Culture Gathering

- As the second of a three-prong approach to developing a parish mission action plan, this group has gathered to discuss the current context of parish culture as it enhances or impedes mission, and to brainstorm ways to create more fertile space for missional imagination for parishioners, for people new to the parish, and for people who are interested in becoming familiar with what motivates you as a parish. Those ideas which develop traction with the group will form the nucleus of the reshaping parish culture to enable ministry portion of the initial parish MAP.



Introductions *no more than 10 minutes, no notetaking*

- If the parish is utilizing an outside facilitator, the facilitator should introduce themselves and say a bit about their role in the gathering.
- If the rector or a parish leader is facilitating the meeting, that person should introduce themselves and be clear about their role as a facilitator - not a parishioner/staff member in this gathering.
- If there are people in the group who don't know one another, take a few moments for people to introduce themselves and share what moved them to say yes to the invitation to join the gathering.

Norms *5 minutes*

- The facilitator should review the basic norms for group process to remind everyone of process "rules" that help people participate in dialogue and accomplish the objective.

Describing Our Current Context *10 minutes*

The facilitator supports the participants in a dialogue about the current culture in the parish using the questions below. The facilitator or the recruited secretary takes notes. Remember to reiterate that this is not about judging the parish, merely about describing what is; painting a picture of the parish's current practices. Pause after each question for responses.

- As you completed the Parish Culture Snapshot Tool, what struck you about the culture of our parish?
- How does our parish culture currently enhance ministry and mission?
- Are there any noteworthy ways in which the culture impedes ministry and mission?

Visioning Reshaping Our Parish Culture *20 minutes*

The facilitator supports the participants in naming their aspirations and dreams for how to reshape parish culture over the next 1-2 years using the following questions to stimulate discussion. Notetaking again is important to capture people's hopes and desires.

Facilitators; don't be afraid of silence. Trust that God is at work in people, that they are thinking about how to respond to your question. If it feels as though everyone is stuck, feel free to invite someone from your leadership team to speak, or share something from your own life to help people feel more comfortable. Just don't jump into the silence too quickly!



Script

Let's root our aspirations and dreams in this scripture verse from Romans 12. *(read by the facilitator or a participant)*

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but give yourselves to humble tasks; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God;[c] for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink...." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

What might we add to or change about our current practices that would deepen our spiritual rhythms and our ability to engage with God's mission? *Pause for responses.*

What practices might we start that would speak into our growing edges for transforming parish life? *Pause for responses.*

The disruptive feeling that accompanies or precedes anticipated change can be scary; which of these change-oriented calls might need more prayer and listening time to reassure people? *Pause for responses.*

Let's stop for a moment and ponder in silence all that we've discussed. Give some thought to wondering if there is anything we might have missed? If you give God some space in your head and heart for the next minute or two, do you hear a call to explore any other practices or paths? *Pause for responses.*

Keep an eye on your 20-minute timeline. If the conversation looks like you're going to go over, ask the group if they're willing to add 10 minutes to your meeting time. If they say yes, continue but at the 30 minutes, invite anyone who still wants to share to send their thoughts to an email address that your team has agreed on ahead of time.



Wrapping It Up 10 minutes

The facilitator helps the group close their discussion by moving them from broad visioning to a narrower focus. Again, notetaking is critical. Pause after each question for responses.

- In which of these ideas do you most clearly see or feel the presence of God?
- Which of these ideas draws your heart or soul?
- Which of these ideas fit readily into the God-given gifts already at work in our midst?
- Which of these ideas invite us to grow our skills and knowledge before we launch them?

Next Steps

- Tell the group how the ideas shared at this gathering will be communicated to the congregation.
- Share the dates/times and focus of the next two gatherings.
- Share the date/time of the *Prioritizing The Mission Action Plan* gathering at which the nucleus of the parish MAP for all three themes will come together, and animation teams will evolve around each theme.

Closing Prayer preferably someone other than the person who prayed the opening prayer

Loving God, we give thanks for our time together,
for careful listening to one another and to the Spirit;
for hopes and aspirations for leaning more deeply into the Way of Jesus;
for intentions around developing habits and rhythms that will bring us closer to you.
Bless us as we leave this gathering, empowered by our longing,
strengthened by our common life in you, and eager to be your presence in the world.
Amen.

Ideas to Consider

Beyond the resources noted in *Reshaping Parish Culture Resources* link, these ideas could be shared at the gathering or later.

Also consider:

- Inviting the parish council to read a missional parish transformation book together over the course of the year using time at each meeting to discuss given chapters,
- Using *Dwelling in the Word* as the framework for an ongoing small group experience,
- Clergy or laity preaching about their own spiritual journey and the faith practices that support their relationship with God,



- Inviting parishioners or others to share a stewardship or ministry story with the congregation during the service, in a video that's available on the parish website and/or in a regular parish newsletter, and
- Inviting parishioners and their family members and friends to regularly listen to podcasts or use apps that you enjoy. A list of podcasts can be found in the Adult Faith Formation Resource section.

— THIRD GATHERING —

FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

IN THIS SECTION:

Third Gathering

- How to Plan and Facilitate the Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Gathering
- Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Reflection
- Facilitator's Agenda
- Additional Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Ideas

The following documents can be found in the Appendices:

- [Appendix F](#) - Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Snapshot Tool
- [Appendix G](#) - Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Resources
- [Appendix H](#) - Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Tools
 - o [Mapping and Praying the Neighbourhood](#)
 - o [Listening to Your Neighbourhood](#)



THIRD GATHERING

FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Two to three weeks prior to your Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood gathering, ask people to respond to the **Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Snapshot Tool** (see [Appendix F](#)). Responding to the tool is an invitation to people in your congregation to think about what community engagement looks like in the parish. The glossary on the back of the tool allows them to explore some of the resources with which they may be unfamiliar, and the work gives them a base from which to begin the conversation at the Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood gathering. The tool is only intended for the use of the person using it. There is no need to collect it or collate the answers. It's solely to stimulate people's reflections around community engagement, their observations about the community relationships they see, and their sense of what's possible.

Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Reflection

Mark 12: 28b-31

...he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

What is God calling us to as the church? We gather in faith communities to be formed in the Way of Jesus and to "practice" and embed new ways of being with one another; loving, forgiving, and affirming each other as we experience the transformative unconditional love of God. We gather, too, to express our gratitude and praise to the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer for the constancy and wonder of that breathtaking and redemptive love, and to lift up together our needs and the needs of the world to God. But we are also called to love our neighbours...to be an embodied witness to that love in the neighbourhoods in which our faith communities are planted. William Temple, former Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury reminds us "The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members."

What does that look like – to be an incarnate witness to God's love in our own neighbourhoods? It is expressed in our desire for everyone in our neighbourhood to experience God's fullness of life...a life marked by justice, equity and restored relationships where brokenness is acknowledged and redeemed into wholeness. A foundational piece for us of this fullness is the recognition that God is already at work in our neighbourhoods bringing about the kingdom. It's not our job to bring God to the neighbourhood; it's our call to look for signs of God's work and to come alongside that work and the people already doing that work.

How do we do that? Incarnational, mission-shaped people move out into their neighbourhoods, and they connect themselves to the rhythms and flow of life in their neighbourhood. The key to connecting to the neighbourhood rhythm is missional listening! Are you rolling your eyes because



I've used that adjective "missional" again? I suspect you might be but bear with me. Missional listening is distinguished by several characteristics. First, the listener has no self-serving agenda; the only agenda is to listen to the stories of our neighbours, to get to know their joys and their challenges – and to notice where God appears to be at work in their lives. The missional listener is listening for places that connect to their own passions, to their own story, and wonders with the storyteller about ways in which they might come together to deepen their connection through their shared passion or join together to deal with the challenge(s) they share in common. Essentially God is inviting us to notice the gifts and dreams already existing in the neighbourhood and connect them to our own gifts and dreams to bring about the kingdom, the restoration of fullness of life for everyone.

What might that look like or how might this unfold? A missional listener might hear a story about a local school that has no recreational equipment for use during recess, and they might connect the principal at that school with a community member who regularly provides soccer balls to schools in another country who had no idea that a school in his own community had the same need. A missional listener might hear another story from a parent who remembers the joy she felt when coaching her daughter's soccer team, and the listener might hook her up with parents at the school with the new soccer balls who are looking for a recess coach or an after-school coach. A missional listener might hear a story about children at that same school not having seasonally appropriate clothing, and then might connect families with excess winter coats and boots who want to share with families at the school. From that connecting, a regular winter clothing depot might be established with parents sharing their stories as they work alongside one another to provide clothing for each other's children. From that sharing of stories might emerge the need for a drop-in centre for children and their parents on Saturday mornings which might mesh with a local church's desire to provide space in their building to community members. And that might morph into a community garden which might generate a community kitchen which might bring into being a regular shared meal. And the story telling over meals might lead to a concern about an issue that parents share about the school in the community which could lead to a community meeting with school personnel. And in each of these connections, there is the opportunity to notice aloud where one sees signs of God at work, to offer to pray for someone else, to offer prayers for the shared work or gathering, and to talk about how the transformative love of God impacts the storyteller's life. Out of missional listening comes community building, sharing of gifts, talents and passions, loving service to one another, and advocacy against injustice – and the opportunity to be an incarnate witness to God's love in the neighbourhood and in each of our lives.

One of the most critical learnings for those of us new to missional listening is to hear people's self-identified needs rather than to enter these conversations with preconceived ideas about what people need or agendas about what we are supposed to be doing. Our call is to be present to people where they are – not where we want them or expect them to be. We must trust that God is present with us and that our interaction is on a holy trajectory.

Just as The Church of Our Saviour The Redeemer's missional listening followed God to soccer balls, then clothing sharing, a children's breakfast program and more. Just as St. Aidan's offered hot chocolate and conversation to moms waiting for school buses and then followed God to community



partnerships in support of children and families; just as Church of the Incarnation heard parents and young people in despair and followed God into safe mental health space; just as St. James Fergus heard an ever growing need for meals and companionship, and followed God from a regular volunteer-provided meal to partnerships with local chefs and restaurants that feed hundreds; just as parishioners from Christ Church responded to a lack of children’s activities in Dain City by following the Spirit to a children’s theatre and summer camp that encompassed prayer, God-filled scripts, and growing gifts.

And remember this isn’t just about a “parish ministry”. We each as individuals can be present to those in our neighbourhoods and workplaces, and allow God to change people’s lives through us. Just as one man’s invitation to a neighbour to join him on his front porch where they shared life stories over several visits led to an invitation to be present with the family as their matriarch was dying, to witness to the presence of God in the midst of their sorrow.

Preparation

- Book a space in the church that’s big enough to accommodate the number of people you anticipate will participate or book a time via a digital meeting space like Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meets.
- Send invitations to the people you think are or could be excited about community engagement with the neighbourhood around the parish. The invitation should be clear that the person invited is being asked because of their interest in, gifts or passion for community engagement, and should convey that their presence will enrich the gathering and the ministry that grows out of the gathering. Relying solely on announcements about meetings that are open to anyone tends to be less successful than specific invitations to individuals. A combination of invitation and announcement may draw in people whose interest the leadership team is unaware of.
- Ask people who are coming to the gathering to complete the Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Snapshot Tool ([Appendix F](#)).
- Two to three days before the gathering, remind people by email or phone call about date and time.
- The day before the gathering, send a last reminder to those who have said they’re coming, and include the link again if this is an online meeting so that it’s easy for people to access.
- For an online meeting, recruit someone to take notes of the responses to the questions either on flipchart paper or on a computer.
- For an in-person gathering, recruit 1-2 people to take notes on flip chart paper at the front of the room during the questions.



- For an in-person meeting, set up two flip chart stands and have ready ¼ sheets of flip chart paper and tape or large meeting sticky notes along with markers (thick tips so people can easily read what is written).
- Set up a parking lot page for ideas shared that relate to the other two action plan foci; Reshaping Parish Culture and Fullness of Life in Your Neighbourhood or instruct the person doing notes for the virtual gathering to keep those items related to the other two areas on a separate page to be shared with the leadership for those gatherings.

A “parking lot” is essentially a holding area for thoughts or questions that are important to retain for a subsequent conversation but don’t need to be discussed in the present conversation. It’s critical to attend to these thoughts so that people trust their contributions aren’t being disregarded. So, it’s important that the facilitator direct the notetakers to capture those on the parking lot page for a future meeting.

FACILITATOR’S AGENDA

Opening Prayer (led by one of the congregation or one of the staff)

Living God, bless this gathering –that through listening and discussing,
your will may be done and your mission embraced.

May our dreaming be creative and hope-filled,
and may we carefully hold the space so others may safely dream.

May the pathway we discern allow all to flourish
in this amazing life you call us into
through the way of Jesus, the wisdom of the Spirit, and
your unconditional and abiding love.

Amen.

Reiterate the purpose of the Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Gathering

- As the third of a three-prong approach to developing a parish mission action plan, this group has gathered to discuss the current context of community engagement in the parish and to brainstorm ways to broaden and deepen the connections with God in the world for parishioners, for people new to the parish, and for people who are interested in becoming familiar with what motivates you as a parish. Those ideas which develop traction with the group will form the nucleus of the community engagement portion of the initial parish MAP.



Introductions no more than 10 minutes, no notetaking

- If the parish is utilizing an outside facilitator, the facilitator should introduce themselves and say a bit about their role in the gathering.
- If the rector or a parish leader is facilitating the meeting, that person should introduce themselves and be clear about their role as a facilitator not a parishioner/staff member in this gathering.
- If there are people in the group who don't know one another, take a few moments for people to introduce themselves and share what moved them to say yes to the invitation to join the gathering.

Norms 5 minutes

- The facilitator should review the basic norms for group process to remind everyone of process "rules" that help people participate in dialogue and accomplish the objective.

Describing Our Current Context 10 minutes

The facilitator supports the participants in a dialogue about the current context of community engagement in the parish using the questions below. The facilitator or the recruited secretary takes notes. Remember to reiterate that this is not about judging the parish, merely about describing what is; painting a picture of the parish's current community engagement practices. Pause after each question for responses.

- As you completed the Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Snapshot Tool, what struck you about the community engagement culture in our parish?
- What are we doing that is currently deepening your own connection to God in the world?
- What are our community engagement strengths?
- Where are our growing edges in community engagement?

Visioning our Future Community Engagement 20 minutes

The facilitator supports the participants in naming their aspirations and dreams for how to shape community engagement over the next 1-2 years using the following questions to stimulate discussion. Notetaking again is important to capture people's hopes and desires.

Facilitators; don't be afraid of silence. Trust that God is at work in people, that they are thinking about how to respond to your question. If it feels as though everyone is stuck, feel free to invite someone from your leadership team to speak, or share something from your own life to help people feel more comfortable. Just don't jump into the silence too quickly!



Script

Let's root our aspirations and dreams in the scripture verse from Mark 12 ...*he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

What might God be calling us to add to our current practices that would restore our community relationships and enable us to better know our neighbours? *Pause for responses.*

What practices might we start that would speak into our growing edges? *Pause for responses*

How might we practice becoming more aware of God or shalom moments in our daily lives, and in the neighbourhood? *Pause for responses.*

What might we do that could create space in which we could listen deeply to people in the neighbourhood? *Pause for responses.*

Let's stop for a moment and ponder in silence all that we've discussed. Give some thought to wondering if there is anything we might have missed? If you give God some space in your head and heart for the next minute or two, do you hear a call to explore any other practices or paths? *Pause for responses.*

Keep an eye on your 20-minute timeline. If the conversation looks like you're going to go over, ask the group if they're willing to add 10 minutes to your meeting time. If they say yes, continue but at the 30 minutes, invite anyone who still wants to share to send their thoughts to an email address that your team has agreed on ahead of time.

Wrapping It Up *10 minutes*

The facilitator helps the group close their discussion by moving them from broad visioning to a narrower focus. Again, notetaking is critical. Pause after each question for responses.

- In which of these ideas do you most clearly see or feel the presence of God?
- Which of these ideas draws your heart or soul?
- Which of these ideas fit readily into the God-given gifts already at work in our midst?
- Which of these ideas invite us to grow our skills and knowledge before we launch them?



Next Steps

- Tell the group how the ideas shared at this gathering will be communicated to the congregation.
- Share the dates/times and focus of the next two gatherings.
- Share the date/time of the Prioritizing The Mission Action Plan gathering at which the nucleus of the parish MAP for all three themes will come together, and animation teams will evolve around each theme.

Closing Prayer *preferably someone different from the person who prayed the opening prayer*

Loving God, we give thanks for our time together,
for careful listening to one another and to the Spirit;
for hopes and aspirations for leaning more deeply into the Way of Jesus;
for intentions around developing habits and rhythms that will bring us closer to you.
Bless us as we leave this gathering, empowered by our longing,
strengthened by our common life in you, and eager to be your presence in the world.
Amen.



— FOURTH GATHERING —
**PRIORITIZING THE
MISSION ACTION PLAN**

IN THIS SECTION:

Fourth Gathering

- How to Plan and Facilitate the Prioritizing the Parish Mission Action Plan Gathering
- Facilitator's Agenda



FOURTH GATHERING

PRIORITIZING THE MISSION ACTION PLAN

The goal of the final gathering is to take the ideas the parish generated at each of the three previous gatherings and prioritize those that people feel called to work on over the next year. How will you prioritize? Participants will be asked to prioritize based on their passions, their gifts, and their sense of where God is calling the parish's attention now. That will mean that some of the proposed initiatives from the earlier meetings may not be part of this initial plan, but all the ideas should be retained to revisit each time the plan is refreshed.

Preparation

- Book a space in the church that's big enough to accommodate the number of people you anticipate will participate **and/or** book a time via a digital meeting space like Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meets.
- Send invitations to all the people who attended any of the previous three gatherings. The invitation should be clear that the person invited is being asked because of their interest in, gifts or passion for aspects of the parish mission action plan, and should convey that their presence will enrich the gathering and the ministry that grows out of the gathering. Relying solely on announcements about meetings that are open to anyone tends to be less successful than specific invitations to individuals. A combination of invitation and announcement may draw in people whose interest the leadership team is unaware of.
- Two to three days before the gathering, remind people by email or phone call about date and time.
- The day before the gathering, send a last reminder to those who have said they're coming, and include the link again if this is an online meeting so that it's easy for people to access.
- For an online meeting, recruit someone to create three polls that list the ideas/initiatives generated from each of the three gatherings, one focus area per poll. The polls need to be set up to allow each person to vote for their top four choices in each focus area.
- For an online gathering, you will also need three documents; each one listing the ideas and initiatives generated at the three previous meetings, and you will be screen sharing each document during the gathering.
- For an in-person meeting, create three lists on flip chart paper capturing the ideas generated at the previous three meetings. Label the page(s) with the relevant focus area (*Adult Faith Formation, Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry, Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood*). Keep the ideas/initiatives brainstormed at each gathering on sheets that can be clustered together if you have more than one page of material.



- Make the print large enough for people standing around the page to see, with enough room between each item for people to “dot” their favourites. **Decide which colour dots will be used with each area and write that colour by the title on every page.**
- For an in-person meeting, have sufficient dots in three different colours so that each person can receive four dots of each colour (a total of 12 dots) with which they can express their preferences.
- Post the three (or more) themed sheets of flip chart paper on the wall(s) of the meeting room with enough space between them to allow for people to gather around each sheet.
- For an online gathering, create three polls that list all the ideas generated for each focus area making each idea a possible vote choice. Set the poll up so that people can use all their votes however they want – from one idea with four votes to a different vote for each of four ideas. For help with creating a poll, contact Jane Wyse in the Synod Office.

FACILITATOR’S AGENDA (IN-PERSON/ONLINE GATHERING)

As people arrive for an in-person gathering, invite them to wander around the room and read the lists of ideas and initiatives with the goal of familiarizing themselves with the work. At the start time, invite them to be seated. When including participants digitally, you will need to send the lists of ideas and initiatives ahead of time so they can familiarize themselves with the material.

Opening Prayer (led by one of the congregation or one of the staff)

Living God, bless this gathering –that through listening and discussing,
your will may be done and your mission embraced.

May our dreaming be creative and hope-filled,
and may we carefully hold the space so others may safely dream.

May the pathway we discern allow all to flourish
in this amazing life you call us into
through the way of Jesus, the wisdom of the Spirit, and
your unconditional and abiding love.

Amen.

Reiterate the purpose of the Prioritizing the Parish MAP Gathering

- As the final step in the development of a parish mission action plan, this group has gathered to consider the initiatives and ideas proposed over the three previous gatherings. Those initiatives and ideas will be reviewed, after which participants will be invited into a time of discernment through scripture and prayer. At the conclusion of this time of prayer and discernment, participants will use a voting tool to rank the initiatives in each focus area. The initiatives that achieve the four highest rankings in each focus area will become the MAP for the parish for the next twelve months (unless the parish feels called to revisit the MAP sooner).



Introductions *no more than 10 minutes, no notetaking*

- For most of you, those in attendance will be known to one another through the previous gatherings. Should that not be the case, please take a few moments to allow folks to greet one another.

Norms *5 minutes*

- The facilitator should review the basic norms for group process to remind everyone of process “rules” that help people participate in dialogue and accomplish the objective.

Reviewing the Work

Invite those present to wander around the room reading all ideas and initiatives.

Invite people to ask any clarifying questions that would help them better understand the actual activity; not a judgement about whether to undertake the activity nor about its merit but merely questions of information seeking.

Ask each person to ponder the initiatives and ideas during the time that follows. During that time, people will want to be considering which four ideas/initiatives in each focus area make their eyes shine and their hearts excited, which feel like the best fit in terms where God is calling the parish, and towards which initiatives they feel the Spirit drawing them.

Ring a gong, bell, or other indicator appropriate to your parish that conveys to the group a period of quiet is about to begin. Invite someone in the group to read the following scripture verse and pray;

From Isaiah 43: 18-19 “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

God, grant us the wisdom to listen attentively to your presence as we discern a path for our parish in the coming year. May our choices reflect a concern for the restoration of wholeness in your creation, a yearning to embrace parish structures that enhance our ability to be present to your mission, and our hunger to become closer to you. By your Spirit, enable us to discern our unique parish calling and give us the courage to act.

Amen.



Allow a period of silence for people to ponder their choices. Feel free to light a candle, play quiet music or whatever other practice your parish uses for these contemplative times.

Give each person four sticky dots of each of the three colours. Invite them to use their dots to prioritize their top four choices in each focus area, reminding them which colour dot goes with each area.

Instruct people that they may use their dots however they want within each colour-designated focus area. They can choose to select four different ideas/actions or use multiple dots of one colour on one or two initiatives about which they feel strongly.

Invite online participants to vote using the polls.

When everyone has finished distributing their dots over the three focus areas, the facilitator will ask for some help in counting dots. The intention is that the four ideas or initiatives with the highest total of dots in each focus area become the MAP for that area over the next twelve months. Where there is a tie, include the tied items in the final MAP actions. Ensure that you add the online poll totals to your count.

Circle or mark conspicuously the top 4 actions in each focus area. Then invite people to step forward and write their name on a sheet for the area that interests them most. Share that the names listed will become the people who are invited specifically to the first gathering of the focus area group. There is no commitment to moving the entire agenda forward for that focus area. Signing one's name only commits one to that first meeting. And participants who feel so called may sign up for more than one focus area.

Ask online participants to use the chat feature to indicate their interest and ensure that their names are added to the sheets.

Tell participants that in that first meeting, people will begin to decide in what order to undertake the actions and will choose an initial action. They will discuss next steps, and those people who feel called to be involved in that initiative will then begin the process of setting things in motion. Often the first step is to share with the congregation the first initiative and ask anyone who is interested in supporting the work to join them. They will be on the lookout for those shining eyes that indicate a shared passion, and they may, in fact, already have a sense of someone with a passion for that idea whom they will invite to join the team.

In closing this segment, share with the participants that the top four ideas or initiatives for each area will be captured in a MAP document (see [Appendix I](#)) along with the parish's vision and mission statements, and then this document will be shared with the corporation, parish council, and the parish. Note that any initiatives that require expenditures will need support from the corporation before moving forward.



Coming to Closure

If people are not already in a circle, ask them to move themselves into a circle so they can all see one another. Using a microphone, tell people you will be passing the microphone around the circle to give people the opportunity to share briefly what the MAP development process has meant to them, and how they propose to be involved moving forward. There is no necessity to say anything, and should anyone choose, they may simply pass the mic along to the next person. If you don't have a microphone, feel free to use a marker or anything else that is visible when passed from person to person.

Use your computer camera to include those who are participating digitally so they can see who is speaking.

When the mic comes full circle to the facilitator, the meeting will conclude with the facilitator acknowledging that, in concert with God, the parish has the resources, the will and the power to help bring about God's kingdom. A final prayer acknowledging the mission action plan and concluding with a blessing will mark the conclusion of the process.



NEXT STEPS

Yes, there are a few more things that need to be done. The corporation should affirm the work, and if there are budget implications, they will want to talk with the team working on those initiatives about funding options.

The rector and wardens will want to recruit a *Parish MAP Advocate* (see [Appendix J](#)) whose ministry will be to stay connected to each working group, report regularly to the corporation, parish council and congregation about the various initiatives to keep interest high and work affirmed and celebrated, ensure milestones in the various initiatives are recognized, and bring challenges in the working group or with a particular initiative to the attention of the rector and corporation so that the appropriate supports can be offered.

The Parish MAP Advocate has a one-time beginning task which could be done in concert with the rector and wardens; to set an initial meeting for each focus area for the people who indicated a passion for that area.

The purpose of that initial gathering is to decide the order in which to engage with each action, in particular to indicate the first action. Once the first action is chosen, the group will want to develop an action plan to get things started. The group will also want to choose a convenor whose tasks are to set the meetings of the group, communicate those meeting dates/times, to ensure someone keeps notes, and to encourage everyone in the group to share the responsibility for enabling the action. That convenor will regularly communicate with the MAP Advocate sharing stories of success, requests for resources, and reports for the corporation.

Once the groups begin meeting, the MAP Advocate will function as a cheerleader, a collector of stories, a conduit to the corporation, and a teller of success stories to the congregation, and to the diocese.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This process is offered to the people of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara as we walk together led by our shared vision, “Called to Life, Compelled to Love” and our mission, “Ignited by the irresistible love of Jesus and renewed by the Holy Spirit, we partner with God to deepen faith, share stories, and care for creation.”

I am deeply grateful to the many teachers and writers whose work, over the past few years, has become part of my DNA and underpins so much of this initiative. Any explanations that do not reflect the journey on which God has taken them reflect my own walk. I trust that they will graciously forgive where I step away and hope that they feel my respect and appreciation for the ways in which they continue to influence and shape God’s church as we move ever closer to the Way of Jesus. I thank God for their prophetic voices!

Particular thanks to:

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Canon Christyn Perkons
Director, Congregational Support & Development

November 2021

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Adult Faith Formation Snapshot Tool
- Appendix B - Adult Faith Formation Resources
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 - Dwelling in the Word
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 - Asset Mapping Thought Provoking Questions Handout
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APPENDIX A

PRE-GATHERING PARISH ADULT FAITH FORMATION SNAPSHOT TOOL

This tool is designed as a starting place; one that creates a snapshot of faith forming in your congregation. It might also serve as a starting place for generating new ideas and plans for deepening your parish's faith formation plan. It is not intended to be all inclusive nor is it size or geography specific. Check the column that best indicates your level of agreement with the statement. Answer spontaneously and honestly. The value in this tool comes in noting where you are and seeing where you might go. If you don't know if something is true for some or most, just check the last box. The snapshot you create is intended to help you participate in the Adult Faith Formation gathering, is only intended for your use and will not be collected. It's solely to stimulate your reflections and your sense of what's possible.

Adult Faith Formation Statements Describing Your Parish	True of most of us	True of some of us	Not true of most of us
We are comfortable talking to one another about our faith.			
We are comfortable talking about our personal faith to people who are not parishioners or perhaps not Christians.			
We can comfortably respond to questions like: Why do you believe in God? How has Jesus changed your life? What's the connection between your faith and your participation in church?			
We have a sense of God's presence in our daily lives, the holy in the ordinary.			
We participate in training about how to tell our faith story.			
We engage in ongoing faith formation activities like Bible study, discussion groups, liturgy writing, intercession writing, mentorship programs, Christian basics courses, Revive, Bishop's Book for Lent, Alpha, etc.			
We participate regularly in a discussion group focused on the Sunday sermon and/or the Sunday readings.			
We have a rhythm of reading the bible and prayer in our daily lives.			
We participate in activities to deepen and expand our spiritual practices e.g. Examen, Labyrinth, Meditation, Journaling, Daily Office etc.			
We live the Way of Jesus through care of others, care for God's creation, and justice action and advocacy in our neighbourhood & the broader world.			
We are so transformed by God's love and the impact of our community of faith that we readily invite others to share in our worship and activities.			
We use a spiritual gifts tool to discern and deploy our gifts in ministry.			
Our generous gifts of time, talent and treasure draw us closer to God with whom we are always collaborating in new things.			
Our stewardship focus makes us feel invited to invest our personal resources in God's mission.			

See glossary on the back for explanation of spiritual practices



GLOSSARY

Bible Study: a gathered group led by a cleric or lay person regularly discusses scripture passages and relates their meaning to participants' lives. Some groups include memorization of passages.

Bible Journaling: a technique for reading and pondering daily scripture readings that invites creative doodling and drawing in your bible to assist in learning and connecting with the bible; especially helpful for visual learners.

Bishop's Book for Lent: Each winter, the bishop chooses a book for individuals and parish groups to use to enhance their Lent experience. Some parishes share study groups with other parishes and in other cases, people use the provided study guide to explore the material on their own.

Centering Prayer: a method of meditation used by Christians placing a strong emphasis on interior silence that employs the use of a chosen sacred word to help one let go of thoughts and remain open to an interior silence.

Christian basics course: a program of study that invites those new to Christianity to easily explore key beliefs and practices. One used frequently in the Diocese of Niagara is Christian Foundations, described as an introduction to the good news of the gospel and an overview of the Bible, church history, key Christian beliefs and core practices of the faith.

Daily Office: the practice in Anglican churches or by individuals of saying two daily services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer (with some including Compline/night prayers) with the core of the services based almost entirely on praying words of the Bible and hearing passages from it.

Discussion Groups: gatherings of parishioners and others with discussions typically focused on life issue or "big questions" or a shared interest with a faith lens offered by the leader and some participants.

Examen: a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of one's day in order to notice God's presence and discern God's direction for our lives, often done at noon and at the end of the day.

Intercession Writing: in some parishes, those who offer the intercessions or prayers of the people write prayers that speak into the context of the parish, arising from reflection that includes scripture, culture, daily news, and the missional focus of the parish.

Journaling: a process of reflecting on problems, issues or just life through writing on a daily basis.

Labyrinth: an ancient tool that relates to wholeness combining both a circle and a singular spiral path to walk that reflects our journey to God and our journey to our own center; a walking silent meditation.

Liturgy Writing: In parishes where contextual liturgy is created, groups typically gather to ponder scripture related to a particular season or theme with the intent of crafting liturgical pieces that reflect both scripture and the context of the parish and the neighbourhood.

Meditation: a form of prayer and reflection in which the practitioner attempts to become aware of and reflect upon the voice of God in one's life.

Revive: a small group program that highlights transformation and spiritual leadership through spiritual formation focused on praying, understanding scripture, and developing a sense of call.

Spiritual Gifts tool: a survey intended to create a snapshot of our individual strengths and gifts, and to help us discern the use of those gifts for God's mission of love.



APPENDIX B

ADULT FAITH FORMATION RESOURCES

Tools	Link or Source
Anglican Prayer Beads	A spiritual practice using beads as a tactile guide to focus, meditate and pray; make your own or purchase http://www.anglicanprayer.org/resources/P-41-Anglican%20Rosary_Web.pdf
Bible Study	Numerous resources available from the Synod Office; contact Jane Wyse. jane.wyse@niagaraanglican.ca
Bible Journaling	https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps https://saralaughed.com/how-to-start-bible-journaling-for-beginners/
Bishop's Book for Lent	Details on website yearly.
Centering Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revive includes a segment on Centering Prayer. Mobile App - https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/centering-prayer-mobile-app/ Book - https://www.amazon.com/Centering-Prayer-Awakening-Cynthia-Bourgeault/dp/1561012629 Instruction - https://www.contemplative.org/contemplative-practice/centering-prayer/
Christian Basics Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Christian Foundations – A Grounding for a Life of Faith</u> co-written by Bishop Bell and available at a discount from the Synod Office: contact Jane Wyse. <u>Guide for Instructors - Wycliffe Booklets on Evangelism: Just the Basics – Teaching Christian Faith to Beginners</u> https://institute.wycliffecollege.ca/securefiles/Just%20the%20Basics.pdf <u>Alpha</u> – an 11-week course that creates a space, online or in person, in which people gather for conversations about life, faith and Jesus... intended for those new to Christianity. https://alphacanada.org/
Cursillo	A movement dedicated to bringing the Good News through friendship and shared discipleship practices https://cursillocanada.org/ and locally https://niagaracursillo.org/
Discipleship	Making Disciples Today: What, Why and How...on Earth?; a Wycliffe Booklet describing discipleship as embracing the Way of Jesus as an apprentice. https://institute.wycliffecollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Making-Disciples-Today.pdf



Tools	Link or Source
Do You Love Me?	A 4-week workbook that includes recorded scripture meditations for each weekday alongside small group discussion questions and activities to encourage the user to live into the practice. Could be done individually or in a group. https://www.graftedlife.org/group-studies/do-you-love-me
Education for Ministry	EFM is a distance learning program of theological education for lay people in small groups over a four-year period with a focus on discovering and living a call to Christian service. http://www.efmcanada.ca/
Embracing Series	Small group studies on significant thought-provoking topics with a popular teacher using a DVD presentation that allows for participant engagement. Teachers include Richard Rohr, Diana Butler Bass, Kathleen Norris and more. Some available from diocesan library or kindle version on Indigo.
Known By Love	An interactive 12-session workbook including podcasts focused on practical skills that support and nourish deepened Christian relationships of all kinds. https://www.graftedlife.org/group-studies/known-by-love#features
Labyrinth	An ancient practice of walking a serpentine path for spiritual centering, contemplation and prayer. Portable labyrinths (floor size and table size) may be borrowed by parishes from the diocesan resource library along with books of instruction. As well, many communities have public labyrinths.
Life With God	A six-semester study based on scripture, integrating interactive projects, personal reflection and small group engagement to transform lives and relationships. Only certified leaders may purchase the resource. If you would like to pursue certification, please speak to the Congregational Support and Development office about financial support for the certification process.
Revive	A discipleship program to help lay leaders grow in confidence as spiritual leaders who can talk about their love for God and embrace their role in Christ's mission https://revive.forwardmovement.org/
Spiritual Gifts Tool	A survey or process intended to assist individuals in identifying their gifts, their growing edges and discerning how best to use those in the service of God's mission. https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools?
The Visual Faith Project	Thought provoking, faith connected database of 5000+ images that help people explore story and scripture in light of reflective questions accompanying images. Purchase access at https://vibrantfaith.org/visual-faith/
The Work of the People	A spiritual visual library to enhance discovery about our humanity and the divine; a place of inquiry about God and being human; to grow in empathy and compassion. Films available by subscription https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/



DIGITAL RESOURCES:

Podcasts:

- **Corrymeela** – open and fruitful dialogues using the texts, traditions and practices of faith groups to help us find our way toward each other
- **Forward Day by Day** – podcasts to center you in prayer
- **Godpod** – theologians Graham Tomlin, Mike Lloyd and Jane Williams discuss burning issues of God, theology, life and more.
- **On Being** – with Krista Tippett examining the animating questions at the center of human life
- **Evolving Faith Podcast** – hosted by Sarah Bessey and Jeff Chu
- **Everything Happens** A Podcast with Kate Bowler who talks with people about what they've learned in dark times.
- **ing Leading, Growing, Being** explore how people of faith are bringing their best selves to the world each day
- **Nomad**: Hope-filled conversations with theologians, activists and contemplatives
- **The Bible for Normal People** – Pete Enns tells stories about everyday people and their struggles with the Bible as they try to make sense of God
- **The Confessional** – with Nadia Bolz-Weber focusing on grace and healing as people share what they've learned from their worst moments
- **The Vicars' Crossing** – exploring the places where faith intersects with the Public Square with Rob Henderson, Kevin George and Iain Stevenson (also on Facebook)
- **The Way of Love with Bishop Michael Curry** – hear stories and get practical advice from Bishop Curry and others who are putting the Way of Love practices into action

Apps:

- **Pray as You Go** – a daily prayer session as you travel to work or wherever you go
- **Centering Prayer** – supports a daily prayer and meditation practice
- **Soultime Christian Meditation** app for daily meditations
- **Hope** – Christian Meditation
- **Lectio 365** – a daily devotional inspired by Lectio Divina that helps one pray the bible daily



Face Book groups:

- Revive: Equipping Lay Leaders to be Spiritual Leaders
- Spiritual Formation for Discipleship
- Missional Commons

Have you got a faith formation resource you would like to share?
Just email Christyn with the information!

christyn.perkons@niagaraanglican.ca



APPENDIX C

PRE-GATHERING PARISH CULTURE SNAPSHOT TOOL

This tool is designed as a starting place; one that creates a snapshot of some aspects of the culture in your congregation. It might also serve as a starting place for generating new ideas and plans for reshaping your parish’s strategies and plans. It is not intended to be all inclusive nor is it size or geography specific. Check the column that best indicates your level of agreement with the statement. Answer spontaneously and honestly. The value in this tool comes in noting where you are and seeing where you might go. The snapshot you create is intended to help you participate in the Reshaping Parish Culture gathering, is only intended for your use and will not be collected. It’s solely to stimulate your reflections and your sense of what’s possible.

Parish Culture Statements Describing Your Parish	We do this well	We need to do more of this	We do not do this... yet
Parishioners can state or describe our vision and mission statements.			
Our committees, ministry teams, outreach activities, parish council, and corporation work are grounded in prayer and our missional focus			
We use a spiritual gifts tool to discern and use our gifts in ministry.			
Lay leaders are affirmed, celebrated and highly visible in ministry, in worship, and in the broader community.			
We have a volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and deployment process that empowers parishioners for ministry.			
As a congregation, we embrace God’s abundance rather than living out of our own sense of scarcity.			
Stewardship of the talents, time and treasure with which God gifts us is a year-round commitment for our parish.			
Our building space is heavily booked for activities that support our mission.			
We have an intentional welcome process for newcomers, online & in-person			
Activity bags or other appropriate materials are provided for children during church services as a sign that we welcome children and families.			
We minimize specialized language and when we can’t, we explain insider terms in teaching moments aimed at everyone.			
Our website is up to date, relevant and easily navigated by parishioners, newcomers, and those looking to get to know us.			
Effective and transparent communication about our challenges and our accomplishments helps us to take faithful risks in ministry.			
Our trusted leadership team makes decisions about the parish in consultation with the people.			
We have exit conversations with people who leave our church which help shape our ministry.			



GLOSSARY

Activity Bags: small bags containing an array of quiet activities for children to occupy them during the worship service. Bag contents are typically rotated to maintain children's interest and include things like small puzzles, stencil templates, construction paper, crayons, reusable sticker pads, small games, etc.

Exit Conversation: an intentional conversation with a person who has left the parish with the goal of conveying care while exploring the reasons for the departure without trying to change the decision.

Specialized language: almost every group uses particular language and abbreviations that people who belong understand however these terms and short forms are a barrier to people who are new. Ideally, a church will minimize its use of specialized language and where it cannot, will explain the term when it is used (e.g., Eucharist, Triduum, annunciation, BCP, BAS, confirmation, priest, and so on) so that the experience feels accessible to everyone.

Spiritual Gifts tool: a survey intended to create a snapshot of our individual strengths and gifts, and to help us discern the use of those gifts for God's mission of love.

Volunteer Management: an intentional process for how volunteers are recruited, trained, retained, and affirmed that creates a space which allows everyone to live into their baptismal call of service to the mission of Jesus. (includes clear, volunteer job descriptions - the [Job Description Template](#) can be viewed on the Volunteer Management and Screening webpage on our diocesan website.

Volunteer Recruitment/Training/Retention/Affirmation

- **Recruitment** – new volunteers are identified through a spiritual gifts discernment process or by listening to their stories, and they are invited to join a ministry where their gifts and passions can shine.
- **Training** – once recruited, new volunteers are oriented to their new ministry, trained in the work, and mentored as they begin to function in their new role; people feel confident about volunteering because they know they will be trained and supported to do their best.
- **Retention** – long-term volunteers are given feedback about the importance of their work and the ways in which it supports the mission of the faith community; they are consulted about how the work is feeding them and are encouraged and trained to take on more responsibility or a broader scope.
- **Affirmation** – the work of volunteers is noticed and affirmed by other volunteers and church staff, and the faith community regularly celebrates the gifts of time and talents that various people offer.

Welcome Process: an intentional method for identifying newcomers and welcoming them to your parish which typically includes a greeting team, information package, a clergy welcome, and a parish companion (someone who sits with them, shows them how to navigate the service, and introduces them to other parishioners). Often this also includes a visit from the clergy or a welcome team member to get to know the newcomer(s) and their story, and a follow up note after the visit.

Year-round stewardship avoids an annual short-term campaign focused on meeting budget needs and instead focuses on giving back to God and God's mission out of a profound sense of gratitude.



APPENDIX D

RESHAPING PARISH CULTURE RESOURCES

Reshaping Parish Culture

- Asset Mapping – a process (shared by Luther Snow in his book, *The Power of Asset Mapping*) that documents the community’s existing resources and holds a space in which to imaginatively link those strengths to create innovative responses to God’s call. See the “Reshaping Parish Culture Tools & Techniques” for process and handouts.
- Vision and Mission Statement Refresh – create or review vision and mission statements using a process included in the “Reshaping Parish Structures Tools & Techniques”.

Stewardship

- Niagara Stewardship and Fundraising Volunteer Support Network; groups of stewardship/fundraising volunteers from like-sized parishes gather regularly to discuss stewardship as a spiritual practice as well as tactical components of donor-based fundraising; connect with Gillian Doucet Campbell, Director of Stewardship and Development, for more information. gillian.dc@niagaraanglican.ca
- *The Spirituality of Fundraising* by Henri Nouwen https://www.perceptionfunding.org/uploads/1/6/8/9/16891606/spiritualityoffundraisingbyhenrinouwen_267.pdf
- *On the Theology of Money: A Resource for Study and Discussion*; a comprehensive resource to guide Canadian Anglicans in the examination of money from a spiritual perspective. *On the Theology of Money: A Resource for Study and Discussion* is available free online and includes an essay on the theology of money, guidelines for group discussion, a series of reflections and questions, and musical and liturgical resources. <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/On-the-theology-of-money.pdf>
- Stewardship resources from The Anglican Church of Canada <https://www.anglican.ca/gifts/gtp/resources/campaigns/>
- Inspire! Invite! Thanks!: a Facebook group of Anglicans, Lutherans, United Church and others engaged in congregational giving and stewardship ministry exploring congregational giving, and stewardship resources.
- Lake Institute on Faith & Giving fosters a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between faith and giving through research, education and public conversation. Find resources at <https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/institutes/lake-institute/index.html>
- Church Leadership interview featuring Mark DeYmaz, author of *The Coming Revolution in Church Economics* <https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-55-the-coming-revolution-in-church-economics-featuring-mark-deymaz/?id=li20200513>



Stewardship Books

- Growing a Generous Church: A Year in the life of Peach Blossom Church by Lori Guenther Reesor comes highly recommended by Gillian Doucet Campbell, “I highly recommend it for any parish Stewardship team along with clergy and wardens. The questions for each chapter help you apply the learned nuggets. The book is laid out in such a way that your church can implement 1-2 new ideas a month and not feel overburdened...I really appreciate the focus on generosity and true stewardship.” Check out the author’s website at <https://www.lgreesor.com/church> and her blog at <https://www.lgreesor.com/blog-4>
- Keeping Faith in Fundraising by Peter Harris & Rod Wilson, experienced fundraisers themselves, bring fundraising within the scope of normal Christian life and work. They consider fundraising in light of the relationships that lie at its heart-with God, with creation, and with ourselves.
- The Storytelling Non-Profit: A Practical Guide to Telling Stories that Raise Money and Awareness by Vanessa Chase Lockshin
 - Vanessa’s website <https://www.thestorytellingnonprofit.com/>
 - Vanessa’s blog <https://www.thestorytellingnonprofit.com/blog/>
 - Vanessa’s YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYsFflatTy0UnX5Fnq1iEVA>
- Embracing Stewardship: How to Put Stewardship at the Heart of Your Congregation’s Life by Grace Duddy Pomroy and Charles (Chick) R. Lane digs into the heart of the matter by naming obstacles to understanding the essential spiritual discipline of stewardship. In this easy to understand and practical book, the authors’ perspectives from two different generations offer a mixture of tried-and-true strategies and new approaches that will help faith communities and their leaders become confident, competent, generous stewards.

Volunteer Management

- Diocese of Niagara Volunteer Management and Screening <https://niagaraanglican.ca/hr/management> - diocesan resources for creating an effective and safe volunteer culture including ministry job description templates, recruiting and management ideas, frequently asked questions, and the diocesan policy for Volunteer Management and Screening.
- *Spiritual Gifts Inventory: If Spiritual Gifts discerning was not part of your Adult Faith Formation walk, this discernment process is critical to effective ministry. Ministry is most transformative when it utilizes the gifts, strengths and passions of your gathered community, and a discernment tool will help leaders and ministry volunteers get a clear picture of the gifts in your congregation.*
- A survey or process intended to assist individuals in identifying their gifts, their growing edges and discerning how best to use those in the service of God’s mission. <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices/Spiritual-Renewal/Assessment-Tools?>



- Invite – Welcome – Connect: <https://www.invitewelcomeconnect.com/> a website that supports the ministry of the same name developed by Mary Parmer (author of the book by the same name describing how to initiate the ministry in your parish) with videos, tool kits and other resources. The ministry revolves around radical hospitality that engages and involves newcomers; not only life changing for the newcomers but transformative for the faith community!
- Engaging Volunteers in Ministry: A Deeper View of Stewardship—a series of three webinars given by two well-known Canadian practitioners in volunteer engagement, Marilyn MacKenzie and Suzanne Lawson—will help you better understand how lay ministry is mobilized and led, and the ways that people’s God-given gifts can be best used in service of God’s mission. <https://www.anglican.ca/gifts/gtp/resources/ministry-webinars/>

Governance

The lens through which parish leadership is shaped, the practices leaders are encouraged to adopt, and the underlying leadership message pervades every aspect of parish life. Where a congregation’s leadership is focused on managing church business to maintain what is, where leaders are not spiritually nurtured and faith formed, and where leaders dwell in fear or despair about the survival of the parish, there paralysis and inertia sets in. Where leaders are faith formed, where God’s mission undergirds the purpose and goals towards which leaders work, and where leaders lean into the promise of God’s kingdom unfolding around and within them, a delightful flourishing of holy imagination, passion, and wholeness will abound. See the reflection on Infusing Governance with Mission piece in this segment for ideas.

Online Resources

- Good Idea/Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College – one good idea once a month <http://institute.wycliffecollege.ca>

Podcasts

- Theology on Mission – explore God, the church, and everything else with co-hosts Dr. David Fitch and Dr. Mike Moore, local pastors, and professors at Northern Seminary
- Logos(ish) – a podcast about religion, culture and fun with four inclusive, edgy, and playful Methodist pastors exploring the wide world of religion <https://www.logosish.com>

Facebook Groups

- Missional Commons – hosted by The Missional Network and Forge Canada, this group shares a belief that the Holy Spirit is at work among us and they are coming together to listen, discern, pray and support one another
- Missional Communities, Orders and Projects Hub at CMS – exploring the #spiritofmission around the world in the way of Jesus



APPENDIX E

RESHAPING PARISH CULTURE TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Infusing Governance or Church Management with Mission

One might think that the management of the church is not intimately connected to the mission; that the day-to-day tasks of caring for the building, the finances, the employees, and the ministry are grounded in management and leadership skills. And while leadership and management skills are important, it's critical that all of these management/governance tasks be firmly grounded in the missional identity of the parish. Decisions and activities that do not align with the parish's mission will distract people from the mission. If people are not clear about the connection between what they do and why they do it, the power of the mission's impact is diluted. And if mission is not intimately connected to the leading and managing of the faith community, then people will not receive the message that God's call is an intimate part of every aspect of life. How does leadership and management become infused with mission?

Mission Statement – everyone should be familiar with the parish mission statement which means it needs to be seen and heard constantly. Post it everywhere; on the parish website, the Face Book page, on the walls of the church building, in brochures, in paper service bulletins, on screens if the service is projected... whenever the people gather, the mission statement should be in front of them in some way. Refer to the mission statement in preaching, when sharing decisions that corporation has made or recommendations that parish council makes, always include the connection to the mission. When the focus is on a particular part of ministry, include the link to the mission e.g. the stewardship campaign should be infused with the language of mission and should point directly to the mission statement.

Prayer – everyone should be doing it. When the *corporation* meets, they should pray for guidance, spiritual support, clarity of vision, and wisdom in their discerning and judgements. *Parish Council* should begin and end with prayer, and if there is an issue that needs particular discernment or conflict resolution, a pause rooted in prayer and silence is often helpful.

When ministry teams meet, their gathering should be grounded in the parish's mission and prayer. That's everyone from the choir, children's programming, ACW, Altar Guild, and outreach to the worship planning team! If your leaders are struggling to incorporate prayer in their ministry gatherings, offer them an opportunity to be part of **Revive** where they will learn to become comfortable with praying in small and large groups as they move into a deeper relationship with God.

Dwelling in the Word – is a specific tool for engaging scripture but also a posture that faith communities take. (see instructions below) This is not about listening to readings at worship services once or twice a week. Leaning into the scripture in missional churches means grounding every leadership gathering in some form of engagement with the Word that shapes us. This practice does



require a commitment of time and that can be challenging for those whose world is built around *chronos* time (sequential measured units of time). As a faith community is reshaping its culture to enable ministry, shifting to attending to *kairos* time; moments of grace, untethered to clock or calendar in which we are open to God's preferred future will be critical.

When churches make the time and space to dwell consistently in scripture, their conversations are very different. In fact, churches committed to this practice may use one scripture passage over an entire year to ground the parish in a particular aspect of their mission and their life in God. "Dwelling in the Word over a significant period of time opens the conversation to Christian innovation better than any other activity we have used." *How Change Comes to Your Church* by Patrick Keifert & Wesley Grandbert-

Michaelson pg 80

Parish Communication – include not only the mission statement but ensure updates from the rector, the corporation and the parish council utilize missional language.

A congregation rooted in God's mission and its own role in the unfolding of that mission will readily filter decisions through a missional lens "Does this decision, this activity, this ministry fulfill our mission; our role in the unfolding of God's kingdom?" And parishes that filter through a missional lens will be less likely to experience drift; an inadvertent move away from the mission or an unintended transition in values.



DWELLING IN THE WORD

Dwelling in the Word is a tool used by Dr Patrick Keiffert and Alan Roxburgh as well as many others, as part of the missional change process they believe is critical to transforming our churches. The practice helps us to listen to scripture, to each other and to God.

We suggest that you make *Dwelling in the Word* a part of every parish council and corporation meeting as well as part of your annual vestry meeting. You may use a different scripture passage each time or follow the recommendation of both Keiffert and Roxburgh who favour using the same passage, Luke 10: 1-12 each time groups meet over the course of a year. If group members change, you might stick with the same passage in subsequent years or choose another passage if the group members don't change.

Dwelling in the Word doesn't ask participants to provide information or a scholarly analysis of a bible passage, rather it invites participants to ponder the passage and share what resonates with them as a way to communally discern God's presence in the group.

1. Start with prayer inviting God to be present in our pondering and in our sharing.
2. Have copies of the passage ready for readers and other participants. Allow at least 20 minutes for this process.
3. Begin the process with one person reading the passage out loud to the group. Then allow for silence in which people ponder the passage.
4. Next, invite people to find a person they know less well. Invite them to listen closely as the person tells the listener what they heard in the passage in response to this question: what captured your imagination in the passage? Allow 4 minutes (2 for each listener in the pair) for this activity. Direct participants to listen closely as they will be asked to share their partner's responses with the group.
5. The reading is then read a second time by a different reader. After a silence during which people again ponder the passage, each duo will listen to one another respond to a second question: what would you like to find out more about? Again, allow four minutes (two per listener in the pair)
6. Invite people to return to the larger group and ask them to share what they learned as they listened.
7. Once the sharing is complete, invite the group to identify how God might be speaking through the passage to your group on that day.
8. The facilitator ends the activity by capturing the highlights of this final conversation in a culminating prayer.
9. As the meeting continues, a participant may ask for the passage to be read again where it feels like the Word needs to be heard.

Over time, this practice shapes a community where the presence of the Spirit is anticipated and welcomed as an integral part of the group's identity and practice.



VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Mission and vision are not the same thing. They're similar but vision statements inspire people to dream while mission statements inspire people to act.

Vision statements are brief sentences or phrases that capture your parish's hope for a preferred future. They describe the church in Jesus' preferred future, in other words, where you're headed. If the world were as Jesus wanted it, that world would be reflected in your vision statement. Vision statements should intrigue and engage people, compel them to find out more about you. While there are aspects of being a church that most churches hold in common, it's important to capture the vision that highlights the unique call and charism of your particular church.

Mission statements describe what your faith community is called to and the why behind that call. These are still generally brief but not as pithy as vision statements. Your mission statement should give the reader a broad sense of what you're working to achieve. It should both inspire and inform, capture your unique context, and share your reason for existence, your purpose and your key values.

Why are these important? Clear and concise vision and mission statements tell the world who and whose you are, and share something of your church's role in the unfolding of God's kingdom. Your vision and mission statements should be recognizably reflective of your particular faith community... not interchangeable with another parish's.

Vision and mission statements are also useful filters for you as a community to focus and organize what you do and don't do. Parishes that don't have clear mission statements tend to say yes to everything and are unable to give their best to any particular ministry. A parish that can weigh ministry decisions against a clear mission statement can focus its resources, gifts and capacity to make the most effective missional impact.

Lastly, a shared vision and mission bonds community members over a shared purpose and future, especially if the vision and mission statements are highly visible and used as filters for decision making.

If you want to review your vision and mission statements, or create new ones, please feel free to utilize the following guidelines.

Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision
make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.

Habakkuk 2:2



CREATING OR RENEWING A VISION STATEMENT (YOUR DESIRED END-STATE)

1. Start with parish council but do this same process with other groups in your church, and/or host a meeting for people interested in developing a vision statement so you include those who are not part of established ministry groups.
2. Open with prayer that invites people on a journey of discovery and wonder; a journey that acknowledges the collective wisdom in the room and creates space for the working of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the gathering. Give participants permission to set aside their inner voices of judgment, fear and cynicism to allow for open minds and hearts to discover a fresh vision.
3. Dream: because the vision statement is intended to capture an image of Jesus' preferred future for your church, you'll want to start by inviting people to dream big, to dream with the heart of Jesus.
 - Begin by asking participants to respond in small groups to this question (with a recorder prepared to share responses with the larger group); allow 5-7 minutes.
 - i. In five years, the news anchor on your local cable news is raving about your parish. What is she describing? Paint as vivid a picture as you can. What is happening? Who is involved? What impact is this having on the broader community? Has anything changed in your neighbourhood as a result? Are you partnering with another group or organization, and if so, what does that look like? What are the spiritual elements of your big moment on the news?
 - Invite the small groups to consider this second question; again for 5-7 minutes with a recorder prepared to share response with the larger group.
 - ii. In five years, Jesus is describing your parish as a model faith community. What is he seeing? Who is present and how are they engaged? What's going on? What are the values that Jesus is so excited about? What's going on that shows those values? What characterizes the mood or emotional tone of your faith community?
4. The facilitator invites each small group to report on responses to the first question and records in point form the highlights.

And the facilitator invites each small group to report on the responses to the second question and again records the highlights in point form.
5. The facilitator invites the group to observe and share common themes and uses coloured markers to link common themes together.



6. The facilitator reminds people of the characteristics of a strong vision statement:
 - Inspires and engages people
 - Concise
 - Uses language that people can connect with
 - Creates a picture of your church that reflects God's unique call
7. Ask for suggested vision statements that capture the common themes and meet the four characteristics described. If the group is large enough to make this unwieldy, return to the small groups and ask each small group to create one or two vision statements to bring back to the larger group.
8. Record the suggested vision statements and then invite people to ponder and pray about the suggestions for 5 minutes. Move from prayer into a discussion of the various options encouraging people to talk about what they like about particular ones rather than what they don't like. By focusing on positive comments, you avoid hurt feelings and the group is focused on the strengths of the suggested statements.

If there's a suggestion to combine two or a suggestion of rewording, just record those as new suggestions, and again ask people to comment on the ones that best meet the four characteristics.

9. This brainstorming group should not make the final decision. If you are doing several brainstorming sessions, record the best received statements from each and then bring those to parish council (or the corporation) to make a choice. Again, you will want to ask parish council to ponder and pray about the draft or multiple suggestions before inviting comments and preferences.

If **one draft vision statement** is where the meeting landed, consider these questions as parish council prays and ponders;

- Does every word draw people to common work in which they feel included?
- Does the statement give people hope?
- Does the statement inspire people's dreams or connect with their dreams?
- Does the statement capture who and whose we are?

Questions to consider as parish council prays and ponders about **multiple drafts**:

- Which statement draws people to common work in which they feel included?
- Which statement gives people hope?
- Which statement inspires people's dreams or connects with their dreams?
- Which statement best captures who and whose we are?

10. Once a vision statement is chosen, ensure that it is shared with joy and excitement with the entire parish; communicate it as broadly as possible using every communications media at your disposal.



CREATING OR RENEWING A MISSION STATEMENT (WHAT YOU DO AND WHY)

Your church mission statement captures why your particular faith community exists in this time and place. It's a broad statement of the overall direction and purpose, flexible enough to move with the Spirit but clearly connected with your context. It should be short, clear and understandable to people outside the parish as well as inside; a brief, compelling statement of purpose.

Mission statements can and should be written by a smaller group than brainstorming session for a vision statement. Gather a group of people who are knowledgeable about your parish's ministries and about the trajectory of the leadership team's understanding of where God is calling you to come alongside God's work in the community. Make sure you include at least one person who is skilled at writing; someone who can frame the group's ideas in clear, easy to understand and compelling language.

The key question to use for developing the mission statement is "why are we here or why do we exist or what is God's purpose for this community?".

Some questions to ask as you work through developing this statement;

- Are we confusing values with mission or beliefs? We need to stick to our purpose; values and beliefs can be outlined elsewhere.
- Does it include our why? Our why is our passion and a mission statement without passion is limp.
- Is it simple and brief? Don't use a lot of adjectives, run-on sentences, or Christian catchy phrases.
- Does every word contribute to saying exactly what we're trying to convey? Eliminate extraneous words. If you need explanatory words, it's too complicated.
- Is it memorable? Does it easily roll off the tongue? It needs to be something that congregation members can easily remember and say!

Once this group drafts a mission statement, test it out with various groups and pay attention to their feedback. Ask them variations on the questions above about simplicity, brevity, memorability and purpose.

Tweak in response to the feedback and then –

USE YOUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS ABUNDANTLY...ON YOUR WEBSITE, YOUR FACEBOOK POSTS, YOUR OUTDOOR SIGNS, POST THEM IN THE BUILDING, ON PRINTED MATERIAL, ON BUSINESS CARDS, ON LETTERHEAD...EVERYWHERE!



ASSET MAPPING TOOL

A tool to help your congregation look at their assets (strengths) in ways that create space to imagine innovative responses to God at work in our neighbourhoods and in our faith communities. The premise is that parishes (or other organizations) can meet the challenges of the present by leveraging their current assets and strengths creatively.

This process can be done in as little as one hour at a physical meeting. The nature of the interaction means that this process cannot readily be done digitally. The process can be done by small groups or by the whole congregation. You will conclude the gathering with tangible action plans around several missional fronts and teams with the passion to launch the actions.

Here's the process in a nutshell:

- *Document your assets*; identify as many of your congregation's and each participant's strengths and assets as possible in the allotted time
- *Connect the dots*; brainstorming together, link unlike assets and strengths in groups to create actions that reflect how your parish could respond to God's mission
- *Vote...* with your feet in a physical gathering and by poll if you're meeting on a digital platform; create an instant work plan by inviting participants to choose the action they would like to engage
- *Reflect*; ponder the actions that seem to have most engaged people and discuss next steps

Getting Started

In your invitation to participants, please include your vision and mission statements and ask participants to familiarize themselves with the statements before the gathering. This ensures that participants are working from a shared framework.

If you haven't done a recent refresh or created new vision/mission statements, you'll want to spend some time at the start of your gathering going over the vision and mission statements to make sure that people are familiar with who the parish is and what the parish is about.

Facilitator Guide:

This process does not require a professional facilitator. There are two key skills that the process requires; holding the space so that no one person dominates or drives their own agenda, and an ability to guide the process and honour the contributions of each without directing the outcome towards something specific the facilitator prefers.

Ensure that the space for a physical gathering is set up for groups of four to eight depending on the number of participants. Assign people to groups randomly. Each group should have index cards or similar size pieces of paper along with pens or thin markers, and green tape. Sticky notes would work for this process as well. Each group should have at least one copy of the Thought Provoking Questions handout to review during the first activity.



ASSET MAPPING AGENDA

Introductions The facilitator should introduce themselves and share a bit about the process of asset mapping and their role as facilitator. Ask each group to recruit a writer. Explain that each table (in a physical gathering) has markers and flip chart paper for notetaking. If you're facilitating a digital gathering, ask that the writer keep notes on paper. The table groups may recruit another person to report back to the larger group.

Ask all the participants to briefly introduce themselves - in their small groups if it's a large gathering or - in the whole group if the gathering is relatively small.

Set the Stage Review the four stages of the asset mapping process (see above). Explain the concept of assets.

The basic assets targeted in this tool are

- Physical assets
- Individual assets
- Associations
- Institutions
- Economic assets
- Spiritual assets

List Assets

20 minutes

Invite participants to use the index cards (or paper or sticky notes) to generate a stack of assets. Each asset goes on a new card/paper/sticky note. Tell participants to write in large letters so that people can read the card.

Write down specific assets in three to four of the asset categories using the thought provoking questions to stimulate your creativity.

If people are still writing at 12 minutes, ask them to stop and begin reading assets

Once everyone is finishes (or when facilitator indicates time), each participant will read their assets aloud to the group.

Once all the assets have been read, the group is invited to stick them to the closest wall in any order. (If you don't have a wall to use, you could give each group a couple of sheets of Bristol board on which to stick the assets randomly)

Connect the Dots Invite participants to gather with their group members and look over their assets thinking about the parish vision & mission statements as they review.

20 minutes

Ask the participants to brainstorm actions that link two or more of the assets to create an action that would move the parish in the direction of the vision and mission statements.



Participants should cluster the asset cards they've have imagined as connected and tell others in the group what action they are thinking of in relation to this linking. Others can add to this or start a new cluster. Find as many clusters as possible within the time limits; again, creativity and innovative thinking are the bywords here!

At the 15-minute mark, ask the groups to settle on a few (2-4) actions. Give each action a short name. Write that name on another sticky note or card and post it with the cluster of assets.

Possible actions people might consider;

- Project
- Event
- Performance
- Campaign
- Protest
- Advocate
- Celebration
- Making, growing or fixing things

Critical Facilitation Point – don't miss this otherwise your group will move to gathering like assets rather than assets that complement one another

People tend to cluster assets that are alike. Encourage people to cluster assets that add value to one another rather than clusters that are the same. For example, when your goal is to raise a barn, it will do little good to only gather the building tools at one's disposal. A successful barn raising needs a variety of assets; building tools, land, lumber, a drawing or plan, builders, nails, door latches, windows, a power source, and so on. In the same way, for asset mapping to be successful, participants need to think about assets that complement one another or add value to one another. The facilitator should wander the room through this activity and refocus groups that seem to have wandered into clustering like assets.

Voting

Tell the group that this is the moment when their action plan coalesces.

Invite the spokesperson for each group to share the actions they have discovered, the name of the action and a brief description of the activity.

Ask each participant to decide which of these actions they would most want to take part in themselves. They may only pick one action.



Invite each person to follow their heart and move to the action/cluster of assets about which they feel most passionate.

Invite everyone to look around the room and notice which actions engaged the most interest. Ask someone standing at each action to write down the names of all the people gathered there.

Share with people that those actions that got no attention in this round of voting may be considered when the other actions are completed.

Where there are only 2-3 people gathered at an action, you might invite them to consider another action or if they feel very passionate about their choice, encourage them to recruit other members of the congregation to join their planning team.

Results

You have an instant work plan

- The actions are identified
- The people who are engaged by the action idea
- The assets you can connect to initiate that action

Closing

Facilitator shares: Someone from the church will collect the action groupings with the names and arrange an initial gathering for the group after which the initiative can get underway with the leadership of the group.

Final caveat: some action ideas may need direction from the corporation or parish council



ASSET MAPPING CATEGORIES (FACILITATOR USE)

Physical Assets

- Land and natural resources
- Buildings
- Space
- Equipment
- Location
- visibility

Examples: parish hall, public health approved kitchen, labyrinth, rectory, meditation garden

Individual Assets

- gifts of the head and heart (knowledge and passion)
- gifts of the body (skills and abilities)
- your talents, gifts, and skills
- past and present activities

Examples: grant writing, hiking, cooking, project management, birdwatching, singing

Associations (i.e., voluntary associations of people – formal and informal)

- Groups within and outside the congregation
- Church and church-related groups
- Groups you belong to and ones that you relate to informally

Examples: choir, young adult group, Neighbourhood Watch, hiking club, Scouting, NP Board

Institutions (i.e., public agencies, corporations, businesses, non-profits, local small businesses)

- Diocesan and national church resources
- Institutions that impact your church or community
- Community or church partnerships
- Institutions to which you are connected through your present/past work
- Local businesses that parishioners frequent

Examples: schools, Hospitals, Public Health, seniors' facilities, museums, banks, local restaurant where parishioners gather)



Economic Assets (i.e., involving money, spending power, investment power, producing goods or services for money)

- Economic assets of the congregation and individuals
- Business ownership
- Congregation space that is or could be rented
- Private or charitable foundations that could be grant sources

Examples: thrift store, rental income, endowments, investments, community organizations

Spiritual Assets (i.e., ministries, programs, presence, sense of Spirit/God moments)

- Pastoral care and prayer ministries
- Spiritual direction
- Spiritual exploration groups
- Church-related workshop facilitation
- Outreach ministries

Examples: healing ministry, parish nurse program, facilitators, helping ministries, Spiritual Gifts Identification, joining God at work in the neighbourhood initiatives

Adapted from *The Power of Asset Mapping: how Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts* by Luther Snow, An Alban Institute Book, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, and from course materials provided by Luther Snow at the CSC Summer Training Institute for “How your congregation can act on its gifts: Utilizing the power of asset mapping” June 14-17, 2005.



ASSETS - THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTIONS HANDOUT

BE SPECIFIC AND CREATIVE! Don't just list something generic like "the building"; note "100 seats in the sanctuary". The most useful assets can be the weirdest, most unique, or even the funniest ones.

Physical Assets

(e.g., property, location, visibility, building features, signage, equipment, accessibility)

- What are two – three physical assets of your congregations?
- What are other assets you might not have thought of at first?

Individual Assets

(e.g., talents, experiences, perspectives, skills)

- What are one or two things you can do with your hands?
- What is a strength of yours that no one at church knows about?
- What is a passion that people at church don't know you have?

Associations

(e.g., voluntary associations of people – formal and informal, inside and outside your congregation)

- What groups of people do you connect with in your community?
- What groups use your building and are/might be connected beyond the space use agreement?

Institutions

(e.g., public agencies, corporations, businesses, non-profits, local small businesses)

- What institutions (locally or more broadly) share something in common with your congregation?

Economic Assets

(involving money, spending power, investment power, producing goods or services for money)

- What does your congregation spend money on?

Spiritual Assets (e.g., ministries, programs, presence, sense of Spirit/God moments)

- How does the congregation address the spiritual needs of the community?



APPENDIX F

PRE-GATHERING FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SNAPSHOT TOOL

This tool is designed as a starting place; one that creates a snapshot of some aspects of the culture in your congregation within the neighbourhood. It might also serve as a starting place for generating new ideas and plans for reshaping your parish's strategies and plans. It is not intended to be all inclusive nor is it size or geography specific. Check the column that best indicates your level of agreement with the statement. Answer spontaneously and honestly. The value in this tool comes in noting where you are and seeing where you might go. The snapshot you create is intended to help you participate in the Reshaping Parish Culture gathering is only intended for your use and will not be collected. It's solely to stimulate your reflections and your sense of what's possible.

Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood Statements Describing Your Parish	True of most of us	True of some of us	Not true of most of us
Parishioners live in the neighbourhood in which our building is located.			
The immediate neighbours around the building are known to us.			
Parishioners support the local businesses.			
We can see where God is at work already in our neighbourhood and we have joined in that work.			
We participate in community activities with our parish's partners in the neighbourhood.			
We host gatherings out in the community or in our building at which listening to one another's stories is the primary activity.			
We pray for the neighbours and neighbourhood issues.			
Our building space is heavily used for activities that support fullness of life in the neighbourhood.			
We know our individual neighbours around our homes, their stories and their struggles.			
People in our neighbourhood would say they see God's love at work because of our faith community.			
In our daily lives, we notice God moments of grace, justice, wellbeing, and restored relationships.			
We see ourselves as participating in God's kingdom when we advocate for justice, share with those living with poverty, and welcome the stranger.			
Community leaders consult our congregation around key neighbourhood issues.			
We understand ourselves and our neighbours to be gifted with the skills, strengths and passions that, when yoked with the Spirit, are a potent force for fullness of life for everyone in the neighbourhood.			
We are connected to the historians, artisans, poets, musicians, and other Spirit carriers in our neighbourhood.			

See glossary on the back for explanation of community engagement practices



GLOSSARY

Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood – a phrase that captures that the unfolding of God’s kingdom is for everyone; that Way of Jesus is about love, justice and dignity *for all* – and as followers of the Way, we are called to use our gifts, strengths and passions in the healing of a broken world so that all might experience God’s shalom, God’s wholeness. We focus on the neighbourhood in which your church is planted because Jesus’ message is about being incarnational, being present in body and spirit to the daily rhythms of people’s lives. Jesus’ stories are about fishing, and cooking, and eating, and shepherding... they’re grounded in the lives of the people with whom he dwells. In fact, John 1:14 tells us that Jesus came and pitched his tent beside ours “*And the Word became flesh and lived among us*” or as Alan Roxburgh puts it, “He moved into the neighbourhood and settled in right beside us.” Alan goes on to conclude “That’s the character of a local church.”

God is already at work in the neighbourhood – many of us act as though the place we find God is the worship space, and that the Holy Spirit only works through believers but the reality is that God is out in the world ahead of us, already at work and inviting us to join in.

God moments of shalom – moments where God’s grace and peace is evident; where one can see the foretaste of the kingdom; restored relationships, justice, peace, inclusivity, and wholeness. Conversely, we can also become aware of moments of broken shalom, where people’s dignity is trampled, hunger and homelessness are prevalent, relationships are contentious or power-driven. Wondering how to get to know the neighbourhood better and where to find those shalom or God moments; ask your facilitator about ***Mapping and Praying the Neighbourhood*** in the appendices of the facilitator’s guide.

Listening to one another’s stories – stories are how we get to know one another, to know our hurts, struggles, joys and passions, and to know where the holy touches one another. Taking time to ask people about themselves, taking time to listen, honours their dignity as a child of God and helps to restore kingdom relationships where people can feel safe, can share their authentic selves, and can aspire to wholeness.

Seeing God’s love at work – just as important as telling people how God’s love has transformed our lives is showing people the impact of those changed hearts. When people see and feel God’s love through your actions, the kingdom becomes more real for them. Actions can sometimes say far more about the love of God than words, especially as churches and Jesus followers venture out into their neighbourhoods. And...when the people who hold power in your neighbourhood see how you care for and align yourselves with your neighbours, they will invite you into dialogues oriented towards fullness of life for everyone in the neighbourhood.

Everyone is gifted by God – we can sometimes slide into thinking that only churchgoers are gifted by God, and that we are obligated by God’s generosity to bestow our gifts on others. In reality, God has gifted everyone with strengths, skills, passion and experiences, and it’s in bringing those diverse gifts together that we are truly working alongside God, honouring the dignity of one another and building on our shared assets to create fullness of life for everyone in the neighbourhood.

We pray for the neighbours and neighbourhood issues – we can sometimes be inclusive of the world and global issues but forget the people who share our corner of God’s world. Holding our neighbours and neighbourhood issues in prayer can be transformative for us and for them.



APPENDIX G

FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES

Books

The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk – for leaders who aren't worried about the world changing the church but are focused on the church transforming the world.

Moving Back Into the Neighborhood: The Workbook by Alan Roxburgh – designed to assist people in a local church discover what God might be up to in their neighborhoods and among their neighbors, and plan for ways of joining God there. May be borrowed from the diocesan lending library.

The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighbourhoods by John McKnight and Peter Block who report on voluntary, self-organizing structures that focus on gifts and value hospitality, the welcoming of strangers. It shows how to reweave our social fabric, especially in our neighborhoods...to create a future that works for all. Tools that you can use and language that leans into your missional value with which your partner organizations will resonate.

Online Resources

- The Anglican Church of Canada Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice – resources for working in partnership for creation care and social justice <https://www.anglican.ca/publicwitness/>
- Diocese of Niagara Justice Ministries – resources that support the creation of a loving world that is just for all of creation <https://niagaraanglican.ca/justice>
- Faith & the Common Good – a national, interfaith network dedicated to assisting and inspiring faith groups to take collective action in creating more sustainable communities. <https://www.faithcommongood.org/>
- Asset-Based Community Development Community of Practice explores helpful tools and resources with an emphasis on strengths, connections, citizen leadership and its recognition that individual gifts become powerful when they are connected together <http://www.deepeningcommunity.org/abcd-canada-home>
- Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement – develops and supports collaborative strategies that engage citizens and institutions to solve major community issues across Canada <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/>
- Tamarack Institute blog The Latest – find out what's going on in Canadian neighbourhoods as they build vibrant communities <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/latest>



- Building Kingdom Communities: The prophetic role of the church in community engagement – a three stage process for groups exploring community engagement including theological reflections and case studies. <http://www2.twittorial.co.uk/sites/default/files/PDFs/Research/Building-Kingdom-Communities-2016.pdf>
- Faith and the Environment Toolkit: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/faithcommongood/pages/242/attachments/original/1599850997/faith_and_the_environment_toolkit.pdf?1599850997
- Citizens for Public Justice Advocacy Toolkit <https://cpj.ca/cpjs-advocacy-toolkit>
- Community Toolbox Kits
 - **Advocating for Change** <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/advocating-change>
 - **Applying for Grants** <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/applying-for-grants>
 - **Assessing Community Needs and Resources** <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>
 - **Creating and Maintaining Coalitions and Partnerships** <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-coalitions-and-partnerships>



APPENDIX H

FULLNESS OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TOOLS

Mapping and Praying the Neighbourhood

The goal of this activity is three-fold; to help participants really “see” their neighbourhood, to notice shalom moments (those moment where God’s peace might be visible or you notice signs of the Spirit at work), and to hold in prayer the people and components of your neighbourhood. So gather a group. Pay attention to who and what you’re seeing. Listen closely to the people and the sounds of the environment. And keep your heart open to noticing what God might be up to!

Guidelines:

- Gather participants at the church building and pray with the group before you start your walk. Form groups of 2-4 people and try to walk at a variety of different times throughout the week. Send the groups off in different directions and if more than one group has to take the same route, space out the departure times. Encourage participants to focus not on each other but on the community around them.
- As participants walk, invite them to pay attention to who is walking, riding and driving by – and ask that they pray for each person they encounter.
- Don’t call attention to the walking group. Respect the dignity of community members. Be present as servants not tourists!
- As you are able, engage people in conversation. You might ask about children or animals with them; about how long they have lived in the neighbourhood and what their favourite thing is about living there. You might ask what they would do to make the neighbourhood better.
- What do you hear? Conversations? Only traffic? Sounds of nature? Sounds of other activity?
- If anyone asks what you’re doing, be prepared to respond, “We’re from Church X, and we are getting to know our neighbourhood better and praying for neighbours as we walk.” Do not try to tell them about your church or persuade them to attend something there. This is about the neighbours, not about you and your church. You will have other opportunities to talk about your faith and your church as you develop relationships with these neighbours.
- Meet back at the church at an agreed upon time and debrief your walks.



Debrief Questions:

- Who lives in the neighbourhood and who is standing at bus stops, going into businesses, hanging out in parks, shopping or using services? How much do people seem to interact with one another?
- What do you see in your neighbourhood; houses, apartment buildings, businesses, parks, community gathering places, churches? What's the mix of private and public space?
- Where do people in this neighbourhood shop, eat, study, worship, receive assistance and gather? Did you observe anything about the quality of services?
- Did you see signs of change; businesses closed, residences for sale, new construction?
- Where did you see those shalom moments; places where God's grace was at work or God's people were at work? (Look for churches, and nonprofit organizations, street art, flower gardens, community gardens, children playing, social gatherings, assets that uplift the community.)
- What would God celebrate here? What would God heal?
- What was hard? What was particularly engaging?
- Could you see an opportunity to join God in the neighbourhood? Did your walk end with a hope that really speaks to your heart?

If you are mapping and praying a neighbourhood that is dependent on cars, you can complete part of the activity from your car making sure to pause at shopping centres, grocery stores, dog parks, community parks, and other gathering places within 5 blocks of the church building. At those stops, get out of the car and walk around observing at each stop.

This is an activity you could do repeatedly; monthly, in particular seasons of the church year, or as the neighbourhood might benefit from your presence and prayers.

Adapted with thanks from the work of Stephanie Spellers and the Missional Vitality Team in the Diocese of Long Island

https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/02/neighborhood_prayer_walks_tec.pdf



LISTENING TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

In this activity, we get more intentional about listening to our neighbours. You will remember that in Luke 10: 1-12, Jesus sent the disciples out two by two into the surrounding communities where they stayed with community members and likely listened to their stories. We are called to do the same thing; to go out into our communities and listen to our neighbours' stories so that we can get to know them better and so that we have the opportunity of hearing their shalom moments (moments of grace and peace, signs of the Spirit). We are not listening with the agenda of luring them to attend church or evangelizing. We are learning to love the people in our communities by hearing the ways in which their lives are like ours. How might we build these listening relationships; two possibilities...

Create a team of volunteers who commit to spending a couple of hours a week over three months hanging out in local gathering places and inviting people into conversations. That might be at local coffee shops, a barber shop or hair salon, a restaurant where locals gather, a park or playground, a community tennis court or even a golf course...wherever the volunteer is comfortable hanging out and inviting others into conversation.

Those conversations have no agenda except to get to know one another so they might start with simple introductions and a comment that observes some commonality e.g. I think I've seen you here every Monday; is this a favourite place for you? Or you might say something like "I play tennis here every Friday evening and I don't think I've seen you before. Do you usually come at a different time or are you new to these courts? Move on from there by sharing a bit about yourself and invite the other person to tell you about themselves. Ask questions that invite sharing answers, not yes/no responses. Once you've heard a bit about each other, you might get around to sharing some of your challenges...maybe with tennis or, if the context allows, in other aspects of your life. And you might then ask if the other person has had similar challenges. You move the conversation at the pace of the other so if you spoke about your tennis challenge, you might end by asking how they manage that same challenge. You talk for as long as the other person is willing to continue the dialogue or until you need to leave, and you end by saying I'll see you next week or whatever is appropriate. Remember your only goal is getting to know your neighbours and listening for moments of shalom and moments of darkness. Feel free, if someone shares a dark moment, to say you'll remember them or their situation in prayer. Do not invite them to church or to a church event; remember that you are not recruiting church members, you are developing relationships with other people who God loves, and trying to see signs of the Spirit at work in the community as well as demonstrating God's love through your own care for them.



APPENDIX I

PARISH MAP TEMPLATE

Map For (Parish Name): _____

Vision Statement: _____

Mission Statement: _____

PARISH INITIATIVES		
Adult Faith Formation	Reshaping Parish Culture to Enable Ministry	Fullness of Life in the Neighbourhood
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5 (IN THE EVENT OF A TIE)	5 (IN THE EVENT OF A TIE)	5 (IN THE EVENT OF A TIE)



APPENDIX J

PARISH MAP ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION

The volunteer Parish MAP Advocate serves a critical role in supporting the groups working on various initiatives once the MAP is finalized and ready for action. A MAP Advocate will keep the corporation, the staff and the community informed about what is happening and what is needed in a way that facilitates the ministry and the mission.

Responsibilities:

The MAP Advocate communicates regularly with each group working on an initiative for several purposes

- To invite interested persons to the initial meeting of an initiative group or to ensure that an interested parishioner takes the lead in this
- To function as a conduit to the corporation and the diocese when a group needs resources
- To collect stories of progress towards the completion of an initiative or successes along the way or when an initiative is realized
- To communicate those stories to the parish as a way to celebrate progress and success, and to keep energy high around the parish MAP
- To share with the group names and contact information of people who express interest in working on a particular initiative
- To connect groups where the MAP Advocate sees parallel work or potential for collaboration

The MAP Advocate similarly communicates with the corporation and with parish council on a regular basis sharing the work, the progress and the resource needs for each initiative.

The MAP Advocate regularly prays for the volunteers working on the initiatives.

The MAP Advocate updates the Synod Office every six months (or sooner) about the progress of the MAP initiatives.

The MAP Advocate trains a person of the parish's choosing to assume these responsibilities over the final six months of the Advocate's term.

The MAP Advocate might work with initiative teams to prepare a report/presentation for the annual vestry meeting.

Skills and Experience:

- A passion for the parish MAP and for the lives of the parishioners
- Strong communication skills
- Strong organizing abilities
- The trust of the corporation, parish council members and the key volunteers
- A willingness to hold this work in regular prayer



Risk Assessment Review

Risk	Description	Rating
Participant	Adult parishioners	Low
Setting	Phone, Computer, in person	Medium
Activity	Ministry support and communication	Low
Supervision	Supervised by rector and wardens Communication with teams in groups or via phone or computer	Low
Nature of Relationship	One to two years but could be longer	Low
Degree of Authority	Some Authority	Medium
Physical Safety	No physical risks	Low
Financial	No financial involvement	Low
Privileged Information	Possession of contact information	Low
Overall Risk to Person	None	Low
Overall Risk to Parish	None	Low
Overall Risk to Diocese	None	Low

Consensus of Risk Assessment = Low

Support, Supervision and Training:

- Supervised by the rector or another staff member, and reports to corporation
- Some support and training resources provided by Congregational Support & Development

Participation Group:

- MAP initiative teams
- Corporation
- Parish council
- Parish
- Community members
- Congregational Support & Development diocesan staff

Screening Requirements:

- Recommendation from two or more parish leaders
- A signed Declaration of Agreement to abide by diocesan policies

Length of Term:

- Two years with the possibility of extending for a further year

Benefits to the Volunteer:

The delight of supporting the MAP initiatives teams; the joy of sharing the success stories with the parish; the satisfaction of reporting annually on the discipleship, growth, and mission of your parish.