



Missional Ministry in Your Own Backyard

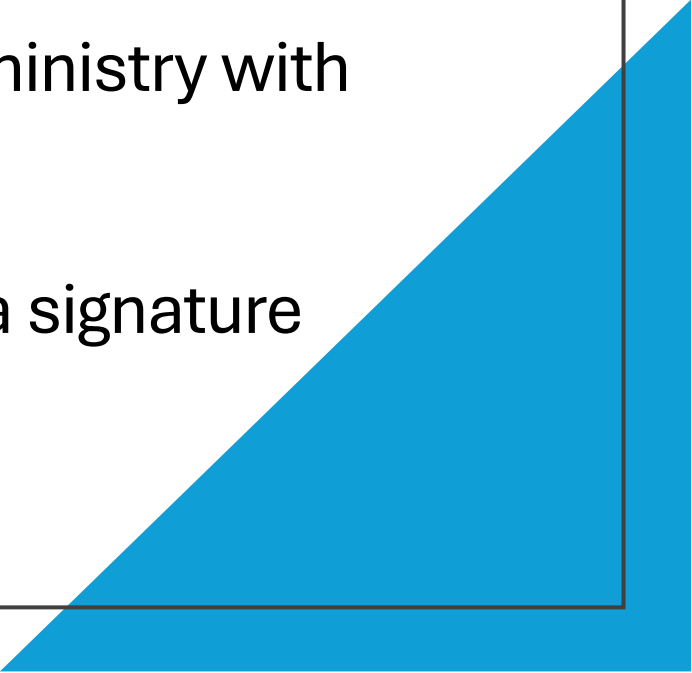
Rev. Jean Marie Peacock

Organizing Pastor, Be Well-Come Together

Stated Supply Pastor, Faith Presbyterian Church

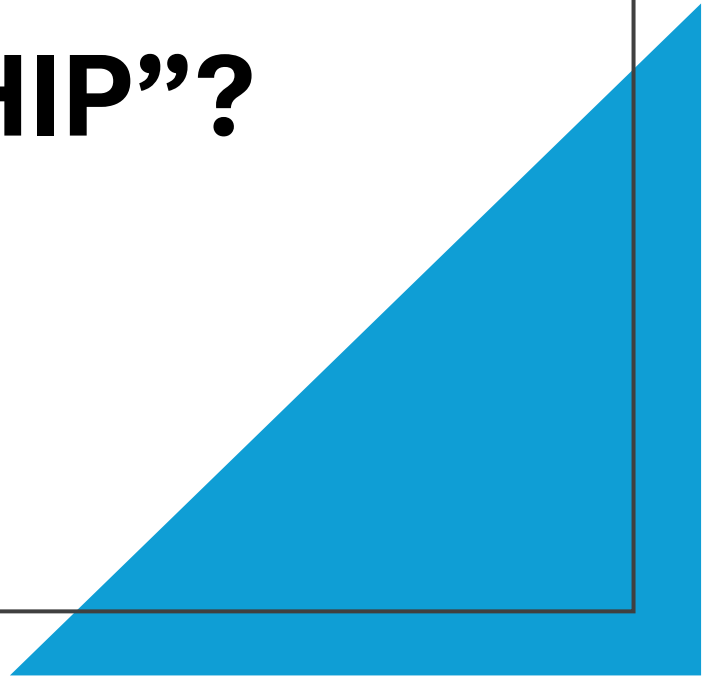
Harvey, LA

Workshop Outline:

- * What it means to steward God's mission.
 - * Seeing your neighborhood as the mission field.
 - * How one small church started a new community ministry with small, relational steps.
 - * Steps your congregation can take toward building a signature community ministry.
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What comes to mind
when you hear the term:

“MISSIONAL STEWARDSHIP”?

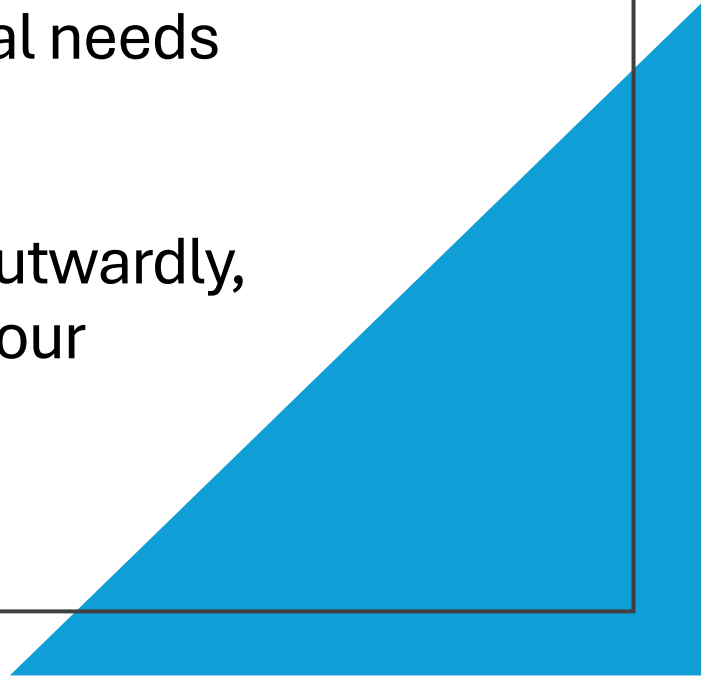


Missional Stewardship:


Stewardship isn't only about money—it's about managing all that God has entrusted to us (time, gifts, relationships, resources, land, influence) for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Traditional Stewardship: caring for the church's internal needs (budget, building, programs).

Missional Stewardship: stewarding God's resources outwardly, joining God's work of reconciliation, justice, and love in our community and world.



A church practicing missional stewardship will:

- See the neighborhood as the mission field – not just overseas, but right outside the doors.
 - Invest resources in relationships, not just programs – time with neighbors, partnerships, presence.
 - Listen first, then act – asking, “What are the needs and gifts already here?”
 - Redefine success – not just “how many attend” but “how many lives are touched.”
 - Align budget and building – facilities and funds used for community impact.
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Community-Based, Relational Ministry

- Jesus' ministry was deeply relational—He ate with people, walked with them, listened to their stories.
- Community-based ministry means being rooted *in* the neighborhood, not just doing outreach *to* it.
- Instead of starting with “*What can we offer?*”, start with “*What do our neighbors say they need?*”
- Embrace **mutuality**: ministry ***with*** rather than ministry ***to***.
- Build partnerships with schools, food banks, cultural centers, or neighborhood groups.



Small Churches Can Make A Big Impact on the Surrounding Community

The story of Faith Presbyterian Church, Harvey, LA giving birth to a new worshiping community, Be Well-Come Together.

Faith Presbyterian Church



35 Members

76% White/Caucasian

17% African

5% African-American

2% Cuban

15 average in worship

Aging congregation with no children in worship

Annual Income: \$40,500

Part-time stated supply pastor (20 hrs/wk)



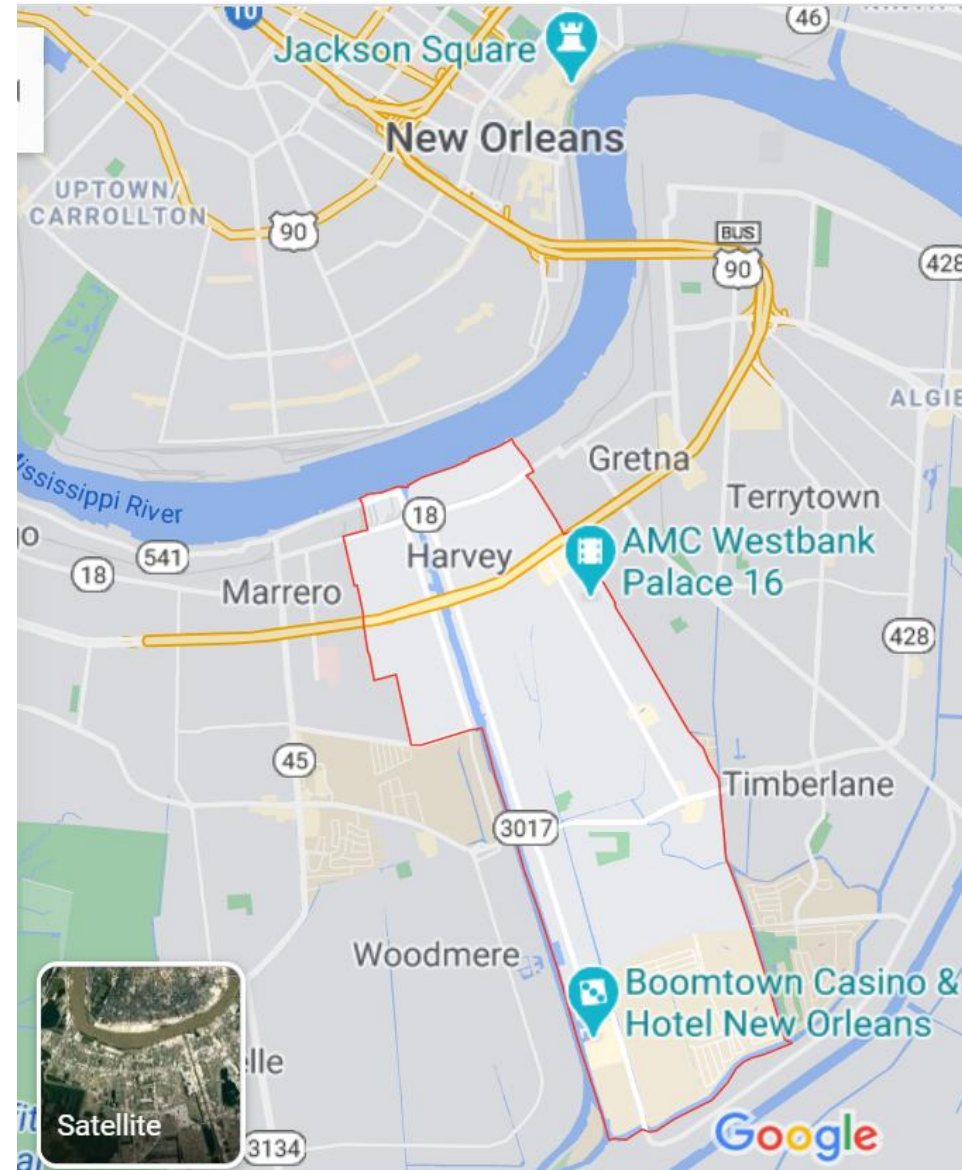
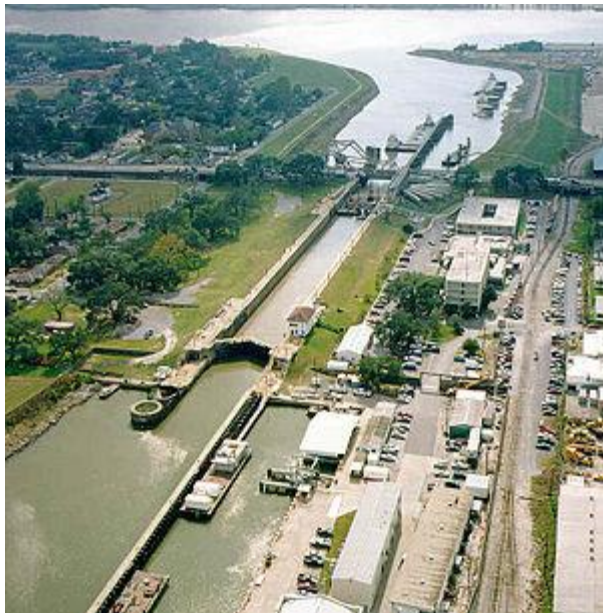
Community Context



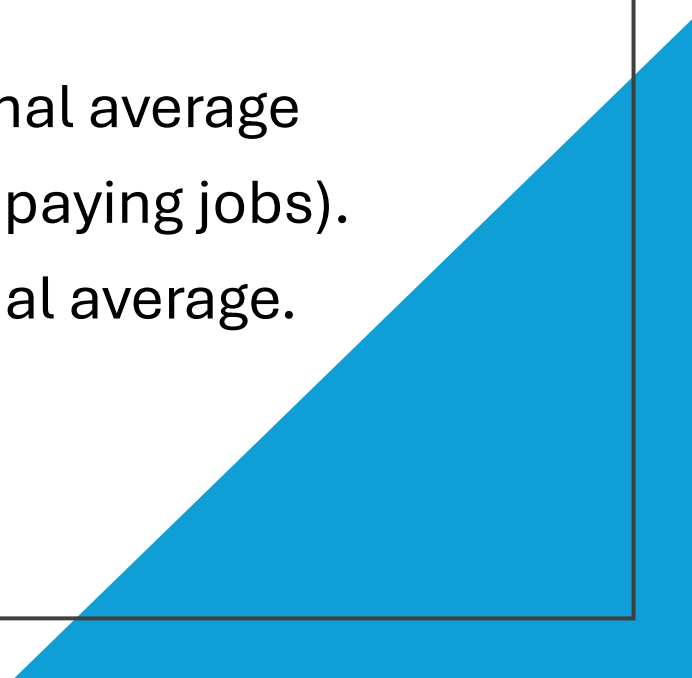
Where is Harvey, LA?

“West-Bank” of the Mississippi River. 10 miles from downtown New Orleans

Bordered by the Harvey Canal – industrial canal connects MS River to various Gulf waterways.



Community Demographics

- In Harvey 48.6% of the population is Black; 31.3% is White; 10.5% Hispanic or Latino; 7.4% is Asian
 - The median household income in Harvey is 33% lower than the national average
 - The poverty level in Harvey is 42% higher than the national average
 - 2% unemployment rate (people are working, but at low-paying jobs).
 - Violent crimes in Harvey are 69% higher than the national average.
 - Cost of living is 7% lower than the national average.
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Our Vision Grows out of Listening

At snowball stand

Mini-market

Fire chief

Neighboring churches

With teachers/school staff

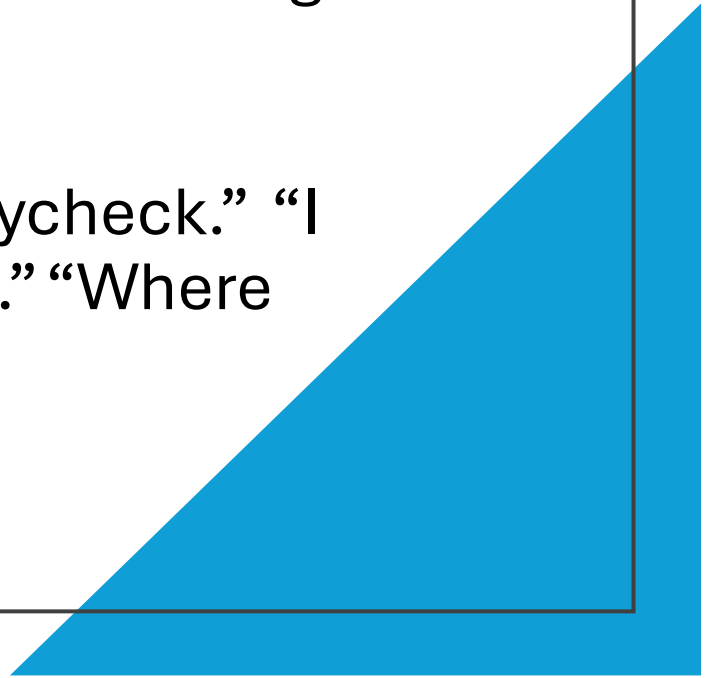
Neighborhood association meetings



What we heard.....

Health concerns - Themes of poor health, costs of health care. Concern about nutrition for families, children, school students. Comments such as: “I wish I were in better health.” “I’d like to lose weight and get in better shape.” “I’m not taking very good care of myself.”

Financial concerns – “We’re living paycheck to paycheck.” “I worry about losing my job.” “Debt weighs me down.” “Where can I get help with rent/utilities?”



What we heard....

Spiritual – “Churches are too judgmental.” “I go to church, but I have a lot of questions.” “I wish churches would become more involved in helping to improve the community.” “Churches seem more worried about how much people give than how people are living.”

Emotional – “I lost my husband, and I don’t have people to talk to.” “I’m under a lot of stress these days.” “I’m caring for my elderly father who has dementia.” “It’s lonely growing old.”

Testing What Was Heard – Start Small

Nutrition Classes





EXERCISE CLASSES

Mondays and Wednesdays
5:30pm-6:30pm

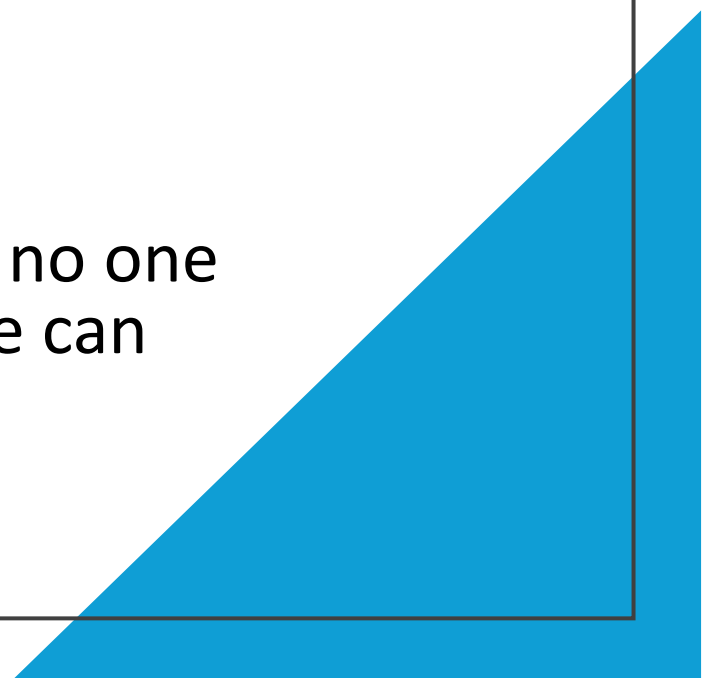


Name Describes the Mission

Be Well... make healthier choices to improve your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Well-Come... be part of a welcoming environment where no one is judged, all are accepted, and everyone supports each other.

Come Together.... find strength in community - no one should face life's challenges alone. Together, we can improve our lives and our community.





Wellness - Spiritual, physical, emotional

- SOUL FOOD (spiritual gatherings to reflect on questions of life and faith)
- STAR (Strategies to Trim and Reduce)
- Exercise Classes
- Grief and Loss Support Groups
- Caregiver Support Group
- Financial Well-Being Workshops
- Care for Elderly Parents
- Healthy Boundaries in Relationships
- Suicide Prevention
- Grief and Loss in the Holidays
- Vaccination Events
- CPR/First Aid Training
- Nutrition Classes





SOUL FOOD – informal worship gathering

- Gather around a meal.
- Build Friendships.
- Listen to each other's stories.
- Explore questions of life and faith without judgment.
- Reflect on scripture, share concerns, celebrate the Lord's Supper, pray and support each other.




Events and programs continually bubble up from the community

Example: CPR/First Aid Training, 2025

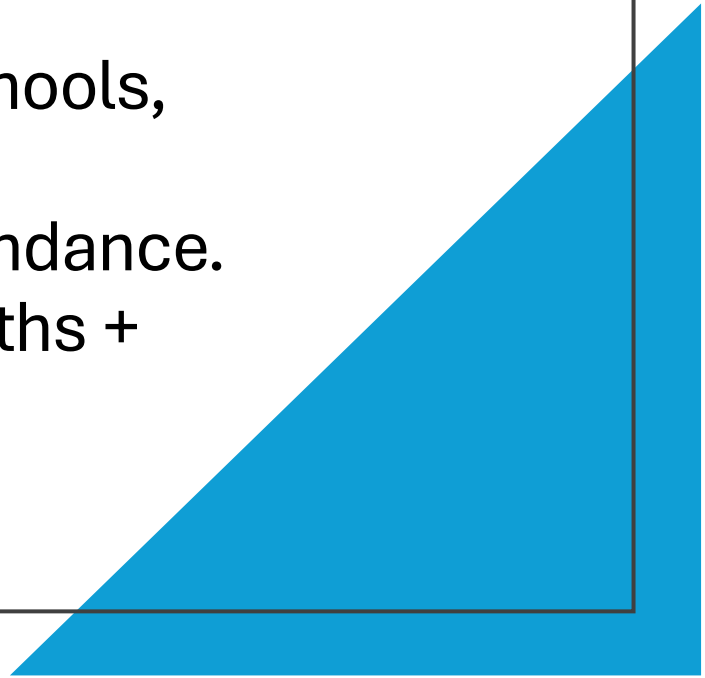


Lessons Learned.....

1. Start with listening, not programs – don't assume you know what the community needs. ASK!
 2. Test the waters – start small and grow from what is resonating with the community.
 3. Be flexible and pivot when needed.
 4. Build mutual relationships.
 5. Create a safe space for sharing (non-judgemental, welcoming, inclusive)
 6. Encourage people to share their gifts, ideas, and leadership to build up the whole.
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Lessons Learned.....

7. Continue to listen for new ways to fill in gaps in community services. Do not replicate what already exists – create what doesn't exist but is needed.
8. Small congregations have unique gifts—intimacy, agility, relational depth.
9. Partnership multiplies impact—local clinics, schools, nonprofits.
10. Success is measured in relationships, not attendance.
11. Ministry emerges from a congregation's strengths + neighborhood needs.



Framework for Developing a Signature Community Ministry

The 5 “L’s” of Missional Stewardship

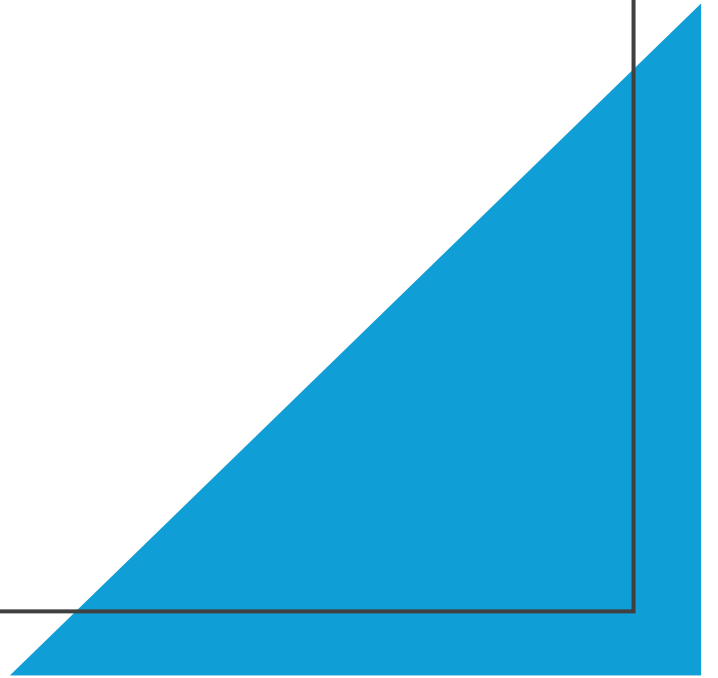
LOOK

LISTEN

LEARN

LOVE

LAUNCH



LOOK

Pay attention to your neighborhood.

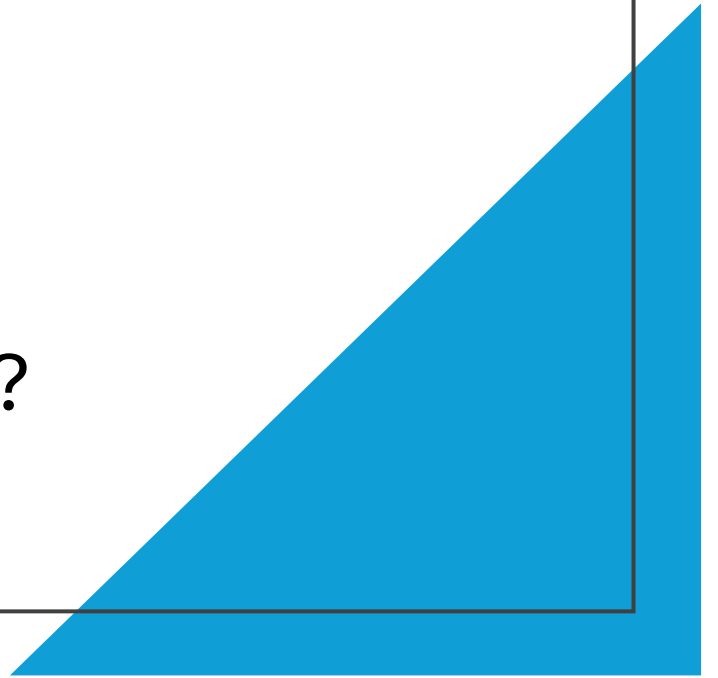
Walk it.

Map it.

Interview people.

What do you see?

What are the signs of pain and hope?



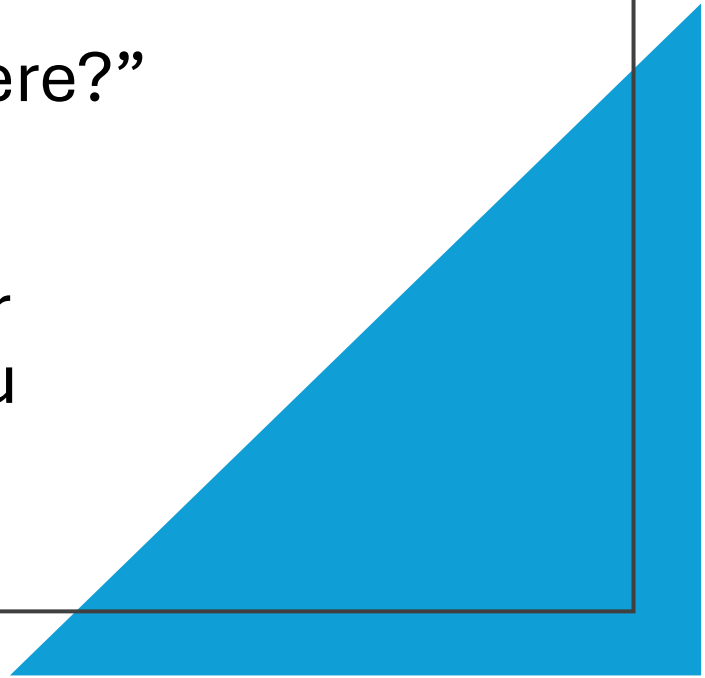
LISTEN

Talk less, listen more.

Talk with people in the neighborhood.

Ask: “What’s something you wish existed here?”
“What brings you joy or stress?”

Question: Who might you approach in your neighborhood. What opportunities can you identify for conversations with neighbors?



LEARN

Research and collect data

What are the demographics of your neighborhood? Look up census data.

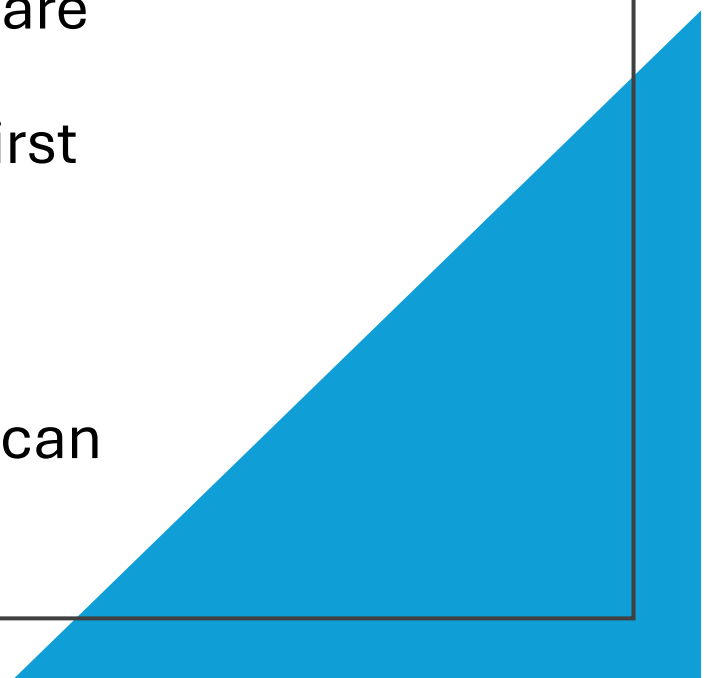
MissionInsite – Learn about the lifestyle segments that are most predominant in your neighborhood.

Learn from local nonprofits, schools, other churches, first responders, business owners.

What are the community's assets and strengths.

Where are gaps that need filling?

Don't reinvent – find a unique niche where your church can create what currently is needed by doesn't exist.



LOVE

Let love be your guide.

Reflect as a congregation on what it means to “love your neighbor as yourself”

What does that look like in the context of your neighborhood?

Are you meeting people where they are at and loving them as they are?

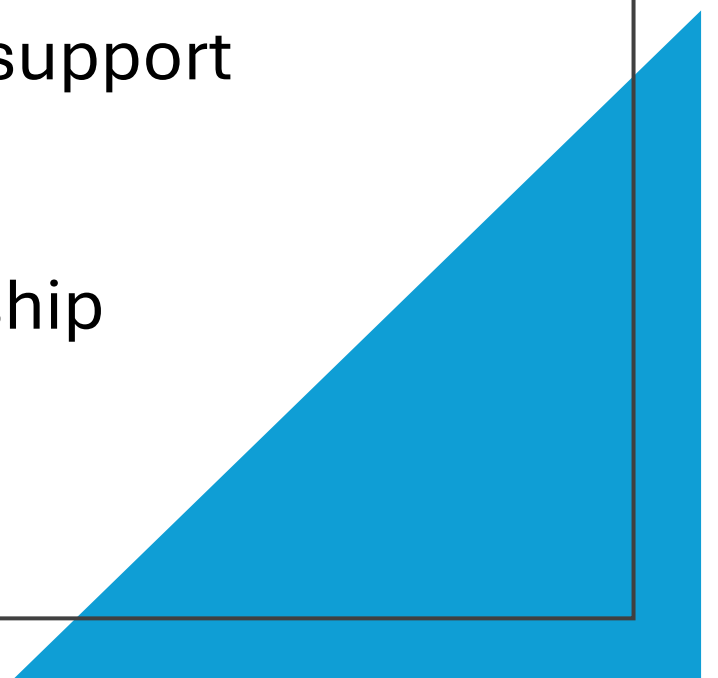


LAUNCH (small)

Start with one thing and build on the successes

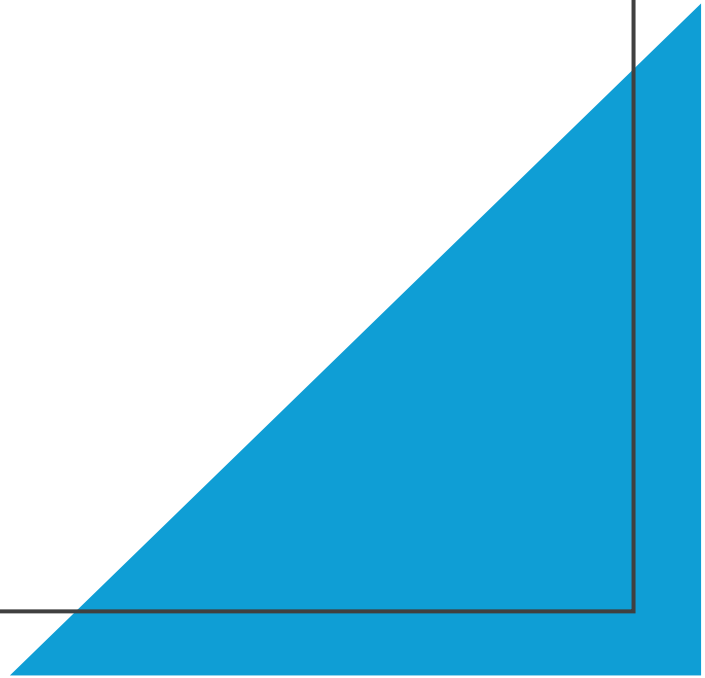
Examples: A monthly gathering. An exercise class. A community art night. A workshop series. A support group.

Let it grow organically, with neighbor leadership



6 Steps to Put the Framework into Action

1. Form a Mission Discernment Team
2. Map the Mission Field
3. Listen Deeply
4. Identify where church strengths and community needs intersect.
5. Test the Waters – organize one small community activity.
6. Reflect, Adapt, and Grow



1. Form A Mission Discernment Team

Purpose – To shepherd the congregation in putting the 5 “L’s” of Missional Stewardship into action

Who: About 4-8 people who have a passion for mission, are trustworthy, authentic, non-judgmental, open to the Spirit, act with integrity, are good listeners and willing to learn and grow in discipleship.

Ask: What is God already doing around us? Who is being overlooked in our immediate community?

Begin with 2–3 weeks of prayer walks around your neighborhood.

Pray - Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see your community through God’s eyes.

Tip: Don’t rush this. Start with presence, not programming.

2. Map the Mission Field

The **LEARN** of the 5 “L’s” of Mission Stewardship.....

Research demographics of your neighborhood. Look up census data.

MissionInsite – Learn about the lifestyle segments that are most predominant in your neighborhood.

What can you learn about the neighborhood from local nonprofits, schools, other churches, first responders, business owners?

Identify both community assets (local leaders, spaces, organizations) and gaps (loneliness, food insecurity, youth support, etc.).

3. Listen Deeply

Conduct 10–15 one-on-one listening conversations. Key questions: What do our neighbors love about this place? What are their hopes, dreams, and struggles?

Attend neighborhood events without promoting anything.

Invite people to share what they'd change or protect in the community.

"Remember: the goal is *mutual relationship*, not charity. Don't assume. Ask."

4. Identify where church strengths and community needs intersect.

Gather the team and reflect.

What common needs did we hear?

What strengths or assets does our church already have?

Where do our church's resources and the neighborhood's needs meet?

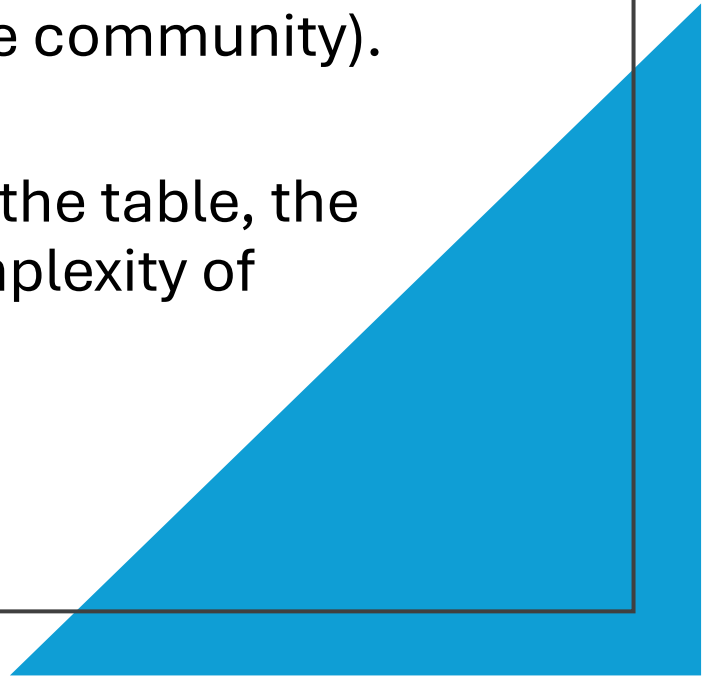
Look for the sweet spot where your church's gifts and strengths meet your community's gaps. This is the seed for a signature community ministry.

5. Test the Waters

Organize One Small Community Activity.

Brainstorm – what is something simple that we can do, using the strengths of our congregation, to respond to a community gap we have identified? Brainstorm ideas that foster building relationships over charity (“mission with” the community over “giving to” the community).

For each idea, list the assets your congregation brings to the table, the assets you discovered in the community, the level of complexity of completing the activity, timeline it will take to organize.



5. Test the Waters

Organize One Small Community Activity.

Select the activity from ideas brainstormed- preferably a one-time activity that will have a high likelihood of success, will help build relationships, and will have the greatest impact in a short timeframe. .

Tip: Start small. Focus on connection over perfection. Choose something simple that can happen *with* your neighbors, not just *for* them.

6. Reflect, Adapt, and Grow

Learn from the “test the waters” activity/event.

Ask neighbors who attended what they thought. What worked well? What would they like to see grow from it? Are they willing to help build on it? What do they see as a next step?

Debrief as a team: Who came? Who didn't come? What lessons were learned? How can we build on the successes of the activity/event?

Invite neighbors who attended to join in planning the next step. Make sure the next step is actionable, achievable, likely to succeed, and builds on lessons learned.

This is an ongoing process based on incremental growth

Each month ask:

What are we learning?

Are we making room for neighbors to lead?

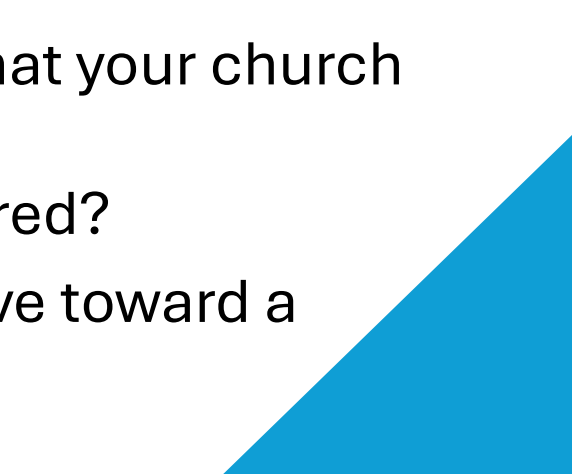
How are relationships growing?

How can we spread the word? What stories are growing out of this ministry to share with others? How are lives being transformed?

Consider ways to continue building partnerships with local groups.

Pray regularly about scaling or deepening the ministry.

Questions to Ponder: "What About Our Backyard?"

- What are some strengths or gifts in your neighborhood? What needs or challenges have you noticed?
 - What might God be inviting your congregation to *pay closer attention to*?
 - What's one need or strength in your neighborhood that your church might respond to?
 - What's one asset your church has that could be shared?
 - What's one next step you can take this month to move toward a neighborhood ministry?
 - What would it look like to start small?
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Remember...

God is already at work in your neighborhood. Your role is to be a steward of God's mission—prayerfully, relationally, and with joy.





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