TOOLKIT:

SEE, I AM DOING A NEW THING!

Resources for Developing New Mission Starts Using a Launch Team Approach

Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" – Isaiah 43:19a

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TOOL #1 – NEW MISSIONS RATIONALE

a. Biblical Principles for Starting New Congregations: A Paper to Ground Lutheran Mission in the Twenty-first Century

An ELCA Document

This paper has been written to respond to the request to state the biblical basis on which new ministries are begun within the ELCA as it moves forward in mission in North America in the twenty-first century and beyond. The paper will include four sections. The first is a brief summary of the changing context for mission in North America. The second summarizes key theological foundations for mission. A third, more extensive section, explores biblical material regarding mission in the New Testament. The final section articulates a list of principles that inform missional decisions as the ELCA moves forward.

Context:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church serves in a rapidly changing context. The United States now is one of the most complex and highly unchurched mission fields in the world. Few nations have both the large population and the wide range of racial, ethnic, and economic diversity that can be found in the United States in the 21st century.

On the surface, much United States culture still appears to be Christian, but that fabric is thin and rapidly unraveling. More and more people in the United States have little or no church connection or background. Many new ethnic groups are arriving whose backgrounds may include Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and other religious traditions with which Lutherans are unfamiliar. Other immigrants bring deep Christian roots but from traditions that American Lutherans have not encountered. With these variables, and others like economics and race, Lutherans often struggle to understand the complexities of our mission field.

Since the 1970s, the ELCA and its predecessors have experienced a slow but steady decline in baptized membership as well as in worship attendance. Rather than gathering or attracting Lutherans who have moved to a new place, many newly birthed congregations find their primary evangelical mission is reaching out to unchurched people who in many cases have little awareness of Christianity or even the story of Jesus. This truth is borne out in nearly every context and setting within the United States today.

Missional Theology:

The basis for all mission endeavors lies in the fact that God is already at work in the world and desires to bless and save the world. The impetus to start new mission sites is found in the ELCA's mission statement:

"Marked with the cross of Christ forever,
we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world."

Starting new congregations is about inviting people to see God's claim on their lives and to live life through the cross of Jesus. In an increasingly pluralistic world, healthy and missional congregations may find themselves more and more providing alternatives to dominant patterns within the culture, being more counter-cultural than the Christian church was once assumed to be.

Mission starts are about communities of believers, all gifted and called to ministry, using their gifts to the fullest to best serve God in that place and through that local expression of the church. These people are sent out as ambassadors for Christ to minister in the world. New congregational starts in the ELCA are a priority because they are one way in which the church can carry out its calling to participate in what God is doing in the world. These new starts become avenues for reaching new people with the gospel, inviting them into a life of faith, and calling them to join in doing God's work in the church and in the world. We are "claimed, gathered and sent…" in part so that we can be vessels through which God claims others, gathers others for nurture, support, training, and worship. These new Christians or new members are not simply objects of mission, but fellow members of the body of Christ, sent forth as we are as well.

<u>Mission in the Early Church / New Testament:</u>

In seeking to fulfill the Great Commission God had given to it (Matt 28:18-20), the early church, as evidenced in the New Testament, used differing models for starting new missions:

1) Some models are unknown to us. How, for example, was the Christian message first brought to Rome? It was clearly there before Paul arrived (Rom 1:10-11, 15:20-24). There are various educated theories, but ultimately, we do not know how it got there.
2) On other occasions the "mother" church in Jerusalem sent out missionaries (Acts 15:7, Gal 2:7-9). Exactly how they supported themselves financially (or were supported) we do not know.
3) At times the mission focused on entire households (Acts 16:15, 31; 1 Cor 1:16). At other times the mission centered on individuals, including situations in which one spouse came to believe and the other did not (1 Cor 7:12-16).
4) The most well-known early church missionary was Paul. People often think he was a solo operator, but in fact he worked closely with other missionaries (Barnabas, Timothy, Silas, Aquila, Priscilla, and many others). He also worked closely with the church in Antioch, Syria. It is of note that there are three missionary journeys of Paul outlined in Acts. Journeys one (Acts 13:1-14:28) and two (Acts 15:36-18:22) begin *and* end in Antioch. Journey three (Acts 18:23-21:15) begins there, too. It does not end in Antioch because Paul was arrested in Jerusalem during the third journey; subsequently he was taken to Rome and executed. While our information is limited, the church in Antioch most likely provided him funds for travel. Once he was in a potential new mission site, he supported himself by his trade as a leatherworker.

   Paul was very careful about finances. In the cultures in which he lived, direct gifts from a group of people to an individual teacher could easily be understood in terms of the patron-client relationship. In that relationship the patron provided material and other assistance to someone lower on the socio-economic scale and in return the client owed obedience and loyalty to the patron. For that reason, Paul did not accept financial gifts from all congregations and when he did, he used carefully crafted language to maintain his independence from the patron-client model (Phil 4:10-20).

At the same time Paul did accept funds. He even solicited funds for the mission of the church. For example, a delegation from Philippi brought a monetary gift to Paul while he was imprisoned (Phil 4:18), and he solicited aid to help with his travel and missionary expenses (Rom 15:24, 2 Cor 1:16).[1] He also expended great effort collecting money from the basically Gentile mission sites he had founded (2 Corinthians 8-9, Rom 15:25-28). The money was to be given to believers in the original or "mother" church in Jerusalem. Paul had two goals in gathering these funds: to alleviate suffering in Jerusalem, apparently caused by a famine, and to provide a powerful and tangible symbol of the unity of Jewish believers and Gentile believers within the one church.

What Paul did not have to do, when compared with a frequent goal of twenty-first century mission starts, was to raise money to build buildings or support infrastructure. His own missionary work centered in his work place, which put him in contact with customers, other workers in his shop, and nearby shop-keepers and laborers. In addition, workers often lived behind or above the shops in apartment buildings or tenements. The advantage for Paul's missionary work was the close proximity of many people, including the families of those with whom he worked. As his missionary work drew more believers, where to meet became a problem. Apartments could hold only a few people. Although on rare occasions Paul could preach in a public hall (Acts 19:9-10), growing discontent by opponents within his own native Judaism and by public officials made use of such facilities less and less attractive. Rental space cost funds Paul did not have and also provided a more public identity than was often helpful. Temples dedicated to the various gods of the ancient Mediterranean area were not available for "sharing" (in the way Jewish and Christian congregations sometimes do today), and Paul could not have theologically reconciled worshiping there, anyway. Synagogues rapidly closed to Paul and others who believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

Partly in response to what was not possible but also with a vision of what the gathered community of believers could be, Paul organized believers into house churches, that is, mission sites that met in the private home of one of the local believers (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Philemon 2; Col 4:15; Acts 2:46, 5:42). Paul likely looked to wealthier believers to host the local Christian gathering. The typical villa or *domus* of the wealthier person was designed for entertaining and could accommodate twenty to forty people, a number few apartments could handle.

That means that the extremely important and frequent language Paul uses about building up the church (1 Cor 8:1, 10:23, 14:3-5, 14:12, 14:17, 14:26; Rom 14:19, 15:2; 1 Thess. 5:11; 2 Cor 10:8, 12:19, 13:10; also Eph 2:21, 4:12, 4:16) refers not to the physical construction of a building but to the strengthening of the believers in their relationships with each other and with God as the body of Christ.

b. The Beatitudes: A Call to Mutuality

In many of our dominant culture churches, we often read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) as a list of the folks we are called to serve; the poor, the hungry, the meek. The impulse is noble and

[1] The references to monetary help are not immediately evident in English. The Greek term for *to be sent on* (*propempō*) is a technical term for providing monetary assistance and, in the case of the letter to the Romans, probably additional assistance in terms of personnel to accompany him to Spain.

true to God’s call to love our neighbor. However, there is a danger in thinking of ourselves as providers of service and our neighbors as recipients. Christian service is always mutual and for building-up. In his book, *Toxic Charity*, Robert Lupton says “Giving to those in need what they could be gaining from their own initiative may well be the kindest way to destroy people.”

When we think of ourselves as providers and our neighbors as recipients, we create an unnecessary and often harmful division that actually keeps us from the kinds of close relationships that can contribute to the common good and keeps people in positions of marginality.

From “Living the Word for January 29, 2023,” an online “Book of Faith” publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Rev. Dr. Mark I. Wegener, author.

c. Shining Light in the World

In my youth, I read Christ’s declaration that we are the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14) as a call to excel or achieve something spectacular. I was socialized into a culture that said the highest value was to be the best, the winner, and the extraordinary. But as I read this text today, I am conscious that light is not what we look at, but what makes it possible to see something at all. Matthew says exactly that – “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to God.” (Matthew 5:16) Our light shines when we make Christ visible to one another and to our neighbor. This also means that it is not our job to bring Christ *to* the neighborhood. Jesus is already at work *in* our neighborhoods, and our role is to shine a light on God’s activity; to name the ways that we see God at work in the communities where we live. May we set down any idols of achievement and seek God’s glory and God’s activity in the places we have been called to be church.

From “Living the Word for February 5, 2023,” an online “Book of Faith” publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Rev. Dr. Mark I. Wegener, author.

TOOL # 2 – NEW MISSIONS EXPLORATION INQUIRY FORM

Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
New Mission Inquiry Form

Upon the recommendation of ______________________________

Conference of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod,

____

is inquiring about a Synodically Authorized Worshiping Community Exploration at ____________________________ (location) and recommends the following as the as the Launch Team of this exploration:

1. _______________________
2. _______________________
3. _______________________
4. _______________________
5. _______________________
6. _______________________
7. _______________________

Conference Dean	Date
Conference Dean	Date
Church Council President (if applicable)	Date
Pastor (if applicable)	Date

TOOL # 3 – MISSION DEVELOPERS

Mission Developers are assigned to a particular area or mission field by the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Bishop. The Mission Developer is matched to the mission field based upon their gifts and compatibility with the community and the vision for ministry. Whenever possible, the Mission Developer will reflect, demographically, the constituents of the new mission field.

Mission Developers may be identified through recommendations from the MCS candidacy committee, conference deans, other rostered leaders, or leaders from the community where the new mission is being developed. Rostered leaders, interim ministers, synodically authorized ministers, credentialed individuals from ELCA Full Communion partners, and/or lay people may be considered when recruiting Mission Developers.

In addition to a Mission Developer Pre-Screening conducted by the MCS Director for Evangelical Mission, the Mission Developer will be introduced to the synod's DREAM Team prior to starting the new mission. The Mission Developer will work in conjunction with a Launch Team or steering team or council for the strengthening and furthering of the ministry site.

The role of the Mission Developer is to provide effective, ongoing spiritual leadership in that ministry site, which includes:

1. Recruiting and resourcing the Launch Team
2. Defining the mission
3. Developing the strategy
4. Assigning tasks
5. Setting the timeline
6. Enlisting the support of others
7. Implementing the plan
8. Evaluating the progress
9. Sharing the results
10. Celebrating the accomplishments
11. Connecting with the community
12. Leadership Development
13. Ordering the spiritual life of the Launch Team/new mission
14. Providing worship planning/leadership
15. Providing periodic reports to the Synod office

The document from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America "Expectations of Mission Developers" can be downloaded at:
https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Expectations_Of_Mission_Developers.doc

TOOL #4 – LAUNCH TEAM WORKING GROUP RESOURCES

Launch Team members may form **additional working groups** as needed for the success of the new mission. Other volunteers may be invited to serve on the working groups, ideally led by a Launch Team member. These working groups may be temporary or permanent, depending upon the nature of their work and the needs of the new mission. Below are some suggested areas of possible work group need:

Christian Education – focused on developing, documenting, and delivering an intentional program for religious education that is complementary to the vision for the new mission.

Community Engagement – focused on connecting with the surrounding community and bridging the gap between it and the new mission. Such engagement could include schools, businesses, not-for-profits, other faith communities, etc.

Communication & Publicity – focused on making aware and inviting others to participate in the purpose, values, and activities of the new mission.

Fund Raising – focused on identifying and cultivating individuals, organizations, or strategies to financially support the new mission. (See Tool #12.)

Hospitality – focused on the radical welcoming of those gathering in the new mission.

Worship – focused on designing, implementing, and evaluating a contextually-relevant worship experience and its supportive ministries (e.g., music, liturgy, proclamation).

When forming Launch Team working groups, a personal invitation is best. However, you will also find two possible general promotion tools below.

a. Sample New Mission Announcement Flyer

Here We Grow Again!
New Mission Announcement

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 28:19 NLT

Living Jesus' call to *"make disciples"* takes many forms. It can be through joining an existing congregation, engaging someone in a face-to-face faith conversation, or forming new faith communities.

The Metropolitan Chicago Synod Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is thrilled to announce exploration of a new faith community in the ***CONFERENCE*** in the ***LOCATION.***

A critical step in cultivating a new faith community is gathering and mobilizing a core of gifted individuals who know the ministry context and community to launch this work.

Do you have a heart for people, an entrepreneurial spirit, and live or work in ***LOCATION***?

If you answered “yes,” the Metropolitan Chicago Synod DREAM Team invites you to an *interest meeting on* ***DAY, DATE*** at ***TIME*** at ***PLACE***

Contact the Metropolitan Chicago Synod Director for Evangelical Mission at ***EMAIL OR PHONE*** to learn more about this new faith community exploration.

b. New Mission Interest Card

An Interest Card like this is used to capture the information of individuals who are potential Launch Team or working group members, helping to determine their skills, gifts, and passions. A personal invitation to serve should follow the submission of an interest card. Mission developer or Launch Team members should maintain a contact list.

NAME ____

ADDRESS ____

EMAIL _____________________@___________________

PHONE (___) __________________ (____) _____________

Worship *Team Leader*	☐	**Community Engagement** *Team Leader*	☐
Event Planning *Team Leader*	☐	**Teaching** *Team Leader*	☐
Prayer *Team Leader*	☐	**Social Justice** *Team Leader*	☐
Event (Date/Time) *Team Leader*	☐	**Fund Raising** *Team Leader*	

SKILLS YOU HAVE_____________________________________

TOOL #5 – LAUNCH TEAM DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

a. Launch Team 5-Part Bible Study

This 5-part bible study is for use at the start of team meetings. The duration of each session is to be determined by the team or the assigned study leader. It's advisable to have one team member lead the sessions, or to trade off the leadership role from one session to the next. The session leader would have the full instructions and written questions to share aloud. The only written materials the whole group needs are the passage from Acts 16 and the interpretation paragraphs that follow it, found on the separate, two-page document after these session descriptions (pgs 15 & 16).

LEADER GUIDE

Session 1:

Start by having someone read the Bible passage from Acts 16:11-15.

After the reading, take a few minutes to hear general reactions from the group about this passage. Then explore for a bit why folks suppose this passage was selected for a Launch Team bible study.

Continue by taking turns reading the interpretation of the Acts passage – the sections entitled "Lydia & Company: An Early Church New Mission Launch Team" and "A New Way of Being and Doing Church." Pause between paragraphs to see if folks have questions or comments.

Have a different person read the Acts 16 passage aloud once more. Take a few minutes for folks to reflect further (publicly and/or silently) as to what this story might have to teach your Launch Team about the new mission you intend to pursue.

Have someone end the session with prayer.

Session 2:

Start by reviewing what Team members recall about the story of Lydia and her companions from Acts 16. Then have someone re-read the five-verse passage aloud. (Did you remember correctly?)

Hear any new insights folks might want to share that didn't come up during the last session. And/or, recall insights that were particularly helpful from that session.

Move into a time for discussion:

1. Why do you suppose Lydia and her prayer partners chose to gather on the banks of the river rather than in the local synagogue or with some other faith community of their day?
2. What might be some parallel situations to those the women experienced that would draw present-day community members with spiritual longings to non-traditional faith expressions?
3. Consider the various characters in this account from Acts 16. Can you identify parallel "characters" in your present-day call to pursue a new mission?

Ask someone to end the session with prayer.

Session 3:

Start by reviewing what Team members recall about the story of Lydia and her companions from Acts 16. If desired, have someone re-read the five-verse passage aloud.

Hear any new insights folks might want to share that didn't come up during the last session. And/or, recall insights that were particularly helpful from that session.

Move into a time for discussion:

1. What all did Paul and his companions have to offer that would be useful to Lydia and her friends?
2. What about Lydia indicated that she would be a suitable leader for a new mission opportunity?
3. What other sorts of leaders – with what skills and characteristics – would have been useful in deepening the nature of that newly-emerging ministry?
4. How are those leadership qualities the same, and how are they different, from what is needed in new mission work today?

Ask someone to end the session with prayer.

Session 4:

Start by reviewing what Team members recall about the story of Lydia and her companions from Acts 16. If desired, have someone re-read the five-verse passage aloud.

Hear any new insights folks might want to share that didn't come up during the last session. And/or, recall insights that were particularly helpful from that session.

Move into a time for discussion:

1. What do you suppose were some of the challenges that Lydia and her house church companions had to face as they established their new ministry?
2. What are some challenges that you and your Launch Team will likely face?
3. How might those challenges be the same as they were for Lydia and company, and how might they be different?
4. What assets and resources did Lydia and her companions have to meet those challenges?
5. What assets and resources does your Team have?

Ask someone to end the session with prayer.

Session 5:

Start by reviewing what Team members recall about the story of Lydia and her companions from Acts 16. If desired, have someone re-read the five-verse passage aloud.

Hear any new insights folks might want to share that didn't come up during the last session. And/or, recall insights that were particularly helpful from that session.

Move into a time for discussion:

1. What do you suppose it was about the house church model that worked well for new Christians of Paul and Lydia's day?

   For background, if folks don't name this:
   - *The newly emerging Christian church was coming more and more under scrutiny and suspicion by citizens and leaders in the Roman Empire of Paul's day. So residents' homes were safer places to gather than congregating in public spaces.*

2. What are some models (known or newly imagined!) that could work well for the community where your Launch Team intends to explore a new mission?

   For background, if folks don't name this:
   - *House churches still exist today, and the model is one that those starting new missions sometimes still choose. But today's Launch Teams aren't limited by the same obstacle as Paul and Lydia were, in terms of needing private and relatively "safe" places to gather.*

3. What else from this story about Lydia and her companions sheds light on your Launch Team's intentions to explore a new mission opportunity?

Since this is the final Bible study session, spend a few minutes reviewing some of the significant insights that came out of this shared 5-session reading and discussion of Lydia & friends' story.

What important lessons do you want to hang onto as a Team as you continue your new mission exploration? How might you be reminded of those lessons and of your companions from Acts 16?

Ask someone to end the session with prayer.

BIBLE STUDY PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

(Print a two-sided page for each member.)

Acts 16:11-15

11 We [Paul and his traveling companions] set sail from Troas and took a straight course to
Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of
the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the
sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer;
and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named
Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in
purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she
and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the
Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

LYDIA & COMPANY: AN EARLY CHURCH NEW MISSION LAUNCH TEAM*

In the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is this very brief account of a woman named Lydia. The Apostle Paul and his traveling companions have traveled to Philippi, where Lydia lives. (We also learn that she hails originally from Thyatira.) On the Sabbath day, Paul and the others go outside the city gates to the river, because they have heard that it is a place where people gather for prayer; a sort of open-air or "pop-up" worship space. There they encounter this group of women, whom they engage in conversation about Jesus.

Lydia is among them and, according to the writer, "The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul" (16:14b). Whatever it is that Paul tells Lydia, it has such an effect on her that she chooses to be baptized into this newly emerging Christian faith. And not only Lydia herself, but her entire household! We don't know about the other women, but perhaps them too?

Apparently eager to continue growing in her faith, Lydia invites Paul and his companions to be her house guests during their stay in Philippi, which they accept. Her powers of persuasion also extend to others in town, as she begins that day to provide a safe place for Christians to gather in her home. Paul and his companions return more than once to stay with Lydia and to "encourage the brothers and sisters [gathered] there" (16:40b).

Though the account about Lydia and her friends is brief, scholars find enough evidence that hers was one of the many homes throughout the region that Paul traveled where house churches sprang up in response to the telling of the Jesus story. The heads of such households were the de-facto pastors of these early churches. Lydia was the head of her rather substantial household, likely sustained by the living she made selling expensive purple fabrics from the region of Thyatira. So she had the space and means to serve as host and leader.

A NEW WAY OF BEING AND DOING CHURCH*

When the Apostle Paul and his companions were traveling throughout the Middle East, spreading the story of Jesus, there were not yet many of what could be defined as churches in existence. There were, of course, synagogues where the Jewish people gathered for worship and as a faith community. But more and more during this time, Jews who chose to follow the newly forming Christian religion were being cast out of synagogues and shunned by other Jews. By necessity, Jewish converts to Christianity were creating new models and new venues to practice their faith.

There also were non-Jews who were drawn to a faith expression different from the prevailing practice of the Greeks and Romans, of recognizing multiple gods. Such "worshipers of God," as they are sometimes described in the Bible, did not gather in formal places of worship, but some of them did form communities based on their faith. Lydia and the other women whom Paul met at the river in Philippi were among this sort of religious group, having met often enough there that the location was known as a place of prayer.

The story about Lydia and her conversion serves as a biblical illustration of how people already in place in their communities can play pivotal roles in the establishment of new ministries. After Lydia heard the story of Jesus, and chose to be baptized along with her entire household, she joined a growing movement of Christians who were shaping what it meant to congregate as a faith community—to be the local church in her day. She and her companions went from being a loosely connected prayer group meeting on the banks of the river to a recognized house church, attracting new Christians and providing hospitality and shelter to traveling evangelists.

**Excerpts adapted from "Women's Work: The Transformational Power of Faith-Based Community Organizing" by Susan Engh. (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, a Roman and Littlefield Publishing Group Imprint, 2019.) Used with permission.*

iii. Spiritual Gifts Assessment

The Apostle Paul, in several of the letters he wrote to the early church, spoke about the need for faith communities to possess a variety of gifts among their members, "for the work of ministry and the building up of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12b) Launch Teams also need a variety of gifts among their ranks, so that the process of developing a new mission can be effective. There are many formats of Spiritual Gifts assessments available. Below you will find a list of Spiritual Gifts as identified in the New Testament.

Team members may already have a sense of where their own gifts lie, though sometimes it's the people around them who can more readily identify the gifts they see in each other. If a team has several people who are good at administration, for example, but no one who is gifted in evangelism, they might easily get bogged down in procedural matters and be reluctant to move out into the mission field to share the gospel.

The Launch Team may not have members that embody all of the spiritual gifts Paul describes. But it's wise to fill out the team with folks who "cover" as wide a variety of these spiritual gifts as possible. Taking time early in the Launch Team's work to identify the spiritual gifts of team members will be helpful, both in understanding one's teammates and in knowing your team's strengths and possible weaknesses – as in, no one has a certain essential gift from Paul's lists.

Read through the various spiritual gifts and their definitions and have team members identify those they believe they possess and/or those they see in others on the team. If any gifts that are missing seem essential to the success of launching a new mission, consider inviting folks onto the team who have those particular gifts, to round out your team and add to its effectiveness.

Spiritual Gifts as identified in the New Testament

(See Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:9-10)

ADMINISTRATION: The ability to help steer the church, or a ministry, toward the successful completion of God-given goals, with skills in planning, organization, and supervision.

APOSTLESHIP: When a person is sent to new places or situations with the gospel, they are an apostle. (The word means "one who is sent.") An apostle can also provide leadership to other churches or ministries and offer advice on spiritual matters.

DISCERNMENT: The wisdom to recognize truth from untruth by correctly evaluating whether a behavior or teaching is from God or another, ungodly source.

EVANGELISM: The ability to successfully communicate the message of the gospel, especially to nonbelievers.

EXHORTATION: Competence in offering encouragement, comfort, and support to help someone be all that God wants them to be.

FAITH: People with this gift have such great confidence in the power and promises of God that they can stand strong in their belief, no matter what may try to shake them. They can also stand up for the church and for their faith in such a way as to defend and move it forward.

GIVING: Those who have this gift are particularly willing and able to share what resources they have with pleasure, and without the need to see them returned.

HEALING: A capability used by God to restore others, be that physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually.

HELPING: Someone with this gift is able to support or assist members of the body of Christ so that they may be free to minister to others.

HOSPITALITY: A natural ability to make people—even strangers—feel welcome in one's own home or church as a means to disciple or serve them.

KNOWLEDGE: This is the gift of someone who actively pursues knowledge of the Bible. This person may also enjoy analyzing biblical data.

LEADERSHIP: This aptitude marks a person who is able to stand before a church, to direct the body with care and attention, and to motivate them toward achieving the church's goals.

MERCY: This is the defining trait of a person with great sensitivity for those who are suffering. It manifests itself in offering compassion and encouragement, and in a love for giving practical help to someone in need.

PROPHECY: The ability to speak the message of God to others. This sometimes involves foresight or visions of what is to come. This skill should be used only to offer encouragement or warning.

SERVING: A talent for identifying tasks needed for the body of Christ and using available resources to get the job done.

TEACHING: The skill to teach from the Bible and communicate it effectively for the understanding and spiritual growth of others.

WISDOM: The gift of being able to sort through facts and data to discover what needs to be done for the church.

TOOL #5 – LAUNCH TEAM DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES (continued)

c. One-to-One Relational Meetings

The best tool for building or deepening our relationships on teams, within our organizations, as well as in the broader communities in which they function is the one-to-one relational meeting***. A One-to-one is a natural but uncommon conversation with someone you want to know better.*** It's *natural* because it flows from your curiosity and your conversation partner's responses, rather than using pre-determined questions or following a pre-set agenda. It's *uncommon* because it requires intense listening and courageous inquiry as you focus primarily on going deep into your conversation partner's story and resist turning it too much toward yourself. You'll find that you and the person with whom you're visiting have things in common, which you should acknowledge with brief accounts of your own experience, building trust and connection. But always return your focus to your partner with a question that can lead them deeper into their story.

Remember that your objectives for having this conversation are simple and transparent. These objectives are listed in descending order of importance. In other words, #1 matters above all:

1. You want to establish or deepen a relationship with this person.
2. You want to learn some significant things about them, what makes them "tick", what they value, who they really are, and what has brought them to this point in life.
3. You might find that you and your conversation partner have commonly held interests, goals or values that can lead you into new opportunities for collaboration.
4. Through your attentiveness and inquiry this person might learn some things about him or herself that they didn't realize were true, leading to new clarity and self-appreciation.

Your conversation should last 30 – 45 minutes. If your conversation partner is curious to learn more about you, they can ask to schedule another time when the main focus will be on you. Or, if you both decide in advance that you want to share equally, you can allow for an hour and a half, with one of you taking the lead for the first half and reversing the roles for the second half; this requires both of you to be disciplined about time and intent. This focus on one person at a time allows each to feel deeply heard and valued.

As noted earlier, you shouldn't go into the conversation with a bunch of pre-determined questions. However, it is wise to have one or two "ice-breakers" in mind to begin with. You might start with something like: "What drew you to the position you're in?" Or, "what constitutes 'family' for you these days?" From there you should follow your curiosity, as well as the other person's response and direction, to get you deeper into their story, their values, vision, life and motivations. Going deeper takes courage on your part**,** a willingness to really listen and to ask what will feel like some risky questions, as well as to reveal some things about yourself. If you don't take risks and go deeper early on, you'll get into a pattern of asking surface-type questions and your conversation partner will be reluctant to share on a deeper level.

One way to determine what follow up questions to ask is to listen for the "breadcrumbs" or "pearls" people naturally drop that can lead you to a real treasure about who they are. These clues often come in the form of what seem like throw-away comments dropped when answering a question; comments like, "let's see, it was shortly after my divorce," or "my mother had just died and I was living in Tucson…" Rather than gloss over the reference, dare to ask something about the thing they just mentioned in passing. It indicates to them that you're really listening, that you have courage, and that you truly care about the experiences, thoughts or feelings that mark significant moments in their life.

Also, be attentive to your gut-level resistance to probing deeper. Rather than hold back, take the risk of asking courageous questions. Instead of being an invasion of privacy, which is what you fear, courageous questioning actually builds trust and gives the person permission to share something deeply significant. To avoid turning this into therapy, offer no advice or analysis. Ask what they make of this aspect of their story, or share something about yourself that relates to their experience.

Sometimes, a ways into the one-to-one, you might need to introduce a new line of questioning, if the conversation gets dry or when you want to move in a different direction. Just don't get bogged down with the idea that you have to cover a lot of territory. Going deep into a few areas of their life, by following a natural course of conversation, is the real key. The following types of questions will encourage your conversation partner to go deeper into their story. (It also helps to insert follow-up questions like "why is that?” or, “can you give me an example?" or, "what was that like for you?")

Introduce one or two of these topics as needed. *Never* try to cover all this ground in one conversation!

- What brings you the most joy in your work?
- What are the greatest hurdles or challenges?
- What kind of impact do you want to have?
- How's it going — that work of making an impact?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your life?
- How did you handle that challenge?
- How is that challenge still affecting you?
- What role has faith [or community, family, friends, or mentors] played in your life and work?
- What accomplishment or project are you most proud of?
- What assets did you bring to that enterprise?
- What did you learn (especially about yourself) in the process?
- What has created real disappointment for you in terms of wanting to make something happen?
- What were your (especially internal) barriers to success?

Your intent is to get them talking about more than facts, figures, names and events; to explore:

- What their ambitions and dreams are;
- What makes them angry, sad, or joyful;
- Why they are attracted to certain people, organizations, or communities;
- What has grabbed them most along their familial, educational, professional or faith journey;
- Why they spend their professional and personal time the way they do;
- What values and relationships they are willing to take risks and make sacrifices around;

After the conversation, you should be able to determine some basic things about the person you visited. To help you remember, jot some notes to retain the essence of the conversation – but only afterwards. (Taking notes during alters the nature of the encounter.) You won't know the answers to all of these, but you’ll know some things in a deep way about a few of them:

- What does this person care most about and why?
- What motivates them?
- What do they get excited talking about?
- How do they spend their time and why?
- What assets does this person have and where do they get to exercise them?
- What relationships does this person have and value and why?
- What specific concerns or ideas does this person have?
- Why is this person a member of this organization or community?
- What would make this person feel very honored if they were invited into it?

Prepared by Rev. Susan Engh
ELCA Director: Congregation-based Organizing, 2007-2019

d. Ten Steps for Establishing Team Norms*

Early on, you'll want to get the Launch Team talking norms for their group. Follow these 10 steps to facilitate a productive discussion with your team and an agreed-upon set of best practices and team norms.

Step 1. Have each member think of the *worst* or least effective team they've served on. Any group counts, as long as the members were dependent on each other to produce results.

Step 2. Have each team member spend 2 minutes writing down what made that experience so bad. They should be as specific as possible about their reasons.

Step 3. Take notes on a flip chart as team members share their experiences with the whole group.

Step 4. Have each member think of their *best* or most effective team experience. Have them spend 2 minutes writing down what made the experience so good.

Step 5. As before, take notes as team members share their experiences with the whole team.

Step 6. With these comments noted, discuss what's been shared and add other components that make for a good team experience and what makes for a bad one.

Step 7. Have team members suggest behaviors and team norms that would contribute to this team's success. Be sure to keep track of suggestions on a screen or a flip chart that all can view.

Step 8. Discuss the suggestions; decide together which ones the team can support and adhere to.

As part of this step, flag any concerns or challenges that the team thinks they may struggle with. Even if you can't identify a solid solution, doing this keeps reality in the forefront.

Step 9. Discuss how to respond if a team member doesn't follow the norms. What is the mechanism for dealing with this situation? Ideally, team members will take ownership of team norms, calling out inconsistencies and violations rather than expecting the team leader to always police the process.

Step 10. Transfer the list of "must-do" behaviors into a document so all team members have access to it. Refer to it regularly, perhaps even having the norms listed at the top of agendas.

Finally, as new members join your team, bring them up to speed and get their input on team norms. Make it a point to discuss what is working and what isn't. Keep the team norms front-and-center, revisiting them as needed to update and add norms.

**Adapted from the Center for Creative Leadership: www.ccl.org*

e. Running Effective Meetings*

"Running effective meetings is like participating in a liturgical tradition, which is one of the things I cherish about my own Catholic faith. Those patterns can be transformational, instructing us as to how we should live out our faith in the world." —Maureen Geddes, community organizer, Catholic lay woman

One way that well organized teams functions differently than many typical groups is the commitment to running effective meetings. It's always fun to ask people to describe some of the meetings they go to in their congregations or other settings. It's apparently a very common experience to sit through boring, undirected, seemingly endless, purposeless meetings! By coming up with the list of things that happen at ineffective meetings, it's then easy to name the corollary opposite characteristics for an effective meeting. It's clear that people don't enjoy ineffective meetings, especially when they happen over and over again. But it's also clear that most people don't know what to do about this problem, especially when they are not the designated chair or convener of the meeting.

When setting up a new team, having a community organizer or other expert do a brief training on running effective meetings can be energizing and instructive. Besides drawing from people's past experiences of what it's like to participate in effective and ineffective meetings, it's a chance to challenge people about taking responsibility for what happens at meetings, regardless of the official role they might be assigned. By reminding people that they actually can change the dynamics by speaking up or acting differently, a new awareness of their role may dawn on them.

Running truly effective meetings requires a disciplined adherence to a set of mutually-agreed-upon commitments from participants. Those commitments can include:

1. that our meetings will be designed to take us into action;
2. that we will share responsibility for carrying out—*between* meetings—the decisions made & assignments made *at* our meetings;
3. that we will hold one another accountable for the commitments we make.

Effective meetings do not allow extended time for:

a. protracted debates on a large array of matters;
b. extended relational interactions;
c. lengthy verbal reports.

But effective meetings <u>should</u> include:

- *a limited* number of proposals or a set length of time for discussion.
- a *brief,* time-specific agenda item for deepening our relationships with God and each other, though most of the relational work must happen between meetings.
- reports provided ahead of time in *written form*, with time only taken for highlights, clarifications, or action items during the meeting time.

It's amazing how willing people are to come to meetings that are run following these principles! "Meeting" is no longer a dirty word, but an essential tool for getting important things done.

**Excerpts adapted from "Women's Work: The Transformational Power of Faith-Based Community Organizing" by Susan Engh. (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, a Roman and Littlefield Publishing Group Imprint, 2019.) Used with permission.*

<u>To satisfy the hopeful expectations you have for establishing meeting standards, you'll need:</u>

1. An ***agenda template*** adapted for each meeting, keeping certain "givens" in place every time. This helps to prioritize and to include each type of thing you want to deal with on a regular basis.
2. An ***assignment chart*** that you keep, showing who has served in what role, with the expectation – if you so choose – that you will rotate each role among all the participants over time.
3. If you want to emphasize ongoing ***relationship building***, you should ***build a repertoire*** of how to do that, both within and outside of meetings. The repertoire might include:
    a. short 1-1s during the meeting, with a guiding question or two;
    b. each member answering a provocative or fun question;
    c. regular commitment to the discipline of relationship-building outside of meetings.
4. Certain important but less collaborative or stimulating matters (like ***calendaring and reports***) can be ***done in writing*** and sent out ahead of time, therefore requiring less verbiage (mainly clarification) at the meeting. More time can be given to creative, action-oriented processes.
5. Assuring that all are heard and none dominate can be addressed in a number of ways.
    a. ***Set time limits*** regarding how long anyone can go on, discouraging long-windedness;
    b. Agree that the timekeeper will note when someone has gone over a ***certain agreed-upon time limit*** when they're speaking.
    c. Use ***mutual invitation*** on certain topics, without interruptions, unless "time" is called.
    d. Have people ***discuss briefly in dyads,*** then dyads agree what needs to be shared with all.
    e. Agree that the chair needs to ***impose order***, and so can others, if they see the need.
6. Flexibility to accommodate creativity or necessary off-agenda excursions requires***:***
    a. ***enough trust and authority vested in the chair*** to sense when something has come up that needs unanticipated attention, and when it can wait;
    b. ***willingness of any member*** to suggest this might be the case, and a culture to allow this;
    c. ***consensus-taking*** to decide whether or not to go there (to that non-agenda topic);
    d. quick proposals as to ***how to make up the time*** this will take from other agenda items.

TOOL #6 – 90-DAY PLANNING

Having a 90-day plan lets your team focus on a few things over a particular time period and stops you from getting overwhelmed with ALL. THE. THINGS. The point of a the 90-day plan is to allow you to take your long-term goals and break them down into 90-day, 60-day, and 30-day stretches; and then, 2-week sprints. Ongoing reevaluation of the 90-Day plan can assist in accountability and sustainability of the mission work.

Get Ready!

Discuss what your team's main goals are for the next year and then talk about how you're going to achieve them. Write down everything you'll need to do to reach your goals.

Get Set!

Once you've reviewed your goals, think about the next quarter (90 days) and what you want to focus on to achieve your 2-3 main overarching goals.

Pick 1-3 steps to focus on for the next 90 days. Remember, don't try to do it all! In fact, you shouldn't be doing any more than 3 main things over the next 90 days.

Break these down further into 30-day stretches. You should end up with 30 days', 60 days', and then 90 days' worth of goals.

You should include all the nitty-gritty details in your 90-day plan. Working backward, start with your overall goal(s) for the next 90 days and break this down into all the steps needed to achieve it, and by when. Include what steps each team member will be responsible for carrying out.

Go!

Your 90-Day Plan essentially functions as your team's "marching orders," and it will also help you plan your agendas for team meetings, and the work that should happen between meetings. Return to the plan each time you meet to see how it's going, what help people need in fulfilling their parts of the plan, and what needs adjusting based on the actions people are taking.

90-day planning isn't about rigid structure. It's about seeing what's ahead and planning accordingly. It allows you to pivot and be flexible and achieve the goals you set for your team, rather than getting to the middle of the year and wondering where the last six months went.

Below are a couple templates to adapt for your own 90-Day-Planning processes:

TOOL #6 – 90-DAY PLANNING (continued)

a. 90 Day Plan Form

(Thanks to Bianca Vazquez for her adaptation of this tool!)

Most of us are accustomed to making to-do lists by starting with urgent tasks, as opposed to beginning with our vision. 90-day planning has you start with your vision for where you, a program, a team, will be in 90 days.

You will name your vision – with specific, measurable results (think SMARTIE goals*). Goals should be written so that it will be very clear whether you were successful, once the 90 days have passed. Think, "In 90 days, I will have had 40 1-to-1 conversations, at least 50% of which are with BIPOC** community members, as opposed to, "I will have more 1-to-1s with BIPOC community members."

The specific, measurable results that will indicate our impact by _________ (90 days from now) are:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. ____

5. ____

Relational work is our bread and butter. No matter what specific program we are working on, cultivating and maintaining relationships is important work.

How many one-to-ones will I do during this 90 days? _____

- Per week? ________
- Per month? ________

What accountability do I need in order to achieve this?

____

____

____

What other resources do I need in order to achieve this?

____

____

____

** SMARTIE: Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable.*
*** BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color*

It’s easy for 90 days to get filled with urgent tasks, leaving other important matters to the wayside. So build benchmarks. Continuing with the example above, if you are going to do 40 1-to-1s in 90 days, by 60 days in you will have completed 25 1-to-1s, 50% with BIPOC, and 2 people identified for the Launch Team.

Milestones:
By 60 days (___/____/___), the specific measurable results we will produce are:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. ____

5. ____

Here we are continuing to build benchmarks. Where do you need to be in 30 days; what tasks do you need to have completed in order to be on the right track to achieve your 60-day goals?

By 30 days (___/____/___), the specific measurable results we will produce are:

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. ____

5. ____

Great! You’ve planned 90 days out and you have 30- and 60-day benchmarks. Now what? EVERY WEEK - as you plan to report to your team or accountability partner - you will go back to your benchmarks.

What specific actions do you need to take in order to move yourself towards your next one-month benchmark? And what time will you block out to achieve this? (This could be planning time, outreach time, research, etc.)

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

4. ____

5. ____

P.S. - It’s totally normal for you NOT TO HIT a specific benchmark! Your plan will evolve and shift, but this way you know you are taking specific actions towards your goals on a regular basis.

b. Worksheet to plan a project – P. 1

1. OUTCOMES: What do you hope to accomplish? Be specific.

2. WHEN WILL THE OVERALL PROJECT BE COMPLETED? ________________ (target date)

3. STRATEGY: How does this work relate to and/or further the organization's purpose, guiding principles and strategic directions?

4. ACTION STEPS: For each step needed to accomplish the work identify:
   i. What step needs to happen?
   ii. When will it need to be done by? ___________________________
   iii. Who is responsible for this part of the work? __________________________
   iv. Who will they communicate progress to?

   (Use the table on the next page to list each action step and related information)

5. MEASURING SUCCESS: What will "success" likely look like? How will you recognize it if it happens? This is about how you will measure results. List criteria and markers below:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.
   f.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY:
   A. Who is the lead person chairing/coordinating this project?

   ____________________________________ (Name)

   B. Who does the leader/group report to for oversight?

   _____________________________________ (Name)

Worksheet to plan a project – *P. 2*

ACTION STEP	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE NEEDED	REPORT OUTCOME TO WHOM, WHEN, HOW?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

TOOL #7 – COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Launch Team is accountable to various new mission stakeholders. Therefore, it's essential to stay in communication with those groups and individuals throughout the course of the project. As part of the team's 90-day planning process, develop and follow a communications strategy.

Below are some of the important aspects of such a strategy. Your team might choose to create a chart with these aspects included, to help keep track of the communications strategy, revisiting it at team meetings and making adjustments as needed.

1. <u>Create a list of all new mission stakeholders</u>, e.g.,
   - Synod Staff
   - Synod Council
   - Conference dean
   - Participating congregations
   - Community at large
   - Etc.

2. <u>Note what each stakeholder group or individual has at stake in the new mission</u>.
   Keeping this in mind as you prepare to communicate helps you appeal to stakeholders' ongoing interests in the project. You learn of each stakeholder's interest by listening to their vision, ideas, and concerns regarding the new mission, often shared in gatherings, but best done through one-to-ones.

3. <u>Determine the best vehicles for communicating with each group</u>, e.g.,
   - E-mail
   - Conventional mail
   - By phone
   - In person
   - Social Media (which platform is best for the format of your posts and intended audience)
   - Flyers
   - Invite cards
   - Blog
   - Website
   - Etc.

4. <u>Decide what the frequency of communications with each should be</u>, e.g.,
   - Monthly
   - Quarterly
   - Whenever there's an upcoming event
   - After a community event
   - Etc.

5. <u>Clarify who from the Launch Team will be responsible for each communication.</u>
   It might not always be the same person communicating with a particular stakeholder. Revisit the strategy whenever a new communication is planned; clarify who will do what.

TOOL #8 – COMMUNITY CAFÉ RESOURCES

(For a deeper dive into this process, check out www.theworldcafe.com.)

A Community Café is a relatively small gathering of people; a coming together of new mission stakeholders with neighbors and others in the community who may be impacted by or have an interest in the project. The Café is designed to build and deepen relationships and uncover the interests and concerns of participants regarding the new mission, the neighborhood, and the broader community. A thoughtfully facilitated Community Café gives people a chance to share their stories and visions, hear those of others, and imagine creative ways to address opportunity and issues of mutual concern collectively.

Community Cafés *are not* a substitute for doing one-to-ones. Cafés *can* supplement those conversations, or be a follow up to them. However, for people who are reluctant about the perceived intensity of a one-to-one, Cafés can be an attractive option that includes them in the new mission process.

Community Cafés can be conducted in a number of ways and cover a variety of topics. But they share the relational nature and the community-building priority of the one-to-one. And they give the opportunity for many to play a key part or for leaders to emerge in the process, since pulling off a community café requires good planning and opportunities to fill several specific roles.

When recruiting people we already know, at least somewhat, personal invitations work best – extended by the host and other Café planners – to a set of people with whom you already have some natural connection. Besides inviting, it's important to get actual commitments from people, in order to convey a sense of importance about the event, and to know how many to expect.

When inviting neighbors or other community-of-context members (like merchants or teachers or public servants), a mission developer or Launch Team chair might write a letter of invitation and intent to be hand-delivered with a verbal encouragement to attend (or a personal note if you end up leaving the letter when your neighbor is out.)

Community Cafés have similar purposes to one-to-ones, to build relationships and a sense of common purpose. Build in activities that create connections, providing opportunities for people to express their hopes and concerns, ideas and assets. It's even a good idea to build one or two one-to-one encounters into the Café agenda; guided one-to-ones* provide a few pre-planned relational questions to explore with a partner. In addition, small group conversations can uncover commonly held concerns. And large group discussions can surface ideas for action, foster courage, collaboration and hope, and set goals, next steps and commitments for moving forward.

Community Cafés can be hosted at a church or in other public settings. The point is to provide venues where as many people as possible will choose to participate. Regardless of where they are held, make hospitality a high priority. And consider serving refreshments!

Sample guided one-to-one questions (pick a few, then give pairs 15-20 minutes to share):

- *Where did you grow up and what was it like? [This is a good ice-breaker.]*
- *What got you into your current job or role? [This goes deeper, but is still introductory.]*
- *What's the most important thing that's going on in your life right now?*
- *Tell me about a really difficult time or situation in your life, and how you coped.*
- *Where are you in your faith journey; what brought you to this point; where are you headed?*
- *What impact do you want to have on your community, and how's that going?*

TOOL #8 – COMMUNITY CAFÉ RESOURCES (continued)

a. Community Café Checklist

- ☐ Choose a date and time
- ☐ Choose a location
- ☐ Create a title or theme
- ☐ Compose the purpose of the gathering
- ☐ Define a basic agenda for the Café (see below)
- ☐ Assign roles:
  - Host(s)
  - Main facilitator(s)
  - Small group facilitators
  - Timekeeper
  - Note-taker
  - Other, as needed
- ☐ Identify invitees, by type, title, and/or name
- ☐ Identify who will invite whom, by when, & by what method (personal invite, letter, flyer, etc.)
- ☐ Create a master turnout list and keep it current as invitations go out & commitments come in
- ☐ Extend invitations; get commitments; report back regularly to the team regarding turnout
- ☐ Have a meeting with the planning group to solidify the agenda, roles, and process
- ☐ Set up the venue to be hospitable and conducive for relationship-building
- ☐ Do final check-backs with prospective invitees who have not yet committed
- ☐ Extend friendly reminders to all who have committed to attend
- ☐ Host the Café (have a way of taking attendance, perhaps using a sign-in sheet)
- ☐ Meet again with the planning team to evaluate the event, glean learnings, etc.
- ☐ Communicate the key learnings and next steps to all participants and other stakeholders

b. ***Sample*** **90-min. Community Café Agenda** (to be adapted for each unique situation)

1. Welcome & brief introductions (6 min.)
2. Centering activity (5 min.)
3. Purpose of this gathering (2 min.)
4. Preview of agenda (2 min.)
5. Establishment of group norms (5 min.)
6. Talk piece – might be a story or a longer version of why we're here together (5 min.)
7. Guided one-to-ones (in dyads) – with a couple questions related to the talk piece (5 min.)
8. Return to large group; hear brief feedback about 1-1s from a few dyads (5 min.)
9. Talk piece – moving us to the next topic, activity, or opportunity (5 min.)
10. Quiet personal reflection on talk piece; perhaps invite folks to journal or doodle (5 min.)
11. In large group: invite comments from a few to share about their reflections (5 min.)
12. Talk piece – moving us to the next topic, activity, or opportunity (5 min.)
13. Small group discussion – with a few key questions related to the talk piece (10 min.)
14. In large group: hear reports from as many small groups as possible (10 min.)
15. Brief synthesis of what we've heard, by a skilled leader who can do this on the fly! (5 min.)
16. Commitment: a leader introduces the opportunities and explains the commitment form; participants take time to consider their options and fill out their forms. (5 min.)
17. Evaluation – with everyone contributing a feeling word about the Café experience. (5 min.)
18. Appreciation and Closing - be sure to collect the commitment forms! (5 min.)

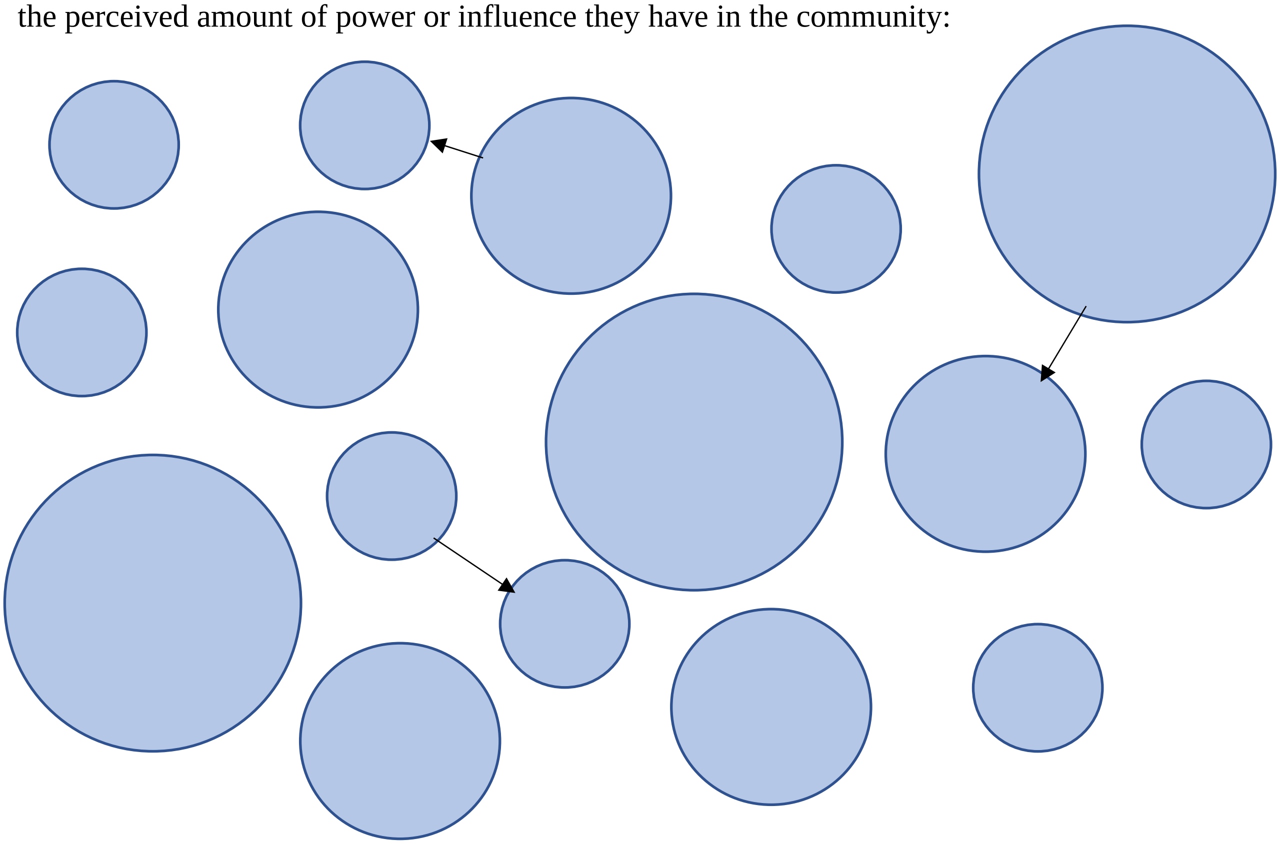
TOOL #9: COMMUNITY MAPPING & NEEDS/ASSETS RESOURCES

a. Community Mapping

As you explore the opportunities for launching a new mission, it's important to understand the power and relational dynamics that currently exist in the potential mission field. The Launch Team should spend some time analyzing these dynamics together, listing the various forces – both individual and collective – at work in the community. Using as many actual names of individuals as you can for each type of entity, make a visual map of these entities, including such "players" as:

- The mayor
- City council
- Other public officials
- School board
- Superintendent
- Police and fire departments
- Chamber of commerce
- Media outlets
- Banks
- Corporations
- Political parties
- Businesses
- Churches
- Educational institutions
- Unions
- Social services
- Foundations
- Others…

Your visual map *might* look something like this, in which you place the various individual and collective you listed into the bubbles, determining what size bubble to give each entity based on the perceived amount of power or influence they have in the community:



Next, draw connecting lines from bubble to bubble where you know of relationships that exist, or where one person or entity has influence with another. Having greater clarity about these dynamics and relationships will help your team determine **with whom to cultivate relationships and alliances** during your new mission exploration process.

TOOL #9: COMMUNITY MAPPING & NEEDS/ASSETS RESOURCES (continued)

b. Assessing Needs and Mapping Assets

NEEDS

Members of your team may already have some sense as to what the **unmet needs** are in the community where you intend to launch a new mission. It's also important to get a wider appraisal, by listening to others who live, work, or regularly spend time there. What do others think is missing? What do they think is needed to fill the gaps? What might be the role of a new ministry in addressing the needs? Asking these questions to different groups may give you different lists of community needs.

Using the insights of team members, along with what you learn from your relational interactions with others, create a picture, graph, or table noting gaps are in services or opportunities. As the vision for your new mission gets clearer, part of what that vision should include is how your new mission might meet some of the needs and opportunities not currently addressed, or how your new mission might support partners who are better equipped to meet those needs.

ASSETS

It's often the mistake of people of faith to behave as if that they are sent to be the saviors of those in need in the community. This attitude is dangerous because it assumes and perpetuates an unequal power dynamic between those who wish to do ministry and those inhabiting the area where they wish to do it. It also ignores the fact that the Spirit of God is already alive and active in every place and situation.

So besides analyzing what the needs might be in any given community, it's essential for the Launch Team to acknowledge its own human weaknesses and limitations, to consider **what assets already exist** in the mission field, and to build on their and the community's inherent potential for carrying out effective ministry collaboratively.

Additional resources for assessing needs and assets can be found in the book *The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts*, by Luther Snow (The Alban Institute, 2004) and by searching *Asset-Based Community Development* in your internet search engine.

TOOL #10: A SIGNATURE MINISTRY

Effective ministry considers the following three areas:

1. Giftedness: Assets or Resources of a community (including its narrative & relationships)
2. Needs or Gaps in services in a community (who or what need is not being served)
3. Passion or appetite (what people ache for in the community)

For effective ministry to happen, a balance of all three areas in needed. Gift without need, or need without gift to meet the need, will not be sustainable. Gift and need may be readily available, but without passion, effective ministry will not occur.

When there is a proper proportion or mix of gift, need, and passion, a *signature ministry* can blossom. A signature ministry is what the new mission will be known for within the community. This Signature Ministry can only develop and thrive after enough time has elapsed for significant involvement in and with the surrounding community. Signature ministries are not exclusive to new mission starts, but they can help to define a new mission start within its community.

In developing a signature ministry, the Launch Team should consider the following:

- What will this ministry be known for?
- How will this ministry identify with the community?
- What issues or needs are not being addressed?
- Who are those most affected by this issue and how?
- Are the voices of those most affected being heard?
- Who or what organization(s) can resolve this issue?
- Who are the decision-makers that can resolve this issue?
- What is the role of God's people/the Church on this issue?

TOOL #11: EFFECTIVE EVALUATIONS

Evaluating is a chance to take stock of what has happened and is happening as a result of the work that has been done. It is also a chance to consider course corrections for the work as it moves forward. It is also a great chance to articulate lessons learned so far.

It is important to remember that evaluation is not the same as criticism. Too many people have had bad experiences because evaluation has been synonymous with a negative experience. Healthy evaluation includes not only negative feedback about things that went wrong, but also positive feedback about things that went right!

SOME KEYS TO DOING A GOOD EVALUATION

1. ***Attitude matters!*** Because so many people have been beat up in an evaluation along the way, people tend to be fearful. Even the word can make some people's heart rate change. Stay positive and encouraging. This doesn't mean to not include negative critique in the process – be honest. But honesty is often more balanced than people's experiences.
2. ***Be clear what you are evaluating.*** It is often easy to get into a conversation about something being evaluated and then follow tangents along the way. These added sidetracks add time that is often not fruitful and leave everyone feeling tired and low at the end.
3. ***Use the plan to do the evaluation***. If a plan was made, then using it to do the evaluation is important. What barriers got in the way? What did we learn? How can we make a stronger plan in the future?
4. ***Involve the people most impacted or relied on.*** If a plan's outcomes are being evaluated and several people were involved in carrying it out, try not to just talk to the leader(s) in the evaluation phase. There is more at stake, more to be learned, and wider participation that will benefit everyone if this is done well.
5. ***Be sure to say "thanks.***" Gratitude is one of the most fruitful outcomes possible. Too often we beat up people for failing and overlook people who do follow through.

SPECIFIC EVALUATION STEPS

An evaluation can be shorter or longer depending on the scope of what is being evaluated and the people involved in making it happen. If the person(s) leading the evaluation are from outside the project, taking time for them to see it first-hand may be important. If the person(s) leading the evaluation are closer to the project, then this "show and tell" phase may be less needed. Consider these questions:

1. OUTCOMES:
   a. Did the outcomes you planned for in your initial plan happen?
   b. Using the measurements listed in your original plan, how did they measure up?
   c. What unexpected "collateral benefits" occurred as well? What benefit did they produce?
   d. How do the people working on this feel about their work?

2. MISSIONAL STRATEGY:
   a. How has God's work been advanced in this work – how have people been reached in new ways?

b. How do the things that happened relate to and advance the organization's purpose, guiding principles and strategic directions?
c. How is the organization in a better place as a result of this work?
d. What new ideas for joining God's work come to mind because of what has happened in this project? Who needs to hear these ideas?

3. PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY
   a. Did the original team stay intact and follow through to completion? If not, why not?
   b. Did new people get involved in this project? If so, who invited them or how did they get connected?
   c. What sense of accomplishment do people who worked on this feel?
   d. What new skills or ways of working did people develop and/or learn along the way?
   e. What lessons or advice would you articulate for someone starting a project like this?

4. TIMEFRAME:
   a. Did the plan unfold on schedule and get completed as expected?
   b. If so, what made it run smoothly? If not, what adjustments were made to develop a new timeline?

5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUPPORT:
   a. How were the planners accountable to one another?
   b. Did a coach or supervisor stay connected and provide ongoing support?
   c. What other supports would have been helpful?

6. GRATITUDE
   a. Who did helped make this happen?
   b. How will you thank them and who is responsible for seeing that they are thanked?
      i. Personal thanks (notes, letters, phone calls, gifts, etc.)
      ii. Corporate celebration (public acknowledgement, celebrations, etc.)
   c. As you close, offer prayers of thanksgiving in the evaluation closing.

7. OTHER: Other questions that may arise specific to the work being done.

Be sure to do the above work in an environment of trust and prayer. Being conscious of God and God's missional work is an essential part of assessing how something contributed to what God is up to. Being prayerful allows the evaluation to be conscious of God's thoughts on the matter and be more than just a human effort.

For each project being evaluated, taking time to ask and answer the above questions can be invaluable. This not only allows for the work to be assessed and the bar to be raised. It is also a capacity building exercise for the people involved. Plus, since evaluation provides a chance to learn and grown, doing this makes future work stronger – both in the area being evaluated and in other work done by the people or the organization in the future.

TOOL #12: FUNDING THE MISSION

New missions receive commitments from various sources, including the Metropolitan Chicago Synod New Missions Fund and the ELCA Christian Community and Leadership home area. Depending upon the new mission ministry context, funding from the ELCA's African Descent or LatinX or Asian Ministry Strategy Teams also may be available.

Stewardship Beyond the Pew
To ensure the long-term sustainability of the new mission, the Launch Team is encouraged to develop a stewardship and/or funding plan. This may include an annual stewardship campaign, but should also consider the use of funding sources beyond the pew, such as grants to support the ministry.

Conference Support or Support from Neighboring Congregations
Metro Chicago Synod conference congregations may provide funding for the development of a new mission. This may be effective when a parish or collaborative new mission is being considered. Neighboring congregations may even realize that the mission is able to reach a mission field that they themselves cannot currently reach.

Individual Donors
Individuals may designate gifts to be used for the development of a new missions.

Other Resources
The Launch Team should be intentional about cultivating relationships with like-minded and like-missioned ministry partners that can help fund the ministry. In "The Coming Revolution in Church Economics: Why Tithes and Offerings are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About It" (2019, Baker Books: Grand Rapids), author Mark Deymaz offers some alternative strategies for funding ministry.