

BEING INTENTIONAL ABOUT GOD'S CALL

Strategic Planning Steps Your Church Can Take Now

The Foundation Forum

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Want to make God laugh?

Make Plans.

Is this a good time for planning?

- How do our members describe who we are and why we are here?
- If the church disappeared tomorrow, what difference would it make?
... to whom? Who would miss it?
- How do we feel “alive in the spirit”?
- How would you describe your church’s energy for mission?
- Does each year seem to roll into the next year without getting things done?
- What’s holding us back?
... discipleship, confidence, facilities...?
“...if they would just send a us a good pastor...”?

... and yet, what are we giving God to work with?

- God will do what God will do.
- Our intentionality offers the opportunity to be a part of what God is doing.
- How will we be faithful in the world as the world is becoming?

Timing

- In this time of COVID-19, is there an openness to opportunity/risk?
- “A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.” (*Paul Romer, Stanford*)

A couple of notes about planning...

The Good Stuff:

- is a wonderful process of discovery.
- is a statement of intention.
- is a commitment to act.
- is an essential part of unlocking what holds us back and releasing your church into deeper relationship with God and the world.

The Challenging Stuff:

- can be unwieldy.
- can be unending.
- can be discouraging.

Holding this tension requires commitment.

Not all churches need the same planning process...

By and large, our context is different...

- Size is different (small, medium, large)
- Level of congregational energy is different
- Mission Context is different (rural, urban, suburban, sub-rural)
- History is different (old, new, merged)
- The unique gifts and graces of each congregation is different
- Access to resources is different

...yet, our call to mission is the same.

These ideas come from several sources

- Experiences
 - many years working with managers and organizations of different sizes and shapes
 - using the best resources I know
 - ***Holy Conversations*** (Gil Rendle, et.al)
 - Planning processes from ½ dozen boards
 - several different church settings
 - Including two medium-sized New England congregations

IMPORTANT: There are other approaches!

Some may be better for your church.

Some may be less effective for your church.

Today's purpose: to share a general strategic planning framework with you

A. *An understanding of KEY elements in the process.*

1. OUR CHURCH

Who are we as God's people?

- *gifts, talents*
- *resources*
- *Et.al.*

3. DISCERNMENT

What is our discernment of mission?

4. NEXT STEPS

2. NEIGHBORS

What is our context?

- *community*
- *needs*
- *opportunities*

B. *Share some resources.*

First Things First.



1. OUR CHURCH

- Prayer.
 - Do we feel called to be more intentional?
 - Do we have a sense that God is leading us?
 - Are we stepping out in faith?
- What do our hearts tell us about our church?
 - Warm loving people?
 - Feeling conflict, anxiety?
 - On a mission?
- What are the biblical stories that resonate with us as we begin?
 - Gifts? Courage? Holy Spirit? Service? Healing?

Are you ready?



1. OUR CHURCH

- Is the congregation able to move ahead?
- Forming a Team
 - Launch by council or main body
 - Representative team – including relatively new members
- Planning the process
- Congregational survey

Who are we as God's people?

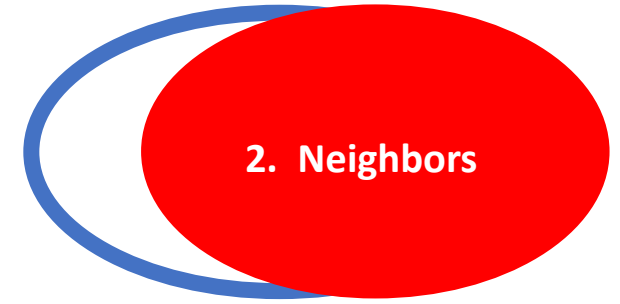


1. OUR CHURCH

- Demographics
- What are our dreams?
 - Nurturing? Missional?
- What is important to us? What do we value?
- Resources?
- What biblical stories resonate with us?
- Who are we called to be?

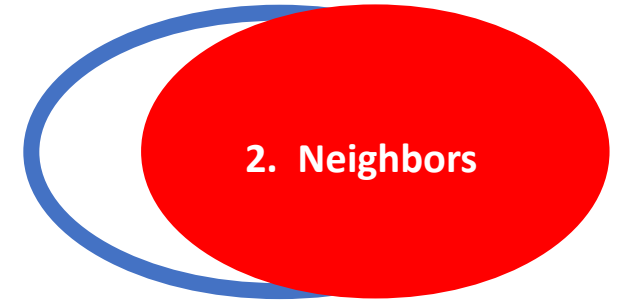
Listen to your prayers, questionnaires, listening sessions.

What is our ministry context?



- Who are our neighbors?
 - Ask neighbors
 - Use MissionInsite tool – who lives around the church? 1 mile? 3 miles? 5 miles?
 - Schools? Assisted living communities? Hospitals? Athletic fields/ gyms? etc
- What is happening in our community?
 - Meet with community leaders.
 - Police chief, fire chief, mayor, town council reps, council of aging, state reps, state senators, youth & family services

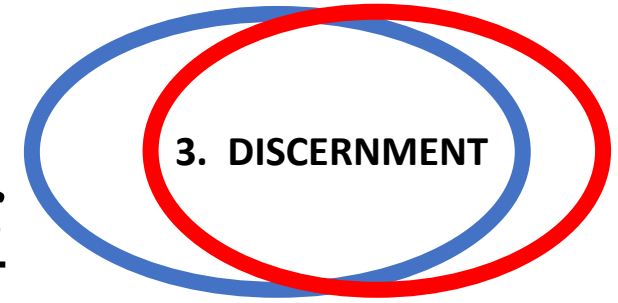
What are the needs of my community?



Examples:

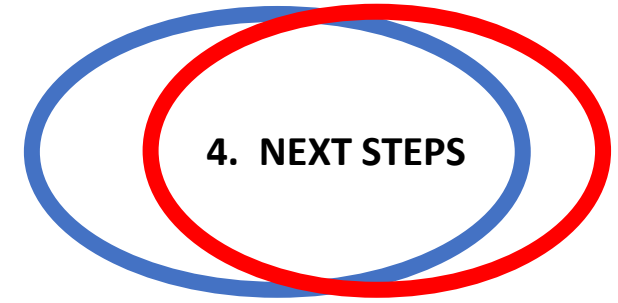
- Elderly issues and care
- Children issues and care
- Educational experience (early childhood, tutoring, et.al)
- Families
- Social Justice (racism, climate change)
- Opioid crisis
- Domestic violence

Discernment: Intersection of who we are and community needs



- Where do our passions lie with community needs?
- Where are our gifts/talents with community needs?
- What is our calling? How does this connect to our story?
- Plan for...”path forward”
 - Innovate forward
- Are our questions/dreaming focused on the future?
- What verb tense is used in conversation and questions?
 - Past or Present and Future?

Next steps



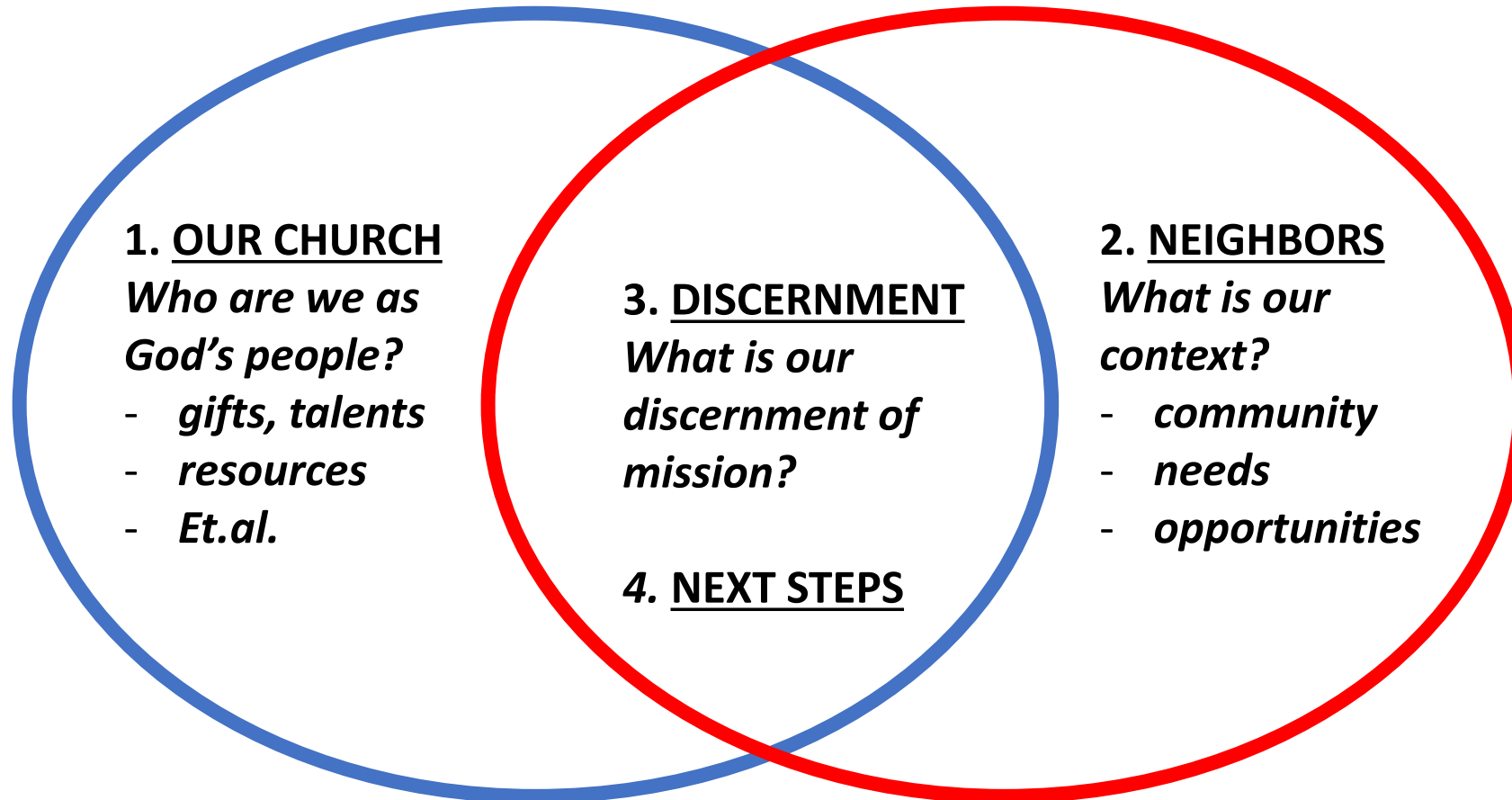
Moving to action.

1. Following the lead of the Spirit
2. Identifying our people and financial resources.
3. Setting priorities, working through conflict.
 - E.g. **YES** to young families!
 - But **NO** to changing hymns, who reads scripture, giving up my storage space...
4. Sequencing.
 - What comes first?
 - Are our people ready? Is our building ready?
5. What does commitment look like?
 - Meetings to explore? Pilot project? Commit funds?

How long? A sample timeline for planning:

- May 12: Administrative Board launches visioning process and selects Coordinating Team
- *May 28: Coordinating Team Meeting*
- May – August: **Congregational surveys**
- *August 19: Coordinating Team Meeting*
- *September 9: Coordinating Team Meeting*
- September 27: **Congregational briefing and discussion**
- September 30: **Congregational gathering** in homes for work session and discussion
- October 7: **Congregational gathering** in homes for work session and discussion
- October 11: **Congregational gathering** in homes for work session and discussion
- October 28: **Congregational meeting** with community leaders to understand major issues in _____
- *November 15: Coordinating Team extended work session/discernment*
- December 1: **Congregational briefing** at Annual Church Conference
- December 8: **Congregational discernment** and work session at Administrative Board
- *January 6: Coordinating Team Meeting*
- January 12 (*from December*): Adoption of vision, mission

If you remember nothing else from today...



4. Our planning process will have an end date!

An opportunity for next steps...

- After this session, you will be sent two items:

1. a short evaluation of session, so we can learn how to improve

- For a copy of the presentation, model questionnaire, please put your email address on survey.

2. a one-page application form for an opportunity to develop your church's plan with the assistance of the consultants

A planning opportunity!

- Re: Application, conference consultants will select 4 – 8 churches who are serious about planning to work separately and share learning with each other. They will act as facilitator for your process.
 - Consultant work will be sponsored and paid for by the Foundation.
 - Upon selection each church will pay \$100.- for the program, and the Foundation will cover all consultant costs and refund the \$100.- to the church upon completion of the church's plan.

Questions?

Thank you!