

OPEN DOORS NEW FUTURES MISSION SEARCH

CONSULTANT HANDBOOK



What does God want to do here?

SIGNS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spiritual discernment is a prayerful, informed, and intentional effort to distinguish God's voice from others that influence us, that the Kingdom might come and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The goal of spiritual discernment is to receive God's guidance.

PEACE	The pre-eminent sign: a sense of confidence at a very deep level indicates we are moving in the right direction. As a group considers an issue, the members will feel permeated with this peace as they approach God's perspective on the matter before them. God's peace does not preclude struggle. Pretending to agree can create an illusion of harmony and peace. Such apparent consonance is weak, superficial and will not last. Turbulence and turmoil are likely in early stages of discernment. The peace of God is born of bold searching, honest expression, mutual respect and genuine compassion. Ultimately the power of God's truth and love brings serenity and a sense of well-being.
CONVERGENCE	Various things that occurred independently and at different times, that heretofore had not seemed inter-related, all of a sudden converge and fit together, informing one another. A pattern emerges like pieces of a mosaic coming together.
PERSISTENCE	The same message keeps coming through unrelated channels and in different ways.
FRUITFULNESS	When certain endeavors produce abundant fruit, God may be calling us to cultivate those areas further.
DISORIENTATION <i>(followed by a sense of clarity)</i>	This occurs when a previous comprehension of truth gets shaken up and a higher truth falls into place with a sudden sense of unanticipated clarity. Suddenly, something significant becomes clear in a vivid way.
JOY	Radiance swells up from within those who are engaged and the Holy Spirit extends a sense of elation.
ENERGY	If we are getting the message right, we are infused with the energy to act on it.

The Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you everything.
John 14:26

Farnham, Suzanne G., Stephen A. Hull, R. Taylor McLean. *Grounded in God: Listening Hearts Discernment for Group Deliberations*, Revised Edition. Morehouse Publishing. 1996.

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook contains details for the Consultant's role as facilitator for the events of the Open Doors New Futures process for the Mission Search. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the Clergy Handbook and the Mission Search Team Handbook. Those are resources for the roles and responsibilities that the Clergy and Mission Search Team members have for each event. The Congregation Handbook contains details of the Open Doors New Futures Mission Search events and is intended to be a workbook for participants from the congregation. Please familiarize yourself with all of the handbooks.

ONBOARDING

INITIAL MEETING WITH CLERGY

Shortly after the arrival of the new Cleric, the Consultant arranges a meeting together to talk about first impressions and to discover their hope for this ministry. This conversation will facilitate the clergy's sense of presence and investment in the process. With permission and where appropriate, weave these hopes into the overall process and look for and recognize God's leading during the Open Doors New Futures Mission Search in connection to these hopes. This is a way that the Consultant can support the Cleric and build a strong partnership.

The Consultant should also talk with the Cleric about choosing the Mission Search team and offer a Mission Search Team training (Zoom meeting) before or after the Leadership in Transition retreat to clarify the roles and expectations of the Team, answer questions, and identify additional support personnel.

LEADERSHIP IN TRANSITION RETREAT

Pre-work:

- Contact clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of the event to check in.
- Send clergy and vestry members the Clergy/Vestry Reflection Worksheets 3-4 weeks ahead and collate the responses to present.

Event Agenda:

Facilitated by the Consultant (See Appendix A for detailed resources)

- Morning Prayer
- Dwelling in the Word Bible study (Ephesians is always a good source.)
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Vestry 101: (Roles & Responsibilities, Accountabilities)
- Conflict Cycle
- Holy Currencies Inventory: What do we have, what have we done, who do we know? How might God resource our call?
- Webinar on Faithful Innovation: Discusses how other churches have reimagined their ministry with neighborhood exploration and the grace and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (see QR code below)
- Overview of the Open Doors New Futures process, with dates if possible

Scan the QR code
or [click here](#) to
watch webinar on
Faithful Innovation
(Start at 3:45 and
end at 51:35).



FOUNDATION EXPERIENCES

You may find that the cleric does not feel connected or certain enough of the spiritual capacity of the congregation to benefit from the Open Doors New Futures Mission Search experience.

Many congregations, especially if they have felt it necessitated by circumstances to focus more on fundraising and less on discipleship, may need a refresher experience. Foundation Experiences are meant to create a new moment, a new sense of community, that builds greater sensitivity to God and one another. People date their experience of God and the church community when this happens. Below is a list of Foundation Experience resources that may be used to jump-start a community's experience of discipleship and following God together. Foundation Experiences are meant to awaken a new experience of God in the community and can happen before or after the Open Doors New Futures discernment process to build life, joy, and energy for ministry, mission, and life together. For a successful Foundation Experience, the clergy must cast a vision that answers: what do you want the parish to experience, what do you anticipate will be the outcome, and how will it prepare you to discern God's leading and cast the vision for the parish life for the next five years? If the Foundation Experience is to be done after the Open Doors New Futures process, how will it fulfill the plan the congregation has discerned?

The Path: Divided into three 8-week sections, this is a community wide experience for adults, youth, and families, that follows the arc of God's presence with humans, exploring how God has reached out to us, how we have responded, and what has grown out of these experiences. Sometimes called Salvation History, this Bible study brings all the connecting stories forward from Genesis to Revelation. There are links to free curriculums and abundant resources on the Diocese of Long Island Congregational Support webpage. <https://www.dioceseli.org/programs-and-ministries/congregational-support>

Revive: A ten-month long digital download curriculum using retreats, video studies, and personal study to help lay leaders grow in confidence as spiritual leaders in 3 sections. The first section helps participants to learn their preferred prayer style and how to lead communal prayer. In the second section the study of Scripture deepens one's personal capacity and growth in working with the Bible and leading others in scripture study. The third section explores personal call, ministry, gifts, and practice. <https://revive.forwardmovement.org/>

The Way of Love: Introduces and encourages experience in the six spiritual expressions of love and prayer in the Episcopal Church tradition: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest. Through study, practice, and preaching the community gathers together to re-experience the fullness of God's love in Episcopal spiritual practice together. Curriculum and resources available for adults, teens and children. <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/>

Being With: A small group experience spread over 10 weeks that helps people consider Christian faith in new and refreshing ways, without needing prior knowledge, but rather a simple willingness to share what you do know or feel. There are no experts in the room. What you may be feeling is as important as what you may be thinking. With a mix of short presentations and small groups discussions that offer lots of freedom of expression and less cross talk, Being With helps people hear one another into transformation. <https://being-with.org/>

Transforming Questions: An adult formation course designed to help both new Christians and longtime churchgoers move into deeper life in Christ. Over the course of ten sessions, participants engage the basic questions of the Christian faith through a combination of teaching and conversation. Participants gather to share a meal, then a leader gives a presentation about a central question of faith. In small groups, participants are invited into deeper reflection on and engagement with the topic through discussion questions. Participants will wrestle with some of the most basic questions of our faith: Who is Jesus? Does God answer prayer? Why do bad things happen? <https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/2394/transforming-questions-brdownloadable-course.aspx?bCategory=FMFREE>

THE EVENTS

EVENT ONE: The Living History

Pre-work:

- Contact clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of event to check in.
- Share the Focused Conversation method using ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretation, and Decision) and its usefulness with clergy.
- Obtain a list of past clergy leaders and dates for the parish timeline.

Event Agenda:

Consultant facilitates the event. As people assemble, ask them to review the Signs of the Holy Spirit on the inside cover of their Congregation Handbooks. As the group works together on their history, take time to listen and discern. If they come to history that is difficult to talk about, slow down and use the Discernment Listening Guidelines. (Appendix D)

- Clergy provides the Welcome, Opening Prayer (Prayer Choir), Scripture reading, and short homily.
- Give a quick review of the process events and why we start with the Living History.
 - Telling your story together, members will explore the soul of their church through their experience of world history, members' personal stories, and the parish engagement of the changes and events of the 20/21st century. Your new clergy partner will learn in-depth history from members and will be better prepared to lead with understanding going forward.
 - In the debrief you will explore the places of power where the Holy Spirit has led you before for inspiration for future ministry; and revisit places of difficulty that might entangle God's vision as it emerges. The session will end with the important things you have learned that need to be carried forward in your discernment.
- Post and read the purpose:
 - The purpose of the Living History is to build a comprehensive group understanding of our collective story at {Parish Name} connecting our world, church, and individual stories. Every church has a personality, a way of being together, a call that we might call it's soul. We will be exploring the story of {Parish Name} in order to gain insight into its soul.
- **World History:** (10 minutes)
 - Ask the group to fill in the World History sections, using the prompts below. At 8 minutes, ask group to look over the paper and see if there is anything important missing.
 - **Prompts:** Big/sensational events, rocket launches, elections, political issues, wars, laws passed, important musical styles/artists, social movements, new gadgets/tech, environmental issues/events, discoveries, catastrophes, world influenced by church
- **Personal History:** (15 Minutes)
 - Ask the group to fill in their personal information.
 - **Prompts:** Birthdates/self/children, moves, graduations/degrees/certificates/schools, achievements, big jobs or volunteer experiences, moves, military service, when did they adopt tech, life cycle events: birth/adoption/weddings/divorce/deaths. Baptism/confirmation. Big life events: building house, publishing book, elected to office, started new hobby or area of study, left church/came back to church/found church as adult, important organizations/associations, church roles, spiritual events/awakenings, personal responses to world events. Did you explore any other religions? When?
 - At 12 minutes, ask group to look at personal history in light of world history. How have the events of the world intersected with their life? Allow the group to think and add things: did they work for an election or hold elected office, march in a protest, serve in the military, attend a big music/cultural event, do post 911 clean-up, do environmental volunteering, interfaith or ecumenical work?

Bio break (10 minutes)

The Living History (continued)

Event Agenda: (continued)

- **Church History:** (10 minutes)
 - Ask the group to fill in major events in the larger church ie: war responses, 1979 prayer book revision, women's ordination, Decade of Evangelism, gun violence response, gay marriage, creation care emergence, labor support, civil right/racial justice/reparation response.
- **Parish History:** (20 minutes)
 - Ask the group to put their name on the bottom line of the church/parish section in the year they joined the church. Write in major parish events, clergy tenures, buildings built, church leaders/pillars, mergers or planting, big growth spurts, fallow periods, big fights/departures, Bishop tenures, important programs or mission efforts: Jubilee Ministry, One Diocese/One Mission, Alpha/EFM/DCDI, All About Love, etc.
 - At 12 minutes ask the group to look and see if they missed anything. Allow group to fill in any remaining pieces.
- Ask the group to read through what has been written. With everyone using red markers, ask them to draw a line from personal life section to the appropriate year in the parish section and add in any baptisms, weddings, confirmations, burials, personal events where the church played a role.
- Ask members to circle a world event and draw a line to the church section and name how the church responded for example: Hurricane Sandy: Opened parish hall to Sandy volunteers provided lunches or; Gay Marriage: Members marched in a Gay Pride parade, Black Lives Matter; members marched in protest/joined citizen safety groups.
- Post timeline on the wall. Arrange chairs so that everyone can see. Let people read and review the group effort.

Debrief: (45 minutes)

- **Family Systems:**
 - Prouds: When have you experienced strong love, connection to God and peace in the community? What is the group proud of what they see? Where is strength in their story that can be built on for the next chapters? How has the church responded to the world? Personal life of members? Is there anything that points to the soul of our church?
 - Sorries: When and where have you experienced high anxiety and conflict? Are they connected in any way? Is there unfinished business? Where might some unfinished business lie, where might the past entangle what's emerging? Are there any wounds to the soul of the church or the body of Christ that need attention?
- **Focused conversation (ORID):**
 - What do you see, hear, sense in the room as we explore our history?
 - What do you associate this experience with, does it raise any emotions or memories?
 - What might this reflection mean for our life together moving forward?
 - What actions might we want to take as a result of this experience?

End the event with prompting the Scribe to ask the following questions and write the responses:

- What are important learnings from today? Important information, moments of inspiration?
- What Signs of the Holy Spirit are we noticing?
- What do we need to carry forward with us as we discern God's leading?

Remind the Scribe to consolidate the learnings section and make them available online and/or in the bulletin/newsletter, and to be prepared to remind the group at the beginning of next meeting of what the group learned today.

Take pictures of all newsprint and butcher paper.

The Living History (continued)

Event Agenda: (continued)

Consultant and Clergy Debrief: Set a date soon after the Living History to debrief the experience and share insights. This debrief is best done in person, if possible, with the Living History posted so that you can both refer to and learn from the Living History. Identify outstanding patterns, especially when the Holy Spirit was powerful and present and when conflict erupted and how/if it was resolved. Is there anything that needs time, attention and love right now? What are ways to address this?

EVENT TWO: Neighborhood Exploration & Debrief

Part One: Neighborhood Demographics Discussion

Pre-work:

- Contact clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of the event to check in.
- Check with the clergy a week prior to the Neighborhood Demographics discussion to make sure they have the data link, that it has been distributed, and that they are ready for the Sunday discussion.

Event Agenda:

The clergy leads this discussion.

End the event with prompting the Scribe to ask the following questions and write the responses:

- What are important learnings from today? Important information, moments of inspiration?
- What Signs of the Holy Spirit are we noticing?
- What do we need to carry forward with us as we discern God's leading?

Review details of upcoming Neighborhood Prayer Walks and Conversations. (Appendix B & C)

Remind the Scribe to consolidate the learnings section and make them available online and/or in the bulletin/newsletter, and to be prepared to remind the group at the beginning of next meeting of what the group learned today.

Part Two: Neighborhood Prayer Walks & Conversations

Pre-work:

- Contact clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of the event to check in.
- Check with clergy a week prior to the start of Neighborhood Exploration to make sure they are ready with a map and teams for the walks and participants for the conversation.

Event Agenda:

The Congregation participates in this event during the week between the Neighborhood Demographics discussion and the Neighborhood Exploration Debrief.

Part Three: Neighborhood Exploration Debrief Meeting

Event Agenda:

Consultant facilitates the debrief. As people assemble, ask them to review the Signs of the Holy Spirit on the inside cover of their Handbooks.

The clergy provides the Welcome, Opening Prayer (Prayer Choir), Scripture reading, and short homily.

Invite the Scribe to remind the group of the important learnings, insights, and information from the last session.

Photo Display: Community Observation Guide

Have the person who took the photo tell the group in just a few words what struck them about the photo.

You will be gathering impressions and noticing in an appreciative way, any evidence of the following:

- **People groups:** Who's around and where are they? Who's is standing at bus stops, hanging on street corners, going into stores and businesses, playing in parks? What are seniors doing? What are the age, gender, ethnicity of the people you see? How are they dressed?
- **Places of activity:** What are the places of activity?
- **Structures:** What are the types and conditions of homes, roads, parks, businesses? How much "free space" is there in the community? What is the mix of private and public space? Are there vacant lots that are idle?
- **Services:** Where do people go to shop, eat, study, worship, and receive assistance? Who provides the services and who is receiving?
- **Signs of change:** Note housing under construction, for sale, demolition, and stores/businesses opening or closing. Have closed-up shops been replaced or vacant for a while? Notice languages on shop signs and buildings being used differently from their original purpose.
- **Signs of hope:** Where do you see evidence of God's grace and God's people at work? Examples could be houses of worship, nonprofit organizations, uplifting artwork, playing children, faith symbols, social gatherings, gardens. Look for local assets that could be connected with neighborhood needs.
- **Signs of need:** Where was there evidence of hardship, hurt or injustice. Are there people who appear homeless? Are there day laborers waiting for work? Is what you see specific to particular areas or affecting the neighborhood as a whole? Be aware that marginalized people and social problems are often hidden, especially in communities that appear well-off.

Handout or Slide of Summary of Neighborhood Conversations Data

Identify the most common answers for assets and difficulties. Read/discuss the spiritual places noted.

Have the group contribute their thoughts and record two lists on newsprint:

- Signs of hope and/or blessings
- Signs of need and/or pain

Some questions you can ask the group afterward depending upon what surfaced for you:

- What did you learn about the neighborhood?
- Where was God's presence and/or calling to you especially apparent?
- What surprised you?
- What was disturbing?
- What was hard? What was engaging?
- What ministries would truly speak here? With whom could you partner and learn?

During the debrief, take time to listen and discern. If there is difficulty in listening to a new inspiration or direction, slow down and use the Discernment Listening Guidelines. (Appendix D)

Neighborhood Exploration Debrief (continued)

End the event with prompting the Scribe to ask the following questions and write the responses:

- What are important learnings from today? Important information, moments of inspiration?
- What Signs of the Holy Spirit are we noticing?
- What do we need to carry forward with us as we discern God's leading?

Remind the Scribe to consolidate the learnings section and make them available online and/or in the bulletin/newsletter, and to be prepared to remind the group at the beginning of next meeting of what the group learned today.

Remind the group of the date of the Community panel and invitations. Make the decision on whether this will be an in-person or a Zoom event.

EVENT THREE: Community Panel

Pre-Work:

- Contact clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of event to check in.

Event Agenda:

The clergy serves as the moderator/timekeeper and outlines the agenda. The clergy provides the Welcome, Opening Prayer (Prayer Choir), Scripture reading, and short homily.

Debrief:

The Consultant facilitates the Community Panel Debrief.

- Invite the Scribe to read the learnings from the previous events.
- Remind everyone to let every idea live when voiced. There is no need to vet ideas tonight for money, time, or other practical measures. Ongoing discernment will do the focusing.
- After the panel, or the following Sunday, or other identified time, have the group come together to debrief:
 - What struck you about the experience? What inspired you?
 - Were there any recurring themes? (between the Living History, Neighborhood Exploration and Community Panel)
 - Are there topics you want to know more about? (Is some topic asking for time, attention and/or love?)
 - Are there places/people we heard about that you feel especially drawn towards?
 - Where are our community leaders seeing life and hope?
 - Are their places of mission alignment and opportunities to work together with the panelists?
 - What areas of need did community leaders identify?
 - Are there needs that we are especially equipped to help with?
- Ask the Scribe to ask the following questions and write the responses:
 - What are the important learnings, information, insights and moments of inspiration from today?
 - Are there connections, patterns, alignment with previous discernment and events.
 - What needs to be carried forward?
 - What Signs of the Holy Spirit are you noticing?
- Remind Scribe to consolidate the learnings section and make them available online, in the bulletin/newsletter, and to be prepared to remind the group at the beginning of next meeting of what the group learned today.

EVENT FOUR: Discovery Café

Part One: Question Development & Planning

Pre-Work:

- Contact Clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of event to check in.

Event Agenda:

The Consultant facilitates this meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, ask the scribe to remind the group of the important learnings, insights, and information from the last session.

Question Development:

Review how to create powerful questions, using the Art of Powerful Questions, pages 3-7. Discuss question construction, scope, and assumptions. Give examples.

As the group brainstorms possible questions, ask them to check if the question is outward-facing and one that can be answered by community members and stakeholders. The question should be formulated to be answered by people that do not attend the church and when answered, should build understanding, vision, and clarity. As the group works on the question, encourage taking time to listen and discern. If an impasse or difficulty is reached, slow down and use the Discernment Listening Guidelines. (Appendix D)

Once the question(s) is created, the group brainstorms for a list of people to invite to the Discovery Café. Drawing on established relationships noted in the Holy Currency Assessment, the group is encouraged to consider community leaders, church ministry volunteers, neighbors impacted by this topic, clients, people present in the community but not present at church, local people with an invested perspective on this topic, and people from varying age/gender/ethnic demographics to invite to have a deeper conversation. The broader and more diverse the perspectives, the greater the potential for surprising new insights. An Sample Invitation Template is provide in the MAP Clergy Handbook. Have the group create an action plan for who will be responsible for the invitations and a timeline for extending them.

Part Two: The Discovery Café Event

Pre-Work:

- Contact Clergy 2 – 3 weeks ahead of event to check in.

Event Agenda:

The Consultant facilitates this event and the debrief. The clergy provides the Welcome, Opening Prayer (Prayer Choir), Scripture reading, and short homily. Post The Question(s) and Etiquette on newsprint. Provide the following introduction to and instructions for the Discovery Cafe (15 minutes)

Introduction to Discovery Cafe Principles: (8 minutes)

1. Set the context

The congregation at {Parish Name} wants to explore a question that is relevant to the real-life concerns of the community. So they have invited you all here to share and consider different perspectives. And to discover something new in the process. We will be doing this through a method called Discovery Café.

2. Create hospitable space

We have worked at creating a hospitable space, hopefully where you all feel safe and comfortable. When people are comfortable, they can do their most creative thinking, speaking, and listening.

3. Explore questions that matter

Knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions. {Parish name} would like to explore a question that is relevant to the real-life concerns of the group. The question you will be discussing is {Parish question.}

4. Encourage everyone's participation

Share the space and time. It is important to encourage everyone in your meeting to contribute their ideas and perspectives, while also allowing anyone who wants to participate by simply listening to do so.

5. Connect diverse perspectives

It is the opportunity to move between tables, meet new people, contribute your thinking, and link your ideas to ever-widening circles of thought that is the benefit of the Discovery Café. As you carry key ideas or themes to new tables and exchange perspectives, you increase the possibility for surprising new insights.

6. Listen together for patterns and insight

Through practicing shared listening and paying attention to themes, patterns and insights, we begin to sense a connection to the larger whole. Encourage people to listen for what is not being spoken along with what is being shared.

7. Share collective discoveries

The last phase of the Café, often called the “harvest”, involves making this pattern of wholeness visible to everyone in a large group conversation. Invite a few minutes of silent reflection on the patterns, themes and deeper questions experienced in the small group conversations and call them out to share with the larger group.

The Discovery Café Event Agenda (continued)

Here's how it will work : (8 minutes)

There will be three 15-minute “rounds” of conversations. There will be 4 people at a table, one of which is a table host who will take notes and record key themes, insights and ideas being discussed. At the end of each round, everyone, except the table hosts, move to different tables, trying to sit with people you haven't been with before.

The table host stays at the table, introduces the participants, and outlines some of the key themes, ideas or questions that have just been discussed. This helps each group to connect to and build on the conversation. Everyone is free to make notes, drawings or even doodles during the discussion. You should leave these at the table when it's time to move on. New arrivals will see the ideas or talking points that have been discussed, and can take them further. At the end, we will bring the whole group back together to discuss the shared insights and ideas.

Review Discovery Café etiquette:

- Contribute your thinking,
- speak your mind and heart,
- listen to understand,
- focus on what matters,
- link and connect ideas,
- listen together for insights and deeper questions,
- and have fun!

Ask if there are any concerns, worries, or issues before the first round.

Debrief: Harvest and Sharing of Collective Discoveries (45-60 minutes)

- Invite a few minutes of silent reflection on the patterns, themes and deeper questions experienced in the small group conversations and call them out to share with the larger group.
- Invite people to share insights from their conversations.
- Through practicing shared listening and paying attention to themes, patterns and insights, we begin to sense a connection to the larger whole. Conversations held at one table reflect a pattern of wholeness that connects with the conversations at the other tables. The last phase of the Café, called the “harvest”, involves making this pattern of wholeness visible to everyone in a large group conversation.
- Furthermore, these whole group conversations help in the cross-fertilization of ideas. In this way patterns are then identified, collective knowledge grows, and new possibilities for action emerge.

Ask the Scribe to ask the following questions and write the responses:

- What are the important learnings, information, insights and moments of inspiration from today?
- Are there connections, patterns, alignment with previous discernment and events.
- What needs to be carried forward?
- What Signs of the Holy Spirit are you noticing?

Remind the Scribe to consolidate the learnings section and make them available online, in the bulletin/newsletter, and to be prepared to remind the group at the beginning of next meeting of what the group learned today.

EVENT FIVE: The Parish Planning Summit

Pre-Work:

- Contact clergy 2–3 weeks ahead of event to check in.
- Remind clergy to lead an exploration the [Evangelism page](#) of The Episcopal Church website, the Experiment page at [TryTank](#), the Open Doors New Futures [list of practices of vital congregations](#), and the resources at [Invite Welcome Connect](#).

[TEC Evangelism](#)



[TryTank](#)



[Open Doors](#)



Event Agenda:

The Consultant facilitates this event. The clergy provides the Welcome, Opening Prayer (Prayer Choir), Scripture reading, and short homily.

- Clarify **CONTEXT** (30 minutes)
 - Review the intent of the previous 4 data & knowledge collection activities
 - Review Discernment and the Signs of the Holy Spirit
 - Reiterate the learnings, insights and inspirations of each activity of the process, taking noting of any connections, patterns, and/or alignment that carried through. Encourage them to look for resources, community allies, potential partners (can partner with other groups or mentor or support other groups), areas for new ministry and/or ministry growth, areas of need, third spaces (where seekers are; neutral spaces for spiritual outreach)
 - Discovery Café: What surprises and discoveries did you notice about your question?
 - Emphasize that today is about creating and planning for their vision of the future. Give them permission to dream, play, and create together. Ask them to put aside any fears they may have: fear of change, of pushback, of self-consciousness. Leave behind any impediments that might come from attachment to physical things and old ways of doing things. They are all invested in a positive outcome.
- **VICTORY** Circle (on newsprint) (15 minutes)
 - Create a palette of possibilities. Take a moment of silence, close your eyes, and envision a future here at {Parish Name} that is an exciting picture of all that is possible. Imagine that we are gathered again 5 years from now. What do you see going on in the life of this parish in 5 years? We are going to call that VICTORY. What does Victory of Jesus look like?
 - What do you see, feel, hear? What is going on? Who is involved? What is happening during the weekdays? What is going on during after school hours? Evening hours? On weekends? In the church? Elsewhere on the campus? I'd like everyone to contribute. What do you see, feel, hear?
- **CURRENT REALITY** exercise (on newsprint) (15 minutes)
 - Strengths (of the team that will lead to the victory)
 - Obstacles (that threaten victory)
 - Potential risks of succeeding
 - Potential benefits of pursuing this vision

Break (10 minutes)

- **COMMITMENTS:** (on newsprint) (15 minutes)
 - Read back the VICTORY and CURRENT REALITY
 - Considering your vision for the future, and in light of the current reality, what is the whole group willing to commit to?
 - Focus on high-level accomplishments rather than a detailed to-do list. You are being asked to develop the intent, scope and focus of the missional work. Planning will come later. What is most important? (You can't do everything.) Have half sheets ready to distribute to participants if commitments are not coming easily.

The Parish Planning Summit (continued)

- **ACTION PLANNING** (45-60 minutes)
 - Form break-out groups based upon the prioritized commitments. Participants are invited to self-select their group based upon their interests, passions, hopes, and/or dreams. Review and distribute worksheets. Each group will work on Action Planning for a specific commitment.
 - Each group writes a clear statement of their commitment. Avoid too much wordsmithing. Get the basics. Create a “catchy name” for it.
 - Brainstorm the steps needed to fulfill the commitment. Prompts: How do we get there from here? What do we want to focus on? What do we want to have happen here? What does Victory look like for this part? You will be reverse-engineering the goals and steps needed to get to the Victory.
 - For Years 1-5: Outline Goals, Key Actions, Timeline, Needed Resources and Responsible Ministry Team
 - This is a rough draft. There will be time to refine. Let all ideas live.
 - As the groups work together, encourage taking time to listen and discern. If an impasse or difficulty is reached, slow down and use the Discernment Listening Guidelines. (Appendix D)
- **RESOLVE:** Review the work of the groups. (10 minutes)
 - What stands out for you from this time together?
 - What are you looking forward to?
 - What are you hesitant about?
 - Where were you surprised?
 - What is important about what you have developed here together?
- Document the commitment of the group
- Review **Next Steps:** (5 -10 minutes)
 - The Vestry will refine the plan and distribute to the congregation
 - The Vestry will send the plan to the Canon for Congregational Support
 - This 5-year Plan will be your template for mission, growth and deepening discipleship for the coming 5 years, refining as the Spirit leads you. Use it each year to guide your planning and goal setting. And celebrate all God does in and through you as you progress through your plan. This Planning requires horizon vision versus up close vision. They can revisit this planning process near year 5 if they can't see past that.
 - Q&A

The Parish Planning Summit Follow-up

In 4-8 weeks, contact the clergy to check in on the status of the 5-year plan. Offer support and guidance through the refinement process. Remind them that they need to send a draft of the Open Door New Futures 5-Year Plan to the Transition Ministry Team, copying the Bishop and the EMLI Directors for potential mission funding and the ERELI Director for potential building and property projects.

The Clergy, Vestry, and Team meet with the Transition Ministry Team to talk about possible Deanery/Diocesan/TEC support for the work ahead.

The Open Doors New Futures 5-Year Plan should provide the foundation for annual Mutual Ministry Valuation (MMV) events for the next five years, focusing, expanding, trimming, or releasing as necessary. An MMV is separate from the Open Doors New Futures events and is scheduled separately with the consultant.

APPENDIX A

Leadership in Transition Retreat Resources

Morning Prayer for Discernment

As we begin the day, we focus on our calling to live faithfully, for who knows what today holds?

Opening

Alleluia! O God, may the empty tomb
fill our hearts with faith. Alleluia!

Prayer

Jesus, our way, our truth, and our life: As the gift of this new day unfolds, open our hearts and minds to you, that we may see you clearly and follow where you lead; to you, risen Savior, we offer praise, now and always. **Amen.**

Praise

A Song of Our Adoption (Ephesians 1:3-10)

Blessed are you, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *

for you have blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Before the world was made, you chose us to be yours in Christ, *

that we should be holy and blameless before you. You destined us for adoption as your children through Jesus Christ, *

according to the good pleasure of your will, To the praise of your glorious grace, *

that you have freely given us in the Beloved. In you, we have redemption through the blood of Christ, *

the forgiveness of our sins, According to the riches of your grace*

which you have lavished upon us. You have made known to us, in all wisdom and insight,*

the mystery of your will, According to your good pleasure which you set forth in Christ,*

as a plan for the fullness of time, To gather together all things in Christ,* things in heaven and things on earth.

Morning Prayer for Discernment (continued)

Scripture

The angel said to the women at the tomb, "I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said."

Matthew 28:6

Meditation

The Trouble with Easter

But ... I want the tomb full, like temple or tent —
with the Holy enshrouded in fabric un-rent.

Yes, I want death preserved in sweet-smelling spice;
not my neighbor perspiring the aroma of Christ.

Julia McCray-Goldsmith

How will we together embrace the gift of life in all its fullness today?

Affirmation of Faith

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?

People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People: I will, with God's help.

Morning Prayer for Discernment (continued)

**Christ Jesus, though in the form of God,
did not exploit equality with God
but emptied himself,
in the form of a slave,
born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.
Therefore, God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Philippians 2:5-11

Prayers

In the work we do this day,
May the risen Christ teach us.
In the challenges we face this day,
May the risen Christ guide us.
Through the people we meet this day,
May the risen Christ renew us.

Here, the people may add particular intercessions or thanksgivings.

As we respond to the hungers and hurts of this world,
May the Spirit of the risen Christ strengthen us.

Lord's Prayer

Song: Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

Allelu-alleluia.

Knock and it shall be opened up to you, seek and you will find, ask and it will be added unto you.

Allelu-alleluia.

Chorus: Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, allelu-alleluia!

Prayer

Jesus, our friend and savior: Guide us in this new day, that we may know God's desire for us and gain strength and courage to live as beloved children of God. **Amen.**

Going Out

Alleluia! O God, may the empty tomb
fill our hearts with faith. **Alleluia!**

Dwelling in the Word Bible Study

Ephesians 3: 14 – 21 Paul's Prayer for the Readers

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- Read through silently. A word or phrase that stood out for you?
- Read again aloud. Ask what is God speaking to you about in your ministry?
- Read again aloud. What is God asking you to do?

Appreciative Inquiry: God's Power in our Church Life

Divide the group into groups of two. Ask each pair to interview one another and to listen closely as they will report out their partner's answer. They will each have 5 minutes to tell their story. The Consultant keeps track of time and at 5 minutes asks partners to switch.

The appreciative question is:

Recall a time that was truly life-giving at {Parish Name}, when you felt most alive, most connected to God. Where were you, what were you doing, who was with you, what did you feel, did anything happen as a result of the experience?

At conclusion of sharing time, ask for a group of two to volunteer to share each other's story. As they speak, the consultant scribes brief descriptions of the life-giving event ie:

"Child's baptism, whole family present, when congregation laid hands on child and family in prayer felt held by God." Always check with the person whose story has been told if this captures the essence of the story. Ask the first group to invite a second group and so on until everyone has shared.

Switch color markers between stories to help group differentiate stories.

Post newsprint and ask the group what stands out in the stories. Can they identify any patterns or threads that connect the stories. Scribe the connections and post them. At the conclusion introduce the group to the debrief questions used after each Open Doors New Futures event:

- What have we learned about our community at {Parish Name}?
- How might you describe God connecting to people here?
- Is there new information? Inspiration?
- What do we need to carry forward in our discernment of what God desires to have happen here.

Scribe the responses.

Webinar on Faithful Innovation



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to watch webinar on Faithful Innovation (Start at 3:45 and end at 51:35).



Holy Currencies Inventory

Read *Holy Currencies* by the Rev. Eric Law and absorb the key concepts of flow of currencies/resources within and among systems, common contribution by all parties, and reciprocity as the key to sustainability.

The intangible currencies: relationship, wellness, truth telling, and gracious leadership are as important as tangible currencies: space and time, money.

Consider each of the currencies below and make as clear an assessment as possible.

Time: Make a list of paid staff and volunteers who are in ministry in your congregation and the amount of time they give. What is focused internally and what is focused externally?

Place: Attach a floor plan of your church facilities and any other properties that can be accessed for ministry. What spaces are used by whom and when? Where and when are there open spaces and times?

Gracious Leadership: List the skills, tools, models, processes and presence offered within and outside the church to create gracious environments {Grace Margins} wherein space is created for mutually respectful relationships to be formed, truth told, and work accomplished together.

Relationship: List the internal and external networks of mutually respectful connections leaders and members have with members and non-members: Congregational, Denominational, Diocesan, Community, Cultural, Civic, Ethnic, Business, Governmental, Educational, Inter-faith and Ecumenical. Please list as many connections as you are aware of.

Truth: List the ways your congregation, as individuals and corporately, have articulated with members and non-members a wholistic truth that empowers people to action in their neighborhoods, community, nation, and planet.

Wellness: List how your church has participated in building up physical, social, economic, ecological and spiritual health in your ministry, neighborhood, town, nation, and earth that has a sustainable, regenerative and circulatory flow of resources, human, financial, and natural resources.

Money: What financial resources does your parish currently list? What sources and amounts are internal: pledges, endowments, and investments? What sources and amounts are external: grants, programs, gifts, and fundraising?

Overview: With a group from your parish analyze the lists for connections and relationships. What is the flow between the six currencies and between each of the currencies internally and externally? Is their reciprocity in both tangible and intangible resources, is everyone contributing to wellness?

Mark the areas where there is flow between internal and external currencies. Ask how to express gratitude and build upon the grace that is there. Mark each area where there is no internal or external flow between currencies. These are your areas of greatest potential growth and grace.

APPENDIX B

Neighborhood Prayer Walk Directions

What Is a Neighborhood Prayer Walk?

It's not just walking around. It's not just praying. It's walking through your neighborhood or "parish", praying with your eyes and your heart wide open. Notice signs of hope and need, and how God calls you to both. Reimagine how your ministry could join God and your neighbors.

Guidelines for Prayer-Walking

- Whether you're near your church or in another neighborhood, plan your route ahead of time. Walk on a variety of days and times, not just Sunday morning. What's happening Tuesdays at 5pm?
- Meet at church and pray with the Prayer Choir before you leave.
- Form pairs of people, ideally covering different areas.
- If your area isn't very walk-friendly, head to common gathering places: shopping centers, groceries, dog parks, town squares, community gardens, the church's five-block radius, and more.
- As you walk, look with care and pray either in silence or aloud softly. Limit chatting or focusing on each other. Focus on the neighborhood.
- Take your camera with you and take photographs of things that strike you.
- Though it's not primary, be open to interaction with people on the way.
- If anyone asks what you are doing, be prepared to respond: "We're from (Name of Your Church), and we are praying and getting to know our neighborhood better." Offer to pray, if it feels appropriate.

Things to look for:

You will be gathering impressions and noticing in an appreciative way, any evidence of the following:

- **People groups:** Who's around and where are they? Who's is standing at bus stops, hanging on street corners, going into stores and businesses, playing in parks? What are seniors doing? What are the age, gender, ethnicity of the people you see? How are they dressed?
- **Places of activity:** What are the places of activity?
- **Structures:** What are the types and conditions of homes, roads, parks, businesses? How much "free space" is there in the community? What is the mix of private and public space? Are there vacant lots that are idle?
- **Services:** Where do people go to shop, eat, study, worship, and receive assistance? Who provides the services and who is receiving?
- **Signs of change:** Note housing under construction, for sale, demolition, and stores/businesses opening or closing. Have closed-up shops been replaced or vacant for a while? Notice languages on shop signs and buildings being used differently from their original purpose.
- **Signs of hope:** Where do you see evidence of God's grace and God's people at work? Examples could be houses of worship, nonprofit organizations, uplifting artwork, playing children, faith symbols, social gatherings, gardens. Look for local assets that could be connected with neighborhood needs.
- **Signs of need:** Where was there evidence of hardship, hurt or injustice. Are there people who appear homeless? Are there day laborers waiting for work? Is what you see specific to particular areas or affecting the neighborhood as a whole? Be aware that marginalized people and social problems are often hidden, especially in communities that appear well-off.

APPENDIX B (CONTINUED)

Neighborhood Prayer Walk Directions

How Should We Pray?

- *Discernment*: Ask God to show how you can pray with greater insight for the people, events, and places in the community.
- *Blessing*: Pray for the person, home, school, business, situations you see.
- *Empathy*: See and feel what your neighbors live with every day. Pray for brokenness and for blessings and gifts in the community.
- *Scripture*: Prayer based directly on scriptures like Jeremiah 29:5-7; Luke 10:1-2; Mark 12:30-31; or Revelation 21:3-5a.
- *Silence*: Allow silence for God's spirit to speak to you, or through you.

Concluding the Neighborhood Prayer Walk — perhaps over a meal — gather to share your prayers and observations:

- What did you learn about the neighborhood?
- Where was God's presence especially apparent?
- What surprised you?
- What was hard? What was engaging?

Bring any notes with you to the debrief meeting. Be ready to share briefly why the photo is important! Send any photographs to your photo point person.

APPENDIX C

Neighborhood Conversations Directions

The sensory questions that begin the Neighborhood Conversations packet found in the Congregation Handbook are designed to help participants elevate a sense of new eyes and ears to experience your neighborhood as a new person and to open your mind and heart. Pray before you start your exploration.

Going out two by two, you can start a conversation with a stranger by asking if someone is local to the neighborhood. If they are, introduce yourself by first name and tell them you are gathering information on what life is like in the neighborhood. Let them know you are in the neighborhood, too, and are part of your church. Tell them that you want to ask three questions. Are they comfortable with a brief discussion? If yes, proceed, if no, thank them and seek out the next person. (If someone says no, do not be discouraged! We don't know their story, and today may just not be the day for them.)

In three separate conversations, ask these three questions:

- What are the assets of living in our neighborhood/town?
- What are the challenges of living in our neighborhood/town?
- If there is a spiritual place for you in our neighborhood/town, where is it?

Bring any notes with you to the debrief meeting. Send your notes to the point person who will aggregate the answers.

DISCERNMENT LISTENING GUIDELINES

You are encouraged to use these guidelines for parish mission, community ministry, and personal life decisions.

1

Take time to become settled in God's presence.

2

Listen to others with your entire self (senses, feelings, intuition, imagination, and rational faculties).

3

Do not interrupt.

4

Pause between speakers to absorb what has been said.

5

Do not formulate what you want to say while someone else is speaking.

6

Speak for yourself only, expressing your own thoughts and feelings, referring to your own experiences. Avoid being hypothetical. Steer away from broad generalizations.

7

Do not challenge what others say.

8

Listen to the group as a whole — to those who have not spoken aloud as well as to those who have.

9

Generally, leave space for anyone who may want to speak a first time before speaking a second time yourself.

10

Hold your desires and opinions — even your convictions — lightly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. *The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action* by Eric E. Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs: dioceseli.org/powerfulquestions
2. Discovery Café Guidelines: dioceseli.org/discoverycafe
3. A Recipe for Collect Writing from *Earth & Altar*: dioceseli.org/collectwriting
4. *Grounded in God: Listening Hearts Discernment for Group Deliberations* by Suzanne G. Farnham, Stephanie A. Hull, R. Taylor McLean: dioceseli.org/groundedingod
5. *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* by Susan Beaumont: dioceseli.org/leading
6. Spiritual Gifts Quiz: spiritualgiftquiz.org
7. Webinar on Leading Faithful Innovation: dioceseli.org/faithfulinnovation
8. Cafe to Go: dioceseli.org/cafe-go
9. Cycle of Unmanaged Conflict: dioceseli.org/cycle-unmanaged-conflict
10. Viability and Vitality: dioceseli.org/what-we-do/resources/viable-and-vital-ministry-practice
11. Family Systems Theory: The Congregation as a System: dioceseli.org/family-systems
12. Bowen Family Systems Therapy: dioceseli.org/bowen
13. **Antagonists in the Church**
14. Clergy Reflection Worksheet: dioceseli.org/clergyreflection
15. Vestry Reflection Worksheet: dioceseli.org/vestryreflection
16. Gradients of Agreement: dioceseli.org/gradients-of-agreement
17. Invite Welcome Connect: invitewelcomeconnect.com/checklists-tool-kits

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines.

OPEN DOORS NEW FUTURES: WHAT DOES GOD WANT TO DO HERE?



OPEN DOORS NEW FUTURES Mission Search, has been developed from the strong work of the Mission Action Plan done by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, extending thanks especially to Canon Janet Marshall, Director of Congregational Development, the work of Open Doors New Futures done by the Diocese of New York, and the work of Susan Beaumont in *How to When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Time*. We have modified the process and added new tools. The Consultant team of the Diocese of Long Island has shaped this process over a three-year period, and we are deeply indebted to them.

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