

# OPEN DOORS NEW FUTURES MISSION SEARCH

TEAM 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.

# WELCOME

---

*May your kingdom come. May your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Matthew 6:10*

Your congregation is about to embark on a spiritual journey together! This journey will seek to understand God's preferred future for your congregation. The spiritual practice of discernment trains a seeking heart, collects all the best information, applies prayer at all points, engages scripture, and spends time listening with friends and strangers. All of these provide experiences for the Holy Spirit to speak through, and as the pieces come together like tiles in a mosaic, God's desire for your congregation becomes clear. (See the Signs of the Holy Spirit on the previous page for a refresher.) God will bring you through these combined experiences as a church to a place of inspiration and refreshed purpose with new people to love and a new life together in service to God and your neighbors.

Discernment is going to God with empty hands and asking God to fill them with new vision and new life. We know that, in many places, what has worked before in our common life is not working now. Letting go of what we have done before so that God might fill our open, empty hands with new life is rigorous and fruitful spiritual work. When we let go of telling God what will be, God responds in elegant, delightful, and surprising ways, and new people come forward to love with new energy to give.

Building the leadership skill of being a non-anxious presence will help your congregation to experience God's presence, leading, and generosity. Faith is the capacity to take a risk in order to follow God where God will lead us. As we move toward trusting in God, we move:

*From knowing to unknowing.*

*From advocating to attending.*

*From striving to surrender.*

Making space for God to lead will take you to new ministry and new life, building on the most life-giving parts of your ministry and giving it new expressions.

# Introduction

The Open Doors New Futures Mission Search is a spiritual journey that typically takes a year or less to complete, beginning 3-4 months after the arrival of your new clergy partner and continuing at a pace that serves the congregation. Each event builds on the previous one and understanding and inspiration grows throughout the process. Your clergy and vestry will work with the consultants to set dates for the events. Team members will help carry out the nuts and bolts, along with the joyful and inspirational work of the Open Doors New Futures experience. Sometimes circumstances arise that call for rescheduling an event, so flexibility is a needed asset for the whole Mission Search team. It is important for the team to be at all events.

## Team Onboarding

*Love must be sincere.*

*Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*

*Be devoted to one another in love.*

*Honor one another above yourselves.*

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.*

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

*Share with the Lord's people who are in need.*

*Practice hospitality.*

*Romans 12:9-13*

**Leadership in Transition Retreat:** Vestry, Mission Search team, Clergy, Consultant, and other parish leadership, Clergy, and Consultant attend this one-day (4-5 hours) retreat, which occurs in the first 8-12 weeks of the Open Doors New Futures process.

**Vestry Pre-Work:** Respond to the Vestry Reflection worksheet that will be sent to you.

Every new leadership group needs time together to share hopes and parish information and to set expectations for roles and accountabilities for their work together, and for the Open Doors New Futures process. As part of the agenda, the group will perform a Holy Currencies Inventory and watch the following webinar:



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





# The Open Doors New Future Mission Search needs a team!

Mission Search team members will be recruited by the vestry and clergy. All Mission Search team members work with the consultant and priest-in-charge/rector. Working as a team, the **Administrator, Champion, Scribe** and **Prayer Choir** (two or more people) share the tasks of the Open Doors New Futures process with the clergy and help build the success of the congregation's experience. Start by reading the Congregation Handbook outlining the events of the process: [dioceseli.org/map-congregation-digital](http://dioceseli.org/map-congregation-digital).

Consultant, clergy, and Mission Search team meet to clarify roles, introduce the Open Doors New Futures process, and equip each other for the journey.

***It is important to keep in mind that all the events build on one another. The process is cumulative.*** Collective learning and insight is what the Holy Spirit works through to lead us forward. Put another way, we live the experience, and this is the language the Lord uses to speak to us. Scriptural insight, prayer, neighborhood interaction, the felt knowledge of discernment, gives us insight into the way forward God desires.

To put these tasks into a spiritual context for you, you may wish to take the **Spiritual Gift Inventory** found on the diocesan website. Knowing your gifts and how the task you are asked to undertake matches your gifts will help in your discernment. Contributing to your community in what you are gifted for is an uplifting experience of the Holy Spirit being with you in the work. Count it all joy!



Scan to take the [Spiritual Gift Inventory](#) or see [Additional Resources](#).



To build your team understanding and bonding to the purpose of discerning God's new chapter for your church, share a meal or a fancy tea together. Share your hopes (and fears if they are there) with your team members for your role on the team and for the entire process. Give thanks for all the goodness and love of God and intercede for one another where there is worry. Pray for interdependence as a team and empowerment from the Holy Spirit. Enjoy one another!

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Romans 15:13*

# MISSION SEARCH TEAM ROLES

Administrator	Champion
<p><i>For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints... All things should be done decently and in order.</i></p> <p><i>First Corinthians 14:33,40</i></p> <p>This person is responsible for logistics: making sure that rooms are reserved, refreshments are present, supplies are there, and necessary copies are made and ready for the event. This person works with church staff and recruits help as necessary. The Administrator works with the Consultant and new Clergy Partner to make sure all is in readiness. This is an ideal role for your most dedicated list maker and task executor.</p>	<p><i>So, let's encourage each other. Let's motivate one another. Let's stir one another up to love and good works. Let's meet together!</i></p> <p><i>Hebrews 10:24-25 (MSG Bible)</i></p> <p>This person makes sure everyone knows about and is involved in the process and encourages them to participate. They ensure that personal invitations, bulletin announcements, and e-blasts reach the congregation. The Champion shows appreciation for the congregation's input in weekly congregational reports and personally encourages members and your Clergy Partner to attend all events. They help write thank-you notes and give public thanks for the ongoing work. This is an ideal role for your most enthusiastic cheerleader.</p>
Scribe	Prayer Choir
<p><i>This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given trust must prove faithful.</i></p> <p><i>1 Corinthians 4:1-2</i></p> <p>This person is responsible for taking notes and managing all the newsprint and notes generated during the process. The Scribe may be asked to take notes on a newsprint pad and needs to be able to write clearly and quickly. The Scribe pays special attention to writing down the important learnings from each event, and communicating what has been learned at the previous meeting at the beginning of subsequent meeting to help build cumulative learning. (They are not asked to transcribe all newsprint but to keep it all together in case a reference is needed.) This is an ideal role for your most perceptive observer and reporter. It is good scribing practice to alternate colors of markers between different speakers or sections. Make sure your markers or pens are fresh and have ink in them. Keep blank copy paper available in case needed by members during events.</p>	<p><i>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.</i></p> <p><i>Philippians 4:6-7</i></p> <p>Prayer is essential for discerning God's direction. The Prayer Choir prays for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for God's leading in the Open Doors New Futures process for the parish. They attend events, write prayers, and intercede for the congregation and neighbors. Topics include understanding, love for neighbors, God's will, vision, agility, and strength. This role suits intercessory prayer groups and those with a deep love for God's work and church ministry. Use event intentions as prayer prompts. The group can be established or assembled for this purpose, but more than one person is preferred. Designate a liaison to coordinate with clergy and produce the parish bulletin for sharing prayers. Pre-work involves gathering, identifying a liaison, praying for the congregation and Holy Spirit's guidance, and praying together. Set meeting times and places.</p>

# THE EVENTS & DEBRIEFS

## EVENT ONE: Living History

*Frequently scheduled for a Sunday following services.*

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Team Tasks:

#### **Administrator:**

You will need:

- Easel, newsprint pad, and new markers
- Butcher block paper (available from Consultant or Transition Officer)
- A table with name tags, markers, and a greeter at the door
- Baskets for markers
- Blue painter's tape
- Several tables laid out together creating 12'-15' of space for the butcher block paper
- A way to hang the completed history vertically for viewing (can be taped to walls, hung from string with clips or attached to chalkboards or easels)

Plan for lunch or light refreshments and recruit assistance in setting up/clearing up room.

In a large room, set up oblong tables end to end to create a span of 12'-15'. Cut a 52-inch-wide piece of butcher paper allowing for 1-2 feet per decade, starting with the "coming of age" decade of the oldest person in the room. (Find out ahead of time what that decade is.) Draw dividing lines horizontally across the paper into three sections with the section identifier written at the top. In large print draw across the top 1-foot-long space for decades prior to 1980 and two feet for decades 1980 – 2020. See diagram below. Tape butcher paper onto the tables. If you have an exceptionally large group, make the paper longer. Have enough colored markers for everyone to use simultaneously. Have baskets with markers in them to place on the table between questions/sections. Remove all the red and yellow markers. (The yellow is difficult to see and the Consultant will use the red marker in the debrief.)

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
World History	<hr/>								
Church & Parish History	<hr/>								
Personal History	<hr/>								

## Team Tasks (continued):

### **Champion:**

Make announcements during Sunday services and invite people personally to attend during coffee hour. At the event, greet people and introduce people to seasoned parishioners. Send the Important Learnings to Take Forward in Discernment out in an e-blast during the following week.

### **Scribe:**

You will be responsible for the Living History newsprint and be ready to record important insights during the debrief discussion. Keep all the papers! Arrange for safekeeping in the church office or another secure place.

### **Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event that speaks to your church's history, the mission of the church, and gratitude for the church. Share with Clergy Partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the prayers of the people. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is important to share with your Clergy Partner any insights from your prayer time and invite them into your prayer writing process.

Open the event in prayer and join the prayer circle at the close.

*Notes:*



## **EVENT TWO:** Neighborhood Exploration & Debrief

*Neighborhood Exploration, consisting of a discussion of the Mission Insight Neighborhood Demographics Report, Neighborhood Prayer Walks, and Neighborhood Conversations, takes place over the course of a week. The debrief is frequently scheduled in the following week, either a weekday evening with a potluck or the next Sunday following services.*

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### **Part One:** Neighborhood Demographics Discussion

*Usually takes place the Sunday before the week of Neighborhood Conversations and Prayer Walks.*

#### Team Tasks:

##### **Administrator:**

Obtain an electronic version of the Mission Insight Demographics Report from the Consultant and email it to the congregation, inviting them to explore the data. Include instructions that the file must be downloaded to open. Additional information will open when the cursor hovers over an information point. Invite everyone to attend a discussion of the following questions on the upcoming Sunday:

- What has changed?
- What surprises you?
- Describe the average person in your neighborhood/town according to the data.
- Are the people living in our neighborhood/town represented in our church?
- What might be the worries or aspirations of people living in our neighborhood/town?

Copy and distribute a printed version of the report to those who do not use email.

##### **Clergy:**

Lead the discussion of these questions during coffee hour or adult education time on the Sunday that parishioners will be sent out for the Neighborhood Exploration.

##### **Scribe:**

Listen closely, take notes, summarize important learnings, check summary with your Clergy Partner, email the summary to the congregation, and include the summary in the following week's bulletin.

### **Part Two:** Neighborhood Conversations & Prayer Walks

#### Team Tasks:

##### **Administrator:**

Obtain copies of the Prayer Walk Directions and the Neighborhood Conversation Directions from the Consultant. Work with your Clergy Partner to print a map of the surrounding neighborhoods and divide it into walking routes for the Prayer Walk teams. Distribute the maps to the Prayer Walk teams. Have copies of the directions for the Prayer Walks and Neighborhood Conversations ready to hand out on the Sunday of sending out.

##### **Scribe:**

Collect and collate the results of Neighborhood Conversations and collect the photos taken during the Prayer Walks (or identify another person to do this) in preparation for the Debrief.

## Team Tasks (continued):

### **Champion:**

Encourage people to participate and learn more about your neighbors and neighborhood. Make announcements in the weeks prior to the Neighborhood Exploration week. Include descriptions of the Prayer Walks and Neighborhood Conversations and give the sample introduction on the following page. Demonstrate a sample conversation to the congregation. Announce the date of the Debrief Potluck or Brunch.

### **Sample self-introduction for neighborhood conversations:**

*Hello, are you a local person? (If yes, continue. If no, explain you are looking for neighborhood information and thank them anyway.)*

*My name is {First Name}. I'm doing research on the neighborhood and wondering if you would be willing to talk for a few minutes and answer three questions.*

*The questions are:*

- *What are the assets of living here?*
- *What are the difficulties living here?*
- *If there is a spiritual place for you in {Your Neighborhood/Town} where is it?*

*If they agree to the conversation, proceed. If not, thank them for their time. If they ask where you are from, tell them you are also local and from {Your Church Name} and we are exploring how best to love our neighbors, so we are talking to our neighbors to get information to help us be better neighbors.*

### **Prayer Choir:**

Pray for the people going out to explore the neighborhood and speak with neighbors on behalf of the church. If your church has a tradition of laying-on of hands, this is an appropriate moment for this form of prayer. If you have a map of your area, pray for each neighborhood by name.

Notes:

# Part Three: Neighborhood Exploration Debrief

## Team Tasks:

### **Administrator:**

You will need:

- A Smart TV or a screen and projector
- Easel, newsprint pad, and markers
- A table with name tags and a greeter at the door

Arrange to have tables and chairs set up for the number of people expected. Make sure everyone can see the screen. Work with your Clergy Partner to identify the photo coordinator and arrange with them the sharing of projected photos taken by members on their prayer walks. Make sure copies of the collated Neighborhood Conversations are available. Arrange for lunch/dinner or recruit help for a potluck meal. Recruit help to set up/breakdown down the room.

### **Champion:**

Encourage people to participate in the Neighborhood Exploration debrief to learn more about your neighbors and neighborhood. Make announcements in the weeks prior to the event.

Send e-blast, thank you notes, and congratulations to the congregation at the completion of the event. Include the Important Learnings to Take Forward in Discernment out in an e-blast during the following week.

### **Scribe:**

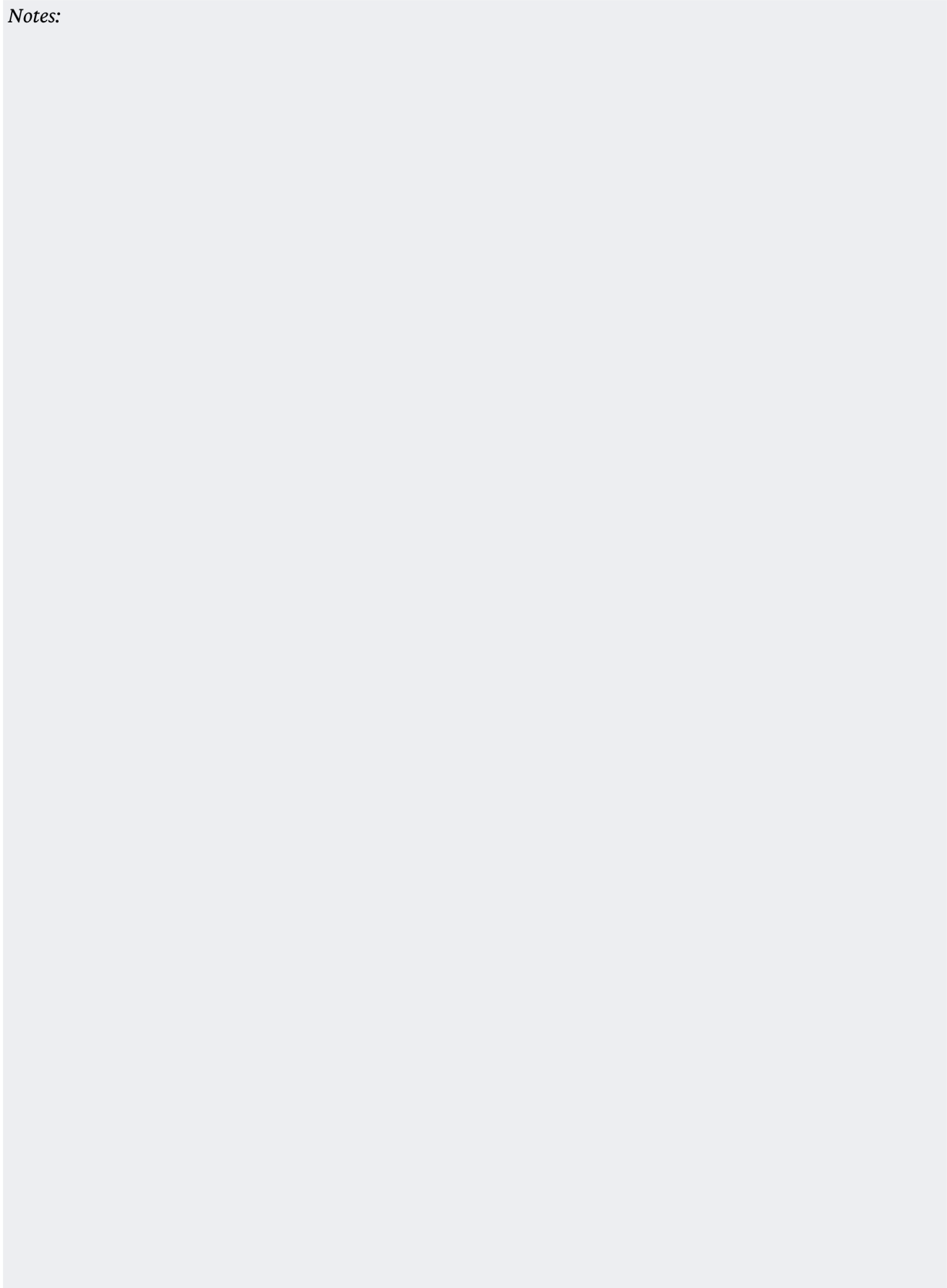
Collect and collate the results of Neighborhood Conversations and report out the results at the debrief. Collect photos taken during the Prayer Walks (or identify another person to do this) to share with the congregation and work with the Administrator to make sure they can be shown during the Debrief. At the beginning of the debrief meeting remind the group of the important learnings, insights, and information from the last event. Listen closely and take notes of the important learnings as they arise. Keep the newsprint!

### **Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event with special intention for deepened understanding, listening with attention and respect, seeking insight, inspiration, and new people to love, and seeing the neighborhood through Jesus's eyes as you send parish members forth. Share with your Clergy Partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the Prayers of the People. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Get a map of your town/neighborhood and pray with it as inspiration for the people and communities surrounding the church. Open and close the Debrief event in prayer.

*Notes:*

*Notes:*





# EVENT THREE: Community Panel

Frequently scheduled for 90 minutes on a weekday evening.

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Team Tasks:

**Note:** Clergy, Vestry, and Mission Search Team create the list of invitees and write and send the invitations.

### **Sample Invitation:**

Dear {Invitee Name},

*The Episcopal Church of {Parish Name} has recently called the Rev. {Priest Name}. We are engaged in a mission and vision process and would like to invite you to join us as a community leader to share your work. We would like ask you to participate in an in person (or zoom) panel presentation and discussion with other community leaders on {Date} at {Time} on the work you do in our community. We expect the meeting to last an hour to an hour and a half.*

We will be asking the same four questions of all of our panelists:

- Your name, your organization and who is your constituency?
- What are your challenges?
- Where do you see life and what are you building on?
- What might be a special request of our parish that you and/or your constituents have that would help you better serve the members of the community?

*We want to respect your time and the other participants. We also adhere to the RESPECT community conversation norms, (attached). You will have ten minutes to share and we will have time for questions at the end each section. We hope you will join us and help us hear where God is calling {Parish Name} in our future work.*

Sincerely,

{Priest} and Wardens of {Parish Name}

### **Administrator:**

If the event is online, work with your Clergy Partner to ensure the congregation has the Zoom link and time for the Community Panel. No setup! No cleanup! Be present and enjoy!

If the event is in-person, arrange to have tables and chairs set up for the number of people expected. Provide refreshments and water on the tables for the speakers. Recruit help to set up/breakdown the room. Have a table with name tags and a greeter at the door.

### **Champion:**

Encourage attendance and make announcements during services in the weeks leading up to the Community Panel. Greet people as they come online or into the room and let them know you are glad they are here. Send the “Important Learnings to Take Forward in Discernment” out in an e-blast during the week following.

### **Scribe:**

Before panel is introduced, remind the group of the important learnings, insight, and inspiration of the last two meetings. Post the RESPECT norms (Appendix D) in the chat if on Zoom or in the meeting room if in-person. Take notes during the meeting on a laptop or notepad if on Zoom or on newsprint if in-person and send them to the congregation to use during the debrief following the event.

## Team Tasks (continued):

### **Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event with special intention for flourishing of our neighborhood/town, to listen with respect and attention, in thanksgiving for diversity in faith and life, for openness to potential partners, and for inspiration to see how we might care for our neighbors together. Share with your Clergy Partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the prayers of the people. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is important to share your work with your Clergy Partner any insights from your prayer time and invite them into your prayer writing process. Open and close the event in prayer whether online or in-person. Be conscious and respectful of the many faith traditions that may be present.

*Notes:*

# EVENT FOUR: Discovery Café

## Part One: Development for Discovery Café

*This preparation for the upcoming Discovery Café should be scheduled for a convenient time shortly after the Community Panel. The Discovery Café experience requires one or two well-crafted questions that will engage your community with curiosity and investment in helping. The questions need to have a doable scope and result in new understandings and creative responses.*

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Team Tasks

**Administrator:**

Distribute the directions for creating Discovery Café questions.  
Contribute your creativity!

**Champion:**

Contribute your creativity!

**Scribe:**

Keep notes during the Question Development meeting and make sure everyone present is clear on the question for the Discovery Café when you leave. Send the questions to the Champion for invitations and announcements.

**Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event with special intention for new ideas, inspiration, revelation, partnerships, and delight. Share with your Clergy Partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the prayers of the people. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is important to share with your Clergy Partner any insights from your prayer time and invite them into your prayer writing process. Open and close the event in prayer.

Scan to read [“The Art of Powerful Questions”](#) (pages 3-7) or see [Additional Resources](#).



Notes:

# Part Two: The Discovery Café Event

Frequently scheduled for a Saturday morning or Sunday following services.

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Team Tasks:

### **Administrator:**

Help design invitation cards and ensure distribution to the congregation and invited guests from the community in the weeks prior to the event. Make sure the date, time, address and question(s) being considered are on the invitation. Arrange for light refreshments to be available. Recruit help to set up/breakdown the room.

For the recommended hospitality touches for a great Café, see Appendix B.

### **Champion:**

Make announcements during Sunday and other services in the weeks prior to the Discovery Café. Work with the Administrator to make the Café welcoming and festive. Make sure everyone knows the question(s) so that people who are invited are clear about what they are invited to consider with the church.

Here's a sample invitation:

*{Church name} has been engaged in a future vision process on how best to love and serve our neighbors. We are seeking information from our community on where things are happening in our neighborhood, how we can support our neighbors, work together, or spark new ideas. We will be hosting a Discovery Café event where church and community members come together to ponder and brainstorm a question developed out of our Neighborhood Exploration that we all have a stake in together. We will be discussing this question, "{question}?"*

*We're especially asking neighbors and community members from outside of {Church name} to come explore with us. We'd be honored to have you join us for this two-hour {morning/afternoon} event. Attached is an invitation card. Please RSVP \_\_here\_\_ so we know how many doughnuts/pierogis/empanadas to have on hand!*

Be on hand to greet people and encourage them to make a name tag, get something to drink, and find a seat at one of the tables. Send the Important Learnings gleaned from all previous discussions to take forward in discernment out in an e-blast during the week before.

See a complete list of recommended hospitality touches for a great Café (Scan or see Additional Resources)



World (Discovery) Café Guidelines (Scan or see see Additional Resources)





## Team Tasks (continued):

### **Scribe:**

Post the RESPECT norms. (Appendix D)

At the beginning of the meeting remind the group of the important learnings, insights, and information from last sessions and post them.

Take notes and listen closely to the important learnings, insight, information, and connections at the closing summary. Collect all the table notes or reports. Keep the newsprint!

### **Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event with special intention for gratitude for your neighbors, inspiration, and the help of the Holy Spirit. Share with your Clergy partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the prayers of the people. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is important to share with your Clergy partner any insights from your prayer time and invite them into your prayer writing process. Open and close the event in prayer. Be conscious and respectful of the many faith traditions that may be present.

*Notes:*



# EVENT FIVE: Parish Planning Summit

*Frequently scheduled for a Sunday following services. The whole congregation works together to create a celebratory ending to the Open Doors New Futures process on this day.*

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Team Tasks:

### **Administrator:**

You will need:

- An easel and markers with extra newsprint and markers for small groups
- A table with name tags, markers, and a greeter at the door

Arrange to set up tables and chairs enough for the number of people anticipated at the event. Place markers and colored pencils at each table.

Arrange for 4 – 6 break-out areas. The Consultant will help determine how many areas are needed.

Have lunch/light refreshments available. Recruit help to set up/breakdown the room.

### **Champion:**

Contact as many parishioners as possible in the weeks leading up to the event, work with your Clergy Partner, Consultant, and Scribe to make a synopsis of the learnings, insight, and inspiration, and encourage people to listen, think, explore and imagine how you might love and serve God and your neighbors. Make sure that everyone's ideas are welcome. Send an email blast and/or write an announcement for the weekly bulletin inviting people to "Increase your knowledge of what is possible. Help God to inspire you through what you have learned." Ask them to explore 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](#).

Time and refinement will shape the ultimate plan but for today, let every idea live. Congratulate everyone for participating. Thank the important contributors; thank the Team!

### **Scribe:**

Post the RESPECT norms. (Appendix D)

Report at the beginning of the meeting the important learnings from the previous four events, focusing particularly on the Discovery Café.

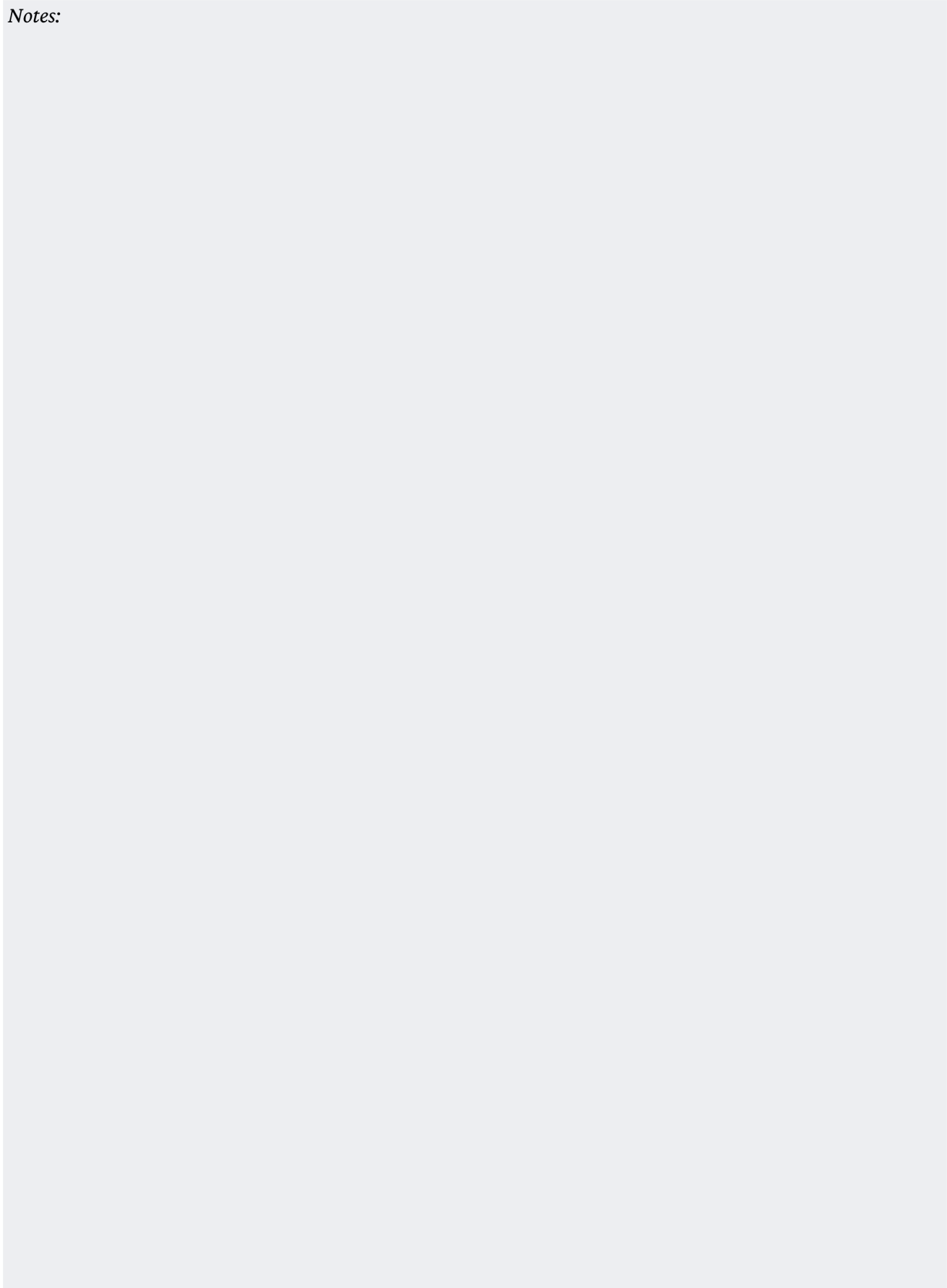
Collect notes from small groups' reports and gather their newsprint.

Work with the Vestry and your Clergy Partner in crafting the final report to the church of the 5-year plan resulting from the Open Doors New Futures process. Send a copy to the Canon for Congregational Support.

### **Prayer Choir:**

Choose or write a prayer 1-2 weeks prior to the event with special intention for creativity, agility, clarity, shared purpose, and the joy in God's call. Share with your Clergy Partner for approval and send to the person responsible for the weekly bulletin to include in the prayers of the people. Commit to praying this and other prayers for community discernment and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is important to share with your Clergy Partner any insights from your prayer time and invite them into your prayer writing process. Open and close the event in prayer.

*Notes:*



# THE JOYS OF PUBLIC PRAYER

\*\*\* Notes on building a Prayer Choir and the joys of public prayer

Prayer choirs can work individually and as a group. Ask people to join the Prayer Choir who enjoy praying for others, or who already lead prayers in the community. Members will be called on to lead prayers at various points in the process and to write prayers as insight develops and God's leading appears over the five events. Read the Congregation Members Handbook to get a sense of the five events and the spiritual needs of each session. *Overall, clear discernment of what God desires in this place and time is the primary goal of the Open Doors New Futures process.*

Writing collect style prayers is not as difficult as it may seem. Go ahead and prime the pump looking through both the Contemporary Collects found in the BCP on pp. 211-261 and Prayers and Thanksgivings for Various Occasions found on pp. 810-841 and following for rhythm as well as structure. Feel free to use these prayers and/or write your own. Enjoy this time with God!

How to write a collect:

1. Pick a title—what or who the prayer is for.
2. Begin the prayer with an address to God.
3. Continue with an attribute or action of God.
4. Specific petition and content.
5. End with a Trinitarian thanksgiving. (Naming specifically one or more of the Trinity.)

If you are above 120 words or so, see if you can trim it down.

The example below has all the parts numbered:

(1) *For the Human Family*

(2) Oh God, (3) you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: (4) Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; (5) through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Practice writing and sharing your prayers inside the group before offering them to your Clergy Partner and the congregation.

[For access to the Book of Common Prayer online:](#)



[For more on collect writing go here:](#)  
[\(Scan or see Additional Resources\)](#)





# 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](https://dioceseli.org/powerfulquestions)
2. Discovery Café Guidelines: [dioceseli.org/discoverycafe](https://dioceseli.org/discoverycafe)
3. A Recipe for Collect Writing from *Earth & Altar*: [dioceseli.org/collectwriting](https://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](https://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](https://dioceseli.org/leading)
6. Spiritual Gifts Quiz: [spiritualgiftquiz.org](https://spiritualgiftquiz.org)
7. Webinar on Leading Faithful Innovation: [dioceseli.org/faithfulinnovation](https://dioceseli.org/faithfulinnovation)
8. Cafe to Go: [dioceseli.org/cafe-go](https://dioceseli.org/cafe-go)
9. Cycle of Unmanaged Conflict: [dioceseli.org/cycle-unmanaged-conflict](https://dioceseli.org/cycle-unmanaged-conflict)
10. Viability and Vitality: [dioceseli.org/what-we-do/resources/viable-and-vital-ministry-practice](https://dioceseli.org/what-we-do/resources/viable-and-vital-ministry-practice)
11. Family Systems Theory: The Congregation as a System: [dioceseli.org/family-systems](https://dioceseli.org/family-systems)
12. Bowen Family Systems Therapy: [dioceseli.org/bowen](https://dioceseli.org/bowen)
13. [Antagonists in the Church](#)
14. Invite Welcome Connect: [invitewelcomeconnect.com/checklists-tool-kits](https://invitewelcomeconnect.com/checklists-tool-kits)

[Access all Open Doors  
New Futures  
resources on our  
website](#)



# 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.

# DISCOVERY CAFÉ TOOL KIT RESOURCES

*Recommended hospitality touches for a great Café:*

- Round or Oblong 30” to 36” diameter tables with chairs (4 or 5 people to a table)
- Tablecloth, flower vase with small flowers, and a votive candle for each table
- Flip chart paper for group graphics and one or more sheets on each table for participant drawing/notes/doodles
- Markers: thin or medium felt tip water based pens in a variety of darker colors for each table
- Roll of mural (butcher block) paper (for harvesting and posting collective insights)
- Blue painter’s tape (sticks but easily comes off without tearing the paper)
- Push pins (for graphic recording or displaying table graphics or signs if allowed)
- Variety of sizes of post-it notes (especially 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 unlined)
- Rolling white boards, flip chart tripods or flat wall space for the mural paper or posting table doodle sheets
- Bell or chime to alert participants of timing or to get their attention
- Playlist with mellow music and speakers/phone/computer designated to play music
- Portable hand held style microphone
- Coffee, tea, water
- A table with name tags and a greeter at the door
- Two copies of the Discovery Café Guidelines at each table (Appendix C)

# DISCOVERY CAFÉ GUIDELINES



illustration by Avril Orloff

# RESPECT Norms

---

**R**

take Responsibility for what you say and feel without blaming others

**E**

use Empathetic listening

**S**

be Sensitive to differences in communication/cultural styles

**P**

Ponder what you hear and feel before you speak

**E**

Examine your own assumptions and perceptions

**C**

maintain Confidentiality

**T**

Tolerate ambiguity because we are not here to debate. There are no “winners” or “losers.”

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

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.

**Created by:** The Rev. Canon Claire Woodley, Consultant for Open Doors New Futures

**Edited by:** Diane Gaidon

**Designed by:** Mary Grace Puszka

**Consultant Team of the Diocese of Long Island:**

The Rev. Maxine Barnett, The Rev. Cn. Cecily Broderick Guerra,

The Very Rev. Steve Foster, Ms. Diane Gaidon,

The Rev. Cn. Joanne Izzo, The Very Rev. Paul Lai,

Dr. Lena Mullings, Ms. Anne Su,

and The Rev. Christina Van Liew



**Published February 2025**