



Flourish to Multiply

Helping Church Multiplication Dreams Become Reality

Moving the Mission Forward Guide

“Falling in love with your community again!”

WHO IS THIS DESIGNED FOR? This guide is designed for churches ready to move forward at carrying out the church’s mission, but that need direction on where to start. This is also for churches that want to more intentionally engage with their communities.

HOW IS THIS TO BE USED? This guide is meant to be used by the key leaders of a church. Ideally five to twelve persons will work through this guide together. Choose persons who are interested in your church reaching out and connecting with its community. Ideally, your pastor and key leaders will be a part of your team. It may include persons outside your church who are very connected in your community.

This team will want to regularly meet, perhaps weekly, as they work through this guide. At times they will seek the input of others in the congregation and community. If the team would find it helpful to have an outside guide to assist them, they can contact Church Development for a Field Guide.

EMBARKING ON OUR JOURNEY

As we prepare to embark on this journey, we need to stop and ask ourselves two questions. First, do we really know and accept the mission? And second, are we willing to commit to do our part to help move the mission forward?

To answer these, we must be clear about what our *mission* is. The United Methodist church is a denomination that clearly articulates its mission. Its mission is the same for every UM congregation worldwide. The church’s mission is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” As United Methodists, this is the reason we exist, our purpose, our marching orders.

The good news is that this mission is achievable because we get to take this journey accompanied and led by Jesus. Sometimes the path will be smooth and other times we will encounter bumps along the way. In either case, moving the mission forward is a privilege. It will bring new life not only to those of us on the journey but also those we encounter.

This workbook is designed to guide your congregation on this journey. Have fun with it. If you need a person to help guide you, Church Development can provide you with a Field Guide. Above all listen to what God is saying and where God wants to lead!

So where to start? How about the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary of all times. His vision and commitment to the cause of Christ never wavered. We find his approach clearly laid out in Romans, Chapter 1:8-9.

“Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the world.

God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart by spreading the Good News about his Son.”

In order to move the mission forward, consider these three steps that Paul points to in these verses. First, Paul focuses on being thankful. As members of Christ’s church, we are fully aware of what we have to be thankful for. We are showered with countless blessings as a result of believing in and walking with Jesus, and ultimately, we celebrate our salvation through Christ alone. Let’s begin our journey with a focus on thankfulness as Paul does.

Secondly, Paul clearly lifts up the importance of prayer. It is critically important that we keep prayer at the center of this journey. The prayer is not just for God to move in our congregation and community, but it is also prayer in which we listen for the Holy Spirit’s guidance and God’s will and direction. This listening prayer, sometimes called “breakthrough prayer,” is essential if we are to move the mission forward.

Third, Paul demonstrates by example the value of service. In every community he visits, Paul engages with the people. Paul knows full well that relationships must be formed in order for conversations to occur that move the mission forward. Engaging with the community is key in our efforts to accomplish our mission.

So, are you ready? Let’s start our journey!

PART 1. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

“Who is my neighbor?” Jesus is asked this question in Luke 10:29. It echoes another question that Cain asks in Genesis 4:9, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Jesus’ answer is not only a resounding “Yes!” but he goes on in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, to clearly show that we are called to serve even the stranger who is not of our “tribe.”

So, one of your church’s first steps in engaging with its community is to define who its community is. By *community*, we are referring not to your church community, your congregation, but rather we’re referring to those outside your church’s congregation. This group can be defined in a couple of ways...

1. As a specific geographic area, for example:
 - the six block-area surrounding your church's building
 - your church's zip code area
 - your school district boundary
 - an apartment complex or retirement center

2. As a particular population niche group, like the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single adults • persons in recovery • families with special needs children • the LGBTQ community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the homeless • retirement communities • incarcerated and/or their families • persons with mental illness
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A church that focuses on a particular geography will likely be more of a neighborhood church; whereas the church that is focused on a particular population niche will be more of a regional church. Some churches may be called to be both—both a church focused on reaching a particular geography and a particular population niche. Most churches, however, will only have the capacity to focus on one.

How do you feel about this? There will likely be many in your church who will push back and say that we should be a church for everyone. Of course, everyone should be welcomed into your congregation no matter where they come from or what population niche they happen to be a part of. However, the more narrowly you define the community you're called to reach, the more likely you will successfully reach them. Typically, when you try to reach everyone, your efforts will be so diffused that you reach very few.

So who is your neighbor? Who is it that God is counting on your church to intentionally engage with? How will you know?

Take your next steps...

A. CREATE A TEAM of five to twelve persons that will work through this guide together. Choose persons who are interested in your church reaching out and connecting with its community. Ideally, your pastor and key leaders will be a part of your team. It may include persons outside your church who are very connected in your community.

B. BEGIN YOUR DISCERNMENT. Here are some steps you can take. Give your team adequate time to work through these. They could be done as part of a retreat or they could be done over the course of a couple months. You may want to engage the broader congregation for its members' input. Bathe this whole process in prayer!

1. **PRAYER.** Enter into an intentional period of fasting and prayer as a congregation. You may want to recruit a prayer team to help lead this effort or your team can lead it. Consider using the Prayer and Fasting guide in the appendix (1).

2. **SCRIPTURE.** Prayerfully consider specific scriptures relating to engagement with others, like Matthew 25:31-46. What scriptures come to mind? Spend time reflecting on them both individually and as a team.
3. **SIGNS & WONDERS.** Reflect as a group on where you are seeing your church having connections with its community.
 - a. Consider who the church's newcomers are. Are they from a particular geographic area? Do they come from a particular population niche? Do they have particular community connections?
 - b. What organizations (secular and/or religious) has your church been drawn to? Who are they serving?
 - c. Where are you seeing God at work in your community? How might you join God with those people who are involved?
4. **DREAMS & VISIONS.**
 - a. What is your church's vision? Who is it impacting?
 - b. What other dreams and visions are you hearing from people in your congregation? Your community?
5. **IDENTITY & VALUES.**
 - a. Reflect on your church's identity. What is it known for in the community? What does it stand for? How is it unique from other churches in its community?
 - b. What are your church's core values—the values that determine how you make decisions, spend your time, money, energy, resources?
 - c. Reflect on your church's history, how has it engaged with its community in the past? With whom has it intentionally served?
 - d. Describe a time when your church effectively carried out the mission and engaged with its community. What factors seemed to facilitate this? How might these be applied in today's context?

C. SYNTHESIZE WHAT YOU'VE DISCERNED. Spend time as a team reviewing and reflecting on what resulted from your discernment. What are the common threads or themes? Is there a particular group or groups that seem to stand out?

D. CARICATURE. Create a caricature of this group. Imagine that they are one particular person or family. Describe them. What is their name? (Yes, actually give them a name!) Where do they live? How many kids do they have? How old are the family members? What is their marital status? What kind of work do they do? What challenges are they dealing with? What are their gifts? What are their needs? What do they think of Jesus? The church? Your church? How might you connect with them?

Introduce your fictitious person/family to your congregational leaders. Ask them if they would add or change anything. Begin praying that God would help you to get to know these people in your community and pray for them.

PART 2. EXPLORE THE LAND

In Numbers 13, the Lord tells Moses to send some men to explore the land of Canaan. This is an important next step for you and your team. It is time to explore your community looking at it with fresh eyes, as though you had never seen it before. Enter its spaces. Rub shoulders with those around. Leave your preconceived notions behind and listen deeply. What are the words and language of the people? What do they value? What are their norms? What are their views of God? Do the answers vary from group to group or are they all pretty much the same?

Take your next steps...

A. EXPLORATION. Use the following activities to better to explore your community (“the land”). Consider who else to invite from your congregation to join you in this exploration. Invite them to join one or more of these exploration teams.

1. **DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY.** Recruit a team of three to six people to study your community’s demographic information using MissionInsite, a free resource available through the Indiana Conference. Refer to appendix (2) for guidance. Describe your community’s population or a segment in a half-page.
2. **WINDSHIELD TOUR.** Recruit a team of three to thirty people to study your community by car or van. Choose various parts of your community and assign car/van-loads of people from your church to tour the specific areas using the Windshield Tour Guide found in the appendix (3). As a group, debrief what you observe and summarize it in a half-page.
3. **PRAYER WALK.** Recruit a team of three to thirty people to prayer walk your community by foot or car/van. Assign them in small teams to prayer walk (or drive) specific parts of your community using the Prayer Walking Guide found in the appendix (4). As a group, debrief what you sensed and summarize it in a half-page.
4. **LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS.** Recruit a team of four to twelve people to conduct interviews of selected community leaders. Team members should be put into pairs and each pair is assigned to conduct one or more interviews with specific leaders using the Leadership Interview Guide found in the appendix (5). Community leaders could include leaders of school systems, township trustees, city/town officials (e.g., mayor, town clerk), police and/or volunteer fire department, organization leaders (e.g., YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Chamber of Commerce), area planning offices, etc. As a group, debrief what you heard and summarize it in a half-page.

B. SYNTHESIS. Share what you learned (the half-page reports) with the whole team and reflect. What common threads or themes did you discover? What are the assets of the community? Its needs? Its uniqueness? Its dreams? Are there persons of peace

(Luke 10:5-6), people who welcome having conversations with you, who are connected in the community and can open doors for further engagement? How might your church's gifts and ministries complement and mesh with where the community is at?

PART 3. MOVE INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Gospel of John, Chapter 1:14, says, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (*The Message*). How should your church move into its neighborhood? What kind of relationship should it have? Sometimes churches have had paternalistic relationships, or us-them relationships, or transactional relationships (e.g., you're hungry and we give you food). Will you minister to your community? Or, minister with? What is the difference? How your church begins its engagement will establish the type of relationship it will have going forward. Once established, it will be very difficult to change.

Part of figuring this out includes answering the questions, Why are we wanting to engage with our community in the first place? What is our motive? What is driving us?

- To grow our church?
- Meet people's needs?
- Save their souls?
- The Bible says to?
- To share God's unconditional love?
- To help them experience an abundant life?
- To be their neighbor?
- Because the pastor wants us to?
- It's the denomination's expectation?

The people in your community will be quick to discover your underlying motives. It is important for all those involved to understand the "why?"

Take your next steps...

Take the particular group you feel led to reach (the caricature from Part 1) and the context, including the assets and needs of the community (from Part 2), and look for points of potential ministry engagement.

A. BRAINSTORM. As a team, spend time brainstorming what potential engagement with the community might look like. Explain why each is important.

B. PRAY. Enter into a time of collective prayer, praying that God would guide your team and congregation as it begins to articulate a direction and focus. Invite the congregation into a time of listening prayer as well. Pray for clarity and discernment.

C. CONGREGATIONAL INPUT. Invite your church to prayerfully consider your list. Have them reflect on these questions:

1. Which ideas seem to be a good fit for our church and is consistent with who we are and our church's vision?
2. Which ideas seem to create the most energy and interest within the congregation?
3. Give congregation members the opportunity to "vote" on these ideas (e.g., have them place stickers on their top 2-3 ideas)? Which ones emerge with the most votes?

D. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN. As a team, develop an action plan that clearly articulates the direction of your congregation's outreach focus. Include the following:

1. A description of the hope-for outcomes
2. Why it is important that the church pursue this
3. Who this outreach is targeting and why
4. The 2-3 key objectives the church needs to focus on in order to make this a reality

Share this plan with the church council for its support and approval. (See below.)

E. CHAMPIONS. The team and/or church leaders need to identify a pair of people who would champion one of these engagement opportunities, and empower them to recruit a team (or work with an existing committee/team) to pursue their particular engagement opportunity. If there's interest and capacity, identify one or two other pairs of people who would champion one or two other engagement opportunities.

F. ASSETS. Surround them with on-going prayer and help point them to the appropriate assets in the church and community—including potential partner organizations, persons of peace, and potential grants. Encourage them to consider using Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) if it would be helpful. Encourage them to consider hiring a coach to work with them and to contact Church Development for other potential resources.

G. COMMISSION. Recognize in a congregational setting, like a worship service, the team/s that will be leading community engagement. Commission them, pray corporately for them (e.g., lay hands on them), and send them with God's blessings.

H. APPROVAL. Take official action in the church's leadership council to endorse the team/s efforts and to officially designate the efforts as key objectives of the church's ministry. Consider what additional steps need to be taken to adequately support the effort/s in order to achieve the objectives.

I. COMMUNICATE. Create a way to regularly communicate with the congregation how the community engagement, done on behalf of the church, is going. How can the congregation be more involved? What stories of transformation are emerging? How will you celebrate the results? How will you God the praise?

OUR OUTWARD JOURNEY

Although the journey through this guide has come to an end, the journey outward continues. As previously mentioned, the mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Engaging with our community is a critically important facet of this mission. How can we transform the world if we simply remain in our buildings?

Jesus' ministry was one of engagement, it was incarnational, it was based on life-giving relationships. Jesus calls us to go, go out into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). May your journey of community engagement take your church beyond its walls, sharing the light and love of Jesus Christ with an incredible world that is waiting for it. And go with the power of the Holy Spirit!

Church Development would like to hear about your church's journey through this resource. Please contact them at CD@inumc.org to share your experience.

You can also request a Field Guide using this same email address.

Appendix 1: Prayer and Fasting Guide

Isaiah 58 (NIV)

Invitations:

- Read through all of Isaiah 58 several times each day, but at least once in the morning and again in the evening.
- Fast as you are led and able. That may be one meal a day or multiple meals. It may mean giving up coffee and other beverages while drinking only water.
- However the fast may look, be wise and smart about it. But also be very intentional with it. God honors your commitment.
- Be sure to spend additional time each day in these guided prayers.
- Keep a journal of how you're led to pray and what you may be hearing from the Lord.

Day 1 (vs. 1)

*Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.*

- Confess and repent of any and all rebellion in your own personal life, as well as stand in the gap for any and all rebellion within the local church.

Day 2 (vs. 2)

*For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.*

- Again, confess and repent of any area of your own life, and the life of the church, where God's commands have been forsaken. Ask for a heart that truly is "eager" to do what is right in God's eyes.

Day 3 (vs. 3)

*'Why have we fasted,' they say,
'and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?'
"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.*

- Ask God to reveal any and all pride in your life. Ask God to impart true humility upon you and every leader in your church. Ask God to reveal any areas of your life and the

church's life where people are not treated well. Ask God to turn your hearts to do what pleases Him and not yourselves.

Day 4 (vs. 4-5)

*Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.
Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?*

— Confess and repent of any and all quarreling and strife in your life and in the life of the church. Ask God to reveal to you and all leaders the startling reality of how such strife keeps your prayers from being heard by God. Ask God to make your heart right with Him while you fast and to lead you and all leaders in the right habit of fasting.

Day 5 (vs. 6)

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?*

— Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where there is injustice and/or oppression in your community. For example, drug abuse, homelessness, hunger issues among school children, sex trafficking, etc.)

Day 6 (vs. 7)

*Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

— Ask the Holy Spirit to begin to show you areas in your community where your church can and should step in to provide real needs for real people. Start with your local community, but also ask the Lord to give you His heart for those in need around your state, country, and world.

Day 7 (vs. 8-9)

*Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;*

*then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

— Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas in need of healing within your church. Areas where you might need God's righteousness. Areas of surrender where leaders need to cry for God's help.

Day 8 (vs. 9-10)

*If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.*

— Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any and all areas of finger pointing and malicious talk within your church. Confess them and repent of them. And actively seek reconciliation with those hurt by these actions.

Day 9 (vs. 11-12)

*The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.*

— Ask the Lord to strengthen you and always guide you to focus on four areas for your missions and your ministries: rebuild, raise up, repair, and restore. Be specific as the Spirit leads. For example . . .

Lord, strengthen me and always guide me to rebuild relationships that have been broken or bruised in this church.

Lord, strengthen me and always guide me to raise up leaders to answer their call into ministry.

Lord, strengthen me and always guide me to repair vision and energy in the church to be about God's work for the Kingdom. And in the community for the common good of all.

Lord, strengthen me and always guide me to restore hope and vision to those in the church who have become tired and apathetic. And in the community for potential partnerships to bless all involved.

Day 10 (vs. 13-14)

*If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the Lord's holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
then you will find your joy in the Lord,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the
inheritance of your father Jacob.”
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

— Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you quickly of doing things your own way and of speaking any and all idle words. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase the fruit of joy in your own life even as you share that joy with those in your church. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand how He wants to use you and your church to triumph in your community.

Invitations:

- Come together as a team within a week of your time of prayer and fasting.
- Come together for 90 minutes to 2 hours. Start your time together with worship.
- Come together with a great anticipation of hearing and discerning the Holy Spirit's voice.
- Come together with a great sense of willingness and humility to follow as the Lord is leading.
- Come together to specifically pray about how God wants to use you and your church for bless your community and advance His Kingdom.
- Come together as part of a committed and regular habit of prayer and fasting for at least six months, if not longer.

Appendix 2: Demographic Community Study

Working as a group...

1. Describe our community's population using MissionInsite data. (See below "MissionInsite Data Guide.")

- How large is it?
- Is it growing?
- What do its people look like? Age? Ethnicity? Education?
- What are its families like? Children? Single parent households?
- What are the primary life stages? Young adults? Empty nesters? Retirees?
- What are the predominate Mosaic groups?
- What are their attitudes and spiritual lives like?
- What ministries are people needing?

2. Consider how this population is like our church's congregation? How's it different?

3. Is there a particular slice of the population we might reach better than others? Which one might God be calling the church to especially reach? How might our church connect with this population?

4. Put into a half-page your answers to the above. This might include a description of the typical person. A description of a potential target group/s.

MissionInsite Data Guide:

- a. Use the ExecutiveInsite Worksheet to create a narrative description of your study area.
- b. Look at the top mosaic groups represented. What are they like? How can churches reach them? (Go to "Mission Impact Mosaic Application Guide by Bandy.")
- c. Find the percentage unchurched in the ReligiousInsite report (page 25).
- d. What are the top ministry needs in the MinistryInsite and MinistryInsite Priorities reports?

Appendix 3: Windshield Community Survey

DESCRIPTION. A windshield community survey is basically riding in a car or van with persons who knows the area. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the community's social/economic profile, so that your church (or district) can better connect with and respond to the people as it makes disciples of Jesus Christ.

BENEFITS. A windshield community survey helps to the following:

- Broaden the awareness and understanding of church development in a particular area with more than one person.
- Increase the intentionality to act upon church development needs among persons within the local area.
- Increase the knowledge of a specific ministry area and points to follow-up data gathering and conversations.
- Participants begin to see the linking bridges among their observations and knowledge.

PROCEDURE. Choose a specific date and time to survey your community. Have a team from your church (district) join you in spending 30-60 minutes driving around your area. Ask people to note things such as the following:

- The type of structures—their ages, single-family vs. multi-housing, businesses vs. residential, high density vs. scattered density, etc.
- The type of businesses—old or new, blue-collar or white-collar or pink collar, factories or agriculture, government or private, large employer or small, etc.
- The homes, their yards (e.g. toys visible indicating young children at home; are they new or used), the type of cars (or lack of cars). The neatness of their lawns. The care they give their cars.
- The gathering spots. Does life take place on porches, on street corners, or inside. Are there bars, schools, churches, workout gyms, etc. What time of day?
- The people. What do their clothes say? What do you hear (e.g. kind of music, cries of babies, pets, etc.)? Is there a predominate age? What ethnic groups appear to be present? What languages (written or spoke) are present? What educational level?
- The churches. What kind of ministry appears to be going on in each? What kind of people do you think attends? Why? Do they appear to be growing or declining?

Debrief as a group immediately after the windshield survey. Write a summary of what you saw. Give a profile of the people. What do you suppose are their primary issues and concerns? What appears to be the spirit of the community? Its self esteem? How might a church reach these people? Where is God at work? Who's falling through the cracks? What is your biggest learning? How should your church (district) respond?

Appendix 4: Prayer Walk

GUIDE TO PRAYER-WALKING AND OBSERVING THE COMMUNITY

What is prayer-walking? One simple definition: "Praying on-site with insight." The purpose of prayer-walking is to seek God's guidance, mercy, and transforming power—both for the community and for ourselves as God's servants in the community.

Become more aware of what you see while you walk and pray by connecting prayer-walking with structured observation (see the guidelines for community observation on page 3). The discussion questions in the observation guide can help participants "debrief" after a prayer-walking experience.

Prayer-walking and observation can be a valuable tool for identifying needs and partners for Faith in Action service projects, becoming more familiar with the community you will be serving, and preparing project teams spiritually for the outreach.

Guidelines for prayer-walking

- Meet at an assigned time and start with group prayer.
- Walk in groups of two or three. Plan your routes ahead of time to cover as much of the area as possible.
- Pray aloud in a quiet, conversational voice, if you feel comfortable doing so. Or pray silently, letting your prayer partner(s) know what you are praying about. Don't call attention to yourselves. As the Waymakers website puts it, "You can be on the scene without making one."
- If anyone asks what you are doing, be prepared to respond: "We're praying God's blessing on this neighborhood. Is there any special way we can pray for you?"
- Although it is not the primary purpose of prayer-walking, be open to opportunities to interact with and bless people that may grow out of your experience. The Waymakers website explains the connection between prayer-walking and faith in action:

As you pray God's promises with specific homes or work sites in view, you'll find that hope for those people begins to grow. You'll begin to see people as God might view them. You'll likely find yourself becoming more interested in the welfare of the people you are praying for. ... Watch for the ways God impresses you to display his love in practical acts of kindness.

- Plan to walk for about half an hour. If anyone in your group is not comfortable with walking, they can prayer-drive around the neighborhood instead.
- Afterwards, gather to share your prayers, observations and experiences. What did you learn about the neighborhood? How was God manifest in this experience?
- Encourage people to continue praying for the community during the week.

Here are some pointers on how to pray:

- *Pray for discernment* -- Seek the gift of seeing the community through Christ's "lens," and to discern what God is already doing there; ask God to show you how you can pray with greater insight for the people, events, and places in the community.
- *Pray for blessing* – Pray over every person, home and business you encounter; for God's intervention in each life, so that each one can be fruitful in God's kingdom; for God's will to be done in this community "as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).
- *Pray with empathy* -- See and feel what residents live with every day; offer intercession for those things that express brokenness and grieve God's spirit, and give thanks to God for the blessings and gifts that exist in the community.
- *Pray from Scripture* -- Prayers based directly on God's word can be especially powerful. You may want to bring a Bible with key passages highlighted, or copy verses onto note cards.
- *Pray in God's power* -- allow times of silence for God's spirit to speak to you, or through you (Romans 8:26). Ask with confidence in the power of Jesus' name (John 14:12-14). Like the disciples sent out by Christ, we are empowered to push back the darkness (Luke 10:17-18).

After prayer walking, take time as a group to compare notes and reflect on your observations. Discuss the following:

- What positive qualities, opportunities and benefits does the community have to offer? What are signs that God is already at work in the neighborhood? Identify potential partners (people, churches, organizations) that the church could come alongside in serving the community.
- What needs and concerns are in evidence? What do you see that might detract from people's quality of life or hinder people from developing their potential? What challenges are people likely to face as they go about their daily life?
- How might community residents view your congregation? Would you be perceived as allies, foreigners, friends, helpers, annoyances, or simply irrelevant?
- Take note of your own response to what you see. What kinds of "vibes" do you get from your encounters in the community? What feels familiar or strange? Safe or dangerous? Friendly or hostile? Happy or sad? Pleasant or uncomfortable?
- Did your prayerful observations spark any ideas for your ongoing ministry in this community? Identify how you could follow up with organizations or individuals in the community.

Close with a time of prayer for the neighborhood/s and for your congregation's witness and service there. .

Adapted with permission from *Community Study Guide: Understand Your Church's Context for Ministry*, by Heidi Unruh, 2007.

Appendix 5: Community Leadership Interview Questionnaire

DIRECTIONS. Each team (of one to two people) is to interview up to five community leaders. Ask leaders for no more than 30 minutes of time to conduct the interview. Take notes during the interview if it's appropriate, or do so immediately after the interview. Compile the results with your whole team.

GUIDELINES. These questions are intended to be used in a way that will keep the interview focused. It is important to allow the person being interviewed to speak freely. It is important not to allow the interview to go beyond the time that was granted by the person being interviewed.

LIST OF POSSIBLE COMMUNITY LEADERS TO INTERVIEW. Mayor, school district superintendent, school athletic coach or director, police chief, art/music directors, social work director, funeral director, presidents of civic organizations, directors of community youth organizations, directors of care facilities, prison warden, representatives of hospitals/clinics, community leaders who range in ages from 21-40, youth, directors of self-help organizations, directors of YMCA/YWCA, business leaders, and volunteer fire departments and/or small-business owners in smaller communities, etc.

LIST OF POSSIBLE QUESTIONS.

1. What do you see as the greatest strength of this community?
2. What is your greatest concern for this community? What do you see as its greatest needs?
3. What are the key economic/social issues that need resolved today? In five years? Ten years?
4. What do you see as the importance of our community's churches?
5. What role do you see them playing in meeting the community's needs? How might they make an even bigger impact?
6. What role do you see your organization playing in our community? What values does it promote? How is it impacting our community?
7. What potential partnerships do you see between your organization—or some other organization—and our community's churches?
8. What do you know about our church? What is it known for in the community?
9. Do you see specific roles or programs/projects this church could do to strengthen our community's well being?

Adapted from a Wisconsin Conference survey developed by Don Mendenhall

