

## What's Next?

### Various Models for Congregations to Consider

*A Vocabulary of Possibility to help us expand our witness to Jesus Christ*

***The purpose of this document is to help congregations pray and ponder carefully about the ways in which buildings, leaders, and technology can be used as tools for mission.***

There are many “puzzle pieces” to consider when a congregation is at a crossroads.

The possibilities for congregations to cultivate a vibrant and enduring witness are many, even in the midst of deep uncertainty about their future.

When encouraging congregations to reflect upon what sort of future God might be calling them to pursue, we must recognize that our call is to unearth the places where Christian witness could shine afresh and provide opportunities for invigorated discipleship. **Furthermore, our hope is to encourage a faithful imagination so that all these models around buildings, leaders, and technology may lead to some sort of TRANSFORMATION as congregations seek to change in order to bring new vision and life to its members in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

---

## How to Use Buildings as Tools for Mission

### THE RENEWAL OF A CONGREGATION

( which include restructuring, retooling, refreshing, partnerships, etc. )

<b>Bi-vocational Building</b>	Intentional multi-use designs; going beyond “land lording” to create partnerships of mission possibilities. Examples include a nursery school or non-profit organization where new mission avenues and outreach could be explored
<b>Buildingless Church</b>	Conscious choice to relinquish a campus and remain a congregation. Examples include renting another space, nesting in another congregation, or using homes as space for congregational activity and worship.
<b>Partnership Model</b>	One larger and centrally located congregation (“the hub”) serves as the administrative center providing communications, book-keeping, and organizational support. All involved congregations would determine their fundamental “why” and would consider major shifts in their “why” in order to partner with one another. Changing worship time and/or location and intentional outreach to untouched community members would be part of the conversation. Congregations would share leadership (pastoral and administrative) in order to augment the mission and ministry of both. These would be sister churches and the relationship would need to avoid paternalistic overtones. One or more pastors/CRES may be called to serve as a team throughout the congregations with the clear purpose of revitalization. A team of CRES might share seasonal or function responsibility for pastoral leadership. For example, CRES could divide responsibility by liturgical seasons of the year or by functional gifts (moderating, preaching teaching, outreach, pastoral care, etc.)

## THE REBIRTH/TRANSFORMATION OF A CONGREGATION

(chrysalis, cocoon, metamorphosis type event)

<b>Home church</b>	There is no church building, congregational life happens within homes and a congregation becomes revitalized around mission, spiritual practices, and acts of generosity.
<b>Merger</b>	Two or more congregations close and then form a new and different congregation. This new congregation may meet in one of the existing church buildings or else move to a building that's new to everyone.
<b>Mission Shaped Community/Outpost</b>	Mission defines the congregation more than Sunday-centric worship. The congregation worships anywhere, with a focus on supporting mission in life and work. May have a "visiting" minister/teacher/speaker from time to time and/or participate with nearby congregations at key liturgical moments in the life of the church. The congregation is shaped by times of daily prayer and/or weekly worship, and intentional acts of generosity.
<b>Relocation</b>	One congregation closes and then opens later as a new, different congregation which is driven by felt needs of a community and shared mission.

## THE DEATH/CLOSURE OF A CONGREGATION

If a congregation and its leadership recognizes that a "good and gentle death" is inevitable and that a season of vibrant ministry has passed, we do not "spin our wheels", forcing a new model or style, but rather pray, support, bless and encourage that decision so that legacy will be left, based on wisdom and generosity.

<b>Conversion to Social Ministry</b>	Congregation closes and the building gifted to house a social service ministry
<b>Heritage Church</b>	Congregational life ceases, but building is gifted to a community and used for heritage events.
<b>Legacy Church</b>	Discerns a faithful road to a closure of a congregation so that its resources may be used to bear fruit for the kingdom

## How to Use Leaders as Tools for Mission

### **Residency**

Seminary interns and/or faculty are welcomed with a place to write and study. Free housing is their stipend and Sunday teaching and preaching would be their sole responsibility.

### **Retired Clergy in Residence**

Invite a retired pastor to serve for a particular season and/or Timeframe

### **Yoked Ministry**

Ordained clergy and/or CRES serve multiple congregations, which may even form a parish.

## How to Use Technology as Tools for Mission

Create Warehouses of Recorded Sermons and Music which could be viewed on a large screen or TV in-person in a congregation

Provide Satellite Services

Provide Online Gatherings for Bible Studies, Leadership Training, and even participatory worship in small congregations