



# PRACTICING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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# WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- The process of intentionally building relationships of mutuality with individuals and communities in geographic proximity to a congregation, with a focus on highlighting gifts, strengths, and community investment.

# WHAT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS NOT

- Community engagement is not a recruiting strategy.
- Community engagement is not about figuring out the next service project or ministry program.
- Community engagement is not a seasonal program or project.

A large, diverse crowd of people is gathered outdoors at night, likely at a community event or festival. The scene is illuminated by warm, glowing string lights strung across the top of the frame. The people are seen from various angles, some looking towards the camera and others looking away, creating a sense of a busy, social atmosphere. The background shows a brick building and more people in the distance.

COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT IS...





# WHAT IS OUR WHY?

The background of the slide is a blurred image of a map with several blue pushpins stuck into it. The pushpins are of various shades of blue and are positioned at different locations on the map. The map itself is light-colored with some faint lines and text, suggesting a geographical or organizational chart.

## YOUR CONGREGATION'S ASSETS

- Map the assets in your congregation.
  - One to ones
  - House meetings
  - Surveys
- Simple questions
  - What is something (or some things) that you know how to do well enough that you could teach someone else?
  - What is something you've always wanted to learn?



# CULTURE AND DIFFERENCE

- What culture(s) are present in our congregations?  
How might culture influence our community engagement?
  - Intercultural Development Inventory
- How might race, ethnicity, and/or class impact our community engagement?
  - How will we combat racism and classism in our church and our community engagement?



A photograph of a person with short brown hair, wearing a grey hoodie, standing at a farmers market. They are holding yellow lemons and have a large, colorful tote bag with a graphic design. The market stall in front of them is covered with a red and yellow checkered cloth and is filled with fresh produce, including carrots, cucumbers, and purple flowers. Other people are visible in the background, and the scene is outdoors with trees and a green canopy. The text "SPEND TIME TOGETHER IN YOUR COMMUNITY" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font, with a vertical white line to its left.

SPEND TIME  
TOGETHER IN YOUR  
COMMUNITY





# ONE TO ONES

- Intentional conversation between 2 people
- Identifying self interest, gifts and strengths, and gathering information
- 60-40 – Listening/Speaking
- Get curious and listen for stories
- Always have a next step





# HOUSE MEETINGS

- 10-15 people
- Informal setting
- 1-2 facilitators/note-takers
- Always have food and drink
- Share what you learn

# STORYTELLING

- Know and practice telling your own story
- Center a practice of storytelling in your congregation
- Invite neighbors and community stakeholders to share their story
- Oral History



A photograph of a residential neighborhood. In the foreground, there is a red brick pillar with a black metal roof. The pillar has some graffiti on it, including the word "LOVE" in large, stylized letters. In the background, there are several houses with white siding and dark roofs. A large tree is visible on the right side of the image. The overall scene is a typical suburban neighborhood.

# ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- What makes communities healthier, stronger, and better? Growing the gifts of people who care about their neighbors, who visit each other when they're sick and offer healing, who throw good parties to celebrate life and joy, who are talented carpenters, cooks, gardeners, administrators, organizers, and artists.
- Mather, Michael. Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places (p. 116). Eerdmans. Kindle Edition.



## SOME POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Practice one to ones during Lent
- Organize some intentional time for enjoying your neighborhood
- Research your community's history – How have culture, race, and class played a role in that history?
- Connect with opportunities from Center for Leadership and Neighborhood Engagement
- Consider applying for Faith Practices & Neighboring Practices in Fall of 2022





QUESTIONS?