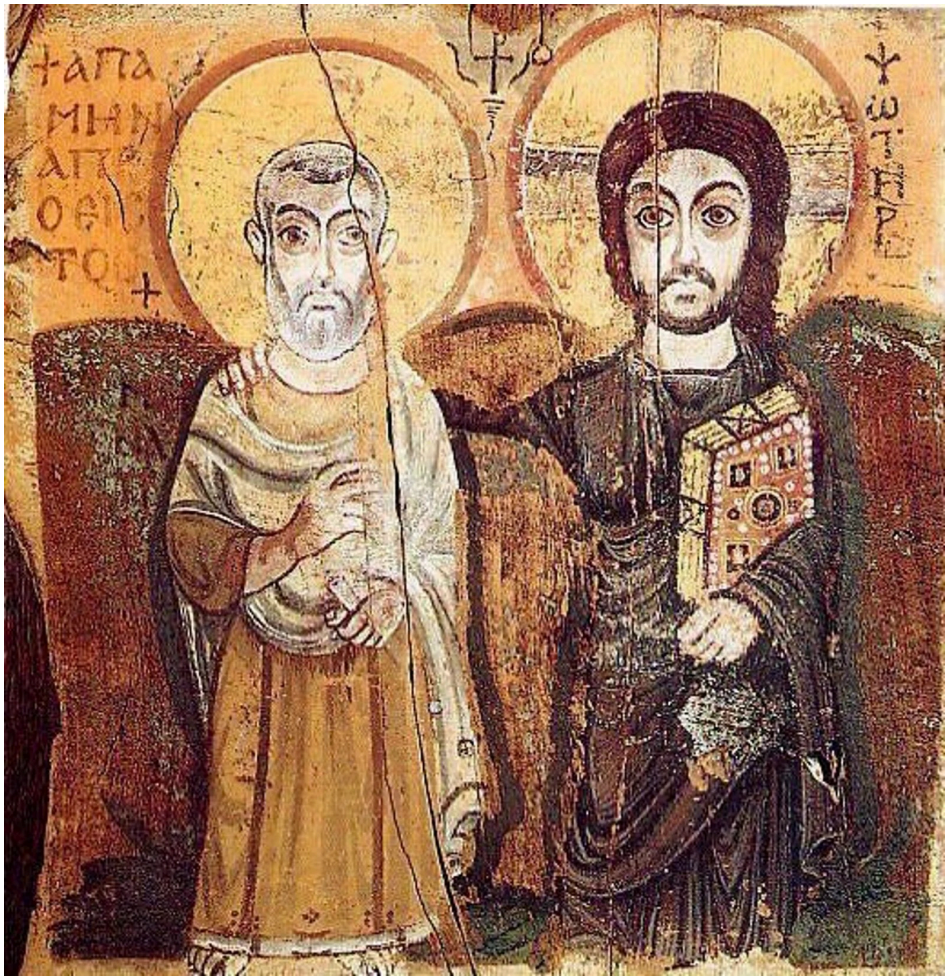
◆ A PARISH WORKBOOK ◆



Going & Gathering

Developing a Missional Strategy for Your Parish

Recovering the Missional Heart of God

The Rev. Canon Michael D. Vinson
Reformed Episcopal Church · NEMA

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook guides a rector, vestry, and mission team through seven meetings. Each session takes 60 to 75 minutes and ends with one clear decision. By the last session, those decisions add up to your parish's 90-day missional plan. Work through it together, in order, and write in it freely.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

Pray
Open with a prayer from the Prayer Book.

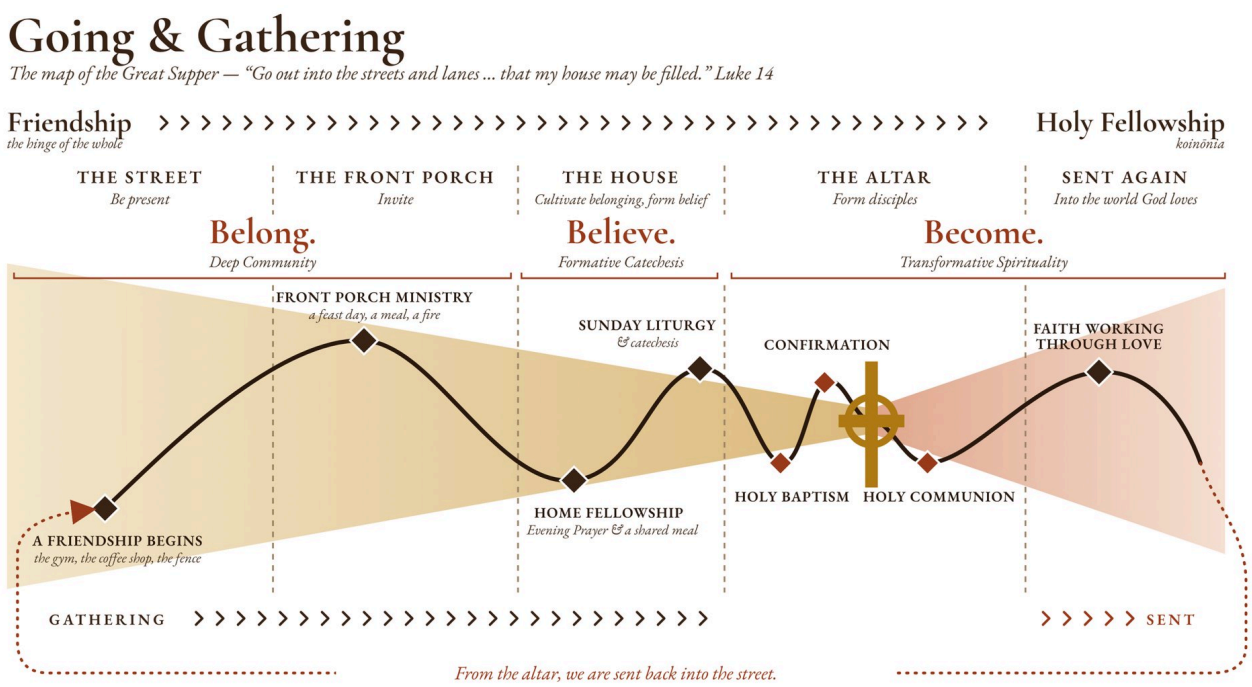
Read
One short page, read aloud together.

Discuss
Honest conversation around a few questions.

Do
Work the worksheet as a team.

Decide
Record one decision for the 90-day plan.

YOUR ROADMAP



- [ ] **1** Why We Go
- [ ] **2** Our Parish Mile
- [ ] **3** The Street and Friendship
- [ ] **4** The Front Porch
- [ ] **5** The House and the Altar
- [ ] **6** An Honest Diagnosis
- [ ] **7** Build the 90-Day Plan
- [ ] *Then* 30-Day Check-In · 90-Day Review

SESSION ONE

I Why We Go

The Sending God · The Heart Precedes the Hands

> *"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."*
>
> JOHN 20:21

◆ PRAY

The convener begins. All stand or kneel.

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth, and didst send thy blessed Son to preach peace to them that are far off and to them that are nigh; Grant that all men everywhere may seek after thee and find thee; bring the nations into thy fold; pour out thy Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten thy kingdom; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Prayer for Missions, The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will share a common conviction about why the parish goes, and will commit to a simple parish practice of prayer for the people and places around you.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
Prayer Books; this workbook for each member; the synod handout, if you have it.

Roles
A convener (usually the rector) and a scribe, who records the team's decision.

The hour

Pray	5 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	20 min
Do	25 min
Decide	10 min
Close in prayer	5 min

A word to the convener
Resist the urge to plan tonight. This session is about conviction, not strategy. The plan will come.

◆ READ ALOUD

A Locked Door and an Open Road

A few years ago, a company of clergy walked the streets of England and Scotland in their cassocks. Again and again they passed the old parish churches, once beacons of the faith, standing locked. Some had been abandoned; others had become community centers or fair-trade markets. Every one of them had been built by Christians who believed they had been sent to that place with the Gospel, for the souls who lived within the sound of its bells.

How does a church become a locked door? It does not happen in a day. No vestry ever votes to stop being sent. It happens slowly, almost imperceptibly, when a congregation forgets why it was planted and begins to live for itself. And when decline comes, frightened churches turn inward to guard what remains. But fear is a poor fuel. It burns hot, and it burns out.



The Church does not become missional because it is declining. The Church is missional because God is missional.

On the evening of the first Easter Day, the disciples sat behind closed doors, afraid. The first Christian congregation was a locked room full of frightened people. And Jesus came and stood in the midst and said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The Father sends the Son; the Father and the Son send the Holy Ghost; and the risen Son sends us. We did not design this mission. We have been swept up into it.

That is why the heart must precede the hands. Programs driven by anxiety wither; mission must flow from a heart formed by the love of God. For us, that heart is formed where it has always been formed: on our knees, with the Prayer Book open, and at the altar. There we offer "our selves, our souls and bodies," and ask grace to "do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in." The road is already laid. We do not rise from the Lord's Table to invent a mission. We rise to walk into one.

◆ DISCUSS · 20 MINUTES

Talk It Through

Let everyone speak before anyone speaks twice. The scribe notes what the team keeps returning to.

1 Have you seen a parish turn inward out of fear? What was it protecting, and what did it lose?

2 "The Church is missional because God is missional." If we truly believed this, what would change in our parish first?

3 Where in our worship is a heart for our neighbors already being formed? Where is it not?

4 Who first brought you near to the faith? How did they come toward you?

5 What anxieties are we bringing into this work? Name them honestly, and offer them to God.

◆ DO · PART ONE

Choose a Parish Practice of Prayer

Mark each practice the parish will take up. Begin with what you can sustain.

- ☐ Name the people and places around the parish in the intercessions at every public service.
- ☐ Ask every parishioner to pray daily, by name, for three people they already know.
- ☐ Pray the Prayer for Missions at the close of every vestry and team meeting.
- ☐ Pray for hearts that love our neighbors whether or not they ever join the parish.

◆ DO · PART TWO

Our Prayer List

First names or initials are enough. Mission begins with names, not prospects.

TEAM MEMBER	NAME ONE	NAME TWO	NAME THREE

Places and communities we will name in our intercessions

What God has already given: relationships, skills, and vocations among us

◆ DECIDE · SESSION ONE

Carries forward to the 90-Day Plan: "People and places we will pray for"

Beginning on _____, our parish will pray for the people and places around us in _____, and each member of this team will pray daily, by name, for the three people written above.

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray for the names on the list in silence, then say together the Lord's Prayer and the Grace.

BEFORE SESSION TWO

Walk or drive the mile around the church once, slowly. Notice who is there, and what you have never seen before.

SESSION TWO

2 Our Parish Mile

Where Has God Placed Us?

> *"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city."*
>
> LUKE 14:21

◆ PRAY

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

A Prayer for All Conditions of Men, The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will have drawn and named your Parish Mile: the people and places for which your parish will take particular responsibility before God.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
A printed street map of the area around the church, colored pens, and the prayer list from Session 1.

Roles
Convener, scribe, and a "mapper" who marks the team's map as you talk.

The hour

Pray	5 min
Report: the walk	10 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	15 min
Do: map it	25 min
Decide & close	10 min

A word to the convener
Begin by hearing what each member saw on the walk. Listen before you plan.

◆ READ ALOUD

Which Street?

Not a line, but a circle: from the altar, we are sent back into the street. But which street? The servant in the parable was not sent into the whole world at once. He was sent into the streets and lanes of the city, the ones nearest his master's house. So before a parish walks this map, it must find its starting place.

Do not begin with a diocesan campaign. Begin with the people and places God has already put within reach of your parish and, by extension, your parishioners' homes. What lies within a mile of your church: what streets and apartment blocks, schools and shops, parks and pubs? Where do your people work, shop, eat, and volunteer? Who lives within sight of your bell tower and has never once crossed your threshold?



Mission rarely begins by creating something new. It usually begins by noticing what God has already given.

Call this your **Parish Mile**. It need not be a literal mile. In a city it may be four streets; in the country, half a county; for some parishes, the truest mission field will be relational rather than geographical. The point is to move from the abstraction called "the community" to actual names, actual places, and actual people for whom your parish will take particular responsibility before God.

And look at what God has already placed among you: the parishioner who teaches at the elementary school, the one who serves on the town council, the one who knows every shop owner on Main Street. Before you plan anything, listen. Learn who lives here, where people already gather, and what hopes and pressures your neighbors carry.

◆ DISCUSS · 15 MINUTES

Listen Before You Plan

1 What did you see on your walk that surprised you?

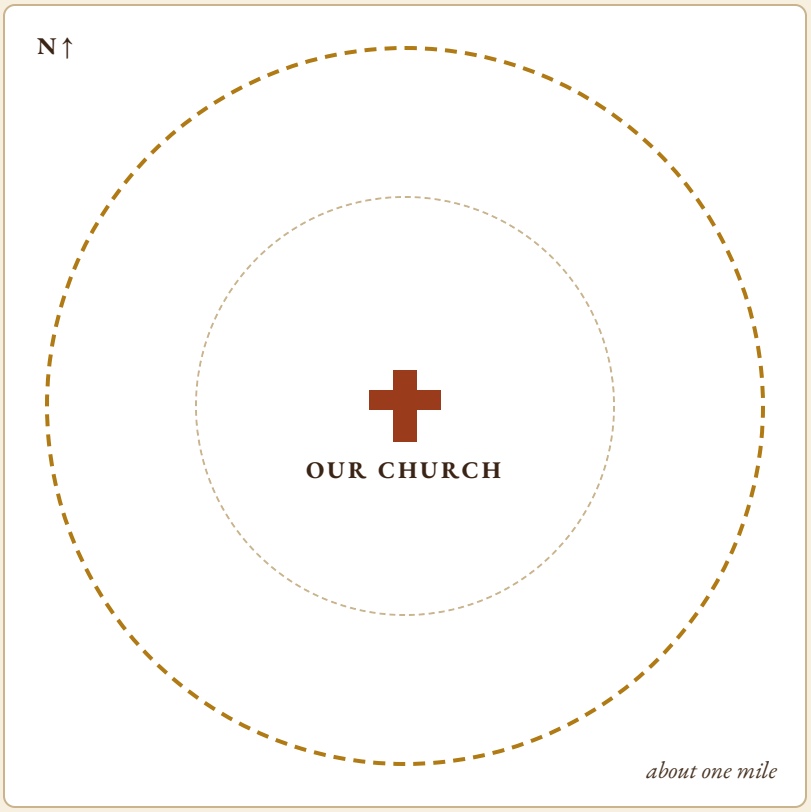
2 Where are people already gathering, and who is there?

3 What hopes, needs, or pressures do we hear from our neighbors?

4 Where are our parishioners already trusted, known, or involved?

◆ DO · PART ONE

Draw Your Parish Mile



MARK ON THE MAP

- ☐ Neighborhoods and apartment blocks
- ☐ Schools, shops, parks, and pubs
- ☐ Community centers and gathering places
- ☐ Where parishioners live, work, and volunteer
- ☐ Places where we have never been seen

It need not be a literal mile. Draw the circle, geographic or relational, that fits your place.

◆ DO · PART TWO

Name What Is Within Reach

Three places within our Parish Mile where we have never been seen

1

2

3

Local institutions, groups, and gathering places we should know better

People, relationships, and gifts already present in our congregation

Who lives within sight of our bell tower and has never once crossed our threshold?

◆ DECIDE · SESSION TWO

Carries forward to the 90-Day Plan: "Our Parish Mile"

Our Parish Mile is:

☐ Geographic ☐ Relational ☐ Both

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray over the map: for each place marked, and for those who live and work there. Then the Lord's Prayer.

BEFORE SESSION THREE

Spend one unhurried hour somewhere in the Parish Mile: a café, a park, a school event. Be present. Notice who comes near.

SESSION THREE

3 The Street and Friendship

Be Present · The Hinge of the Whole

> *"He first findeth his own brother Simon … And he brought him to Jesus."*
>
> JOHN 1:41–42

◆ PRAY

Almighty God, who didst give such grace unto thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for Saint Andrew's Day, The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will choose one practice of going: a simple, sustainable way for your people to become present in the Parish Mile and to cultivate genuine friendship there.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
Your Parish Mile map from Session 2 and the team's prayer list.

Roles
Convener and scribe.

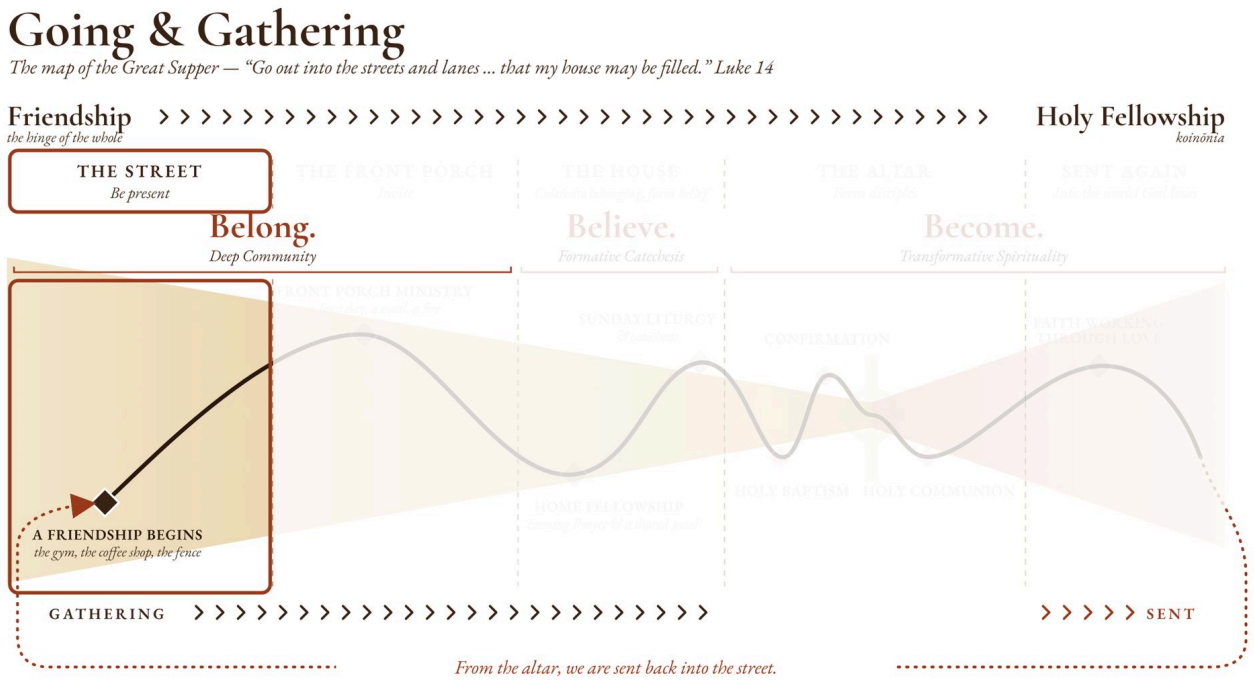
The hour

Pray	5 min
Report: the hour	10 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	15 min
Do	25 min
Decide & close	10 min

A word to the convener
Watch for friendship sliding into technique. People can always tell when they are a project.

◆ READ ALOUD

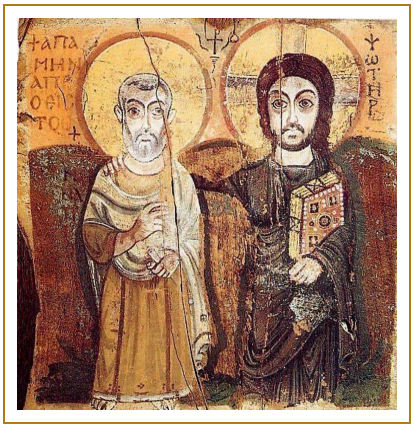
Seen, and Not in a Hurry



The street is ordinary life: the office, the gym, the coffee shop, the school pick-up line, the neighbor over the fence. Our first task there is not to turn every encounter into a pitch, but to be genuinely and unhurriedly present. The ancient *Epistle to Diognetus* says that what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world: not a separate enclave, but life given quietly from within.

Outside a pub in Durham, a young man once stopped me in my cassock. Within a minute he had confessed his unbelief, and in the same breath the memory of a faith he once held welled up. What brought it to the surface was simple: he could see me, and I was in no hurry. **People will often come to us when they can see us, and when we are not in a hurry.**

Presence ripens into friendship, and friendship is the hinge of the whole. The Church's first evangelism was a brother fetching his brother. But friendship is never a technique; we must be willing to love our neighbors whether or not they ever darken our door. Real friendship makes room for a word about faith when it is asked for, an invitation to a meal or to Evening Prayer, an honest "I don't know," and patient presence in sorrow.



◆ DISCUSS · 15 MINUTES

"Here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst."

ST. AELRED OF RIEVAULX, SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP 1.1

Christ stands beside Abbot Menas, his arm on his shoulder. Not enthroned above him. Beside him.

1 Report on your unhurried hour. Who came near? What did you notice?

2 What keeps our people from being visible and unhurried in the places they already go?

3 How can we tell the difference between friendship and treating someone as a project?

4 When has a friend's simple invitation changed something for you?

◆ DO · PART ONE

Practices of Presence

Mark the practices you will commend to the whole parish.

- ☐ Learn names; ask questions and wait for the answers.
- ☐ Show up: the hospital visit, the note after the funeral.
- ☐ Give an answer for our hope, with meekness and fear.
- ☐ Be available in grief, transition, or crisis.
- ☐ Become a regular somewhere in the Parish Mile.
- ☐ Be willing to say, "I don't know."

◆ DO · PART TWO

My Practice This Week

Each member fills this in alone, then shares one line with the team.

THIS WEEK	MY COMMITMENT
A person I will pray for by name	
A person I will listen to more attentively	
A place where I will slow down and be present	
A practical act of care I can offer	

One friendship I want to tend with greater attention

◆ DECIDE · SESSION THREE

Carries forward to the 90-Day Plan: "One practice of going"

Our one practice of going:

How we will commend it to the whole parish:

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Each member prays aloud, briefly, for the one friendship they named. Then the Lord's Prayer.

BEFORE SESSION FOUR

List every gathering the parish already holds across a year: feasts, suppers, studies, fellowships, sales.

SESSION FOUR

4 The Front Porch

Invite · Fishing with Nets, Not Hooks

> *"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many."*
>
> LUKE 14:16

PRAY

O Lord, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for the Second Sunday after Trinity, whose Gospel is the parable of the Great Supper. The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will choose one practice of gathering, a front porch ministry, and plan its welcome before planning the event itself.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
The list of the parish's yearly gatherings, the parish calendar, and the Parish Mile map.

Roles
Convener and scribe. Invite anyone who hosts parish events.

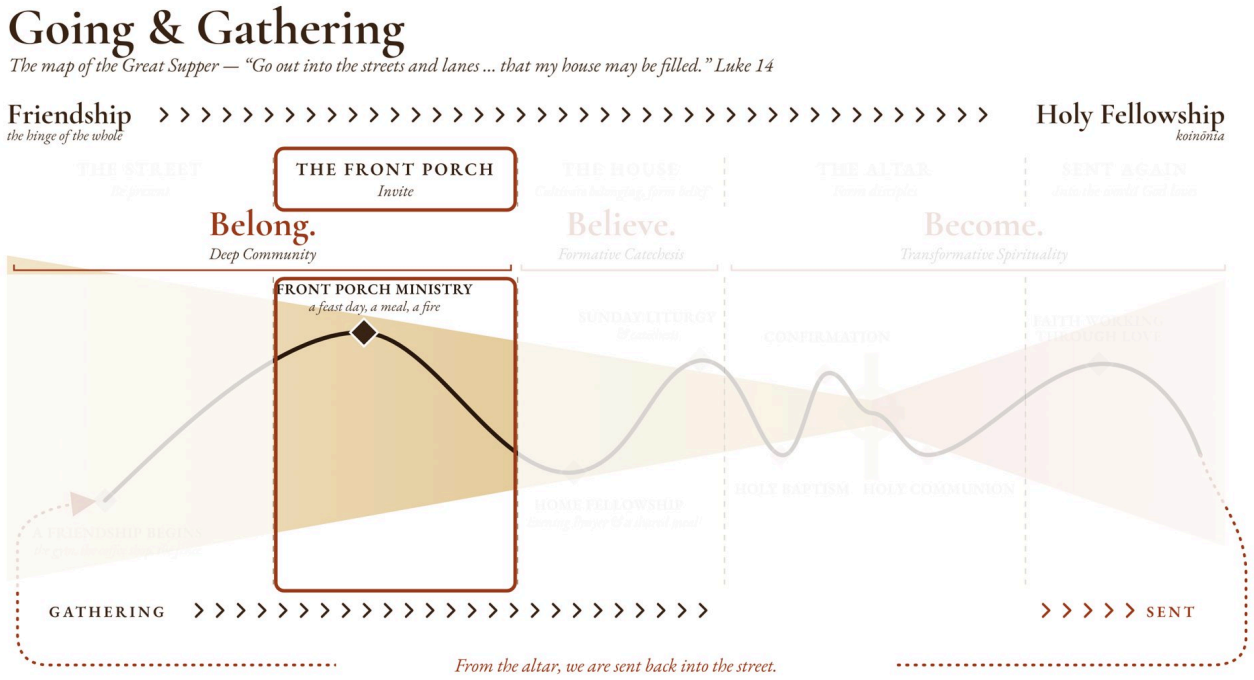
The hour

Pray	5 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	15 min
Do: choose three	15 min
Do: plan the welcome	20 min
Decide & close	10 min

A word to the convener
Resist inventing new programs. Ask which of our existing gatherings could open its doors.

◆ READ ALOUD

The Doors Open Wide



Yet friendship cannot carry the whole weight alone. Sooner or later a friend must be invited somewhere: to a meal, a feast, a fire. That is the front porch, an invitation into a little more of our common parish life. Front porch ministries let people draw near before they believe, before they embrace our Reformed Catholic way, before they step across the threshold into the full life of the parish.

Begin with the treasures you already possess: a Rogation procession, a blessing of animals, an Epiphany house blessing, an Advent concert; and alongside these the ordinary life of the parish, from the garage sale to the cigar fellowship by the fire. Bishop Sutton calls this fishing with nets rather than hooks. Every front porch ministry is a square in the net, and the net is cast in the open. We never trick anyone into attending, nor hide our intentions.

But an event is not evangelism; it is an opening for relationships to begin. So plan the welcome before you plan the event. Who will greet the newcomer? Who will sit with them? Who will call them the next week? **A full hall that leads nowhere is a missed supper.**

◆ DISCUSS · 15 MINUTES

Which Doors Could Open?

1 Look at your list of the parish's gatherings. Which of them could become an open invitation with little added cost?

2 What do our people already love doing together?

3 Think of a time a newcomer came to a parish event. What happened next, and what should have?

4 How might the Church's year (Rogation, Epiphany, Advent, our patronal feast) open doors to our neighbors?

◆ DO · PART ONE

Name No More Than Three Possibilities

POSSIBLE INVITATION	WHO MIGHT IT REACH?	WHO COULD HOST?

Then circle the one the team will begin with.

◆ DO · PART TWO

Plan the Welcome First

PLAN THE INVITATION	OUR DECISION
Our chosen front porch invitation	
What will make it genuinely welcoming to a newcomer?	
Who will greet, sit with, and introduce guests?	
Who will follow up personally the next week?	
What next step will continue the relationship?	

◆ DECIDE · SESSION FOUR

Carries forward to the 90-Day Plan: "One practice of gathering"

Our one practice of gathering:

To be held on

Welcome led by

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray for the guests who have not yet been invited, and for those who will greet them. Then the Lord's Prayer.

BEFORE SESSION FIVE

Attend Sunday worship as if you were a visitor. Note what would confuse, welcome, or move a stranger.

SESSION FIVE

5 The House and the Altar

Cultivate Belonging, Form Belief · Form Disciples

"Come; for all things are now ready."

LUKE 14:17

PRAY

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for Purity, from the Order for the Holy Communion. The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will draw a clear path from a first welcome to belonging, catechesis, and the sacraments, and name who will tend hospitality and follow-up.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
Notes from Sunday seen through a visitor's eyes, and a list of current groups, classes, and catechesis offerings.

Roles
Convener and scribe. The rector should be present for this session.

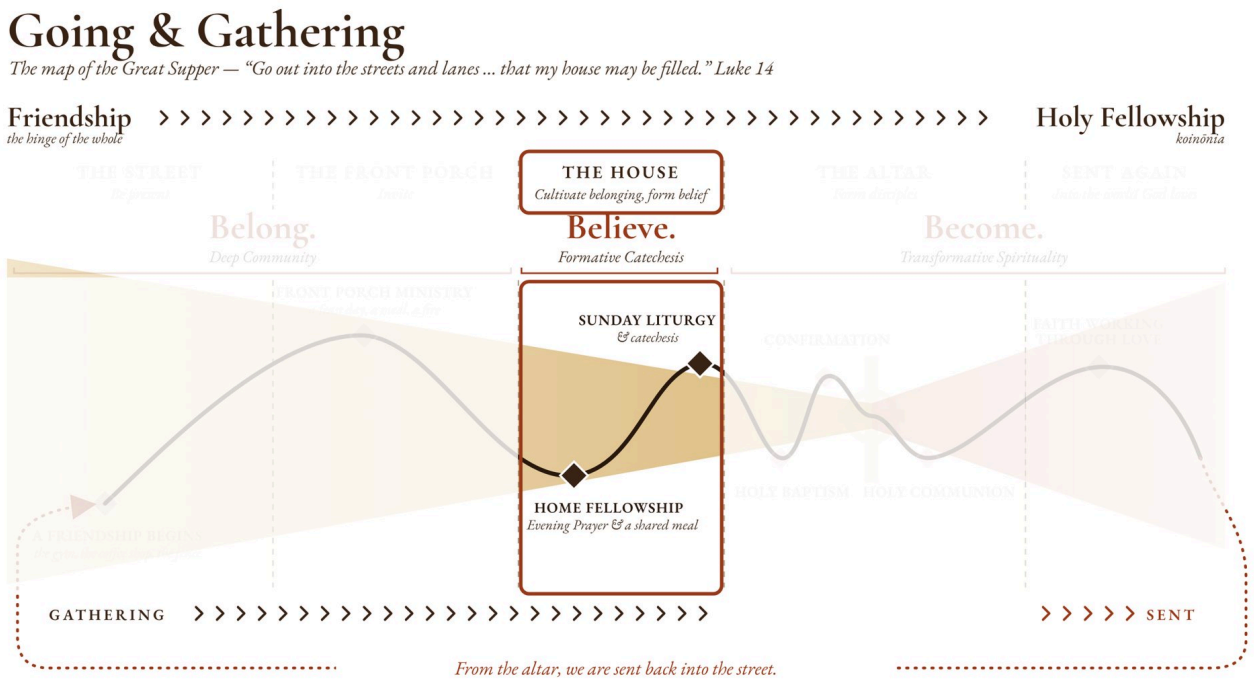
The hour

Pray	5 min
Report: Sunday	10 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	15 min
Do: draw the path	25 min
Decide & close	10 min

A word to the convener
Belonging is the soil, not the harvest. Keep the conversation moving toward the altar.

◆ READ ALOUD

Further In, and Up to the Table



But a porch is a threshold, not a destination. Those who linger there must be welcomed further in, into the house. St. Benedict wrote, "Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ." That sentence should stand over the door of every parish. The house is deeper belonging: home fellowships with Evening Prayer and a shared meal, parish suppers, study groups, and catechesis cohorts where questions are welcome.

For many, belonging will come before believing. That does not mean belief is unimportant, or that everyone welcomed is thereby a Christian without professing faith through the grace of Holy Baptism. It means we do not demand that people resolve every question before they may come into the house. Yet **belonging is the soil, not the harvest.** People must hear the Gospel; they need Scripture, the Creeds, the Catechism, and patient company through a long and uncertain season.

And all of it is leading somewhere: to the table the Master has prepared. The altar is the heart and center of the house. Every invitation leads at last to Holy Baptism and Confirmation, to the Holy Communion, and to a life transformed in Christ. Our sacramental life is not a private possession to be guarded from the world; it is the very life into which Christ gathers his people. And at the altar the circle turns: those gathered in are sent out again.

◆ DISCUSS · 15 MINUTES

Is There Room in the House?

1 Seen through a visitor's eyes, what in our Sunday worship welcomed, confused, or moved you?

2 Where can someone still asking questions belong among us right now?

3 How do we explain our worship generously, without making it less distinct?

4 Who could accompany an inquirer through a long or uncertain season?

◆ DO · PART ONE

Make Room in the House

Mark what we already do well. Circle what we must strengthen.

- ☐ Someone explains the service without overwhelming a visitor.
- ☐ An existing group has room for a newcomer to join.
- ☐ Visitors receive a personal follow-up within the week.
- ☐ Newcomers meet people beyond the one who invited them.
- ☐ There is a regular place to explore the faith and ask questions.
- ☐ Preparation for Baptism and Confirmation is clear and offered.

◆ DO · PART TWO

Draw the Path to the Table

For each step, write what our parish offers now and who tends it. Leave a blank where something is missing.

STEP 1
First Welcome
a visit, an event

Who

STEP 2
Belonging
a group, a table

Who

STEP 3
Inquiry & Catechesis
Scripture, Creeds, Catechism

Who

STEP 4
The Altar
Baptism, Confirmation, Communion

Who

Where is the path broken or missing? What must we strengthen first?

◆ DECIDE · SESSION FIVE

Carries forward: "Hospitality and follow-up"

Hospitality and follow-up will be overseen by:

The next step we will offer to anyone who wants to learn or belong:

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray for all preparing for Baptism and Confirmation, and for those not yet ready to ask. Then the Lord's Prayer.

BEFORE SESSION SIX

Name one thing our parish does out of habit that no longer serves its purpose.

SESSION SIX

6 An Honest Diagnosis

The Small and Effective Church · Four Objections

"For who hath despised the day of small things?"

ZECHARIAH 4:10

◆ PRAY

Gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it; where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer for the Church, The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will tell real limits from assumed ones, and choose one thing to stop, simplify, or change to make room for mission.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
60–75 minutes

Bring
Each member's "one habit" from the last session, and the parish calendar and budget.

Roles
Convener and scribe. Invite the senior warden.

The hour

Pray	5 min
Read aloud	5 min
Discuss	20 min
Do: diagnose	15 min
Do: work an objection	15 min
Decide & close	10 min

A word to the convener
This session asks for honesty and charity in equal measure. Name habits, not people.

◆ READ ALOUD

Small, and Effective

A small parish does not have to think small. Smallness does not disqualify a parish from mission, and size alone does not tell us whether a parish is healthy. We rejoice in growth when God gives it. But a small parish may possess gifts a large one envies: intimacy, flexibility, a strong common life, and the ability to truly know a newcomer by name.

Let us also be honest. Some parishes are small because they have turned inward and quietly closed the porch. Smallness is neither proof of failure nor a guarantee of health. The question is not how to imitate a large church with fewer resources, but how to be healthy and fruitful with the people and gifts God has given.



Size shouldn't be viewed as an obstacle to effectiveness, but rather as a spur to the missional imagination.

FOUR OBJECTIONS, AND A FAITHFUL RESPONSE

"We're too small."

Smallness does not disqualify a parish from mission. Begin with the people and gifts God has given.

"We don't have the money."

Money cannot buy love, patience, prayer, or presence: the very things mission cannot do without.

"We only have one priest."

Mission was never reserved to the clergy. The priest teaches, forms, equips, and leads the people of God.

"Our worship is too strange."

Inhabit the tradition faithfully; explain it generously. The liturgy is the life we invite people to discover.

The small-church material in this session is adapted from the author's teaching, The Small, and Effective Church, developed in conversation with Karl Vaters, Small Church Essentials (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018).

◆ DISCUSS · 20 MINUTES

What Is Really Holding Us Back?

1 What in our parish is life-giving, healthy, and fruitful?

2 Where have we become inward-focused, resistant, inaccessible, or simply tired?

3 Which of the four objections do we hear most? Is it a fact, a fear, or an assumption?

4 What would a neighbor encounter if they tried to draw near to us?

◆ DO · PART ONE

Stuck, or Strategic?

Mark every description that honestly fits your parish. Most parishes will find themselves on both sides.

WHEN SMALLNESS MAY BE STUCK

- ☐ **Small by mistake:** practices or leadership patterns no longer serve the mission.
- ☐ **Small by exclusion:** habits or barriers keep newcomers at a distance.
- ☐ **Frozen in time:** unwilling to adapt or respond to the community.

WHEN SMALLNESS MAY BE STRATEGIC

- ☐ **With a purpose:** a community where people can be known and pastored.
- ☐ **For a while:** a season in the life of a developing mission.
- ☐ **For infiltration:** able to reach places larger churches may not.

◆ DO · PART TWO

From Objection to Faithful Experiment

Take the objection the team hears most, and work it through.

WORK THE QUESTION	OUR RESPONSE
1. Name it. State the objection honestly.	
2. Diagnose it. A capacity issue, a habit, or a strategic choice? What evidence do we have?	
3. Declutter. What can we stop, simplify, share, or repurpose before adding anything?	
4. Imagine. What one small, faithful response fits our gifts and place?	

◆ DECIDE · SESSION SIX

Carries forward: "What we will simplify"

One thing we will stop, simplify, or change:

What this frees us to do:

Recorded by (scribe)

Date

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Offer the parish as it truly is, its gifts and its limits, into God's hands. Then the Lord's Prayer.

BEFORE SESSION SEVEN

Reread every Decide box in this workbook. The rector proposes dates for the 30-day and 90-day reviews.

SESSION SEVEN

7 Build the 90-Day Plan

Begin Where You Are · Sent Again

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

EPHESIANS 2:10

PRAY

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

BY THE END OF THIS SESSION

Your team will have assembled the 90-day plan from its six decisions, set the review dates, and signed the Parish Commitment.

FOR THE CONVENER

Time
75 minutes

Bring
Every member's workbook, the parish calendar, and a pen for signing.

Roles
The rector, the senior warden, and the whole team.

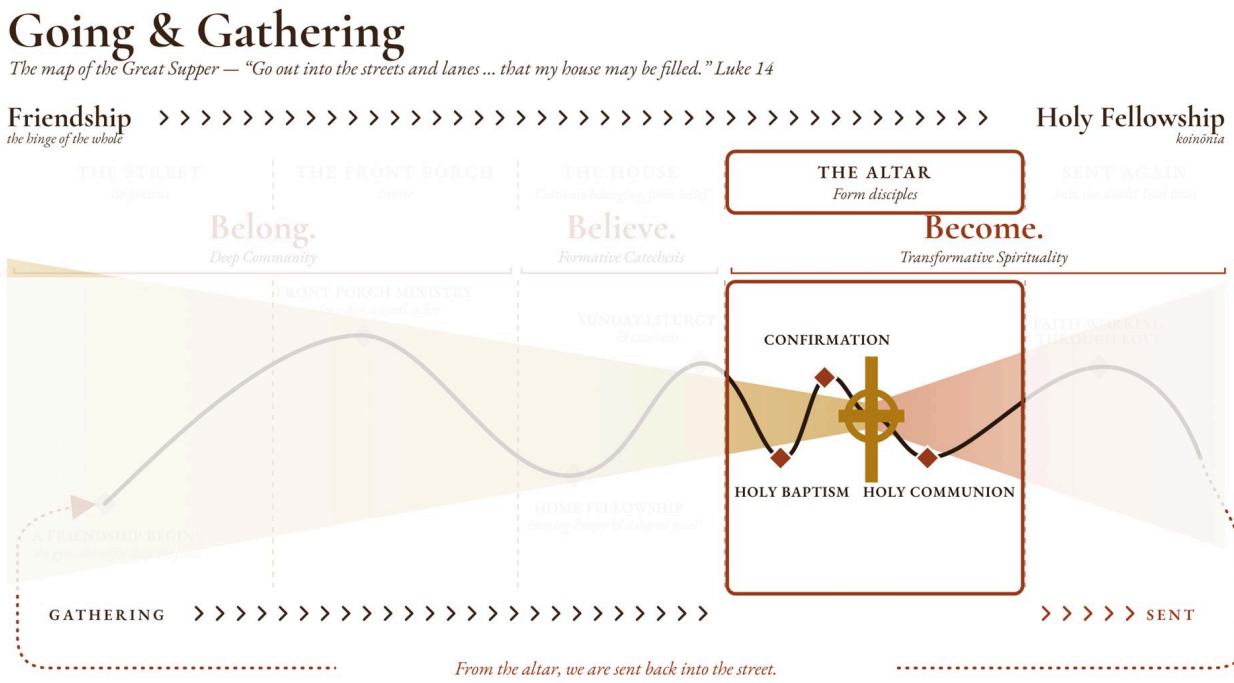
The hour

Pray	5 min
Read aloud	5 min
Readiness check	10 min
Assemble the plan	35 min
Sign the commitment	10 min
Close in prayer	10 min

A word to the convener
The aim is not to do everything. It is to take the next faithful step.

◆ READ ALOUD

Sent Again



And here, at the altar, the circle turns. Those gathered in are sent out again, to "do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in." We are sent, we gather, and we are sent again. You do not need to do everything at once. You need only begin faithfully: one practice of going, one practice of gathering, a welcome planned, and dates set to learn from what happens. We should still count, and still care for the health of the parish. But the numbers must serve the mission, not replace it.

◆ READINESS CHECK · 10 MINUTES

- ☐ We can say why mission flows from the love of God, not the wish to grow.
- ☐ We have defined our Parish Mile.
- ☐ We know who will welcome newcomers and follow up.
- ☐ We are praying for our neighbors by name.
- ☐ We have chosen one realistic practice of going, and one of gathering.
- ☐ There is a clear path to catechesis and the sacraments.

◆ DO · ASSEMBLE THE PLAN · 35 MINUTES

Our 90-Day Missional Plan

Copy each decision from its session's Decide box, then complete the last four lines together.

OUR PLAN	FROM	PARISH COMMITMENT
Our Parish Mile	*Session 2*	
People and places we pray for	*Session 1*	
One practice of going	*Session 3*	
One practice of gathering	*Session 4*	
Hospitality and follow-up	*Session 5*	
Next step for inquirers	*Session 5*	
What we will simplify	*Session 6*	
Who coordinates the work	*Today*	
Pastoral oversight	*Today*	
30-day check-in date	*Today*	
90-day review date	*Today*	



DECIDE · SESSION SEVEN

A Parish Commitment

As a parish, we desire to share more faithfully in the mission of God. We will begin with prayer, attend to the people and places God has entrusted to us, cultivate genuine Christian friendship, open our common life to our neighbors, and welcome them toward the table the Master has prepared.

The parish of

_____

_____ _____

Rector Senior Warden

_____ _____

Junior Warden Mission Team

_____ _____

Mission Team Mission Team

_____ _____

Mission Team Date

We must go to the street. We must open the front porch. We must welcome people into the house. We must gather them to the altar. And from the altar, we are sent out again.

Close by praying together the Prayer for Missions, and the Grace.

AFTER THIRTY DAYS

30 The Check-In

A listening review, not a performance evaluation. About 45 minutes.

◆ PRAY

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

LOOK BACK TOGETHER

- ☐ What friendships have begun or deepened?
- ☐ What invitations or doors have opened?
- ☐ What felt life-giving? What was difficult?
- ☐ What have we learned about our Parish Mile?
- ☐ Were newcomers welcomed and followed up?
- ☐ Are we still praying for our names daily?

Stories and observations

◆ DECIDE

One adjustment for the next sixty days:

AFTER NINETY DAYS

90 The Review

Celebrate signs of grace, tell the stories, and choose the next faithful step.

PRAY

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom, The Book of Common Prayer (1928)

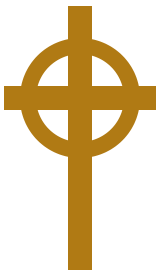
LOOK FOR	WHAT WE HAVE SEEN
Friendship	
Presence	
Invitation	
Belonging	
Belief and discipleship	
Parish culture	

Continue

Adapt

Begin next

"We should still count, and still care for the health of the parish. But the numbers must serve the mission, not replace it."



Gathered by grace.
Sent in love.

"Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

JOHN 20:21

Going & Gathering · A Parish Workbook

The Rev. Canon Michael D. Vinson
Reformed Episcopal Church · NEMA