

DISCOVERING GOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

TOOLKITS FOR DISCOVERY AND DISCERNMENT

FROM ENCOUNTER TO EMPOWER

God is already active and present in the world around you. This toolkit invites your congregation to participate in mapping out its relationship with the surrounding neighborhood and discover places where God is already at work. When this exercise is complete, your congregation will be left with a map to discern how you might live as faithful partners with the community around you.

COMMUNITY POWER

When setting out to create social change, one of the most important initial conversations should be about community power. This toolkit offers community leaders a guide for theologically rich discussions about community power, a theoretical framework that will help them create a community power binder, and a collection of resources for diving deeper.

STRONG COMMUNITY

Instead of starting with what is wrong, this toolkit offers an invitation to begin with what is strong. As an introduction to Asset-Based Community Development, this exercise maps out community assets at every level. This map will inspire you to discover synergy, build collaboration, and be part of the work God is already doing in the community around you.

RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Many of our communities have experienced a history of disaster and displacement. Context matters, and each neighborhood is unique in how it prepares and responds. This toolkit will provide community leaders with a framework for understanding, evaluating, and responding to community challenges so your community can be prepared and resilient.

BELOVED COMMUNITY

Every member of a community is God's beloved. This toolkit offers a spiritual, theological, and pastoral framework for evaluating belonging, cohesion, and community wellbeing. More than simply a community that understands that social justice exists, this toolkit will result in strategies for offering spiritual care, mutual aid, and well-being to your neighborhood.

DISMANTLING WHITE SUPREMACY

In order to be part of healing the wounds caused by racism, we must commit to building an anti-racist world. This toolkit offers tools for detecting, disrupting, and dismantling white supremacy in the world around you, beginning with your own neighborhood.



DEMOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY

When setting out to create social change, one of the most important initial conversations should include our theory of power. This toolkit offers community leaders a guide for theologically rich discussions about community power, a theoretical framework that will help them create a community power map, and a list of books and resources for diving deeper.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Health equity is an important framework for understanding community wellbeing. By introducing the Social Determinants of Health, this toolkit invites your congregation to understand, measure, evaluate, and work to address a number of social factors that affect the wellbeing of the community around you.



NEIGHBORHOOD WALKABOUTS

Inspired by numerous ancient and indigenous spiritual journeys, the Neighborhood Walkabout is a sacred pilgrimage to discover the heart of God for your neighborhood. This toolkit leaves you with a prayer map that you can use as an instrument for discovery, discernment, and prayer. This spiritual practice toolkit is a good complement to any of community engagement toolkits.



PLACE, ART & STORY

Many of the existing practices in your congregation can be retooled for engaging the community around you. This toolkit is an invitation to take a deep dive into the history of your community. It provides resources and direction for engaging, interpreting, and creating a healthy, vibrant, inclusive culture in the community around you.

DISCOVERING GOD IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: A GUIDED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT JOURNEY

Each toolkit in the Community Engagement Toolbox can be presented as a workshop. In partnership with the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Living Water Association can host one or more workshops with trained facilitators who can journey alongside your congregation throughout the process of discovery and discernment, helping you build a vision for engaging the community around you.

For more information, contact Rev. Michael Howard, Minister of Faith in Action at michael.mfia@livingwaterone.org or visit us online at livingwaterone.org.