

A SHORT GUIDE TO:
STARTING
NEW
EPISCOPAL
COMMUNITIES

FOR DIOCESAN LEADERS



**THE OFFICE OF CHURCH PLANTING AND REDEVELOPMENT,
2023**

INTRODUCTION

Henri Nouwen writes: “The message that comes to us in the New Testament is that the compassionate life is a life together.” Gathering together in communities of faith is a natural and crucial aspect of the Christian witness and of our shared mission. While it is impossible to know the “future of the Episcopal Church,” there’s no doubt that the heart of its future will be faithful communities of people striving to love God and neighbor, gathering to share bread, and telling their stories of transformation and resurrection.

The hype around church planting can lead us to imagine a “Shark Tank” like tenor, where only the ministries with the most sellable vision, the most charismatic leader, the most competitive plan and the most start-up funding will survive. Vision, leadership, plan and funding ARE indeed important. But even more important are faithfulness, love and compassion for neighbor, and willingness to follow the Spirit into the unknown. Any diocese striving toward these things can plant a new church.

A key learning of our team has been that there are many different, simultaneous and connected futures for The Episcopal Church. One of these futures is the new hope and possibility that open for us when we start new expressions of church. **Our shared vitality depends on having faith communities in all different stages of the life cycle.** This is the process by which we most naturally and strongly grow and evolve to engage the people, cultures and challenges of each new generation.



Our team is frequently asked for guidance about how Episcopal dioceses can initiate, nurture and bless creative leaders and new faith communities. This simple guide is intended to share our learning from the past three triennia and help make starting New Episcopal Communities feel not just un-daunting, but life giving.

Please connect with us - we want to be your partners on this journey!

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1.

WHY PLANT NEW EPISCOPAL COMMUNITIES?

Starting new Christian communities is a tangible expression of our desire to live into Jesus' call to share the Good News and make disciples. When financial and energy resources are limited, how important is church planting to the vitality and mission of the wider church? Consider the following:

1. New communities are often more effective at reaching new people, as they create excitement and build momentum around missional work and growth.

2. New communities can be planted among people who are historically underrepresented in the Episcopal Church, allowing us to more fully represent our communities and see God's Kingdom more vividly.

3. New communities have an opportunity to reach the growing numbers of people who find established parishes unappealing, or who feel disenchanted with church institutions.

4. New communities have more freedom to innovate and experiment with less traditional patterns of gathering, worship, leadership and formation.

5. New communities are an opportunity for missional discipleship for members of sending congregations.

6. New communities complement the ministries of existing churches, offering new opportunities for service.

7. Demographic growth can demand new communities that incarnate themselves into the culture and life of that neighborhood.

8. New communities often start out exhibiting missional behaviors and practices that established and redeveloping congregations can see and learn from.



9. Our shared vitality depends on having faith communities in all different stages of the life cycle. This is the process by which we most naturally and strongly grow and evolve to engage the people, cultures and challenges of each new generation.

2.

WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S WORKING?

We're all aware that the American church is the midst of a re-formation. For the most part, our go-to recipes for church planting from decades past aren't working; often they also aren't congruous with the current generation's sensitivity to the ways colonization and racism have factored into institutional church. What are the new paths forward, for reaching people with the Gospel through Christian community? Our last decade of church planting has been a process of experimentation, re-evaluation and learning. We see at least four paths emerging among New Episcopal Community leaders that are quite hopeful:

1. Ethnic church plants

American demographics are shifting, and by 2045 the U.S. will be a majority non white. We need Episcopal churches to nurture communities of immigrants as well as people of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations - including multi-generational and multi-cultural communities.

For many ethnic churches, the church experience is more than worship - it gives people space to live their cultural, language and religious identities simultaneously. These church plants tend to be more traditionally centered around Sunday worship, though there is freedom for music, liturgy and ministry to be reimagined for the cultural context. In the right context and with a strong, well-supported leader, growth can happen quickly.

Ethnic church plants do not typically start as "stand alone" entities. They often have a hosting congregation, are well supported financially by diocesan and parish partners, and will need other resources (legal and financial management assistance, etc.) For partnerships to be mutually transformative, ask what cultural competency training, ongoing relationship and covenanting will be needed in your context.



Challenges include: Many congregants without reliable transportation, low financial resources, minority clergy who don't always know how to navigate and influence diocesan systems.

Hope-filled examples: Faith Christian Church of India (MO), Saint Thomas Pakistani Church (Albany), New Hope (S. OH), Mother of the Savior Arabic church plant (MI), Saint Mary Magdalene (TX), The Gathering: A Center for Asian American Spirituality (LA)

2. Unchurched and de-churched people

Many church planters long to reach their peers outside the church - people (often but certainly not exclusively White) who are not connected with a healthy, loving faith community or who have been hurt by other forms of church. Sometimes the passion is for LGBTQ+ people, veterans, Exvangelicals, youth, or artists. Others may have a heart for young families or day laborers who cannot worship at traditional Sunday times.

While church attendance is declining, there is mounting evidence that Americans are as spiritually inclined as ever. Church planters with a heart for unchurched and de-churched people believe that the Christian story, lived out in healthy community, is an antidote to the isolation, polarization and despair of our time.

These communities will often take some sort of nontraditional, intimate form such as dinner church, house church, third space ministries and outdoor churches. They may experiment with different forms of gathering and ways of living out worship.

Challenges: This may be one of the hardest contexts for church planting. People are often going through the process of deconstructing and reconstructing their relationship with God and organized religion. Never-churched people are starting with little framework for what it means to commit and contribute to a faith community. Though these communities often grow slowly, they offer a crucial witness to the power of the Gospel in today's world.

Hope-filled examples: The Way Station (Iowa), St. Isidore (TX), The Abbey (AL), Church on the Square (MD), West Central Abbey (WA), QTPOC Church (MA), Wild Church (N. Michigan)

3. Neighborhood Churches

The concept of church planting in growing suburbs and city centers isn't dead!

There's no doubt the pandemic had an effect on how people are now living their lives - in terms of employment status, working from the office vs. from home, the economic downturn, movement out of urban centers, etc. The Church has always followed patterns of human movement, making sure that faith communities are present in the places where people actually make their lives. Furthermore, local churches are able to emphasize the love and care of its members' physical, incarnate neighbors and neighborhoods in a way "commuter" churches struggle to do.

Traditionally, these church plants had full time clergy leadership, were expected to build their own buildings, relied on (now dwindling) denomination loyalty, and cost a lot of money. Now, creative leaders are finding ways to make a difference in their neighborhoods while trying on different sets of assumptions. They are meeting in non traditional spaces, partnering with other denominations and local organizations.

Some of these neighborhood churches might be considered "restarts" or "re-imaginings" - they take existing resources like a building, a remnant congregation or remembered relationships and re-form them into a new expression of church in that neighborhood. Others started more or less from scratch.

Recent, hope-filled examples: Christ's Beloved Community (NC), Good Samaritan Episcopal Church (Indianapolis), Grace Church (OK), Saint Peter's (NY), Holy Family Episcopal Church (Texas)

4. Unhoused and Marginalized People

The shift away from ministry "to" and toward ministry "with" is inspiring Episcopalians to start new faith communities with unhoused people, people suffering from addiction, people in and transitioning out of prison, and people in other marginalized positions. These communities strive to share power and leadership and to center people who might not have the opportunity to lead, preach or teach in a traditional parish.

Challenges: These communities are almost never financially self sustaining; they require strong fundraising skills on the part of the point leader, and a long term commitment on the part of their diocesan partners.

Recent examples: Stepping Stones (El Camino Real), Traveler's Altar (AL), Bridges Reentry (AZ)



3.

PATHS FORWARD

How can we, as a Diocese, initiate New Episcopal Communities? If your diocese doesn't yet have a vision for church planting, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

What do we already have?

- Are there **un-used or under-utilized buildings** we could reimagine for the purpose of starting a new faith community?
- What **relationships** have we built that, if nurtured further, could emerge into a new worshipping community?
- Are there any existing congregations in our diocese with a missional spirit, who might be energized by the idea of helping birth a new faith community?

What are others seeing?

- Host a World Cafe conversation with your wider diocese - ordained AND lay leaders and ask:
- Where do YOU see **opportunities for new growth**, among people we are not yet reaching? For whom you have a passion to reach out and engage?
- What kind of **blessing** from the diocese would you need in order to start discerning and laying groundwork for the new possibility you see?



What could we water?

- Are there unofficial, **“church-like” gatherings** happening under the radar? Particularly ones that might really blossom with your dioceses’ partnership?
- Where, outside the church walls, is the **Holy Spirit** at work? What energy and resources could your diocese join with these efforts?

Do we know someone with the gifts and motivation?

- Who has the **missional spirit**, entrepreneurial interest and risk-taking capacity to lead a new expression of church? What is their vision, and what would make you feel strong about supporting it?
- Do you have strong **lay leaders** in your diocese who are looking for opportunities to deepen their faith and spiritual practices? Would any of them be excited by the possibility of joining a church planting team?
- What does it look like to **lend and share courage** with the leaders who want to explore planting something new?

What story is the data telling?

- Use FaithX or another data tool to take a “long, loving look at the real.” (quote from Ignatian Spirituality) What places of energy, dead ends, or potential rebirths will the Spirit reveal?

4.

ASSESSING LEADERSHIP

Church planting is a very particular ministry within the Church, and the gifts exhibited by a strong planter can vary greatly from those needed to succeed in an established ministry. Careful discernment on the front end is important. A leader whose gifts aren't a fit for planting can find it to be a painful experience. However, those who do will likely thrive in the challenge.

What to look for:

Though no one can accurately predict 100% of the time whether a particular leader will succeed at starting a sustainable, new church community, we have found that there are certain gifts and competencies that are very helpful in this work. Among these are:

- Having the vision and intrinsic motivation to start a



- new worshipping community
- Emotional resilience and the ability to manage conflict and personal failure
- Maintaining a strong base of social relationships that support the call to leadership
- Entrepreneurial interest and experience
- A high capacity for risk taking
- Strong cross cultural skills
- The ability to build a successful team, gather people into a shared vision and shared leadership
- Grit, including the perseverance to pursue long-term goals

We encourage Diocesan leaders to ask whether their local ordination process is seeking and approving leaders with these gifts for missional leadership - or whether potential church planters are often weeded out of ordination processes because they do not fit the traditional mold.

Resource: Discerning Missional Leadership Retreats

The Office of Church Planting and Redevelopment offers quarterly leadership assessment retreats for potential New Episcopal Community leaders, held in both virtual and on-site formats. Participants are offered feedback on whether and how their gifts line up with those helpful in a church planter, and where their challenge areas might be.

5.

VISIONING AND PLANNING

A church plant always starts with the missional questions “why?” And “who?” The first season, the Season of Discernment, is the time to start asking these questions. This work should be done in conversation with the sponsoring diocese, so that you can confidently send out your church planter with a sense of shared mission and goals.

If you have not planted a church, it can be hard to imagine what’s involved. Some of the most important things your church planter will be doing in the first year are:

- Walking, praying and curiously engaging their neighborhood and neighbors

- o Having many one-to-one conversations with neighbors, and with people who might be interested in being part of the new community.

- o Starting to build a core group of committed people and nurturing this team for shared leadership

- o Discerning and acting on the best ways to be in communication with their team, neighbors and sponsors as the ministry progresses

- o Experimenting and trying new things, resulting in a plan for initial public expression.



- o Discerning a budget that is appropriate to their context and vision, discerning a definition of “sustainability” and building initial financial support for the ministry

- o Creating and sharing a 3-year ministry plan that includes shorter term goals and next steps, as well as the budget and income sources they anticipate.

- o Seeking and receiving the training, coaching and mutual learning spaces necessary to thrive in this ministry.

Resources available to you and your church planters through the Office of Church Planting and Redevelopment:

MINISTRY PLAN TEMPLATES AND GUIDES

Guides to help you and your planter with the initial Season of Discernment, as well as crafting your three year ministry plan and contextual budget. Includes our “What to Expect” guide to New Episcopal Communities.

THE ACTIVATOR TRAINING FOR NEW EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY LEADERS

A combination of our best resources, practices and experience in a free, self-paced online course. It is comprised of eight modules, including pieces on discerning a new community, building a core team, contextual budgeting, creating a solid ministry plan, and covenanting with your diocese.

COACHING AND COHORTS

A guide to getting the most out of your coaching relationship and a recommended list of certified coaches. We also offer seasonal cohort experiences with skilled facilitators for group learning and support.

6.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

It costs anywhere from \$0 to hundreds of thousands of dollars to plant a church. Though it may sound simplistic, the key to setting a budget is to appropriately match your desired outcomes (the difference you want to make in God's world through this ministry) with money and resources.

Start with your end goal in mind, and work backwards. If you want your planter to start a congregation with an eventual ASA of 250, it would be immensely helpful for them to be paid full time. That planter will need to have upwards of 1,000 one to one conversations, attend city council meetings, regularly patronize local businesses and organize and plan for worship on a large scale in order to be successful. The goal of starting a 30-member dinner church is in no way less visionary or less valuable; however, it should be financially resourced differently.

Factors to consider when determining diocesan funding:

- Dependable, respectable levels of funding helps incentivize talented leaders to try on the work of planting something new.
- What has your church planter discerned vocationally? Do they intend, and are they able, to be bi-vocational, co-vocational, part-time or full time?
- Who is your target demographic, what is their average income level, and what do they have at their disposal to give? How accustomed are they to pledging to a religious organization?
- What is possible for your diocese to commit to in terms of long term funding? Most New Episcopal Communities still need diocesan funding long after the five year mark.
- What is the new community's definition of financial "sustainability?" How is the new community working toward this definition? Have frequent, loving and clarifying conversations with your planter about this. Defining sustainability *realistically* can be the difference between getting there or not.
- Underfunded church plants run the risk of not being able to get past critical benchmarks; the vision then has to contract, often to a degree that thwarts its potential for growth.

- Overfunded church plants are also at a disadvantage because it is unlikely that they will be able to evolve their funding model enough to reach a place of self-sustainability.

How long?

A New Episcopal Community will often depend on a combination of diocesan, parish and grant-based funding for the majority of its budget for the first three years of its life. *Depending on the contextual definition of sustainability, the target demographic, and planting model,* diocesan and grant funding should gradually decrease as internal funding (the financial commitment of individuals) increases. This process can take anywhere from 3-12 years.

We are observing that even highly skilled planters in “ideal” mission fields (where there is still a persistent church-going culture and givers with capacity) are taking longer to hit financial benchmarks. Regular, supportive check-ins with your planter are crucial so that you can have clarifying and productive conversations about whether the numbers are going the way you had hoped, and what you need to see in order to feel really good about continuing to finance the ministry.

Justice issues

With all of the above said, the judicatory still must wrestle with issues of justice when it comes to funding a New Episcopal Community. Consider:

- We can't systematically pay immigrant/minority clergy less just because many of them are involved in church planting work with communities of lower income levels (relative to the wider Episcopal Church)
- It can be demoralizing to a church planter to realize they are being paid a quarter of what some colleagues are making, simply because they are planting among spiritually wounded people who struggle with the concept of giving money to the church.
- Church planters are often taking significant personal risk, including with their future job prospects and resume.

There are no easy answers to these questions of justice, but they should be kept in mind as you think about how a New Episcopal Community will initially be funded.

RESOURCE: NEW EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY GRANTS

Through a resolution of General Convention, grant funding is available for New Episcopal Communities in the 2022-2024 Triennium. Grants are made for specific church plants who exhibit a strong ministry plan, point leadership and support of their local diocese.

7.

COVENANTING WITH YOUR PLANTER

Ideally, a New Episcopal Community is a shared vision and mission among the “Senders” (i.e. the Bishop, key parishes, etc.) and the “Ones being Sent.” When a potential church planter comes to you with an idea for a new faith community, you will be able to lend your best support if the idea fits into your larger strategy for mission in the Diocese.

If you are considering saying “yes” to blessing a leader and their vision for a new community, make time to meet with that leader often - especially at the beginning.

Questions for Covenanting may include:

- How does this vision for a new community fit into our Dioceses’ larger strategy for mission?
- How do we imagine success to look like for this new community? What are the agreed-upon outcomes and goals by which we will measure success?
- What is expected of this ministry in terms of financial self-sustainability? At what level and for how long will (and can) the Diocese support it?
- What happens if the ministry does not become self sustaining in the hoped-for period of time?
- What are other resources, other than financial, that the diocese can commit to this ministry?
- What aspects of this church planting mission must we agree on? Where is it okay for the new community to go its own way?
- How will we covenant to talk about this ministry within the wider diocese?
- How often will we meet together to discuss progress and challenges, and what kind of behavioral norms will we commit to when discussing success and failure?
- Acknowledge that significant pivots can (and often should) happen in the early years of a new community. How will we negotiate these together so that everyone feels invested in the new direction?
- How will we commit to talking about the legacy of this new community if it should end?

The Covenanting process may also include the **Letter of Agreement** a new ministry leader has with either their Diocese, or their sending parish. Some elements of a Letter of Agreement that may be especially helpful for church planters are:

- A written understanding of salary and benefits, who is paying them, and for how long and at what level.
- A commitment to annual re-evaluation based on the growth and stewardship practices of the new community would be helpful.
- Continuing education funds built into the Letter of Agreement, as well as funds for spiritual direction, coaching and mental health care.
- A commitment to how long salary and benefits will last if a decision is made to end the new church plant.

Covenanting with the Ministry Itself

Many New Episcopal Communities get stymied because there is not clarity about how the ministry is connected to the structure of larger diocese. Without clarity, a new community can easily get sidelined, forgotten in a bishop transition or hindered by institutional policies intended for established congregations. A written Covenant with the new ministry (not just the planter), can help ward off some of these issues. It can also help give the core team a sense of being missionally “sent” by the larger body of Christians and help connect them to the wider diocesan family. Consider including:

- Your shared statement of mission and purpose for this new community
- The canonical designation of the new community
- What support the diocese will offer in terms of financial management, for the first few years. For example, it can be immensely helpful for a new community to have its payroll managed externally; however, it needs to have ready access to the checking account so it can purchase supplies and make any urgent repairs to space or equipment.
- Creating a liturgy of “sending” with the planter, the core team, sponsoring churches and diocesan staff

8.

WHAT ARE THE BENCHMARKS?

With such a variety of different expressions, is there any way to assess the vitality and ultimate sustainability of a New Episcopal Community? As you're working with your planter to define benchmarks, avoid unspoken expectations. Use relational practices to set contextual, realistic and measurable goals that are understood and agreed to by everyone.

The following are our ideas of important benchmarks that are common to most forms of New Episcopal Community. You should be able to see progress toward (not perfection of) these benchmarks within the first 2-3 years of the new community's life together.

Core Team benchmarks

- o Look for the development of a core team that understands and has made the commitment needed to build the new community together.
- o Over time, the Core Team grows in its capacity to do the work of neighboring, inviting, and mentoring others.



Community Rhythm benchmarks

- o The community practices clear, regular and accessible patterns of community, discipleship and worship.
- o They have developed a rhythm of gathering for prayer and spiritual formation that bind its together in vision, purpose and ways of relating to one another and to the world.
- o New people are invited to participate in these patterns and shown how to adopt them for themselves.

Collaborative Leadership benchmarks

- o The new community is growing and maturing toward a life together that is not so dependent on the planter's personality and gifts.
- o An organizational structure emerges that is contextual and effective for the needs of the community.
- o There is a clear channel of communication between the new community and its supporters in the wider diocese.

Relational benchmarks

- The community grows in emotional maturity and grace and they prioritize these values when dealing with conflict.
- Church leaders continually cultivate a culture of “how we will be when we are together.” This community covenant is clearly articulated, taught and made available to all members.

Financial benchmarks

- The community is coming to clarity about how they define financial sustainability and is making progress toward nurturing stewardship in their committed members. They have a plan for becoming less reliant upon temporary funding sources.

Diocesan benchmarks

The new community participates in the life of their wider judicatory in ways such as:

- Sending representatives to diocesan convention, participating in programs of the diocese
- Sharing with the wider diocese what they have learned through their experiments with doing church differently
- Raising up candidates for lay leadership and ordination
- Contributing financial and/or other resources, space and skills to other diocesan entities

9.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Both the church planter and the Diocese have a role to play in planning for the first leadership transition. Prepare for a bumpy ride! However, new communities built on a solid foundation of faithfulness, commitment to the shared journey and vision, and good stewardship of their resources certainly can navigate the turbulence and emerge strong.

It's important for Bishops and Canons to realize that leadership transition in a church plant is quite different from in an established parish. New Episcopal Communities get

started through the invitation of a gifted leader around whose gifts the community initially gathers. Their core team has minimal experience working with diocesan staff toward a healthy transition. Structures for administration, communication and accountability are still new and fragile (or not exist yet at all). And, new faith communities tend to be experimental in ways that a new, traditionally-minded clergy person may have trouble adapting to.

Below are some nuggets of wisdom from three experienced church planters regarding the process of an initial leadership transition:

Mike Michie (Founder of St. Andrew's, McKinney, TX)

- Start planning for leadership transition well before the transition takes place. Plants aren't like established churches. The traditional "focus on a proper goodbye and deal with the transition after" is a sure fire way to put an already vulnerable new ministry in danger.
- Try to have an overlap between planter and successor. A responsible planter will work with the Diocese to have their successor in place ideally a year or more before the transition takes place! Even a few months is better than nothing.
- Bishops and Canons should not try to impose old rules for established parishes on new communities. New communities will struggle if there is a long interim period, or lengthy search process.
- If a new ministry is not sustainable after the planter leaves (if there is no successor and no energy to keep it going), have the good sense to say a prayer, have a party and bring it to a good end.

David Perkins (Founder of All Souls, Richmond, VA)

- Think about the issue of continuity when you select the original, founding mission developer. Is this person likely to create something so outside of the box that finding an Episcopal successor will be difficult?
- If the new ministry will be assigned an interim, choose this leader carefully. You don't want someone who will impose a more traditional structure onto the new work.
- Have the second leader attend a missional leadership assessment. They need to share the entrepreneurial gifts of a planter so that they can appreciate what's unique and outside the box and build on it.
- Plan for longer than the traditional 30 day transition period. A new work lacks the experience of transition and needs more time to acclimate to the idea of their leader departing and more time to deal with loose ends and gear up for the search.

Michael Gehrling (1001 Worshiping Communities, Associate for the Northeast Region and Assessments)

- Bear in mind that as a new church transitions to its second leader/pastor, the community of participants are often new to Christianity and to the denomination. They're navigating a process that is entirely new and unfamiliar.
- Our systems of calling pastors were designed for long-established churches. New communities have different needs, and the second leader may come from unexpected/nontraditional places. Be open to making exceptions to the process.
- Even with church planters who are exemplary at empowering the participants/laity of the new church, it's inevitable that some pieces of a community's ethos and culture will be sourced in the planter's personality. The community will likely discover this after the planter leaves. Be prepared to help them navigate this.
- Care for the planter after they leave. Leaving a community you founded is an intense experience involving a lot of grief.

10. COMPOSTING

Not every church plant, restart, or missional community goes as we hoped it would. Neighborhood dynamics weren't what you expected them to be. The core team never quite coalesced. Financial recession hit, the point leader moves away or decides they aren't called to this work after all. The way you end a new community, and the nutritious compost you choose to receive from it, are just as important and missionally driven as the launch was. The compassion with which you close a ministry - or lack thereof - will be noticed by the community and neighborhood... not to mention other potential church planters in your diocese.

Remember! **The only ministry that truly breaks the bank is the one we fail to learn from.**

Diocesan leaders have a crucial role to play in the ending a of a new faith community. Do not wait until the bitter end before initiating the conversation about winding down a ministry.

The qualities of transparency and mutual accountability that were so necessary in other

seasons, are especially pertinent now. Remind your church planter from day one that much of ministry is seasonal, and that failure is an option that can produce abundant opportunities for learning. Have frequent reviews of how the ministry is going and ask questions about whether it is meeting its defined goals. Making this constantly part of your conversations will allow you to make a wise decision together about if and when the "composting" season has started.

- Talk with the church planter about what role they will play in the process, and what role you will play.
- Journey alongside the community as it prepares to end by attending community conversations and liturgies of closure.
- Understand that your church planter will likely experience the loss of their community as a tragedy. Now is the time for unconditional pastoral support, not shame.
- Help your church planter transition to their next call. Help them navigate insurance, pension and salary gaps that may occur. Letters of Agreement should include a specified amount of time that compensation will continue after the closure of a church plant.
- Initiate a conversation with your planter and other core leaders about how the end of this ministry will be communicated to the rest of the diocese. Remember that the way you communicate about this venture will set a tone for how mission and innovation are perceived in your diocese for years to come.
- Commit to using the rich compost created by the ministry. There is much to be learned from new communities that don't go as planned. After the initial emotion has subsided, plan to use a professional facilitator to help you debrief the ministry experience and uncover costly learning that will help fuel future endeavors.