



Six Ideas for Creating New Faith Communities (Mike Slaughter)

Use what is already in your hand by maximizing your current space. Before trying a church plant in a new place, ask if you have maximized what can be accomplished to share the Good News in your current space. Is there an unreached segment of your community that could be better served if you offered worship at a different time of day, on a new day of the week or in a difference space in your current facility?

Grow a place or setting somewhere you already do ministry into a vital church community. For instance, if you have an effective care ministry in a nearby assisted living or long-term care facility, could that become a worshipping community or video venue?

Begin an online worship experience that does not require brick and mortar. Connect with United Methodist Communications or churchonlineplatform.com for ideas on getting started.

Equip our sold-out Jesus followers to start their own small, informal communities. Could your group of folks meeting on Wednesday night in a nearby pub over beverages and the Bible be transformed into a faith community?

Prepare your college students to start a dorm room church, students who watch the live stream or videos of your worship with other students each week. Offer supporting discipleship resources.

Move into the neighborhood that you see as your church's next place of evangelistic calling — I mean literally move in. Offer a standing invitation to your new neighbors to drop in to your home one night each week for an "open table" dinner. Provide the main dish and invite guests to bring a side to share. Weekly open tables are a great way to create contagious feelings of community that can serve as rich soil for New Faith Communities . . . trust me, this works!

It can be easy to think that we just don't have the resources, money, spaces, people or staff to expand the life and mission of the church. I have been in that place. This is seldom true and, yet, often keeps us from growing our churches. It's so easy to name the barriers because they are so obvious. The opportunities and possibilities are not so easy to see, but they are there. If we pray, investigate, discover, invite others around us to join the conversation and then put on the calendar the new we plan on starting. Sometimes the simple answers will be the best.