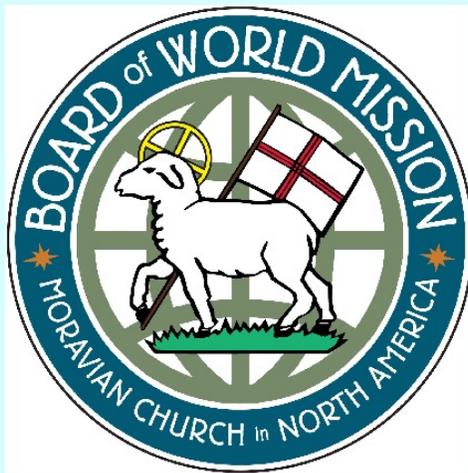


Congregational Mission Discernment

**USING OUR GIFTS TO MAKE THE WORLD
BETTER PLACE**





BOARD OF WORLD MISSION

of the Moravian Church • North America

Mission Discernment Workshop Materials

INTRODUCTION	3
COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT PRAYER ACTIVITY	4
BIBLICAL REFLECTION on the GREAT COMMISSION	9
BIBLICAL REFLECTION on the GREAT COMMANDMENT	10
SERVICE LEARNING: STEPS	11
SERVICE-LEARNING OUTCOMES	12
COMMUNITY QUESTIONS	14
MISSION IS....	14
CONGREGATIONAL ASSET DISCERNMENT	15
LISTENING CAMPAIGN	19

Introduction

The Apostle Paul spends much of his first letter to the church in Corinth writing and encouraging his readers to visualize the church as the Body of Christ. Paul knew that for the work of Christ to continue in his day, and ours today, the church would have to do the work. You, as the church of Jesus Christ today, are answering a call from God to BE the church beyond the walls where your congregation meets for worship, learning, and fellowship. While those are essential parts of being a church, service to the broader world in the name of Jesus Christ has to be a part of the equation, and we at the Board of World Mission are thrilled to know that you are in the process of doing just that!

To serve others effectively, constructively, and wisely takes a little work and a lot of preparation; otherwise, your good intentions can lead to a waste of time, money, and more frustration than anyone needs. This booklet contains a wide variety of training and planning resources that can help improve the chances that your congregation will serve its members well and motivate them to carry the compassion of God into the world.

If your congregation is utilizing this material, you are already feeling called to serve others in some capacity in Jesus' name. The questions to be answered now are:

- Where is God leading us to serve?
- What gifts does our faith community have to offer?
- How can we serve?
- Where will we serve?
- How will we raise the money to accomplish the mission?

This packet of materials is designed for congregational use to assist in the beginning stages of discernment of a step "out" in missions. These materials can be used to help those interested to look "in" to determine how they are being called to use their gifts in service to the world.

We would suggest that a small group in your congregation be selected to review all of the materials presented here and choose the ones that seem to fit your particular context and purpose best. The staff of the BWM is ready to assist you in any way that we can to help you take full advantage of what you will find here. We can do this through emails, phone calls, zoom meetings, or an in-person visit. We would be happy to help guide your congregation or mission group through the mission discernment and planning phases.

These materials provide introductory exercises and questions to aid in the process of Mission Discernment. Further resources are available from the Board of World Mission to assist in taking the next steps.

For more information, please contact:
The Rt. Rev. Chris Giesler (chris@moravianmission.org)
Director of Mission Engagement
Or Jill Kolodziej (jill@moravianmission.org)
Director of Mission Service

COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT PRAYER ACTIVITY

- When God calls, we should **listen**. Don't do all the talking - be still.
- Sometimes we don't have to wait for God's call. Jesus tells us how to get in touch with God. He not only tells us how to pray - but to be persistent and perhaps even annoying.

To discern God's call in either our personal or community life, we must begin in reflection and prayer. This Discernment Prayer is a multi-step process that can be used by participants ahead of your first meeting or be done as a group together as you begin your work. Since some research might be needed in Step 4, it would be wise to begin the process at one meeting and conclude it at a second.

STEP 1: Read Luke 11: 1-13

The Lord's Prayer, and Perseverance

1 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' ²He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

⁵ And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;⁶for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." ⁷And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." ⁸I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ 'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹²Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

- After reading the passage, list at least one prayer concern that fits into each of the seven categories listed below. Multiple concerns in each are fine, but at least one for all categories.
- Notice how we are praying about the needs starting at home and then moving outward.

1. Yourself

2. Your family/friends

3. Your Neighbors

4. Your town

5. Your state

6. Your Country

7. In the World

STEP 2: Look back at your prayer requests in the seven categories and place them in the appropriate boxes below. Which of your requests go onto God's to-do list (things you are asking God to do), and which things are you asking God to help you accomplish?

GOD'S TO-DO LIST

MY TO-DO LIST

Now look back on these two lists. Which is the longest? Can you adapt items on God's list into something that belongs to yours? Do that now. Think about asking God to guide you in your response?

STEP 3: Of the "to-do's" on your list, choose three that capture your attention right now. As you list them in the box below, add to them at least one tangible step needed to accomplish your task. (Remember, you thought it was important enough to tell God about it, so it must be significant enough for you to do something about it, right?)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their selected tasks and steps.

STEP 4: Choose one of your three to-dos from Step 3 and, using the form below, do a R.E.A.D. on it. For example, if you had listed praying for those who are hungry in your neighborhood, here is how that might R.E.A.D.

Relief – Collect canned food for the local food pantry each month

Education – What does it look like to be hungry in your neighborhood? Are folks homeless on the streets? Are they in their homes but struggling to make it to the end of the month?

(Note how this education may shift your Relief Efforts: Ex. Non-Perishable canned food is great if you have a can opener, a pot, and a stove or a microwave, but if you are on the streets, it won't bring much relief to have an unopened can of cold cream of mushroom soup or pack of Ramen Noodles.)

Advocacy – How do you speak "with and on behalf of" (rather than for) someone? (Note that this implies needing to have a relationship to be able to understand how to advocate. How can you get to know people in need and people who are responding?)

Development – If folks are hungry because of unemployment/under-employment because they lack language skills to be considered for positions, what solutions can your congregation offer to eventually alleviate hunger but not have anything to do with food? (English language tables – just talk with people. Resume formatting – invite people to sit and help them create a strong resume.)

Relief

Education

Advocacy

Development

Debrief questions:

1. How often do you let prayer be the only action you take on a need someone has identified?
 - a. How often do you hear a prayer request and perhaps even forget to pray?
2. How would this activity change if you did it as a group within your congregation?
3. As a congregation, would you be able to identify needs in all of these areas quickly?
4. Would you be able to identify tangible actions you can take in each area?
5. What tools/processes would you need to have/follow to make a definite plan and carry it out?

Biblical Reflection on the Great Commission

We hope this discernment process will help you reflect on several key questions and provide you with some guidance to help you along the journey. The Board of World Mission staff stands ready to assist you through this process, but we would encourage you to talk to trusted friends and spiritual guides that can help you. We also remind you that a devotional life that includes prayer and Scripture (our Moravian Daily Texts, for instance) can be a valuable resource to have during a time of discernment.

Jesus' Great Commission Begins with Something Personal

*16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." **Matthew 28:16 - 20***

The Board of World Mission sees the **Great Commission** and the **Great Commandment** as key scripture passages that help to orient us in our service to others. Here are reflections on both of these texts that your group can use to explore the call to mission.

It is interesting to note that before receiving the Great Commission to "Go," we are told that the eleven disciples went to Galilee, "to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them." That first instruction may not have sounded so "great" to them. They were directed to go to a mountain in a marginalized area, Galilee, far from the centers of power and excitement. And when they got there, they worshiped him (but some doubted).

To be sent out into all the world, to make disciples of all nations – all ethnicities – we first have to be where Christ calls us to be to hear where it is that Christ wants us to go. So, we begin by getting closer to him, and we find that this brings us closer to each other. (We also recognize that some may not answer the call as there will be those who have their doubts.) But as we draw closer to Christ and closer to each other, we discover that if we want to stay close to Jesus Christ, that may mean following him together out into the world. We go to make disciples by baptizing and helping people learn and follow Christ's Great Commandment, knowing that our Chief Elder is with us as we go.

Questions for reflection:

1. In what ways can we gather as a community to get closer to Christ? Where is our mountain where we can worship and bring our honest doubts?
2. Jesus told his disciples to teach people the things he had commanded. How can our teaching focus more on Christ's commands and less on our agendas?
3. How does the Great Commission help us understand our priorities compared to what Jesus' priorities are?

The Biblical record is full of stories of God's call being extended to mere mortals to carry out God's will and purpose in the world. That call continues to be extended today to us as we are invited to be the hands and feet of God's presence in the world.

BIBLICAL REFLECTION on the GREAT COMMANDMENT

Jesus' Great Commandment

*One of the scribes came near and heard Jesus and the Pharisees disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." **Mark 12:28-44***

Interestingly, this scribe comes to Jesus and asks for the one most important commandment of all the 613 commandments found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Because as challenging as it was to keep them all, there was always a great debate among scholars about how they were to be prioritized. So, this scribe asks for THE most important commandment.

Jesus' first response was a predictable one as he recites the command found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Jesus answered, *"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."* This would have been the most familiar Scripture passage to anyone in that region: Jew or Gentile. Jesus could have easily left it right there since he had answered the question posed to him.

Instead, Jesus goes a significant step further and picks up the critical theme of caring for others. Jesus here is referring to: *"The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."* Leviticus 19:34. So taking this concept from the Hebrew scriptures, Jesus connects the love of God to the love of both self and neighbor. He is saying that if we don't love our neighbor, then our love of God might prove to be quite shallow and self-serving rather than self-giving.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does the command to "love" ask us to treat those whom we perceive to be different from us?
2. How does the third petition in our Moravian motto "In all things love" help you to understand this concept of loving God, self, and neighbor?
3. How does this "Great Commandment" help us to understand our priorities in life and the high priority that Jesus places on serving others' needs?

Service-Learning Steps

STEP 1: PREPARATION

While preparation does include the logistics of gathering supplies, raising money, and making travel arrangements, there's more to be done to set the stage for a positive service experience. The preparation step should include intentional efforts to build community with time dedicated to sharing expectations, acquiring skills needed for the service experience, and learning about the organization or community where you will serve. Don't forget to include listening to the organization or communities' expressed needs and expectations.

STEP 2: ACTION

The service-learning process includes an actual service experience. Leaders should choose service activities that are meaningful and engaging, are realistic for the group's resources (including time available), and address expressed community needs (versus imposing their own expectations).

STEP 3: REFLECTION

Often overlooked or delayed, the reflection stage is essential to the service-learning process because it is through critical reflection that individuals learn and grow from their experiences. Debriefing activities provide mission participants with opportunities to consider thoughts or feelings that have emerged and the potential impact on their attitudes or behaviors.

Reflection can happen in various creative ways, including small-group discussions, art or photography, journaling, storytelling, Bible study, devotions, and more.

STEP 4: CELEBRATION

This final step ties together the other three, as mission participants find ways to celebrate what was accomplished and share their experience with others. It's a time of worship as you recognize and rejoice in the ways God has called you to serve and challenges you to continue to live as servant leaders.

The four-step service-learning model used in this resource provides a simple framework to be used when planning service and mission experiences. Brief outlines of the steps are listed here. More materials are available for expanded guidance on each step as you continue the mission discernment process. Contact the Board of World Mission for further tools and resources.

Where are you now?

1. How does your congregation or group understand its part in God's mission to the world?
2. How would your congregation or group define "missions"?
3. What are some things you are doing as a congregation or group to fulfill God's mission?
4. What unique gifts has God given your congregation or group to fulfill God's mission?
5. What obstacles face your congregation or group that can hinder the fulfillment of God's mission?

Service-Learning Outcomes

Some questions to get you started:

1. Will this be a new mission, or are we looking to expand/focus on an existing mission?
2. What resources or organizations do we have connections with that could help us to get started?
3. What issues are essential to the individuals and the group? (What "problem" are you looking to address through mission?)
4. What do you hope to accomplish through a specific service experience?
5. How can participants' faith be challenged or strengthened by the experience?
6. What impact do you anticipate the mission project or trip will have on the individuals or communities served?
7. Listed below are six outcomes of mission and service-learning identified by the Board of World Mission. Read through the outcomes and determine which may be an outcome of the project you are discussing. Or, how can an experience be shaped to help reach a desired service-learning outcome?

Compassion

Service-learning seeks to develop people who hold a deep sense of compassion for the world and God's people. Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) provides a great example of one person's deep concern for another, even when crossing social barriers. Service-learning often involves walking alongside others, and in that relationship, we begin to see, sense, feel, and engage with "the other." Or, a significant encounter in God's creation leads to a deeper understanding of caring for the world God made.

Biblical references:

- Luke 10:25-37: Parable of the Good Samaritan
- Luke 15:11-32: Parable of the Prodigal Son
- Colossians 3:12-14: A call to care for each other

Community

Service in Jesus' name can draw people into community, break down existing barriers, and forge new relationships where acquaintances or strangers can become valuable friends and partners. Service-learning provides a context for community as participants. While working together, it is discovered that the Christian community is not formed because of similar physical traits, abilities, or lifestyles, but that we are all children of God (Galatians 3:26-28). Service experiences also open possibilities for people to see themselves as part of the global community of God's people and active participants in the collective response to hunger and poverty.

Biblical references:

- Mark 3:20-35: Christ's family are those who do his will
- Mark 12:28-34: The greatest commandments

The discernment stage is crucial when planning a mission experience. It provides the opportunity to determine goals and objectives, choose a location or organization to serve with, and create a plan of action that will guide you through the experience as well as sharing about it upon completion.

Adequate preparation, whether it is for a two hour visit to a local service organization, or traveling internationally will include: listening carefully to the needs of the community or organization you will serve with; determining the actual mission project or activity; building community within the group working together; sharing or creating individual and group expectations; and acquiring needed skills and resources.

- Acts 2:44-47a: The actions of the newest Christians
- Galatians 3:25-28: We are all God's children through faith

Leadership

Through service-learning, people can become empowered to contribute to the world in which they live and discover ways to be leaders among peers, in their congregations, and within communities. Paul encourages the young Timothy to embrace his youth and teach what has been entrusted to him (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:1-2). We all play an essential role in promoting leadership development by inviting others to share the gifts God has entrusted to them.

Biblical references:

- 1 Timothy 4:7b-16: Don't be despised because of your youth
- 2 Timothy 2:1-7: Teach others, and the Lord will provide understanding
- 1 Peter 4:10-11: Serve one another based on your unique gifts

Advocacy

Through service-learning, people can begin to ask the deeper, tougher questions, probing the root causes of homelessness, hunger, poverty, housing, or environmental destruction. While addressing such issues is not always easy, people can begin to challenge systems, policies, and societal values and norms that create oppressive structures. As people wrestle with these questions, an opportunity emerges to move beyond one-time relief efforts to consider long-term systemic change, sustainable development, and advocating with and on behalf of others for the urgent needs of God's people.

Biblical references:

- Exodus 5:1-2; 6:10-13, 28-29: Moses seeks freedom for the Hebrew people
- Matthew 5:1-12: The Beatitudes
- John 4:5-26: Jesus meets the Samaritan woman

Lifelong servanthood

Service is a spiritual practice that calls us to repeated and frequent acts of service, no matter the size of the task, context, amount of preparation, or recognition received. The Christian life involves a call to servanthood (Micah 6:8, Matthew 25:31-46), and the more people "practice" service, the more it becomes a regular and natural part of their daily life. Engagement with issues of hunger and poverty can shape the ways people think and act as they become increasingly aware of and seek to respond to others' needs.

Biblical references:

- Micah 6:8: Do justice, love kindness
- Matthew 4:18-22: Jesus calling the disciples
- Matthew 25:31-46: Serving "the least of these", is serving Jesus

Exploration of vocation

Meaningful experiences in service can provide a vocational "learning laboratory" where people experiment with how their gifts, passions, and values intersect with the world's most pressing needs. It's not uncommon for a service experience to shape a person's sense of identity, vocational call, or future career. As people live out their faith in daily life, they see opportunities to apply their Christian beliefs and values in homes, families, communities, congregations, and the workplace.

Biblical references:

- Romans 12:3-13: All have been given gifts to share
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31: The body is made of many parts
- Ephesians 4:1-13: God offers a variety of gifts

Community Questions: Why Are We Here?

- If your congregation disappeared tomorrow, what would the neighborhood notice? What would they miss?
- What are the most significant needs in your neighborhood?
- How would you solve one of these needs if you had no limitations?
- What are three reasons people in the neighborhood would want to come to your congregation?
- What is your congregation known for in the community?

These questions help to move a congregation from being inwardly focused to being more mindful of how the surrounding community might perceive its ministry. This is an essential step in the discernment process.

Debriefing the process of discussing the Community Questions

- Were there times when the focus was on the congregation, although the question was about the neighborhood? Why is that?
- What did you hear that was new?
- What needs consistently surfaced?
- What solutions consistently surfaced?
- As the community needs were discussed, is there a perceived need for partnerships between the congregation and the neighborhood, with community service agencies, religious organizations, or local businesses?

After your group has worked through the Community Questions, use these prompts to gauge what you have learned.

MISSION IS....

Mission is...

1. reaching the world with the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. feeding the hungry and healing the sick.
3. doing what Jesus would do and being what Jesus would be.
4. a people-to-people sharing of the servant nature of the church.
5. making disciples.
6. people everywhere reaching people everywhere.
7. our faithful response to the Great Commission.

Use these various definitions to get people thinking and talking about their own group definition of "mission." Do they identify with any of these? Why, or why not? These can be used to break people into groups, etc.

Congregational Asset Discernment Discovering What I/We Have to Give

PURPOSE

Asset Discernment is an exercise to be done by a congregation as a first step in trying to discern how it can best be generous with its gifts. This is a process that can be used to help congregations discover the gifts and abilities God has given them to help their neighbors both near and far.

It should be stressed at the outset that this process is NOT about discussing what we are lacking, comparing ourselves to other congregations that seem to have more, or about solving perceived weaknesses. This about taking stock of what we DO have to give to others and how we might use those blessings to serve others.

Who Should Attend?

This process is ideally done with as many of your congregation's members as possible, but key leaders are essential. Folks that should be involved are members of the Board of Elders and Trustees, folks actively engaged in Christian education, youth ministry, music, worship, and building and grounds maintenance aspects of your congregation. People are more likely to respond if they are invited specifically because their input is valued. Having them RSVP is essential so that adequate materials can be on hand. It is also crucial that youth in your congregation be given a special invitation making sure that they know they are an essential part of your mission.

Room Preparation

Set the room up with tables for 4 to 8 people at each table. This will form the small groups that will be doing much of this work.

Gather the necessary materials, including:

- Flip chart or butcher paper
- Markers (enough or one Red, Blue, and Green marker per table)
- A copy of the Skills Assessment for every person
- A copy of the Congregational Assets for each of the small groups
- Chime, or some other favorite tool for getting people's attention

Taking Stock of What I have to Give

A congregation is made up of individuals who are willing to work together for the betterment of the whole and its mission. Congregations need people with different gifts to accomplish the various tasks that need to be addressed. So, before we assess what our congregation has to offer, each member must take stock of how God has gifted them. To do this, we begin by turning our attention to the following chart. Give 15 minutes for individuals to put checkmarks in the appropriate boxes for each line. If they have no skills or interest in a given line, they simply leave that one blank.

Too often, we operate from a notion of scarcity rather than counting our blessings. We fail to act because we feel that we don't have enough, while if we only take a moment, we find that God has blessed with gifts that can transform the world. Board of World Mission staff and volunteers have been treated as special guests in some of the poorest places in the world, being given gifts of appreciation and served an abundance of food from people who we might consider having nothing. Their generous giving should serve for us as an example, reminding us that generosity should always be first on our minds.

Skills Assessment

Name: _____

TASK	I have never done this but would love to learn	I have done this and feel ok about doing it with a little help	I can teach others how to do this
Outdoor painting (like a building)			
Indoor painting (like a wall or room)			
Leading or teaching songs			
Washing windows			
Cleaning a kitchen			
Speaking in a worship service			
Cleaning a bathroom			
Preparing and Serving food for large groups			
Washing dishes by hand			
Making and packing sandwiches and other lunch foods			
Pulling weeds, raking, and other light yard work			
Using a shovel and wheelbarrow			
Trimming bushes			
Picking up garbage to clean up an outdoor area			
Doing light carpentry			
Playing with small groups of young children			
Organizing games for young children			
Sharing your faith story with a group			
Sharing your personal story with someone			
Using a washing machine and dryer to do laundry			
Leading prayer			
Leading a discussion of the Daily Text			
Listening to someone's problems			
Praying one-on-one with someone			
Offering counsel or guidance to someone who requests it			
Setting a table for meals			
Leading meal prayers			
Being a good listener to someone who is homesick or lonely			
Using power tools like a drill or saw			
Carrying heavy items as a team			
Mixing and laying concrete			
Teaching a Sunday School class using a prepared lesson			
Writing Sunday School or program material			
Preparing and leading worship			
Play a musical instrument			
Lead music in worship			

After folks have completed the form, it is offering time. In the large group go down the page one line at a time. For each line, ask if there any in the group who feel they are competent enough to teach others this skill. Once they have been identified, ask them to stand in a group together. Next, ask if others have had some experience in this skill who are interested in helping in this area with an expert's assistance. Once they have been identified, have them join the group. Finally, ask if there are others who would be willing to learn this skill and help get a task done. Again, have them step forward and join the group.

Have someone in the room take notes as to which tasks seem to gather a good mix of experts, knowledgeable helpers, and willing learners to make a team. Now, narrow down to 2-4 tasks that seem to be strengths for your congregation. List each of these tasks on a separate piece of butcher paper. Have these groups assemble around their piece of paper.

What Do We Have to Give?

Depending on how many groups you have and how many tasks show up, some groups might have more than one task to evaluate. Have the small group brainstorm about how these particular gifts can serve the congregation, the community, and the global community.

Finally have each group look at the physical and financial gifts your congregation has to offer.

Assets Our Congregation Can Offer God's Kingdom

	We Have an Abundance	We Have Adequate Supply	We are lacking
A place for people to come and worship			
Sunday School Program Children and Youth			
Sunday School Program for Adults			
Meeting Space for community groups			
Recreational space for community use			
Mid-Week Bible Studies			
Food to be distributed in our own food bank or taken to a community food bank			
A Clothing Closet, or the ability to collect clothing for a community closet			
A fund to help families in need for food, rent, or utilities			
We can financially support community programs that help the less fortunate			
Are there other assets we have to offer others?			

When groups are done, have them share their lists aloud and have a recorder make a master list.

Next Steps:

- Looking at both asset lists are there clear signs of things we can begin to organize into mission efforts?
- What additional information would be helpful in discerning future directions for your congregation?
- Should a research/ action team be formed to develop a workable/ winnable issue for the congregation to tackle?
- What boards or committees need to be called upon to move these mission efforts along?

LISTENING CAMPAIGN

Basis Concepts for a Listening Campaign *Awaken and engage the power in your church.*

Strategy: A Listening Campaign works by bringing to awareness the typical pressures and common hopes of our constituents. Within local congregations, it is done by one-on-one meetings between members of a congregation. The goal is to discern their particular passions and needs related to mission, what is common among them, and where we might develop leadership within our congregations for both local and global missions.

Process:

1. Assemble a group of 3 to 5 people who are committed to helping your congregation define and strengthen its mission both locally and globally.
2. Have an initial meeting where the group reviews the interview forms and processes.
3. Next, look over your congregation's directory and choose key persons who you feel would offer useful input to the process. Divide these names among the group and contact them to arrange an in-person listening session.
4. With each person use the Skills Assessment and Congregational Assessment Sheets. Have folks share what they can offer and what they think the congregation has to offer in mission to others.
5. After all of the listening sessions have been done, have the group gather and make a master list of both assessment forms.
6. Where do you see areas of strength and energy that can be organized into mission?
7. Using the questions below, have each group member do a listening session with the leader of a service ministry in your community. (this can be a soup kitchen, city/county recreation directors, clothing closets, etc.). Use the following questions to gather your answers:

Interview of a community leader

- a) What, if anything, do you know about our Moravian Congregation?
- b) What changes and trends are you aware of in our community today?
- c) What are the key assets of/ in this community?
- d) What are some needs that no one is addressing?
- e) How can our congregation be of help?

8. When those listening sessions have been completed, reconvene the group to review those findings.
9. Present the findings to the Church Board(s) or Church Council using the following questions as a guide.
 - a. What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Why?
 - b. Are there commonalities we have heard from our members?
 - c. What are the things we do well as a congregation? Where are our strengths?
 - d. What are some needs that we see present in the community?

Potential Outcomes:

1. More engaged membership and new leaders
2. Stronger relationships between members/ congregations
3. Collective action that is relevant and implemented by your members

This process can help your congregation in two ways. First, to identify the interests, develop leadership capacity, and bring congregational members into new relationships within the congregation. Then the process moves outward to see how the gifts within your congregation can meet the unmet needs of the community.

Other questions to be Considered

1. What are the side doors that bring people into our building? How are we welcoming and providing a spiritual connection for them?
2. How are visible are we in our community?
3. Many people no longer come into the church for their spiritual needs; are there new models for being "church" today? How might this church go beyond its doors to reach those who need to know God's love?
4. What did the Covid-19 shutdown teach us about different methods for reaching into the community?

Next Steps:

1. What additional information helpful in discerning future directions for your congregation?
2. Should a research/ action team be formed to develop a workable/ winnable issue for the congregation to tackle?
3. Act collectively, evaluate together and move back to Listening/ Discerning

To identify people's interests, develop their leadership capacity, and bring them into new relationships toward realizing your congregation's true.