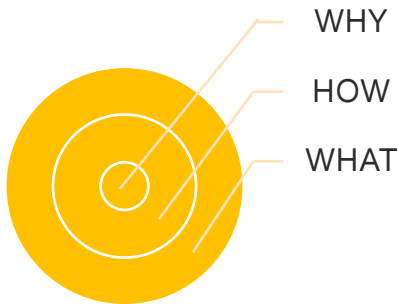


VITALITY TOOLBOX

WHY CHURCH VITALITY?

Simon Sinek is an unshakable optimist who believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together. He discovered remarkable patterns about how the greatest leaders and organizations think, act and communicate. <https://startwithwhy.com/>



1. Why do we believe that church vitality is so important?

We believe that ALL people – no exceptions – are loved by God and that knowing this transforms life.

How are we getting more vital?

We are seeking to love those who live wider and wider circles of difference from ourselves.

Various tools can help us discover our best way forward.

What is a vital church?

Vital churches are communities where we know that we are loved by God, love God in return and learn to love all people.

2. Why do we believe that church vitality is so important?

Jesus' focus: the realm of God is at hand. We believe that the realm of God is near, reachable.

How are we getting more vital?

Bringing good news to the poor, release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freeing the oppressed, and proclaiming Jubilee.

What is a vital church?

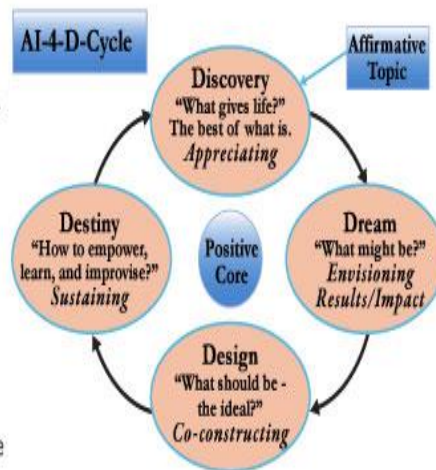
Vital churches believe that God's realm is near and live as if that is true.

3. Why do you believe that church vitality is so important?

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY - COOPERRIDER

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) represents a paradigm shift in the world of sustainable organizational development: a radical departure from traditional deficit-based change to a positive, strengths-based change approach. AI is revolutionizing the field by providing a proven methodology to successfully address the most important change agendas faced by organizational and societal leaders today. AI focuses on leveraging an organization's "positive core" strengths to design and redesign the systems within an organization to achieve a more effective and sustainable future.

AI initiatives are implemented using the "4-D Cycle." (*Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny*); a methodology that allows an organization to identify its positive core strengths relative to the "affirmative topic" being addresses and initiate concrete operational steps to achieve its goals. AI is more than a 4-D Cycle methodology. What is being introduced is change that is deeper, more meaningful and sustainable at the core of the organization.



"The ageless essence of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant."
Peter Drucker

"Appreciative Inquiry is revolutionizing the field of organizational development and change."
Robert Quinn
University of Michigan

<http://www.davidcooperrider.com/ai-process/> theory behind process

<http://www.clergyleadership.com/> use with churches and clergy

ASSET MAPPING – ALBAN INSTITUTE

Asset Mapping is a tool that relies on a core belief of asset-based community development; namely, that good things exist in communities and that those things can be highlighted and encouraged — these are assets suited to advancing those communities.

1. Physical Assets
2. Economic Assets
3. Stories

What Will We Do Exactly?

Basically you'll do three things:

1. *Recognize Your Assets.* Look at your half-full cup to identify many of your congregation's assets and strengths.
2. *Connect the Dots.* Link some of these assets together to brainstorm *actions* that you can take to get things done.
3. *Vote with Your Feet.* Make an instant work plan by allowing participants to choose the action they would most like to take part in.

4. Local Residents
5. Local Associations
6. Local Institutions

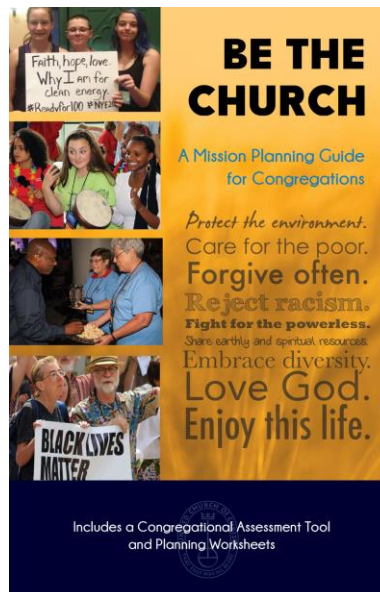
https://alban.org/uploadedFiles/Alban/Bookstore/pdf/resources/Asset_Mapping/resource2.pdf

BE THE CHURCH – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The "Be the Church" resource, outlines tangible, adaptable ways to develop programs and activities to live into God's beloved community with clear outcomes. Ideas that are already generating interest in local churches.

The Rev. Greg Briggs, former interim pastor of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Grand Ledge, Mich., put the resource to use right away.

"As part of our self-study and visioning process, the 'Be the Church' assessment tool was a helpful way for the congregation to assess the effectiveness of their outreach. The previous summer, the congregation's sermon series was based on the 'Be the Church' banner, so the congregation was already familiar with the concepts. The resource became available literally days before our final visioning session before the summer, so I wasn't able to fully integrate it into the process, but we did take the assessment and I'm compiling an average of the scores for future discussion."



http://www.ucc.org/news_be_the_church_planning_assessment_guide_built_to_support_mission_vitality_05302017

COACHING

Individual Coaching begins and stays centered on you and what you want to accomplish, both as an overall goal and in each individual session. In a one-on-one coaching relationship, the coach holds the client with unconditional positive regard.

Sometimes the challenges facing groups of people who work together require support in establishing a “same page” for moving forward. Potentials coaches provide the kind of engagement with teams that can: help achieve breakthroughs and establish shared goals, redefine roles and responsibilities, and work through conflict issues within teams, transforming working relationships.

<https://potentials.us/coaching/>

Empowering progressive church leaders through coaching that is **individual-focused, practical, and life-giving.**

individual-focused: coaching that considers the context of each person and ministry.

practical: coaching that engages in inquiry that results in action.

life-giving: coaching that creates space to find joy, meaning, and transformation in ministry.

Coaches are trained ministry professionals who will walk alongside you in your context.

<https://convergenceus.org/coaching-teams/>

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

In her podcast/interview with Sonenshein (4/13/22) Brené Brown connects the dots, conjecturing that it is quite easy to slip from “You do not like my ideas” to “you do not like me.” At Potentials, we are aware that the world is a bit “edgy” right now. The pandemics and grief, the power vortices that change creates, the changes in organizational systems of all types and sizes pushed by “the great resignation” means conflict is a way of life. Learning to harness the energy that conflict is and generates; learning the skills necessary to transform “negative” conflict into positive and productive energy is important. At Potentials, we believe it is essential.

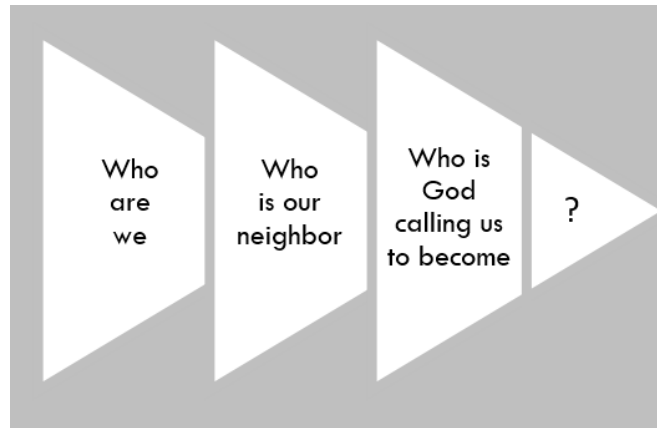
<https://potentials.us/conflict/>

Conflict is inevitable in any community that is trying to do the hard work of relationship building and ministry. It is, however, possible to “disagree without being disagreeable”. This on-line course will help any individual or group(s) in the church learn how to disagree in a more loving way.

<https://convergenceus.org/strategic/>

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!



http://www.ucc.org/ministers_search-and-call

NEXT LEVEL CONSULTING – CONVERGENCE

Our Next Level Consulting Program helps your church to identify what the next level is and achieve that growth. We meet your church where you are in your life-cycle by conducting an accurate and honest assessment with in-person site visits, help your congregational leadership articulate a shared goal, encourage insight into future challenges, assessing your assets, and devising a plan for growth.



Leaders of strong and healthy congregations know that it is critical to always be asking the question “What’s next?” The Next Level Program of the Center for Progressive Renewal is designed to help your church answer that question – and then make it happen. Next Level is a minimum two- year commitment by you and your church leaders focused on assessment, leadership development, coaching and consulting. If you want your church to grow beyond the family or pastoral size transition, this is the program for you.

<https://convergenceus.org/next-level/>



Encouraging Awareness, Supporting Change

The Potentials Coaching and Consulting team is committed to working alongside you, your organization and/or congregation as you seek to achieve your goals, create sustainable change and make a meaningful difference in the world.

We offer a wide range of relevant topics, training and programs, in a variety of formats. Consequently, there are many options available to structure a process by which we can meet the needs of your unique setting and situation.

<https://potentials.us/>

reVision

CREATING A NEW VISION FOR YOUR CHURCH

REVISION IS A JOURNEY TO DISCERN GOD'S CALL FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR CHURCH.

You have realized it is time for congregational renewal and reinvigoration. You have become aware that your membership is declining, your demographics are shifting, or external circumstances have changed. If you have already begun to walk along a new path, you may have begun with a process to learn more about the current state of your congregation, your neighborhood, and your larger context. This process may have inspired you to dream about where you might want to go. What's next?"

HOW CAN REVISION HELP?

reVision will help your congregation draw a clear map to God's future for your church.

reVision provides the tools you need to travel in new directions.

reVision will deepen your congregation's faith and engagement with each other and your context.



<https://convergenceus.org/revision/>

UNBINDING THE GOSPEL SERIES - REESE

Martha Grace Reese

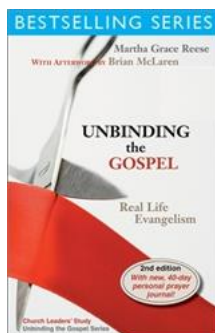
If we answer the “WHY share my faith?” question, we’ll start wanting to know “HOW can God use me to help people move into faith?” Churches can’t share their faith until they’re loving, relational communities where people (1) pray, and (2) talk comfortably with each other about their own faith experiences. Once our churches make this shift, we’ll want to know HOW to share our faith. The Unbinding the Gospel Series addresses both the Why and the How.

Unbinding the Gospel (Second Edition) with 40-day prayer journal Church Leaders’ Study 978-08272-38084 (red ribbon)

Unbinding Your Heart— with 40-day prayer journal All-Church Study 978-08272-38053 (purple ribbon)

Unbinding Your Church Pastor’s and Lay Leaders’ Guide 978-08272-38060 (green ribbon)

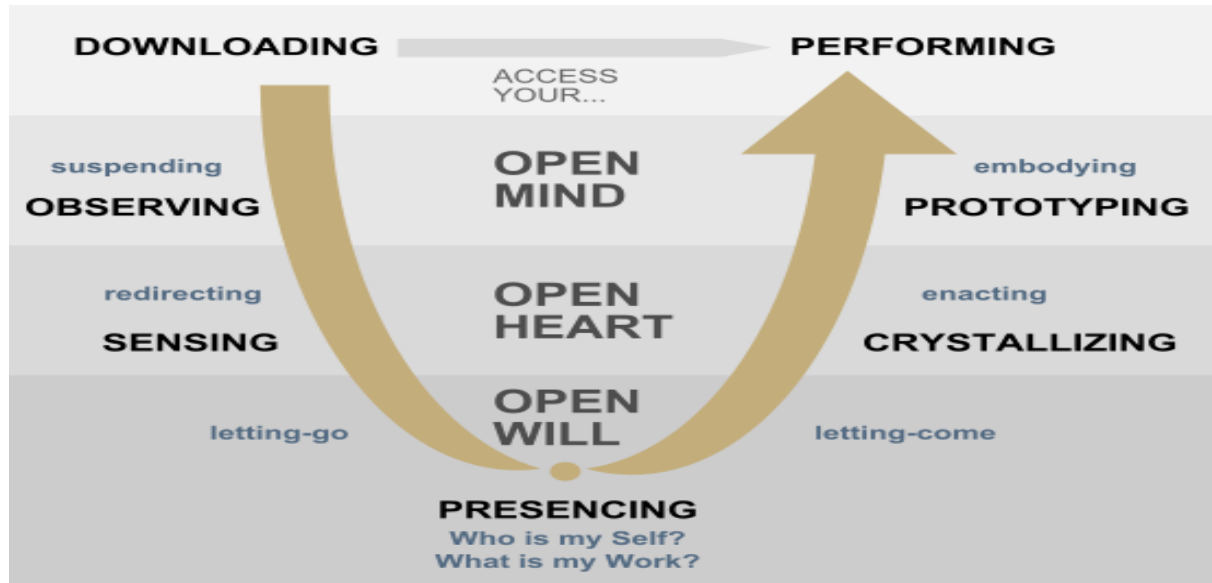
Unbinding Your Soul—with personal prayer journal Small Group Studies for Members & Friends 978-08272-38091 (yellow ribbon)



<http://www.gracenet.info/documents/Unbinding%20brochure%20author%202010c2.pdf>

THEORY U - SCHARMER

The Essentials of Theory U enables leaders and organizations in all industries and sectors to shift awareness from ego to eco, to connect with the highest future possibilities, and to strengthen the capacity to realize those possibilities.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

- PRESENCING FOUNDATION PROGRAM

The most pressing challenges leaders and teams face today require innovative thinking and collaboration across traditional boundaries – departments, organizations, sectors, and cultures. Yet we are entrenched in rigid patterns of behavior that limit our ability to transcend these boundaries and work together effect deep change. To bring about the level of transformation needed in our organizations and our world right now, we need a way of learning and of leading – one not limited to reflecting the patterns of the past but one that tunes into the possibilities of the future.

This [program](#) is based on the “U model” featured in **Theory U and Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future**, co-authored by Peter Senge, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers.

<https://www.presencing.com/programs/foundation-program>

YOUTH – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries (CYAM) advocates, communicates, coordinates, and networks on behalf of youth and young adults of the United Church of Christ (UCC).

The 1985 General Synod established a task force of youth and young adults. In 1987 the UCC by-laws were changed and CYAM - the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries - was formed. CYAM has been present and has sponsored referenda at almost every General Synod since.

CYAM members work together and with other church leaders to establish strong youth and young adult ministries throughout the UCC by advocating to church leaders, helping make youth and young adult voices heard at General Synod, seeking to address issues of social justice and peace, and serving as a voice for UCC youth and young adults.

We believe:

- that the whole church needs the vitality and vision of youth and young adults;
- that youth and young adults are a part of the voice and vitality of the church today;
- that we should have effective ministry with youth and young adults in a vigorous intellectual faith;
- that vital ministry is oriented towards local congregations (of many kinds);
- the future of the UCC depends on the vitality of this ministry;
- that the UCC needs to be present in life transitions through youth and young adulthood;
- in justice, love, service, and living out the mission and vision of our denominational faith which embodies continuing testament, extravagant welcome and changing lives;
- in the youth and young adults of the UCC and our ability to change lives through Christ!

Help us spread the word about CYAM and share in the work of your council. Contact us at cyam@ucc.org.

CLOSURE AND LEGACY – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Churches build their present and future legacy
by living their purpose, passion and mission.

Churches support their neighbors creating community gardens

Churches provide community healing during crisis and tragedy

Churches foster generosity and new generations

Churches contribute space and funds for new ministries, artists and musicians

Churches welcome all by providing sanctuary and shelter

Churches express gratitude for their congregation ministry through a missional legacy

How does your congregation live its legacy? There are resources to help your decision.

Living Legacy is ideal for any

- Leader/member of a congregation who wonders if you need to 'get real' about your church's future
- Congregation seeking guidance in implementing your decision to close
- Pastor who seeks to guide your congregation in implementing a decision they have already made
- Conference staff or volunteer consultant to congregations
- Interim pastor who specializes in transitioning congregations
- Member of your Association Church & Ministry Committee and assisting churches

<http://www.ucc.org/legacychurch>