

Steps for a Strength Based Asset Map

“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

~Howard Thurman

Layer 1

*In the centre of your paper, find a way to represent you – sketch a self portrait, write your name, write ‘ME’, draw a stick person or smiley face

*Around the representation of you, fill the space with words or symbols that represent your gifts and skills. Are you an organizer? An advocate? A good listener? Good with numbers?

*Around your gifts and skills, fill the space with words or symbols that represent your passions, the things that fill your cup, what gives you joy. Does singing make you feel alive? Does hiking make your spirit sing? Does sharing your knowledge give you joy?

Layer 2

*In the centre of your paper, find a way to represent your community of faith – you could sketch the church building, or write the name of the church, or write your mission statement, or doodle a church logo

*Around the representation of your community of faith, fill the space with words or symbols that represent your church’s gifts and skills. Give name to what makes your community of faith distinct and vibrant. Are members gifted at offering hospitality? Do you have great space for community gatherings? Do members have specific technical skills?

* Around your church’s gifts and skills, fill the space with words or symbols that represent your shared passions, the things that fill your collective cup, what gives your community of faith joy. Does your community of faith love to eat together? Does making music together give you joy? Do you value community outreach initiatives?

Layer 3

*In the centre of your paper, find a way to represent the community you live in – you could write the name of the city/town/municipality where you live, or write your city’s motto (i.e. North Bay: Gateway of the North), or doodle a key landmark

*Around the community you live in, find a way to represent your neighbours (both locally and around the world) think of the people who live near the church (seniors in long term care facilities? Families in apartment buildings?), think of the business that operate near the church (laundromat? Restaurants? Convenience stores? Think, too, of the people who frequent these businesses), think of the social services that operate near your church (Food bank? Shelter? Friendship Centre? Think, too, of the people who frequent the social services), think of partners in your mission (if you’re an Affirming church,

other Affirming churches could be partners. Do you partner with an organization overseas? Are your working ecumenically on refugee sponsorship? Ecumenical partners are your neighbours, too)

*Beside each neighbour you list, add a few words about what the gifts and skills of your neighbour are. And, finally, write in (or draw symbols) the things your neighbours are passionate about. If you don't already know, there is no time like the present to learn what gives your neighbours joy!

**When the 3 layers of your map are complete, without drawing any conclusions, begin looking for connections between the gifts and joys of you, your community of faith, and your neighbours. For example, do you and one of the neighbours you listed share a passion for gardening? Or, if one of the gifts of your community of faith is lots of retired teachers and professors, there may be a meaningful connectional opportunity with the apartment building in your neighbourhood that is full of young families.

Spend some time examining potential links between you and your church, you and your neighbours, and your neighbours and your church. When you have identified some possible points of connection, it is time to invite for conversation all those who care about what you care about!

Authentic collaboration happens when we share what we have, and what makes us feel alive, for the greater good!