



Invite • Welcome • Connect

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## Invite • Welcome • Connect

### Newcomer Ministry High Level Congregational Assessment

There are assumptions in these comprehensive assessment tools that your congregation is undertaking significant opportunities to teach and support lifelong Christian formation in its members. This **high level** list is a starting place for you to evaluate your congregational newcomer ministry. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

### INVITE...Evangelism

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model **INVITE (personal invitation) & Evangelism**?
- What are you doing in an organized way to invite new people to visit your church? Do you provide any physical tools to your members to help them invite others?
- How do you prepare your congregation to be evangelists? Do you offer education/training/guides for sharing their faith journey/stories?
- What are the creative avenues your church offers to invite the local community to visit? Do you intentionally connect these activities with information about your church?
- How well do you know (and how much are you involved with) the community surrounding your church?
- What is your church/clergy/staff relationship with local civic/community groups?
- What do you offer in the way of communication, both outside & in-house? Have you cultivated a relationship with your local media?
- Is your website up-to-date, relevant, newcomer & mobile friendly? Are you using social media as an evangelism tool?

### WELCOME...ministry of Hospitality

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model a **theology of WELCOME & Hospitality**?
- Do the members of your congregation intentionally look for the stranger in their midst?
- Would you say your congregation is a "friendly community" or is it a "community of friends?"
- Can you identify the members of your congregation who have the gift of hospitality?
- Does your church have an organized comprehensive strategy/system for welcoming and following up with newcomers? If so, do the members of your vestry and leadership know the details of the system?
- How well is your welcoming system working? What needs to be added and/or changed?

## CONNECT...Empowering Laity for Ministry

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leaders teach, preach, and model **CONNECT**, helping people discern their giftedness (vocation); then empowering, equipping, entrusting, and affirming them for ministry?
- What is your process for connecting newcomers into ministry at your church? Do you have an intentional system of tracking and follow-up of every single newcomer?
- Given that the Deep Truth of CONNECT is the “Sacred Act of Listening”...do you offer any resources/classes for listening skills?
- Can you identify the members of your congregation who are “connectors” – those people who naturally have a gift for connecting others?
- Given that newcomer ministry needs to be a team effort, how do your staff and/or lay volunteers interface with newcomers?
- What are your pathways to belonging? Do you offer a clear membership pathway, teaching the importance of our Episcopal rites of initiation, e.g., baptism, confirmation, and reception?
- What is your process for empowering laity for ministry? Do you have a variety of resources/methods/classes to assist people in discerning their God-given giftedness for ministry?
- Do you have written descriptions of all lay ministries in your church? In what ways do you communicate ongoing up-to-date information about lay ministries to your newcomers and congregation?
- Do you have a system for the nurture and support of all lay ministries in your church?
- Do you have exit conversations with the people who leave your church?

## CHURCH-SCHOOL

- Do your clergy, staff, and lay leadership understand and/or believe that your school could be your biggest mission field?
- Do you have an organized strategy to address this issue? If so, what is it?
- What are the ways you intentionally build and maintain healthy relationships between your church and school?

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# Invite

## Check List

### Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment

This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for inviting.  
It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
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#### Inviting

**Physical tools for invitation are provided to members**  
i.e., business cards, postcards, etc.

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#### Education & Training

- Classes and/or teaching resources are provided to help parishioners learn how to effectively evangelize, i.e. how to share their faith story; how to invite someone to church

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**Church offers numerous creative ways of invitation to the local community**

- Intentionally connect these activities with information about your church, always asking the question, *Why are we doing this and how does it align with our mission?*

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#### Community

**Your church's neighbors**

- Do you know them? Do they know you?
- Demographics, opportunities & needs of neighborhoods around your church are clearly defined and known

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# Invite

## Check List

We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
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### Like-minded community groups


 The church has partnered with these groups in outreach efforts

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### Civic Involvement

 Your clergy, staff, and leadership are affiliated with local civic and community groups, i.e., Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Kiwanis, etc.


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## Communication

### Local Media

 Your clergy, staff and/or leadership have cultivated a relationship with local media, e.g. local newspaper, radio, TV station

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 Creative advertising efforts, e.g. FaithStreet

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### Church Communication

 Website: up-to-date, relevant, newcomer friendly

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 Newsletter: up-to-date, relevant, online

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 Social Media: used in creative ways as an evangelism tool

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 Membership Contact Info: up-to-date email & physical addresses

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# INVITE

## IDEAS & RESOURCES

### Inviting Tools

#### Physical Tools for Inviting are provided to members

Small business cards: Provide the name, address & worship times of the church

Postcards: invitations to special events in the parish

Inexpensive source: [Vista Print](#)

Creative source: [Moo cards](#)

Windshield Car Decals

Episcopal Shield = Source for Episcopal Shield decals: [Episcopal Bookstore](#)

Custom designed decals

Smart phone apps = with information about your congregation

QR (quick response) Codes = download free from Internet; use to link to your website

#### Education & Training

Offer Technology Classes in E-Media: enlisting the youth as co-teachers ~ teaching "computer-ese"

Guides for sharing our faith journey:

[Sharing Faith Dinners](#) - Each of us has our own personal faith story, and sharing our stories deepens our own faith as well as helps others to recognize how God has worked in their lives.

[Transforming Evangelism](#), David Gortner - A practical, conversational style guide for helping Episcopalians understand evangelism as a non-threatening spiritual practice.

#### Creative Ways to INVITE your Local Community

- ✚ Creative evangelical efforts outside the church, i.e. [Ashes to Go](#); [Laundry Love](#)
- ✚ [Alpha](#); [Cursillo](#); [Faith Alive](#); [Via Media](#)
- ✚ [Discovery Series](#)
- ✚ Vacation Bible School
- ✚ Community Garden, Community Farmers Market; Pumpkin Patch
- ✚ Labyrinth (educate community about your labyrinth; invite them to walk it)
- ✚ [Meet-Ups](#); [A Movable Feast](#); [Order of Naucratis](#)
- ✚ School Functions; Partnerships with Local School
- ✚ Art Show; Community festival; Blue Grass Festival
- ✚ Community concert; Jazz Mass
- ✚ [Blessings of Animals](#), include blessing animals at local animal shelter or pet store
- ✚ Thrift shop connection
- ✚ Community fellowship offerings, e.g. "Wine Study & Bible Tasting"
- ✚ Financial workshops, e.g. ["Financial Peace University"](#)
- ✚ Burning of the Greens, especially if you have a school
- ✚ Epiphany (teaching moment-why we celebrate this season): tree chipper w/bags for mulch (church name on bag)
- ✚ Rogation Sunday (blessing of parish property and neighborhood blessing)

# Community

Your Church's Neighbors: [FREE demographic information](#) from Episcopal Church Center

# Communication

Communication questions: [Carol Barnwell](#)

E-Newsletters: [Constant Contact](#) & [MailChimp](#) offer affordable ways to reach your community

[Cardboard Testimonies](#) - at Emmanuel Houston demonstrate the power of words and faith as parishioners share their life struggles and how faith in God helped them cope

# Recommended Books, Blogs, Websites, Apps

- ✚ [Reclaiming the Great Commission](#), Claude E. Payne, Hamilton Beazley
- ✚ [Unabashedly Episcopalian](#), Andrew Doyle
- ✚ [Crazy Christians: A Call to Follow Jesus](#), Michael Curry
- ✚ Michael Harvey's [Unlocking the Growth](#) work
- ✚ [Forward Movement](#) & [Forward Day by Day App](#)
- ✚ [Episcopal Church Foundation Vital Practices](#)
- ✚ [The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways](#), Meredith Gould
- ✚ [Speaking Faithfully: Communications as Evangelism in a Noisy World](#), Rebecca Wilson, Jim Naughton
- ✚ [The Digital Cathedral: Networked Ministry in a Wireless World](#), Keith Anderson
- ✚ [Click2Save: The Digital Ministry Bible](#), Elizabeth Drescher & Keith Anderson
- ✚ [The Social Church: A Theology of Digital Communication](#), Justin Wise
- ✚ [The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age](#) – Dwight Zscheile
- ✚ [Twitter for Good](#), Claire Diaz-Ortiz
- ✚ [Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe](#), Walter Brueggemann
- ✚ [Anglican Evangelism Resources](#)

# Recommended Video Presentations

- ✚ [Presiding Bishop Michael Curry – “This is the Jesus Movement...”](#)
- ✚ [“Extending the Invitation”](#) Miguel Escobar, ECF Vital Posts
- ✚ [“Season of Invitation”](#) Back to Church Sunday U.K.
- ✚ [“Reasons \(People don’t go to church\)”](#) Powerful video from [worshiphousemedia.com](#)
- ✚ [“Goulash”](#) – great INVITE video from [skitguys.com](#)

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Updated 5.3.16



# Welcome








## Check List

### Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment


This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for inviting. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

We do this well      We need to work on this      We do not do this yet

### First Impressions











	<b>Greeting message on church answering machine</b> Warm, friendly voice with clear information about current service times & instructions for leaving a message	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Road signage and/or banners</b> Contain easily readable information while driving by	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Facilities inside &amp; out</b> Clean, inviting, attractive, clearly tended & cared for	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Designated guest parking</b> Located near the front doors & clearly identifiable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Interior signage</b> Clearly marked entryways, walkways, & map of facilities available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Nursery</b> Accessible, clean, attractive to adults & children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<b>Restrooms</b> Well marked, clean, supplies on hand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Greeting & Welcome

	<b>Welcome Team Members:</b>			
	• Greeters (parking lot, narthex, welcome table)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Ushers (narthex, entrance into nave)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	• Hospitality (coffee hour)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Welcome

## Check List

	We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
 <b>Welcome Team Requirements</b>			
• Intentional warm, friendly & informed welcome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Balance of gender & age on team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Clergy Welcome</b>			
• Clergy contact at door of church before and/or after worship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Words of welcome from clergy before or during service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Welcome – Information Table – Kiosk</b>			
Clearly identified with signage & staffed with friendly greeters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Nametags</b>			
Either everyone wears them or no one wears them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Newcomer information gathering</b>			
A system is in place for identifying guests/visitor/newcomers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Newcomer welcome gift</b>			
Welcome gift for newcomers is standard policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Newcomer information packet and/or welcome bag</b>			
Information for the newcomer is available at all times	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Kid bags</b>			
Say to newcomers "We welcome your children here!"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Worship bulletin</b>			
• Simple; understandable; newcomer friendly; intelligible to someone who has never been to church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Use insider language [EYC, ECW] as teachable moment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 <b>Hospitality time (coffee hour) following worship</b>			
• Intentional attention to visitors/guests/newcomers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Placement important – visitor should not have to go out of their way to get to hospitality location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Welcome

## Check List

We do this  
well      We need to  
work on this      We do not do  
this yet

### Follow-Up



#### Clergy follow-up

- Phone call, text or email from clergy following first visit
- Handwritten note, preferably from clergy, within first week

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#### Staff and/or Laity follow-up

- Phone call, email, and/or handwritten note after 1st & 2nd visit
- Invitation to newcomer coffee/dinner and/or newcomer class
- Distribution of newcomer info to staff/leadership
- Delivery of welcome gift (if not given at time of visit)

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#### For more Follow-up & Tracking system development (see Connect Check List)

### Training, Education, In-House Assessment



#### Administrative support – (see Connect Check List)

Development of admin support system for newcomer ministry

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#### On-going training

For entire welcome team, including greeters, ushers, hospitality team

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#### Flow chart

Newcomer ministry strategy/process for clergy/staff/leadership

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#### Mystery worshippers audit

Invite other Episcopalians to be “mystery worshippers”

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# WELCOME

## IDEAS & RESOURCES

### First Impressions

#### Sunday Morning Suggestions

- Have your designated Vestry person of the day carry around the office cordless phone in order to answer any incoming phone calls, or...
- Have a lay ministry volunteer at the church office answering the phone for those last minute people who might be calling to know times of worship services or directions.

#### New Episcopal signs – [Episcopal Marketplace](#)

### Greeting & Welcoming

#### Welcome Team Members

- ✚ Form greeter teams based on which service they attend; this will insure they will generally know the difference between a member and a guest/visitor

#### Welcome Team Tools & Suggestions

- ✚ “Ask Me” Name tags or t-shirts for greeters, ushers, hospitality teams
- ✚ Umbrellas: For parking lot and/or front door greeters in the event of rain
- ✚ Greeter Connectors: Intentional introduction to others = Greeter escorts visitor into nave and/or arranges for member to sit with them

#### Words of Welcome from Clergy

- ✚ Brief welcome & instructions for the congregation to introduce themselves to each other before worship service begins; clergy also intentionally points out welcome card/welcome table
- ✚ One clergy suggestion = ‘words of welcome’
  - No matter where you come from or where you're going*
  - No matter what you believe or what you doubt*
  - No matter what you feel or just don't feel today*
  - No matter whom you love*
  - You are welcome into this space to be met by a God*
  - Who knows you by name, who knows your heart, who knows your mind, and...*
  - Who wants to have a relationship with you*

#### Nametags

- ✚ The 30 per page (peel off mailing label) nametags are immensely effective
- ✚ Blank nametags ~ everyone writes their own name
- ✚ Laminated nametags (with magnet holders)

#### Guest Information Gathering

- ✚ Perforated “Get Connected” card attached to worship bulletin (for visitors & current members alike)
- ✚ Pew welcome card; guest book
- ✚ 5x7 clip board, with information sheet attached, given to each guest as they enter into the narthex
- ✚ Pew folder ~ at end of each pew ~ holds blank name tags, perforated newcomer/visitor information card, church information card, marker & pen



### **Guest Welcome Gift** (tie in with the church's name, locale, or logo)

- ✚ Homemade bread
- ✚ Mug
- ✚ Magnet
- ✚ Pen
- ✚ Packet of popcorn
- ✚ Chocolate bar
- ✚ Bookmarks
- ✚ Water bottle
- ✚ Bags for "green" cities where plastic bags are outlawed

Resource for umbrellas, mugs, tote bags [4Imprint](#) [FunImpressions](#)

### **Guest Information Packet ~ Welcome Bag/Folder**

- ✚ Church brochure with ministry information
- ✚ CD or Flash drive with information about the church
- ✚ Episcopalian, Sacraments, Creeds, BCP, brochures
- ✚ Church core values, mission & vision statement
- ✚ Current newsletter
- ✚ Facilities map with service times

Resource for [Informational brochures](#) for newcomers

### **Kid Bags**

- ✚ Colorful pipe cleaners
- ✚ Bible lesson to color
- ✚ Crayons
- ✚ Sacred scribbles (blank card stock)
- ✚ Small stuffed animal or small toy

### **Hospitality after Worship**

- ✚ Three minute rule = parishioners are encouraged to talk to someone they do not know for three (3) minutes after the service
- ✚ Clergy (if more than one on staff) welcoming at different exits after service

## Follow-Up

### **Staff and/or Ministry Volunteer Follow-up**

- ✚ Newcomer information shared with pertinent staff and/or ministry volunteers = this includes ALL clergy and any person who interfaces with newcomer

Newcomer survey for first time visitors [TOOLKIT](#)

## Training, Education, In-House Assessment

Flow Chart examples of newcomer ministry strategy/process [TOOLKIT](#)

Mystery worshippers audit [TOOLKIT](#)

## Recommended Books, Articles

- ✚ [Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition](#), Christine D. Pohl
- ✚ [Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation](#), Stephanie Spellers
- ✚ [The Inviting Church: A Study of New Member Assimilation](#), R.M. Oswald & S.B. Leas
- ✚ Welcoming article "Three Minute Hospitality" [TOOLKIT](#)

[Mary Parmer](#) 2016

[Invite-Welcome-Connect](#)

Updated 4.4.16



# Connect

## Check List

### Newcomer Ministry Congregational Assessment

This list is a starting place for you to assess and create your congregation's system for connecting. It is not intended to be either all inclusive or size specific.

#### Connecting

##### Process for connecting newcomers

- ☞ Intentional system in place for tracking & follow-up; Flow chart of process has been created
- ☞ Software system for tracking newcomers

##### Designated person(s) who will connect & keep track of newcomers

- ☞ Intentional conversations with each newcomer
- ☞ Connect newcomer with the people & ministry that matches his/her particular life phase, gifts, talents, passion
- ☞ Written job descriptions for newcomer staff

##### The Importance of Listening

- ☞ Listening skills training offered on regular basis

We do this well	We need to work on this	We do not do this yet
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#### Clear Pathways to Belonging

##### Intentional entry points whereby newcomers are guided in their journey of faith and into the life of the congregation

- ☞ Newcomer orientation/new member class
- ☞ New member welcome
- ☞ Classes for Rites of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Reception
- ☞ Entry points/doorways for spiritual nurture/discipleship

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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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# Connect

## Check List

### Closing The Connection Loops — Empowering Laity for Ministry

#### Discernment of gifts, strengths, vocation

- ☛ Variety of resources/methods are offered to help people claim their life's work as ministry/spiritual practice

We do this well      We need to work on this      We do not do this yet

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#### Lay Ministries Accountability, Communication, Nurture & Support

- ☛ Regular meetings with lay ministry heads
- ☛ Written descriptions & contact information of all lay ministries on website and in booklet form for easy distribution
- ☛ Each lay ministry functions as a small group, offering encouragement and pastoral care to group members
- ☛ Communication of ongoing Information about Lay Ministries through newsletter, website, Facebook, ministry booklets, worship bulletins, other ...
- ☛ Recognition, Affirmation, and Celebration of all lay ministries

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### Entrance & Exit Conversations

- ☛ **Entrance Conversation:** For a Realistic Look at your Newcomer Ministry Process, visit with five (5) people who have joined your church within the last year.
- ☛ **Exit Conversation:** For a Reality Check, have an intentional conversation with everyone who leaves your church. This does not have to be a formal process, and might be more informative if done by laity rather than clergy ... meet them for a cup of coffee or a beer!

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## IDEAS & RESOURCES

# Connecting

**FLOW CHARTS** of Invite-Welcome-Connect newcomer process [TOOLKIT](#)

### INTENTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

(Hearing the newcomer's soul story, an intentional conversation of the head & heart)

#### Initial Conversation

- ✚ Where did you grow up?
- ✚ Did you grow up in another church tradition? If so, which one?
- ✚ If Episcopalian now...when were you confirmed/received?
- ✚ What brought you to this church? Did someone invite you?

#### Going Deeper

- ✚ Have you ever felt God's call in your life?
- ✚ Do you feel called to a particular ministry now?
- ✚ What do you love doing? What gives you life? Joy? What makes your heart sing?

### CONNECTORS

(Shepherds, Mentors, Sponsors)

- ✚ These are people who might be in the same age range and/or particular life stage as the newcomer, i.e. parents of pre-schoolers or teenagers; dealing with elderly parents; recently divorced, etc.

### LISTENING Skills Development

- ✚ [\*The Power of Listening: Building Skills for Mission and Ministry\*](#), Lynne Baab
- ✚ [\*Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction\*](#), Margaret Guenther
- ✚ [\*The Art of Listening – A Reading List\*](#) – excellent extensive listing from [Godspace](#)
- ✚ [\*Community of Hope\*](#) – lay chaplain course with listening skills component

# Clear Pathways to Belonging

## Clear Membership Pathway

- ✚ Newcomer's Café – provides first opportunity to hear newcomer story (how and/or why they came to church)
- ✚ Liturgy of Belonging - new member welcome – an interim step prior to confirmation, reception **TOOLKIT**
- ✚ Seekers Forum – forum for connection that combines in-person and online community **TOOLKIT**
- ✚ Confirmation class models: **The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey**

## INTENTIONAL Entry Points/Doorways for Spiritual Nurture/Discipleship

- ✚ Outreach Teams, e.g. local soup kitchen, fundraisers for local non-profits, **Habitat for Humanity**
- ✚ Retreats (women, men, youth, couples retreats)
- ✚ Pastoral care:  
**Community of Hope, Stephen Ministries, Daughters of the King, Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Christ Church Cares**
- ✚ Divorce recovery
- ✚ Grief groups, e.g. **Mourners Path**
- ✚ **Caring for the Caregiver**
- ✚ 12 Step Groups (AA, Al-Anon)
- ✚ Marriage enrichment
- ✚ Expectant parents support group
- ✚ New mother ministry
- ✚ Mothers Day Out
- ✚ **MOPS** (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers)
- ✚ Teacher appreciation (private & public school teachers)
- ✚ Fellowship groups (Foyers, dinner groups, 50+/seniors group)
- ✚ Interest groups, e.g. Prayer Shawl Ministry (knitters), fellowships of runners, bikers, softball team, etc.
- ✚ Spiritual Nurture ~ Discipleship groups (Bible study, book study, topical studies):  
**Forward Movement, FORMA, RenewalWorks**

# Closing the Connection Loops- Empowering Laity for Ministry

## Gifts Discernment

- ✚ **Discovering your Motivational Spiritual Gifts**
- ✚ **Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Self-Assessment**
- ✚ **Discovering your SHAPE**

## Further Discernment

- ✚ **Strengths Finder**, Tom Rath
- ✚ **Living your Strengths**, Albert Winseman & Donald O. Clifton
- ✚ **Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Types**, Isabel Briggs Myers, Peter B. Myers
- ✚ **The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective**, Richard Rohr
- ✚ **The Wisdom of the Enneagram**, Don Richard Riso, Russ Hudson
- ✚ **Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation**, Parker Palmer

# Recommended Books, Articles, Videos, Websites

- ✚ **The Discovery Series: A Christian Journey**
- ✚ **Vital Practices for Leading Congregations**
- ✚ **Foundations of Discipleship**, The Rev. Patrick Gahan
- ✚ **The Cause Within You**, Matthew Barnett & George Barna
- ✚ **Everyone Communicates Few Connect**, John C. Maxwell
- ✚ **Equipping Church Guidebook**, Sue Mallory
- ✚ **"Assimilating New People in the Church"** David Drury, evangelical & mainline publications cited

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**Invite-Welcome-Connect**





Invite • Welcome • Connect

Born and raised in Mississippi, Mary Parmer is a congregational development consultant/coach, speaker, and retreat leader with offices in Austin and Sewanee. She serves as Director of the Gathering of Leaders, a national leadership group of young Episcopal clergy, and as Creator of Invite\*Welcome\*Connect, a transformational ministry born out of her work in parish ministry, further refined through the Episcopal Diocese of Texas Newcomer Ministry Project. Mary has served as Lay Deputy & 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate Lay Deputy to the 75<sup>th</sup>-78<sup>th</sup> General Conventions, and is a member of the Task Force on Clergy Leadership Formation in Small Churches (GC2015-A045). She holds a degree in religious studies from St. Edward's University, and formerly served as Director of Adult Ministries & Evangelism at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Beaumont, Texas.

Mary has taken the Invite\*Welcome\*Connect work to 40 dioceses throughout The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Diocese of Calgary, and has taught the work to teams of college missionaries and at two Episcopal seminaries. Visit [maryparmer.com](http://maryparmer.com) for further information, and [invitewelcomeconnect.com](http://invitewelcomeconnect.com) for checklists, resources, and videos.

*The Invite • Welcome • Connect ministry is a theological and practical initiative, which goes beyond making "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You" a reality, but also insures those who do come to faith in our churches do not leave by the back door. It provides a theological rationale for outreach to the spiritually hungry, a means of engaging those who come into our places of worship and a way to engage those who become a part of our community of faith. Simultaneously, the vision of an outward focus can be preached as central to the gospel to encourage congregations to be welcoming and inviting. The Episcopal Church will continue to wallow in a high maintenance mode until it takes its outreach to seekers as seriously and happily as it does tending the Altar Guild. Here is a super working model that makes "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You" a reality and not an oxymoron. Like the Altar Guild, choir, Christian formation ministry, youth ministry, acolytes, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, etc., Invite • Welcome • Connect is a crucial and exciting vehicle for the faithful to fulfill their ministries of being the church. The Rt. Rev. Claude E. Payne, VII Bishop of Texas*

*After a year it is clear to me that Invite • Welcome • Connect is only partly about evangelism. Its primary outcome here has been transformation. St. Peter's has become a different parish. Long time members talk to each other more. People linger longer after church. More people stay for breakfast and participate in adult formation. We are having an adult Confirmation program for the first time in years. To my surprise, almost everyone wears a nametag! And as I talk with others in our neighborhood or in the diocese, more and more people refer to St. Peter's as "the welcoming church." I believe the best of the good news in this initiative is proclaimed anytime a new member tells a long-time member, "I joined this church because you all have been so welcoming." Anytime someone hears that it dispels the myth that "The Rector" draws people to the church and reinforces the truth that we all participate in the ministry of evangelism.*

*The Rev. Luke Jernagan, St. Peter's, St. Louis, Missouri*

