

Faithful Innovation

A Spiritual Practice of Community Discernment



During times of tremendous change, the way forward is not clear. Plans and programs that once worked don't seem to be effective. More than ever, this is a time for listening: Listening for the losses and longings of the community around us. Listening for God's mission to serve and heal. Listening for the Spirit's invitation to renew. Faithful Innovation is a process of discerning the way forward. This process was developed by Faith+Lead ministry of Luther Seminary.

Faithful Innovation Process

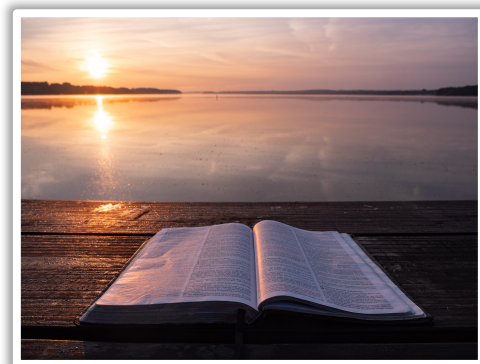
1. Start all meetings with a spiritual practice such as **Dwelling in the Word** or **Lectio Divina**.
2. Listen with empathy to the longings and losses of the church and community.
3. Dream, envision, and brainstorm to create as many new ideas as you can.
4. Develop a prototype and move forward on the new idea. Get feedback. Refine.



*Faith+Lead, Luther Seminary,
St. Paul, Minneapolis*

Dwelling in the Word

1. Choose a scripture passage. Read it three times.
First reading: What caught my attention?
2. Second reading: What questions arose for me?
3. Third reading: What is God saying to me?
4. Find a "reasonably friendly looking stranger" and share your reflections (3-5 min each).
5. In a larger group, share what you heard **your partner say**.
6. As a group, reflect on what you think God might be saying to you through this scripture passage.



Dwelling in the World

Gather data about the community and learn as much as you can about the demographics, social issues, cultural context and history. Analyze the data and, in prayer, ask God to help you identify the spiritual needs of the community. Spiritual needs may include: a need to grieve, to be valued, to belong, to be united, to have a voice, to heal, to be included, to be useful, to find peace ... God is already active in the community and your ministry is to join in this sacred mission.



Dreams and Visions

1. Give each person 10 post-it notes.
2. Set the timer for 5-7 minutes.
3. Ask people to come up with 10 ideas to respond to the spiritual needs of the community. Recall the spiritual responses from Dwelling in the Word and the spiritual needs from the Dwelling in the World.
4. Have everyone read all the ideas from the Post-it notes.
5. Set the timer for five minutes and ask people to sort them according to the ones they like the best.
6. When sorting, pay attention to when you feel excitement and energy.

Design a Prototype

1. Take your top idea.
2. Set the timer for five minutes and ask everyone to sketch out three ways to implement the idea.
3. Choose one.
4. Test the idea as a pilot project.
5. Get feedback. Refine. Redesign.
6. Move to the next idea, if appropriate.

