



**WHERE
TO START**
WHEN YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT
TO DO ABOUT
RESOURCES

*A guide for
faith leaders
on shifting
ground*

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT TO SUPPORT YOU

It's been a hard time. Thanks for doing what you do. The world needs your good and beautiful work right now; we need it now more than ever.

The purpose for this tool is to walk with you as you consider some of the questions that are pressing on you and your ministry. As these questions are clarified, we can point you to some helpful resources for taking next steps.

Thanks for what you do.

Before we jump in, let's take stock of where we are.

Go ahead, write your thoughts down!

What's one thing that has gone well?

What keeps you up at night?

What's your greatest need in ministry right now?

Who else do you need to journey with you?

When a crisis hits, we can feel disoriented in ways that prevent us from taking the next steps in mission and ministry. Imagining new possibilities often feels utterly impossible. We get it.

We've intentionally structured the questions that follow to include a combination of individual and collective questions. Some of these questions invite personal reflection; some of these questions pertain to how you lead the broader community you serve. As you consider how the individual and collective reflections are related, we invite you to respond to whichever questions release the most imaginative energy for you.

Consider the list of questions you may have under each category. In order to focus your energy, mark off the two or three questions in each category that are most pressing for you right now. We've also left space for you to identify additional questions.

Did you know, there are lots of different ways to use this guide?

HERE ARE THREE IDEAS:

- 1** Use it for personal reflection
- 2** Discuss a specific section with leaders in your congregation
- 3** Facilitate a discussion in a cohort or group of ministry leaders

No matter how you use it, you're never doing this work alone!

CRISES

Below are some crises that you might run into.
Mark off the two or three questions in each category that are
most pressing for you right now.

1 Our building isn't working for our mission and ministry anymore

- What do we do about churches that have deferred maintenance, especially after our buildings haven't been used during or since COVID hit?
- Could our building or property help us generate revenue?
- How could our building or property better serve God's mission in our neighborhood?
- How do church leaders relate to developers who do not always share values around community development?
- How do we decide when and how to sell our building?
- How do we grieve the loss of facilities and collective identity?

What other questions do you have?



2 I know we need to do something new, but I don't know how to make changes

- Following months (and years) of innovation, how do I learn from and further strengthen an innovation muscle?
 - With so many barriers to innovation, how do I take the first step?
 - How can we innovate if we lack capacity (staff, volunteers, energy, time, etc.) to imagine a new future?
 - How does innovation move from an idea I have to a vision that we share?
 - What is it we have to let go of to reimagine mission and ministry?
 - Am I the right person to do what's required right now? Do I even want to do what is required of me right now?
 - When change is the norm, how do I sustain myself and what do I draw upon?
- What other questions do you have?



3 Our faith community is feeling divided

- How do we mend divides after polarization and political divisions?
 - What does it mean to be an autonomous person in relationship with others?
 - How do we live together after experiencing deep divides and pain?
 - Where do I belong and how do I create spaces where others belong?
 - How do I continue to serve in contexts that no longer privilege my embodiment?
 - How do I continue serving when life and ministry feel fraught on every side?
- What other questions do you have?



4 Experiencing a loss of individual and collective identity

- How have the crises of the past few years changed how our faith community sees itself?
- How do I continue adapting and leading when it feels like external factors keep changing the landscape?
- How do I align who we want to be (collectively) with who we are?
- What do I need to leave behind but don't know how to let go?
- How have I experienced the call of God on me and our community in new ways?
- How do we understand our place on the margins of society after losing social position?
- How do I live into my call when the community that called me may no longer exist?

What other questions do you have?



5 Ministering amid unviable congregational realities

- How do I continue serving my faith community when it feels like too much is asked of me? What do I do when ministry isn't worth the mounting personal costs?
- How does my church and/or denominational system adapt to allow for greater health and wellbeing?
- Many of my colleagues are leaving the ministry; what does this mean for those of us who stay? Where do I find support without existing cohort groups?
- Who are my people and where have they gone?
- How do I lead and love my people when it feels like I am left to lead alone?
- What do we do when there just aren't enough volunteers anymore?

What other questions do you have?



6 Making a way out of injustice

- My church acknowledges that much of what we have is the product of systematic injustice. Now what?
- If I have benefits from structures of oppression, what is the first step toward equity and healing?
- How can our church address the unequal distribution of resources?
- My church has suffered due to systematic injustice. Now what?
- I have suffered from systematic injustice. Now what?
- Our church sits on land that was unfairly taken from indigenous peoples. What do we do now to restore justice?
- Our church and/or denomination has wealth and endowments derived from slavery. What do we do now to restore justice?
- As we become more aware of how philanthropy has underinvested in organizations led by and for people of color (philanthropic redlining), what do we do when thinking about our own resources and gatekeeping?

What other questions do you have?



7 Leading amid reconfigured institutional structures

- Our judicatory or network is closing churches. What are some options as to what to do with the properties and/or revenue generated?
- How can denominational leaders and a local faith community discern together when and how to sell a beloved building?
- How do I build new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships if my denominational body no longer provides the support and belonging my ministry requires?
- How do I love my institutions when it so often feels like they don't provide structures of care?

What other questions do you have?



8

Caregiving throughout church decline, closure, and/or congregational death

- It is clear our church will need to close in the next few years. How do we do that well?
 - What legacy do we leave in our community as we close?
 - What new life might emerge as a result of this congregation's death?
 - How do we claim the gospel story of death and resurrection as our congregation closes?
 - What happens to our building, property, and money when we close?
 - What will be lost in the neighborhood when we close, and can we prepare well for that?
 - How do I lead our remaining members through the grieving process as our congregation dies?
 - How do I grieve and deal with my feelings of (disappointment, shame, relief, excitement, etc.) as the church I am pastoring closes?
 - What should a judicatory do to best support the death and closure of churches?
- What other questions do you have?



9

Expanding funding for sustainability

- Where do I even start with fundraising? How do I fund my salary?
 - How can communities leverage access to funding networks to promote equity in funding?
 - Are there other ways our church could generate revenue in addition to member giving? For example:
 - Is there a role for social enterprise to further our mission and generate revenue?
 - Could we rent out our building to make use of space and generate revenue?
 - What is a grant and how can I learn to write one? Can our church apply for grants?
 - When my community realizes it needs to write a new money story for the next generation, what is the first step?
 - How has the fundraising landscape shifted over the past few years and why does that impact stewardship?
 - What do we do with our collective trauma and grief when talking about fundraising?
- What other questions do you have?



ACTION

1

Which three crises are most pressing for you and your community?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

2

Review the resources below that are connected to each of the crisis categories. Identify three resources you'd like to explore further to help assist you in navigating the challenges you and/or your community are facing.






1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

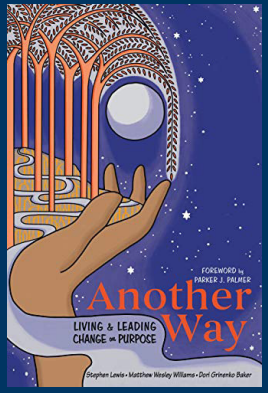
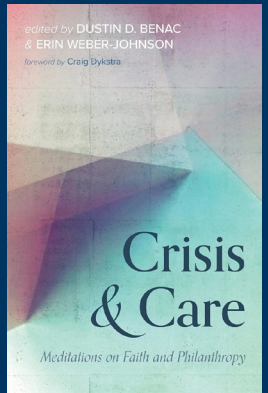
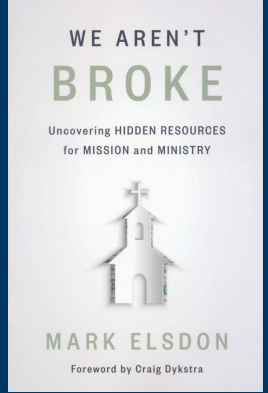




3

Identify who you would like to read or discuss these resources with (i.e., colleagues, congregants, mentor, etc.).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



 <p>Our building isn't working for our mission and ministry anymore</p>	<p>Prelude Chapter 1</p>	<p>Chapter 6 Chapter 8 Chapter 9</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 1 Chapter 8</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p> <p><u>Vandersall Collective/Parish Properties: Core Values/Development Process</u></p> <p>RootedGood property tools (How to Develop Well)</p>
 <p>I know we need to do something new, but I don't know how to make changes</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 3 Chapter 7</p>	<p>Chapter 1 Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 13 Chapter 14</p>	<p>Preface Introduction Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 10 Chapter 12</p>	<p><u>Ministry Architects: Tools & Resources</u></p> <p>RootedGood Mission Possible Game</p>
 <p>Our faith community is feeling divided</p>	<p>Chapter 5 Chapter 6 Chapter 8</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 4 Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 13</p>		<p><u>The Program for the Future Church</u></p> <p><u>The Ministry Collaborative</u></p>
 <p>Experiencing a loss of individual and collective identity</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 2 Chapter 3</p>	<p>Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Chapter 15 Conclusion</p>	<p>Preface Introduction Chapter 1</p>	<p><u>Vandersall Collective</u></p> <p><u>Forum for Theological Exploration: Resources</u></p>
 <p>Ministering amid unviable congregational realities</p>	<p>Chapter 6 Chapter 7</p>	<p>Chapter 1 Chapter 2 Chapter 5 Chapter 8 Chapter 12 Chapter 15</p>	<p>Preface Introduction Chapter 1</p>	<p><u>Collective Foundation</u></p> <p><u>Program for the Future Church</u></p>

				<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p>
 <p>6 Making a way out of injustice</p>	<p>Chapter 3 Chapter 6 Manifesto</p>	<p>Chapter 1 Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 10 Chapter 14</p>	<p>Chapter 2 Chapter 3 Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Chapter 11</p>	<p>Collective Foundation</p> <p>Forum for Theological Exploration: Christian Leadership Forum</p>
 <p>7 Leading amid reconfigured institutional structures</p>	<p>Chapter 1 Chapter 6</p>	<p>Chapter 2 Chapter 5 Chapter 14</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 1 Chapter 8</p>	<p>RootedGood property tools (How to Develop Well)</p> <p>Sympara</p> <p>Ministry Architects: Tools & Resources</p>
 <p>8 Caregiving throughout church decline, closure, and/or congregational death.</p>	<p>Chapter 6 Chapter 7</p>	<p>Introduction Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Chapter 12</p>	<p>Chapter 8</p>	<p>Faith & Leadership</p> <p>Sympara</p> <p>Invested Faith</p>
 <p>9 Expanding funding for sustainability</p>	<p>Chapter 8</p>	<p>Chapter 9 Chapter 10 Chapter 11 Chapter 12 Conclusion</p>	<p>The whole book – Preface Introduction Chapter 1 Chapter 8 Chapter 10</p>	<p>Vandersall Collective</p> <p>Parish Properties</p> <p>Shifting Ground Initiative</p> <p>RootedGood - Oikos Accelerator and Money and Mission Tool</p>



**THANK
YOU!**

*For all
your good
and beautiful
work*

Co-created by

