

Case Studies by Other Churches

Below you will find examples of churches that are learning new ways to engage with the community around them. Change is scary, and it's a process, and what works for one church may not work for another, but these are just a few examples of churches who are finding creative ways to be the church. Please note, we do not share or affirm all the theology held by some of these churches, their websites may express views that we do not agree with, we are merely using certain aspects of their church as examples of creativity. You can find brief descriptions, but you can get more info by following the links provided:

St. Lydia's: A Dinner Church In Brooklyn

www.stlydias.org

- Worship takes place around a table that is cooked together- as soon as you arrive you are "put to work" preparing dinner or setting the table
- Communion is made as food is shared
- Time is spent sharing with each other, exploring scripture, singing and praying together
- Congregation 20-30 people but has been growing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kq9yNljN6w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yZ6sVdaENg>

Union Dallas

"Union cultivates the divine spark in our neighbors for the good of the city and the world it inspires through outstanding coffee, robust, community and engaging causes."

- Ethical and fair-trade coffee that is also a church and community- high levels of community engagement
- Every cup of coffee bought 10% of the sales go to a local non-profit organization
- Tuesday worship, Sunday worship, "The Naked Stage" a space created for storytelling without notes or props- stories and poems will range from funny to inspiring to sentimental, spoken word poetry, weekly run club,
- Open late to accommodate the local college and young adult scene
- They provide traditional worship spaces but also more accessible areas that people in the community might show up for if they aren't particularly drawn to a "Sunday morning worship"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRG9CZB2GwA>

www.uniondallas.net

Zion United Church of Christ in Cleveland

- 1) Zion United Church of Cleveland
 - a. Dying church with 20 parishioners
 - b. A couple bought the church and are renovating the inside to include
 - i. Rock wall
 - ii. Café
 - iii. Lounge area
 - iv. Yoga

They are also maintaining it as a church where parishioners will continue to meet: they are excited about the new people that usually wouldn't even set foot in a church coming in

<http://www.freshwatercleveland.com/devnews/climbzion020915.aspx>

Homeboy Industries- Father Greg Boyle

- Job training for gang members and parolees
- Spiritual formation
- Educational services/ college support
- Legal services
- Mental health services
- They have:
 - o Homeboy bakery
 - o Homegirl café
 - o Homeboy products

All of which help the participants get some financial stability and job training

<http://www.homeboyindustries.org/>

Thistle Farms- Rev. Becca Stevens

- Started as Becca welcoming 4 victims of trafficking into her home and now advocates for and serves 700 women yearly
- Residential program provides:
 - o Education-
 - o Counseling
 - o Job training
 - o Medical care
- Thistle farm social enterprises:
 - o Employs residents and graduates of the residential program

- Operate a natural bath and body product line made from the lavender at the farm that thistle farm is located on

<http://thistlefarms.org/>

Orchard Hill Church- Try Pie

The church went into the community and asked people what they most wanted for their kids and it was “responsibility” and “job training”- so the church started a small business that employed a diverse group of girls in the community. They do:

- Job training
- Devotionals and bible studies
- Build relationships with other girls who they may not otherwise meet
- The community they are delivering pies too
- Adults who help at the church

www.orchardhillchurch.org/resources/additional/blog/1975-try-pie

Presbyterian House

Nestled close to the University of Wisconsin- it’s a campus ministry and an apartment complex for students to live. It is led by two pastors, who help connect the people living there to small groups, communities, and outreach. They have:

- Regular worship services
- Regular small groups ranging from Bible Studies to just groups that want to connect
- Every Sunday one of the local churches in the area brings dinner for the students that live there, allowing students a chance to connect with local churches
- Do a lot of social justice and outreach in the community

<https://preshouse.org/>

House for All Saints and Sinners

An intergenerational and diverse church, they describe themselves as “sacramental community”, a mix of ancient traditions and new ones.

<http://houseforall.org/whoweare/>

The Practice- Willow Creek Chapel

- Every month there is focus on a different aspect of practicing what living the life that Jesus has for us looks like
- Sunday night meeting- communion- and ancient traditions of our faith
- Seek to be kingdom-minded, practice-based, ecumenical, and eucharist centered
- Current series Rhythm of God: Love
- Fall Series- Living the Beatitudes

<http://www.practicetribe.com/>

Boonton United Methodist Church

Open Mic-Night every third Friday of the month

- Community event
- Free
- Chances to support and encourage people in their gifts and meet new people

<http://www.boontonumc.com/music-ministry/open-mic-nights/>

Soma Family of Churches

<https://vimeo.com/24802073>

<http://wearesoma.com/about/>

A network of churches and church plants all over the community, rooted in missional communities that meet regularly, open up to the communities they live in, and meet regularly for worship and communion. They describe multiplication as the heart of who they are, and necessary for raising up good leaders.

The Austin Stone Community Church

<https://austinstone.org/connect/missional-community>

The Austin Stone is a network of missional communities – small groups of people, joined by the gospel, pursuing the renewal and redemption of their community together. Missional community is the primary way to connect with others at The Austin Stone and pursue life on mission together. A community of Christians on mission with God in obedience to the Holy Spirit that demonstrates tangibly and declares creatively the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a specific pocket of people.

Tampa Underground

<http://tampaunderground.com/#index-a>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AadpTegUKdU>

Similar to the two churches mentioned above, Tampa Underground is focused on missional community. They have a diverse staff that is dedicated to equipping individuals to go out into marginalized communities and participate and lead their own missional communities. There are 140 micro-churches and communities, but they have a space that is open to all of those so there is overlap. This space has as rooms for banquets/dinners/events, a “dream room” where those ministries can come and dream up new ideas for their communities, a free clinic for those without insurance in the community etc... There goal is to have very little “control” over each micro-church but rather being united under shared mission and value and space for people to work out of that.

For more information on missional communities like the three above:

<https://www.cmaresources.org/article/2010-europe-simple-church-report>