

Embracing Differences

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28



THE
STORY WE
TELL

Questions Our Churches Focus On:

How do we grow?

How do we attract kids
and families?

How do we get people
to get involved?

But What Do We Mean?

I want church to feel like it did....

- Before COVID
- Before we were smaller
- Before we were financially strapped
- Before we had less church staff
- Before we had families had two parent or single parent working households
- Before Sunday wasn't so heavily scheduled for families

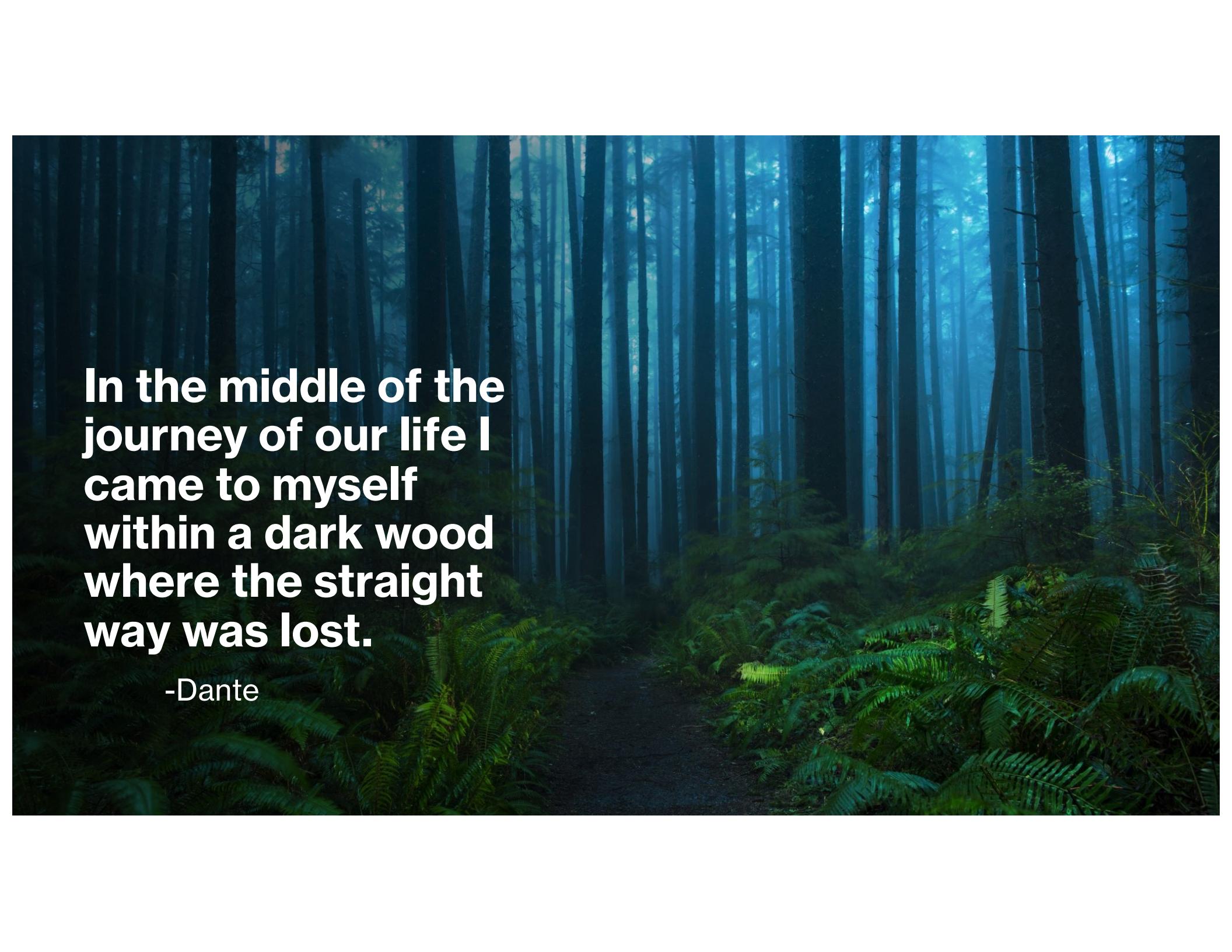


SURVIVAL VS. LEGACY CONGREGATION

- Survival
 - Seeks resources simply to prolong a church's life
- Legacy
 - Maximizes the impact of the church in the years of ministry that remain and beyond

A survival strategy that refuses effective change while absorbing resources is a failure of discipleship.



A dark, atmospheric forest scene. The foreground is filled with dense green ferns and low-lying vegetation. A narrow, dark path or clearing leads into the distance, lined with tall, thin trees that are silhouetted against a lighter, misty background. The overall mood is mysterious and somber.

**In the middle of the
journey of our life I
came to myself
within a dark wood
where the straight
way was lost.**

-Dante



**This is a “Yes, And”
presentation**



WE NEED TO BE CREATING CHURCHES:

- Where we embrace people with an **authentic welcome and meaningful connection** they need
- Where we embrace and adapt with **people in all seasons of life and help them find their best selves** equipped and used in ways that empower them to make a meaningful contribution to the world
- Where we embrace the fact that **conflict can be a means toward better solutions** rather than further wounding



WELCOME AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

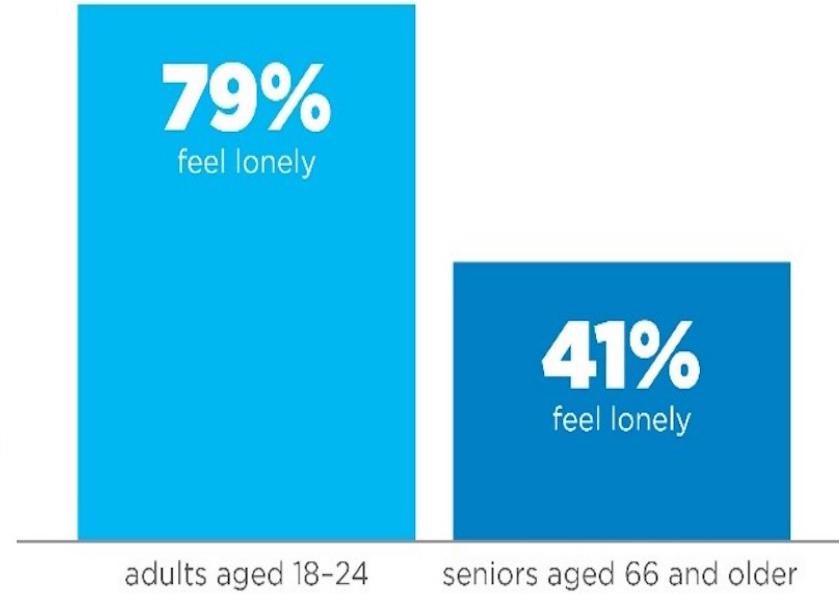
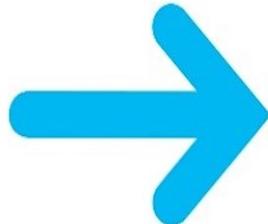




**CHURCHES ARE BUILT
ON RELATIONSHIPS**

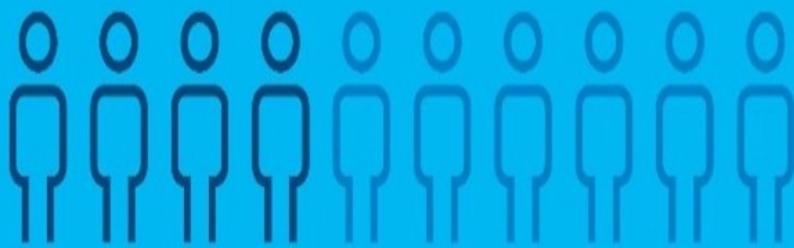
Lonely is not alone

Young adults
are twice
as likely to
be lonely
than seniors.

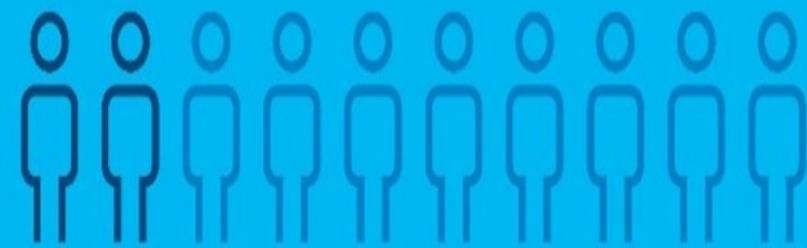


<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/loneliness-in-america>

More than twice as many younger adults as older adults experience feeling left out.



42% of people aged 18-34 report always
feeling left out



16% of people aged 55 or older report always
feeling left out

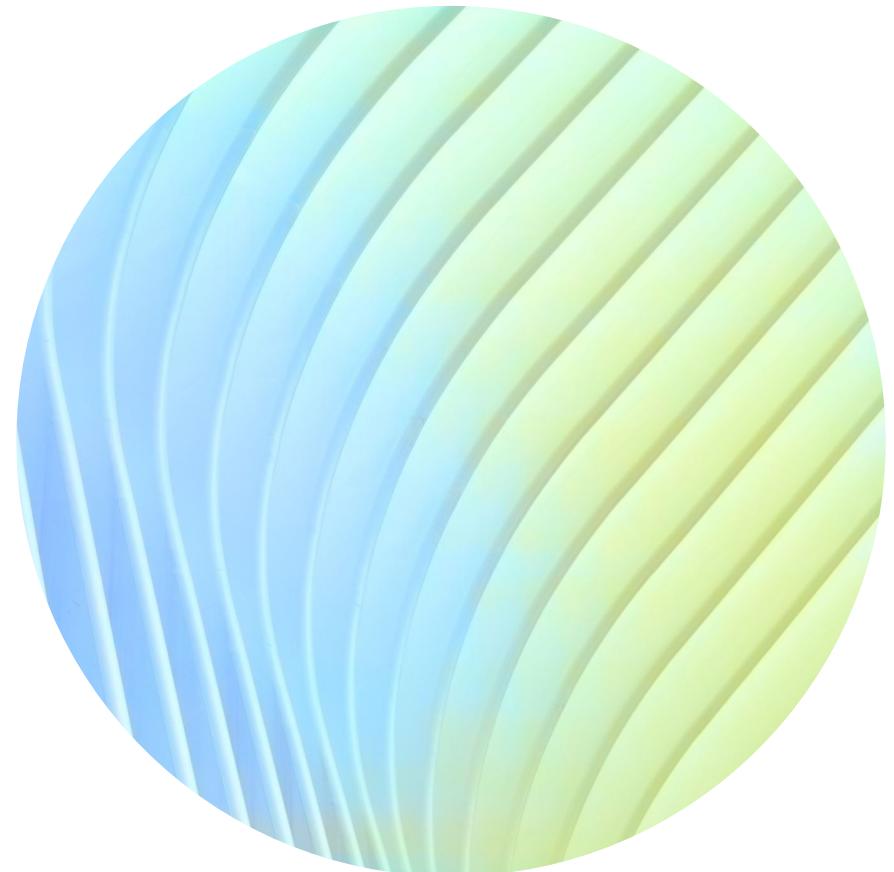
According to the CDC, People live longer if:

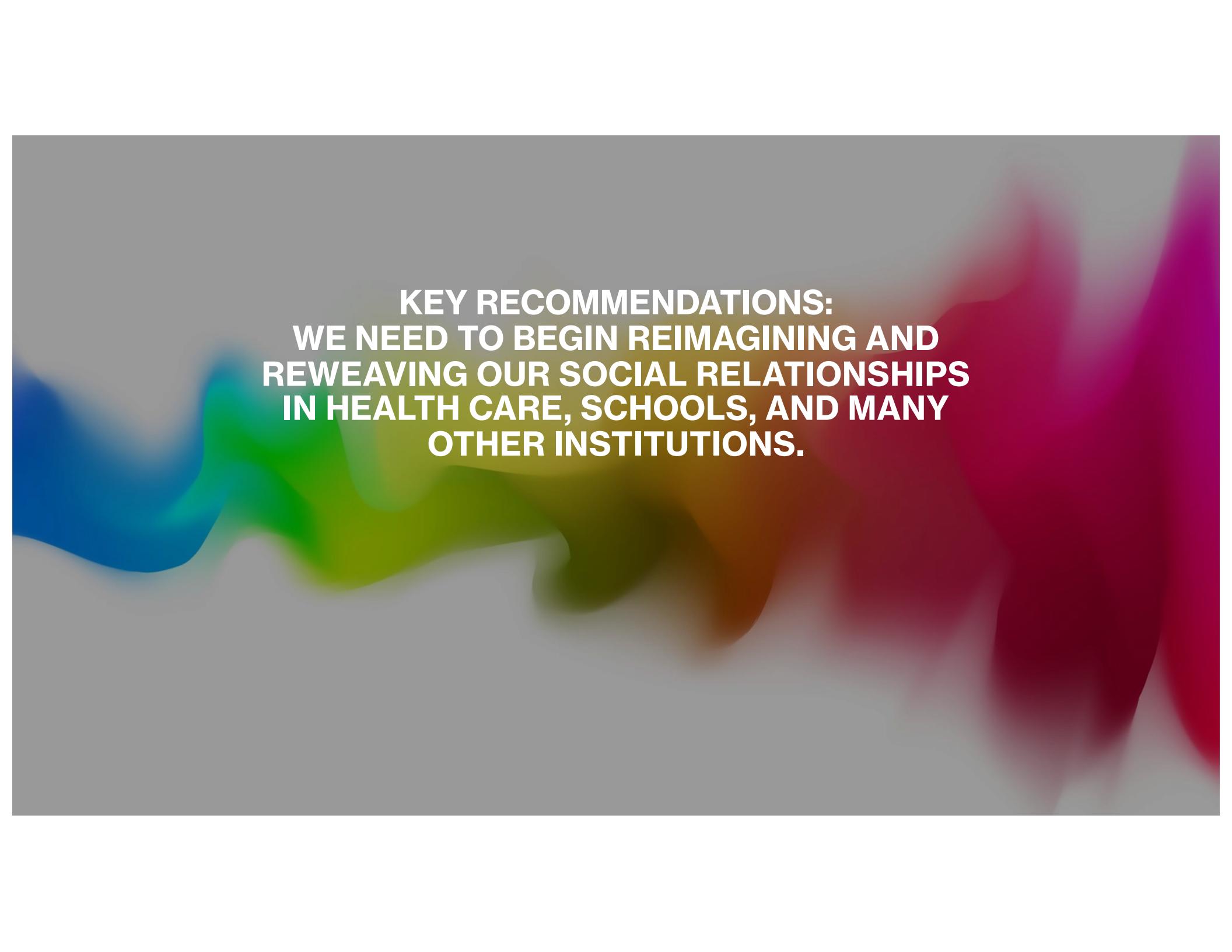
They have friendships

67% increase in death
by heart disease

50% increase in death
from cancer

They have daily
community interactions





**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:
WE NEED TO BEGIN REIMAGINING AND
REWEAVING OUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS
IN HEALTH CARE, SCHOOLS, AND MANY
OTHER INSTITUTIONS.**

Take a minute



Where in your life do
you feel the most
welcome?



What makes you decide to go
back?



HIGH QUALITY HOSPITALITY PLANS ADDRESS

- How we care for each other
- How we care for the community
- How we welcome
- How we invite
- How we build something that lasts together

WHY DON'T PEOPLE ATTEND CHURCH?

They don't believe or found other ways to meet spiritual needs

They are afraid of being judged or not accepted

They are afraid of getting it wrong



**CHURCH
HOSPITALITY
STARTS IN THE
DINER
(the acceptance and
judgement part)**

YOU HAVE TO ASK:



WHAT DO PEOPLE SEE WHEN WE LEAVE OUR BUILDING?



WHAT DO PEOPLE SEE WHEN WE ARE WORKING IN OUR CHURCH GROUNDS ?



WHAT DO PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY SEE US DO MINISTRY?



WHAT DOES OUR WEBSITE SAY ABOUT WHO WE ARE? AND THEN DO IT



WHERE DO PEOPLE FIRST GET GREETED WHEN THEY ARE COMING TO:

Events in the space
Childcare in the building
Worship

**TAKE THE “I'M
STUPID” FEEL OUT
OF CHURCH**
**(the afraid of getting
it wrong part)**





The whole church watched with nervous anticipation
as the visitors sat where the Martins have sat for 42 years.

In all Seasons: Understanding Generations and the Changing Church



Why do we need to know this?

- We want to attract families with children and youth
- Most church leadership doesn't know what the different age groups want and need in church
- Church is one of the rare instances in life where we can experience a multi-generational community
- We need to stop guessing



What drives us?

Traditionalists (80+ years)

- Loyal to their employers and to institutions – stick with it.
- Respect authority
- Appreciate one on one interaction
- Value consistency and reliability
- Giving is determined by if it is reliable institution or known quantity



Baby Boomers (61-79 years of age)

- When working it is the center
- Value individualism and self assertiveness
- Duty-driven model of giving time and money
- Support traditional, well-established organizations
- Do not need to feel connected to give
- Highest amount of financial giving

Gen X (45-60 years of age)

- Began a focus on work-personal life balance
- Value self-sufficiency and flexibility, wanting informal spaces to connect
- Must feel a personal connection to give and direct impact on the target community
- Highest amount of hours volunteering

What drives us?



Millennials (29-44 years of age)

- Needs socio-political values matched in both work and personal life
- Value empathy and interpersonal relationships
- Give when there is a peer-to-peer connection to give (I know someone who does this work)
- Money and time must be connected personally

Gen Z (13-28 years of age)

- Value truth, exploration and identity within their own context
- Need community that prioritizes mental health, open and honest communication
- When giving time or money they need to see impact so they know it is making a difference

Young(er) people need



To be seen and loved for who they are



To feel personally connected within the congregation (who are my people)



To feel an informal welcome that is genuine and authentic



A group that values mental health and honest conversation



A congregation that has a place in the world that is meaningful

These differences affect:



How we give our money



How we give our time



What motivates us to engage



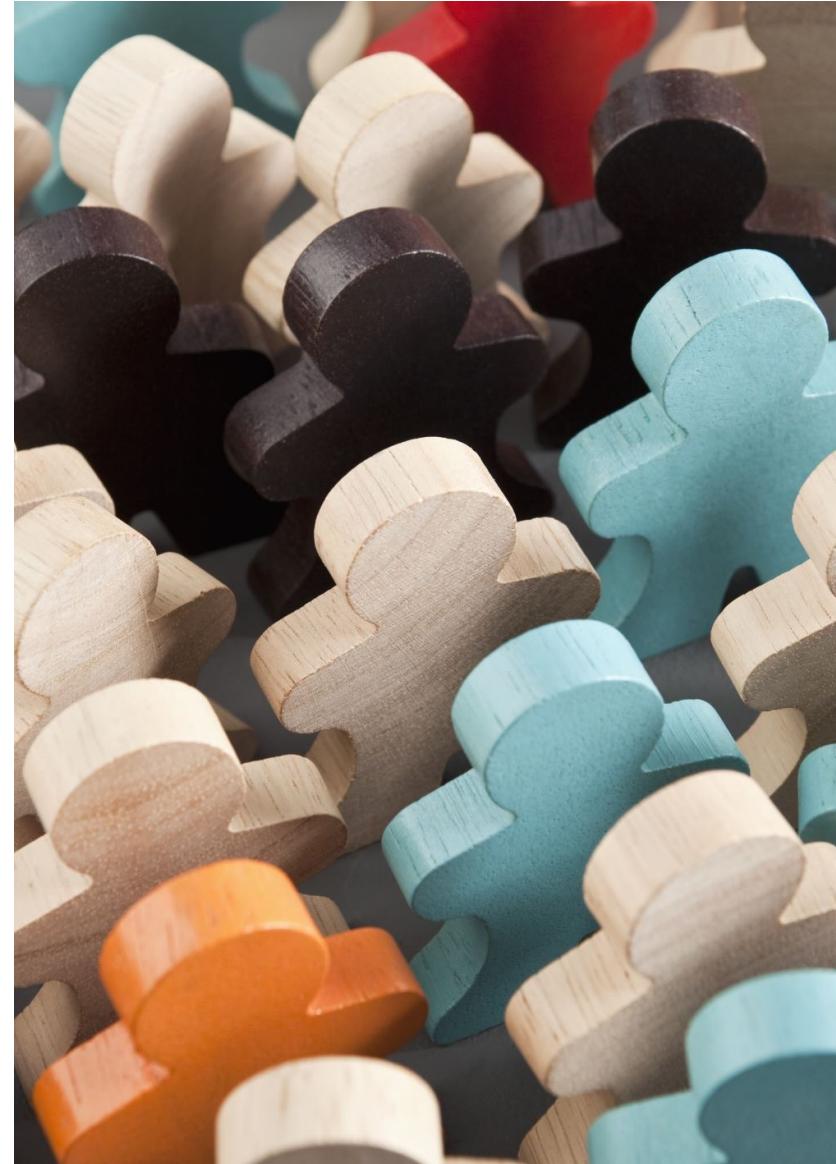
What makes us want to be in leadership



How we feel impactful

We need to be able to answer:

- How are we welcoming ALL generations into our congregations so they can feel valued and a part of what we do together?
- How are we listening to the needs of ALL generations and responding?
- How are we managing our expectations of what younger people can give and how they can give it?
- What can we give each other in community that we cannot get anywhere else?

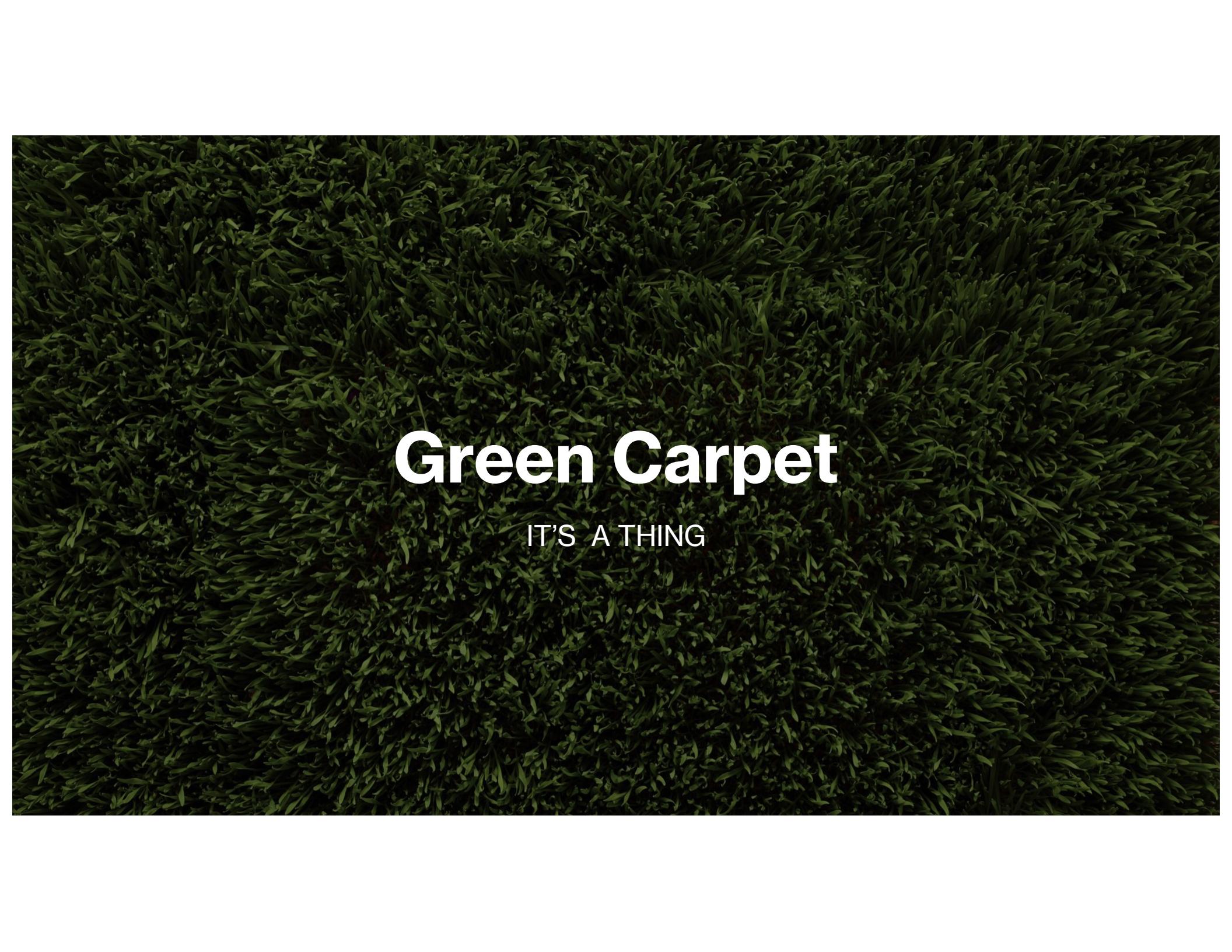




Church is changing because we are changing. We need to be able to meet the needs of the people we are serving.

TRUST AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT





Green Carpet

IT'S A THING



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Be ready – Wellness check
- “Triangulation” and anxiety management
- This is a part of being human (Prov. 27:17)
- Growth driven to disconnect or division driven.



Trust why do we need it?

Mistrust doubles the cost of doing business.

- John Whitney

- It has a quantifiable value –
 - Trust = speed + lower cost
- Systems with more trust have:
 - Less stress
 - Less burn-out
 - More energy and satisfaction
- Trust is the #1 competency of leadership needed NOW
 - Collaboration
 - Teamwork
 - Attracts people
 - Fosters innovation

How do we build it?

Copyright: Stephen Covey, *Speed of Trust*, 2006

Credibility = character + competence

- Character – integrity, intent (people know we care about them), authenticity, and agenda (win-win)
- Competency – capabilities with results on repeat

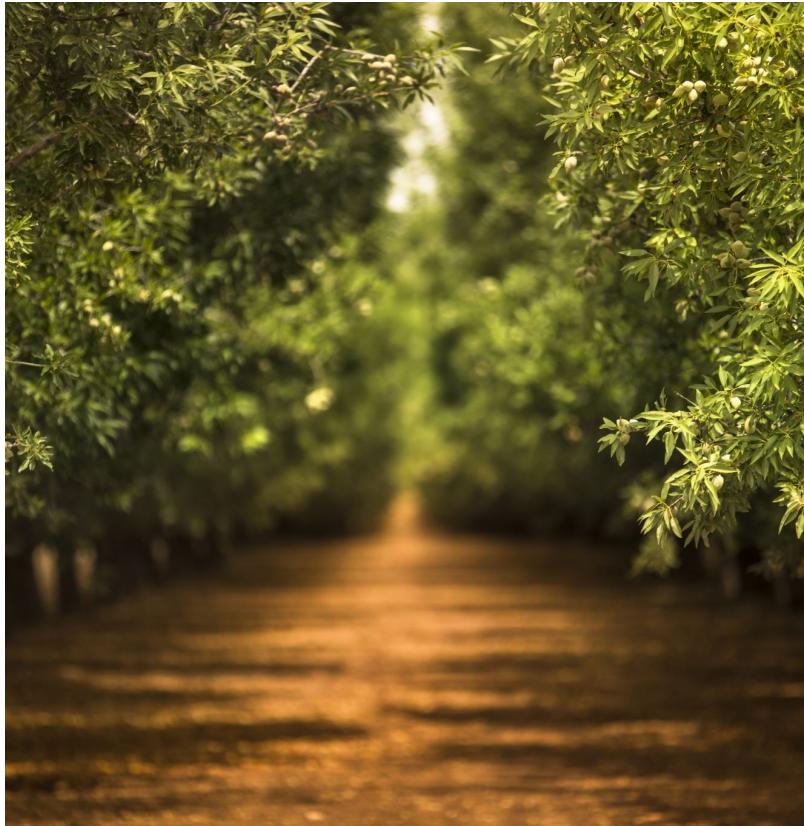
Behavior = what we do and how we do it

- Listen first
- Talk straight
- Transparency
- Signal
- Keep commitments
- Extend trust

Healthy Pathways:

- Help leaders understand the systemic nature of anxiety/conflict.
- Equip leaders (youth too!), staff and members of the congregation with an understanding of emotional systems and with skills in conflict transformation.
- Address individual conflicts by coming along side one another and do the work of reconciliation; be hard on issues, easy on people.





Healthy Pathways **(continued)**

- When conflict does occur, engage it directly with care and grace as an opportunity for mutual learning.
- Intentionally begin an asset-framed congregational narrative.
- Develop leaders and followers who embrace the purpose/mission of the congregation.

The Congregation Transformation

Any time we commit to a culture shift it must involve everyone

- No one person can do it alone

Motto becomes: We must love the whole of the congregation and each other, even when we don't agree and even when we don't see things exactly the same

Abundance narrative: What do we love about our congregation? What are we good at?



WE NEED CHURCHES:

- With an authentic welcome and meaningful connection
- With people in all seasons of life and help them find their best selves
- With conflict that can be a means toward better solutions

An aerial photograph of a construction site. In the center is a large, multi-story building with a light blue and white facade. The building is surrounded by construction materials, including wooden planks, metal sheets, and a yellow excavator. The ground is dark and appears to be dirt or asphalt. The overall scene suggests a large-scale urban development project.

**THIS NEEDS TO BE THE STORY
WE TELL AND THE LEGACY WE
BUILD**

Set an Intention

Pick one thing that resonated with you today.

*And we know that for those who love
God all things work together for good,
for those who are called according to
his purpose.*

Romans 8:28



THANK YOU

Emily Swanson
Owner/President

