

Missional FAQ

What is the goal of a missional community?

For parishes to become 'sending churches' that equip and send missionaries into the world to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

In what ways are missional communities and sending churches different?

They are parallel ecclesiastical structures. The focus of the sending church is to feed the Body of Christ. The focus of the missional community is to feed the world. For more, see the chart on p. 123 in [*Small Batch*](#).

How are sending churches and missional communities related?

Missional communities remind our sending churches of our apostolic identity. Sending churches remind our missional communities of our deep rootedness in traditions that were instituted by Christ himself.

Will forming missional communities be a break from our Episcopal tradition?

No. Forming these communities honors our tradition, which values equipping missionaries to serve the world in Jesus' name. The beginning of the Anglican tradition involved translating worship into language that all people would understand. In making the content accessible and digestible, the liturgy embodied its original intent more fully than ever before. The "work of the people" takes on the four-fold rhythm of blessing, breaking, giving, and taking. The final element, taking the good news out into the world, grounds us in the ministry of Jesus and the purpose of gathering as the church: to share the mission of God with the world. This rhythm still permeates not only our principal Eucharistic services, but the pattern of life for those who worship.

Whom should we send?

Those who feel called to go, and have a genuine interest in being present with those in the identified mission field. Each week, all of us sent "forth to love and serve the Lord" at the conclusion of worship. That said, the intention to build missional community in a specific context is a decision that should be made after a period of mutual discernment.

Why should we send them?

This is what Jesus commands us to do in the Great Commission.

How many different forms can missional communities take?

As many of which you can think. As long as a group of people are connected to a sending church, covenant together to live as missionaries in service to a specific people group, and gather regularly to eat, pray, and study scripture, they are what we now call a missional community.

Can a traditional church have more than one missional community?

Yes. Churches of every size can have multiple missional communities. We want sending churches to sow communities just as extravagantly as the sower in Jesus' parable, which means that we know that only some will take root and bear fruit. The opportunity to learn from those efforts that do not take root are just as valuable as those that do.

How will our sending churches equip missional communities?

Through listening and presence. By commissioning and deputizing lay leaders for ministry beyond the traditional church setting. Cultivating a culture with an adventurous spirit and acceptance of experimentation and reflective learning from failure.



Can members of the missional community remain involved in their sending church?

Of course! Each sending church must discern how they will relate to these communities with their missional leaders.

Does a missional community need to have a priest in it?

No, but it certainly can. A missional community can be led by a priest, deacon, or layperson. If a missional community does hope to celebrate the Eucharist together, please see the guide to [communion in missional communities](#).

My people and I are already extremely busy. How do we carve out time for yet another thing?

Everyday, each of us engage others as we go about our ordinary lives. Becoming missional-minded begins with the simple task of prayerfully watching and listening for how God might be active in those relationships.) While we understand the daunting nature of being sent out, we ask that everyone at least enter into a period of discernment and complete the Bible Study series. We are not asking everyone to go out simultaneously. The chances that no one in your entire community is called to respond at this point in time seem slim.

How are we to measure success of a launch?

Our traditional mechanisms of “success” and “failure” are not going to work in the context of missional communities. Furthermore, it is difficult to accurately measure the quality of relationships. That having been said, we would like to know what you’re up to! For now, we suggest a simple narrative reflection after each gathering. In this reflection, you might address if new people attended, the nature of your gathering – ex: worship, a shared meal, discussion, etc.; conversations on which you will follow up, and any other pertinent, non-pastorally sensitive information. We’d also love to learn about what didn’t work and any insights as to why, as these are opportunities to learn.

Are we supposed to record these numbers anywhere?

If any kind of worship happens, yes. Please report the number who attended worship to your sending congregation to be recorded in the church register.

Do we have to follow safeguarding regulations for these communities?

Yes. We value keeping all individuals safety. Please review our [guidelines for safeguarding in missional communities](#).

The reality of evangelism makes us uncomfortable. If we buy into the mission, but are having trouble getting started, what should we do?

Spend more time studying scripture and understanding the “why” behind the “going.” As you read through these lessons, practice explaining them to a friend who might not be familiar with Jesus at all. In taking the new relationship out of the equation, how might you have this conversation with someone whom you feel comfortable? This may help you to imagine how you might have this conversation with a stranger. We are not asking you to have any conversation in an inauthentic way. Be you, and the truth will come through.

How much money is this going to cost us? Who is supposed to pay for it?

This will cost as much as you decide to spend. There are no required and immediate overhead costs. This will all depend on where and how you decide to gather, and what you plan to do. Enter into conversation with your sending church as to what the financial plan is both initially and long term.

If I want to form a missional community, what is the next step?

1. Going – Show up consistently to find out who is in your community.
2. Relationship – Who do you need to partner with? Who might already be doing this work with whom you can make meaningful connections?
3. Gather – Begin to form as a community.

Questions that will help guide your discernment:

With whom in our community could we partner?

Where is God working in our community? What need is yet unmet that we may be able to tend to?

Think of the Christian community you attend. If you had a blank slate for being the church, what aspects of your community would you hold on to? What would you want to release?