

Missional Incubator National Capital Presbytery

Missional: Loving people. Engaging community on their terms and their turf.

Incubator: Space to dream. Growing dreams into reality.

TASK ONE: Defining Our Identity

Starting Point:

- *What do you sense God is moving in you and in your church community in the work of the Missional Incubator?*
- *What is already in place, or is moving in place, for this venture?*
 - *What do you have?*
 - *What do you lack?*
 - *Where have you seen energy and God moments?*
 - *What is your dream?*
 - *Initially, who is God placing on your heart to engage with in this venture?*
- *Our church needs:*
 - *A missional compelling business that creates:*
 - *The possibility of a new expression of church?*
 - *The possibility of a new worshiping community?*
 - *A missional social enterprise that creates:*
 - *The possibility of a new expression of church?*
 - *The possibility of a new worshiping community?*
 - *A combination of a missional social enterprise and a missional compelling business that creates:*
 - *The possibility of a new expression of church?*
 - *The possibility of a new worshiping community?*
 - *A missional compelling business or social enterprise AND a new steady income stream*

Week 1:

The purpose of this task is to discuss together the beliefs and the values that will ground your work and to come to a shared way of understanding and talking about key components of this venture. Your team will ultimately develop a written Identity Statement that articulates core beliefs about Jesus, Church, witness, gospel, disciples, justice, salvation, missional compelling business, missional social enterprise, and your understanding of mission.

Bible Study:

Ask everyone in the group to respond to the question, “When was the first time God’s love for you in Christ Jesus became real?”

Read Matthew 16:13-20 (NRSV)

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” 14 And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus

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answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Questions for the Group:

- What phrases or ideas jumped out at you in this passage?
- What is your answer to Jesus’ question: “Who do you say that I am?” Who is Jesus to you?

Read Matthew 16:13-20 (MSG)

13 When Jesus arrived in the villages of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some think he is John the Baptizer, some say Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” 15 He pressed them, “And how about you? Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter said, “You’re the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17-18 Jesus came back, “God bless you, Simon, son of Jonah! You didn’t get that answer out of books or from teachers. My Father in heaven, God himself, let you in on this secret of who I really am. And now I’m going to tell you who you are, really are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out. 19 “And that’s not all. You will have complete and free access to God’s kingdom, keys to open any and every door: no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven.” 20 He swore the disciples to secrecy. He made them promise they would tell no one that he was the Messiah.

Content to Ponder:

Consider how you described who Jesus is to you. Did you use “churchy” language to describe Jesus? Or did you describe Jesus in such a way that someone who has never intersected with Christianity could understand?

Discuss as a group the following questions as time allows. For homework before the next gathering, have everyone write out their answer to the following questions in a sentence or two.

Who is Jesus?

What is Church?

What is witness?

What is “gospel” (good news)?

What is a disciple?

What is social justice?

What is salvation?

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The National Capital Presbytery perceives a need for a more proactive, intentional approach to establishing new worshiping communities and new expressions of existing churches. The decline in church membership, the increasing pace of church closures, and the growing disconnect between current ministries and a postmodern culture create an urgency for a different strategy. This strategy will need to include projects that incorporate a mixed economy ministry which can provide income streams to the mission while, at the same time, increasing opportunities to engage with individuals who would not be attracted to a more traditional church. This approach will require the starting of missional compelling businesses and missional social enterprises.

What is a “missional compelling business”?

What is a “missional social enterprise”?

What defines a program/social enterprise/compelling business as a part of “our mission”?

What is a “new expression of church”?

What is a “new worshiping community”?

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TASK TWO: Discerning the “Who”

Week 2

The purpose of this task is to clearly define the “who” that your church is being called to engage, as well as the why of starting a missional compelling business or social enterprise. God will bring whom God will into our communities, regardless of where we begin but we need to begin somewhere. Your vision of the “who” will be developed after visits in neighborhoods, talking with local leadership and regular folks, prayer, and reflecting on how these encounters are moving you. All this will result in a concise one-page description of who God is calling you to engage and why.

Bible Study:

Read: Acts 16:6-10 (NRSV)

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Questions for the Group:

- Where have you felt or experienced your church being “forbidden by the Holy Spirit”?
- Who are the “Macedonians” in your community? Church? Presbytery? City?
- What might it mean to your team to “get ready to cross over to Macendonia”?

Read: Luke 10:1-3 (NRSV)

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

Questions for the Group:

- You’re going to go “out” into the harvest field. Do you have any reservations? Fears? Hopes?
- You’re going as listeners, not preachers. How does listening demonstrate the Gospel of Jesus?

Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and left.
- Pray for the person on your immediate right and left to see who God wants them to see.

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The Three “sight” Visit Activities:

1. Have a drink or something to eat in a local establishment. Listen in on conversations. It’s a chance to ask questions of locals.
2. Talk with at least one person who is part of the people group you believe God is asking you to engage.
3. Bring back a token, something that represents what you learned about the people you met. You’ll use this to tell part of the story you are learning about these people.

Possible “sight” Visit Questions: *Casual Community Conversations*

- “Excuse me, do you work or live in the area?”
- “If I were to move here, what do I need to know?”
- “Who lives here?” (Age groups, race, class, families, singles, etc.)
- “What do people do for fun?”
- “Do you like living/working here?”
- “Do people live/work here for a long time?”
- “What are the challenges in the area?”
- “What are the benefits of this area?”
- “What could make this community better?”

Feedback from the “sight” Visits:

The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you’ve had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.

Using your token to begin, tell what it represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you’ve met and had conversations with on your Site Visit. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

Beyond the initial “sight” visit:

- Before you leave this meeting, pair up and commit to going back and doing another “sight” visit or two at different times.
- Assign members of your team to interview in person or on the phone, law enforcement, educators, city officials, businesspeople, social services, non-profit groups, churches.
- Commit to praying for clarity as well as for those you continue to meet in this process.

Next Team Gathering:

Read: John 4:1-42

Questions for the Group:

- What words, phrases, jumped out at you?
- Reread verse 1, where, or to whom, is your “have to go”?

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Content:

- Review the team's "sight" visits, community interviews, demographic research, and community encounters.
- Have each person on the team share "who" God is placing on their heart.
- Write a concise one-page description of who God is calling you to engage and why.

A few "sight" visit suggestions:

- Find places where people gather and look for opportunities to ask people questions.
- Look for those people who are "like" those you have sensed God's call to engage.
- If you go into a business be sensitive not to interrupt someone's work. Always ask, "Would you have time to answer a few questions about the area and the people who live here?"
- If someone asks you, "Why do you want to know?" be honest and tell them what you're doing.
- Delay asking questions about church and whether or not one is needed. This will change the conversation. If you must, ask people if they are aware of churches in the area and what they are like.
- Go out in groups of two, no more than three — don't gang up on people! Remember that though you are not "witnessing" — i.e. verbally sharing the Gospel — you are still a witness. How you behave speaks volumes!
- Be sensitive to the fact that there may be religious groups who do this regularly. Dress appropriately for the day out. Try not to dress similarly or appear as too much of group.

Site Vision Observations:

- Who is there?
- What are they doing?
- Are they talking to others?
- Are they alone?
- Are people out in the streets?
- How are people dressed? Notice details like jewelry or not, name badges, shoes, styles, tech toys...
- What are the sounds?
- Sidewalks or not? Streetlights? Signage?
- If there are yards, are there toys in them?
- Are people at home or not?
- What kind of housing?
- What are the fliers in store windows, electric poles?
- What is your visceral response?

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Week 3, A Second "Sight" Visit

Review:

How do we answer these questions that form our Identity?

1. Who is Jesus?
2. What is church?

Bible Study:

Read **John 4:1-42 (CEB)**

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John (²although Jesus' disciples were baptizing, not Jesus himself). ³Therefore, he left Judea and went back to Galilee.

⁴Jesus had to go through Samaria. ⁵He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which was near the land Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey, so he sat down at the well. It was about noon.

⁷A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me some water to drink." ⁸His disciples had gone into the city to buy him some food.

⁹The Samaritan woman asked, "Why do you, a Jewish man, ask for something to drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other.)

¹⁰Jesus responded, "If you recognized God's gift and who is saying to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would be asking him and he would give you living water."

¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you don't have a bucket and the well is deep. Where would you get this living water? ¹²You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave this well to us, and he drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

¹³Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in those who drink it a spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will never be thirsty and will never need to come here to draw water!"

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Go, get your husband, and come back here."

¹⁷The woman replied, "I don't have a husband."

"You are right to say, 'I don't have a husband,'" Jesus answered. ¹⁸"You've had five husbands, and the man you are with now isn't your husband. You've spoken the truth."

¹⁹The woman said, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you and your people say that it is necessary to worship in Jerusalem."

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²¹ Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you and your people will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You and your people worship what you don’t know; we worship what we know because salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the time is coming—and is here!—when true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth. The Father looks for those who worship him this way. ²⁴God is spirit, and it is necessary to worship God in spirit and truth.”

²⁵ The woman said, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one who is called the Christ. When he comes, he will teach everything to us.”

²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I Am—the one who speaks with you.”^[a]

²⁷ Just then, Jesus’ disciples arrived and were shocked that he was talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸The woman put down her water jar and went into the city. She said to the people, ²⁹“Come and see a man who has told me everything I’ve done! Could this man be the Christ?” ³⁰They left the city and were on their way to see Jesus.

³¹ In the meantime the disciples spoke to Jesus, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

³² Jesus said to them, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

³³ The disciples asked each other, “Has someone brought him food?”

³⁴ Jesus said to them, “I am fed by doing the will of the one who sent me and by completing his work. ³⁵Don’t you have a saying, ‘Four more months and then it’s time for harvest’? Look, I tell you: open your eyes and notice that the fields are already ripe for the harvest. ³⁶Those who harvest are receiving their pay and gathering fruit for eternal life so that those who sow and those who harvest can celebrate together. ³⁷This is a true saying, that one sows and another harvests. ³⁸I have sent you to harvest what you didn’t work hard for; others worked hard, and you will share in their hard work.”

³⁹ Many Samaritans in that city believed in Jesus because of the woman’s word when she testified, “He told me everything I’ve ever done.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹Many more believed because of his word, ⁴²and they said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this one is truly the savior of the world.”

Questions for the Group:

- What phrases or ideas jumped out at you in this passage?
- What is the role of the woman in this story?
- What is the role of the disciples in this story?
- What is the role of Jesus in this story?

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- Who do you most need to be like for God to create a new expression of church in your community, the woman, the disciples, the villagers, other?

Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and left.
- Pray for the person on your right and this process.

Second “Sight” Visit.

Remember the Three Tasks

1. *Something to eat*
2. *Token of visit*
3. *Talk with someone (s)*

Feedback from the “sight” Visits:

1. The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you’ve had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.
2. Using your token to begin, tell what it represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you’ve met and had conversations with on your Site Visit.
3. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

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Week 4, A Third “Sight” Visit

Review:

How do we answer these questions that form our Identity?

1. What is justice?
2. What is salvation?

Bible Study:

Read:

John 4:35 (NRSV): “But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.”

Luke 10:2 (NRSV); He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

10:02 Spiritual Practice: Consider setting your watch or a timer on your phone for 10:02 AM daily. When your timer vibrates quietly ask God to send laborers.

Acts 17:16-23

“While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this babbler want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new. Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Questions for the Group:

- What phrases or ideas jumped out at you in this passage?
- What is “good news” that your community needs to hear?

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Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and pray for them.

Third “Sight” Visit. Where does your team need to visit and when?

Remember the Three Tasks

1. *Something to eat*
2. *Token of visit*
3. *Talk with someone (s)*

Feedback from the “sight” Visits:

1. The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you’ve had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.
2. Using your token to begin, tell what it represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you’ve met and had conversations with on your Site Visit.
3. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

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Week 5, A Fourth “Sight” Visit

Review:

How do we answer these questions that form our Identity?

1. What is justice?
2. What is salvation?

Bible Study:

Review 10:02AM Spiritual Practice: *He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Luke 10:2 (NRSV)*

Read: **John 21:1-12 (NRSV)**

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” 6 He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

Questions for the Group:

- What word or phrase stood out for you in this passage?
- Why did the disciples go fishing?
- What would be the impact of this story if they fished because they needed funds?
- What would you do outside of your current job to raise funds to live?

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Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and pray for them.

Fourth “Sight” Visit. Where does your team need to visit and when?

Remember the Three Tasks

1. *Something to eat*
2. *Token of visit*
3. *Talk with someone (s)*

Feedback from the “sight” Visits:

1. The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you’ve had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.
2. Using your token to begin, tell what it represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you’ve met and had conversations with on your Site Visit.
3. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

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Week 6, A Fifth “Sight” Visit

Review:

How do we answer these questions that form our Identity?

1. What is good news to you?
2. What is belief in God?

Bible Study:

Read: Luke 10:1-9 (MSG)

¹⁻² Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He gave them this charge:

“What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands. ³ “On your way! But be careful—this is hazardous work. You’re like lambs in a wolf pack. ⁴ “Travel light. Comb and toothbrush and no extra luggage. “Don’t loiter and make small talk with everyone you meet along the way.

⁵⁻⁶ “When you enter a home, greet the family, ‘Peace.’ If your greeting is received, then it’s a good place to stay. But if it’s not received, take it back and get out. Don’t impose yourself.

⁷ “Stay at one home, taking your meals there, for a worker deserves three square meals. Don’t move from house to house, looking for the best cook in town. ⁸⁻⁹ “When you enter a town and are received, eat what they set before you, heal anyone who is sick, and tell them, ‘God’s kingdom is right on your doorstep!’

Questions for the Group:

- What word or phrase stood out for you in this passage?
- What would it look like to “travel light” into your community?

Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and pray for them.

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Fifth “Sight” Visit. Where does your team need to visit and when?

Remember the Three Tasks

1. *Something to eat*
2. *Token of visit*
3. *Talk with someone (s)*

Feedback from the “sight” Visits:

1. The site visit can be as brief as a couple of hours. Plan time in your day to gather your group to share first impressions and any learning you’ve had. You could gather at a café or a pub or a park to do this.
2. Using your token to begin, tell what it represents from your visit. Have each group share their discoveries and insights. Pray for those you’ve met and had conversations with on your Site Visit.
3. Pray that God will clarify your direction.

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Week 7, Identity and Who

Bible Study:

Read Acts 16:6- 15

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the regions of Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit kept them from speaking the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they approached the province of Mysia, they tried to enter the province of Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them. ⁸Passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas instead. ⁹A vision of a man from Macedonia came to Paul during the night. He stood urging Paul, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" ¹⁰Immediately after he saw the vision, we prepared to leave for the province of Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Lydia's conversion

¹¹We sailed from Troas straight for Samothrace and came to Neapolis the following day. ¹²From there we went to Philippi, a city of Macedonia's first district and a Roman colony. We stayed in that city several days. ¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the riverbank, where we thought there might be a place for prayer. We sat down and began to talk with the women who had gathered. ¹⁴One of those women was Lydia, a Gentile God-worshipper from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth. As she listened, the Lord enabled her to embrace Paul's message. ¹⁵Once she and her household were baptized, she urged, "Now that you have decided that I am a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us.

Questions for the Group:

- What word or phrase stood out for you in this passage?
- What do imagine "the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them." was experienced by Paul and the others?
- What is easier for you to recognize, doors opening or doors closing?
- What would it look like today to find a person like Lydia? What was her role in the forming of the church in Phillipi?

Pray:

- Thank God for the person on your immediate right and pray for them.

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Where are you now?

- What is your Identity Statement and what is your team's Identity Statement (if completed):
 - **Who is Jesus?**
 - **What is Church?**
 - **What is witness?**
 - **What is "gospel" (good news)?**
 - **What is a disciple?**
 - **What is social justice?**
 - **What is salvation?**
 - **Other?**
- Describe your emerging "Who" and your emerging team's "Who" if different than yours.
- "What" do you sense you are to do to engage the "who"? This is a check-in knowing it might change multiple times over the next few months.
 - Missional Compelling Business _____?
 - Social Enterprise that _____?
 - We need to create an income for our mission to continue of _____?