

Embracing Training to Build a Social Capital Framework of Bonding and Bridging
Through the Ministry Example of Jesus for the Local Church

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ABSTRACT

EMBRACING TRAINING TO BUILDING A SOCIAL CAPITAL FRAMEWORK OF BONDING AND BRIDGING THROUGH THE MINISTRY EXAMPLE OF JESUS FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Joel D. Churchwell

Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church, Jacksonville, NC

Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church is geographically located within the city limits of Jacksonville, North Carolina. It is included within the approximately 3.4 square miles of census tract 26, which has been identified as an urban distressed community. Sandy Run has historically addressed the needs of the local community through stemming from the 1970s. At that time it was the first African American church in Onslow County, North Carolina, to collaborate with HUD to build a hundred and seventy-nine (179) unit, family affordable housing complex, which continues to meet the needs of the community at the writing of this project. SRMBC continues its commitment and understands the vital role it believes it plays in its community, this project focuses on how Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church has incorporated the social aspect which is one of the seven community capital frameworks developed by Putman, Flora and Flora, an organization which assists local congregations in their efforts to create a vibrant community context. Utilizing Social Capital with the components of Bonding and Bridging as the foundation along with the inspiration provided by Jesus, who as the *Tetkon*, the carpenter who built tables and utilized table fellowship in His own ministry we implemented this project. It is through this project that SRMBC was able to sharpen its impact upon the surrounding community that will hopefully lead to further transformation.

DEDICATION

To my brothers in the ministry, thank you for your sacrifice of encouragement and efforts. We have been in a covenant relationship to transform the communities in which God has planted us. Although the work may be tedious and time-consuming, God's Word reminds us, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9 King James Version). Ultimately, your works will impact your congregation and yourselves. Stay the course, my brothers, in Christ; practice self-care, and be an example in your speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (see 1 Timothy 4:12). God is faithful.

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First, I thank God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for sustaining and guiding me through this journey.

I also keep in loving memory, my mother, Reverend Gladys P. Churchwell, my father, Deacon John D. Churchwell, my mother-in-law, Mrs. Gussie Glenn, and my father-in-law, Mr. Berry Glenn, Jr. Their lives exemplified the portrait of hard work, tenacity, grit, and faith. During a time in America when the playing field was not always level for people of color, the lessons gained from knowing them left an indelible mark on my life. Moreover, they taught me everything is possible as one matures in Christ Jesus.

To my wonderful daughters, Erica, Kimberly, and Jo'el, you are a source of encouragement. Your resilience, tenacity, and intellect are a source of inspiration. As proud as I am to be your father, I am even prouder of the love and care you always show your mother.

To my amazing wife, Felicia, know that I thank God for you. You never allowed me to settle for the status quo. You have been my biggest cheerleader, confidant, and best friend. Your brilliance is the constant river running throughout our marriage. I thank you for your untiring support, patience, and love. I am eternally grateful to you for the sacrifices you made throughout my military career and the ministry of being a pastor's wife. By the grace of God, you have helped me become a better husband, father, and servant leader.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCF	Community Capital Framework
HUD	The Department of Housing and Urban Development
KJV	King James Version
NKJV	New King James Version
SRMBC	Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (in the CCF)
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association

GLOSSARY

TRACT 26

A US Census designation that refers to an area with a severe stress due to economic and cultural issues. Because of this designation there are certain grants available for interested stakeholders to apply for and utilize to the betterment of the area. See the project paper for more in-depth analysis along with charts and maps.

INTRODUCTION

MY JOURNEY – PLANKS FOR THE TABLE

My father served honorably and proudly in the United States Army for twenty years. Growing up in the Deep South, the Army provided him with the means to support his young family as well as opportunities for us to travel. As a result, my older sister and I received a global education.

I was born in Tacoma, Washington. However, before I was old enough to attend school, my father received orders to go to Germany; where I spent four of my formative years on a military compound where all military dependents attended a school sponsored by the Department of Defense.

Growing up on a military installation in the early seventies sheltered me from the injustices that were prevalent at that time in the United States. I was protected from the bigoted language and prejudices of all kinds.

I was in elementary school when my father received orders to go to Columbus, Georgia. One would think this was a blessing, but a sudden fear overcame my mother, which caused her to become more protective. She slowly started preparing my sister and me to enter a new world that would treat my sister and me unkindly simply because of the color of our skin. My mother's home state of Georgia would show little tolerance for African Americans, especially for military families who had served overseas. The culture of Columbus, Georgia, was very different from what I was used to while living on military installations. However, my parents taught us how to adapt and gave us the tools to adjust. The move to Georgia would be the inauguration of lessons that offered me many firsts that would shape my life forever. For example, Forest Road Elementary was

the first predominantly Black school I attended. Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church, where I was baptized, was the first church I attended where everyone was Black. In Germany, most families attended chapel, where the congregation was a blend of people of all races and ethnicities. Another glaring difference was that Black History was taught in the Sunday school curriculum. It was confusing yet intriguing, because, at that time, our teachers conveyed no actual significant facts regarding the contributions of African Americans to American History; instead, Black History was taught from a spiritual perspective to help students embrace that particular legacy. The lessons were taught to engender a sense of pride, encouragement, and dignity.

Barbara A. Holmes writes:

Retrieving this legacy is important because we can no longer assume that the tradition will be passed down through generations of church-going families. Increasing diversification of faith options makes it imperative that the stories and practices be retained. But even more crucial than the retention of practices is the healing of the wounds of generations past.”¹

While this whole life of blackness was inspiring, I longed for the acceptance of the world that embraced the biblical ethos that Jesus speaks about in the Gospels. Jesus’ teachings look beyond cultural barriers and accept humanity regardless of ethnicity or social status. Therefore, four days after graduating from high school, I joined the United States Marine Corps, searching for some of those intangibles that I experienced as a youngster growing up in Europe. I learned later that while growing up in the military culture and spending twenty-five years in the Corps, there were flaws, yet the experiences would lead me on a journey that would shape my ministry context.

¹ Barbara A. Holmes, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), xxxix.

My life as a career Marine was the juxtaposition of my life at that time with that of my childhood in various ways. My career allowed me to support my growing family and travel across this country, from coast to coast. However, somewhere along the way, I lost my way and strayed away from the Church, searching again for an elusive place of happiness. I could hear God calling me to ministry, but like Samuel, I did not recognize His voice (1 Samuel 3:7-8 KJV). Nevertheless, because of God's faithfulness, God never left me to my own understanding.

Thirteen years later after joining the Corps, I received orders to go to Pensacola, Florida. While on leave, my father introduced me to a man who would later become my pastor and mentor, Richard Lee Hines. Sgt. Major Richard Lee Hines had attended Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church while stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he became a disciple of Jesus Christ and became an ordained minister. After his retirement, Rev. Hines moved to Pensacola, Florida, and became the pastor of St. John Divine Missionary Baptist Church. At St. John Divine, my family met him and inspired by his leadership, we once again began our spiritual journey.

One might say this was a coincidence, but I know it was God's divine movement in my life. He purposely interrupted my worldly views to reintroduce me to the One who would restore my faith in the God I was longing to meet again, the God from my childhood Sunday school lessons: Jesus Christ, the servant to all humankind. I count it as all joy to witness the inescapable hand of God and His movement in my life.

Under the mentorship of the late Rev. Richard Lee Hines, Jr., I began once again to grow spiritually. Rev. Hines was a teacher and a community activist. He taught the tenets of faith found in the Bible with great humility and compassion, and he believed in

discipleship and evangelism. Rev. Hines also believed in building communities within the church. He opened his home and his life to my family. More importantly, this man of God taught me principles that aligned with God's Word as a servant of Christ.

As life would have it, my military duty called me to move to Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, North Carolina. Because my family was growing spiritually, and it was close to my retirement, my wife and I decided that she would remain in Pensacola to allow our youngest daughter to finish her high school career. After retiring, I would return to Pensacola. Once again, I tried to discern God's plans for my life, but God reminded me:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts. Nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8 NKJV).

This was a test, but the lesson I learned was that God had prepared me spiritually to leave, this time with His blessings.

Once I settled at my new duty station, I immediately began searching for a place to worship. I visited several churches, but the Holy Spirit led me to:

Sandy Run Missionary Baptist (SRMBC), the oldest Black church on record in the area. This historical church was established in 1831. Interestingly, there was a law forbidding Blacks to 'preach or exhort in public.' Regardless, a small congregation was formed under a tree near what is now Hargett Street in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Reverend Cornelius Scott led worshippers and oversaw the construction of a small log church around 1864.²

Again, God's sovereignty opened doors. I enrolled in seminary, joined the ministerial staff, immersed myself in ministry, and built relationships with church members.

² "African American Heritage Trail – J3: Sandy Run," Only in Onslow County Tourism 2021, accessed December 1, 2023, <https://www.onlyinonslow.com/african-american-heritage-trail/>.

I knew this was where God would give me peace until I could return to my family in Pensacola, Florida, but my path would change again. I only had six months before my retirement from the military when there arose an impasse between the leadership of SRMBC and the pastor. In order to avoid a split in the church, the pastor decided to resign. The deacons then approached me to consider becoming interim pastor until they could determine the next steps. Those next steps were indeed ordered by God, for I was ordained as the pastor of SRMBC in September 2004, never to return to St. John Divine or to Pensacola, Florida.

I thought I was failing at understanding God's vision for my life; however, I began to understand that God's timing is perfect. Moreover, prayer and meditation were keys to understanding God's path and vision. George Barna makes this profound acknowledgment of the role of a servant-leader and the vision God provides for those who are in leadership when he states: "The vision God provides will always be consistent with the context of the leader, hence its relationship to an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances."³ God was preparing me to become the next leader of Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church. At this occurrence, I began to hear God's voice more clearly. I knew God was molding me to become a Joshua type leader, Moses mentee, one who would be courageous enough not to allow the distractions of the naysayers and those who found an exodus easier way than commitment (see Joshua 1:1-9 KJV). As we shall see, God chose me to continue the Sandy Run's legacy of activism and social justice in a world that was radically changing. It would unfold as a bridge from the past to the present.

³ George Barna, *Leaders On Leadership* (Ventura, Regal Books, 1997), 48.

My first test of many as the new pastor was tumultuous, because some church members were not ready to receive the vision, nor accept my role as pastor they gradually left the church. In addition, in 2018, the weather intervened and our city was hit by Hurricane Florence. Fortunately, this category five hurricane was downgraded to category one as it made landfall; however, it still managed to devastate Jacksonville, and our church facility was one of the casualties. Many of our members' homes were destroyed, and sadly, some of them perished in the natural disaster. We temporarily relocated to another church to keep the remaining members of our congregation together when another natural phenomenon occurred: COVID-19. This global pandemic was a devastating sting, for it claimed the lives of many of our families and community members. Analogously, we lost members due to trauma, homelessness, economic disruptions, depression, and other circumstances which we had been unprepared to address. Despite these unforeseen circumstances, I knew I would have to continue learning and growing to be the leader God was calling me to be, for as Barna says, "Once you grasp the vision, you will never be the same."⁴ In the midst of the pandemic, while our church was under construction, our Trustee Ministry was not inactive; they researched how to write grants. We were able to apply for a grant from a North Carolina agency to help with our growing expenses. Subsequently, we were awarded a \$50,000 grant. This endeavor helped the leadership team and other ministries understand the power of collecting data. We also learned a lot about the tenacity and skills of teamwork. Additionally, we knew that grants would provide inroads to help support our community.

⁴ Barna, *Leaders On Leadership*, 48.

Slowly, I began to see many of my prayers answered. God began opening doors for me to participate in various avenues of community volunteerism. These experiences provided me with knowledge, collaborative efforts, and relationship-building opportunities with numerous stakeholders. Because of the church's community investment, I had a voice in city zoning issues and participated in African-American male forums. As an elected officer of our local Board of Education, I was part of an initiative to address closing the achievement gap for students of color and students who lived in underserved communities. I continued to collaborate closely with the mayor of our city, the county manager, and the police chief to discuss alternative solutions in order to help curtail youth violence.

These civic opportunities broadened my worldview regarding ministry. I was invited to become a founding member of the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) in our city. Additionally, as a member of the Community Health Advisory Team and the Onslow Memorial Hospital Board, I have access to relevant data regarding community health disparities. This data helped me curate my weekly sermons and Bible studies as a tool to introduce our church's ministry context to our congregants.

SRMBC developed a mission statement that conveys a clear vision as it states: "To love and serve God through Jesus Christ our Savior by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be committed to reshaping the lives of our families, our church, and our communities through biblical worship, discipleship, and evangelism."

More importantly, our Mission Statement gave the church members value as partners in the vision. They began to understand that ministry goes beyond giving out Thanksgiving baskets once a year and other signature programs that simply make us feel

good. Therefore, our ministry context had to change; we had to pragmatically look at ministry through the lens of what our community needed, not what made us feel good. This cascading revelation caused a paradigm shift to occur in our church. We formulated a tandem with the community for both church leaders and community stakeholders to explore sustainable ministries to help people become physically, emotionally, and spiritually whole. This endeavor meant that church leader had to commit to attend Jacksonville City Council meetings, Onslow County School Board meetings, and Onslow County Government meetings. Additionally, this endeavor included implementing methods to establish relationships with our community.

Before Hurricane Florence, the congregation of SRMBC had discussed the need to rebuild, for we were continuously growing. Therefore, we developed a Five-Year Strategic Plan to address the physical growth of SRMBC. The Trustee Ministry contracted a renowned firm to provide renderings of our church that would incorporate our mission statement and reflect the needs of our community church.

Although Hurricane Florence and the global pandemic were destructive, they were blessings in many ways. Both highlighted our church's weaknesses, including the lack of resources such as skilled human, financial, natural, and social capital. One of the shining moments amid the tragedy of the global pandemic was it gave our team time to plan. Immediately, members of our leadership team began investigating ways to navigate all of these storms during strategic planning meetings. We had to learn to live and not die during the social, economic, and political crises that plagued our society.

Another incredulous God-inspiring moment was that amidst all of this tragedy; our new church was under construction. The building process gave our community something positive to talk about and gave our members and surrounding community a

sense of hope. The excitement was palpable, however, for the mission to be successful, we knew that once the congregation came back together, they had to be educated on the biblical values of grace, wisdom, and godly love, which were needed as we addressed our weaknesses.

Moving forward, I challenged the leadership team of SRMBC to embrace a practical theology that would hopefully provide strategies to help address some of the societal issues in the revitalization of New River, the community in which our church resides.

Jacksonville is considered a transient community because of the military; therefore, New River, located near Camp Lejeune and Camp Johnson became the off-base residence for many military families. During the 1960s and '70s, New River was a vibrant shopping center near downtown. Slowly, however, this economic hub began to change. The grocery store disappeared, many small businesses began to vacate, and families started leaving.

Eventually, time caused the once bustling community to be labeled as the Tract 26 community by the 2020 U.S. Census Report. Because SRMBC is located in the center of Tract 26, this became the nucleus for our ministry context.

Consequently, since this was the driving force of our ministry context. The goal began as a hypothesis to find opportunities to empower worth, value, and health (emotional, physical, economic, and spiritual) in our community. To get the congregation involved, one of the exercises we incorporated in our Bible study was to form four teams to investigate our community and find out what was needed. We then examined ourselves to determine the strengths and weaknesses of our ministries. In other words, to

help a community, we needed to know if we had substantial skills and resources. As the pastor, I understood that the ethos of our ministry context would have to change, because the data derived from our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) survey that we issued to our congregation, identified the need for structure, accountability, and integrity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEED FOR THE TABLE

A Historical Perspective: Ministry Context

According to city and Onslow County historians, Jacksonville's early history began around the end of the Tuscarora Wars in 1713. The displacement of Native American tribes allowed permanent settlement between New Bern and Wilmington. The headwaters of the New River became central to the production of naval stores, such as turpentine. Today, the site of Wantland's Ferry hosts a downtown waterfront park, with bridges constructed on either side of the original ferry location. Former newspaper and magazine editor Billy Arthur wrote,

Agricultural income was four million from tobacco, corn, peanuts, and hams. The fishing industry was comparably profitable. He described the town of Jacksonville, before Camp Lejeune, as quiet, and the most profitable business was operating a restaurant that fed the ten-member Kiwanis Club.”¹

It was during the establishment in 1941 of Marines Barracks, New River, later renamed Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, which led to the relocation of seven hundred families. While many of the landowners were compensated, many of the families displaced were sharecroppers who did not own the land upon which their houses were built; therefore, those tenant did not receive compensation for their structures. Some compensated African American families could purchase property from Mr. Raymond Kellum, which became known as Kellumtown. Other displaced families established communities in Georgetown, Pickettown, Bell Fork Homes, and Sandy Run.²

¹ “History of Jacksonville,” City of Jacksonville, NC, August 2007, accessed December 1, 2023, <https://www.jacksonvillenc.gov/103/History-of-Jacksonville>.

² “Country Club/Sandy Run Neighborhood Plan, .

In the spring of 2011, longtime residents of those established communities faced some challenges to ensure future success, such as a need for park and recreation facilities for children and adults alike. The underlying argument was that the perception of limited public safety conveniences in the area of underdeveloped parcels of land could potentially detract from the neighborhood's character and value. In the 1970s, Bell Fork Homes and New River Town Center were annexed into the City of Jacksonville and became characterized as a more prominent area than had been traditionally developed as African American suburbs. The general area also comprised Jack Amyette Park, based in New River, and E.W. Wooten Park, located approximately one and a half miles south of New River, closer to the Bell Fork community.³

Development in the neighborhood was relatively slow but steady, and most homeowners began to build their own houses. While single-family houses dominated the development pattern in the 1960s, local landowners helped coordinate the development of the Sandy Run Apartment Complex in the 1970s. The housing units, later renamed The Sandy Run Apartments, were developed in the early 1970s by Fannie and Hurtis Coleman, members of SRMBC. Through the vision of the church leadership during the 1970s, low-income apartments were constructed to provide affordable housing in Jacksonville.⁴

The 2010 Census Bureau Report illuminated the dormant concerns in Onslow County. The data published for all to read was evidence to those who populated New

³ "Country Club/Sandy Run Neighborhood Plan," City of Jacksonville, NC Development Services – Planning Division, Spring 2011, accessed May 29, 2025, <https://www.jacksonvillenc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/87/countryclubssandyrun?bidId=>

⁴ "Country Club/Sandy Run Neighborhood Plan."

River, which as mentioned earlier, is categorized as Tract 26, an urban distressed community. This is the community in which SRMBC is located, the community we call home to the future Hope Community, a name the church has recently adopted.

A study by William High and Todd Owen from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill published their findings based on data retrieved from the United States Census Bureau, which, as mentioned above, cites an area of Jacksonville city as Tract 26, which includes SRMBC, as an urban distressed tract. Hill and Owen note:

Residents of distressed tracts are disproportionately minority. In particular, black residents comprise slightly more than 20 percent of all North Carolinians but represent 61 percent of the residents living in urban distressed tracts and a majority of those living in distressed tracts statewide. Notably, nearly 16 percent of all black residents in North Carolina live in a distressed tract.⁵

When considering the intersections of health and childhood poverty, it is worth noting that there had been only one major chain grocery store in the Tract 26 community, but it closed in 2003. Today, The New River Shopping Center has remnants of a once-premier shopping center. The combination of age and neglect reflects disheveled, dilapidated vacant storefronts with a corresponding limited aesthetic appeal, which has ultimately contributed to a housing shortage.

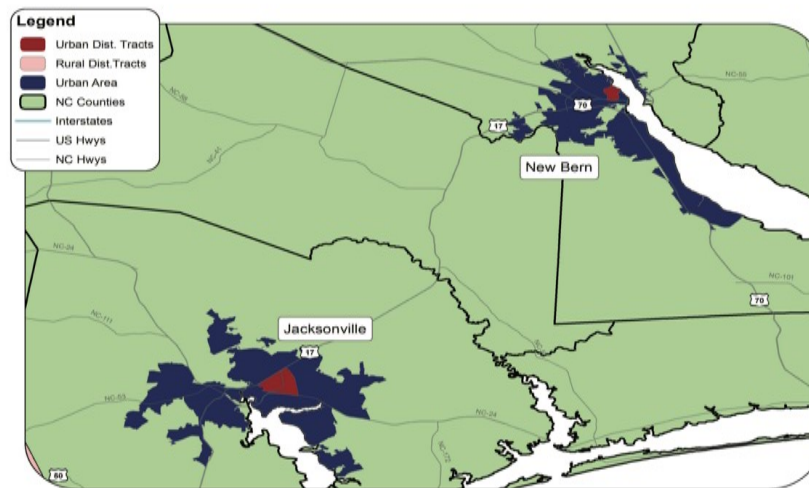
Because of a lack of fresh produce, New River has been considered a food desert for the last two decades. Since 2010, more challenges have arisen for this area. Wherein amenities that usually sustain a neighborhood were once a convenience, a chain of unfortunate events affected the New River residents. Noticeably absent are many of the basic amenities that communities of influence enjoy. Compounding the problem is the

⁵ William High and Todd Owen, “North Carolina’s Distressed Urban Tracts: A View of the State’s Economically Disadvantaged Communities,” Center for Urban & Regional Studies The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, February 2014, accessed November 15, 2023. <https://curs.sites.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1430/2014/02/NC-Distress-Update-final.pdf>.

absence of grocery stores, financial institutions, and pharmacies. On the other hand, several storefront businesses that sell overpriced packaged food, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco products thrive in this community, which have led to concomitant societal fissures.

The following tables are from The *Savannah Morning News*, regarding salient data from the 2020 U.S. Census.

Table 1: Map of Tract 26



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This region has a climate of racism, marginalization, cultural indifference, and an overabundance of subtle socio-economic issues. Constructed on the framework for this context, the United States Census Bureau built its designation on the following criteria:

- An unemployment rate that is 50 percent higher (14.5 percent or more) than the state's 9.7 percent average
- The per capita income is one-third (\$16,921) of the state's average of \$25,256.

⁶ William High and Todd Owen. "North Carolina's Distressed Urban Tracts: A View of the State's Economically Disadvantaged Communities."

- The poverty rate is 50 percent higher (12 percent) than the state's 8 percent rate.

Table 2 – 2020 Census Population by Racial/Ethnicity in Tract 26.

Population by Race/Ethnicity						
		2020		2010		Change
		#	%	#	%	
Total		3,202		4,492		-28.7% ↓
Race	White	1,003	31.3%	1,523	33.9%	-34.1% ↓
	Black	1,648	51.5%	2,491	55.5%	-33.8% ↓
	American Indian	28	0.9%	23	0.5%	21.7% ↑
	Asian	27	0.8%	75	1.7%	-64.0% ↓
	Pacific Islander	6	0.2%	17	0.4%	-64.7% ↓
	Other	189	5.9%	164	3.7%	15.2% ↑
	Two or More	301	9.4%	199	4.4%	51.3% ↑
Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	442	13.8%	414	9.2%	6.8% ↑

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The data from Hill and Owen and the Census Bureau became the bedrock of our passion for restoring the New River community. Hence, SRMBC is determined to be a

⁷ “How many people live in Census Tract 26, Onslow County, North Carolina,” *Savannah Morning News*, 2020, accessed May 29, 2025, <https://data.savannahnow.com/census/total-population/total-population-change/censustract-26-onslow-county-north-carolina/140-37133002600/>.

community congregation committed to restoring the importance of *koinonia* biblical fellowship, and contemplative and communal prayer which must undergird our efforts.

According to Dale P. Andrews, “the pastor becomes the agent of God’s concern for the person and the community.”⁸ Herein is the stated purpose for this doctoral project: this pastor and the SRMBC congregation are to promote and embrace a practical theology that will hopefully provide strategies to help address some of the societal issues in the revitalization of Tract 26. Therefore, the issues in this ministry context are finding opportunities to empower worth, value, and health (emotional, physical, economic, and spiritual) in our community. Analogously, this research aims to analyze ways SRMBC, can successfully integrate sustainable strategies already implemented by scholars whose work supports community development. This became especially significant because SRMBC gained the additional subtitle of the “Hallmark of Hope,” after the church survived Hurricane Florence and began to rebuild (see full story in the appendix). We now know that we call ourselves *Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church: The Hallmark of Hope* and every Sunday morning The Hallmark of Hope is our call to worship.

Understanding the fabric of our community helped us develop connections, for we share stories and values. As the oldest African American church in Jacksonville, North Carolina, we are the only church that offers affordable housing through HUD. That is part of our history. Our stories are instrumental in the form of encouragement and the journey God has brought us through. We are not a megachurch, but we have been blessed to accomplish and contribute to our community by the grace of God. He has allowed us to invest in our community.

⁸Dale Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 24.

SRMBC is a fixture in the New River and Bell Fork Homes community. The congregation's members must return to functioning as they did in their earliest days by reacquainting themselves with their neighbors. In 1995, before I arrived at SRMBC, there was a church split which created a new church: *Full Gospel Ministry*. Before this occurred, many people living in the New River and Bell Fork Homes communities worshipped together. Unfortunately, their current leadership is not interested in a reconciliation and would not have made a successful Bonding and Bridging experience for this project.

Even earlier than that split, in the 1970's, Bell Fork Homes, New River, and SRMBC used their "superpowers" (i.e., ministers, educators, political leaders, small business leaders, etc.) to galvanize the community when there was a societal issue. They stood united in the face of political authorities who tried to implement changes they believed would strengthen the communal base. Regrettably, many people left the community for various reasons, and the strength of the community began to weaken. The changes led to a slow demise. But there is hope, and the foundation of our hope is the love of Jesus Christ and building new relationships with those who are our neighbors. Jesus taught, "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?" (Matthew 5:13 NKJV).

Despite all of this, we must decide which external resources can be utilized and budget accordingly. Moreover, we can canvass whether these resources are available immediately or if they become exhaustive over time. Social researcher Barbara Wallace suggests having "a collaborative process that articulated to promote interested agencies to

reach consensus on common areas of interest.”⁹ One of the most misleading assumptions regarding people who live in marginalized communities is that poverty is a means to access government programs. While so many who live in the housing area in our community do not have an income or their income is below the poverty line, we must not ignore those who do not qualify for financial assistance because their income is just under the edibility guidelines. The irony in this is that they often do not qualify as poor. This conjecture is preposterous. It infers that jettisoning poverty is a community problem rather than a societal issue.

Fourteen urban ministry professionals collaborated with the founder of the *Christian Development Association*, John M. Perkins, to share their perspectives on revitalizing neglected and/or exploited communities. In one of the essays written by Lowell Noble and Ronald Potter, the authors quote Perkins, who makes a profound statement that juxtaposes one component of our ministry context challenges. Perkins observes, “We must probe further, push our analysis of the causes of poverty to another level-- the societal level of cultural values and social institutions.” He then asks this critical question: “Why has this human disaster occurred?”¹⁰

Dr. Perkins shares several critical elements for community organizers, explaining that “if people live in the community they serve and all those within that community are reconciled to God and each other, the result is redistribution sharing resources for the

⁹ Barbara Wallace, *Toward Equity in Health: A New Global Approach to Health Disparities*. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2008), 211.

¹⁰ Lowell Noble and Ronald Potter, “Understanding Poverty,” in *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together & Doing It Right*, John M. Perkins (Grands Rapid: Baker Books, 1995), 52.

good of the whole community.”¹¹ I agree that with God, all things are possible, and when community leaders focus on the goal of bonding and bridging, communities can be transformed.

In any event, the task of this project is to seek ways to implement those strategies by building upon the trust of those who are living in the context of a Tract 26 designation. Our next step is to consider the Biblical and Theological bases for the project.

¹¹ John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together & Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1995), 53.

CHAPTER TWO

AT THE TABLE –

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL LEGS

The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible mentions the word "table" seventy times across its twenty-seven books of the New Testament. From the usage in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the context for each passage, especially in the New Testament, one could infer that Joseph, Jesus' father who chose carpentry as a profession and (one has to wonder how far back in Joseph's ancestry must this have extended) and, among other things, that of building tables. Perhaps Jesus himself observed the work that went into crafting pieces of furniture that would be vital in bringing communities together. Matthew 13:55 states, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?" Against this backdrop, Scripture scholar Paul Furfey writes an intriguing article highlighting the socio-economic position in the life of a woodworker and connects it to the early life of Jesus. Furfey explains the Greek Fathers understood *tekton* as a "general term for a worker in wood, whether it involved houses, furniture, or other wooden objects."¹ Philosopher-theologian David K. Naugle suggests readers consider these questions:

Why, in the providence of God, did Jesus become a carpenter? Why did he not choose or receive some other accepted occupation of the time? Why wasn't he, for example, a shepherd, weaver, olive grower, fig grower, tent-maker, fisherman, potter, or merchant? Why was he a tekton? Why carpentry?²

¹Paul Hanly Furfey, "Christ as TEKTON," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 17, no.2 (April 1955): 204-215, accessed February 13, 2025. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43710137>.

²David K. Naugle, "Jesus the Tekton," *Comment Magazine*, June 01, 2010, accessed February 13, 2025. <https://comment.org/jesus-the-tekton/>.

While Naugle cites thought-provoking, philosophical questions that may prompt a deeper exploration of the historical context, Michael Brewer's compelling perspective strengthens the idea of the table as a symbol for uniting communities, making this concept more relatable. Interestingly, the author contends that "carpenters have two essential roles: they build and repair. Carpenters create what is needed and restore what is damaged. In other words, they both create and redeem."³

Similarly, community leaders serve as carpenters; they create environments that help build and repair underrepresented communities. Furthermore, community carpenters emphasize restoration and redemption. The ultimate goal is always to leave people and communities stronger. Oftentimes, they make these decisions at meetings which come together around a table. An invitation to the table symbolizes trust, collaboration, and reconciliation, all of which are nuances of building and bridging.

The family table is symbolic of one's own community. The cool part about the family table is it does not have to be elaborate. It is a gathering place to share meals, catch up on the day's events, and have family game night. Analogously, one might agree that the table represents a classroom because of the diversity of those who gather around it. A glance at the table through the lens of familial guidance, the table can be viewed as the inauguration of social skills. At the table, children learn Bible verses, family devotions, the value of education, storytelling and problem-solving skills, and it provides

³Michael Brewer, in "Jesus the Tekton," by David. K. Naugle, *Comment Magazine*, June 01, 2010, accessed February 13, 2025. <https://comment.org/jesus-the-tekton/>.

the setting for family meetings; a community that transcends economics, ethnicity, and politics.

Theologian Barry Jones suggests that the semiotics surrounding the table is one of the keys to human connection. Jones connects this thought with Old and New Testament examples. He writes:

We're often most fully alive to life when sharing a meal around a table. We shouldn't be surprised, then, to find that throughout the Bible, God has a way of showing up at tables. In fact, it's worth noting that at the center of the spiritual lives of God's people in both the Old and New Testaments, we find a table: the table of Passover and the table of Communion⁴

Jones quotes another theologian, N. T. Wright in his article to make another biblical connection to the table worth considering:

When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal. Once again, one may surmise that the focal point of most intimate and life-changing conversations often occurs at the table.⁵

In light of these comments, our identity as the community carpenter has been to develop the community, and our responsibility has been and still is to develop and nurture relationships within that same community – our local context. Another theologian, Paul D. Hanson argues, “Many are the images that have arisen out of the yearning of the faithful community for the time when God’s blessed order would be fulfilled and when God’s sovereignty would be recognized by all.”⁶ Hanson’s

⁴ Barry D. Jones, “The Dinner Table as a Place of Connection, Brokenness, and Blessing,” *Voice*, Dallas Theological Seminary, October 26, 2015, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://voice.dts.edu/article/a-place-at-the-table-jones-barry/>.

⁵ N. T. Wright, quoted in Barry D. Jones, “The Dinner Table as a Place of Connection Brokenness, and Blessing.”

⁶ Paul D. Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 517-518.

connection to the table merges with community growth as seen from a biblical perspective that includes the union of justice and peace as an essential dynamic. In his book, he concludes that “ (We see) images of the creation of new heavens and a new earth, of the marriage of justice and peace, of the swallowing up of death and sorrow forever, of the great wedding banquet.”⁷

The *tekton* example makes the table the central figure in developing trust, relationships, and engagement. This is critical for our project because this researcher has chosen to utilize the Community Capital Framework. In order to shapen and necessarily narrow the project focus, we will see that the social aspect will become most prominent. Australian community minister and author, Susan Barnes addresses a theological side to this aspect:

The term “social capital” has become popular among social analysts to explain the value of community, connectedness and a sense of belonging. It’s something God knew long before we coined a term for it. God said, “*It is not good for the man to be alone*” (*Genesis chapter 2 verse 19*). God had created light, sky, land, vegetation, sun, moon, fish, birds and animals. All the resources necessary to sustain life yet he saw it wasn’t enough. We need relationships with people.⁸

If we take this a step further, we see that the notions of bridging and bonding are realistic goals for the congregation that seeks to transform its community. As civic researchers Cornelia Flora and others have averred: “Bridging and bonding social capital can reinforce each other. When both are high, the result is effective community action.”⁹

⁷ Hanson, *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible*.

⁸ Susan Barnes, “Social Capital,” *Christian Today*, n.d., accessed June 10, 2025, <https://www.christiantoday.com.au/news/social-capital.html>.

⁹ Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan J. Flora and Stephen P. Gasteyer, *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change* (New York, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2018), 166.

Community activist Augustine Pierce explores the transition from the comfort of the church pew into activity that can ignite community engagement. The author encourages congregants to view activism as a transformative force from an evangelistic perspective. As the book develops, Pierce identifies various strategies for dealing with mere romanticizing about what could be. His theories allow congregants to view activism from an evangelistic point of view, identifying strategies to encourage and organize groups to look at community action from a realistic approach rather than one of romanticizing. Pierce writes:

For many congregations of all faiths, belief in God necessitates involvement in making the world a better place. It is that simple – and that difficult not only because it is hard and sometimes frustrating work but also because the responsibility inherent in the task demands effectiveness and goodwill.¹⁰

Notwithstanding that Pierce published his book over forty years ago, his ideology and theories remain applicable to this day.

As noted above, the origin of the influence regarding the notion of table has broad appeal within the realm of scholarly authors. Church volunteer coordinator and author, Shari Edwards writes an article published in *The Arkansas Baptist News* that connects the reader to the essence of and inherent spirituality centered around the notion of table fellowship:

I've been thinking a lot lately about the significance of 'the table...' Over the 28 years we have been part of our church, I have seen meal after meal, gathering after gathering, conversation after conversation happen around a table as a way of ministering to needs and for the benefit of building up the church as commanded in Ephesians 4.

¹⁰ Gregory F. Augustine Pierce, *Activism That Makes Sense: Congregations And Community Organizations* (Chicago: ACTA PUBLICATIONS, 1984), 96.

She continues: “the Lord impressed upon me that He was the originator of the table.

We see the establishment of the five major feasts in the Old Testament referenced in

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary Biblical Theology of the five major feasts in the Old

Testament described to be communal, commemorative, theological, and typological:¹¹

Israel's festivals were communal and commemorative as well as theological and typological. They were communal in that they drew the nation together for celebration and worship as they recalled the common origin and experience of the people. They were commemorative in that they kept alive the story of what God had done in the exodus and during the sojourn. They were theological in that the observance of the festivals presented the participants with lessons on the reality of sin, judgment, and forgiveness, on the need for thanksgiving to God, and on the importance of trusting God rather than hoarding possessions. They were typological in that they anticipated a greater fulfillment of the symbolism of the feasts.¹²

Edwards includes several examples of the essence of the table in the Scriptures

The first can be found in 2 Samuel 9:1-13 when: “King David invites the crippled

Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son) to dine at his table.”¹³ It is a beautiful representation of

forgiveness, compassion, and love. Another celebrated example of a metaphor for God's

protection and love is the most poetic description of the table in Psalm 23:5 (NIV) where

the psalmist writes: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”

Edwards continues, “The significance of the table continues in the New Testament as we

see Jesus, the Bread of Life Himself, dining at several table settings, interacting with

¹¹ Shari Edwards, “The significance of the table,” *Arkansas Baptist News*, September 15, 2022, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://arkansasbaptist.org/post/the-significance-of-the-table/>.

¹² Walter Elwell, ed. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), s.v. “Feast and Festivals, Old Testament,” 440-441, in Shari Edwards, “The significance of the table,” *Arkansas Baptist News*, September 15, 2022, accessed February 17, 2025. <https://arkansasbaptist.org/post/the-significance-of-the-table/>.

¹³ Edwards, “The significance of the table.”

people who were in need of salvation, as he offered friendship, teaching, truth, and restoration.(Luke 5,7,11; John 12,13).”¹⁴

Let us now approach the table from another perspective as we consider how we had planned to run this project with regard to the methodology we utilized.

¹⁴ Edwards, “The significance of the table.”

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY – TABLE ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

Earlier, I expressed that our congregation needed to understand that we must address our church community and its impact upon our ministry context by stating: “Why are we doing what we do?” Why is a powerful and insightful question, for when one understands the why, one can then begin to understand the who, what, when, where, and how. Our Mission Statement has mentioned before addresses our why:

To love and serve God through Jesus Christ our Savior by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be committed to reshaping the lives of our families, Church, and communities through biblical worship, discipleship, and evangelism.

Our Mission Statement is read aloud every Sunday and we include it as the benediction for all ministry meetings.

Jesus proclaimed, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28 NKJV). The bottom line is that we are servants, and our mission is to serve. Moreover, we understand we serve the people who reside in Tract 26, a community in which, in the past, so-called band-aids was placed in order to conceal the scars of neglect. We want to serve our community in the spirit of our Mission Statement. The crux of the problem comes in answering the question: “How?” How do we find the framework that encompasses our ministry context? This is in the face of some daunting statistics, some of which we addressed earlier, others which we present here:

Social determinants of health do include the social and communal context. Tract 26 data reflects:

Median age 37, 61% range from 18 to 64, Race & Ethnicity 51% female, White 38%, Black 41% Native 0%, Asian 3%, Islander 0%, Other 0%. The per- capita income of \$19,140.00 is about two-thirds of Jacksonville's median household income of \$29,792. Also, another data point is reflected in the level of poverty,

37.9% persons below the poverty line, which is more than double the rate in Jacksonville: 13.5% ¹

Although other data points are reflected in the Census of Tract 26, in Onslow County, North Carolina, Profile Data-Census Reporter, the aforementioned data provides a snapshot of the social determinants in this ministry's context. Once again, How can SRMBC impact the determinants prevalent in the Tract 26 community?

Sometimes, the answers to questions such as this comes through research, and other times we find answers through interconnected inspiration that borders on irony. In the case of the latter, I have been a member of the *One Place Board*, formerly known as the *Onslow County Partnership for Children*. One of the other board members recognized the works and ministry initiatives that our church does within the community and gifted me the book *Building Community: Twelve Principles for a Healthy Future* by James S. Gruber. I started reading the book after my scheduled intensive at Drew University in October 2021, and that's when I realized the language in the book gave deeper meaning to what we were doing in both the church and community (and created a nascent framework for how this project might unfold). In short, it introduced me to the Community Capital Framework. Gruber writes:

Every Community...has resources within it. When those resources...are invested to create new resources, they become *capital*. Over the course of many years working with...communities, (it has been found) that dividing invested resources into seven “capitals is extremely helpful in fostering wholistic analysis and action.”²

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 5-year estimates*. Retrieved from *Census Reporter Profile page for Census Tract 26, Onslow, NC*, (2023), accessed June 12, 2025, <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/14000US37133002600-census-tract-26-onslow-nc/>

² James S. Gruber, *Building Community: Twelve Principles for a Healthy Future* (Canada: New Society Publishers, 2020), 31.

Here is a graphic depiction of those types of capital:³



For this ministry context, we are most aware of the seven capital components which are further described in the collaborative work of Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan L. Flora, and Stephen P. Gasteyer in their book *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*. The authors recommend seven community capitals that are quintessential to promoting sustainable communities: natural capital, cultural capital, human capital, social and community capital, political capital, financial capital, and built capital. In an article, sociologist Lionel J. Beaulieu analyzes Floras and Gasteyer's Community Capitals Framework (CCF). His comments were encouraging and hopeful. Beaulieu contended that this framework could be used "as one that could guide the on-the-ground efforts of the community and economic development practitioners."⁴ (See also Study Appendix 1 and Project Appendix III for more information).

³ Gruber, *Building Community*, 25.

⁴ Lionel J. Beaulieu, "Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability." Purdue University: Center For Regional Development. (October, 2014): 1, accessed July 15, 2023, <https://pcrd.purdue.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Community-CapitalsFramework-Writeup-Oct-2014.pdf>.

The notion of the CCF starts with the concept of “natural capital” which, on the previous chart seems to hover over and surround the others very intentionally. Brian Foreman and Justin Nelson curated a series of articles for *Baptist News Global* and *Campbell University for Church and Community*. The authors published monthly columns featuring the seven types of capital frameworks by Floras and Gasteyer found in the CCF. They observed that “Natural capital is used by humans to build other forms of capital. This form of capital is essential, for it includes land and water.”⁵

Foreman and Nelson write from the Christian worldview. They surmise that “natural assets are more than just recreational and financial resources; they are spiritual resources as well.”⁶ The authors’ worldview of natural capital is embedded in the Word of God; hence, acknowledging humanity's task is to be responsible for nurturing and protecting the environment and being faithful to caring for natural capital. The authors also subscribe to the belief that natural resources connect communities and the church, for “the church is where people connect,... natural assets are more than just recreational and financial resources; they are spiritual resources as well.”⁷ A cohort of professors from the *University of Georgia* reminds us that communities that are rich in agricultural resources might adapt job programs to create and attract jobs.⁸ These opportunities are essential to

⁵ Flora, et. al., *Rural Communities*, 64.

⁶ Brian Foreman and Justin Nelson, “The importance of natural capital for the rural church,” *Baptist News Global* (February 2, 2021):4, accessed July 1, 2023. <https://baptistnews.com/article/the-importance-of-natural-capital-for-the-rural-church/>.

⁷ Foreman and Nelson, “The importance of natural capital.”

⁸ Kevan W. Lamm, Abigail Borron, and Keith Atkins, “Natural Capital: The Foundation of Community Development and Introducing the CD+SI Toolkit™” The University of Georgia. (April 2021):5, accessed July 1, 2023. <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B1547-2>.

our ministry context, for we live in an environment susceptible to floods, tornados, and hurricanes. While the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Florence brought some egregious circumstances, it also provided some residents with jobs and other educational and training opportunities.

Kyle A. Pitzer and Calvin L. Streeter are acclaimed social workers who also focus on community capital. The authors utilize the Community Capital Framework as a viable tool for social workers in various contexts and at multiple practice levels, including the community level, where community members engage in identifying, leveraging, and building community resources. Moreover, Pitzer and Streeter agree that the outcome of using the mapping method and how the framework can be amenable to “gain insights into the assets that exist in the community and how those assets might be used to enhance community capacity.”⁹

This approach provided a model that can be used to evaluate the resources within a given community. Therefore, this project will utilize the CCF to encapsulate the dynamics of our community.^{10 11}

Lionel J. Beaulieu’s research solidifies Flora’s CCF model. In an article Beaulieu wrote, he states, “One of the challenges that local leaders and citizens constantly face is finding a coherent way to address the variety of challenges facing their communities.”¹²

⁹ Kyle A. Pitzer and Calvin L. Streeter, “Mapping Community Capitals: A Potential Tool for Social Work,” *Advances in Social Work* 16, No. 2 (2015): Fall 2015, accessed November 15, 2023. <https://advancesinsocialwork.indianapolis.iu.edu/index.php/advancesinsocialwork/article/view/17470/20477>.

¹⁰ This approach will govern the project and we will go into greater detail not only in this chapter, but in subsequent chapters as well.

¹¹ Sociologists Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan L. Flora initially at Iowa State University are credited with formulating the Community Capital Framework, later to be joined by Stephen P. Gasteyer.

¹² Beaulieu, “Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability.”

The CCF was one of the challenges our congregation had to address first. The leadership team had to present the framework as a transformative and considerable plan; therefore, training had to be a priority to address the many issues our community needed for intellectual sustainability. Another key point Beaulieu makes is that “the framework had to be one that could guide the ‘on the ground’ efforts of community and economic development practitioners.”

Flora, Flora and Gasteyer stress the importance of utilizing all of the various capitals:

When one capital is emphasized over all others, the other resources are *decapitalized*, and...social equity is thus compromised...when working with a group seeking to improve their collective well-being, it is useful to see them as...group properties.¹³

This reference notwithstanding, because of the somewhat narrow scope required by this Doctor of Ministry project, we decided to limit our research to just the social capital component of the CCF within our ministry context at SRMBC.

Theologian and minister Simone Mulieri Twibell aptly describes the notion of social capital in general:

Although the concept has seen an extensive range of definitions, *social capital* can be largely understood as the social ties formed between individuals and groups that make it possible for resources to be shared, information to flow, and cooperation to develop in order to facilitate action in society and generate potential personal and communal benefits.¹⁴

And she, along with other authors references, goes into detail about how the Church is particularly adept at managing social capital:

¹³ Flora et. al., *Rural Communities*, 31.

¹⁴ Simone Mulieri Twibell, “Social Capital and the Church: Engaging Virtually for the Sake of the World, *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 46, no. 1 (January, 2022): 115-122.

Social researchers have long recognized that congregations are among the best producers of social capital.¹⁵ In her important book *Congregation and Community*, Nancy Ammerman observes that what ‘congregations contribute to the social order is not unique.’¹⁶ That is, congregations, like any other civic organization, provide spaces for belonging and a venue for the formation of relational ties. Wuthnow also shows that congregations serve not only as formal service providers but as spaces where social ties can help meet needs informally.¹⁷

In other words, the kind of social capital that a congregation is more likely to generate is the bonding type, by strengthening social ties between the members.

Some of the language Beaulieu used in his article are bonding, bridging, and linking. These words connote activity and connectivity. According to Beaulieu, “social capital represents the glue that holds a community together and whose presence can spur the type of economic growth that brings benefits to the entire community...social capital consists of bonding and bridging activities that occur within the local community setting.”¹⁸ One of the keywords used in SRMBC is connectivity. The goal is to make SRMBC the place where community members can connect, bond, and bridge with community stakeholders and those community leaders who have sworn to represent and protect them.

Greg Snider writes, “Aligning the church facility to the community means creating space that enhances your ministry impact. Churches that are focused on being in

¹⁵ See: Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Michael W. Foley, John McCarthy, and Mark Chaves “Social Capital, Religious Institutions, and Poor Communities,” in *Social Capital and Poor Communities*, ed. Susan Saegert, J. Philip Thompson, and Mark R. Warren (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), 215-45; Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Corwin Smidt, ed., *Religion as Social Capital: Producing the Common Good* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press., 2003); Robert Wuthnow, *Loose Connections: Joining together America’s Fragmented Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Ammerman, *Congregation and Community*, 362.

¹⁷ Robert Wuthnow, *Saving America? Faith-Based Services and the future of Civil Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 83.

¹⁸ Beaulieu, “Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability.” 3.

and for the community will reflect this mission and value in the ministry space they create.”¹⁹

Going further, and echoing the earlier reference to Flora et. al, Twibell also stresses bonding and bridging:

An important dimension of social capital is the distinction between *bonding* and *bridging* social capital. Bonding social capital brings people together who are like one another in various respects (ethnicity, gender, age, social class, etc.) and focus on the networks *within* the community. Bridging social capital, in contrast, refers to social networks that link people who are different from each other *across* communities. In short, whereas bonding social capital is primarily horizontal and interrelated, bringing together individuals of similar backgrounds, bridging social capital is primarily vertical and interrelated, linking people in asymmetric relations of power.²⁰

In an article that provides in-depth analysis of the rural church, Brian Foreman and Justin Nelson talk about the issues regarding recognizing cultural capital (and especially the aspect of social capital) for the betterment of the community Foreman and Nelson write:

The rural church, of course, is another social institution to consider because of its integral role in the community. It is a rich cultural source in and of itself. But given this discussion, how does the rural church recognize and embody the unique cultural assets of the communities it serves? How does the church envision and support a new way forward that does not promote out-migration?²¹

Not only is their depiction of “out-migration” missional *per se* and is necessarily a part of the bridging aspect of this project, but it is also key to understand the results of

¹⁹ Greg Snyder. “Building a Church In and For The Community.” *Aspen Group* (blog). (February 20, 2019):1, accessed August 5, 2023, <https://www.aspengroup.com/blog/building-a-church-in-and-for-the-community>, (link broken).

²⁰ Twibell, “Social Capital and the Church,” 117.

²¹ Brian Forman and Justin Nelson, “Rural Churches need to understand the cultural capital of their communities, *Baptist News Global*, March 02, 2021, accessed June 10, 2025, <https://baptistnews.com/article/rural-churches-need-to-understand-the-cultural-capital-of-their-communities/#.YThu4y1h1z9> .

engaging in social capital. Here they further this notion and include the role of the local faith leader, from which this researcher takes note vis à vis this project:

If these networks are to be impactful with the purpose of developing stronger communities, the bridging work needs to be expanded beyond those we know, and be done with humble curiosity, so that individuals and communities might flourish. While the internal connections may be strong within a church, how strong are the ties to the community? One step is to recognize the role of the faith leader. There are countless clergy who recognize the importance of expanding their roles as pastor to the community, redefining the definition and parameters of their congregation.²²

More germane to this project is the essence of social capital according to Gruber who also quotes sociologist Robert Putnam:

We have found that you cannot ‘get’ social capital for a community. It must be grown. Social capital is a term coined by Robert Putnam from his study of recovering post-World War II Italian communities. On his website, Dr. Putnam states: ‘The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the collective value of all “social networks” and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other...’²³ It is essential that any social capital building activity or event represent all stakeholders of the community including the minority population, the elderly, youth, newcomers, and others.²⁴

Will Kenton’s article mentions the advantages and disadvantages. The author reports that one of the advantages is perhaps based on the old adage that suggests, “it’s not what you know, but it’s who you know.” In contrast, Kenton acknowledges some disadvantages. One of the disadvantages Kenton points out is:

“Many people believe that the success of an organization- whether that’s society as a whole or a specific group- depends on the degree of social capital available. This is why social capital has always been linked to positive change. But that’s

²² Brian Forman and Justin Nelson, “On Social Capital, churches often do one part well and one part not well,” *Baptist News Global*, May 5, 2021, accessed June 10, 2025, <https://baptistnews.com/article/on-social-capital-churches-often-do-one-part-well-and-one-part-not-well/> .

²³ Robert Putnam, “Social capital Primer,” Robert D. Putnam, May 23, 2017, accessed June 12, 2025, <http://robertdputnam.com/bowling-alone/social-capital-primer/>.

²⁴ Gruber, *Building Community*, 48.

not always true. Although there are distinct advantages to social capital, it can be used for manipulative or destructive purposes.”²⁵

Through awareness of potential pitfalls, Flora et. al identify that communities lacking bonding or bridging social capital also lack the capacity for change. The authors observed, “When bonding is high and bridging is low, communities resist change. This may occur in two ways. The community may organize in opposition to the outside in a kind of solidarity; newcomers are viewed with suspicion in such communities.”²⁶ Contrastingly, the authors write, “Where bridging social capital is high but bonding capital is low, some degree of control from outside the community is exercised through community elites, helping professionals or, in the most extreme form, local boss”²⁷

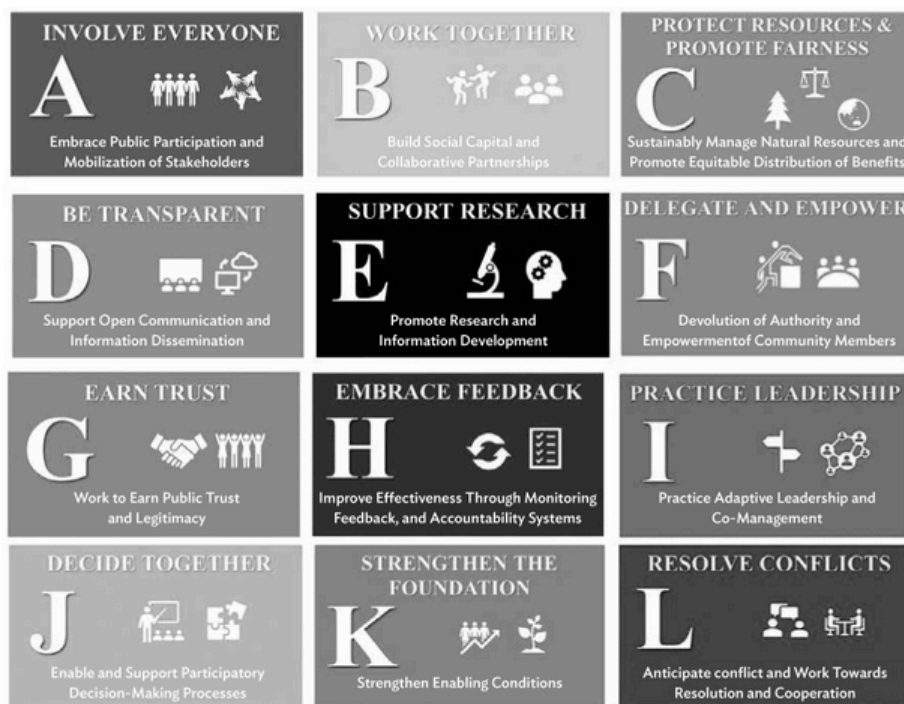
Because this ministry context praxis presents some challenges, a clarion call posits that intentional training must occur at the onset in order to strengthen the congregation. Moreover, it was essential that we also incorporate robust teaching standards that utilized the talents of a leadership team that I was able to gather for this work. The underpinning of my hypothesis was based on keeping our conversations focused, implementing training for our leadership team, and finding ways to mend some of the outlying fissures created by the external influences aimed at a community that suffers from distressed social determinants.

Gruber, once again provides insights in his book *Building Community: Twelve Principles for a Healthy Future* devised those twelve ways to implement the CCF in a given context, summarized in this chart.

²⁵ Will Kenton, “What Is Social Capital? Definition, Types and Examples,” accessed December 21, 2023. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/socialcapital.asp>.

²⁶ Flora et al., *Rural Communitates*, 168.

²⁷ Flora et al., *Rural Communitates*, 169.



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Again, due to the narrow focus of this project, our team chose to focus primarily on B – Work Together (the Social Aspect):

Gruber suggests several ways that local contexts could implement the Social aspect of the CCF:

Networks and partnerships are integral to building social capital and serve as a catalyst to finding innovative strategies and solutions.

Collaborative partnerships are key to leveraging resources and supporting implementation.

Stakeholder trainings, workshops and other collaborative learning opportunities can build social capital and commitment.

Seeking agreement among key environmental NGOs, governments, and (the) private sector to work collaboratively and to share resources and responsibilities is paramount.

²⁸ Gruber, *Building Community*, 48.

Ownership by community members and other stakeholders enhances design, implementation and operation, supports cohesion and encourages long-term commitment.²⁹

Ronald A. Heifez is the founder of the *Center for Public Leadership* and one of the proponents of Gruber's work. He makes a profound statement that cements the tone of this researcher's work: "This is crucial reading for all who feel compelled to lead, not because they have authority, but simply because they care deeply about their community and world."³⁰ Gruber further contends that "Strong, local communities are the foundation, the tap roots, of a healthy, participatory, and resilient society."³¹ These words rang true for me on many levels, for they are principles that buttress accountability and responsibility for pastors who are committed to the task at hand. In addition, the Word of God must serve as the baseline, as we have already seen in Chapter Two.

While there is no easy panacea to address all the concerns, crafting a sustainable framework for fostering a resilient community had to start with the local body of Christ, our ministerial context, within the larger community context. The inception includes an internal evaluation determining the availability of human and fiscal resources, knowledge, and skills. Members of SRMBC had to ask themselves, "Why are we doing what we do?" Why is it an important question and is, in itself, a great place to start, for it changes what we do and inspires our impact on the people in our community. The answer is simple: What we do indicates who we are and why we serve. The answers also helped us define an action plan that would hopefully lead to a positive outcome that

²⁹ Gruber, *Building Community*, 47.

³⁰ Ronald A. Heifetz, "preface remarks," in *Building Community: Twelve Principles for a Healthy Future*, James S. Gruber (Canada: New Society Publishers, 2020), preface.

³¹ Gruber, *Building Community*, 1.

denotes capital, not just charity. Let us turn now to the what – of what we did for this project.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION – SEATED AT THE TABLE

I had intended the project implementation to run for one year, from January 2022 through December 2022 of that same year. There were three major components to the implementation of the project that occurred within that time frame however, unforeseen occurrences had intervened to prevent the completion of the project until this writing, as you shall see. There were three major components to the project implementation: a Bible study series, a Sermon Series and two Bridging and Bonding (see Chapter Three for the link to the CCF) events that occurred during that year are ongoing and have evolved into annual events. I concluded the project with an overall questionnaire.

BIBLE STUDY (for more detailed information see Project Appendix I)

From January through March of 2022, the leadership team at SRMBC introduced the congregation to community development (the CCF) by inviting those interested to attend a Bible study series entitled *Biblical Principles to Help Build Our Communities* which we fashioned after one of the components of our Mission Statement: “reshaping the lives of our communities.” Recall that we felt that the CCF would provide the membership of Sandy Run an opportunity to raise awareness of how we can increase our effectiveness in structuring our mission works and ministry efforts. The objective of the study was to familiarize participants with the Community Capital Framework and highlight our own church strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and (perceived) threats (SWOT). As a byproduct this researcher recognized the opportunity for bonding (with each other) and bridging (evoking ideas as to how to reach out into the community) to occur during each lesson. The principal goal was to broaden the understanding and even

begin cultural networks and collaborative learning in this social context through the lens of CCF. Each lesson would foster a visual image and overall perspective of what the CCF could look like for *Sandy Run* while also creating a sense of familiarity and eventually narrowing it down to the development of one part of the seven-part framework (social capital). Community connectivity undergirds the methodology of the CCF, by advancing programs and empowering the church and developing cohesion among community entities.

We designed the timeline for the Bible study to span six weeks. Each session lasted one hour (from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.) in the church's fellowship hall on most Wednesday evenings. After an overview of our study, the leadership team asked the participants to define the strengths of our church. We organized the participants into small breakout working groups in order to have a fruitful dialogue fueled by appropriate discussion questions and subsequently, each group was given an opportunity to report their findings back to the larger group. We hoped that each lesson would foster a visual image and overall perspective of what the CCF could look like for SRMBC while also creating a sense of familiarity and eventually narrowing it down to the development of one part (the social component) of the seven-part framework. In summary, the group activities challenged participants and allowed them to discuss and explore our church capital resources juxtaposed with those of the community's capital resources (our context) using relevant data such as demographics, population, and health indicators based on the Church's data and the current Jacksonville, North Carolina City Dashboard.

Those working groups would eventually look within the congregation and begin to identify proficient individuals with credentials to help those living in Track 26 to change their distressed circumstances. These individuals included: administrators,

financial advisors, business owners, counselors, educators, food service technicians, health care providers, technology, public safety, as well as many other professions. But let us not get ahead of ourselves as we now look more closely at each of those sessions:

The overall structure consisted of the following:

Introduction – goals for the evening's session

Presentation of Scripture along with a short reflection – 10 minutes

Breakout groups engage with directed material – 10 to 20 minutes

Large group summary – 20 minutes

Closing reflection and overall summary of the session – 10 minutes

Lesson 1 (Week 1): January 05, 2022, Scripture - Matthew 5:13-15 Part One:

"Connecting" The first session aimed to explain why the church needed to acknowledge its gifts, talents, strengths, and assets, with the overall understanding that within the CCF, the membership would have to create and define resources and opportunities for connecting. What were the community capitals where, and how could they be utilized? Natural, Human, Social, Political, Cultural, and Financial, to help generate and explore the critical ways we can support the implementation over time. Additionally, Lesson One would reinforce why we need to build connectivity and awareness to adopt a comprehensive understanding of connecting through the CCF. As outlined in lesson one, Jesus makes us aware of our ability to connect and have a positive influence by declaring us to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13-15).

Lesson 2 (Week 2): January 12, 2022, Scripture - Matthew 5:13-15 Part Two:

"Identifying Community Capital" – This lesson builds upon the social capital focus of CCF and highlights how Jesus took a social stance throughout His teachings in order to create an environment that serves all. The Bible study session in the second week

was again divided into discussion groups. It included questions to increase awareness and promote understanding of why the connection is essential to all CCF goals, while also examining our Mission Statement and the elements of social capital it encompasses.

Lesson 3 (Week 3): January 26, 2022, Scripture - Proverbs 22:6

Part Three: "There is Space for Our Youth and Young Adults" No CCF will be complete without creating interest within all of the generations whose contributions for succession are necessary. Promoting inclusivity rather than exclusivity hopefully provides agency and voice for the youth and young adult population within the church framework. We introduced how the bonding and bridging perspectives would function in the church polity framework as described by Gruber in the previous chapter. Gruber is especially fond of the notion of bonding and bridging between individuals and communities, both of which we accomplished in this project. Our small group Bible study collaborated well, and we reached out to another church, as you shall see later. Flora, Flora and Gasteyer admonish with regard to bridging and bonding, highlighting the need for equilibrium to exist between the two, purporting:

...when bonding social capital is not tempered by bridging social capital, it creates barriers to change. When bridging and bonding social capital reinforce each other, development can occur; local resources are innovatively combined with and augmented by outside resources.¹

Gruber also quotes a truism: "Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I'll remember. Involve me, I'll understand".²

Lesson 4 (Week 4): February 02, 2022, Scripture - Ephesians 4:16

¹ Flora et al., *Rural Communities*, 183.

² Gruber, *Building Community*, 215.

Part Four: "Collaborative Partnerships: Working Together" In Ephesians 4:16

Paul reminds us of the need for unity and the need for equipping the body to grow the body of Christ. One overarching theme in Ephesians is that Paul addresses the reconciliation of the Jews and Gentiles to God. The importance of social engagements and opportunities lies in elevating broader societal engagement and promoting bonding and bridging that will hopefully enhance our ability to grow as the membership becomes familiar with the need to develop partnerships outside the church into the community at large.

Lesson 5 (Week 5): February 09, 2022, Scripture - Micah 6:8 Part One:

We provided the attendees with the opportunity to exercise strategic planning through data collection and collaboration. Included in this exercise were some notions as to what might contribute to a potential decline of bonding and bridging, as well as what may attribute to individual investment with bonding and bridging. We used this exercise to capture, develop and discuss actionable goals and objectives aimed at establishing bonding and bridging opportunities and eventually incorporate them into the overall church's strategic planning process of the church moving forward. The process was a large one which needed two separate sessions detailed in weeks five and six.

Lesson 6 (Week 6): February 16, 2022, Scripture – Matthew 28: 19-20

Part Two: Introduction:

It was described as to how the attendees would be provided with the opportunity to exercise strategic planning through data analysis and collaboration. Questions: 1. What may contribute to the decline of bonding and bridging? 2. What may attribute to individual investment with the hope of increasing bonding and bridging? This exercise will also be used to discuss actionable goals, creating objectives to establishing bonding

and bridging opportunities and eventually incorporate them into the overall strategic planning process of the church moving forward.

Reading and reflections on Matthew 28:19-20

Breakout Groups

- Encourage participants to be intentional about strengthening their faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ through committed participation in the social capital of bonding and bridging. Determine if our outcome measurements will define how we assess a ministry's effectiveness through shared table talk (bonding), meals with our neighbors and possible combined worship services (bridging).
- Eventually, create descriptive statements used to shape the creation of goals that reflect shared values, levels of trust aligning with social capital that will hopefully communicate the importance of bonding and bridging in our church activities for strategic Planning.
- Combine insights from the data i.e. from 2010 and 2020 census report, City Dashboard, Community Health Advisory Team Report, and other local reports become as a springboard to help us adapt to the community dialogue recognizing issues, concerns, and situations in areas of determinants.

Group summary

- Focus on developing discipleship training by providing more opportunities and ways for members to commit to developing in their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Closing reflections and summary.

Many good things which arose out of the Bible study sessions which will be revealed in the subsequent chapter wherein we deal with project results and evaluation.

SERMON SERIES (See Bulletin Sample: Project Appendix IX)

We now turn to the second major project component: the Sermon Series. Even if a church member did not participate in the Bible study, we introduced the congregation to the CCF model through a six-week monthly sermon series entitled: *Building Communities*. Project planners intentionally chose the same pericopes of Scripture from the Bible study sessions to be repeated in the Sermon Series. Our intention was to move

from the particular (small group engagement) to the general (the entire congregation). Our thinking was that we could see if there was any interest in engaging with the CCF and the social capital focus before we went to the church at large. Not only was there interest, but the process generated many ideas. We were eager to share that process with the entire church community. Thus, throughout the Sermon Series, each message highlighted various aspects of the Community Capital Framework especially social capital, assisting the congregation in connecting and continuing the conversation about what it means to be a community wherein hope can be found. Here is a summary of what occurred:

Sermon Abstract March 13, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 1: “It’s Personal”

Scripture: Matthew 5:13 NIV

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Introduction:

“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are,” Roy Disney.³

Background:

Renowned Old Testament scholar and theologian Paul D. Hanson presents a compelling idea that emerged from the exodus. He makes the connection between quality of life and community. Hanson writes, “God’s deliverance of a slave people inaugurated a new order of life for Israel and, concretely, a new notion of community.”⁴

³ Roy Disney, quoted in Dan R. Ebener and Frederick L. Smith, *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process for Leaders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 37.

⁴ Paul D. Hanson. *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 23.

In today's message, we will focus on verse 13 from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's audience recognized salt's use as a preservative and its economic value. However, it is essential to note that, as Jews, they understood salt as a symbol of Israel's covenant with God (see Leviticus 2:13)

Key Points

[1] The person and the process (v.13a)

- Individual change agent – call to holiness
- Counteract – forces that might deter holiness

[2] The disappointment and the appreciation (v.13b)

- If we lose our saltiness, we lose the ability to make a lasting, impactful difference.
- However, the appreciation of pure salt does not diminish its transformative properties.

Our call to action:

Beloved, there is an Ancient Chinese Proverb (Confucius) that says, “Tell me, I’ll forget. Show me, I’ll remember, Involve me, I’ll understand.”⁵ Let us be impactful and be the salt of our community, let us take the mantle and framework of the community capitals and start making a difference.

Sermon Abstract April 10, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 2: “It’s Personal”

Scripture: Matthew 5:13 NIV

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Introduction:

Scholars have reflected that “a common understanding of the salt of the earth” metaphor is one of two declarative maxims that describe the mission of the

⁵ “Quotempole,” Chinese Proverb Quotes, n.d., accessed July 04, 2025, <https://qtmp.com/author/Chinese%20Proverb-quotes>.

disciples.”⁶ Yet, Hans Dieter Betz argues that the evidence from the synoptic tradition suggests that this saying, employing the salt image or metaphor, was already understood as signifying discipleship before its use in the Sermon on the Mount. In this same vein, Betz contends that what is described is “what the community addressed is, what they should be, and what they ought to do.” Furthermore, Betz claims that “when Jesus spoke to the disciples, He addressed them emphatically and metaphorically, affirming their mission as salt and light, because the empirical Israel had failed in its mission to the nations.”⁷

Conclusively, Donald Hagner states, “The disciples—the blessed recipients of the kingdom—are thus of vital importance for the accomplishment of God’s purpose in the world. They constitute the salt... without which the earth cannot survive.”⁸

Key Points

[1]. Fundamental characteristic

- Demands all our energies.
- A larger vision of what God wanted to accomplish.

[2]. Trace source

- A cause greater than ourselves.
- Reconfigures our connections.

Our call to action:

Beloved, as a church in Tract 26, we must be willing to explore the fundamental principles of the Community Capital Framework, committing to a cause that fosters communication and collaboration.

⁶ Richard P. Thompson, “Can Salt Really Lose Its Saltiness?” *Reading and Listening to Matthew 5:13 Again*, in *Listening Again to the Text: New Testament Studies in Honor of George Lyons*, ed. Richard P. Thompson (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2020), 4.

⁷ Hans Dieter Betz, *A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Hermeneia*, in “Can Salt Really Lose Its Saltiness?” *Reading and Listening to Matthew 5:13 Again*, in *Listening Again to the Text: New Testament Studies in Honor of George Lyons*, ed. Richard P. Thompson (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2020), 4.

⁸ Donald D. Hagner, *Matthew, 2 vols, WBC*, in “Can Salt Really Lose Its Saltiness?” *Reading and Listening to Matthew 5:13 Again*, in *Listening Again to the Text: New Testament Studies in Honor of George Lyons*, ed. Richard P. Thompson (Claremont, CA: Claremont Press, 2020), 5.

Sermon Abstract May 8, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 3: “Preparation”

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6 NIV

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

Introduction:

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe,” Abraham Lincoln.⁹

In her writings, Patricia K. Felkins focuses on community and the process through which laypeople can become involved and celebrate community through the discipline of empowerment through collaborative decisions and actions. One such action is defined as significant participation. As Lincoln posits in his quote, there must be hours of sharpening the axe before tackling the task of cutting down the tree.

Felkins suggests that there must be opportunities to learn and grow within the community, which can be significant on a personal level. One of the characteristics of integrated participation is when the heart and mind are engaged in this community work.¹⁰

Background:

Linked with “path” in verse 5 by the catchword, the first imperative in this chapter urges parents to start a youth on the right path. The second line predicts the likely outcome, “when he is old, he will not turn from it.” Remember that a proverb is not a promise, therefore this one is no guarantee.¹¹

Key Points

[1]. Meaningful roles

- Recruiting and rewiring

⁹ Abraham Lincoln quoted in Dan R. Ebener and Frederick L. Smith, *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process for Leaders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 23.

¹⁰ Patricia K. Felkins, *Community At Work: Creating and Celebrating Community in Organizational Life* (New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2002), 251.

¹¹ Paul E. Koptak. *The NIV Proverbs Application Commentary* (MI: Zondervan, 2003), 565-566.

[2]. Sharing experiences

- It should be a mindset

Our call to action:

Beloved, intergenerational involvement will be critical to the success of improving our community.

Sermon Abstract June 12, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 4: “Integrated Participation”

Scripture: Ephesians 4:16 NIV

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Introduction:

“If you can get a clear picture of your goal, really see it, feel it, taste it, then you can make it happen.” Arlene Blum¹²

Background:

Paul highlights the proper functioning of the parts of the church body. “Through the proper functioning of the parts, the whole body is to be active in promoting its own growth, although ultimately it is Christ who is seen as providing the means for the body to carry out such activity.”¹³

Key Points

[1]. Embracing diversity

- Treat each other with respect

¹² Arlene Blum quoted in Dan R. Ebener and Frederick L. Smith, *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process for Leaders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 51.

¹³ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 42, Ephesians*, Bruce M. Metzger, gen. ed., (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 262.

- Apply the standard¹⁴

[2]. Essential for our future success

- Recognize.
- Contribute positively to our community

Our call to action:

Beloved, utilizing the Bonding and Bridging of Social Capital, we must expand opportunities to build respect and trust in meaningful ways. Creating space at the table for conversation and change.

Sermon Abstract July 10, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 5: “Planning”

Scripture: Micah 6:8 NIV

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Introduction:

“If you don’t get up every morning with a burning desire to do things, you don’t have enough goals.”¹⁵ Coach Lou Holtz

Background:

“If verses 6-8 are related to verses 1-5, they supply Israel’s response to the implied charge against her. She had displeased Yahweh but she claims ignorance. She asks God what he wants. What must she bring with her when she comes into his presence that will make her acceptable? This question represents one of the two basic ideas about religion. How can man approach God? One answer is: with sacrifice, things, good works. The other answer is reflected in verse 8. God

¹⁴This refers to a special gift that the Church gives to newcomers who complete a spiritual gifting survey when they join the church.

¹⁵ Coach Lou Holtz quoted in Dan R. Ebener and Frederick L. Smith, *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process for Leaders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), 67.

requires not some external gifts from his worshiper, but a humble communicant who loves to serve God and practice justice toward his fellowman.”¹⁶

Key Points:

[1]. Inspire others to share

- No longer work in isolation.
- The worthiness of community.

[2]. Step up

- Expression through regular involvement.
- Imagining the next opportunity.

Our call to action:

Beloved, continue to build upon our mission statement that guides our church and fosters a plan that is implemented, as we look for the benefits of furthering Faith and Blue and our fellowship with Living Hope Community Church.¹⁷

Sermon Abstract August 14, 2022

Series Title: Building Communities

Part 6: “Planning to Connect”

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Introduction:

¹⁶ Ralph L. Smith. *Word Biblical Commentary Micah-Malachi*, Vol. 32, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 2014), 51.

¹⁷ See the text for more information and clarification on both of these activities and how they impact this project.

“Action will delineate and define you,” Thomas Jefferson.¹⁸

Background:

Matthew 28:19-20 is part of the Great Commission, an activity that Jesus commands His disciples to undertake. In his commentary on the New Testament, Warren Wiersbe writes, “The ‘Greek verb *go* is actually not a command but a present participle (going). Wiersbe goes on to explain that the entire Great Commission is to ‘make disciples’ (‘teach all nations’).¹⁹

Key Points

[1]. Forging for loose connections.

- Parentships that welcomes collective wisdom
- People-centered

[2]. An integrated practice

- Attention to our social presence
- Discern, design, and co-create

Our call to action:

Beloved, Matthew encourages us to make an effort to create inclusive and engaging teaching and learning environments within our communities. Evaluate our effectiveness and the forms of engagement in the social capital framework.

Throughout my Sunday preaching, especially during the time frame of this project, I continued to emphasize how our spiritual gifting gives provide us insight and power to do the works of Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I really did not need to introduce any new concepts because most of the church body was familiar with the importance of utilizing, and being guided by our gifts. The project truly sharpened

¹⁸ Thomas Jefferson quoted in Dan R. Ebener and Frederick L. Smith, *Strategic Planning: An Interactive Process for Leaders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015),77.

¹⁹ Warren Wiersbe. *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament, vol.1* (Colorado: Cook Communications Ministry, 2001), 107.

that focus, especially because of the Bible study incentives. Although not explicitly mentioned in the spiritual giftedness study, we introduced the concept of holiness to reinforce that, as we continue to act as change agents in our community, we must uphold our holiness. It became almost an unintended consequence to this project. I was able to incorporate holiness in the first Sermon Series, emphasizing its importance as we engaged with local stakeholders as we strengthen our social bonding and bridging. This aligned with the first two sermon engagements, where I taught salt's use was to serve as a preservative. It's application depended on recognizing the right time and manner. The individual change agent sought to prevent loss of flavor, which might have been caused by contamination. The need for holiness and uniqueness as a preservative reflects the distinctiveness of our giftedness.

OTHER PROJECT IMPLEMENTATIONS

There were three events which took place during the initial project implementation year of 2022. Although all three of these events were ongoing in the life of our church and not initialized during the project year, I was able to utilize them and to reframe them in light of the Bible study series and Sermon series to highlight how the CCF, social capital of bonding and bridging led to positive changes in our congregation. We will speak about this in greater detail in the next chapter. Herein, allow me to present the nature of these three engagements as they related to the project.

Easter Sunrise Service with Living Hope Community Church

Living Hope Community Church of Jacksonville NC, formerly known as *New River Baptist Church*, has been within the Tract 26 community for over six decades. It made a name change sometime between 2006 and 2009. At that time, it encompassed three ministries under one roof. It had a Japanese ministry, a Hispanic ministry, and a

Caucasian ministry. Because of this, the church truly reflected a multicultural and multigenerational community. Given the demographic of Living Hope at the time of this project, the Japanese, Hispanic and Caucasian ministries provided rich opportunities, during our two fellowship experiences. Easter and Thanksgiving to witness the social capital tents of bonding and bridging in separate fellowship settings.

The Easter Sunrise Service took on a completely new character when it was once again held on Easter Morning, April 17, 2022. Since our congregation is predominately African American this fellowship afforded the members at SRMBC to engage with a multicultural church and observe their response to our style of worship and song presentation. It also opened the church's doors for the betterment of the community. We especially encouraged Sandy Run's members to participate in fellowship and sit with someone other than a person they knew and was not a member of Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church. It was a beautiful example of bonding and bridging through the spirit of Resurrection Sunday. Hospitality was exhibited through reconciliation, kinship in suffering the preached word that accentuated, hope as stories where shared about the struggles of the unhoused members of our community. This is an outline of how the morning proceeded:

Order of Service:

- Opening Song
- Scripture and Prayer
- Welcome
- Song
- Spoken Word, by the Pastor of Living Hope Community Church
- Blessing of the meal and benediction
- Depart to Fellowship Hall for breakfast

Thanksgiving Fellowship Service with *Living Hope Community Church*

Once again, the annual Thanksgiving Fellowship was marked by a new understanding of the CCF, Social Capital and especially Bridging and bonding. This was especially true because, while the Easter Sunrise Service had occurred just after the first Sermon Series dealing with CCF, the Thanksgiving Fellowship occurred near the end of the Project year after we had completed all of the Bible Study and all of the Sermon Series engagements. While *Living Hope* came to *Sandy Run* for Easter, *Sandy Run* travelled to *Living Hope* for Thanksgiving, less than one city block from our location and less than a .4 miles walking distance on the third Sunday before Thanksgiving, which was November 20, 2022. The outline for the fellowship is as follows:

- Dinner started at 5:00 pm. It was an excellent opportunity for *Sandy Run* members to share a meal with members of another community. The serving line was set up in a buffet style, allowing guest to walk along and select from a variety of food items prepared by *Living Hope* members. Many options were available, including different ethnic cuisines, such as Hispanic and Japanese dishes. *Living Hope* members served as servers and, when asked, shared information about the recipes or cultural backgrounds of the dishes with *Sandy Run* members they were serving.
- For this project, members of *Sandy Run* were encouraged to sit at tables with members of *Living Hope* to foster bonding and bridging during table conversations, learning, and listening at our neighbor's table—an aspect of social capital. And after the meal was finished, at approximately 6:00 pm, *Sandy Run* members reassembled in the sanctuary of *Living Hope* with the members of *Living Hope Community Church* for the worship experience. Again, the *Sandy Run* members were encouraged to sit with someone they did not know or had just met during the fellowship meal.

The order of service was one hour in length:

- Scripture Reading and Prayer: Pastor of *Living Hope*
- Musical selections: *Living Hope Community Church* Choir
- Receiving of Offerings: *Living Hope* Deacons. All offerings received were donated to the Onslow County Soup Kitchen in the name of *Sandy Run* Missionary Baptist and *Living Hope Community Church*.
- Spoken Word: Pastor *Sandy Run* Missionary Baptist Church

- Closing Remarks and Benediction by Pastor of *Living Hope*.

Faith And Blue / Blueberry Pancake Breakfast (See Project Appendix V)

Sandy Run has maintained an acquiescent relationship with the local public safety department. Before this project, we took part in an informal gathering called “Coffee with the Chief,” initiated by the Chief of Police. This event provided an opportunity for members of our congregation and community to meet with the Chief in person and to and officers in a safe environment. The purpose was to bridge the gap between the community and the police serving in our New River community. If an issue of concern arises, the Chief has been known to contact this researcher for his opinion on the matter, which greatly encouraged me to offer the Faith and Blue/Blueberry Pancake Breakfast to members of Sandy Run and the local Public Safety Department of the City of Jacksonville over the past few years. As in the aforementioned engagements with *Living Hope Community Church*, The Faith and Blue/ Blueberry Pancake Breakfast Event took on new meaning within the Project Implementation year and it occurred on October 08, 2022.

Faith and Blue is a nationwide community initiative and event planning application designed to raise awareness to the core principles of Connecting, Engaging, Reconciling, Building and Bridging between local communities, including churches and public service organizations in the local community (see additional resources in the appendix). *Faith and Blue* National provides local stakeholders with a toolkit to support efforts in creating bonding and bridging events that aim to foster these core principles. While local Sheriffs typically wear green uniforms, police departments are blue. One of the events recommended by National is to hold a breakfast event which we called it

blueberry pancake breakfast to highlight and honor those uniforms as a way to attract public safety officers to attend and gather with church members, once again in table fellowship with each other as emphasized in this project endeavor. Once again, we have held this event several times in prior years and continue the tradition up to the time of this writing, but it took on new resonance because this time it occurred after the Bible series and the Sermon series of the project.

We included the news about the upcoming of *the Faith and Blue* Blueberry Pancake Breakfast in our Sunday morning worship announcements for three weeks prior to the event which would be held in the church fellowship hall. Although, the *Faith and Blue* tool kit manual provided suggestions for the order of events, we customized them to fit our own purposes. The Jacksonville City Manager attended and shared remarks about his role and responsibilities to the community, and his working relationship with the Police Chief. Immediately afterwards, the Chief then introduced the officers in attendance, numbering over twenty-five some of the police officers brought family members as well. The two officers directly responsible for our community spoke and then opened the floor for discussion and questions. Lastly, the Supervisor of School Resource Officers introduced each of the School Resource Officers (SRO) assigned to the five high schools. Three of these five high schools are within the city limits, while the remaining two are in the county. This event was beneficial because most of our youth attend one of the three city high schools. The conversations with the SRO's and community policing officers lasted about fifteen minutes, which included an opportunity for a question-and-answer session. The SRMBC Culinary Ministry and other volunteers served a delicious breakfast and the menu consisted of the eponymous Blueberry Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon and an assortment of pastries, juices and coffee. We arranged table groups

that afforded the opportunity for church and community members to commingle with the officers and their leaders which, of course allowed for further engaged fellowship during the remaining time we were all together. Here is a brief summary outline (times are for planning purposes).

Opening Prayer	2 minutes
Introductions: City Manager, Jacksonville Police Chief	2 minutes
Speaker #1 Jacksonville Police Chief	10 minutes
• Question and Answer	
Speaker #2 Sandy Run Member	10 minutes
Speaker #3 Community Leader	10 minutes
• Question and Answer	
Speaker #4 Community Policing Officer	10 minutes
• Question and Answer	
Speaker #5 School Resource Officer Supervisor	10 minutes
• Question and Answer	
Breakfast served and assigned breakout table discussion groups.	
Closing reflections, summary.	

We now turn to the overall results the year of project implementation yielded as bonding and bridging utilizing the Social Capital of the CCF. These results yielded many profound changes not only in our Church context but also in the surrounding community of the city of Jacksonville and environs. We will also provide an extensive evaluation about how we thought our efforts played out just after the Project Implementation year up

to this writing. The beginning of that evaluation occurred in December 2022 with a questionnaire we distributed to our membership following all of our activities.

CHAPTER FIVE: PROJECT RESULTS AND EVALUATION –

TESTING THE TABLE’S INTEGRITY

Again, we had intended the project implementation to run for one year, from January 2022 thru December of that same year. The major portions of implementation did occur within that time frame, however unforeseen occurrences had intervened to prevent the completion of the project until this writing, however as the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (KJV)*

This researcher believes that because of the extended duration of the project’s major portions of implementation, it afforded the opportunity of including the hypotheses that the membership of Sandy Run would embrace and begin to incorporate the CCF’s as a foundational instrument in the future. The church leadership team and I believe that, most likely, this may would not have been occurred or may not have occurred as quickly if this project had been completed within the prescribed timeline. We can begin to see this result in the following questionnaire given to a sample group of SRMBC members, followed by their responses. The aim was to determine whether the Church should continue the annual efforts or provide further training and studies of the CCF model used in our ministry context. All twenty (20) surveys were returned, with questions answered.

Questionnaire

- 1) Did you attend the Church’s six-week study that introduced the Community Capital Framework? If so, did the material pique your interest in further studies?
- 2) Bonding capital exists when different groups come together for communal worship, encourage volunteerism, and encourage civic engagement by individual members. Do you think our yearly fellowship with Living Hope and our Annual Faith in Blue Breakfast (*sic*) can make a difference in our community? If you answer no, how can we evaluate the impact of our fellowship on the community?

- 3) In his article, "A Season of Social Capital," Cas Wepener helps us understand the communal ethos associated with bridging capital. Wepener uses the example in Luke 24:13-35 when Jesus takes the disciples through a series of events, including the opening of Scripture, fellowship, prayer, the option of being hospitable towards a stranger, and the breaking of bread. Do you think the church's annual Faith in Blue Breakfast is a start toward bridging social capital?
- 4) Do you think learning how to practice the two? Components of social capital, bridging, and bonding can assist the Church members in strengthening the community. Why or why not? How can this be done?
- 5) Social capital can be divided into bonding and bridging. Which do you feel is more important? Why?
- 6) The central premise of social capital is that networks have value and that people working together have value (yes or no). Would training and workshops be advantageous for our church?
- 7) How long have you been a member of Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church?
- 8) What is your gender/ ethnicity/age?

Responses to the Questionnaire

Question # 1:

Indicated that seventeen (17) participants attended the six-week Bible study, and three (3) did not. Those who attended the eight-week Bible study on CCF indicated that it piqued their interest in further studies.

Question #2:

Seventeen (17) participants agreed that the annual fellowship with Living Hope and the Faith and Blue Blueberry Pancake Breakfast was beneficial and acknowledged the potential for continued collaboration. Respondents recommend that consistency in efforts to create oneness and a shared understanding of areas of bonding or bridging need to be focused on as the goal of each group. Also, one respondent indicated that current efforts are not adequate enough and consideration should be considered for including

additional events to promote bonding and bridging efforts. The three (3) participants who did not attend recognized the benefits of attending the two (2) annual events and the possibilities of the efforts made while observing the personal interaction during both events.

Question #3:

Concerns expressed by one (1) who attended the six (6) week Bible study regarding the Church's annual Faith in Blue was a social prop to deflect the cultural capital. The remaining nineteen (19) respondents concurred that the Faith in Blue event allowed members and local public safety personnel to engage in conversation that otherwise may not have occurred. It is an instrument that permits members to see the public safety offices as parents, fathers, mothers, people they see in the grocery stores and parks, and as members of the community. This event is especially significant given the climate of public safety officers serving underrepresented communities and people of color. One (1) survey respondent was enlightened that one law enforcement officer brought his children to the event. This, too, helped the respondent see the law enforcement officer as a parent who desires the same values as they desire for their children. Several participants viewed this as a means to bridge the gap in developing trust among the members and our public safety officers. One (1) respondent mentioned that our church efforts regarding bridging are leading the way in our community. Over the past two (2) years, they have seen the interaction become more meaningful as the conversations have developed into a more casual tone and demeanor. Furthermore, these events build and enhance social connections in the community.

Another respondent indicated that the most sustaining conversation occurs over meals, stating that eating a shared meal tends to invite people to relax. Two of the

participants who did not attend the eight (6) week Bible study recognized the potential of fellowship and building trust that leaves a greater impact on one's mind, soul, and spirit.

Question #4:

Learning to practice the components of social capital was well received by the participants' responses. Many of the twenty (20) surveyed felt that including those whom we are attempting to bridge with will be made aware of the reasoning behind our efforts and perhaps solicit recommendations from their perspective, too. Also, the opportunity for church members to be strengthened by the two components, such as the sharing and exchanging of beliefs and cultural practices, could be further defined in a setting such as this. Bonding assists us in discovering where there are commonalities and eliminates the duplication of some efforts that are already working on the bridging aspect.

Analogously, bonding assists the church members in developing trust with others, sharing information and expertise, collaborating to create opportunities for leverage for the community, and maximizing our resources.

Question #5:

The participant's unique perspectives regarding the two components of social capital should or should be a priority over one or the other. The responses of those who attended the Bible study were varied. What emerged is provided in the following breakout:

- Five participants indicated that both are equally important.
- Five suggested bonding was the most important.
- Six participants said bridging was the most important of the two aspects of social capital.
- One respondent stated that it could be separated or divided from the other if the objective is to build a healthy social capital perspective.

The remaining sample population consisted of three participants who did not attend the eighth-week bible study. One rated both as equally important, one identified bonding, and the remaining participant identified bridging as important. Bonding will collect and ultimately promote bridging, allowing people to build connections in a comfortable atmosphere. These responses indicate that both are important and suggest that they will foster a better outcome when both work together.

Bridging was deemed most important by this group, for it was necessary to build trust with the diverse groups as a high priority, since bonding occurs naturally among groups with some familiarity.

Question #6:

When asked if additional training would benefit the Church regarding social capital, the respondents agreed unanimously in the affirmative that the Church would benefit from additional training, group workshops, and furthering the implementation of the remaining CCF. One (1) participant indicated that the social capital with bonding and bridging was a well-thought-out idea to inform the Church how it came to have a framework to serve the community better. Even the three participants who did not attend the eight-week Bible study could recognize the framework of social capital by attending and participating in the Faith and Blue Annual Pancake Breakfast and the annual Easter and Thanksgiving Fellowship with Living Hope Community Church.

Question #7:

The members who participated in the survey ranged in length of membership from four (4) months to forty-five (45) years.

Question #8:

A total of twenty (20) members responded. The gender breakdown reflected eleven (11) African American females, eight (8) African American males, and one (1) White male. The age range of the respondents was one (1) (39yrs-50yrs), fourteen (14) (51yrs-69yrs), and five (5) (70yrs-75yrs).

The late Rev. Dr. Haywood Gray, Executive Secretary, General Baptist State Convention North Carolina, shared a powerful insight regarding what a church prioritizes and how one can make that determination. Gray's thoughts over a decade ago, could be summarized as follows: "show me a church's operating budget and I'll show you what that church prioritizes."¹ Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church's governance is based on congregational rule, meaning the congregation votes during its quarterly business meetings on what expenditures and ministry initiatives it will undertake per recommendations are made by church leadership.

Change and transformation can be measured since the introduction of this project and is noticeable that prior to this project the quarterly business meetings were unduly long and arduous and the need for explanations or reasoning had be to oversimplified in order to accomplish our goals, but this project has proven to be extremely beneficial in raising awareness for the following ministry initiatives seen through the lens of the CCF, Social Capital Bonding and Bridging:

Due to the overwhelming response of the congregation and community, SRMBC resolved to lend our space at no cost to other non-profit organizations and stakeholders who are willing to help plan and move from activity to impact. The Bible study allowed the congregation to become stakeholders, owners, and servant leaders. The Bible study

¹ Rev. Dr. Haywood Gray, "Church Budgeting Priorities," (lecture/workshop at Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church, Gainesville, NC, June 11, 2005).

quickly became a modality for training members and an evaluation tool for our ministry's internal resources. The focus gradually shifted from us to them. The congregation began understanding the community's problems and the necessity of providing training and soliciting opportunities to meet those needs through table talks with community leaders, which ultimately creates space for community involvement.

As a result of the group projects, we hosted two events: "Coffee with the Chief" an event sponsored by the city's Chief of Police which we briefly mentioned above and A Community Resource Fair. Here is a description of how the latter evolved into one of its most recent iterations (in 2024):

The Town Center Apartment Complex began as a renovation project which has extended far beyond the original completion date and has caused numerous families to seek housing outside of the city limits into the Onslow County area. This delay and subsequent move has created a transportation issue because of the lack of available public transportation options. The Jacksonville City Neighborhood Improvement Service officed reached out to our church leadership to enquire if they could utilize our fellowship hall to provide resource to displaced residences during a March-April 2024 timeframe. (See Project Appendix VII).

Both events successfully allowed community members to speak face-to-face with representatives of the local public safety team and local community services representatives. Our church leadership team posted those activities on the church's website, our marquee, Facebook page, as well as the on the city government site. We have reconciled that when God is the focus of our goals, purpose, and mission, community transformation can result. Continuing in this vein, the City of Jacksonville again utilized our fellowship hall to provide information on the FY 25-26 Annual Action

plan for future development in the city. This occurred on October 29, 2024. In 2025, the church again hosted *The Neighborhood Housing Initiative Awareness* meeting about eligibility for affordable housing and qualification criteria. Other meetings hosted by the church included Suicide Awareness Training in April 2025 as well as Drug Awareness Training (Narcan) in June 2025 for nearly twenty individuals.

SRMBC has been a staple in the community and continues to partner with local stakeholders to meet some of the most pressing needs. For several years, the church partnered with the Department of Social Services and provided household and domestic items annually during a weekend in November that met the needs of 1,500 individuals.

This event was called the “Harvest of Blessings Giveaway” The Sandy Run Harvest of Blessings coordinators would work hand in hand with the Department of Social Services in order to address the neediest demographic as best we could. Social Workers provided referrals and those referrals received household items and some clothing the Friday before Saturday public event. Every year at its conclusion the church would immediately start preparing for the upcoming year. We purchased three storage containers to house all the donations received through the year.

Before this project the church entered into an agreement with the local community college. The College would provide instructors and laptops to increase computer literacy for the community at no cost to individuals who registered through the colleges career readiness office. However, because of Sandy Run’s limited Wi-Fi capabilities, the class was limited to twelve computer stations running simultaneously. Any more than twelve computers operating would cause buffering and disrupted optimal class success. Largely due to the input of this project, church leadership, which in the past might have been extremely reluctant to invest in a bonding and bridging effort to create this kind of Social

Capital, were avidly interested in doing just that and agreed to pay the \$8,000 cost to install fiber optics and divide the connectivity into various individual zones within our building. And so, presently, we are partnering with the College to offer two Basic Computer Skills courses, where upon completion, students receive a 90-credit hour course certificate. (See Project Appendix II).

We partnered with the Onslow County Health Department to provide a series of classes to discuss the connections between food, physical fitness, and faith. SRMBC continues to provide the space for the community to meet weekly and for health educators to teach how to save money by planning meals, meal preparation, shopping using coupons, and preparing healthy family meals along with simple ways to be physically active during the day and in one's faith community. These classes are open to the public. Members who were available during the day were encouraged to attend some activities.

Faith communities and organizations are important health advocates, and Faithful Families can support community health improvement work to decrease health disparities. In these nine sessions, health educators from OCHD implement the health and nutrition aspect of the program, while a lay leader from the partnering organization conducts the spiritual component of the program.

During 2022, the Community Relations Team health educators completed the training for Faithful Families and began researching local faith-based organizations throughout Onslow County as potential partners. Just after Project Implementation, in January 2023, the Health Department began Faithful Families with the Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church. Initially, OCHD had a total of 13 Healthy For Life participants who attended nine sessions. OCHD plans to continue promoting the monthly Healthy For Life classes on social media and at community outreaches to boost

awareness and participation. These events were profitable to our community and for our church, for they further provided data that could be used to apply for grants. (See Project Appendix VI).

In addition, The Faithful Families program was conducted at Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church from June 1st- August 3rd, 2023 for nine weeks during the hours of 1:00 pm-2:00 pm every Tuesday. The facilitators provided instruction each week on one of the following topics:

Basic nutrition

- Strategies for planning, shopping, and preparing healthy, tasty meals
- Recipe taste tests and cooking demonstrations
- How to read and use nutrition labels
- Ways to control portion sizes and limiting consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Ways to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables

And every other week there was a small meal prepared to reflect how to prepare healthy recipes and healthy portions.

This is a national organization with whom our church leadership has partnered, once again for community outreach based on the action of this project:

Faithful Families works with each faith community to consider ways they can help their organization to adopt healthy eating practices. Through Faithful Families, faith communities have established policies to serve water and/or unsweetened beverages at all events, established guidelines that all meals offered at the faith community must follow healthy food guidelines, and have even provided space and time for breastfeeding.²

Faithful Families support faith communities to extend their reach into the local community by connecting to local resources, coalitions, and community organizations. Through Faithful Families, faith communities have joined local coalitions working to increase access to healthy foods. A faith community has

² “Faithful Families: Thriving Communities,” 2025, accessed on July 11, 2025. <https://faithfulfamilies.com>.

also established an on-site farmers market to increase access to local food for the community.³

Related to this is our involvement since August 2023 with an organization called *One Place* (formerly known as *Onslow County Partnership for Children*). Here is a description from the *One Place* website:

A parent is a child's first and most important teacher. By partnering with Early Head Start during the first three years of a child's life parents and caregivers can nurture a child's development and create stronger family bonds. Early Head Start encourages the growth and development of infants and toddlers through a strong foundation of social-emotional competence for lifelong learning. Early Head Start is available to pregnant mothers, infants, and toddlers until age 3. Our Early Head Start program provides comprehensive early childhood education to income-eligible children and their families, from birth to age 3, at no cost to families. EHS combines parent involvement, education, health and social-emotional wellness services (including for women before, during, and after pregnancy), and services to children with disabilities. Our program emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher and enriches the lives of children and their families by working with each family's individual needs.⁴

We offered our Fellowship hall as a community space so *One Place* could conduct Early Childhood registration. *One Place* does not have adequate space to host an event this size for the number of families that typically arrive to register their children for this program. And because our church is on a public transportation route, this facilitates access for many of *One Place* clients. *One Place* will be utilizing our facilities again in August of 2025 for the same purposes.

In addition, our Church leadership has entered into a partnership with the United Way to address food insecurities. Our fellowship hall is being utilized to provide breakfast and lunch to the general public through a grant secured by the United Way of

³ "Faithful Families."

⁴ "Give your Child an Early Head Start," *One Place: Creating Hope for Families*, n.d., accessed July 08, 2025, <https://www.oneplaceonslow.org/for-parents-and-early-educators/infant-toddler-programs/>.

Onslow County. At the time of this writing we are serving 100 children throughout the day including breakfast and lunch meals on site from Monday thru Thursday and on Thursday each child is given a bag of non-perishable food items for the weekend. (See Project Appendix VIII).

Lastly, and probably most ironically, the University of North Carolina School of Government sponsored the 2025 Community Development Academy Course which ran: March 18th-20th and April 15th-17th 2025. As mentioned earlier the church, since the inception of this project, has become readily willing to invest resources to assist with gathering the knowledge to better serve our community. Two of our church trustees attended this training session costing \$1800 that the church leadership willingly funded. The course that spoke to the change and transformation which we have been working toward. The irony? A key component they covered was the importance of Social Capital! (see Project Appendix IV for a snapshot).

Project Evaluation

Drs. Carl Savage and William Presnell have worked for many years to prepare students in Doctor of Ministry Program, in particular at Drew University. They encouraged students to look back over what they have accomplished in their projects to see how the projects have unfolded within their particular context and how they might have brought about change. They began with this notion of change and transformation:

We see a form of evaluation that consists of two distinct parts. One part is observing change. This first part is fairly straight forward; you compare the state of the context prior to a new ministry intervention and afterward. In a sense, this part of evaluation is only a measurement process. Has there been change in activity, habits, stories told, etc.? The second part is discerning transformation. The definition of transformation is ‘a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better.’ The latter part of this definition is critical in this understanding of the purpose of evaluation—discerning transformation

toward a preferred future.⁵

It is this evaluation process to which we now turn. Savage and Presnell had identified five areas of evaluation. I have chosen to review this project through the lens of four of them:

Functionalist

Savage and Presnell utilize this approach to evaluate “how combining the various narratives of the context fit together pre- and post-project...how parts of the context might fit together differently now.”⁶ Before this project, Sandy Run defined ministry development in only the broadest terms: mission work, outreach works, almost like the notion of Ezekiel’s “dry bones.” But after the project we can begin to see, as reflective in Ezekiel 37:6 “And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord”. (KJV) The CCF became the sinew as the means to connect all that we would embark upon in ministry. As we advance forward since project implementation, I see the direct benefit associated with this project as the “sinew” it has provided, that has changed the way I communicate with the membership and how the membership communicates with one another and indeed into the surrounding community through bonding and bridging. . This project will now serve as the backbone for message preparation and encouragement, enabling me and the membership to strive for measurable progress within our ministry context. Although this project limited the scope of utilizing the CCF,

⁵ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville, KY: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 124.

⁶ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research*, 128.

I now have a framework to gauge how I'm vision casting within all of the other parameters of the CCF.

Ecological

Savage and Presnell speak about how "...the ecology of a ministerial context...may include its relationship to other larger contexts...if there has been a change in how the ministerial context...relate(s) to these larger entities."⁷

The ecological change perspective of the post-project reality in the context of Tract 26 and the larger community dynamic has been no less than dramatic. I do not need to reiterate all of the project results chronicled above for the reader to see the impact we have achieved. There continues to be a crisis in housing and infrastructure investment dollars. The surrounding area is still suffering, some are still lacking the availability of affordable child care or the means to secure child care which continues to affect parents' ability to secure employment. However, our partnership with One Place offered parents the information and resources to explore child care services which created options for employment stability. This project allowed the church to see itself as resource hub like a sprocket on a bicycle wheel, instrumental in keeping this process turning.

Materialist

Savage and Presnell point to this perspective looks at "how the (ministerial) context is affected by changes in the surrounding environment."⁸ We understand that there are certain things beyond our control in our ministry community context: the lack of affordable housing and the decline of the New River area. However, I believe this

⁷ Savage and Presnell, 128.

⁸ Savage and Presnell, 128.

project assisted in conversations with our City Manager and Elected Officials in a more meaningful way than in the past. It positioned the church to communicate in language that reflected our desires to expand our partnership with city government. Another direct result was the introduction to the UNC School of Government and the fact that church leadership funded two of our church trustees to attend the Community Development Academy that meeting occurred that where provide to us to pursued sending two of our church Trustee to the Community Development Academy. That opportunity was birthed during a table meal with the City Manager and the church and might not have happened if the project had not occurred.

Structuralist

Savage and Presnell note that this approach “looks for the unconscious and unobserved patterns that may shape the context”⁹ and have developed during this project. Historically the membership was accustomed to using the church space mostly for internal uses, reserving it for members family reunions, birthday celebrations and other celebratory occasions. However this project shifted our focus on uses which initially caused some consternation as the project prompted us to reevaluate our space usage. As we became more outwardly focused in the utilization of the church fellowship hall and classroom spaces and the unfolding of this project begin to establish external partnerships through bonding and bridging conflict did arise regarding facility uses and the focus on external stakeholders using the church space as opposed to membership driven activities. However, we were able to channel those energies to continue engaging with the community, the most dramatic change came when the church leadership committed to 8K

⁹ Savage and Presnell, 129.

to improve our WiFi so that we could hold computer classes in conjunction with the local Community College. In the pre-project era, this could have been likened to “pulling teeth!”

Lastly, the findings from this study highlighted the impact of implementing one of the seven CCFs within the local church’s ministry context. Lionel Beaulieu’s concluding comments summarize SRMBC’s endeavor to continue utilizing the CCF as an instrument for the future transformation of our community. In his research, Beaulieu infers that communities grow when one invests in one of the frameworks of capital resources: social, human, political, and financial. In his concluding thoughts, Beaulieu notes:

In most communities, efforts to develop and sustain a strong, vibrant community are a long-term process. The community capital framework offers local leaders, organizations, and residents a deeper understanding of the multi-pronged approach needed if communities hope to create the foundation necessary for them to survive and thrive over the long term. While it may appear overwhelming to give attention to all seven community capitals, the reality is that communities should start by focusing on a smaller set of community capitals and then give attention to the other capitals over time.¹⁰

This approach aligns with the findings of this research project and allows this church to grow as it fundamentally applies the CCFs over time, becoming a deeply embedded application within our ministry context. Fostering an atmosphere that continues to promote the practices of the CCF will hopefully continue to create a community that will be vibrant and continue to thrive. As SRMBC continues to grow, mature, and foster the current social capital with its annual Thanksgiving worship with Living Hope and the annual Faith and Blue, we will continue the introduction of the remaining CCFs through Bible studies, teaching platforms,

¹⁰ Beaulieu, “The Community Capitals Framework,” 155.

workshops, and sermon series. We will integrate these cultural practices into laying a foundation for positive behavioral practices within the ministries of Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church.

Conclusion

In his scholarly review of *Rural Communities*, Lionel Beaulieu deduces, “the concept of culture provides a frame of reference for understanding the fabric of community. This fabric is often connected by a common language, symbols, gestures, beliefs, values, and resources.”¹ As a Marine, I found some familiarity in this statement. This tenet is a life lesson for Marines before deploying to a foreign country. Not learning the country’s culture, language, and infrastructure can be a prodigious pitfall when connecting with a community. Whether one’s intentions are admirable or not, the goal is always to leave a place or person better. Hence, “cultural capital is how we see the world and what we value. It links the seen to the unseen, making meaning of our collective and individual lives. Moreover, this framework determines what we think is right and what is possible to change.”² When we practice why, what, and how we serve, it builds another framework for our ministry context. In their analysis of cultural capital, Forman and Nelson concludes, “understanding the cultural capital of our communities helps us celebrate the beauty and history of the place a while holding in tension the parts of that history and culture that need to be challenged and changed.”³

The CCF model is the framework that will provide the structure for SRMBC as we gingerly and intentionally identify the influencers in our community and make available room for creative and innovative thinkers. Our goal is to create opportunities

¹ Beaulieu, “Promoting Community Vitality & Sustainability, 2.

² Flora et al., *Rural Communities: Legacy + Change*, 73.

³ Brian Foreman and Justin Nelson. “Rural churches need to understand the cultural capital of their communities.”

for growth and sustainability for those who have been underrepresented. We believe the seven pillars of the CCF will assist in reflecting the brand for SRMBC's ministry context.

As we become more familiar with the social capital component of the seven CCF components: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built, this researcher believes that The Hallmark of Hope will continue to reflect on how the CCF model can be successfully implemented into our ministry context. Consequently, the community will hopefully improve, and the church's level of participation will be more impactful in turning Tract 26 into a robust and much more sustainable community.

As SRMBC continues to embrace the need and desire to better equip herself and continue to align with this researcher's hypothesis, we concluded the following:

- More training is needed.
- The annual Thanksgiving meal with Living Hope Community Church and the Faith and Blue Annual Blueberry Pancake Breakfast exemplifies bonding, bridging, or both.
- Thirdly, most church members will understand that the objective is to make connections; therefore, bonding and bridging are essential components of the church.
- This endeavor will take time and commitment as the years unfold.

Lisa Fields, the founder and host of the Jude 3 Project Podcast, posted an interesting conversation with guest Dr. Walter Kim on exploring “why challenging discussions have become increasingly hard in today's polarized culture.”⁴ Fields, a

⁴ Lisa Fields, “Navigating Difficult Conversations in Today's Culture,” with special guest: Dr. Walter Kim, November 1, 2024, played on March 1 2025, produced by Jude 3 Podcast: Episode 271, 36 minutes, accessed March 14, 2025, <https://jude3project.podbean.com/e/navigating-difficult-conversations-in-todays-culture-special-guest-dr-walter-kim/>.

seminarian, candidly speaks about her struggles with having courageous conversations. One of the takeaways from this noteworthy conversation was a comment that “Jesus sat at more tables than He turned over.” Fields responded, “Yes, and He built more bridges with people that didn’t come from the same background He came from.”⁵

We hope that table fellowship will remain the “Hallmark of the Hallmark of Hope.”

⁵ Lisa Fields, “Navigating Difficult Conversations in Today’s Culture.”

Project Appendix I: The Bible Study (Origin Story)

When I became active as a community leader, I understood my role as the pastor of a historical church, which was once known as a church of influence, and was now rooted in the issues of Tract 26. I was also attuned to the call from God not only to opine the problem but to become a change agent and hopefully provide solutions. Through much prayer, meditation, and counsel from the Holy Spirit, I knew that the congregation must be taught the role it needs to play in building trust in a community that had experienced many fractures and lost hope in their city representatives as well as in those of us who worship in New River but live in other communities. Calling ourselves *The Hallmark of Hope* was not a catch phrase, but it would become our clarion call to be a place of hope, restoration, forgiveness, and love in our community. Therefore, we must regain the trust of those of us who live in Tract 26 by examining and educating ourselves about the needs of the community. I believed that in order to help the SRMBC congregation understand the language of Tract 26 and its significance to our Church, I needed to create a teaching platform that embraced our mission statement and the biblical tenets of Jesus Christ. I fashioned a Bible Study in order to accomplish this. The framework became a key part of my doctoral project. On the next page I reproduce the flyer we used in order to advertise the study. Following that is a more detailed depiction of what we did in each of the successive weeks.

Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church Bible Study Ministry

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹ ‘And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:30-31, NKJV

Biblical Principles to Help Build Our Communities



Hope Community

Rev. Joel D. Churchwell, Pastor/Teacher

Mission Statement: To love and serve God through Jesus Christ our Savior by the power of the Holy Spirit. To be committed to reshaping the lives of our families, our church, and our communities through *biblical worship, discipleship, and evangelism.*

Welcome!

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked His disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” He asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Matthew 16:13-16 NIV

When folks from our community ask, “What do you mean when you say you are the Hallmark of Hope?” How do you respond? By the end of this six-week introductory Bible Study entitled: *Biblical Principles to Help Build Our Communities*, our prayer is that you can respond with authority.

These precious six weeks we study together are going to be life-changing. When someone asks you, “Who do you say Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church, The Hallmark of Hope is?” you will be able to give an answer.

Lesson 1: “Connecting” **Rev. Joel D. Churchwell – Pastor/Teacher**

The New Testament was first written in the Greek language. The Greek word *koinonia* in the New Testament gives us an idea of the biblical meaning of community. *Koinonia* is often translated as “fellowship” or “partnership.” It implies being involved in something with someone else. Likewise, it indicates a two-way relationship with emphasis placed either on the giving or the receiving. *Koinonia* is also translated as “participation,” “communion,” or “contribution.” The word is used for a close partnership, such as a marriage relationship. In the early church, after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, a strong spirit of unity and community existed. Acts 2:44 states that these people had “close fellowship” and “shared their belongings.”

Now, think back to our definition of community. These words show that “love and concern” and “close fellowship” were present in the early church. The New Testament church was a church of community because the people in it cared and shared.¹

The practice of Christian community, quite simply, makes the gospel a lived reality. It embodies a specific, personal way of life together in Christ. It strengthens us to live the life to which we are called; it conveys God’s life and power to the world at large. Furthermore, it is necessary. Community should not be feared but welcomed. The risks do not go beyond those it takes to follow Jesus. The reward is to enter into life as God intended it to be lived from the beginning. How can we balk at an offer like that?²

The opportunities to touch the community’s heart are endless, requiring some thought, creativity, and a congregation eager to share God’s grace with their neighbors or strangers. Small steps can have large impacts and provide significant healing when needed. So, what can we do, and what is our church doing?

We do not need to create new institutions to implement viable and lasting solutions for community restoration. We need to leverage what we already have. Since many of our community issues are ethical and moral at their foundation, we represent the most natural social service agency to address these issues.

¹ Donald Stuckless, “The Christian in their Community,” Journey OnLine, n.d., accessed July 15, 2025, <https://journeyonline.org/lessons/the-christian-in-his-community-the-idea-of-community/?series=13740> .

² Howard Macy, “Community: God’s Design for Growth,” Bible.org, accessed July 15, 2025, <https://bible.org/article/community-god’s-design-growth>.

The church was designed to be a conduit through which these things pass.

Meaning, as God shows us favor and gives blessings, those things should then be passed on to the community. Some community projects we can be involved in are:

- supporting local schools to influence children and parents,
- supporting local businesses to influence economics, and
- supporting our local government and other local stakeholders in influencing policy.

Beloved, when we, Sandy Run, become strategically involved in these areas, God's blessings will flow into the community, and positive outcomes will abound.

Matthew 5:13-15 declares, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

To minister effectively, we must embrace the ethos of servitude. Paul reminds us, "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*" (see Philippians 2:3, *NKJV*). Hence, when we see people through the lens of God's Word, we notice that all people are important because all people are essential and belong to Christ.

In a letter addressed to all of SRMBC on October 3, 2022, I expressed that we will not fully experience the power and delight of life with God without connecting and fellowshiping with our sisters and brothers who live, work, pay taxes, and send their children to school in this community. Without experiencing such life together, we will not discover how excellent the news about Jesus is.

Tony Evans writes, "Friend, if you want to experience more of God vertically, you must be dynamically involved with others horizontally. You must be the visible expression of Christ's love to other members of the family of God." Evans continues saying, "The Bible encourages Christians to be active members of a local body of believers because that's the environment where we experience God at a deeper level. That environment involves connectivity—both with God and with others."³

While there is no easy solution to address all the concerns, crafting a sustainable framework for fostering a resilient community must start with us. God's Word reminds us that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. We don't need new programs. We need the church to start functioning the way God created it to function.

So, what is our first step to connecting to our community?

- Education, Education, Education!
- Communication! Communication! Communication!
 - We need to get to know our community. We can't love people we have not first tried to establish a relationship.
 - Remember me asking, "Does our community trust us?"

The next step, but not the final step, is to take an internal evaluation that determines the availability and commitment of our human resources. Moreover, determining the availability of our fiscal resources, knowledge, and skills.

This Bible study will enlighten us and **encourage our neighbors**. Everyone needs encouragement, particularly during these times of uncertainty and anxiety. People

³ Tony Evans, *Horizontal Jesus: How Our Relationships with Others Affect Our Experience with God* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2015), 75.

are looking for hope. Proverbs 12:25 reminds us: "*Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up.*" *New Living Translation*

The objectives of this Bible Study are to get us thinking about how to use our human resources and other community resources to connect with the Hope Community.

Therefore, we want to:

- begin thinking about first steps in developing a sustainable framework that will help guide our church in establishing our brand in the community.
- develop a sustainable framework that helps us to approach some of the challenges that involve collaborating with community stakeholders, community leaders, and our church ministry leaders (our Strategic Planning).
- be committed to reshaping the lives of our families, our church, and our communities through *biblical worship, discipleship, and evangelism*.

Next week, we will start by understanding the language. We will start with the term *community capital*. **Please, click on the hyperlink and it will take you to the video, *The Community Capitals - Community Assets to Build Upon, or Expand*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBG6hMpnSM0>.⁴ We will discuss the video in class next week. The Kansas PRIDE Program follows the Community Capitals Framework, through programming assessment pairings, to the awards system.

Appendix 1 defines the ***Seven Forms of Community Capital*** used by James S. Gruber, author of *Building Community: Twelve Principles for a Healthy Community*. I will refer to some of his work throughout this Bible study.

Next Week's Guiding Question

After viewing the film, why is it important for us to understand and recognize what community capital is in our community?

⁴ The Community Capitals - Community Assets to Build Upon, or Expand, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBG6hMpnSM0>

Lesson 2: “Identifying Community Capital”

Rev. Joel D. Churchwell – Pastor/Teacher

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." Matthew 5:13-15 *NIV*

Lesson Overview

When we refer to Jesus' *social stance*, we mean the response that Jesus made through His teachings and conduct to the question of how persons and groups ought to live together. Therefore, when we refer to Jesus' *social and political stance*, our intention is to emphasize that Jesus responded not only to the social situation of the poor, the infirm, and the oppressed, but also to the policies and practices of the political leaders of His time. ⁵

"If we purpose to love God and people, then what we do will be grounded in love. It's why we do what we do. And, what we do will be guided by love. It's how we do what we do."
Anonymous

Guiding Question

After viewing the film, why is it important for us to start by understanding and recognizing what community capital appears in our community?

Group Discussion Questions

Directives: Spend twenty minutes together discussing these questions. Please use Scripture to complement your findings.

Group 1: Why is it important for the church to be active, relevant, and vibrant in the community? Why does the mission of the church matter?

Group 2: How do you feel about this statement: "The most important resource we have to redistribute is ourselves. If people live in the community they serve, and all those within that community are reconciled to God and to each other, the result is redistribution: sharing resources for the good of the whole community."⁴

⁵ Richard J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (New York: Orbis Books, 1978), 20.

⁴ John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Together and Doing it Right* (MI: Baker Books, 1995), 153.

Group 3: Why is it important to always allow the Word of God to be the guiding instrument in all we do?

Group 4: Read Matthew 22:37-40. Our greatest purpose in life is to love God and to love people. Why should this be our priority when serving our community?

Closing Thought: The Hallmark of Hope's *brand grew out of our mission statement. Moreover, our mission statement grows out of our purpose. In other words, we know why we do what we do. The purpose of having structure and vision is to help us understand how we are going to get to our destination.*

Next week, we will look at specific goals needed to accomplish our vision.

*Watch the following video by clicking on the hyperlink below. The video will be the segue to our next conversation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K33GFMLb9U8>*⁵

Next Week's Guiding Questions

Why is it important to get everyone involved? Why is it important to share information?

Lesson 3: "There is Space for our Youth and Young Adults" Brother Wendell Boykins, Presenter

"Point your kids in the right direction when they're old they won't be lost."
Proverbs 22:6 *The Message*

Lesson Overview

Engaging in public participation means sharing information, and the sharing of knowledge means sharing power. It may not be easy, but conversations with community members about their development goals and strengths will most likely lead to results wherein the community can decide their future and manage their development. Public participation is the cornerstone of healthy and sustainable communities. Similar to the

⁵ Participatory Community Assets Mapping: Meet the August Town Community Mapping Team, Jamaica Diaspora Youth Connection Project, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K33GFMLb9U8>

First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which includes freedom of speech, active involvement of the public is crucial to provide the conditions that hold a community together.

Gruber's Five Characteristics of Public Participation will be the nucleus of our lesson tonight. These characteristics will help embrace public participation and mobilize stakeholders. Many authors have cited them as "one of the most essential for successful local community-based initiatives and governance."⁶ (See Appendix 3 below for more information)

Guiding Questions

Why is it important to get everyone involved? Why is it important to share information?

Next Week's Guiding Question

What is one way you would like to impact your community?

Lesson 4: "Collaborative Partnerships: Working Together" **Brother Grover C. Lewis, III, Presenter**

"From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." Ephesians 4:16 English Standard Version

Lesson Overview

Collaboration between members in the Body of Christ is vitally important because it reflects the very nature of the triune God and how He designed His Body to function. Whether it is a bilateral partnership of organizations, a multi-church network, or an

⁶ James Gruber, *Building Community*, 62.

informal alliance among like-minded ministries, Christian unity is demonstrated through practical partnering.

Collaboration is important not only because it reflects God's intended design for His Body but also because collaboration has demonstrated increased Kingdom impact. Over the last 40 years, God has been uniting the global church as never before in history, resulting in the explosive growth of mission networks that are making gospel advance possible where the challenges are too big, the situations are too complex, and the resources required are too great for any single organization or strategy alone.⁷

Dorothy Bass makes an interesting statement that is the ethos that set the tone of our first community. Bass states:

“Home is where we let down and rest well- or fully. Home is where we figure out primary patterns of nurture and productivity, habits of need and desire, forms of rage and forgiveness, ways of “taking time” and discovering the people who “count” for us. Our households are anchoring places where, over time, we craft the practices by which we prosper or fail to prosper.”⁸

The core of the second principle we will be studying is collaboration. Working in the community is the hallmark of our mission statement. Over the last decade, the data proves many community-building efforts have been successful because the underpinning tenet of collaboration was the foundation. The data also revealed that collaborative partnerships were shared resources, shared knowledge, and skills; therefore, it collectively enhanced the outcomes of our efforts. Because our community is urban distressed, there has been marginal investment made from the Capital Improvement

⁷ Karin Butler Primuth and Michael Kaspar, “Ministry Partnerships & Networks: Why Collaboration is Critical to the Movement,” Lausanne Movement, May 01, 2019, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://lausanne.org/content/ministry-partnerships-networks-collaboration-critical-movement#:~:text=Not%20only%20is%20collaboration%20important%20because%20it,for%20any%20single%20organization%20or%20strategy%20alone.>

⁸ Dorothy Bass. *Practicing Our Faith* (CA: Josey-Bass Publishers, 2010), 43.

Projects deemed for our community. However, our church has partnered with the local community college to provide space to offer free basic computer classes, the police department, and other community initiatives. These proposals are healthy ways that fuse fissures caused by negative political and societal propaganda.

Guiding Question

What is one way you would like to impact your community?

Next Week's Guiding Question

Why do you think grocery store chains are reluctant to locate in our community? **Watch this video and be ready to discuss your findings:** <https://youtu.be/Rd8J-9uUnfc>.⁹ (See Bible Study Appendix 2 below for more details)

Lesson 5: *How and Why Does a SWOT Analysis Relate to Our Strategic Plan? – Part 1*

Sister Deborah J. Harvey, Presenter

*“He has told you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you but to **do justice**, and to **love kindness**, and to **walk humbly with your God?**”* Micah 6:8 English Standard Version

Guiding Questions

What were your reactions to the video? Why do you think grocery store chains are reluctant to locate in our community?

Lesson Overview

⁹ CNBC, Why Grocery Stores are Avoiding Black Neighborhoods, August 22, 2020, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd8J-9uUnfc>

⁹ CNBC, Why Grocery Stores are Avoiding Black Neighborhoods, August 22, 2020, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd8J-9uUnfc>

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis method was originally developed for business and industry, but it is equally useful to take the mission, vision, and ministry of the church and produce practical objectives and strategies. A SWOT analysis has a variety of applications, but for purposes of definition and illustration, we have chosen the example of using a SWOT Analysis as a church strategic planning tool.¹⁰

Breakout Groups

Directives: Tonight, you will spend twenty (20) minutes examining and preparing a **SWOT** analysis, assessing ourselves and our church's community, and discussing your group's assigned factor listed below. This will be in preparation for your group's general presentation next week (see Appendix 3). As a friendly reminder, this is not a real-time project; our goal is to begin building a sustainable product.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
What are our <u>S</u> trengths?	What are our <u>W</u> eaknesses?	What are our <u>O</u> pportunities?	What are our <u>T</u> hreats?

Next Week: At our next meeting, be ready to present a general overview of your findings from doing the **SWOT** analysis. Also, be accessible for sharing your findings, goals, approach, and challenge.

Lesson 6: *How and Why Does a SWOT Analysis Relate to Our Strategic Plan? – Part 2*

¹⁰ Jim Baker, "SWOT Analysis Strategic Planning Tool," Sacred Structures, n.d., accessed July 11, 2025, <https://sacredstructures.org/methods/swot-analysis-strategic-planning-tool/>.

Sister Deborah J. Harvey, Presenter

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20 New King James Version

Breakout Groups

Directives: You will spend ten (10) minutes tonight finalizing your group’s findings for the assigned SWOT factor. Each group will have five (5) minutes to present its findings.

Group 1	What are our <u>S</u>trengths?
Group 2	What are our <u>W</u>eaknesses?
Group 3	What are our <u>O</u>pportunities?
Group 4	What are our <u>T</u>hreats?

Closing Remarks Pastor

The following are Appendices to the Bible Study

Study Appendix 1: *Seven Forms of Community Capital*

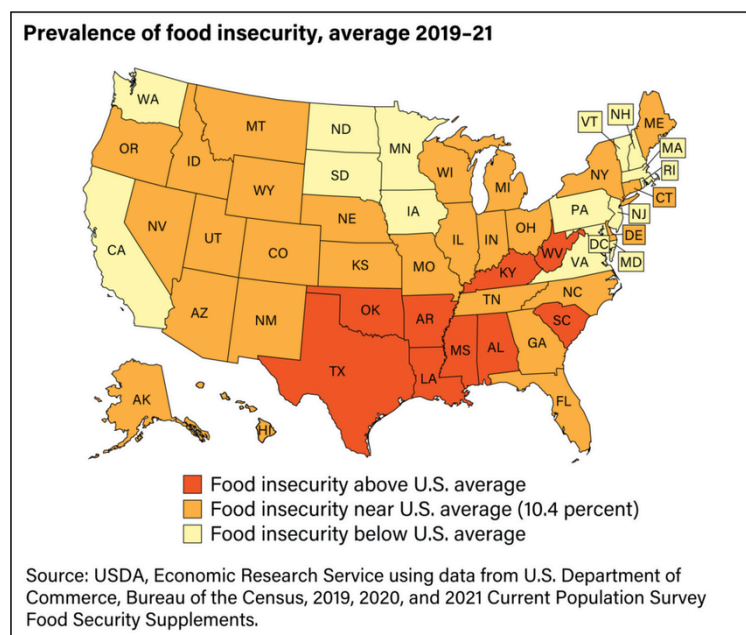
- **Natural Capital:** Renewable and nonrenewable natural ecological systems such as streams, forest, ground water, soil, and air.
- **Human Capital:** It is the collective knowledge, education, skills, job experiences of the community members. Investment in these areas will grow a community's human capital.
- **Social Capital:** Is the shared social norms, trust, and networks that impact how individuals and groups get along. A form of positive social glue. High social capital requires the investment of time and energy. It includes networks of bonding and bridging between individuals and groups.
- **Political Capital:** The ability of individuals and groups to influence the political agenda within the community. High political capital of citizens is supported by participatory democracy and board empowerment of all members of a community.
- **Cultural Capital:** The local beliefs, values, traditions, language, history, and cultural heritage of a community. Can give community members their sense of identity and sense of place.
- **Financial Capital:** A community's monetary assets invested in other preforms of capital or financial instruments. Forms of public financial capital can include savings, debt capital, investment capital, tax revenue, and grants.
- **Built Capital:** The built manufactured and infrastructure capital of a community such as water and wastewater systems, roads, machinery, electronic communication systems, buildings, and housing.¹¹

Study Appendix 2 – Food Deserts

A Food Desert is an area with low access to healthy and affordable food. About 19 million people in America live in a food desert, and it disproportionately affects Black communities. Despite nationwide efforts to improve poor food environments, many of

¹¹ James Gruber, *Building Community*, 14.

the biggest names in America’s grocery industry continue to avoid these neighborhoods. Amid a worldwide pandemic and raging protests against police brutality, there’s another silent crisis wreaking havoc on America’s most vulnerable communities: food deserts. The USDA defines a food desert as a place where at least a third of the population lives greater than one mile away from a supermarket for urban areas, or greater than 10 miles for rural areas. By this definition, about 19 million people in America live in a food desert.



12

Study Appendix 3: The Five Characteristics of Public Participation

1. Effective public participation is integral to all forms of healthy and sustainable communities and other community-based environmental initiatives.
2. Public participation processes should empower citizens and raise knowledge levels.

¹² Naseem S. Miller, “Food Insecurity and Food Deserts in the US: A Research Roundup and Explainer,” The Journalist’s Resource: Informing the News, Harvard Kennedy School, September 27, 2022, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://journalistsresource.org/home/food-insecurity-health/>.

3. Public participation will directly impact public trust, confidence, and legitimacy.
4. Seek diversity of stakeholders including citizens, NGOs, local and regional governments, private sector, and those with programmatic, operation, scientific, and legal knowledge.
5. Provide for participation of stakeholders at all stages: information gathering, consultation, visioning and goal setting, decision making, initiation action, participation in projects, and evaluation.¹³

Study Appendix 4: SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats; a **SWOT** analysis is a technique for assessing these four aspects of your business.

SWOT analysis is a tool that can help you to analyze what your company does best now and to devise a successful strategy for the future. **SWOT** can also uncover areas of the business that are holding you back, or that your competitors could exploit if you don't protect yourself.

A **SWOT** analysis examines both internal and external factors – that is, what's going on inside and outside your organization. So, some of these factors will be within your control, and some will not. In either case, the wisest action you can take in response will become clearer once you've discovered, recorded, and analyzed as many factors as possible.

¹³ James Gruber, *Building Community*, 42.

By exploring both the internal and external environments of our ministries, we can develop an effective long-term strategic perspective on where God is leading Hope Community. Furthermore, this will enable our church to remain effective in an increasingly dynamic and spiritually diverse world, encouraging us to think more strategically about our purpose and the role God wants us to fulfill as the Church.

<p>Strengths</p> <p>What do we do well?</p> <p>What unique resources can we draw on?</p> <p>What do others see as our strengths?</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>What could we improve?</p> <p>Where do we have fewer resources than others?</p> <p>What are others likely to see as our weaknesses?</p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities are open to us?</p> <p>What trends could we take advantage of?</p> <p>How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>What threats could harm us?</p> <p>What is our competition doing?</p> <p>What threats do our weaknesses expose us to?</p>

Project Appendix II

Coastal Carolina Community College – Computer Class at SRMBC

<https://coastlcarolina.edu>

free to
the
public

call

College and
Career
Readiness
Office

Sandy Run MBC


"The Hallmark of Hope"

(logo used by permission)

COASTAL CAROLINA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

"Computer Basics Course"
&
"PC Applications Course"

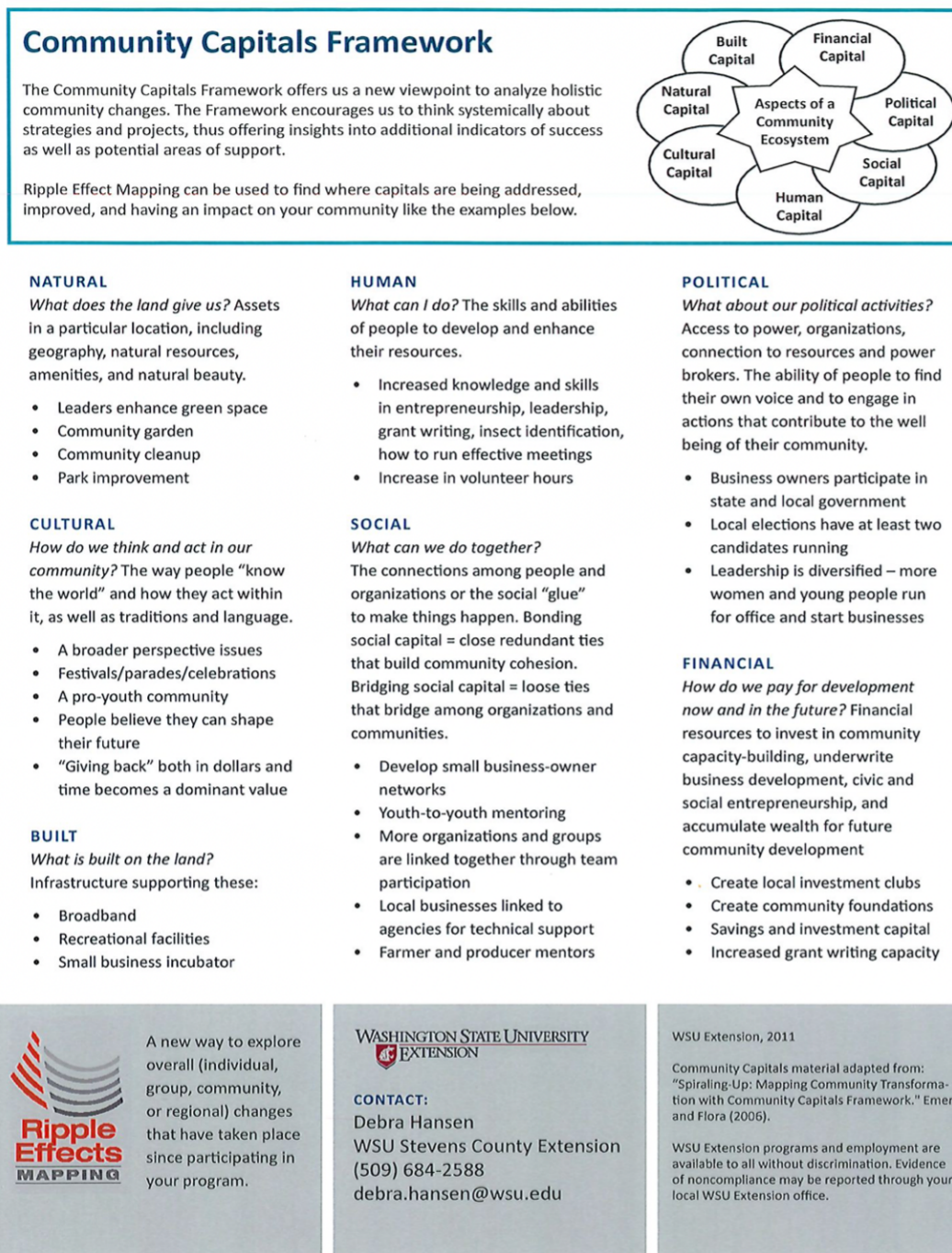
9:30am-12:30pm / Mondays-Thursdays

Location: Sandy Run Missionary Baptist Church

contact College for next semester class schedule


(910)
938-6259
to register

Project Appendix III – Chart of Community Capitals Framework



Washington State University Extension <https://community-development.extension.org>

Project Appendix IV: Community Development Academy




[About](#)
[Public Officials](#)
[Topics](#)
[Courses](#)
[Publications](#)
[Blogs](#)
[Resources](#)
[Giving](#)
[Knapp Library](#)
[MPA Degree](#)


Courses


Community Development Academy


Chapel Hill, NC - [Click here to sign up to receive a notification when registration becomes available for this offering](#)


March 17 - 19, 2026
April 14 - 16, 2026

 Overview

 Register

 Discounts & Scholarships

 Materials

 Contact


Community development practitioners will benefit from this intensive course, which is designed for community development practitioners and covers the concepts, methods, and strategies of community economic development. The course provides practitioners with perspectives and practical skills surrounding community development in North Carolina.

The Community Development Academy alternates each year between "in person" classroom format and "online via Zoom." In 2025, the Academy will be held in person for 6 days: March 17-19 and April 14-16.

Dates for 2026

In-person for six days. March 17-19 and April 14-16

LEAD FACULTY



C. Tyler Mulligan

David M. Lawrence Distinguished Professor of Public Law and Government; Lead Faculty, Development Finance Initiative

mulligan@sog.unc.edu

UNC <https://www.sog.unc.edu/courses/community-development-academy>

Project Appendix V: Faith and Blue Resources

GETTING STARTED

Thank you for your interest in organizing an activity for National Faith & Blue Weekend. Your participation will help community members and law enforcement connect on a personal level and, in doing so, create safer and stronger neighborhoods.

MovementForward, Inc., will be here each step of the way to help you put together a successful event. As you design your activity, we ask that it (1) involve both a faith-based organization and a law enforcement office, (2) be positive, and (3) be open to the general public.

Engaging Important Issues: At the heart of Faith & Blue is creating meaningful connections between law enforcement and the public. For this reason it is recommended that, to the degree you are comfortable, your activity acknowledges and explores the important conversations that are currently occurring around policing, justice, and community relations. Some of the activities — like the essay contest, book discussion, crucial conversation, and vigil for understanding — lend themselves more readily to engaging these topics, but all activities can facilitate important discussions around policing. We encourage you to be brave, open, and kind as you design and implement your activity.

To help in your planning, we have created the following checklist of what you'll need to identify as you plan your activity.

Event Setup

Activity Selected: _____ Time and Date: _____
 Lead Faith-Based Organization: _____ Lead Law Enforcement Agency: _____
 Role of Faith-Based Organization: _____ Role of Law Enforcement Agency: _____
 Other Partners: _____
 Location (or virtual platform): _____
 Materials Needed: _____
 Food and Drink (if any): _____
 Short Overview of the Activity: _____

Planning Checklist

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity posted on www.faihandblue.org | <input type="checkbox"/> Event promoted on social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in sheet | <input type="checkbox"/> Photographer assigned |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media advisory sent two days before activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and drink ordered (if any) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assign responsibilities to volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify/invite attendees via email/mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create a timeline/event agenda | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual platform confirmed (if needed) |

REACHING OUT

As you start planning, you will want to reach out to a co-host, which will be either a local law enforcement agency or a faith-based organization. You should plan to reach out at least 15 days before your event, if possible. You can inquire later, but you run the risk of the potential partner not being able to participate due to scheduling.

To Reach Out to Your Law Enforcement Agency

Conduct a Google search for your local law enforcement agency and identify the name of either the Police Chief, Sheriff, or Community Liaison. Next, place a call to the department and ask to speak to this individual.

A note about recruitment: National Faith & Blue Weekend provides the opportunity for people to be exposed to law enforcement and to learn about the profession. For almost all of the activities, flyers can be provided about joining the local agency, and officers can discuss their experience in joining the force.

To Reach Out to a Local Faith-Based Organization

Ideally, it is best to start with a faith-based organization that a member of your department attends and has a good relationship with the faith leader. If neither you nor your colleagues have a contact, you can contact us at info@faihandblue.org and we will provide you with a list of local faith-based organizations.

Sample Script

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling from [law enforcement agency/faith-based organization] about an activity we are putting together for National Faith & Blue Weekend. Faith & Blue is designed to bring together community members and law enforcement officers, and we are organizing a [type of activity] as one of the thousands of activities that will occur across the country. We would love it if you would be able to participate in the activity, which will be held on [date and time]. Is there a member of your team that we could work with to organize the activity?

Media Advisory

For Immediate Release

[Date]

Contact: [Contact Information — Name plus phone and/or email]

TITLE [e.g., Anytown Law Enforcement Agency and Anytown Church Host Joint Event]

SUBTITLE [Activity Name] Is Open to the Public and Is Part of National Faith & Blue Weekend

Who: [Name of your Law Enforcement Agency and Faith-Based Organization]



ACTIVITY 1: CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS (ONE-HOUR EVENT)

Planning Timeline — minimum seven days from event date

- ☐ Step 1: Reach out to the faith-based organization or law enforcement agency. A local faith-based organization with a reputation for community engagement and a significant-sized congregation would be the ideal partner to work with law enforcement to turn out a good-sized group.
- ☐ Step 2: Designate a topic focus and identify invitees from (a) the congregation, (b) the law enforcement agency, (c) one to two additional participants, ideally from community organizations that engage issues of policing or racial justice, and (d) a facilitator who is comfortable with sensitive topics. Confirm two people to provide introductory remarks, ideally a faith and law enforcement leader.
- ☐ Step 3: Identify and confirm the venue.
- ☐ Step 4: Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the faith-based organization and law enforcement agency to send an email and post on social media to members about the event, (2) having the religious leader announce it at a religious service, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, (4) identifying event photographers, etc.
- ☐ Step 5: Have the facilitator create initial questions that can open up the topic for discussion.
- ☐ Step 6: Hold event (see Day of Steps below).
- ☐ Step 7: Compile contact information from attendees and send thank you notes to attendees, vendors, and anyone else involved.

Day of Steps

- ☐ Step 1: Participants should arrive 15 minutes before the discussion starts.
- ☐ Step 2: At the start of the event, a welcome should be given by the host of the physical space and then introductory remarks should be given by someone from law enforcement and the faith-based organization (3 minutes).
- ☐ Step 3: The facilitator will then allow each of the participants to give a 30-second introduction (12 minutes). (If doing a panel, allow for longer introductions.)
- ☐ Step 4: The facilitator will describe the topic for discussion and establish ground rules for the discussion.
- ☐ Step 5: The first question/topic for discussion will be provided, and a conversation will commence.
- ☐ Step 6: Closing remarks from the facilitator to summarize the dialogue and to thank everyone for coming (5 minutes).
- ☐ Step 7: Break down.
- ☐ Step 8: Send photos with descriptions/captions to your partners, including community organizations, the faith-based organization, law enforcement agency liaison, info@faihandblue.org, and any local sponsors.

Virtual Programming

This activity can be organized as a Zoom discussion.

- ☐ Step 1: Zoom or another videoconferencing software should be selected. Make sure all participants have access to, and are familiar with, the software you choose. You may want to schedule a trial run-through if you are doing a panel. Have the speakers sign in 15 minutes before the start of the discussion.
- ☐ Step 2: Starting two weeks in advance, the event should be promoted heavily through the existing channels of the organizations that will be sending participants. A media advisory should also be used to reach the public that lists an email for RSVPs.
- ☐ Step 3: The format should follow the same order as the in-person activity. Those not speaking should be muted.
- ☐ Step 4: The event should be recorded and made available on the pages of the participating community organizations.



ACTIVITY 2: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE (TWO-HOUR EVENT)

Short Overview

A conversation on public safety and how community members, faith leaders, and law enforcement can work together to ensure safe neighborhoods while protecting the rights of those who are policed. The conversation will be a small panel, with representatives from the law enforcement agency, the hosting faith-based organization, a community member with some expertise in criminal justice (such as a local professor or prominent attorney), and a representative of a community organization.

Materials Needed

Table cards for the panel, microphones and audio equipment, and name tags for attendees, along with chairs. Water for the panel.

Location Needed

The setting can be outdoors or indoors. Church grounds or a fellowship hall will serve well.

Role for Faith-Based Organization

To designate a member of congregational leadership to speak, to encourage parishioners to attend, and to provide a meeting space.

Role for Law Enforcement Agency

To designate a member of department leadership to speak and to encourage members of the force to attend as audience members.

How to Create Connections

Through the use of a breakout session that divides the audience into smaller groups to discuss particular challenges and opportunities in public safety.

Planning Timeline — minimum seven days from event date

- ☐ Step 1: Reach out to the faith-based organization or law enforcement agency. A local faith-based organization with a reputation for community engagement and a significant-sized congregation would be the ideal partner to work with law enforcement to turn out a good-sized crowd.
- ☐ Step 2: Designate a safety-related topic focus and identify speakers from both the congregation and the law enforcement agency, one to two additional speakers, and a moderator. Identify facilitators for breakout sessions if you feel the crowd will be large and smaller groups better for discussion.
- ☐ Step 3: Identify and confirm the venue.
- ☐ Step 4: Form a small promotion committee that will take steps including: (1) working with the faith-based organization and law enforcement agency to send an email and post on social media to members about the event, (2) having the religious leader announce it at a religious service, (3) posting promotional materials on bulletin boards, (4) identifying event photographers, etc.

Project Appendix VI: Faithful Families



Picture shows the Faithful Families session at Sandy Run

What is Faithful Families?



MISSION: Inspiring faith communities to be health champions for individuals, families, and local communities.

Faithful Families Thriving Communities (Faithful Families, previously Faithful Families Eating Smart and Moving More) works directly in faith communities to promote health for individuals, families, and local communities. This practice-tested health promotion intervention is open to all faith and religious traditions.

Faithful Families trains and brings together program facilitators (nutrition and health educators) and Lay Leaders (non-clergy members) to co-deliver the program in faith-based settings. Over the course of the program, program facilitators engage each faith community in healthy eating and physical activity education, chronic disease prevention, environmental changes to support health, and community-wide health initiatives.

FAITHFUL FAMILIES Thriving Communities

Through state and local partners, **Faithful Families Thriving Communities** promotes personal and environmental changes to support good health.


- Direct Peer Education**
The nine-lesson Eating Smart and Moving More Curriculum and four additional Chronic Disease Lessons are co-taught by program facilitators and Lay Leaders. Through group discussions, recipe taste tests, and activities, individuals and families are encouraged to set goals for leading healthier lives. Lay Leaders bring the spiritual elements into each session, through discussion questions and prompts in each lesson.
- Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Supports**
Throughout the program, facilitators work with each faith community to implement at least one policy and one environmental change to support their members' long-term health.
- Community Engagement**
As the program progresses, facilitators help faith communities connect to community and clinical programs and resources. Faith communities can also advocate for community health by participating in local coalitions and by using their particular resources to support community health initiatives.

Faithful Families is successful

- 2017 data from North Carolina shows that 93% of participants made positive changes in at least one nutrition practice and 78% made positive changes in at least one food resource management practice as a result of Faithful Families classes.
- In North Carolina alone, over 250 policy and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity have been made in faith communities.
- Trained Lay Leaders have become health ambassadors in their faith communities, their families and their communities.
- Faithful Families has been accepted as a "Practice-Tested Intervention" by the Center of Excellence for Training and Research Translation (Center TRT) at UNC Chapel Hill.

www.faithfulfamilies.com

Project Appendix VII: Neighborhood Housing Initiative



City of Jacksonville

Neighborhood Housing Initiative

We're building neighborhoods, not just houses.

- Incentives for Qualified Buyers
- Custom Built Homes
- Variety of Plans
- Affordable Prices
- Now Easier to Qualify

2025 HUD Income Limits

Don't miss out on this special offer! If you make at or below the amount listed below for your size family, you may be eligible for special assistance. For more info call **938-5286**.

Family Size	80% Median Income
1	\$45,300
2	\$51,750
3	\$58,200
4	\$64,650
5	\$69,850
6	\$75,000
7	\$80,200
8	\$85,350


Income limits subject to change annually

As part of the Clean & Green Jacksonville Initiative, Jacksonville Neighborhood Improvement Services seeks to create a public-private partnership with qualified builders for the development of City-owned vacant lots for the construction of attractive, affordable single-family housing throughout the City.

The City of Jacksonville Neighborhood Housing Initiative is a special opportunity for homebuyers to save and be a part of Jacksonville's revitalization efforts. **Down payment assistance** is available to qualified buyers.

If you are interested in purchasing a home in Jacksonville and earn less than 80% of the area's median income, this opportunity could be for you! Income qualifications are adjusted with family size.

Call 938-5286 for program details.



City of Jacksonville
Neighborhood Improvement Services

Clean & Green Jacksonville

910 938-5286
JacksonvilleNC.gov/NIS

www.jacksonvillenc.gov/NIS

Project Appendix VIII: United Way Summer Feeding Program



UNITED WAY
Onslow County

SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
SANDY RUN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Sandy Run MBC




"The Hallmark of Hope"



JUNE 16TH - AUGUST 21ST



FOR CHILDREN PRE-K - HIGH SCHOOL

MONDAY - THURSDAY 11AM - 1PM
(CLOSED ON JUNE 19 & JULY 7)





**1503 HARGETT ST.
JACKSONVILLE, NC**

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT SHELLY KIEWEG
910-347-2646
SKIEWEG@UWONSLow.ORG

<https://www.uwonslow.org>

Project Appendix XI : Sample Sermon Series Bulletin

Sandy Run MBC



Building Our Communities

"The Hallmark of Hope"

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-15 *New International Version (NIV)*

Supporting Scriptures: Lamentations 3:40;
1 Corinthians 13:1-4; Ephesians 3:17

Part 1: "It's Personal"

Background: Renowned Old Testament scholar and theologian, Paul D. Hanson, presents a compelling idea that emerged from the exodus. He makes the connection between quality of life and community. Hanson writes, "God's deliverance of a slave people inaugurated a new order of life for Israel and, concretely, a new notion of community."¹

In today's message, we will focus on verse 13 from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's audience recognized salt's use as a preservative and its economic value. However, it is essential to note that, as Jews, they understood salt as a symbol of Israel's covenant with God (see Leviticus 2:13).

Beloved, just as salt enhances flavor, metaphorically, when we embody this idea, we become stewards of God, acting as salt and light in our community. Salt creates a thirst, and light reflects God's love for people. Let's take this personally and be change agents for our community by cultivating a new perspective on our neighborhood.

Key Points

- The person and the process (v. 13a)
- The disappointment and the appreciation (v. 13b).

Matthew 5:13-15

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, How can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Words of Hope

There is an Ancient Chinese Proverb that says,
"Tell me, I'll forget. Show me, I'll remember. Involve me, I'll understand."

¹ Paul D. Hanson. *The People Called: the Growth of Community in the Bible* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 23.

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VITA

Please note: This section is not required for all papers. Check with your school to see if you must submit this with your paper.

Full name:

Place and date of birth:

Parents Name:

Educational Institutions:

School	Place	Degree	Date
Secondary:			
Collegiate:			
Graduate:			

Include degrees earned from each institution. If no degree was earned, do not include.

Be sure to include your forthcoming degree from Drew University. Do not include this statement on the document. The Vita is placed at the end of the dissertation or thesis.