

The Neighborhood is my Parish

Tools to know your community more deeply

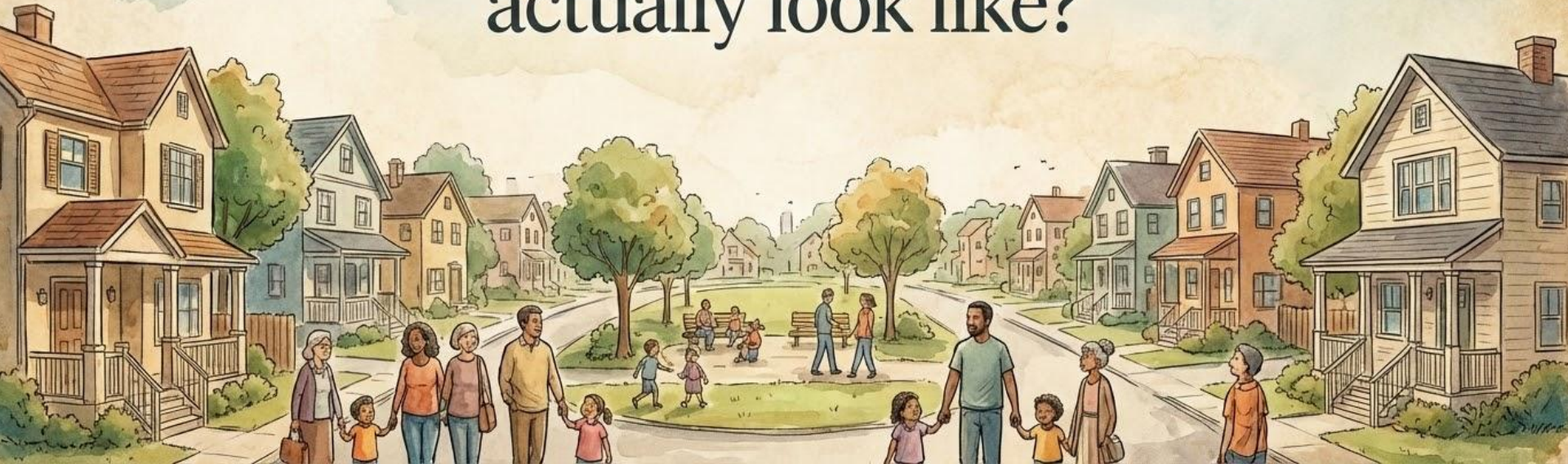
The Rev. Stacy Walker, bi-vocational preacher and Metro IAF community organizer

Preachers are well-versed in the world as **it should be**, or as it's often called in the Church, the Kingdom of God or God's Dream.

What does this ideal world look like?



However, we live in the world as it is.
What does **the world “as it is”**
actually look like?





The world faces no shortage of problems or even solutions, but rather a shortage of **power**—specifically, **relational power**.



What if part of your ministry included **1:1 conversations** with members of the community, and members of your congregation?



A First Step: Get Out and Listen

THE ACTION



- Get out of the office and listen to the people in your neighborhood.

THE CHALLENGE



- What holds us back isn't a lack of faith, or curiosity, or even time. It's a lack of **planning and accountability**.

How to Get out of your office with intention!



1. Meet with yourself:

Clarify your motivations and personal connection to the issue.



2. List 25 people or places to meet:

Aim for half within a set timeframe (e.g., a season). Schedule one to two 30-minute meetings weekly.



3. Share 1:1 meeting priority with congregational leadership:

Explain how this builds community understanding, identifies partners, and informs sermons.



4. Keep meeting notes:

Track themes and insights to gain a clearer picture of the local human condition/neighborhood.

Relational Meetings are not Pastoral Care meetings

“One-to-One” Relational Meetings

The core building block of broad-based power organizations (organizer language)

Pastoral Care meetings: Generally when a person is in a crisis, assurance of God's loving care, private and confidential.

Relational Meetings can also help pastors and church leaders better understand their community and congregation.



Pastoral Care meetings



Be Clear with yourself WHY you are meeting



PURPOSE:

Build public relationships, identify leaders to act with, understand your context.



HOW:

Build reciprocal trust; share stories (not information); understand self-interest.



WITH WHOM:

Potential leaders. People who are curious about your community as well.



TIME:

20-40 minutes.
(NOT ENDLESS.)

The “One to One” Meeting



OPENING

Start with credentials and a warm-up, mentioning who referred you, who you are, your purpose, and other background.



MIDDLE (SHARING)

Ask about their public life, interests (why, how it feels), but avoid an interview style. Share your own stories.



PROBE & AGITATE

Discover motivations and interests using questions like “why” and “what if.”



CLOSE (REFERENCES)

Ask for referrals and names of respected individuals in their network.

PREPARE

- **Plan & Research:** Use Google, LinkedIn, talk to others, allocate time, and prepare scripts/notes.
- **Do not take a notebook or laptop with you.** Be fully present in the meeting.



- **Connect:** Request meetings via email (strong subject line) and phone, stating who referred you. Set a firm meeting time and place.
- **Have a plan for making some notes after your meeting.**

What about the door to door canvas?

This is an effective way to have mini 1:1 meetings in a targeted area of your parish neighborhood.



BUILD A TEAM

Build a team at your congregation first through 1:1 meetings.



CLARIFY PURPOSE

Have clarity about your purpose as a team.



FOLLOW-UP MEETING

A follow-up community meeting within a week, no longer than 1 hour.



LISTENING SESSION

Focus on pressures, challenges, and what people would change if they had the power.

Meeting is over, notes made, now what?

Next Steps: Meet Again?



Decide if you want to meet again. If yes, suggest another meeting or for them to investigate an interest/contact others. (Can do in meeting or via follow-up email).

Evaluation: Assess & Learn



Assess what was learned, note emerging issues, and if the person has a drive to act.

Plan Follow-up Actions



Plan a second meeting, introduce them to someone else, or follow up with their suggestions for others to meet.

Send a Brief Thank You



Send a brief, personalized thank you note.

Evaluation/Feedback/Next Steps?

How Are You Feeling?



In a word (or two):
how are you feeling
after this training?

Brief Questions



stacywalker059@gmail.com

You can reach out
to me for brief
questions.
stacywalker059@
gmail.com

Deep Dive: 1:1 Meeting



If you have many
questions, I may
suggest you schedule
a follow-up 30 minute
1:1 with me.

Thank You & Closing



Thank you for your
interest on how to get
out of your office and get
to know your neighbors!
And thank you for your
work as preachers and
leaders. This. Work.
Matters.