



## Discernment

### Can a dying church give birth to a new worshiping community?

We know we worship a God of resurrection and new life, and there are some inspiring stories of vibrant ministry springing forth from a congregation that has come to the end of its life cycle. This is not an easy transition, however. Old congregations have history, tradition, programs, buildings, staff and members. These things don't automatically disappear when a ministry closes.

Are you wondering if there is the potential for new life to arise from the ashes of an old church? Here are some questions to ask and some scripture to guide you through your discernment process. This brief resource can be used by:

- The session of a congregation that is contemplating closure
- A presbytery team
- A community group that is dreaming about starting something brand new in the place of a dying congregation

### A few questions to ask

1. What is the vision?
2. Describe the steps that have led you to the decision to start something new.
3. How have you celebrated and mourned what was in order to prepare for what is to come?
4. What resources are available for this initiative?
5. What have you done to explore and get to know the community? What have you learned?
6. What evidence is there that this is a movement of the Holy Spirit?
7. Where are the potential roadblocks or areas of resistance? Identify 5 potential barriers to the success of the project.
8. How is the presbytery supporting the project?

### Scripture to study: John 11:1–44

1. Take time to imagine yourself in the story. With whom do you identify and at what point?
2. If God resurrects this community, from what grave clothes would you need to be unbound?
3. Toward what are you being let go?
4. How is life transformed for Lazarus and his family?

*1001 New Worshiping Communities—new expressions of church forming new disciples who transform the world.*