

WELCOME, FELLOW PILGRIMS!

We're blessed to welcome you to The Crossing, and hope you'll see, hear, taste and experience fresh ways of meeting God, forming authentic Christian community and getting stirred up to join God's mission in the world. As you get set to visit, we hope you'll sit with the reflections and questions below. They're the same ones that guide us as we engage this holy adventure.

BACKGROUND

From the beginning, leaders at The Crossing have been dreaming of a different kind of church. On the one hand, we're deeply engaged with ancient Christian practices and Anglican traditions, knowing we need the old stories and ancient pathways as much now as in the past (maybe more!).

But we're also deeply committed to context and to worship that is truly a liturgy – that is, the work of the people. This means we're constantly listening to the voices and gifts of the people who come into or just near our community. It means we keep asking how our worship gathering can be authentic, life-changing, radically welcoming and holy to our neighbors, especially the ones who might not connect as deeply with more conventional forms of worship.

It's hard – maybe even impossible – to answer those questions if most of the people at the planning table are the same church insiders who show up on Sunday morning and/or generally hold church leadership. So from the beginning, we've taken a missional approach: listening for the passions of folks who are part of the actual community we hope to gather. It took a whole lot longer, but we

started with relationships, inviting fresh voices into regular conversation as early as possible, and then continuing to seek creative ways of widening the circle, including old-fashioned face-to-face, friend-to-friend, network-to-network invitation.

With some models, you create the new worship form and then advertise to the people you're hoping to attract. Sometimes, there's not much thought of new people at all; instead, you create an experience that feeds current members in new ways. There's room for that consideration; a lot of regulars at The Crossing have a Sunday church home but find they don't get to bring their whole selves to God in conventional church.

Still, we pray you have come to your desire for fresh worship out of an even deeper desire to fulfill the Church's mission: to reconcile the world to God, and God to the world, bearing healing, hope and the life of Christ into places that haven't heard much good news, and discovering where God has been speaking and transforming lives far from the doors of the church. If that's your goal, then a mission-shaped church should sound like good news.

THINK ABOUT THIS ...

1. Do you hope to renew your regular Sunday service or to begin a new worship service?
2. Whom do you expect to gather for worship and Christian life? Is there a community (geographic or demographic) you're hoping to reach by introducing new worship practices or a new service? What are your current relationships with this group?
3. How could you develop relationships with the community with whom God is calling you into mission? Where could you meet them and hear their stories?
4. Who are your worship planners? Does the group creating worship include people who are in the communities you hope to eventually gather? How could you draw on this outsider wisdom, and begin building a following for (and investment in) your new worship gathering?
5. And some more questions to ask yourself after you visit:
 - What did you notice in worship at The Crossing?
 - What parts seemed rooted in tradition?
 - What parts were shaped more by context?
 - What was moving or holy to you?
 - How does this experience make you reflect anew on your own context and your mission?

For more on the dream of a mission-shaped, emergent church, head to www.thecrossingboston.org, go to the [resources](#) tab, and download our [info booklet](#) introducing the emerging church – get it for the bibliography alone!

Please let us know how we can pray for you as you discern God's dream for your congregation and engage in deeper mission with the community and world around you. And please contact Julia Wilkinson at visit-us@thecrossingboston.org for more info.