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- To start your web cameras, press the “Start my Web Cam” button and “Start Sharing”
- If you have questions, please type them into the chat box on the right-hand side of the screen
- PDFs of the slides and resource list are available for download
- This webinar is being recorded and will be made public



Witnessing Faithfully Beyond the Walls

Building a Community-Based Witness & Episcopal Presence

The Rev. Audra Abt, 2015 ECF Fellow
Missioner for Intercultural Community Development, Diocese of NC

The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF)



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Introduction to our Presenter



The Rev. Audra Abt is a Missioner in the Diocese of North Carolina who is pastor to a neighborhood-based bilingual house church community in Greensboro, NC. She helps equip existing faith communities who are looking to form networks for shared mission or to relate more significantly and mutually with their neighbors who are immigrants, refugees, or young adults. She is also a 2015 ECF Ministry Fellow.

Prayer

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Light and peace be with us all, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

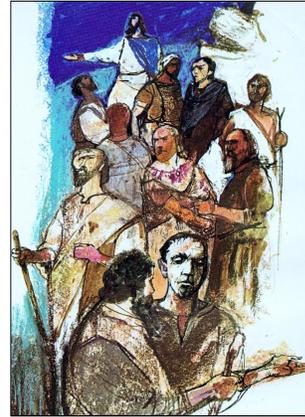
A1

Overview: Being Church Beyond Church Walls

The Risen Christ says : “Do not be afraid. Go, tell the others to go to Galilee. They (you) will see me there.” (Matthew 28:10)

Resurrection Life is a movement outward that draws the church into the vitality of the Triune God’s ongoing work.

- Section 1: Prayer
- Section 2: Formation
- Section 3: Worship
- Discussion: Practical Next Steps



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A2

Who are “We”?

- Comunidad Puerta Abierta ~ Bilingual, Intercultural House Church Community in Greensboro, NC
- St. Andrew’s in rural Haw River, NC
- Episcopal Churches of the Greater-Greensboro convocation



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Slide 7

- A1** For some time now, we've heard our Presiding Bishop Curry inviting us to be the Jesus Movement and to be the church IN the world and FOR the world.

Tonight I'm going to share some of what we've been doing here in North Carolina to live into this vision and what we're learning along the way. Every context is different, though, so where you are in ministry may call for something different.

I'll say up front that I'm presuming that you're here tonight because you and your community are feeling called in some way to follow Jesus in faith out beyond the walls of your church or in a way that's outside your comfort zone.

I hope that something I share here might strike a chord or inspire you to try something new.

We hear in the Scriptures that after Jesus dies and his tomb is found empty, he meets his apostles as the risen Christ, and tells them...

...

What I hear in this is a promise, that Christ, the power of new life, WANTS to meet us, and is living and active not just inside our churches but outside. The call to go out is not just so we can "give others the gospel" but so that as apostles, young and old, we can meet Christ anew where he promises to meet us, beyond our church walls.

What I want to do here is share some ways we've been engaging in being church beyond church walls through prayer, our Christian Formation, and worship - what we've been learning and why I think it's so important to experiment with and discover how our faith is strengthened when we get beyond the walls.

AAbt, 9/21/2016

Slide 8

- A2** So as a missionary I work with several sorts of communities, and when I say "We" throughout the presentation I'll be referring to my experiences with these different groups.

AAbt, 9/21/2016

A3

Prayer Beyond Church Walls

Door-to-Door Gathering Prayers of the People

- Jesus sends his disciples out
(*Matthew 10, Mark 6, Luke 9*)
- Asks us to go out, to be the stranger in need of welcome who brings a gift
- Openly Church, Openly Episcopalian
(not *just* friendly neighbors)



A4

Prayer Beyond Church Walls

Door-to-Door Gathering Prayers of the People

1. We'd like to pray for you or someone you care about at worship this Sunday.
2. Please pray for me

So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. (1 Thess 2:8)

3. What if they ask me to pray right then and there?? (Name, their prayer, God bless)



Slide 9

A3 Being church beyond the walls means we've got to be explicitly people of faith. This might seem obvious, but I think it bears saying. It's not enough to be generally kind and good people and hope people notice and put 2 and 2 together about our faith.

Going out and being about prayer is one way to to be open about our faith and commitment to people who may not know there's a God or a church that cares about them.

Both our bilingual house church and the small rural church I'm working with felt a call to grow closer to their neighbors and explore what it would mean to be present, as Church, with Others who speak different languages and come from different cultures.

And we knew this would mean going out - out of our church or out of our own apartments (in the case of the house church) to meet people and see what the Holy Spirit would open up among us.

It helped to start studying the Scriptures for what Jesus did with this sort of ministry. We hear in the Gospels that Jesus sends out apostles 2-by-2 and anoints them to heal and cast out demons and create peace in the name of the Kingdom of God.

One of our house church members brilliantly observed these are things the apostles probably don't feel they are equipped to do. We mostly don't feel equipped either.

But Jesus anoints and sends them out anyway, promising the Holy Spirit will be with them. Then Jesus calls them back afterward to share what happened and celebrate what the Holy Spirit worked through them.

It's in this spirit that we've gone out to introduce ourselves and gather the prayers of the people in our communities, knocking on doors or talking to people in public. We take notecards and a pencil for writing the prayers, but that's all. No extra sandals or anything.

This is about relationship building, and as we know, relationships take time. While some people are open to talking, we may have to go out 20 times before someone opens their door, and that's ok.

What we know is that there's a lot of mistrust and fear in our society right now, and in diverse neighborhoods like ours, where people do not share much in common, people are closed-off or mistrustful because of language and class differences or immigration status.

But knowing this has helped us see even more clearly our call to humbly show up and offer ourselves and our prayers.

AAbt, 9/21/2016

A5

Prayer Beyond Church Walls

Gathering Prayers of the People at Community Events



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Prayer Beyond Church Walls

Gathering Prayers of the People Where Public and Personal Lives Meet



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