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# Go & Make Disciples

## A Communication Strategy For Educating & Engaging a Church Community in Missions Outreach

A thesis submitted to the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University on May 14, 2014, for the degree of Master of Design in Communication Planning and Information Design.

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Robyn Hammond, Master of Design 2014

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Many thanks to Shannon Libengood, the North Way Missions Director, who shares a genuine enthusiasm to innovate for the good of missions. Thank you to North Way Christian Community for partnering with me on this project and for everyone who helped with my research. I am especially grateful for the staff of North Way Oakland, and also for my wonderful small group who was always happy to participate in my latest research activity.

When I walked through the doors of that converted Chinese restaurant during my first weekend in Pittsburgh, I could never have anticipated that I'd spend the entire second year of my graduate design program researching and innovating for such a great church. I didn't really have a "heart for the nations" (yet), but I did have a big heart for people and for design. So when this topic landed in my lap in the spring, I remember thinking, *what if my insight and skills as a designer could be put to good use for the good news?* I am incredibly thankful for this unique opportunity to have done that very thing with a community that I adore.

*Opposite: A look at where it all began. Whiteboard sketching to synthesize early research findings.*



# Go & Make Disciples

MISSIONS COMM. @ NORTH WAY

Christians are called to obey  
A. two commands:

1. Love God
2. Love your neighbor

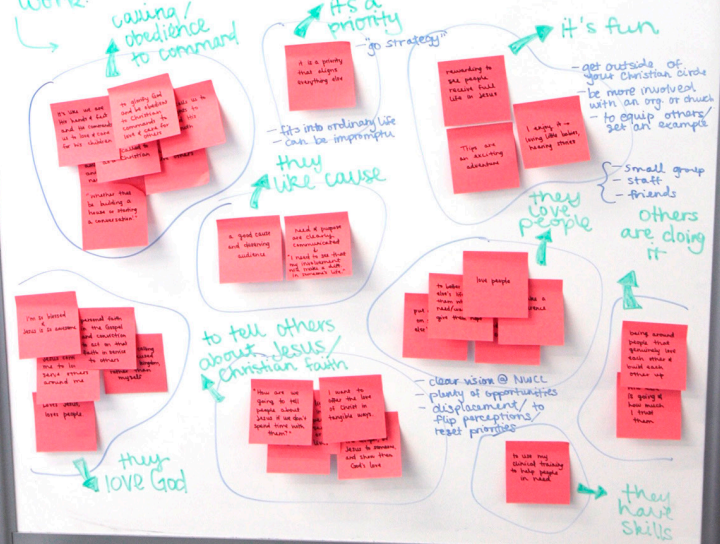


B. Meanwhile, God is on a MISSION  
to redeem every person.

mission work = A + B

↳ organized effort to spread  
Christian faith

People have lots of reasons for doing mission work:



multisite  
similarities

- >> video screens & teaching
- >> well branded sermon series
- >> slides to explain who's talking
- >> environment "feels" like NWCC
- >> same TD opportunities
- >> single marketing dept.
- >> emphasis on small groups
- >> hierarchy
  - executive team
  - Emerging leaders
  - all staff
  - elders
  - small group leaders
  - congregation

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## ABSTRACT

Communicating information is essential for bringing about changes in existing perceptions, helping people learn, and issuing a call to action. Within a church community, though, these actions are often hindered by the transmission of information that is haphazardly planned, inconsistent across mediums, and that fails to inform the recipients of the communication in a way that helps them take action. The field of missions outreach is one specific area that suffers from a lack of attention and participation, a problem that is directly related to the way that information is communicated and then perceived.

In order to educate, engage, and increase the total participation of a church community in missions outreach, I conducted a research study that employed human-centered design research methods to explore the current state of missions communication and to develop concepts for design interventions that improve the way that information about missions outreach

is communicated. In the end, I designed a cohesive system of communication pieces and methods of delivery that rely on a set of fundamental design principles to effectively communicate the message of missions outreach and facilitate participation. This solution will ideally produce a well-informed church body that is motivated and empowered to take action to serve outside the walls of the church. In addition, many other churches and service organizations should be able to benefit from more effective outreach and stronger communities as a result of employing this flexible communication framework to educate and engage their members.



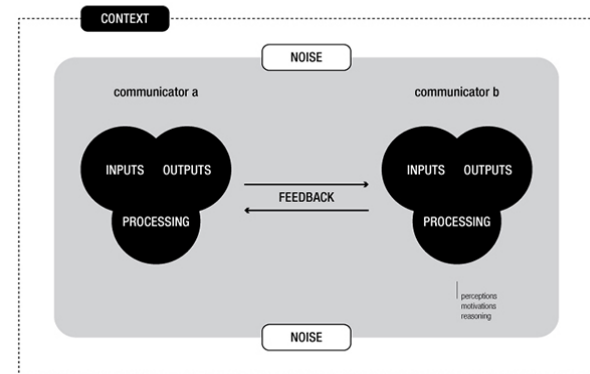
# INTRODUCTION

*Emmert/Donaghy Model of Communication, 1981. Adapted from Philip Emmert and William Donaghy, Human Communication: Elements and Contexts. (Davis, 2012)*

## COMMUNICATION THEORY

We are individuals who live in a world full of messages, and as such, we are constantly being asked to receive and respond to these messages in an endless cycle of communication. Although the various models that exist to represent and explain this communication often emphasize different elements and actors, the basic components of sender, receiver, and message are always present. In other words, communication always involves someone (a sender) with something to say (a message) to someone else (a receiver), even though the sender may not necessarily be one person or people at all, and the message might be delivered through any number of mediums that may or may not involve words.

The Emmert/Donaghy model presented in Meredith Davis' *Graphic Design Theory* is an especially good representation of communication, because it explores the notion that all communication happens within a certain context. No matter the sender's intentions or



the content of the message, the model acknowledges that the context in which a message is communicated will necessarily influence the response of the receiver. Given that perspective, it follows that if designers of communication choose “to ignore critical aspects of the communication context, the design may fail, even though its form may be responsive to other less important demands of the problem” (Davis, 2012).

## CHURCH COMMUNICATION & MISSIONS OUTREACH

Understanding that context influences communication is helpful for framing the way messages are sent and received within specific locations, at specific times, to specific audiences. One particularly distinctive context is the Christian church community in America. This context encompasses a body of people with a shared set of beliefs who typically gather in a building or space at established times throughout the week and who engage together in a certain way of life.

The Christian church community is simultaneously a people group, a physical place, and a lifestyle. This description may be true of any number of religious and secular institutions and organizations, but the unique practices, routines, and beliefs of Christians make this community an especially distinctive setting for studying communication. Because of their distinct characteristics, the communication methods employed in the Christian church and by church members have often been adapted to their needs and activities.

Although specific beliefs vary widely among Christian denominations, two commonly held tenets are the dual commands in Scripture to love God and love your neighbor. “Neighbors” are typically considered to be both other Christians and non-Christians. Christians also generally believe that God is on a mission to redeem every person from their own sin, by bringing

them to faith in Him. The combination of these beliefs – the call to love your neighbors and the understanding that God is actively increasing the number of faithful believers – is encompassed in the concept of mission outreach.

Missions outreach comes in a lot of different forms, but the purpose of it is always the same: to be in relationships with other people and serve them while pointing to faith in Jesus as a necessary and relevant reality. Sometimes this may be accomplished by meeting the physical needs of others, such as providing food, clean water, or shelter to people who are unable to provide for themselves. Other times missions outreach may entail serving others by meeting their emotional needs, often simply by spending time with them and recognizing their opinions and contributions to the world as unique and valuable. And finally, sometimes missions outreach is focused directly on meeting spiritual needs by presenting the beliefs of Christianity.

Various perspectives exist that may limit or expand the precise definition of what activities constitute missions outreach. Some Christians see missions outreach as evangelism that crosses cultures; in other words, to be considered “missional,” an activity must present the beliefs of Christianity to a culture different than one’s own (Piper, 2010). Other Christians consider this an antiquated view and would see mission outreach as any

activity that includes Christians reaching out to non-believers in the context of ordinary life, no matter how informally (Chester & Timmis, 2012). For the purpose of this project, I have relied on the latter perspective of missions outreach, which expands the global nature of the first stance to include an emphasis on local service. This perspective is distinguished from traditional evangelism in that it always involves serving others in order to live out the beliefs of the Christian faith, but it may or may not include a direct emphasis on spiritual conversion.

### WHY IS MISSIONS OUTREACH IMPORTANT?

No matter what form it takes, effective missions outreach should be a transformational process for both parties, because it is one side that cannot be separated from the two-sided coin of Christianity. By professing to love God, Christians must love others, and vice versa. The Bible lays out a clear expectation for these commands to be carried out by anyone who claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Although Christians certainly aren't always perfectly obedient, it is important to strive to live out missions outreach in the way the Bible commands. Obedience befits the Christian identity, it is the natural response of a grateful heart, and it demonstrates the truth of the Christian faith to others. Poor missions participation can result in a shallow, ineffectual church community and neglected physical, emotional, and spiritual needs within the

populations toward whom missions work is directed. Unfortunately, according to research done by David Kinnaman and the Barna Group, regardless of how missionally Christians may claim to act, it seems that most outsiders don't see this actually happening (Kinnaman, 2012). Instead, the prevalent reality is an increasingly negative reputation of Christianity because of a widespread perception that Christians talk a good talk, but don't truly do what they say they believe. In order to change this reality and to effectively communicate and express the message of the church, Christians must visibly and consistently live out their faith. Kinnaman suggests that relationships are the driving force in leading people to Christ, which means that missions outreach is essential for overcoming this negative image and forming a positive social identity.

### HOW IS MISSIONS OUTREACH RELATED TO DESIGN?

Effective communication is essential to the relational nature of missions outreach and its focus on serving others. Missions outreach does not ever happen with only a single participant, which means there are always two communicators, a message, and a context. Even before any mission outreach happens, however, it is critical to communicate the significance of a missional lifestyle and the opportunities available to potential participants. This is a wide-open design space, in which appropriate information design and relevant

communication methods will determine whether or not missions outreach ever makes it onto the radar of Christians. The communication design and planning that surrounds missions outreach are responsible for promoting certain perceptions, informing an audience, and establishing action steps.







## PROBLEM DEFINITION

Given the necessity of communication to inform, influence, and direct people, and the understanding that the context in which the communication takes place will have an effect on the message, it follows that highly effective communication will thoughtfully consider its intended audience and employ methods of delivery appropriate to the context. Alas, these noble aims for stellar communication often fall flat in the context of the Christian church community. Too often, churches are unable to change perceptions, educate their members, and issue calls to action because of communication that is haphazardly planned and sometimes inconsistent across various mediums. Poorly developed or unpredictably executed communication strategies typically affect all aspects of church communication, which means that missions outreach is often an affected subset. At many churches, missions outreach suffers from an obvious lack of attention and participation, which can be directly related to the way that information is communicated and then perceived.

Christians are generally quick to agree that missions outreach is important and that someone should do it, but those specific words “missions,” “important,” and “someone” often mean different things to different people. Perhaps most significantly, Christians often fail to include themselves in the “someone.” That’s why one of my interviewees described her ah-ha moment of realizing that the church “staff is always telling us that people need to be serving and I think ‘that’s nice...’ until I realize, ‘wait, I am people!’” In addition, some church members possess antiquated perceptions of missions that make them hesitant to get involved (“Will I have to move to a hut in Africa?”).

It’s no wonder that missions outreach suffers from a lack of attention and participation – often people don’t know what they’re being asked to do. Church members receive so many different messages that many times no single message is being heard or acted on. There are many other commitments and activities competing

for their time, money, and energy, and even at church, members frequently experience an overabundance of messages and information. The result of these factors tends to be an immobilized church body whose cognitive load is so overwhelmed that they can't pay attention to anything.

This breakdown in communication is a broad issue that affects many different churches. Creating a cohesive communication plan that connects Christians to the message of missions has the potential to improve the effectiveness of missions outreach and to help form stronger, more purposeful church communities. With that goal in mind, I conducted a research study that explored the following question: How can the design of communication methods and strategies educate a church community, address the misconceptions they have about involvement, and facilitate their participation in missions outreach?

## SCOPE

For this project, I used the problem of missions outreach and communication at North Way Christian Community (also referred to as NWCC or North Way) as a specific instance of a larger communication issue that affects many church communities. Although the driving factors will be similar among churches, I only examined the nuances of the problem as they applied to NWCC. In the end, the deliverables were crafted

specifically for the instance of the problem as it exists at NWCC, but I hypothesize that the final design is scalable and transferable to the problem among other church communities and service organizations.



*North Way Christian Community was founded in 1981 by Jay Passavant as a place for Christian believers to follow Jesus and build strong relationships within their local community.*

North Way Christian Community is an interdenominational church with four locations (soon to be five) and 4,000 attendees in the greater Pittsburgh area. Attendees include people of all backgrounds, races, ages, and lifestyles. A major component of North Way's church vision is having 100% of the church's members participating in some form of missions, known at NWCC as "transformational outreach," by mobilizing believers at all campuses to serve outside the walls of the church.

Although most church members at North Way would easily agree that this is a noble vision, there's a clear disconnect between people who want to serve and actually getting them to serve. This is because many NWCC church members fall into the Christian camp who agrees "that missions outreach is important and



on outside of the conversations that tend to happen organically. The church's current strategy relies largely on verbal announcements and printed notes, as well as one-on-one interactions between church members and staff. Also, member-to-member communication is a huge untapped opportunity that should be supported by the NWCC communication strategy.

Some touchpoints receive unwarranted investment, while others have been neglected and fail to reflect the church's vision of missions outreach. In the end, this has all built up a communication structure that has many of the right pieces but that hasn't been optimized to suit the needs, wants, and expectations of the actual users. As a result, staff members feel overwhelmed and unsure of how else to engage members, while the church body is often confused and unmotivated in their efforts to "do something" with their ideas.

Martha Augoustinos & Iain Walker's social schemas theory helps explain why this dissonance exists. Their theory defines schemas as mental models that people use to select and interpret information from the world around them. This relates to missions communication, because even though church members are familiar with the communication touchpoints, they're not necessarily familiar with the church's vision for missions outreach. Most church members have schemas for serving that aren't an accurate representation of the church's vision, simply because they haven't been

exposed to it in a way that makes sense to them (Augoustinos & Walker, 2006).

## STAKEHOLDERS & NEEDS

The stakeholders involved include church staff and members, various outreach partners and organizations, and the people being served by missions outreach. This project focuses largely on the perspectives and needs of church members, with due consideration given to staff members when appropriate. Church members are in need of a communication strategy that reduces information overload in order to effectively educate and inform them.

## GOALS & SIGNIFICANCE

In the end, the main goal of the project is to investigate and improve the NWCC communication strategy. One likely byproduct of this goal will be to engage 100% of North Way members in actively developing relationships with non-Christians, in which they point to faith as a necessary and relevant reality. Improved communication will help to form these relationships by increasing the salience of the reasons to participate and decreasing the common barriers that are associated with participation.

Achieving the end goal of an educated church body and increased participation in missions outreach would be

*Timeline of the design research process for this thesis project*



### PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

*Conducted literature and artifact reviews, and finalized IRB modifications*



### EXPLORE PROBLEM SPACE

*Observed all NWCC campuses, interviewed members and staff, and distributed survey*



### FOCUS EXPLORATION

*Synthesized initial insights, then created a communication-focused survey*



### GENERATE CONCEPTS

*Used exploratory research findings to brainstorm initial design ideas*



## SYNTHESIZE FINDINGS

*Extracted findings, sketched concepts, and documented research progress*



## REFINE CONCEPTS

*Explored and iterated on various design ideas before choosing the ones to test*



## DEVELOP PROTOTYPES

*Created medium-fidelity prototypes to test each concept*



## TEST CONCEPTS

*Tested each concept with NWCC members & staff, evaluating for engagement and effectiveness*



## SYNTHESIZE FINDINGS

*Extracted insights, then made recommendations for a final design solution*

significant for both church members and the eventual beneficiaries of missions work. A church that actively lives out the Christian mission will form a stronger, more purposeful community. High participation will result in more efficacious missions work in regards to both breadth and depth, with more populations benefited, as well as more fully met needs.

In addition, I expect this research to have significance for the larger church community and for secular community outreach efforts. Missions outreach always relies on some kind of communication, and the results of this particular topic of research have produced a generalizable framework that I hypothesize can be applied to these other instances of needing to educate or engage an audience in community-oriented service.

## APPROACH

All aspects of this research and design project involved the engagement of the NWCC staff members and church members. They were at the center of this process, since the solution ultimately relies on their participation.

The first phase, exploratory research, began in the summer with an exploration of the existing literature and artifacts related to missions communication, multi-site churches, how people learn, and the relationship between perception, motivation, and design. In the

fall, I began gathering insights about the lives and the environments of the staff and members of NWCC. I conducted interviews, observations, and surveys, and then synthesized my findings to categorize problems and glean areas of opportunity.

The second phase, generative research, began late in the fall and continued into the spring with a focus on exploring design opportunities and initial design ideas. I developed storyboards for some of the concepts, explored various touchpoints that I could design, then chose a few key ideas to begin prototyping based on a set of overarching design principles. As I developed the prototypes, I established a visual style and conducted a survey to determine the appropriate language and terminology to use for all of the final designed communication pieces.

The final phase, evaluative research, used prototypes to test how well the finalized concept actually worked. It gave participants a chance to demonstrate what is useful and what needs further improvement. I never intended to execute a production-quality final solution for NWCC; rather, I will leave them with my research and recommendations for how they could proceed. These guidelines for missions outreach communication are grounded in user insights from NWCC participants, but also offer generalizable insights that may be applied to other communication problems within the church, as well as to other community-oriented outreach efforts.





## LITERATURE & ARTIFACT REVIEWS

### REPRESENTATIONS OF INFORMATION

Meredith Davis and Don Norman wrote the following books to present design theories and applications that are related to the representation of information, as well as to explore the effect of those representations on communication and audience perceptions.

#### *Graphic Design Theory*, by Meredith Davis

In *Graphic Design Theory*, author Meredith Davis briefly introduces and explains a range of graphic design theories, with a particular emphasis on making obvious links to the form and outcome of design. For all of the theories and frameworks that Davis presents, she includes a visual application, which is helpful for gaining a full understanding of the theory itself as well as its use in context. For example, in her chapter on the nature of representation, she uses an image of the USDA food pyramid to demonstrate why the illustration of the concept doesn't match the perceptions of its viewers. Davis divides the book into two sections. Part one

discusses the contexts of designs and the visual forms and representations that live within and respond to those contexts. Part two discusses theories from the twentieth-century and on, with direct implications for how those concepts have shaped design today.

The most useful part of this text for my project is the first portion, in which Davis lays the groundwork for communication theory and design. For example, the communication models she introduces, including the Shannon–Weaver model and the Emmert/Donaghy model, help explain the important actors and elements of communication. Understanding these actors and elements helps explain why context is key for effective communication.

#### *“The Power of Representation” from Things That Make Us Smart*, by Don Norman

In “The Power of Representation” chapter from *Things That Make Us Smart*, Don Norman advocates for the

design of human-centered technology that enhances human cognition, rather than creating technology that human minds must adapt to. This chapter focuses specifically on the information design of the artifacts that humans interact with and create. Norman explains that a good understanding of the represented world and the representing world is important when we consider designed artifacts. Since those artifacts will help us perceive and reflect on the world around us, it is essential that they match the tasks that we use them for. The appropriateness of the form, content, and dimensions of the displayed information determines how natural it is for viewers to reach conclusions from representations.

These were important insights for my project because communication with church members relies largely on designed artifacts. These artifacts will ideally create experiences in which viewers perceive information effortlessly, without having to needlessly reflect and ponder representations that don't naturally stem from the displayed message. The information design I chose to employ considers people as a first priority and is intended to fit the tasks for which it was designing: to educate, shift perceptions, and/or facilitate member participation in outreach opportunities. By applying Norman's appropriateness principle, I have designed representations that should effectively communicate to users.

## DESIGN AND LEARNING

The following works by Brenda Dervin, Meredith Davis, Julie Dirksen, Matt Cooke, and Martha Augoustinos and Iain Walker explore the effect of design on human perception and learning. They also suggest methods that designers can employ to influence the way their audiences receive and retain knowledge.

**“Chaos, Order, and Sense-Making,” by Brenda Dervin, from *Information Design*, by Robert Jacobson and Richard Wurman**

In the “Chaos, Order, and Sense-Making” chapter from the larger text, *Information Design*, Brenda Dervin discusses a theory of information design known as sensemaking. This theory helps explain how people make sense of information in their environments. Dervin suggests that when people arrive at a knowledge gap or obstacle, they tend to seek out information or approaches that will help them bridge the gap. In this way, they become part of a communication dialogue, and they help to create their own “new informations.”

This theory of sensemaking is especially useful for my thesis project because it places the everyday viewer (in my case, a church member) in the driver's seat of procuring the information they need to make sense of their world. Rather than assuming that people are passive recipients of communication who need to be convinced to intake new information, the sensemaking perspective empowers people to use their own agency

to fill in knowledge gaps. This takes pressure off of the designer to design for everyone and every possible situation, because it acknowledges that people will see what they need to see and seek out what they need to seek out. Sensemaking falls right in line with human-centered design, and reinforces my place as a designer and communicator to correctly identify situations, problems, and knowledge gaps and then help build bridges and point viewers in the right direction.

***Design as a Catalyst for Learning*, by Meredith Davis**

In *Design as a Catalyst for Learning*, Meredith Davis and the other authors explore how design is currently used in schools to enhance student learning and improve gaps in the traditional education model. The authors also propose a vision for the future of school curriculum, in which design thinking and the design process is integrated as a natural part of academic education. The authors use case studies and interviews with teachers to suggest that by introducing design activities as a formal part of the curriculum, students will be better able to problem solve, communicate their ideas, and employ systems thinking both in and out of the context of school.

Although this book is targeted at teachers and it describes the benefits of design within a traditional academic environment, there are many tie-ins to the way that I intend to educate church members with design interventions. For instance, in the same way

that teachers can encourage students to use the design process to tackle complicated, abstract problems, I may be able to empower church members to do the same. By articulating the necessary steps to church members (identify the problem, gather information, generate a variety of concepts, test solutions) and providing the resources to follow through, church members can take an active role in their own outreach education and participation in opportunities. The book also explains that some design methods may help reach students with different types of intelligences, as defined by Howard Gardner. This principle should carry over into almost any educational context, including educating church members. Interactive, participatory design strategies may help reach learners who have previously been left out by traditional communication strategies.

***Design for How People Learn*, by Julie Dirksen**

In *Design for How People Learn*, Julie Dirksen presents a broad overview of instructional design principles to help craft effective learning experiences. She is concerned not only with whom the learners are and what they need to know, but also with learner attention, memory, skill, motivation, and environments. Because of that, she covers a large breadth of information and methods to help designers match strategies and objectives to learner needs. Dirksen encourages designers to ask questions such as, “What bad things will happen if students don’t learn?” and “What’s everything we could do to help learners succeed?” to provide perspective

and innovation for learning experiences. Although the book is targeted at more traditional education and instructional design, the principles are valuable for any communicator or designer who will be imparting new information to an audience.

The most useful insights from this book were the double tasks of motivating people to learn as well as motivating them to do. Designers can capitalize on social learning theory, which explains that people learn from experience and imitation, but often that means combating experiences that have taught the wrong thing. As I redesigned the way that missions outreach is communicated, I navigated through knowledge and perceptions that were inaccurate and needed to be corrected. My final design crafted messages intended to resonate with church members and staff, and also surprise or inspire them to reconcile their existing beliefs with the reality of the message.

**“Design Methodologies: Toward a Systematic Approach to Design,” by Matt Cooke (Chapter 9, *Design Studies: Theory and Research in Graphic Design*)**

In the “Design Methodologies” chapter from *Design Studies*, Matt Cooke describes a system of methods for designing user-centered communication. Rather than rely on a visionary graphic designer or a small group of executives to approve design decisions, Cooke advocates for a visible design process that provides a rationale and foundation for the actual designed

communication pieces. He uses a case study to show that a formalized approach to user-centered design is more effective for communicating to a specific audience than merely designing based on intuition or conventional aesthetics. Cooke uses a four-step design methodology (define, diverge, transform, converge), with specific action steps within each one of those categories. In the end, the communication pieces that are produced are intended to do a better job of meeting the needs of real users.

This description of the design process as a logical system of methods centered around users and their needs helps to formalize the general goal of my project to offer user-centered design that educates and engages a specific audience. Although I am familiar with this design process, the communicators and content producers at NWCC are not. It is an important part of an effective communication system for the church to help explain to staff how content should be designed in a way that considers the final user. Cooke’s design methodology is simple and logical, with focused action steps (e.g. “define target audience,” “agree on design objectives”) that can be completed by non-designers.

**“Social Schemas,” from *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction*, by Martha Augoustinos and Iain Walker**

In the “Social Schemas” chapter from *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction*, Martha Augoustinos and Iain Walker discuss the mental models that people use

to select and interpret information from the world around us. They explain that schemas are based on past experiences and interactions with other people, and that those same schemas then help predict how people will think and behave in future situations. When someone encounters a new piece of information, he unconsciously consults his existing schemas to “bucket” the new information, by labeling and organizing it in a category that he already understands. In this way, schemas help people quickly make sense of unfamiliar environments and complicated realities.

The most useful parts of schema theory for my project were the notions of role schemas and event schemas, as well as the discussion of how schemas can change. It was important for me to understand and acknowledge the existing schemas that church members possess regarding their role in serving and the types of events they expect to serve at. Presenting a completely foreign communication strategy with no links to existing models would have almost certainly result in confusion and lack of appropriate action. On the other hand, schema theory states that most people do not apply their schemas at any cost, while ignoring the available data. With that in mind, a careful balance of presenting new information that only moderately deviates from existing schemas should be an effective way to help church members assimilate this new data and incrementally shift their perceptions.

## DESIGN AND MOTIVATION

The following works by authors Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, Daniel Pink, Barry Schwartz, and Chip and Dan Heath explore motivation and the ways that thoughtfully designed services, communication, and artifacts can effect behavior change in individuals and entire audiences.

### “Interactivity” from *Rules of Play*, by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman

In the “Interactivity” chapter from *Rules of Play*, authors Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman discuss interactivity within the context of game design. In order to differentiate between the various definitions of interactivity, the authors propose an interactivity model with four dimensions: cognitive, functional, explicit, and beyond-the-object. They then use these four dimensions to describe which types of interactivity are designed and which are not, as well as to explain the role of choice in interactivity. Salen and Zimmerman are careful to define interactivity as a relationship that allows a person to make meaningful choices that affect the outcome of the interaction. Within this interaction exists a “space of possibility” that designers cannot directly control; rather, designers contribute only to the structure and context in which the interaction takes place.

This description of interactivity is especially useful for my project because it limits interaction to behaviors

and relationships in which the participant actively influences the outcome. So when I designed interactive experiences and communication, I made them flexible enough to allow church members to craft their own endings. By providing the structure and resources to empower church members with the agency to make choices, communication touchpoints can construct a space of possibility that ideally contributes to increased participation in outreach opportunities.

***Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, by Daniel Pink**

In *Drive*, Daniel Pink argues that the success to high performance and satisfaction is not carrot-and-stick motivation and rewards, as described by the cognitive evaluation theory. Rather, he demonstrates that the three elements of true motivation are autonomy (people want to have control over their work), mastery (people want to get better at what they do), and purpose (people want to be part of something bigger than themselves). He then provides a toolkit of practical strategies that rely on transformative learning and the investment model to implement these elements into everyday situations, including enabling autonomy over how and when to work, promoting mastery by providing novel tasks, and offering clear purposes for why things need to be done.

Although Pink uses businesses to illustrate most of his points, his unique perspective on motivation can be

applied to circumstances outside of the workplace, as well. He suggests, for example, providing to employees “Goldilocks tasks” that are neither too hard or too easy; I have applied the very same principle to get church-goers involved in serving. Participatory communication methods can provide knowledge gaps that invite them to engage, but not to the point that it’s confusing or overly complicated. I think that these same strategies that motivate people to do better in the workplace are also useful for activities in other contexts, such as attempting to increase participation in opportunities for outreach at North Way, because many people approach serving in a similar way to employment: they want it to be do-able, meaningful, and engaging.

***The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less*, by Barry Schwartz**

In *The Paradox of Choice*, author Barry Schwartz convincingly demonstrates that more choice does not equal more satisfaction, better results, or really any other psychological benefit. He explains that people are predisposed to believe that freedom of choice is a basic human right, particularly in the United States, then he compares that reality to studies show that we are often more anxious, less satisfied, and less confident when we are overloaded with choices and our cognitive load is maxed out. Schwartz provides plenty of studies to show that anchoring, framing, and the availability heuristic (how quickly we can mentally retrieve info about a given option) wildly bias our decision-making,

and that losses hurt more than gains satisfy. He also thoroughly explores the Herbert Simon perspective on maximizers and satisficers, explaining that we would all be happier if we could move towards satisficing (being content with a choice that is good enough, rather than obsessively seeking out better alternatives).

Some “choice” insights from the book that are relevant to my thesis project were these: that less choice leads to more overlap and shared experiences, which tend to make us happier; that our evaluations of given options are largely based on our personal perceptions and schemas, rather than on the objective reality of the option; and that modest expectations can make a world of difference, because we get lots of satisfaction out of experiences that exceed our expectations, based on the principles of the expectancy theory. In general, the *Paradox of Choice* paradigm—that an abundance of options is a recipe for decision-making paralysis and limited satisfaction—helped inform the context of my research. As I explored the channels of communication and the way that people currently engage in missions outreach, I looked for places with too many options and observed the results of that overload. In designing my final solutions, I was careful to consider the paradox of choice when outlining opportunities for participating in missions, aiming for a balanced, focused set of options that would provide the most satisfaction possible.

### ***Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*, by Chip & Dan Heath**

In *Switch*, Chip & Dan Heath suggest three inter-related strategies for enacting change on any level, be it individual, organizational, or societal. Although it is a commonly accepted truth that people resist change (with plenty of examples to prove it), there are also massive changes that people happily volunteer for – just think about marriage and babies! The authors argue that these successful changes share a common pattern that involves shifting minds (rational thinking), hearts (emotional thinking), and environments, in order to get someone to start acting differently. The Heaths use an elephant-rider-path metaphor to demonstrate that, almost inevitably, two or more of these elements get involved in tug-of-war (cognitive dissonance) when change is involved. By adopting strategies to direct the rider, motivate the elephant, and shape the path, the authors claim that effective change can be brought about in nearly any context.

Insights from this book were especially useful later in my research, when I set about designing for behavior change among North Way members and staff. Each of the three strategies has three more focused application points, all of which point back to the overarching goal of initiating a “switch.” Directing the rider (rational side), for example, involves pointing out replicable bright spots where the switch is already working, scripting the specific behaviors that are required, and

pointing to the final destination. The authors clearly emphasize that a big-picture vision is not enough, which was especially true for my thesis project; the majority of North Way church members already seem to know that missions outreach is admirable. What might work more effectively is specifying details that attempt to bring this noble goal within the realm of everyday behavior. The other two strategies detail other applicable actions, which include shrinking the change, asking people to pose within a new identity (i.e. saying “I am a missionary” will make church members more likely to act like they are!), setting action triggers or habits, and making the “right” (desirable) behavior a little easier and the “wrong” behavior a little harder.

## MISSIONS OUTREACH

The following works form an understanding of modern missions outreach as a lifestyle that can and should be adopted by all Christians, not just missionaries.

### *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis

In *Everyday Church*, Tim Chester and Steve Timmis claim that there’s a fundamental shift that needs to occur in the traditional definition of Christian missions, because the old definition is simply no longer relevant or effective. Because Christians are living in the “margins” of a post-Christian culture, in which most people have no intention of ever attending church, it

would be wise to meet nonbelievers in the context of ordinary life; in other words, “to be an everyday church with an everyday mission.” Rather than putting on attractional events, programs, services, and activities at church, the authors exhort Christians to be attractional communities, by being good neighbors, colleagues, and family members wherever they are already at. According to the authors, this focus on behavior consistency will dramatically improve the chances of reaching non-Christians with mission-minded outreach.

The primary perspective on missions outreach in *Everyday Church* is that missions isn’t a “thing” to tack onto the life of a Christian; rather it is a Christian’s life. This is important because it empowers the everyday Christian and eliminates some of the most compelling reasons for not participating in missions (comfort, fear, and other people). Plus, if the norms of the culture put forth this expectation, then according to the theory of planned behavior, people will be more likely to value this behavior and be motivated to perform it. To gauge the missional focus of an individual or a community, the authors suggest asking questions like: Are we in close proximity to the people we are trying to reach? Are we spending time with those people? Are we too busy with other obligations to focus on meaningful relationships?

The insights in the book are especially practical for the majority of church members who don’t participate in missions because of a lack of time, money, or energy.



Since my project is targeted at this audience, this perspective on missions and understanding of what it looks like to subscribe to it was particularly relevant and helped to shape effective final solutions. Rather than thinking in terms of inventing new obligations, I worked towards solving the problem largely within the existing routines of church members and staff.

***unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity... and Why it Matters*, by David Kinnaman**

In *unchristian*, David Kinnaman presents research performed by the Barna Group that illustrates the increasingly negative reputation of Christians. This image problem comes from both Christians and outsiders, and the author argues that even if these perceptions don't accurately reflect reality, they are nonetheless becoming reality. Kinnaman posits that Christians have a responsibility to understand the perspectives and schemas of outsiders, in order to effectively communicate and express the message of the church. In his opinion, relationships are the driving force in leading people to Christ, and conversations with nonbelievers are the key to developing and changing their perceptions. Christians must earn the right to these relationships and these conversations by being genuinely interested in getting to know nonbelievers, not by judging the willingness of a nonbeliever to accept the Gospel. Kinnaman leaves the reader with evidence that negative perceptions of Christians can be overcome, but he explains that the transformation happens most

often in the context of particularly meaningful and trusting relationships.

The research that Kinnaman presents regarding the existing perceptions of outsiders toward Christians is foundational for the research that I conducted regarding the perceptions of Christians towards their church, in that it provides a context for why people often have the perceptions they have regarding Christianity. It seems likely that some of the same influences and motivators that have given outsiders a less-than-great impression of Christianity are the same factors that influence the extent to which Christians engage with their church, because many Christians are leery of being associated with these negative impressions. Kinnaman's strategies for overcoming this negative image and forming a positive social identity were important for framing my final solution, in that the communication that I suggest implementing is intended to be sensitive to supporting the positive reality of the message of the church.

## ARTIFACTS

### **myEdu installation at SXSW**

The myEdu installation was displayed at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas. The intention was to get people involved in creating their own life-size visual resume with foam app-like tiles that mimicked the icons available on the myEdu website.



This artifact is a good precedent for my project because it engaged viewers with information that would typically be static, one-sided communication (a poster, a slideshow, etc.). By translating the information into bits that people could literally hold, manipulate, choose between, pose with, and combine, myEdu successfully marketed their visual resume and familiarized people with the look, feel, and benefits of the website.

### “The Happy Show” by Stefan Sagmeister

“The Happy Show” is an exhibit by Stefan Sagmeister that was on display in three North American cities between 2012 and 2013. The specific installation pictured is one of the most intriguing pieces of the larger exhibit, in that it displays real-time statistics of the happiness of the patrons by directly involving them in the statistic-gathering. They enter the exhibit, read the instructions, take a gumball, and reflect on the changing state of the tubes.



This piece is useful for my project, because the filled happiness tubes engage the audience, present the vision for the exhibit, automatically reflect real-time data, and communicate in a concrete, tangible way that is easy for viewers to understand and value.

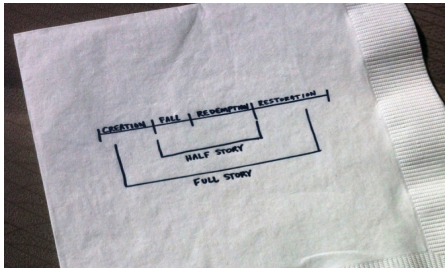
### Around the World game by Buckner International

Around the World is an online game created and hosted by Buckner International, which is an international faith-based organization that provides maternity, adoption, and family services. Buckner marketed this game as a clever way to bring traffic to their website, explain the work of the organization in each of its location, and allow viewers to see specific photos and stories from each region.

This digital game is useful for my project because the contextualization of information helps participants relate and see value in the communication. The game is a fun, visual, and interactive method to communicate data and information.



*From left to right:  
myEdu installation,  
“The Happy Show”,  
and the Around the  
World game.*



From left to right:  
North Way napkins,  
Breakaway commu-  
nication strategy, and  
Mars Hill website



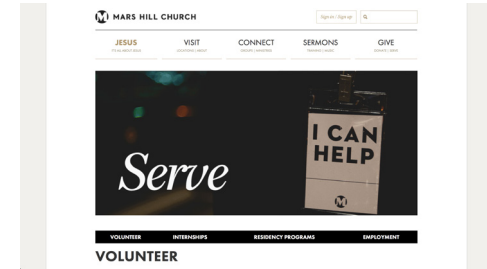
### North Way napkins

These napkins were distributed during a sermon in the fall of 2013 at all four of the North Way Christian Community campuses. They supported the message that was being spoken with a visual, tangible artifact.

This was useful for my project because it showed how traditional communication norms could be shaken up, even within a fairly traditional communication structure of an organization. With a little bit of planning ahead, the church leaders knew that this little napkin would be unexpected, memorable, and easy to replicate. The communication methods that I've proposed have adopted the same principles.

### Breakaway communication strategy

Breakaway Ministries is a faith-based organization on the Texas A&M University campus. The organization relies on a highly effective communication strategy and integrated touchpoints to connect and inform students, volunteers, staff, and the community about events,



services, and resources. Touchpoints include print collateral, signage, a website, and social media.

This is useful for my project because it demonstrates how to effectively communicate to engage with large numbers of people, recruit and retain volunteers, and share a core vision for what the organization does.

### Mars Hill website

Mars Hill Church's website is clean, simple, welcoming, and easy to use, but most importantly, it implicitly (and explicitly) states the vision for the church. The visual style and language communicate exactly as intended, helping people to engage and fill in some of the small knowledge gaps like, "How can I help?"

This is useful to my project because it shows techniques for weaving a clear vision throughout an entire piece of communication. It's also useful because it employs the principle of progressive disclosure to make sure that visitors only see what they need at that moment.



## EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

I employed a number of human-centered design research methods to explore the behavior and needs of church members and staff, with a focus on the existing situation of missions outreach communication at NWCC. Using the insights and findings that I gathered, I began to establish some recurring themes and potential design opportunities.

### OBSERVATIONS OF NWCC

In order to better understand the context in which most of the missions outreach communication currently occurs, I spent time observing each one of the NWCC church campuses during a Sunday service. Two of the campuses are in the city of Pittsburgh, while the other two are outside of the city in Wexford and Sewickley. I paid close attention to the attendees and the way they interacted with each other and with staff before, during, and after the service. I also watched the way they interacted with their environment, particularly with

the communication touchpoints at each campus. The last important observation was noting how the entire Sunday experience functioned for each individual, from walking through the front door of the building, to participating in the service, to walking back out to the parking lot to go home afterwards.

### *Key Finding: Common Brand*

Even though North Way has a number of different campuses across the greater Pittsburgh area (including locations in Wexford and Sewickley Valley) that are attended by diverse groups of people, each of the campuses feels remarkably connected. There is a common brand and look-and-feel to the communication pieces, sermon series, and lobby set-ups. It “feels” like North Way, whether you’re walking into the elementary school building where Sewickley Valley holds its services or into the huge auditorium at Wexford.

### MULTI-SITE SIMILARITIES

- » *Video screens and teaching*
- » *Well-branded sermon series*
- » *The environment feels like NWCC*
- » *Same transformational outreach opportunities*
- » *Single marketing department*
- » *Emphasis on small groups*
- » *Hierarchy: executive team, emerging leaders, all staff, elders, small group leaders, congregation*

### MULTI-SITE DIFFERENCES

**Wexford:** auditorium seats about 1000 people and has a huge stage, older audience, tons of volunteers, seven exits from sanctuary, three services each weekend

**Oakland:** auditorium seats about 200 and has a small stage, younger audience, a tiny lobby with very little room to mingle, a small number of volunteers, one exit from sanctuary, five services each weekend

**Sewickley Valley:** seats about 120, temporary setup in an elementary school, lots of families, lots of mingling in lobby, one exit, two services each weekend

**East End:** seats about 350, sanctuary is a theater, diverse ages, not a lot of mingling in lobby, two exits, one service

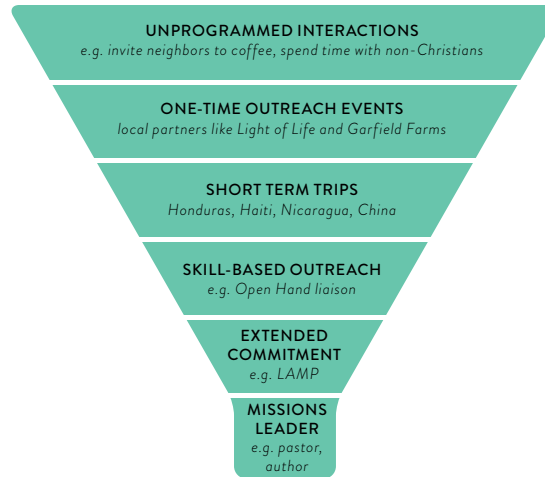
#### **Key Finding: Physical Building Affects Communication**

Although each campus is clearly part of the same church, it was an important observation that each distinctive church building contributed to a different type of interaction between church members. The tiny lobby with a single entrance and exit at Oakland meant that conversations spilled out onto the sidewalk outside. The slightly larger lobby at Sewickley Valley was full of mingling people who stuck around long after the service, while the enormous lobby at East End cleared out almost immediately afterwards.

#### **Key Finding: Clear Vision for Small Groups**

The church has a clearly communicated vision for small groups; each campus I visited mentioned small groups at some point during the sermon and had very clear opportunities to sign up to join one. Although this isn't related to missions outreach, it was important to understand that the four campuses could share and communicate a common vision for a different topic.

The funnel of involvement at NWCC. According to the interviewees, this hasn't been well-publicized.



Examples of interview questions and responses. See full list of questions in the appendix, pg. 77.

**What do you see as the primary messages that North Way communicates?** “Small groups and inviting your friends to church. I can’t think of anything else.”

**What do you see as the benefits and challenges of missions outreach?** “Serving others benefits both people, but it’s hard to make time to do it and to find other people to do it with.”

**Have you ever participated in a missions opportunity? If so, what was your motivation for participating?** “Yes, I do mission work because it’s what Christians are called to do and because I think it’s rewarding to help others.”

## INTERVIEWS

*“There’s this delusional American Christian mentality that we’re ‘bringing Jesus’ to the people we serve.”*

– Interviewee, staff member

I interviewed nine church members and staff from across the four campuses to gain an understanding of their thoughts on the current state of communication at North Way and their perceptions of and experience with missions outreach. These interviews revealed significant insights, with many of the interviewees reporting that they felt like passive recipients of information, that they were often confused or overwhelmed by that information, and that they felt little urgency or motivation to do anything with the information.

### Key Finding: Abundance of Communication Channels

Interviewees had a lot to say when asked about the channels North Way uses to communicate and the primary messages communicated on those channels. Most people named several different communication channels, including verbal announcements, printed notes, social media, and email. When asked which communication channel was the most effective, verbal announcements was the near-unanimous choice. As far as the primary messages, interviewees mentioned a number of different things, but none of them answered with something about missions outreach or service.

**Key Finding: Many Definitions for “Transformational Outreach”**

Interviewees had a fairly consistent answer when asked, “How would you define missions outreach?” but they came up with wildly different answers for the question “What do you think transformational outreach means?” Even though the two answers should be essentially the same, each of the interviewees had a different spin regarding transformational outreach, which could indicate that NWCC hasn’t clearly communicated a vision for this term.

**Key Finding: Many Reasons for Participation & Lack of Participation**

Across the board, interviewees were interested in participating in missions outreach and everyone had participated in some type of outreach at some point (although most were not regularly participating at the time of the interview). When asked what inhibited their participation, interviewees brought up a number of different factors including time, money, not knowing how, not wanting to commit, and not feeling effective in past missions outreach.

**Key Finding: Common Misconceptions**

Finally, I identified many common misconceptions about missions outreach based on the questions I asked during the interviews. This is significant because these are the perceptions that need to be addressed by the NWCC communication strategy in the final design.

**COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS**

- » “They” are changed by “our” service.
- » Missions outreach is a nice thing to do every once in a while.
- » We provide the mission (ie. “bring Jesus”).
- » Missions means doing something extra.
- » Missions is an expensive, long-term commitment that involves going somewhere far away.
- » Only some people are capable and “called” to do missions. I’m not one of them.
- » Missions requires partnering with an organization.
- » I don’t know anyone who does missions.
- » I’m replaceable or insignificant as a volunteer.

**SURVEY OF MOTIVATIONS & INHIBITIONS**

This was a short survey distributed to Christians (beyond the members and staff of NWCC), with just these two questions: 1) “What motivates you to do missions?” and 2) “What inhibits you from participating?” The survey was intended to quickly compile a list of common reasons for doing mission work and a parallel list of reasons for not doing mission work, with the understanding that the final design would need to emphasize the former and de-emphasize the latter.



## WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

**Obligation:** out of obedience to a Biblical command, other people are doing it, it is North Way's vision

**Personal fulfillment:** personal enjoyment, it is a priority, to reset priorities, it fits into ordinary life, to lead others

**Altruism:** love for God, love for people, to help a good cause, to share a specific ability or skills with others

**Social support:** to get outside of Christian circle, to be more involved with an organization or church

## WHAT INHIBITS YOU?

**Limited resources:** time, money, energy

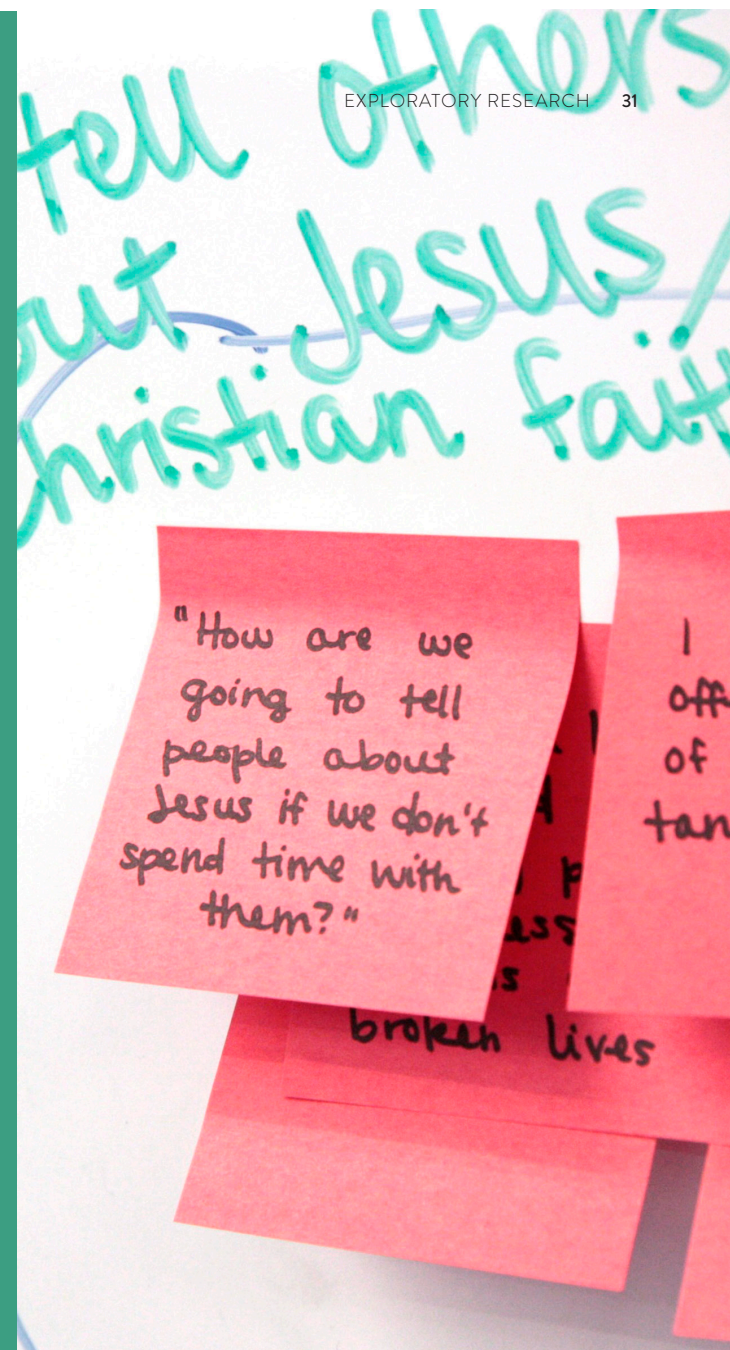
**Confusion:** too many choices, confused about how or where to serve, it's difficult to find right cause or organization, it's hard to see the point without prior experience

**Inefficacy:** ineffective causes, unarticulated outcomes, there is no clear vision, feels overprogrammed

**Lack of agency:** committing to serve is intimidating, no one models a good example, no one asks you to do it

**Lack of desire:** prefer to serve in church or with people

Some participants brought up the "Mother Theresa effect," which is the notion that only noble people can do noble work. It seems that sometimes there is a feeling of needing to be a perfect Christian in order to serve, and assuming that until that standard is met, there is no reason to bother with missions outreach.



SURVEY OF RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

I spoke informally with contacts at related organizations and gathered some information about communities that operate in similar contexts to NWCC. Although some of these organizations differ widely in scope and purpose, I have indicated the common threads between them and called out the successes of each organization.

SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Based on the findings from my observations, interviews, and survey, I extracted a number of communication variables that I had observed or that my participants brought up, including the context of the communication, the number of messages presented, and the level of commitment required by the audience. In order to

	OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION	EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	FOCUSED ON MISSIONS OUTREACH
<b>Multi-Site Churches</b>			
Mars Hill Church	●	●	●
National Community Church	●	●	●
The Austin Stone	●	●	●
Willow Creek Community Church	●	●	
<b>Parachurch Organizations</b>			
YoungLife	●		●
The World Race	●	●	●
Cru		●	●
Breakaway Ministries	●	●	
<b>Service Organizations</b>			
International Justice Mission	●	●	
charity: water	●	●	
YWAM	●	●	●

Survey of related organizations, divided according to their similarities. Successes related to volunteer participation, effective communication, and missional focus are denoted with ●.

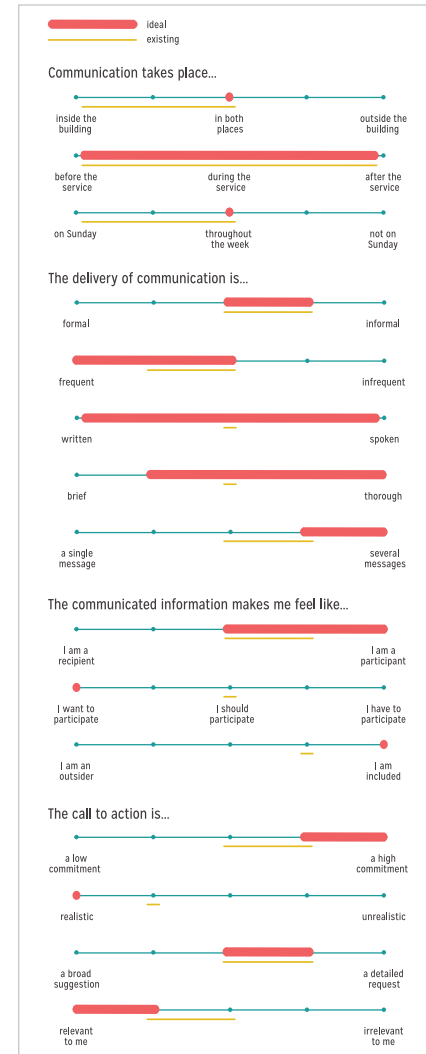
Results of the survey of communication preferences, plotted on spectrums of communication variables. Red bars denote the average ideal preferences, while yellow lines denote the existing situation according to participants. See the full survey in the appendix, pg. 78.

better examine the disconnect between how content is currently communicated at the church and how people would like it to be communicated, I plotted the variables on spectrums under various headings, such as “The delivery of communication is... formal or informal.”

I then conducted a survey with 16 participants, in which I asked participants to fill in the spectrums twice. First they marked where the existing communication falls on each spectrum, and then they marked their desired preferences for ideal communication. The results show that some of the variables are spot on, which means the church is already doing a good job communicating across that spectrum. For example, the specificity of the call to action is right where it should be, according to these participants. In a lot of cases, though, changes need to be made to better match the needs of church members, such as creating a level of motivation that is less of a “should” and more of a “want to”.

## ANALYSIS OF EXISTING TOUCHPOINTS

North Way has many communication touchpoints currently in place to convey information to church members. Currently, the communication load falls largely on printed notes, verbal announcements, and one-on-one interactions with church staff members. Many other touchpoints are in place, including a website, emails, a mobile app, and printed posters. These other touchpoints, however, aren’t being appropriately utilized,



and they rarely emphasize opportunities for service and outreach. In addition, there's a large gap in offering communication touchpoints that facilitate member-to-member communication.

All of the touchpoints can be divided into a few different categories according to the context in which they're typically employed. I researched these touchpoints and analyzed them for their current successes and breakdowns.

## IN THE BUILDING, BROAD EXPOSURE

### Verbal announcements

**Successes:** They are likely perceived as effective because they are typically spoken by a familiar person and voice of authority in a situation where the audience is forced to listen, and they're often multi-modal because of support from slides or printed pieces. Given the familiar context, church members typically know how to act and how to respond.

**Breakdowns:** They are only available on Sundays. The announcements must be framed as short calls to action or they get lost in the noise of everything else people are thinking about. There is also not enough time to mention every important event or opportunity, and even those that do get mentioned require support from other touchpoints to provide additional details.

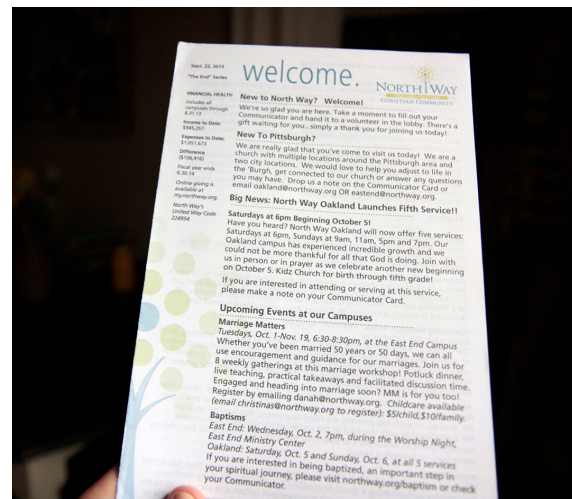
### Printed notes and handheld pieces

**Successes:** They are flexible in that they often feature

inserts or some kind of handheld piece that shakes up the normal handout.

**Breakdowns:** They often display too much information for the average church member to read. Printed notes have become the source for all the details that NWCC communicates, but only a few small snippets will be relevant to any given person who reads the notes.

Both the printed notes, handheld pieces, and verbal announcements would likely serve church members best as short, concise, compelling messages that direct the audience to other touchpoints for more details. The difficulty is that they're currently bearing the majority of the communication load, which means they have too much content and are being asked to do more



*North Way notes often display more information than the average church member cares to read.*

*Northway.org has a consistent visual style, but it is not especially welcoming or engaging.*

than they're capable of. It's ineffective and unsustainable; people get confused and lose interest.

IN AND/OR OUT OF THE BUILDING,  
BROAD TO MEDIUM EXPOSURE

### Word of mouth

**Successes:** Word of mouth is a low barrier-to-entry communication channel that currently has the most user engagement. Interviewees reported that word of mouth is the primary way they find out about missions outreach.

**Breakdowns:** Engagement generally fizzles before users take action steps to act on their conversations, because conversations are often undirected and unsupported by other touchpoints. People are sharing messages that should be validated in other communication channels.

### Website

**Successes:** The visual style is consistent. There is a ton of important content.

**Breakdowns:** The website is cluttered and not action-oriented. It lacks hierarchy and unity. It also tends to come off as “churchy,” with insider words and generic stock images. The abundance of navy blue is not especially welcoming or engaging. Overall, the website is dark, busy, and relatively generic, for a church that is lively, diverse, and intently focused on a mission of serving the city of Pittsburgh. The website is currently an information dump that combines a variety of content in a confusing layout that lacks immediacy. It's often



easier to simply ask someone on staff than to dig through the content online.

IN AND/OR OUT OF THE BUILDING,  
VARIABLE EXPOSURE

### Everything else (including slides, video, posters, response cards, social media, app, email)

**Successes:** These touchpoints have varying levels of user engagement, because they are generally employed on a less consistent, as-needed basis. In many instances, they are not intended to connect users to an action step. Instead, they may help spread information, remind people of something that was said in a Sunday service or printed in the notes, or bring exposure to the North Way brand.

**Breakdowns:** Sometimes these pieces are invested in and expected to do heavy lifting in the communication system. This usually disappoints, or at best the result is inconsistently successful. Often it is unwise to spend

time, money, and energy on a piece that may not guarantee a high return on investment. It might be better to implement these touchpoints in unusual contexts or in places that will provide a break from the norm, rather than saturating contexts in which they will blend in or not receive any special attention.

## SYNTHESIS

After gathering all of the findings and learning about missions outreach and communication at North Way from a variety of different perspectives, many different problems and opportunities emerged. It became clear that although the current communication system at NWCC had lots of the right pieces, the organization of and investment in those touchpoints could be improved.

There is currently a disconnect between the information being communicated by the church and then perceived by the congregation. The disconnect is manifested in the lack of participation in out-of-church outreach and a widespread ‘them vs. us’ mentality in which church members feel like recipients rather than participants. For church members to truly understand and engage in the church’s vision for missions outreach, they would be better served by a communication strategy that considers their needs and the specific contexts of their experiences with informational materials.

## PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### MOTIVATION & PLANNING

*Problem:* Members don’t always feel a sense of personal agency or urgency.

*Opportunity:* Empower members by giving them an identity in order to view themselves as missionaries.

*Problem:* Members don’t plan their involvement. Instead, it usually just happens.

*Opportunity:* Suggest a logical path or trajectory for involvement (i.e. a “go strategy”).

*Problem:* Outreach sometimes feels more like a “should” than a “want to.”

*Opportunity:* Foster buy-in from members and provide opportunities for shared & overlapping experiences, which will make them feel more meaningful.

*Problem:* Outreach opportunities sometimes feel very programmed or limited.

*Opportunity:* Empower members to create their own solutions to participate in missions outreach.

*Problem:* Members feel like “someone” (besides themselves) should be doing outreach.

*Opportunity:* Dissolve the “them vs. us” mentality.

*Problem:* Outreach feels like a big commitment.

*Opportunity:* Provide visible on and off ramps.

## CONTENT & DELIVERY

**Problem:** There is not a culture of serving because the vision for missions isn't clearly or consistently communicated among church members.

**Opportunity:** Create a counter-cultural culture by weaving the vision for missions outreach into every touchpoint.

**Problem:** Members don't understand what they are being asked to do.

**Opportunity:** Communicate clear, realistic expectations.

**Problem:** Members don't see the results of outreach.

**Opportunity:** Document and communicate clear, concrete outcomes.

**Problem:** How to be involved isn't always obvious.

**Opportunity:** Reveal the involvement funnel.

**Problem:** Lots of choices are overwhelming.

**Opportunity:** Offer less choices and use straight-forward, visual representations to organize information.

**Problem:** There are lots of brief messages.

**Opportunity:** Deliver one more detailed message.

**Problem:** Members don't understand the big picture of missions outreach.

**Opportunity:** Communicate "what part do I play?" and "this is how it all fits together."

**Problem:** There is an abundance of information.

**Opportunity:** Employ progressive disclosure.

**Problem:** Members feel like recipients, not participants.

**Opportunity:** Find out exactly how members want to communicate, then employ those methods and use relevant, accessible language; create spaces of possibility for "talking with" (as opposed to "talking to").

**Problem:** The bulk of communication happens during weekend services.

**Opportunity:** Communicate throughout the week, possibly with unconventional communication channels (short term missions meetings, small groups, etc.).





## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

By synthesizing the insights I gathered from my initial research, I identified a number of misconceptions about the Christian ideal of serving and missions outreach, as well as problems with NWCC's existing communication. Those problems and their corresponding opportunities can be divided into five overarching themes for the design. The final communication strategy reflects these themes, and all recommendations for appropriate and effective communication stem from the application of the following principles.

### 1. FOCUS THE CONTENT

*"People get blitzed with information."*

– Interviewee, staff member

The existing problem is that people feel there is not enough transparency when it comes to the structure of involvement and results of outreach. This design principle focuses on providing a clear vision and sharing

outcomes with church members. Focused content should be feasible to update and maintain, and should make clear the steps needed to participate.

Specific opportunities to apply this principle could be implementing a system to track and document the outcomes of missions outreach, and revealing the involvement funnel and being clear about on and off ramps for participation in outreach.

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

- » Use direct, action-oriented language. Instead of writing "please let us know if you're interested," use a phrase like "Join us by registering at [northway.org/serve](http://northway.org/serve)."
- » Employ one hub for detailed information, with other engaging touchpoints that point people back to the hub used as-needed. For example, all of the detail could live on a website or in a monthly printed piece,

as long as the other touchpoints consistently refer to that source as the next step to participate.

- » Improve memorability by building on existing schemas, but with a twist. People often know that missions outreach is a noble goal, but what if you introduce a familiar face to the message? You could say, for example, that Pastor Jay will be gardening at the community farm and that there are enough weeds for anyone who wants to join.

## 2. EXPAND THE DIVERSITY OF CONTEXTS

*“The problem with announcements is that if you’re not at church on Sunday, you don’t know what’s going on.”*

– Interviewee, staff member

The existing problem is that the bulk of communication takes place in the building on Sunday and relies heavily on verbal announcements. This design principle focuses on deliberately considering location and timing, possibly by finding alternatives to verbal announcements or by communicating throughout the week, inside and outside of the building, depending on the message. A diverse array of contexts will ideally support multiple types of dialogue (e.g. staff to member, member to member).

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

- » Rather than considering the pure number of people who will encounter a given touchpoint, consider how

many of the people who want to encounter it will be likely to do so. If all of the people who you expect to respond don’t have smartphones, then don’t waste time and money on an app.

- » Remember the types of communication – staff to member, member to member, member to outsider, and staff to outsider – and support as many of them as is appropriate.
- » It is important to script the critical moves for the audience, but it is more important to provide a space of possibility in which meaningful interactions can take place. Concrete action steps can be provided in the verbal announcements, but if there is no outlet for a person to interact with more information, they will probably not be motivated to act.

## 3. EMPLOY RELEVANT MODES OF DELIVERY

*“I think our members get tired of people telling them to do stuff.”* – Interviewee, staff member

The existing problem is that there is an abundance of information that is not always relevant or appropriately communicated. This design principle focuses on being responsive to the message in order to share information in a format that resonates with the audience and helps them want to respond to it. Given this perspective of deliberate flexibility, the mode of delivery should change depending on the content and the audience.

Specific opportunities to apply this principle are using relevant, accessible language and visual representations to provide explanations; employing progressive disclosure to determine how each different message should be communicated; and evaluating the effectiveness of existing touchpoints and considering adding new ones.

#### CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

- » Use narratives and stories whenever it is possible and appropriate. It helps multiply the experiences of those people who have participated, as well as those people who eventually will (Heath, 2007).
- » Make emotional connections between something people are already invested in and something that they don't yet care about (Heath, 2007). A church member may really care about abandoned children, but they may not yet care about the OrphanCare ministry. Deliver information about the new outreach opportunity by drawing attention to the existing emotional connection.
- » Whenever appropriate, make communication two-sided and dynamic as opposed to one-sided and static. For example, given the choice between a poster and a small group activity, the interactive activity will likely be the more successful method of communication.

## 4. EMPOWER THE AUDIENCE

*“Being missional is intimidating.”*

– Interviewee, church member

The existing problem is that members feel like recipients, rather than participants, because they don't understand the big picture. They also feel pressure to be “perfect Christians.” This design principle focuses on giving members an identity so that they feel informed and equipped to actively participate in missions outreach. This could be accomplished by communicating answers to typical questions like, “What part do I play?” as well as by encouraging an appropriate understanding of the purpose of missions outreach. An empowered audience should feel comfortable interacting with less familiar touchpoints and should buy into the vision for missions outreach.

#### CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

- » Offer “Goldilocks tasks” that are neither too hard nor too easy (Pink, 2011). For example, rather than asking someone to simply give \$10 or to commit to a year-long missions program, provide an in-between opportunity to serve at a weekend soccer clinic for at-risk students.
- » Set the expectation that church members will serve in ways outside of formal service partnerships that are organized by the church. This will encourage autonomy, mastery, and purpose (Pink, 2011).

- » Ask people to pose within a new identity (Heath & Heath, 2010). For example, even if church members don't necessarily feel like missionaries, asking them to participate in an "I am a missionary because..." installation may go a long way to making the switch.

## 5. FOSTER SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT

*"If you don't treat it like a lifestyle, missions can feel like more things to fill an already busy schedule."*

– Interviewee, staff member

The existing problem is that members don't always realize what they're being asked to do, and as a result, they don't feel much agency or urgency. This often means that committing to outreach feels more like a "should" than a "want to." The focus of this design principle is on empowering planning and motivating action. Specific opportunities to apply this principle include suggesting a logical trajectory for involvement, fostering buy-in by making a noble goal feel realistic, and encouraging members to adopt a missional lifestyle, rather than treating missions like another thing to do.

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLICATION

- » The church should strive to be incarnational as opposed to attractional, because the former brings about lasting engagement as opposed to short-lived interest. For example, instead of hosting a service

day sponsored by the church, members could be encouraged to live out their faith by joining existing service organizations.

- » Create a snowball effect by pointing out replicable bright spots where the switch is already working (Heath & Heath, 2010). This will help people feel like they're participating in a culture of service with momentum, not starting from scratch.
- » Adopt a mentality of "how many people can we mobilize?" rather than "how many people do we need?" By connecting a large number of people with a specific, timely reason for participating, the church is then in a good position to help those people specialize and understand the impact of their service (Searcy, 2012).





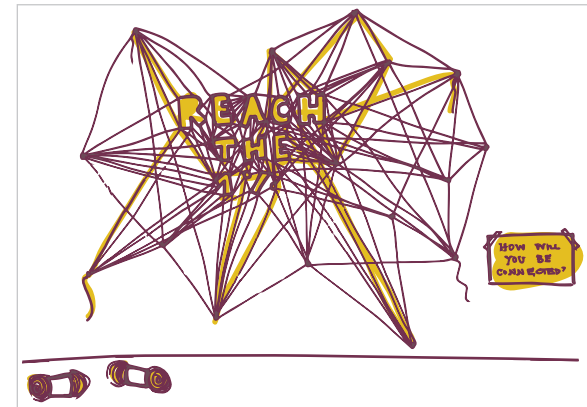
## GENERATIVE RESEARCH

*An installation with a large, interactive communication aid could be set up in the church lobby. It would provide a brief bit of information about missions, with a thorough follow-up available online, which would provide the opportunity for members to plan their involvement or share the outcomes of their outreach.*

I employed human-centered design research methods in the generative research phase of the project, with a focus on generating new concepts for missions outreach communication and the communication strategy at NWCC. Using the opportunity spaces and design principles from my exploratory research and synthesis, I explored my design ideas and selected a few of them to develop into initial prototypes based on the inherent chronology of artifacts that I discovered.

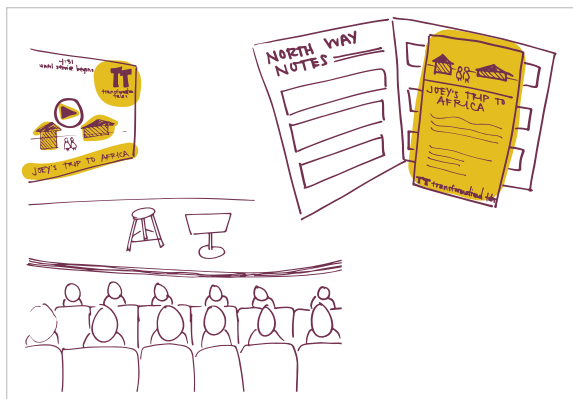
### INITIAL CONCEPTS

Based on the problems and opportunities identified in the exploratory phase, I compiled a long list of potential design ideas that had the potential to capitalize on the opportunities in order to solve the problems. These design ideas included everything from reenvisioning an approachable, useful church website to designing an interactive installation and placemats or table topics to spark conversation about missions outreach.

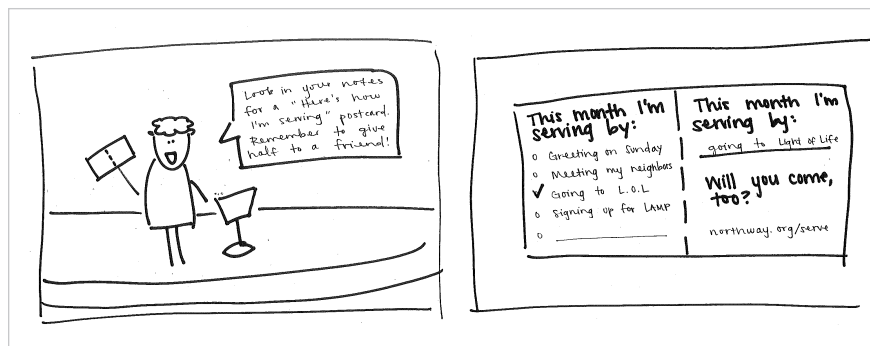


To elaborate on those design ideas, I sketched quick vignettes to show off the highlights of some of them, as well as more detailed storyboards for a few of the ideas that held the greatest potential for impact and involved the most complex forms of interaction.

Handheld pieces (shown on right) could be distributed in the printed notes given out at Sunday services, in order to get members talking about serving outside the walls of the church with others. Transformational Tales (shown below, left) would allow for the outcomes of missions outreach to be deliberately shared with church members under a common brand. This might include on-stage storytelling, a short video before the sermon, and trading-card style printed photo cards with a short story on the back. A small group toolkit (shown below, right) would capitalize on small groups as a vital communication channel, by giving group leaders access to an online toolkit with a variety of digital and print resources related to missions outreach. This toolkit will provide the opportunity for member to member interactions and relevant, contextualized communication.



Transformational Tales



Handheld Artifact



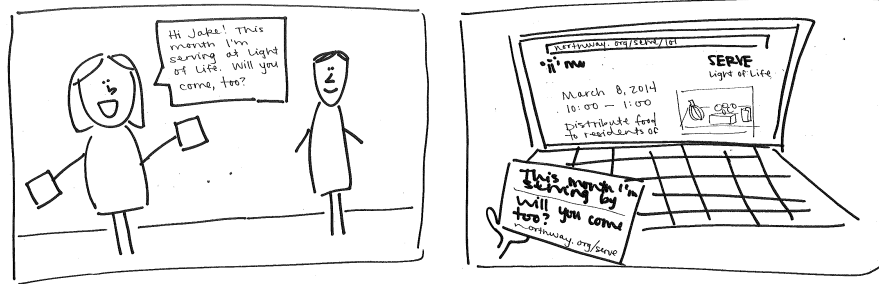
Small Group Toolkit

From left to right: Transformational Tales features real members doing realistic outreach activities which is intended to dissolve the prevalent "them vs. us" mentality and share the message that "You can do this, too!"

Small group toolkit tools might include debriefing guides for short term mission trips, weekly diary prompts to encourage accountability with outreach, and a planning activity to help members develop a "go strategy."



The handheld artifact shown in these storyboards would include a piece to keep and a piece to share, which would emphasize the vision and do-ability of outreach by encouraging members to participate with other people that they know.



## OTHER DESIGN IDEAS

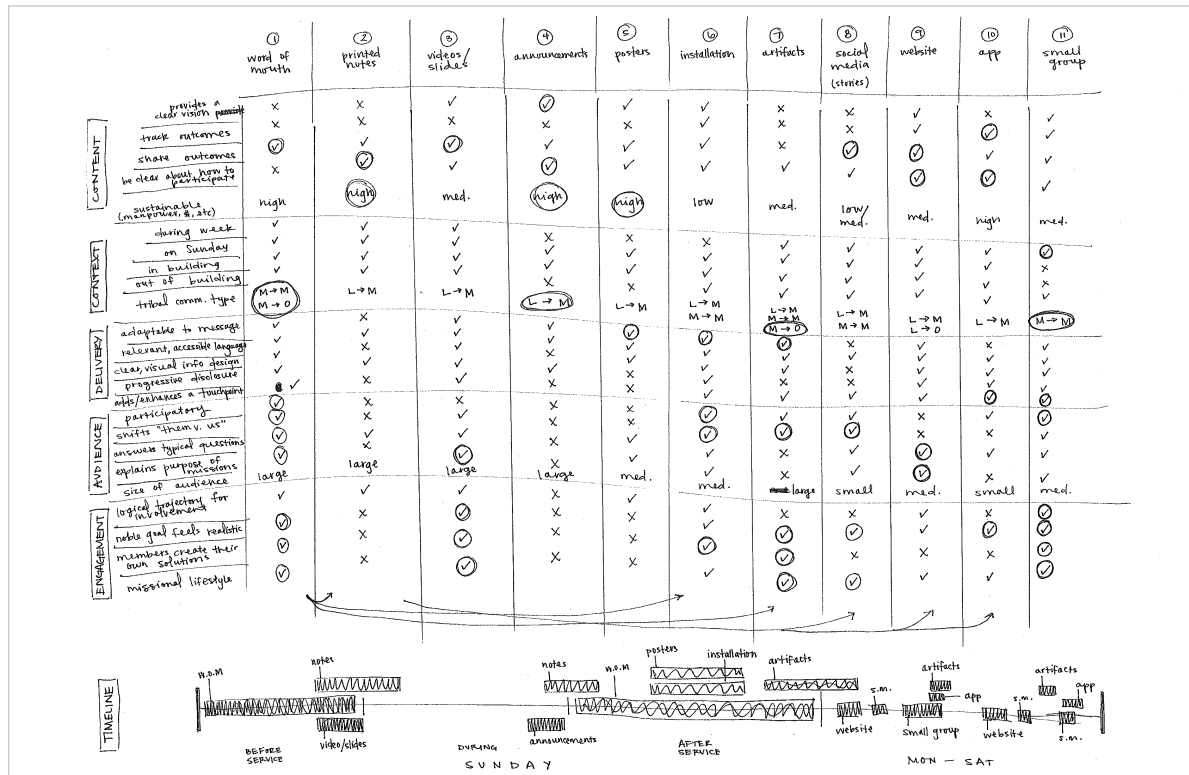
- » Create an activity to map the 1% that NWCC hopes to reach in Pittsburgh.
- » Design an installation with salt shakers to help church members see themselves as “salt” to “season” their communities.
- » Distribute “Outside the Walls” stickers or badges to display at locations where missions outreach is done.
- » Create an outdoor installation with spray chalk to demonstrate the 3-12-70 model for serving.
- » Establish a repository of written or filmed stories (similar to medium.com or Humans of New York).
- » Design an approachable, useful church website that employs effective information design.
- » Create a visual bucket of skills and interests as an activity to be completed in a small group.
- » Develop a “Famous Faces” poster campaign that creates emotional appeal by displaying the faces of well-known church members or staff.
- » Design placemats that promote inviting friends and neighbors over to eat dinner together.
- » Use pre-sermon slides or videos to share the outcomes of missions outreach at North Way.
- » Distribute table topics for lunch after church to spark conversations about missions outreach.
- » Launch an “I Am Missional” campaign to help equip church members with a missions-minded identity.

The 3-12-70 model is already in place at NWCC to encourage serving as often as possible with an intimate group of three or so, monthly in a small group of around twelve people, and quarterly in a large group of about 70 people.

## IDEAL TOUCHPOINTS

Building from my analysis of the existing touchpoints, I created a matrix of ideal touchpoints to demonstrate how they mapped to the design principles and sub-criteria that I developed, as well as a timeline of how church members might interact with those touchpoints during the course of a week.

The matrix and timeline helped to validate investing in some touchpoints over others, depending on how well the given touchpoint fulfilled the design criteria. It became clear that the new communication strategy would need to emphasize communication between members, and offer a source of more detailed information combined with brief snippets of content.



This matrix of ideal touchpoints analyzes how well each touchpoint meets the design criteria.

## TERMINOLOGY PREFERENCES

*When it comes to informing someone on how they can attend a service at North Way Christian Community, which words work the best?*

Come (19%)

Join us for worship (17%)

*When it comes to helping someone get detailed info about North Way, which words work the best?*

About North Way (18%)

What we believe (17%)

*When it comes to telling people about ways to be connected within North Way (e.g. small groups, ministries, and Family Matters), which words work the best?*

Get connected (20%)

Get involved, Grow (16%)

*When it comes to informing people about the resources available to them through North Way (e.g. sermons, music, stories of current members), which words work the best?*

Resources (21%)

Messages (19%)

*When it comes to telling someone about how they can serve at North Way or in their own community, which words work the best?*

Volunteer (15%)

Serve (13%)

See the full list of survey questions and results in the appendix, pg. 79.


## SURVEY OF TERMINOLOGY PREFERENCES

As I crafted these design ideas and began prototyping, it was important not to assume that the standard North Way language or even just commonly used terms in church communication would be the best or most effective choices for the ideal NWCC communication strategy. To establish an appropriate voice for my prototypes, I conducted a survey of terminology preferences for NWCC communications among church staff and members, with a total of 49 people surveyed. The six question survey gave participants a list of words or phrases and asked them to choose which words or phrases they would use to describe a given topic (e.g. getting connected to others at church, participating in missions outreach). Participants tended to choose words that were direct rather than vague or “churchy” (which often apply simultaneously). For example, they preferred the term “volunteer” to describe the action of missions outreach as opposed to “serve,” but they preferred both of those terms far more than the phrase “missions outreach.”

## PROTOTYPES

Based on my design ideas and the matrix of ideal touchpoints, I crafted a prototype of a communication strategy and a framework that both validated it and offered criteria for further evaluation (Appendix, pg. 80-81). I also designed examples of a few of the pieces that would be part of that communication strategy. I applied a visual style to these pieces that aligned with

friendly	empowering	relevant
engaging	clear	modern
fun	bold	direct
approachable	informative	consistent



**Frutiger 65 Bold**  
**Brandon Grotesque**  
*Brandon Grotesque Bold Italic*

The visual style reflects North Way’s vision to be friendly, empowering, and relevant. The letterforms in the chosen typefaces are wide and round to embody this sense of welcome, and the colors are intended to be inviting and relatable.

the design principles and a few key descriptors for North Way, including friendly, empowering, and relevant. The robust nature of the communication strategy lends itself to extensive testing, which the time constraints of this project simply didn’t allow for.

Because of that, I decided it would be most beneficial to create a few pieces and gather reactions before making the entire system. I tested pieces of the strategy with NWCC staff and members and got feedback on the projected usefulness and desirability of those pieces. This included asking participants to interact with mock-ups of the website and a handheld printed piece, and actually having them complete one of the small group activities.

User Insights

Related to the content of the pieces, most users thought it was clear and direct, but could use less text.

One user reported that missions outreach “still seems like a lot of work,” while another commented that “doing some of this wouldn’t be difficult.”

Users were excited about the flexibility and diversity of the pieces, and they could see them being used in a variety of contexts. The small group resources were particularly effective because they increased the willingness of users to actually act, since participants reporting feeling “more inclined to do something with other like-minded people.”

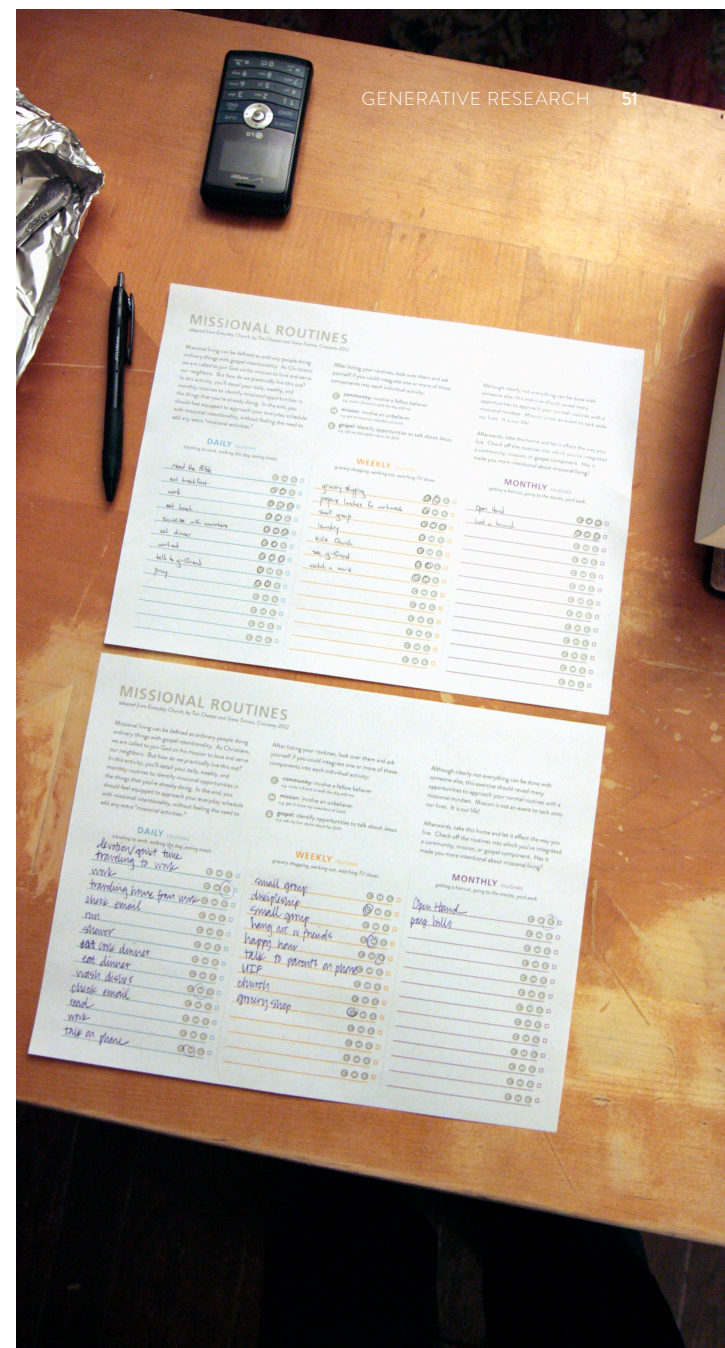
Users appreciated that the delivery of touchpoints was approachable and “more conversational,” although some of them mentioned that they would prefer touchpoints that were less structured and allowed for more flexibility. Given the nature of the proposed communication strategy, the touchpoints are designed to support this desire for flexibility. These participant

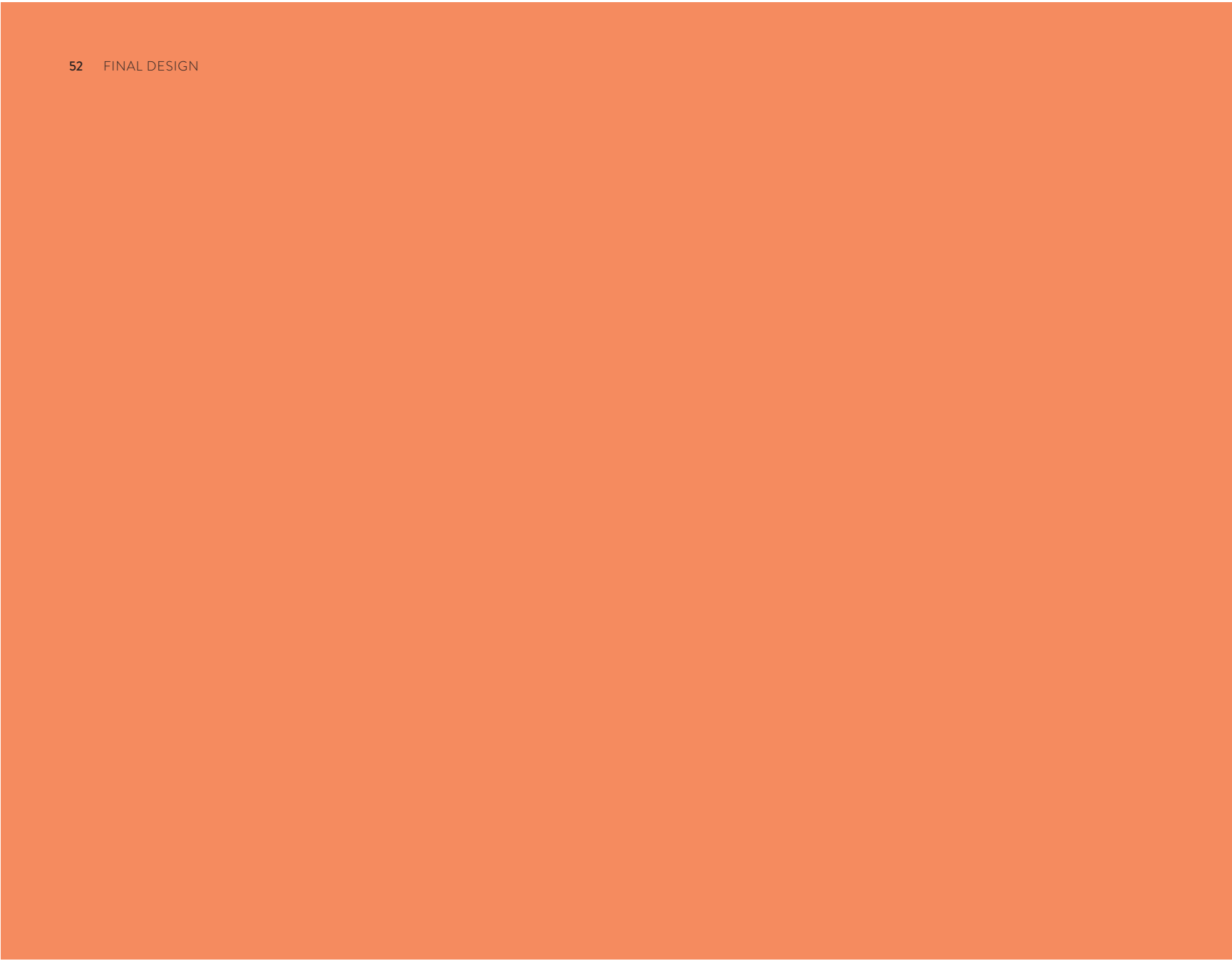
responses indicate that the flexibility of the system may not have been accurately represented during the testing session.

Regarding the audience for the pieces, both staff and members thought it was helpful that these pieces emphasize the role of members as participants and communicate via existing personal relationships. They saw this as helpful for accountability and thought that using the social dynamic to communicate would increase their motivation.

Users bought into the premise of a reenvisioned communication strategy that focused on NWCC's vision for missions, and they had positive feedback about feeling like serving was something they could actually do. They were overall very engaged with the pieces and seemed enthusiastic about taking next steps.

Examples of a small group activity completed by research participants during user testing.





## FINAL DESIGN

I have designed a robust communication strategy that deliberately reframes the touchpoints with which church members and staff interact. This is intended to help them make better sense of information, increase their sense of agency, and provide “spaces of possibility” for them to take action steps to participate in service opportunities.

These tasks can be accomplished by reordering the flow of touchpoints in the communication strategy so that people interact with smaller chunks of information via communication methods with lower barriers to entry, such as word of mouth conversations or handheld printed pieces before they are directed to more detailed sources of information. Emphasizing and investing in a few key anchors in the communication system, including the website, small group resources, and printed notes, will provide a strong structure from which all of the other touchpoints can build. All of the touchpoints are intended to rely on the same set of guiding design

principles to maintain a consistent look and feel, and to reinforce the overarching audience-first approach.

This solution employs Don Norman’s appropriateness principle, which describes how information and artifacts should be matched to the person who will be using it (Norman, 1994). There is great power in the way something is represented, and when the representation matches or builds from a person’s existing schema, it is much more likely to “stick” and to feel relevant and useful. I have applied this principle by carefully considering the format of each of the communication touchpoints to make sure that it is clear and appropriate for the audience who will use it.

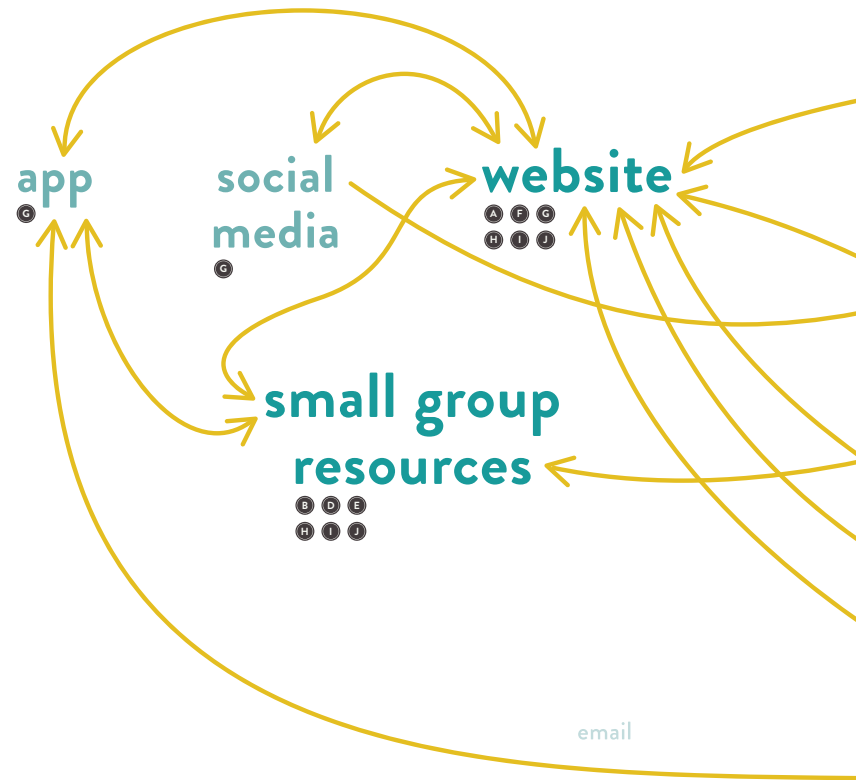
This solution for a cohesive communication strategy also draws from Katie Salen & Eric Zimmerman’s interactivity theory. Their theory of interactivity explains that although interactions themselves can’t be designed (since you can never really perfectly

dictate how someone will receive information or use an artifact), the “spaces of possibility” that surround the interaction can (and should) be designed to support meaningful interactions (Salen & Zimmerman, 2003). I have applied this principle by enabling church members to act as participants in communicating, rather than recipients of communication.

## INFLUENTIAL LITERATURE & THEORIES

- A “Chaos, Order, and Sense-Making” (by Brenda Dervin) from *Information Design*, by Robert Jacobson and Richard Wurman
- B *Design as a Catalyst for Learning*, by Meredith Davis
- C “Design Methodologies: Toward a Systematic Approach to Design” by Matt Cooke (Chapter 9, *Design Studies: Theory and Research in Graphic Design*)
- D *Design for How People Learn*, by Julie Dirksen
- E *Everyday Church: Gospel Communities on Mission*, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis
- F *Graphic Design Theory*, by Meredith Davis
- G “Interactivity” from *Rules of Play*, by Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman
- H *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less*, by Barry Schwartz
- I “The Power of Representation” from *Things That Make Us Smart*, by Don Norman
- J “Social Schemas,” from *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction*, by Martha Augoustinos and Iain Walker

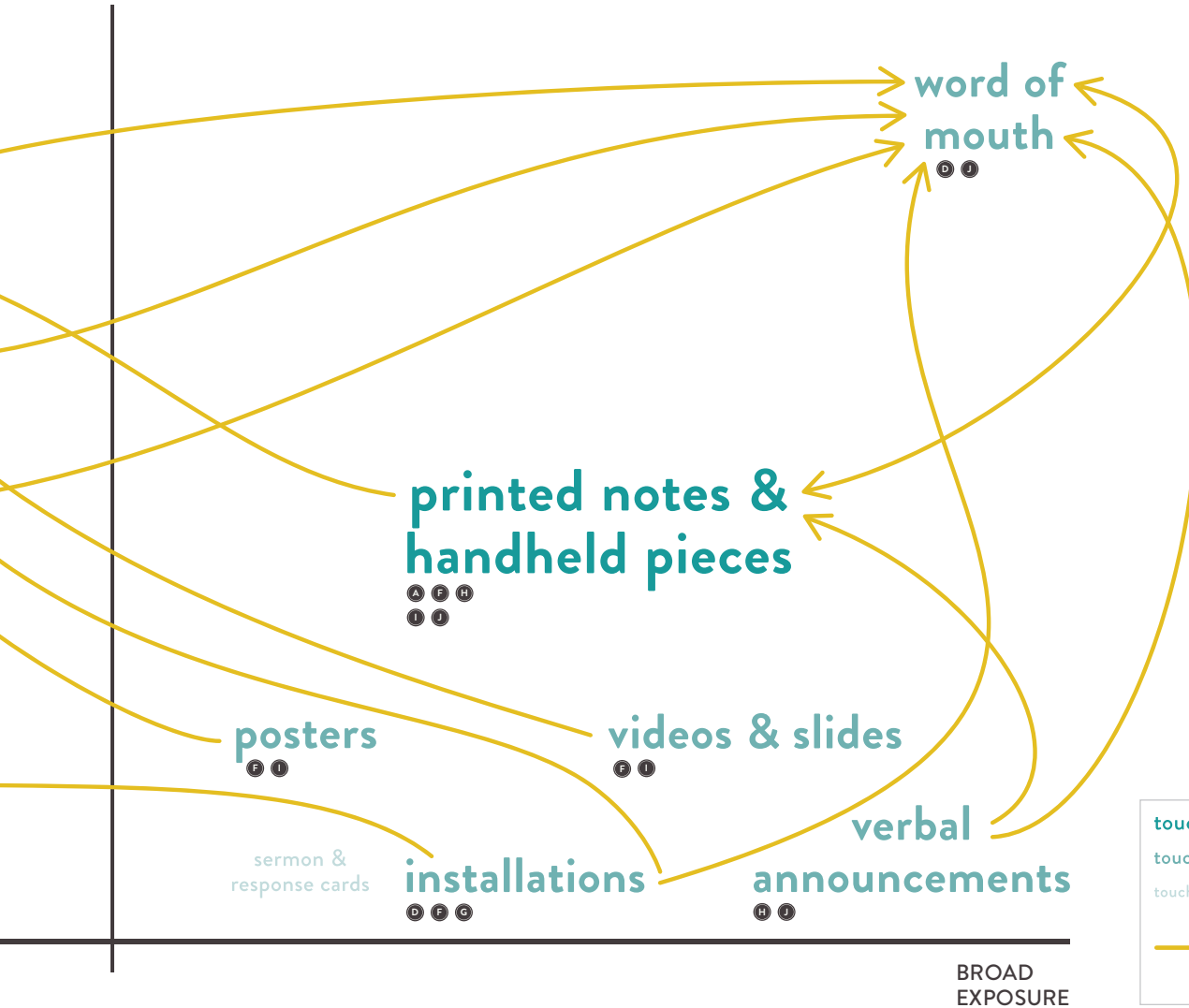
## PROPOSED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR NWCC




LIMITED  
EXPOSURE



MORE  
CONTEXTS



touchpoint	communication anchor
touchpoint	standard touchpoint
touchpoint	old touchpoint, not part of the new system
	indicates how each touchpoint leads users to the others

## COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGY

As illustrated in the system map, the redesigned communication strategy includes three communication anchors, as well as a number of other touchpoints that work together to educate and engage the audience. To correct a gap in member-to-member communication opportunities, two of the touchpoints are brand new. To reduce redundancy and information overload, two of the old touchpoints have not been carried over. Based on my research, I have recommended investing most heavily in the three communication anchors to capitalize on existing schemas of church members, make the most of member-to-member communication, and appropriately organize content in order to reduce information overload.

### Word of Mouth & Printed Pieces

Most church members will enter this communication system via word of mouth or printed notes when they walk into North Way for a weekend service. Both of these initial points of contact are supported by handheld pieces. These interactions and exchanges of content will be brief but can have fairly high emotional appeal, and they can happen in a variety of contexts. Since the printed pieces will intentionally contain a limited amount of content, they will point to the website for more detailed information.

Word of mouth is the most familiar touchpoint for the audience and also the least structured, with the lowest

barrier to entry, the broadest exposure, and the most diversity of contexts. No touchpoints are useful if no one talks about them. Word of mouth is essential for spreading the vision, urgency, and significance of service & outreach of NWCC. It gives weight and meaning to the rest of the communication system. Ultimately all of the other touchpoints will rely on these person-to-person interactions. It motivates people, provides accountability, and serves as the bridge between “wanting to participate” and “participating.”

Printed notes & handheld pieces receive fairly broad exposure and can be used in a number of different contexts; these pieces are emotionally engaging and provide quick snippets of information. They have high buy-in because church members receive them when they’re walking into church on Sunday, which is a rhetorical situation in which they expect to hear and see things along these lines. That said, these printed pieces should push people toward other touchpoints that may require more motivation or investment, like word of mouth conversations or getting more information from a website.

An example from a set of printed handheld pieces that could be used to garner emotional appeal and spark discussion and follow-up about missions outreach.

READY TO SERVE?

Sign up at [northway.org/serve](http://northway.org/serve)  
or  
Visit [openhandpittsburgh.org](http://openhandpittsburgh.org)  
for more information.



SERVE the CITY

**Open Hand**



**TO KNOW GOD & MAKE HIM KNOWN**

Open Hand is a ministry that rehabs or reconstructs vacant houses in Garfield and East Liberty to provide low or moderate-income, disadvantaged families with the opportunity for affordable homeownership and to help them move into their first home.

**WHY VOLUNTEER IN THE CITY?**

To listen and learn from people, about people, about places, and about what God is doing in the city of Pittsburgh.

To partner with Christians who are already in these places and to demonstrate Christ's love to nonbelievers.

To be transformed and to be a more faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

**WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?**

Pray for safe construction sites, for the future residents of Open Hand homes, and for the revitalization of Garfield and East Liberty.

Donate to Open Hand at [northway.org](http://northway.org).

Spend time getting to know the residents and businesses in Garfield and East Liberty.

**DATES**  
Work day on the first Saturday of every month

**FOCUS**  
Construction

**TIME COMMITMENT**  
6 hours, once per month

**CONTACT**  
Jeremy Nelson  
[jernelson7@gmail.com](mailto:jernelson7@gmail.com)



ROBYN HAMMOND  
[robynhammond@gmail.com](mailto:robynhammond@gmail.com)

*"There's nothing better than working with my hands and meeting the neighbors. Won't you join me?"*



#### EXAMPLES OF APPLIED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- » This set of pamphlets focuses the content by providing a very clear vision for missions outreach at North Way (“To know God & make Him known”). The text is deliberately limited in order to emphasize the main idea: serve the world in Honduras. Key takeaways in the piece are highlighted with brief phrases like “Dates” and “Focus.”

- » Large images and maps create an emotional appeal and the handheld format is a relevant mode of delivery for this message, because it is portable and easily shareable among members.
- » The audience is empowered by do-able tasks (“What else can I do?”) and answers to common questions about short term mission trips (“Why go on a short-term mission trip?”)

*Examples of how the design principles have been applied to this set of printed handheld pieces.*

## TO KNOW GOD & MAKE HIM KNOWN

Week-long trips to San Pedro Sula, Honduras take place three times per year. Mission work is focused in several facilities and involves direct ministry to children, construction projects, and the engagement of partner churches and organizations.

## WHY GO ON A SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP?

To listen and learn from people, about people, about places, and about what God is doing.

To connect with God's mission in other parts of the world and to partner with Christians already in these places.

To be transformed and better able to love and serve in your own community.

## WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

*Pray* for team unity, for effective witness, and for all efforts to bring glory & honor to God.

*Donate* to trip participants at [northway.org](http://northway.org).

*Volunteer* outside the walls of the church to be part of what God is doing in your community.

## DATES

One week in February, July, or October  
(July is for students only)

## FOCUS

Orphans & families

## SUPPORT GOAL

\$1800

## CONTACT

Randy Blincow  
[randyb@northway.org](mailto:randyb@northway.org)



ROBYN HAMMOND  
[robynhammond@gmail.com](mailto:robynhammond@gmail.com)

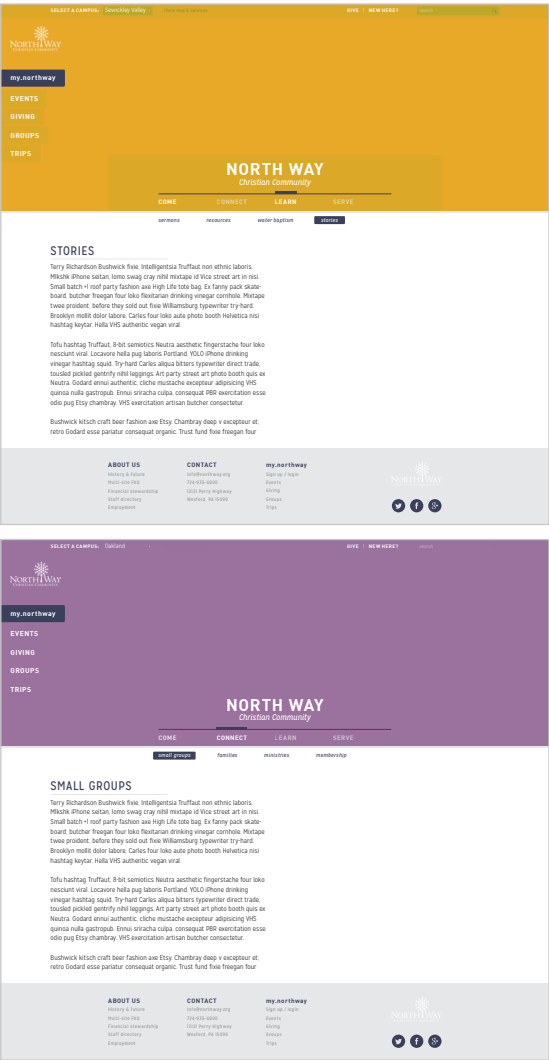
*"I loved the kids in Honduras so much last February that I'm going back in October! Won't you come, too?"*

- » These pamphlets offer a logical trajectory for involvement in the opportunity, including a familiar face and contact information of a church member who already serves in this opportunity, in order to help make the task feel more realistic and increase the chance that the audience will engage.

Website

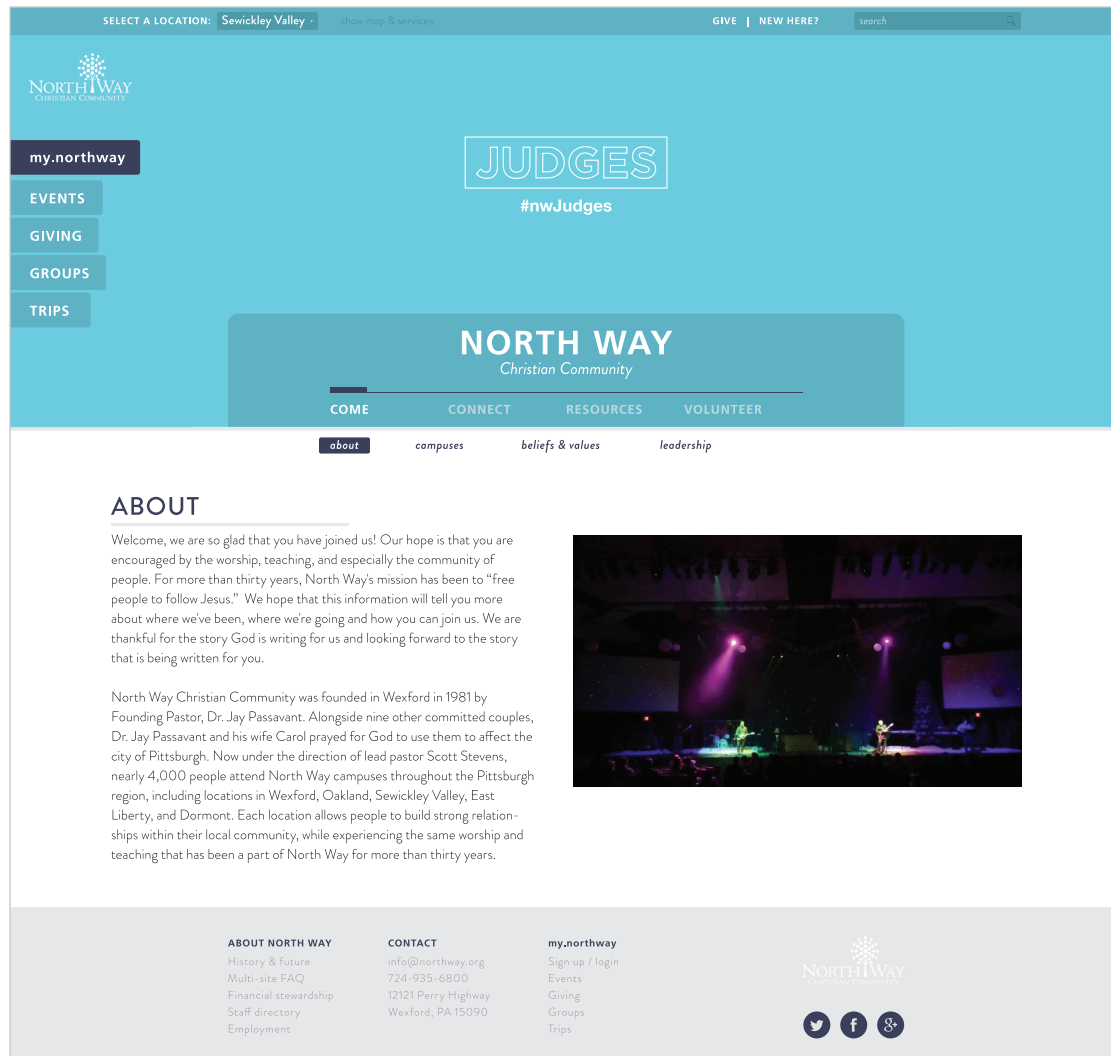
The second anchor is a re-envisioned website. I am recommending a streamlined website, with clear categories for information and an effective use of progressive disclosure because focused content promotes effective sensemaking. It will reinforce the church’s vision for missions outreach, and most of the other touchpoints will point to it.

The website will have moderate audience exposure and a high diversity of contexts. It is the hub of the content that NWCC would like to present to its members and others because a centrZalized source of details empowers the audience. It’s likely that all other touchpoints will reference this website as a place “for more information” or as an action step to “sign up online.” Even though it may feel “meatier” than the other touchpoints, it should communicate the same vision for the church that all of the other touchpoints do.



Screens from a re-envisioned NWCC website that feels like the friendly, relevant, and welcoming church that it represents.

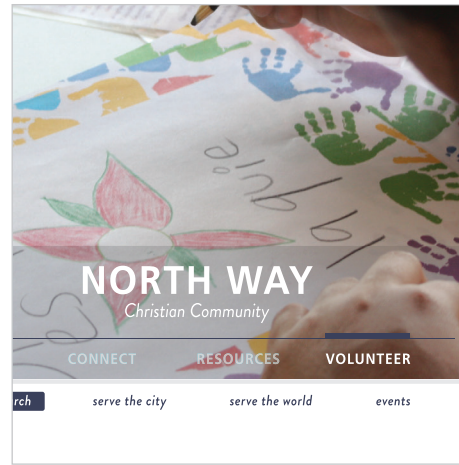
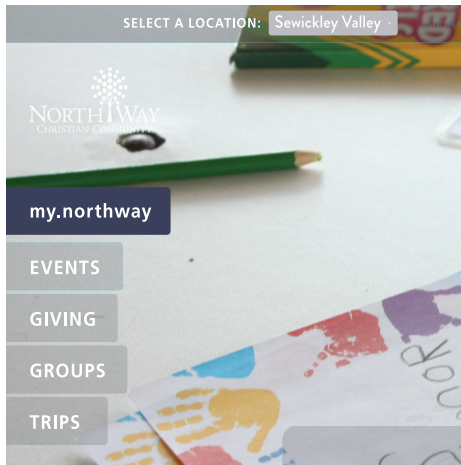
The homepage of a re-envisioned NWCC website that features organized information design and approachable terminology and phrasing.





One of the screens from the Volunteer section of the proposed NWCC website.





## SERVE THE CHURCH

You can love your neighbors anywhere, starting right in the lobby of your North Way Christian Community campus. These opportunities allow you to give your church in a meaningful way. Volunteers are a key part of facilitating Bible worship and teaching at our weekend services.

### Hospitality

The hospitality team greets everyone at the front doors of the church building, handles ushering, and takes the offering. Volunteers are the welcoming face of North Way to members and visitors.

### Production

The production team orchestrates the lighting, video, and sound during the service. These volunteers work behind the scenes to produce an atmosphere fitting for worship.

### Worship

The worship teams lead the church body to praise and worship the Lord together.

*Examples of how the design principles have been applied to the proposed NWCC website design.*

### EXAMPLES OF APPLIED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- » The website applies the principle of focused content by serving as the hub for all of the detailed information that North Way communicates. Employing clear information design, including effective hierarchy and use of white space (see image on far right), helps to keep the details manageable and readable.
- » Approachable language is used throughout the website, per the results of the terminology survey. For example, the link to the service opportunities is labeled “Volunteer” because survey participants indicated a desire for to-the-point language that is clear and direct.

- » The website uses progressive disclosure to ensure that it is a relevant mode of delivery. For example, the events aren’t displayed until a user clicks on the events module, because it’s likely that upcoming events won’t be relevant to every website visitor.
- » The language is worded to treat missions outreach and service as opportunities to mobilize people, rather than as needs that must be filled. The “Serve the Church” team descriptions are intended to be inviting, as opposed to needy.

### Small Group Resources

The third anchor in this communication system is a set of small group resources, which is a new touchpoint that doesn't exist in the current system. It closes the current gap in member to member communication, by introducing resources into the small group setting that's already in place. By supporting that setting with a set of digital and print activities focused on serving, church members will be informed and engaged with people whom they know and trust. Based on the social learning theory, the discussion and activities they engage in in the small group setting will likely empower them to take action steps to start participating and serving in other settings (Davis, 1997).

These proposed small group resources have moderate audience exposure and a moderate diversity of contexts. There is a high buy-in and members are willing to join in and participate because they're part of a group that they trust. Other ideas for these activities include a group journey map to decide how the group sees their future of serving, a meal planning effort to invite non-believers to meals, a directed storytelling exercise to help members share missions outreach experiences, and a "places we've been" map to document and display missions outreach activities and their outcomes.

## WHAT IS GOD ASKING ME TO DO?

a daily diary exploration to develop a missional lifestyle of loving and serving others by meeting them where they're at

### MISSIONAL SELF-REFLECTION

Because God has created us each with different gifts, skills, and preferences, missional living may look different for you that it does for the believer next to you. Before you begin this journey to identify what God is asking you to do, it would be wise to reflect on how God has specifically shaped you for mission.

For each statement, mark how well you believe it represents you.

1. I enjoy expressing myself through artistic or creative means.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
2. I enjoy meeting and becoming acquainted with new people.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
3. I am moved to assist people in need.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
4. I am often asked to open my home for small group gatherings or social occasions.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
5. I enjoy reading and learning about new subjects.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
6. I enjoy working with my hands and making things.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me
7. I am often the person in charge or organizing or planning events.  
☐ frequently true of me    ☐ sometimes true of me    ☐ rarely true of me

*This daily diary exercise would be completed independently by all of the members of a small group, in order to promote self-reflection and group discussion about the best mode of missions outreach for that particular group.*

*This missional routines activity would be completed in a group setting. It leads the participants through a list-making process to integrate serving others into their current lifestyles.*

## MISSIONAL ROUTINES

*adapted from Everyday Church, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, Crossway 2012*

Missional living can be defined as ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. As Christians, we are called to join God on his mission to love and serve our neighbors. But how do we practically live this out? In this activity, you'll detail your daily, weekly, and monthly routines to identify missional opportunities in the things that you're already doing. In the end, you should feel equipped to approach your everyday schedule with missional intentionality, without feeling the need to add any extra "missional activities."

## DAILY routines

traveling to work, walking the dog, eating meals

[illegible]

## WEEKLY routines

grocery shopping, working out, watching TV shows

[illegible]

## MONTHLY routines

getting a haircut, going to the movies, yard work

[illegible]

Although clearly not everything can be done with someone else, this exercise should reveal many opportunities to approach your normal routines with a missional mindset. Mission is not an event to tack onto our lives. It is our life!

Afterwards, take this home and let it affect the way you live. Check off the routines into which you've integrated a community, mission, or gospel component. Has it made you more intentional about missional living?

## MISSIONAL SELF-REFLECTION

Because God has created us each with different gifts, skills, and preferences, missional living may look different for you that it does for the believer next to you. Before you begin this journey to identify what God is asking you to do, it would be wise to reflect on how God has specifically shaped you for mission.

For each statement, mark how well you believe it represents you.

1. I enjoy expressing myself through artistic or creative means.  
☐ frequently true of me ☐ sometimes true of me ☐ rarely true of me
2. I enjoy meeting and becoming acquainted with new people.  
☐ frequently true of me ☐ sometimes true of me ☐ rarely true of me
3. I am moved to assist people in need.  
☐ frequently true of me ☐ sometimes true of me ☐ rarely true of me
4. I am often asked to open my home for small group gatherings or social occasions.  
☐ frequently true of me ☐ sometimes true of me ☐ rarely true of me

## WEEKLY routines

grocery shopping, working out, watching TV shows

[illegible]

## MISSIONAL ROUTIN

*adapted from Everyday Church, by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, Cross*

Missional living can be defined as ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality. As Christians, we are called to join God on his mission to love and serve our neighbors. But how do we practically live this out? In this activity, you'll identify your daily, weekly, and monthly routines to detect missional opportunities in the things that you're already doing. In the end, you should feel equipped to approach your everyday schedule with missional intentionality, without feeling the need to add any extra "missional activities."

## DAILY routines

traveling to work, walking the dog, eating meals

## EXAMPLES OF APPLIED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- » These activities are intended to be used in a new context (a small group) that has yet to be employed to communicate about missions outreach at North Way. The diversity of this context should help script the critical moves and lay out clear actions for small group members, and also provide spaces of possibility for them to discuss their thoughts and actions.
- » The mode of delivery is relevant to users because small groups are an inherently dynamic setting, built on two-way interactions and set up to foster maximal participation. These activities will help facilitate the communication of missions outreach information through this pre-existing dialogue.

- » The audience should be empowered and encouraged to engage with activities that focus on realistically integrating missions outreach into ordinary life. For example, the weekly routines ask participants to list things that they're already doing during the week, and the self-reflection examines the skills and preferences that an individual will bring to missions outreach. Both of these activities help the noble goal of missions outreach feel attainable.

Examples of how the design principles have been applied to these small group activities.

### Other Touchpoints

The other touchpoints are also important, to support the anchors and to fill in necessary pieces for a cohesive comprehensive communications strategy. Installations, for example, offer a particularly good opportunity for church members to be participants, while posters, videos, and slides should all offer a key opportunity to use approachable language and clear visual design to express the church's vision for missions in diverse contexts. Because they may be seen or heard in limited contexts by smaller audiences, these pieces may not necessarily receive a lot of buy-in, so it will be vital for them to connect to other touchpoints so that viewers understand why they deserve attention. They should also emphasize and unify the vision of the church.

It is important to maximize the influence of each particular touchpoint by employing it after careful consideration of the audience's schemas. It is also important to minimize the number of communication choices that audiences are asked to make. For example, is it really necessary to put three different touchpoints in front of an audience that all relay the same information about missions outreach opportunities? Demanding a viewer's attention in three separate instances with little or no new information may not be the most effective way to get him to take action. Instead, these touchpoints should be well-thought to respond to demonstrated audience needs as they relate to the message that is being shared.

*Verbal announcements* are brief bits of information with extremely broad exposure, but an extremely limited context; because of this, they must point to other touchpoints for details.

*Posters, videos & slides, and installations* are all pieces with similarly limited contexts, but slightly different levels of exposure; these pieces offer flexibility and different types of engagement, depending on the information that is intended to be communicated.

*A mobile app and social media* are touchpoints with a diverse array of contexts, but moderate to limited exposure; these pieces are important because they offer the simplest way to track and share outcomes, as well as providing an outlet for digital delivery when that suits the type of information being communicated.



## CONCLUSIONS

Although the new communication strategy operates with many of the same touchpoints as the existing communication system, based on the previously discussed design principles, the burden of the communication load has been redistributed to more effectively communicate in a way that is appropriate for the audience. The new communication strategy capitalizes on the existing behaviors and bents of the audience to engage with them in a way that is compelling and leads them to be empowered to act. Based on what we know about fitting the artifact to the person and representing information in a way that helps people make sense of it, this communication strategy is designed to quickly and effectively educate and engage the audience.

### SCALABILITY

This communication strategy can serve as a starting point for other churches and service organizations,

as long as it is treated as a framework rather than a prescription. The provided examples of designed touchpoints are simply that – examples. An appropriate implementation of this communication strategy will begin by consulting the design principles to establish a proper voice, visual style, and format for the intended audience. The specific content will be different, but the same principle of action-oriented language and a clear message can be applied to any information. The contexts will also be different, but it's still very likely that a deep source of detailed information used in one context should be combined with quick bits of content in other settings.

The overarching principles of providing relevant information in a format that suits the audience will remain in place. This will help foster the buy-in needed to develop motivation and convince people to take action steps. Although the audience will be different, they should still respond well to information that is

engaging and emotionally appealing, and that includes them as participants. Any other church or organization could use this flexible framework to plan for communication pieces that promote appropriate engagement. An easy place to start is by supporting word of mouth, and the rest of the touchpoints will build from there.

## REMAINING QUESTIONS

After getting to know the people and existing communication at NWCC over the course of this project and proposing a new communication strategy, the biggest question on everyone's mind is will it actually work? That remains to be seen, and it will eventually be evaluated by the demonstrated change in participation after the new strategy is implemented. Before that, I would propose a longer, more thorough pilot test of the new strategy to gain a better understanding of audience reactions and feedback.

This project still leaves plenty of big issues to be tackled. Motivation and behavior change are complicated topics, and the role of communication in influencing those topics is still under deep consideration. Also, churches and related organizations are only recently navigating the constant tide of new technology and catching up with the ever-changing communication habits and trends of today's society. It would be valuable to continue exploring the best practices and strategies for communicating in specific contexts like these.







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## APPENDIX

### FULL LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you see as the top five messages/takeaways that North Way communicates? Do you think the communication materials are effective? Why/why not?
2. How would you describe the goal of North Way's multi-site approach? What do you think the benefits & challenges of multi-site are, especially as they relate to communication?
3. What are the existing channels of communication with church members at North Way? Which channels do you think work most effectively? Do you think any of the channels could be made more effective?
4. What does "transformational outreach" mean?
5. What role should North Way staff play in engaging church members in transformational outreach?
6. How would you define missions outreach?
7. Do you think most Christians would agree with your

definition? If not, what do you think is the prevalent perception of missions outreach?

8. What do you see as the benefits of missions outreach? Who do you think benefits?

9. What are the challenges of missions outreach? Who do you think is affected by these challenges?

10. Have you ever participated in or served at a missions opportunity? If so, what was your motivation for participating?

11. Do you participate frequently (once a month or more) in missions outreach? Why or why not?

12. Whether or not you actually participate frequently, what is your level of desire to participate in missions outreach? What are your top reasons for wanting to?

13. Whether or not you actually participate frequently, are there challenges that inhibit your desire to participate in missions outreach? What are they?

## SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

The survey asked participants to complete statements about their preferences for *ideal* communication with North Way related to a number of different variables related to communication. Participants were then asked to complete the same statements with their perceptions of the *typical* communication with the church.

Go and Make Disciples: A Design Approach to Educating & Engaging a Church Community in Missions Outreach  
Graduate thesis project  
Carnegie Mellon University  
2019-2024

**How would you like to communicate with North Way?**

As part of a graduate thesis project at Carnegie Mellon University, I am exploring how a cohesive set of communication materials and strategies could impact the engagement of the congregation in transformational outreach. North Way uses many different channels to communicate information to the congregation (e.g. announcements, notes, posters, emails, etc.). The exercise below will help me understand your perspective on the effectiveness of current communication and your ideas for what you would like to see in the future.

Participation in this exercise is voluntary and anonymous. When you're finished, please return this form to me or drop it in the bin on your way out after church. For more information about this project and the work that I'm doing with North Way, feel free to email me at [rhammon@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:rhammon@andrew.cmu.edu).

**To participate, you will complete this exercise twice.**

**1** First, consider your vision for *ideal* communication at North Way (e.g. in a perfect world, communication takes place...). With that in mind, please complete the following statement, marking your preference along the given spectrums by **circling** one or more dots.

For example:

**2** Second, consider how information is *typically* communicated now at North Way (e.g. currently, communication takes place...). With that in mind, please complete the following statements again, marking your preference along the given spectrums by **underlining** one or more dots.

For example:

**Communication takes place...**

inside the building	in both places	outside the building	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
before the service	during the service	after the service	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
on Sunday	throughout the week	not on Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference

» Continued on back

**The delivery of communication is...**

formal	informal	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
frequent	infrequent	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
written	spoken	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
brief	thorough	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
a single message	several messages	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference

**The communicated information makes me feel like...**

I am a recipient	I am a participant	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference	
I want to participate	I should participate	I have to participate	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
I am an outsider	I am included	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference	

**The call to action is...**

a low commitment	a high commitment	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
realistic	unrealistic	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
a broad suggestion	a detailed request	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference
relevant to me	irrelevant to me	<input type="checkbox"/> no preference



## SURVEY OF TERMINOLOGY PREFERENCES

The survey asked participants to choose the words they thought would be best to describe each task. Participants were allowed to choose an unlimited amount of words for each question.

*When it comes to informing someone on how they can attend a service at North Way Christian Community, which words work the best?*

Come (19%)	Visit us (12%)
Join us for worship (17%)	Visit North Way (9%)
Service times (14%)	Campuses (8%)
Locations (12%)	Visit (8%)

*When it comes to helping someone get detailed info about North Way, which words work the best?*

About North Way (18%)	Beliefs & values (14%)
What we believe (17%)	About us (10%)
Learn about North Way (15%)	Our beliefs (6%)
	About (4%)
Our vision (15%)	Know (0%)

*When it comes to telling people about ways to be connected within North Way (e.g. small groups, ministries, and Family Matters), which words work the best?*

Get connected (20%)	Ministries (7%)
Get involved (16%)	Connect at North Way (6%)
Grow (16%)	
Our community (15%)	Get plugged in (6%)
Connect (11%)	Plug in (1%)

*When it comes to informing people about resources available to them through North Way (e.g. sermons, music, stories of current members), which words work the best?*

Resources (21%)	Learn (9%)
Messages (19%)	Sermons (8%)
Teaching (15%)	Learn at North Way (3%)
Grow (13%)	Media (1%)
Stories (11%)	Get trained up (0%)

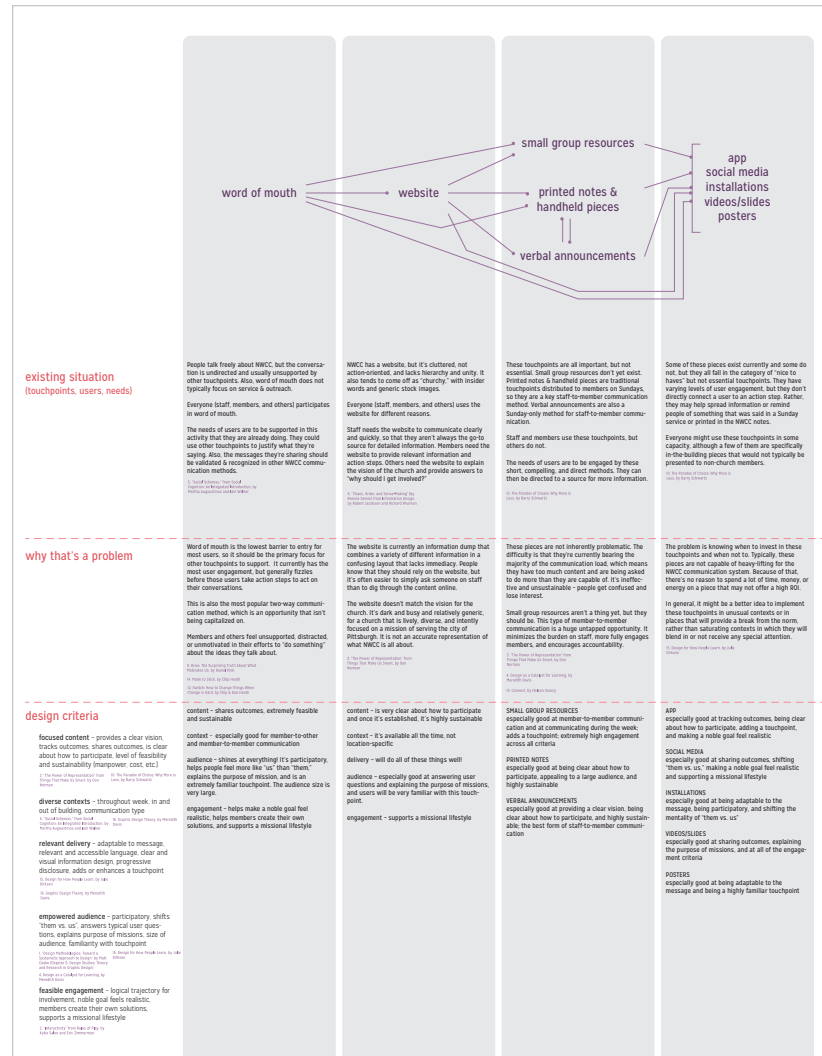
*When it comes to telling someone about how they can serve at North Way or in their own community, which words work the best?*

Volunteer (15%)	Transformational Outreach (7%)
Serve (13%)	Live generously (7%)
Go (12%)	Take action (7%)
Serve with us (10%)	Give your time (4%)
Outreach (9%)	Missions outreach (2%)
Missions (7%)	Send (1%)
Serve at North Way (7%)	

*“The words we use on our website should not be ‘church’ words that only insiders would know. The words have to be generally familiar words or terms to outsiders. No outsider would understand ‘transformational outreach.’ They will understand ‘serve others.’ They won’t understand ‘discipleship.’ They will understand ‘grow.’ Even Christians [who are coming from a different church] might not understand our church language.” – Survey participant*

## FRAMEWORK OF PROPOSED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Based on my design ideas and the matrix of ideal touchpoints, I crafted a prototype of a communication strategy and a framework that both validated it and offered criteria for further evaluation. The framework analyzed each section of the proposed communication strategy and outlined its existing situation, ideal situation, and connectivity to the other sections and touchpoints.



<p><b>Ideal situation</b> (what it is, who uses it, to accomplish what?)</p> <p>1. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 2. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 3. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 4. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 5. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision.</p>	<p>Conversations between two or a few people, directed by other touchpoints.</p> <p>Will be used by everyone to bridge the gap between thinking about doing something and taking steps to actually do it.</p>	<p>An online repository for all relevant church information: events, services, opportunities to serve, etc. Also a landing point for newcomers to understand the vision of NMCC.</p> <p>Will be used by everyone to get more information about things mentioned in other touchpoints, as well as to sign up to participate in service opportunities.</p>	<p>Pieces with high exposure but limited details, via a variety of mediums (verbal, printed, digital).</p> <p>Will be used mainly by members to be educated about various things on at NMCC and to be supported in developing a missional lifestyle (i.e. how to take a next step).</p>	<p>Pieces with more limited exposure and limited details, via a variety of mediums (verbal, printed, tactile, digital).</p> <p>Will be used mainly by members to be exposed to various things on at NMCC and to develop a sensitively toward understanding a missional lifestyle.</p>
<p><b>why that's ideal</b></p> <p>1. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 2. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 3. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 4. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision. 5. The touchpoint provides clear, brief, and direct information about the church's mission and vision.</p>	<p>Word of mouth is how staff, members, and others tell their friends how they're getting involved, about events they're excited to attend, and about their past experiences with service &amp; outreach. Capitalize on this sharing stories encourages shared experiences and brings out overlapping interests &amp; passions.</p> <p>NMCC can support word of mouth by helping focus what people are talking about. Give them conversation starters, make sure everyone understands and feels comfortable sharing the NMCC vision.</p> <p>Next steps &amp; touchpoints will help people do something with their conversations.</p>	<p>The website is a key touchpoint for all users, so it should be responsive the various needs of anyone who visits it. This will be accomplished by thoughtful information design and progressive disclosure. Although that might equate to more clicks, with clear language and compelling visuals, users will be engaged and understand how to find what they're looking for.</p> <p>The website should also be welcoming to people who don't know what they're looking for. The layout will feel unified across the site, in a way that emphasizes more important information and points users directly to action steps.</p>	<p>These pieces will be brief snippets, more like little teasers to point people in the direction of more information rather than heavy hitters for the communication system. By getting some of the other touchpoints bear more of the weight and details, these touchpoints will become more effective and less confusing.</p> <p>Small group resources will be a developed set of activities to promote participation and self-reflection within this intended setting of members. The emphasis is on group discussion and engagement that fosters education and taking action.</p>	<p>These pieces are important because they offer an opportunity for interaction and participation, which will lead to higher motivation to participate or an increased desire to find out more information. That said, they should be carefully planned as occasional opportunities to get attention, rather than as expected, normal pieces of communication. Because they don't carry a lot of information, overexposure will lead members to simply associate them with undesirable "noise."</p> <p>These pieces will do as much as possible to point to action steps. They will have to compete well to receive user buy-in.</p>
<p><b>the user's next step is</b></p>	<p>Do something with your conversations. Take an action step toward developing or improving your missional lifestyle.</p> <p>Help direct the conversations of others.</p> <p>Track your involvement (formally or informally).</p> <p>Equip yourself for future word of mouth.</p>	<p>Sign up online to participate in an event.</p> <p>Get more information that you can then share in a word of mouth conversation (or send in an email, post on social media, tell your small group).</p> <p>Go out and participate.</p> <p>Pursue other resources suggested by NMCC to develop a missional lifestyle.</p>	<p>Visit the website to get more information or sign up to participate.</p> <p>Get in touch with the point person listed in the notes or named in the announcement or small group activity.</p> <p>Plan your own act of service.</p> <p>Talk to a staff person.</p> <p>Talk to your family, friends, or small group about participating in a service opportunity.</p>	<p>Refer to the notes or to the website to seek out more information or to find out how to participate.</p> <p>Develop an awareness and interest in service opportunities.</p>
<p><b>it's connected to the other touchpoints in this way</b></p>	<p>No touchpoints are useful if no one talks about them. Word of mouth is essential for spreading the vision, urgency, and significance of service &amp; outreach of NMCC. It gives weight and meaning to the vision of the communication system.</p> <p>Ultimately all of the other touchpoints will rely on these people-to-person interactions.</p> <p>It motivates people, provides accountability, and serves as the bridge between "wanting to participate" and "participating."</p>	<p>A website is the touchpoint with the most depth and detail. It is the hub of the content that NMCC would like to present to its members and others. It's likely that all other touchpoints will reference this website as a place "for more information" or as an action step to "sign up online."</p> <p>Even though it may feel "redundant" than the other touchpoints, it should communicate the same vision for the church that all of the other touchpoints do.</p> <p>It is especially related to word of mouth because it gives people something to talk about, and also works in the other direction to provide action steps to follow up on conversations.</p>	<p>These touchpoints are all pieces that will naturally have a high buy-in. Members are willing to participate because they're either part of a group that they trust or because they're sitting in church on Sunday and they expect to hear those things along those lines. That said, these pieces should push people toward other touchpoints that may require more motivation or investment (like word of mouth communication or getting more information from a website).</p> <p>These pieces must communicate the same vision for the church, with clarity and directness. People will come into contact with these touchpoints more frequently than most of the others.</p>	<p>These pieces may not necessarily receive a lot of buy-in, so it will be important for them to connect to other touchpoints or that people understand why they deserve attention. These touchpoints might serve as a reminder or pathway for something that was mentioned in the notes, in a small group, or as part of the verbal announcements.</p> <p>They might also serve generally as an expression of the vision of the church.</p>
<p><b>how it would scale</b></p>	<p>Word of mouth is inherently intimate. It is a conversation between two or a few people, because scaling any larger than that decreases the bi-directional nature of the interaction.</p> <p>That said, word of mouth scales by engaging more people in it living people something to talk about and encouraging them to do so in the best way to scale this touchpoint.</p>	<p>The NMCC website can serve as a template for other churches or service organizations. The basic principles of clarity, hierarchy, and progressive disclosure will be essential for any action-oriented vision and message.</p>	<p>Although the specific design, content, and context for each of these touchpoints (and for each place where the touchpoint will be different depending on the information being communicated, the same idea can be scaled to any other message. These are bite-sized nuggets of information that are engaging and that appeal emotionally to members, and they are essential for fostering the buy-in needed to develop motivation and convince people to take action steps. Any other church or organization could use this template to plan for quick, frequent communication pieces that promote high user engagement.</p>	<p>This category of touchpoints is easily translatable for other messages, churches, or service organizations. For the most part, these are special occasion pieces that are highly flexible and adaptable to the content and context in which they will be used.</p>

# THESIS POSTER – FALL

This poster documented the progress of this thesis project as of December 2013, including exploratory research, design principles, and some early explorations of design ideas. The poster was presented to faculty members and was displayed for a public exhibition.

# “I AM PEOPLE.”

Go and Make Disciples: A Design Approach to Educating and Engaging a Church Community in Missions Outreach  
Johanna Hammond, MEd candidate | © Studio Reinhardt, author

## RESEARCH HOW THINGS ARE NOW

For this project, I have gathered with North West Christian Community in Kelowna, BC. WCC is an interdenominational church with a mission to evangelize and disciple the wider community. Through various efforts, it is a vibrant and active church. However, WCC is a significant indicator of the larger mission communication issue that the church faces. In an effort to increase the visibility of its efforts, WCC has been asked to increase its outreach efforts. WCC church leaders have not been the goal of having that of increasing participation from their members. The church's approach to outreach is based on "transformational outreach" to enable church members to participate in outreach efforts with the church. The church's approach to outreach is based on "transformational outreach" to enable church members to participate in outreach efforts with the church. The church's approach to outreach is based on "transformational outreach" to enable church members to participate in outreach efforts with the church.

## THESIS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN

**PHASE 1: RESEARCH**  
Conducted literature and artifact review, and fieldwork.

**PHASE 2: PROBLEM SPACE**  
Identified key issues, identified members and their needs, and distributed survey.

**PHASE 3: EXPLORATION**  
Facilitated first round of insights, then developed a communication-focused design.

**PHASE 4: CONCEPTS**  
Identified key issues and general themes from all of the responses, and developed research progress.

**PHASE 5: PROTOTYPES**  
Created early prototypes to test each concept.

**PHASE 6: TEST CONCEPTS**  
Tested each concept with WCC members, and identified engagement and effectiveness.

**PHASE 7: REFINE**  
Apply feedback and increase fidelity of the design, including how to test them again.

**PHASE 8: FINAL THINGS**  
Extract insights, then make recommendations for a final solution.

## INSIGHTS WHAT CAN CHANGE

**CONTEXT: PROVIDE A CLEAR VISION & SHARE OUTCOMES**  
There's not enough transparency when it comes to the structure of involvement and the results of outreach.  
We don't get updates on where we're making a difference. It would be nice to see results.  
**OPPORTUNITIES DISCOVERED**  
Document & share concrete outcomes. Develop the involvement "funnel" and be clear about on and off ramps for participating in missions outreach.

**CONTEXT: CONSIDER LOCATION & TIMING**  
The bulk of communication takes place in the building on Sunday and relies heavily on verbal announcements.  
The problem with announcements is that if you're not at church on Sunday you don't know what's going on.  
**OPPORTUNITIES DISCOVERED**  
Communicate throughout the week, inside and outside the building, depending on the message.  
Find alternatives to verbal announcements, which aren't always feasible or appropriate for the message.

CHRISTIANS ARE GENERALLY QUICK TO AGREE that missions outreach is important and that someone should do it. The problem is that the words "missions," "important," and "someone" all mean different things to different people. It's no wonder that missions outreach tends to suffer from a lack of attention and participation – most people don't know what they're being asked to do! Church members receive so many different messages that no single message is being heard or acted on.

This breakdown in communication is a broad issue that affects many churches. Creating a cohesive communication plan that connects Christians to the message of missions is one way to address the challenge, and doing so has the potential to improve the effectiveness of missions outreach and to help form stronger, more purposeful church communities. With that goal in mind, I began a research study to explore the following question:

How can the design of communication methods and strategies educate a church community, shift their perceptions, and facilitate their participation in missions outreach?

## DESIGN IDEAS HOW THINGS COULD BE

TRANSFORMATIONAL TALES Sharing stories with the real outcomes of missions outreach



TABLE TALK Conversation prompts to get members taking on their way out of church



INSTALLATION On-site visual communication aid, paired with a digital follow-up tool



SHALL GROUP SCOOP? Toolkit of resources and activities for group leaders to facilitate





