



- 8 Denominations
- 7,000 Congregations in Rural, Urban, and Suburban Areas Across NY
- Helping Congregations since the late 19th Century to advocate for the poor and disenfranchised and in the process become healthier and more vital communities of faith.
 - Social Justice and Public Policy
 - Certification and Support of Prison Chaplains
 - Community Development and Affordable Housing
- The Reverend Peter Cook, Executive Director, Pcook@nyscoc.org , 508-380-8289 WWW.nyscoc.org

- Chaplaincy, Social Justice Community Development and Affordable Housing are interconnected
- In Community the Council advise congregations on ways to:
 - Build healthy relationships with their neighborhoods and cities
 - Make their neighborhoods and cities more welcoming and racially and economically inclusive.
 - Contribute to comprehensive plans, and creating land use laws and policies which make diversity possible.
 - Repurpose and better their property to further mission and bless their community including construction of affordable housing.

- Create a fund through the Interfaith Affordable Housing Collaborative in Partnership with Goldstein Hall, Enterprise Community Partners, Collegiate Corporation, Interfaith Assembly on Housing and Homelessness and others to provide predevelopment grants to help churches get their house in order to enter into affordable housing agreements.
- Advocate for the funding of affordable housing on the state and national level.
- Advise specific churches and denominations about best practices and approaches to building affordable housing



Work with Pace University Land Use Center, Goldstein Hall, Enterprise Community Partners, Community Preservation Corporation and a plethora of others to do day long Who is My Neighbor Seminars advise houses of worship on how to do community outreach and to use their property to further their mission and revitalize and do things like build affordable housing.

We have already done two seminars at Pace University Land Use Law Center in White Plains and at First Presbyterian in Medina

We have three more seminars scheduled in Long Island, Saratoga Springs and Syracuse to which we invite you.

WWW.Nyscoc.org

- **ADVICE FOR CONGREGATIONS**



A church must focus outward and not inward:

Many churches succumb to a societal ideology that we will be better off and stronger if we mostly attract people just like us. We are shaped by a distorted societal narrative that tells us that segregation makes our communities more stable and economically secure.

These sorted out churches are reinforced by a model of church growth based on attracting people "like us" who will feel at home in our churches.



Sometimes our buildings feel like a fortress protecting us from the community--locked doors, fences and "No trespassing" signs. We end up projecting a message of exclusion instead of a message of hospitality. Is the church open just a few hours a week and locked up and under utilized for the rest of the week for fear of opening it up for the community.



And when we do open up our congregations, are they designed in such a way that it will build community or will people be navigating through an obstacle course of empty pews and lack of anything visually appealing? Often times we end up underutilizing our property while also allowing it to fall into disrepair to the point that we cannot sustain it on member donations alone. We are closed, however, to exploring other income possibilities.

Churches which revitalize have an understanding that their parish is not just the people who come to their church. They cannot be a fortress.

- Their parish is comprised on all the people who live in their neighborhood and city.
- Churches which ignore their parish and turn inward and just try to take care of their own suffer.
- Churches which reclaim their historical purpose, build relationships and seek welfare of their communities, influence public policy have a better chance or surviving and.
- This outreach work that is not just done by the pastor but the pastor and parishioners together.

Churches need to do some social analysis. They need to name and address:

Attitudes which can separate and destroy. For example:

Fear of immigrants, or people of different races or nationalities.

Fear of “low income” people in our neighborhoods.

Fear of people trying to re-enter after being in prison.

Policies and laws which segregate and disconnect people from one another. Exclusionary zoning, red-lining, one acre zoning, barriers to higher density housing or smart growth, or the creation credit deserts where people cannot access affordable capital to purchase or fix up their homes.

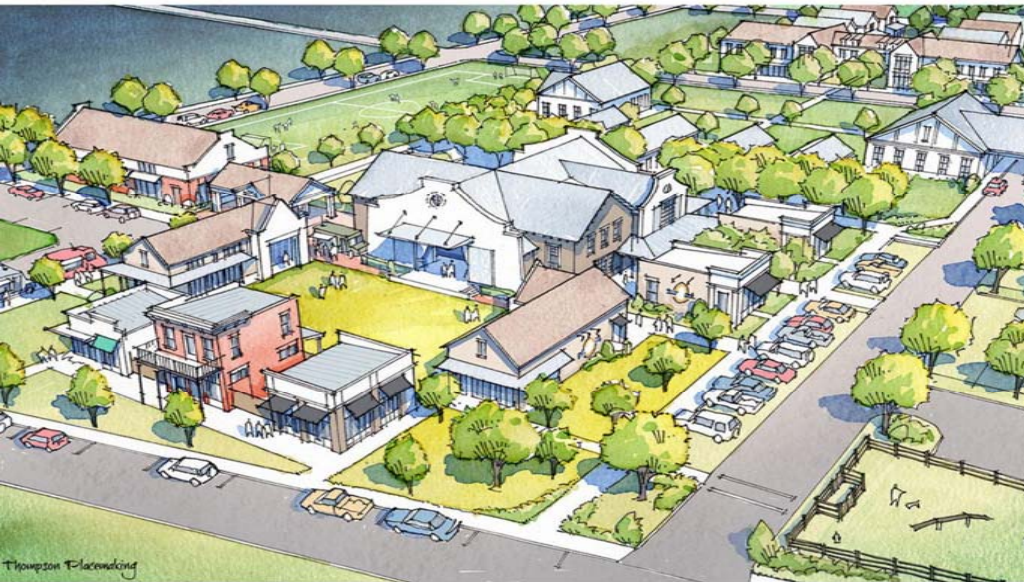


And yet, we often tend to design our communities and our lives by separating people from one another. Some people live in gated communities so they can feel safe but it can be a lonely existence.



NOT IN MY BACKYARD

These attitudes, laws and policies, historically and presently create what Mindy Fullilove, Author of Root Shock and Urban Alchemy, calls the sorted out city.



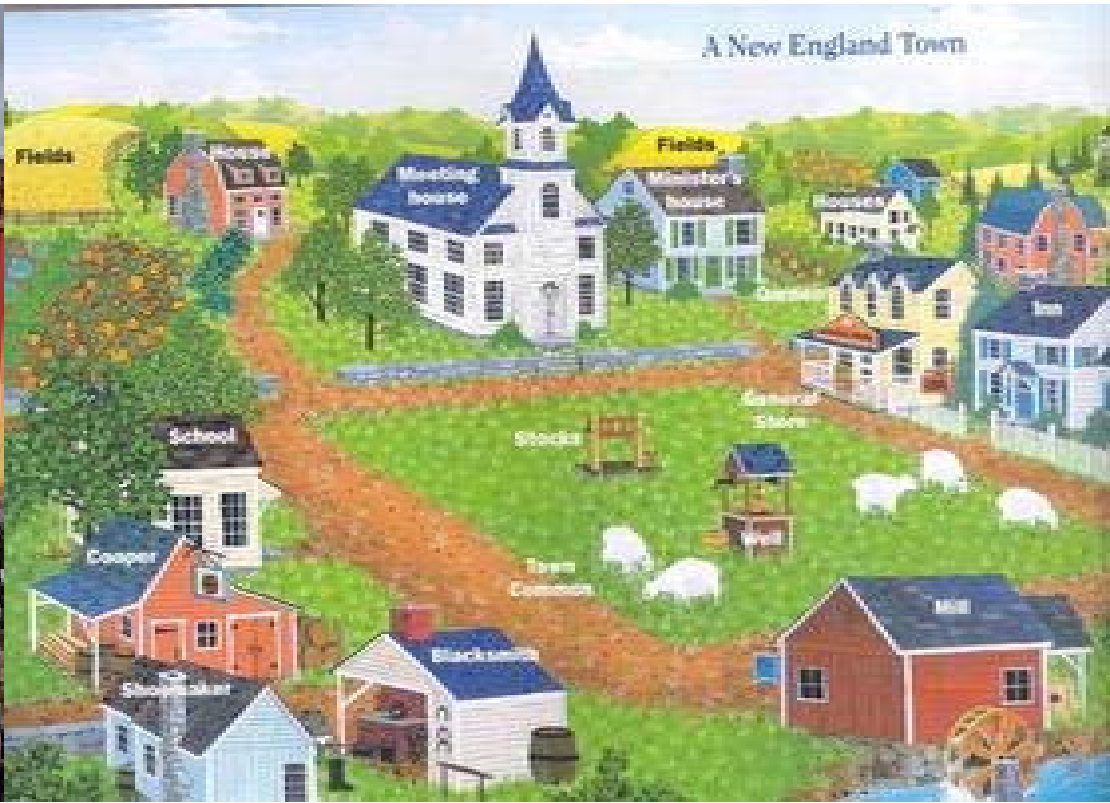
The church needs to try to offer a more positive vision.

Mindy Fullilove tells us that we improve the mental health of a community by facilitating connections between different people. In theological terms, we discover joy from loving our neighbor. Segregation is spiritually and economically damaging.

As faith communities we must advocate for neighborhoods and cities which lend themselves to interaction knowing that this has a tremendous impact on our well being.



SPACES WHICH BUILD COMMUNITY



Churches using property and resources to reach out and bless our community.

Are we building or maintaining a fortress? Does our design connect and welcome or does it exclude? Do our buildings get fully utilized or do they lie dormant? Use our property to address segregation in neighborhoods and cities and create a sense of connection and community which is so important to our mental health.

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- Church property in disrepair or underutilized.
- Churches cannot fix these problems by raising money just inside the church.
- Explore all their options to bless their community
- Partnerships with others to build:

Affordable housing,
Accessble community space,
Schools,
Art centers,
Pre-schools



United Methodist Church to build a structure for seniors including 45 units for people who a very income with special needs including elderly who were previously incarcerated. This project was initiated by the United Methodist City Society in collaboration with the developer Bronx Pro.



This is a large affordable housing development initiated by First Presbyterian Church, Jamaica, Queens called Tree of Life, this project includes many affordable housing units, a medical clinic and bank. Proceeds from this development in part were used to renovate the church on the left.



St. Marks Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bushwick neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York build 20 affordable units right into their old church structure.

TO BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING
ADVICE FOR CONGREGATIONS AND DEVELOPERS

- Listen to your congregants and encourage your congregants to meet their neighbors and leaders in your neighborhood and city and build relationships with them. Show up for community events and be a presence.
- Know what other faith communities are doing in your community and where schools, arts centers, affordable housing and other social services can be identified in your community.
- Know who makes decisions about land use and zoning in your community and the process followed for making those decisions.
- Become acquainted with the work and needs of potential partners but do not sign contracts with any one in this investigatory phase and if you are a developer educate but don't pressure.

- Know and influence comprehensive plan for your neighborhood and region
- Obtain and review ALICE data for your region.
- Learn about other congregations who have done good things with their space to further their mission and how they financed that effort.
- Write a mission statement which helps your congregation focus on serving the community.

- Identify your decision making process for missional and property matters in your congregation and on a denominational level. Present your findings to these organizational bodies for consultation and approve.
- Obtain an appraisal of your property which shows your property's current value and what it would be worth with certain uses.
- Get your books in order and obtain an audit of those books.
- Ensure there are no tax liens, title problems or other encumbrances on your property. Obtain a cost estimate to solve any outstanding problems. Identify debt obligations and restrictions on your assets (ie you can only use this money for this purpose)
- Obtain information about your congregational giving and endowments.
- Consult with attorney who has expertise in faith based development to discuss your congregation's missional and building needs and discuss with you the Attorney General's requirements.
- Have an attorney and architect to evaluate your space understand zoning requirements

- A WORD ABOUT BOUNDARIES AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Churches are inexperienced, scared and vulnerable when we need them to get out there to influence laws and property creative
- Developers need to generate money and advice in the predevelopment space
- Churches have access funds to hire people represent your interests only
- Do not have a developer offer their attorney as your attorney
- Don't pressure churches to not sign anything with you until they have done the preliminary predevelopment steps. If you are a developer, please be patient and ensure anyone you work with has their sea legs and someone representing the opposite party alone.
- Do not hire members of your congregation or others with some interest in your property.
- If congregations or developers attempt to ignore these boundaries the project could blow up and you will have problems with attorney general.



This is Chapel Garden Senior Apartments which was initiated by the St. John's United Church of Christ in Waukegan, Illinois. This deal was put together when the church formed a separate corporation to pair with a developer to build 22 units of housing for seniors and people with disabilities using government funds including low income housing tax credits, a low interest government loan, a commercial loan, Federal Home Loan Bank money and a HOME Funds.