



A Project Of

Rebuilding Lives, Transforming Our Community

**One Body** Collaboratives

**No one church can bring city transformation on its own, but together we can. Imagine the impact we could have if we knew each other and worked together.**

## Introduction

One Body Collaboratives is built on the concept of collaboration and has an original mission to unite the Christian Churches to collaboratively work together. In addition to our 100+ Network Partner Churches, representing over 20 denominations; we also have over 40 local ministries and 120 local service agencies within our network.

Our local churches and faith-based organizations are too often vast, yet greatly underutilized and undervalued resource pools in our communities. One Body Collaboratives was formed to help them effectively become the central and valued players in rebuilding lives and their communities as they were meant to be.

**What would our community look like if the kingdom of God really took shape here?**

## Our Process

The Board of Directors of One Body Collaboratives engaged in Strategic Planning Sessions around this idea. And we began to wonder what it would look like to pray...

**“Thy Kingdom come thy will be done (in Rockford) as it is in heaven.”**

In July 2021 we introduced the Community Flourishing project idea at a Faith Leader Breakfast hosted by Mayor McNamara. We further engaged additional churches in the process by presenting the information in an online forum.

Our next step was to survey our local churches to better understand the good work already being done by them in our community, and to also understand the areas that they would like to impact.

In September 2021 we hosted a Faith Leader Strategy Session where we reviewed the survey results and identified the Focus Area(s) in our community that they would like to impact collectively in 2022.

This report serves as the summary of these events and also outlines our process to implement the project in 2022.

## Background Data

We researched faith lead city transformation efforts in other communities where they have successfully connected churches with one another for the purpose of collectively impacting their community in meaningful ways. Common factors of the success of these efforts is documented in the book, [\*The Externally Focused Church\*](#), by Eric Swanson.

Churches that transform communities are those that are inwardly strong but outwardly focused. An increasing number of churches are rediscovering their focus and thinking differently about what church should be.

These are **externally focused churches** – churches that measure their effectiveness not by how many congregants are sitting in the pews but rather how many congregants are engaged in the community.

Partnering and collaboration are not essential for becoming the best church *in* the community but are absolutely essential if you want to become the best church *for* the community.

Churches that are transforming communities don't divide over differences but unite with other churches and community service organizations (faith based or not) around their common love for the community.

We can unite and work together with other churches and groups in our communities not because we share the same theology but because we care about the same things.

Churches that are working together have discovered the biblical truth that there is really one church in the city that meets in different locations and at different times. There may be many congregations, but there is only one church.

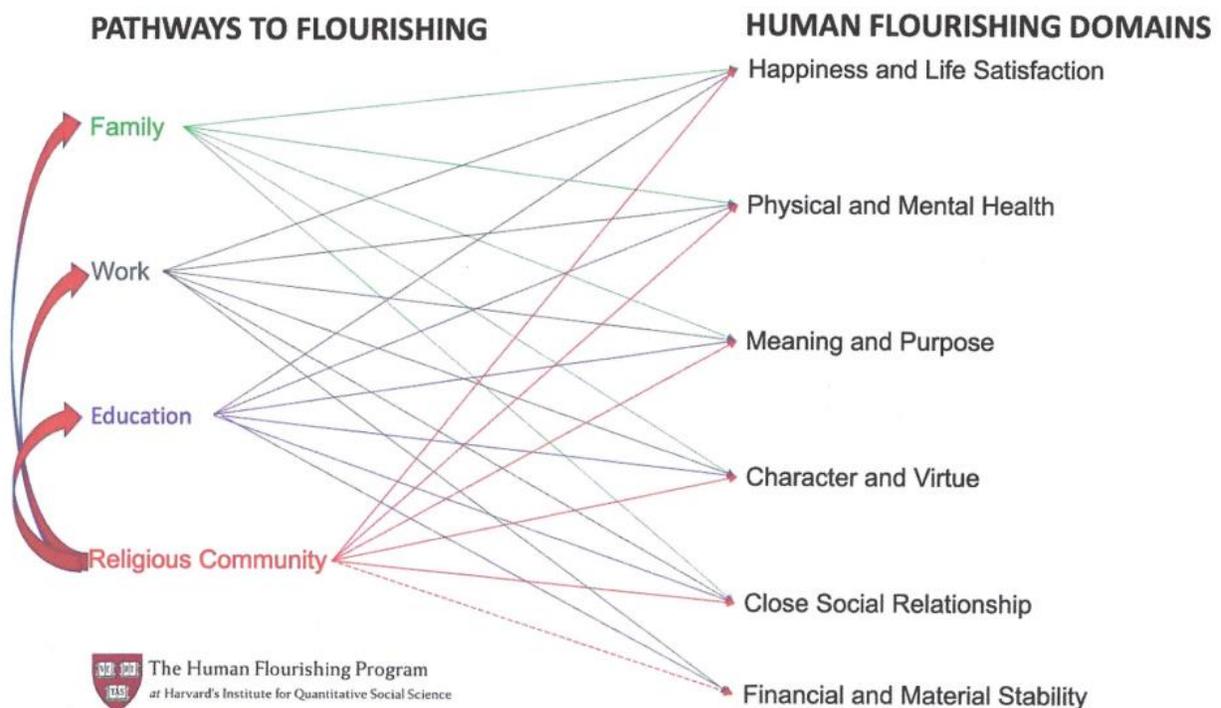
It's no secret that people are walking away from the church. Yet there is a glimmer of hope. Thirty-one percent of lapsed Christians report that they would be "More interested in Christianity if they saw various churches in their community working together more." Understanding our congregations as parts of one larger church in the city allows us to experience the unity of family that we share in belonging to the same Father, the unity of fellowship as we accept one another and worship together, and the unity of purpose. Congregations are discovering that sometimes we can publicly express our unity through service that blesses our community.

**The united and equipped church,  
working together with others can solve almost any problem.**

## Human Flourishing

Harvard University created the Human Flourishing Model. They determined that individuals flourish through four pathways: Family, Work, Education, and through the Religious Community. These four pathways of family, work, education and religious community were selected on the grounds of being relatively common in human societies, and also having evidence that suggests modestly large effects on various human flourishing outcomes.

They then identified Human Flourishing Domains which are listed in the graphic here:



The program sponsors research projects that investigate the role that religious communities play in public health, medicine, and human flourishing. These projects include original empirical research on how religious communities affect various aspects of flourishing, such as health, happiness, meaning and purpose, and close social relationships.

More information on the Harvard Human Flourishing Model can be found [here](#).

## Isaiah 65: When God Builds a City

The Flourishing Domains identified by the Harvard Flourishing Program can be correlated directly to Isaiah 65: When God builds a city.

### When God Builds a City—Isaiah 65:17-25

I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

HAPPINESS & LIFE SATISFACTION

“Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

HEALTH & LONGEVITY

They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

HOUSING & FOOD—FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.

MEANINGFUL WORK

They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune,

UPWARD MOBILITY

they and their descendants with them.

STRONG FAMILY STRUCTURE

Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear.

CONNECTION TO GOD—SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

The wolf and the lamb will feed together...They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.

RECONCILIATION / ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE

#### **We used these Flourishing Domains to define twelve key areas in our community which include:**

Crime Reduction: Absence of Violence

Domestic Violence: The city is safe for all.

Education: Opportunities at all levels.

Elder Care: Elderly are living long and full lives.

Food Assistance: Access to Quality Food

Housing: Access for all to Quality Housing

Quality of Life: Happiness & Life Satisfaction; Health & Longevity

Racial Justice: Structural and systemic changes to ensure racial equity.

Re-entry Services/Jail Ministry: Assistance to returning citizens.

Strengthening Families: Strong Family Structure

Workforce Training: Upward Mobility/Meaningful Work

Youth Resources: Children are valued, protected and nurtured.

## Survey Results

We created a survey that we asked churches to complete to help us to better understand the areas that our faith community are already impacting. Here is an overview of the responses:

### *What would our community look like if all Christ-followers were engaged in meeting the needs and dreams of the community?*

Families would be better resourced our streets would be more peaceful. All needs would be lovingly met. All would be at peace. It would be a loving community that shared its resources. It will become more like the Kingdom of God where all people live in peace and abundant life. Hunger would not be an issue the city would be more equitable. A clear sense of shared humanity, where all have a place at the table, and no one is safe until all are safe. The kingdom of God in our midst! Disciples living out their faith, in relationship with neighbors, celebrating joys together and supporting one another through hardships. Everyone would have safe, affordable housing, enough healthy food to eat and time to have meals with loved ones, there would be intergenerational friendships in neighborhoods, access to quality mental healthcare, lots more public art and community celebrations, and we would have worship services that brought together people from different backgrounds. Absence of violence, racial reconciliation and justice.

### *How can we help your church build capacity to address these areas?*

Partnerships to Increase Accessibility to Counseling Services. Education, or a model on how to start a program. Avenues to explore crossing the cultural lines between black, white, brown. Church partnerships across lines? I would like to know more about the geographically immediate needs surrounding our church. I want One Body to communicate with my church in sharing more specific needs of the community so that my church can find ways to meet their needs and provide with resources we have. Trainings to lead our own workshops or info sessions. availability of resources, a collaboration of services already offered. Partnering our more senior volunteers who have lots of great experience with community volunteers who may have more energy / time to do the physical work required with many of these programs. We don't need help building capacity, we need help supporting the dreams and capacity we have already engaged.

### *What does a hopeful future look like for your church?*

Vibrant, Mission-Minded Community. People of all walks of life working together to be a community. A safe haven. Engagement with people from our neighborhoods. Engagement with the intent of the gospel. Offering peace and caring for all of our neighbors. I want my church to be more engaging with the community, sharing our ways to make our community a better place for children, vulnerable people, and the least so that my church will be recognized as a needed place to go and participate. Making an impact on the neighborhood while nurturing relationships with our neighbors. A hopeful future is one where the violence in the city is at zero. It includes a path for self-sufficiency for each person and family. There is not only freedom for all to seek a relationship with God, but also an openness for a variety of expressions to include the other, more diversity and involvement of the city's young people.

### *Is there anything God might have us do together that would make a bigger impact for the Kingdom than we are presently doing ourselves?*

Strategy (Keep it up!) Being a force in the city, a group that can represent issues that come up. Practice being in spaces where black and white and brown and other people are socializing, developing friendships, worshipping together. I think you have already been doing such a great ministry in our community. Maybe pastors like me need to be more attentive to One Body Collaboratives with congregations so we would continually work together. We are a small and elderly congregation who has limited capacity for ministry on our own, but we are willing to be partners with other churches and organizations to have a larger impact. Working and praying together to give hope to families (affordable housing, job training and opportunities and elimination of food insecurities) all with the goal of reducing hopelessness. Once needs are met, hearts become ready to receive the good news of faith. Focusing on overdose prevention and partnering effectively with secular groups. Collaborating on what needs to be big community wide initiatives and recognizing where more is better, and we should all offer what we have to our little corners.

### *What could we do to get everyone in the game (Pastors, Church Elders, Missions Teams, Congregants)?*

Communicate and collaborate. Vision-cast. Inspire. Need someone to take the lead on this and present the need to our congregation members. Communicate that we are more together vs. being in silos. Each one teach one, with personal invitations. Come and see, Include others with more than an email or mass mailings. Think Tanks focused on specific issues. Take the time to build support for new initiatives and have them led by congregants rather than the pastor, with the pastor serving as cheerleader. Collective projects that change the landscape of Rockford.

## What resources are needed by churches to accomplish this?

Leadership. Knowledgeable leadership or direction for what the program would look like. Education and opportunities to experience. People to come and share stories of success, More knowledge of the city's resources. Connecting with new volunteers. A blueprint of how to start and a support structure to flourish. What resources churches need will be directly tied to the goal. Churches have big desires, and little know how, so provide the concrete know-how for whatever goal is chosen.

Of the churches that participated in the survey, we asked them the number of congregants that make up their church. This helps to give us context to the size of the congregation as we talk about capacity.

Less than 50:	30%
51-100:	10%
101-250:	40%
251 – 500:	20%

## Strategy Session Activity/Outcomes

At our Faith Leader Strategy Session, we asked those in attendance to indicate the areas in our community that they are *already* impacting, areas they are *interested in* impacting and areas that their *denomination* impacts at a regional or national level.

We then asked each church to write down three **unacceptable realities** in our community that they would like to impact. All of the feedback was documented on large posters designated for each of the 12 key areas in our community.

Each church was also provided with stickers that they used to indicate the areas they would most like to impact together.

The participants then took part in a Gallery Walk where we reviewed each theme as a group. We were able to see areas that had a large amount of support behind it, and areas that were lacking in support.

The group engaged in a discussion and determined the two Focus Areas of 2022 to be: Mental Health and Racial Justice.

A summary of this activity is provided on the next two pages.

<b>Community Flourishing Impact Areas</b>	<b>Currently Impacting</b>	<b>Would Like to Impact</b>	<b>Denomination Level Impact</b>	<b>Unacceptable Reality</b>	<b>Level of Support For This Theme</b>
<b>Racial Justice</b>	First Covenant, Forest City Church, Grace UMC, SecondFirst, Spring Creek UCC	Community Bible, Emmanuel Lutheran, Our Saviors, Rockford Arae City Church, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Bethesda, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Spring Creek UCC, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Racial Division, Racial Inequity & Systemic Racism, Racial Hate Crimes	12
<b>Quality of Life/Health &amp; Mental Health</b>	Bethesda, Emmanuel Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Forest City Church, Grace UMC, Life Church, Salvation Army, Spring Creek UCC, United Lutheran	Willow Creek	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Grace UMC, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Spring Creek UCC, Willow Creek	Inadequate Health Care, Lack of Mental Illness Resources, Poor Mental Health, Need for Counseling & Resources for Adults, Youth & Children	11
<b>Workforce Development</b>		Rockford Area City Church, Willow Creek	Brooke Road, First Covenant, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Willow Creek	Poverty, High Poverty, Underemployment and Job Skills	5
<b>Strengthening Families</b>	Bethesda, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Grace UMC, Rockford Area City Church, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Our Saviors	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Our Saviors, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Broken & Fatherless Homes, Low Access to Addiction Care	4
<b>Youth Resources</b>	Bethesda, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Life Church, Our Saviors, Salvation Army	Community Bible, Third Presbyterian	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Grace UMC, Life Church, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, United Lutheran, Willow Creek	Lack of Youth Engagement, Lack of Support for Children, Long Term Impact of Foster Care	4
<b>Crime Reduction</b>		Brooke Road, Emmanuel Lutheran, First Covenant, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Brooke Road, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, SecondFirst, Willow Creek	Gun/Neighborhood Violence, Youth Crime, Fear for Safety	3

Community Flourishing Impact Areas	Currently Impacting	Would Like to Impact	Denomination Level Impact	Unacceptable Reality	Level of Support For This Theme
Education (any/all)	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, First Covenant, Grace UMC, Our Saviors	Rockford Area City Church, Willow Creek Presbyterian	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, United Lutheran, Willow Creek	Unequal Access to Education	3
Reentry/Jail Ministry	Salvation Army	Community Bible, First Covenant, Rockford Area City Church, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Willow Creek		3
Housing	SecondFirst, Spring Creek UCC, Third Presbyterian	Community Bible, Rockford Area City Church	Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, First Covenant, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Willow Creek	Lack of Affordable Housing, Eviction Crisis, Homelessness	2
Domestic Violence	Emmanuel Lutheran, Grace UMC, Spring Creek UMC, Third Presbyterian	Our Saviors, Willow Creek	Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek	High Rate of Domestic Violence	1
Food Assistance	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, Emmanuel Lutheran, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Forest City Church, Grace UMC, Life Church, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Spring Creek UCC, Third Presbyterian, United Lutheran	Willow Creek	Brooke Road, Evans/New Life, First Covenant, Grace UMC, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, United Lutheran, Willow Creek	Hunger, Food Insecurity & Food Deserts	1
Elder Care	Lutheran, First Covenant, Forest City Church, Grace UMC, Salvation Army, Spring Creek UCC, Third Presbyterian	Our Saviors, United Lutheran, Willow Creek	Bethesda, Brooke Road, Christ Lutheran, First Covenant, Our Saviors, Salvation Army, SecondFirst, Third Presbyterian, Willow Creek		0

If your church was unable to attend the Strategy Session, and would like to add your data to this chart, please complete the survey [linked here](#).

## Next Steps

### **Annual Focus Area**

Faith leaders across the community see the needs and struggles of their congregations on a daily basis and are the key to helping us determine our annual focus area. We recognize that for us to help foster transformation, we have to listen first before we act.

Each year we will host a Faith Leader Strategy Session to identify an area in our community that we will work collaboratively to impact. In 2022 our Focus Areas will be: Mental Health and Racial Justice.

### **Collaborative Networks**

We will develop networks around our Annual Focus Area(s). The networks will be built on a geographic and issue-specific networks of Faith leaders. These networks will be formed in early 2022.

To do this, we will have a three-step process.

1. Connect faith leaders and work with them to identify the needs in their neighborhoods that are connected to our Annual Focus Area(s).
2. Provide research and connect Faith Leaders with resources and partners to address those needs.
3. Equip and mobilize churches to take action together.

### **Events**

One Body Collaboratives will host a variety of gatherings and events throughout the year that educate, connect and equip leaders for collaborative action on our Annual Focus Area(s).

**“When right-living people bless the city, it flourishes.” Proverbs 11:11**

## Additional Ways to Support our Effort

### **Pastor Advisory Network**

If you are a Senior Pastor, we ask for you to prayerfully consider joining our Pastor Advisory Network, which will act as our advisory board for this initiative.

### **Pray**

Please continue to pray for this effort as we work together to help our community flourish.

## Community Flourishing Prayer

God, today I pray for my city. I believe you have planted me in this community on purpose. I pray your Holy Spirit would continually remind me to speak life and blessing over my city. May we walk in unity and love for one another. Please use me to be a part of solutions to problems. Help me have a selfless heart and generous hands. Show me opportunities to give back because I believe as I bless my city, we will flourish!

## For More Information

For more information, please contact:

Mary Cacioppi, Executive Director, One Body Collaboratives

Email: [Mary.Cacioppi@OneBodyCollaboratives.org](mailto:Mary.Cacioppi@OneBodyCollaboratives.org)

Website: [www.OneBodyCollaboratives.org](http://www.OneBodyCollaboratives.org)

PO Box 1633, Rockford, IL 61110

