

An aerial photograph of a dirt crossroads in a forest. The roads are made of light brown dirt and intersect in the center. The surrounding area is covered in dense green trees and foliage. The title 'At a Crossroads' is written in large white letters across the center of the image.

At a Crossroads

Four Pathways for Congregational Discernment

Rocky Mountain Synod | Rev. Sara Wirth-Synod Minister for Transitions
and Healthy Ministries and Rev. Chris Davis-Director of Evangelical
Mission-North and Synod Minister for Generosity



The Changing Landscape

Smaller congregations

Inflation

\$160,000 income benchmark

45% can't afford a full-time pastor

Declining enrollment of seminary students

Nontraditional leadership formation has Increased (TEEM and SAM)

You may be at a crossroads if...

- Most of the giving in your congregation goes towards maintenance and survival instead of “Great Commission” work.
- Your growth pattern has plateaued or declined.
- You don’t have enough people to volunteer for ministry within the congregation and outreach into the community.



Why Crossroads Matter

- Congregations face challenges and changes
- Crossroads are spiritual opportunities
- God meets us in decision points

Four Faithful Options at a Crossroads



Radical Revitalization



Culture change and
renewed mission



May require new
worship, outreach, or
leadership



High energy, high risk

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o

How?

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Four Faithful Options at a Crossroads

Why do we want to
grow/revitalize?

Can we revitalize?

What are we willing to lose
or change to revitalize?

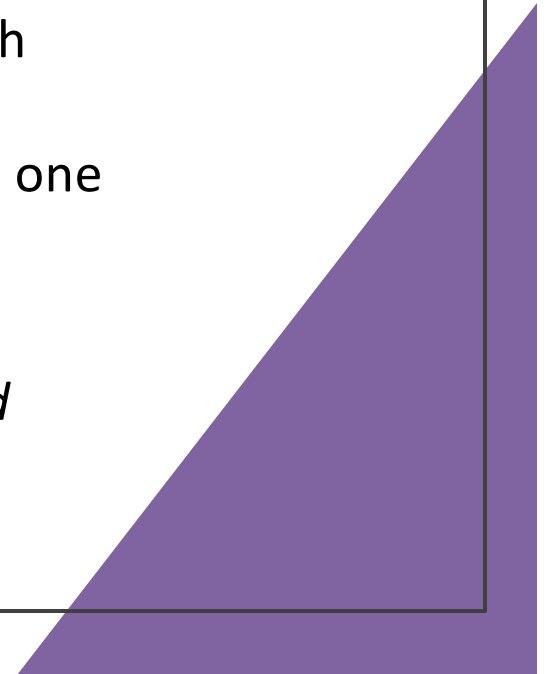
Should we revitalize?

Anchor Church

“Ultimately, the anchor church movement exists to provide a medium for congregations to share with one another their best practices for cultural development keeping in mind that what works in one place may not work in another.”

--Douglas A. Hill

*Cultural Architecture: A Path to Creating Vitalized
Congregations*



Partnerships and Mergers



Shared ministry or
combined
congregations



Requires alignment
and transparency



Can steward
resources and mission

Continuity with Purpose

Continue ministry with clarity and focus

Realistic about capacity

May be a faithful, smaller footprint

Holy Closure and Legacy



When mission is no longer sustainable



Leave a legacy—
bless others with
gifts



A sacred and holy
path

Questions & Sharing

- What option resonates?
- What stories are stirring?
- What's your congregation wondering?

Blessing for the Journey

- ¹⁶ This is what the Lord says:
- “Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.