

A close-up photograph of a monarch butterfly emerging from its chrysalis. The chrysalis is a pale, translucent yellowish-brown color, and the butterfly's wings, which are black with vibrant orange stripes and white spots, are partially visible. The background is dark and out of focus.

The Road to Transformation: Challenges, Pitfalls, and Possibilities



Two Quotes to Consider

A monarch butterfly with orange and black wings is perched on a white flower. The butterfly's wings are spread, showing the characteristic orange and black pattern. The background is dark, making the butterfly and the flower stand out.

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“Tradition is simply an experiment that went well.”

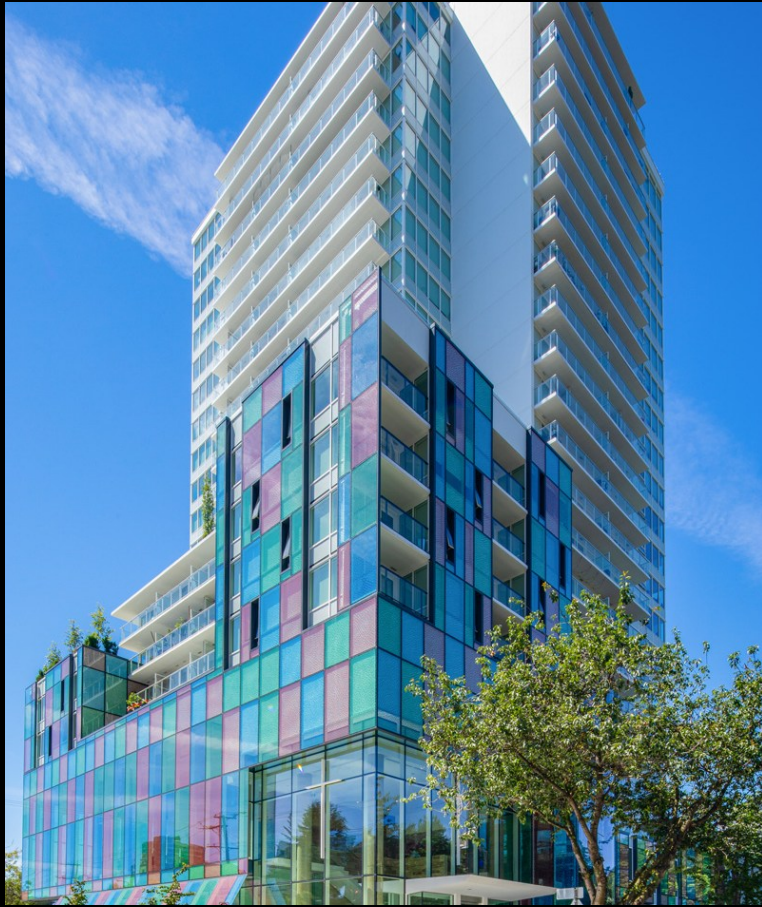
“Transformation is not about becoming something we are not...it is about becoming more of who we already are.”

OVERVIEW

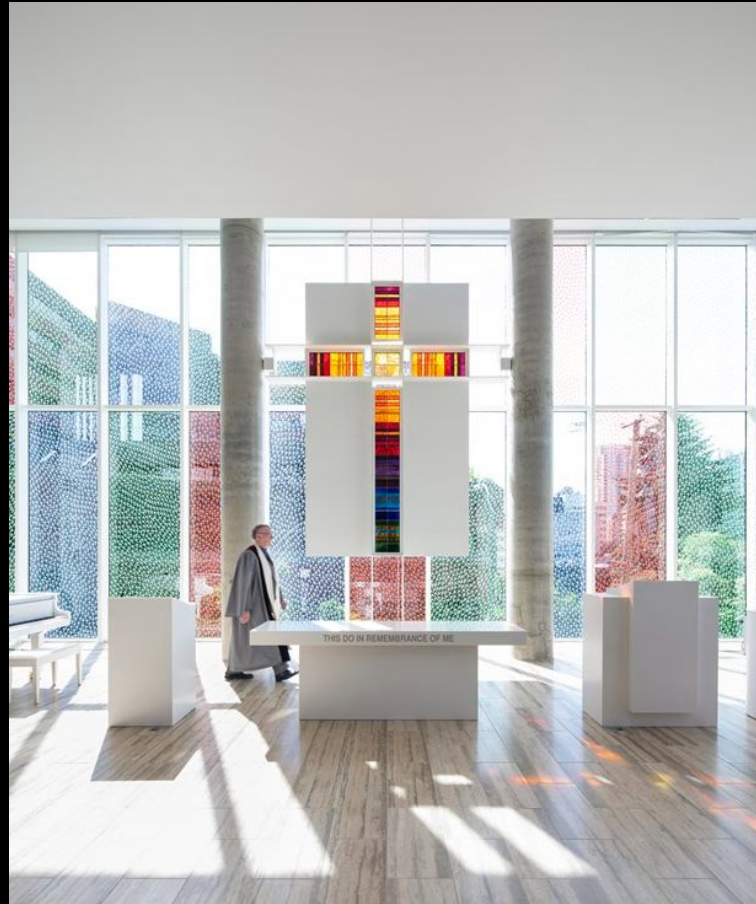
- ❑ Background to Central Presbyterian
- ❑ The intersection of two stories
- ❑ Points of Pivot
- ❑ Struggles, Successes
- ❑ Surprises Along the Way

A Case Study: Central Presbyterian Church, Vancouver

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Exterior of Central Presbyterian Church



The Chapel

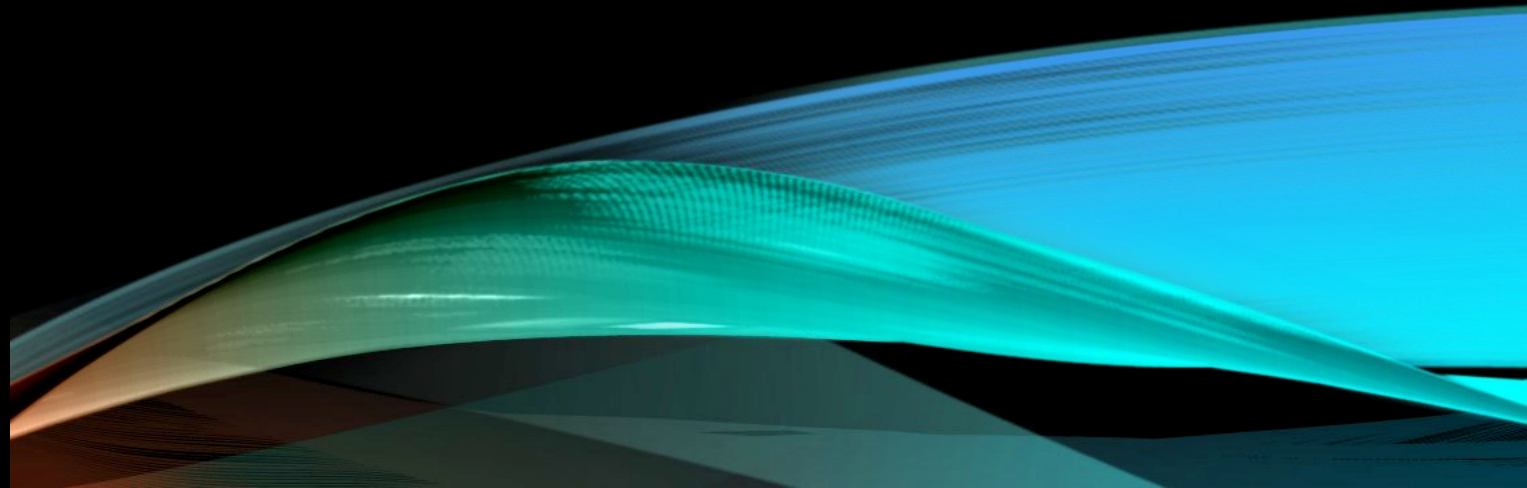


The Sanctuary



THE INNER SIDE OF TRANSFORMATION

What it asks of us



ENGAGING IN TRANSFORMATION VS CHANGE – IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?



What's Involved?

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Understanding the difference between change and transition.



THE STARTING POINT: EVERY⁹
CHANGE/TRANSFORMATION BEGINS WITH THIS...





Conversations with Whom? ¹⁰

- One Another
- Scripture
- Our Heritage
- God through prayer
- Our community and world
- Ourselves

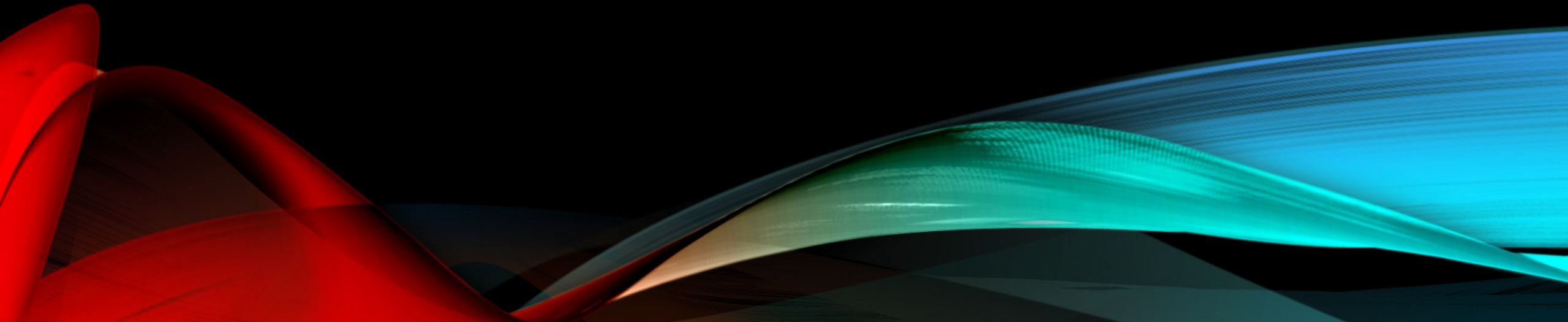
The Role of Discernment

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Discernment is “a regular discipline of listening to the still, small voice beneath the rush of the whirlwind, a prayerful practice of reading the subtle signs in daily life. Discernment is **not a once-for-all decision making** at critical points in one’s life, but a lifelong commitment to ‘remember God’, know who you are, and pay close attention to what the Spirit is saying today.”

THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

A beginning and a middle, but no end



The Beginning: A Pinch in the System

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Established Congregations often face a 'pinch in the system' that triggers the beginning journey to transformation.

The willingness to name things as they are rather than as you wished they would be.

Getting to reality is not always easy, but it is one part of transformation.

Reality

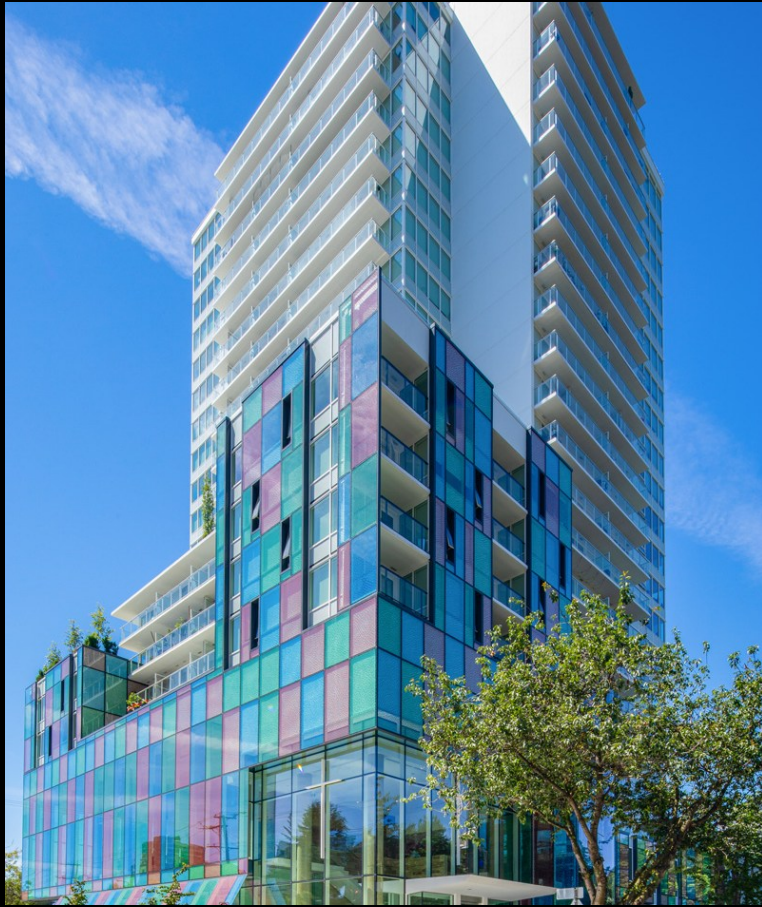


Necessary but not sufficient

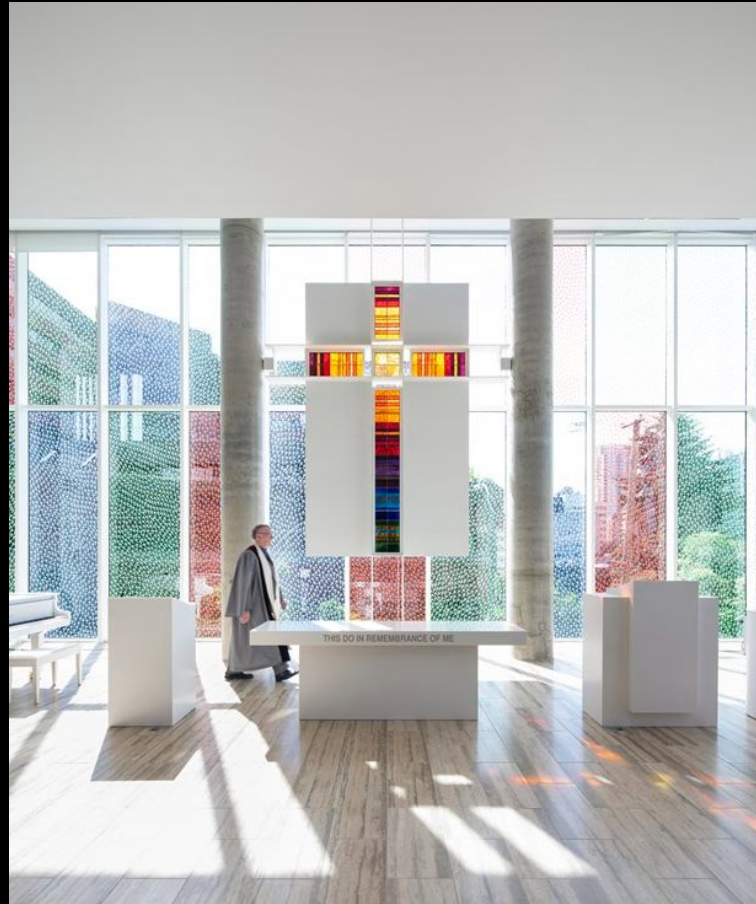


Central Presbyterian Church Vancouver

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Exterior of Central
Presbyterian Church



The Chapel



The Sanctuary

THE NEXT STEP

The Place of Vision
and Hope



**NEXT
STEPS**

Transformation Requires Hope ¹⁷

HOPELESS

Hope is the belief that the future can be different than today

It's based on a vision that can be sensed and described even if it can't be seen in the present.

Hope is rooted in identity - it is a vision of becoming more of who we already are.

Rooting Transformation in Identity

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Identity shapes our actions.
If we see ourselves as dancers, we are more likely to dance.



If we see ourselves as a club of like-minded people, we will act like a club of like-minded people. If we see ourselves as disciples of Jesus, we will be more likely to act like disciples of Jesus.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

"If you know who you are, you'll know what to do."

Identity and Vocation are Linked

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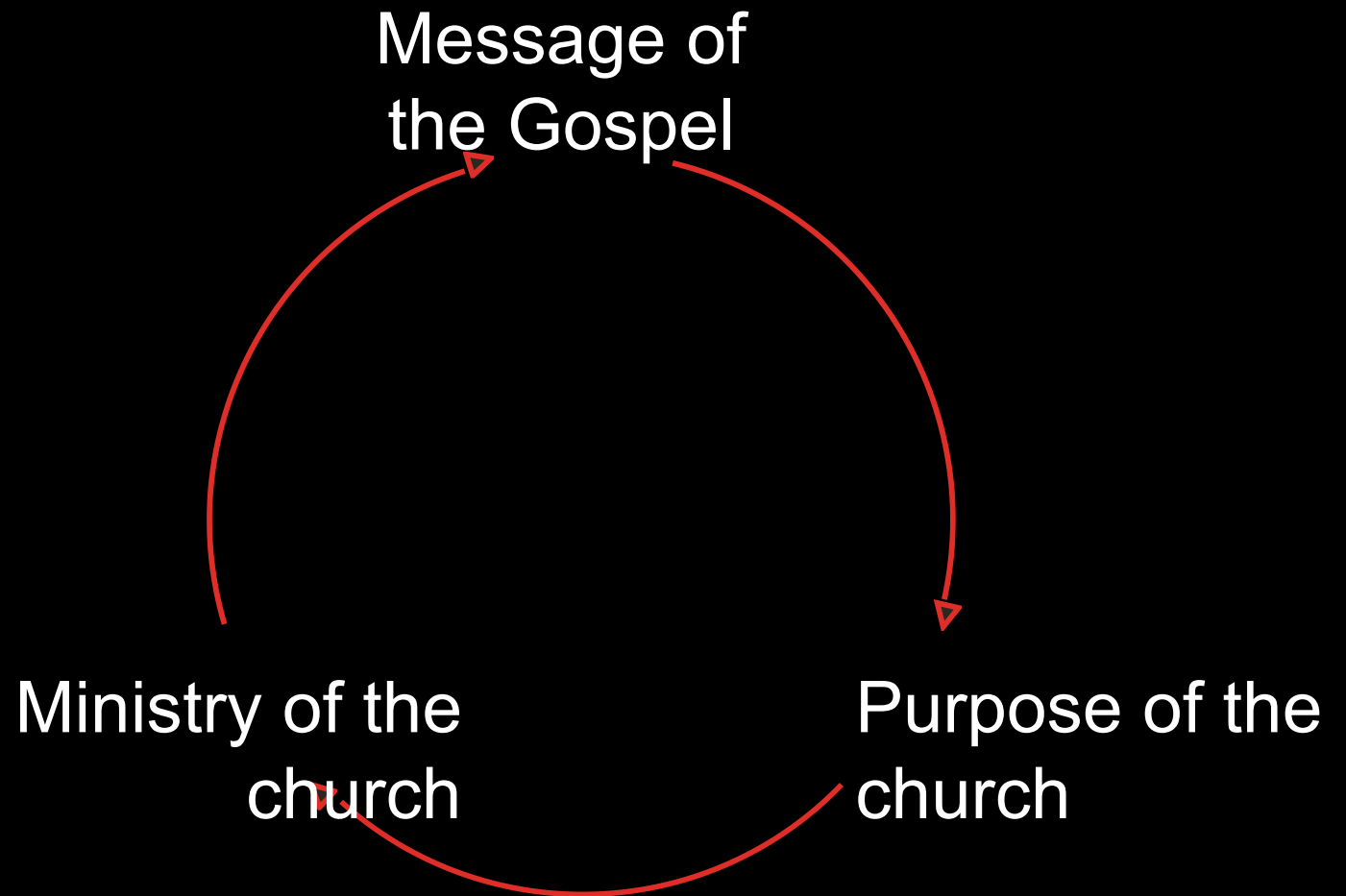
“Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values of the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live—but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.”

What We Learn From Congregations that Experienced Transformation

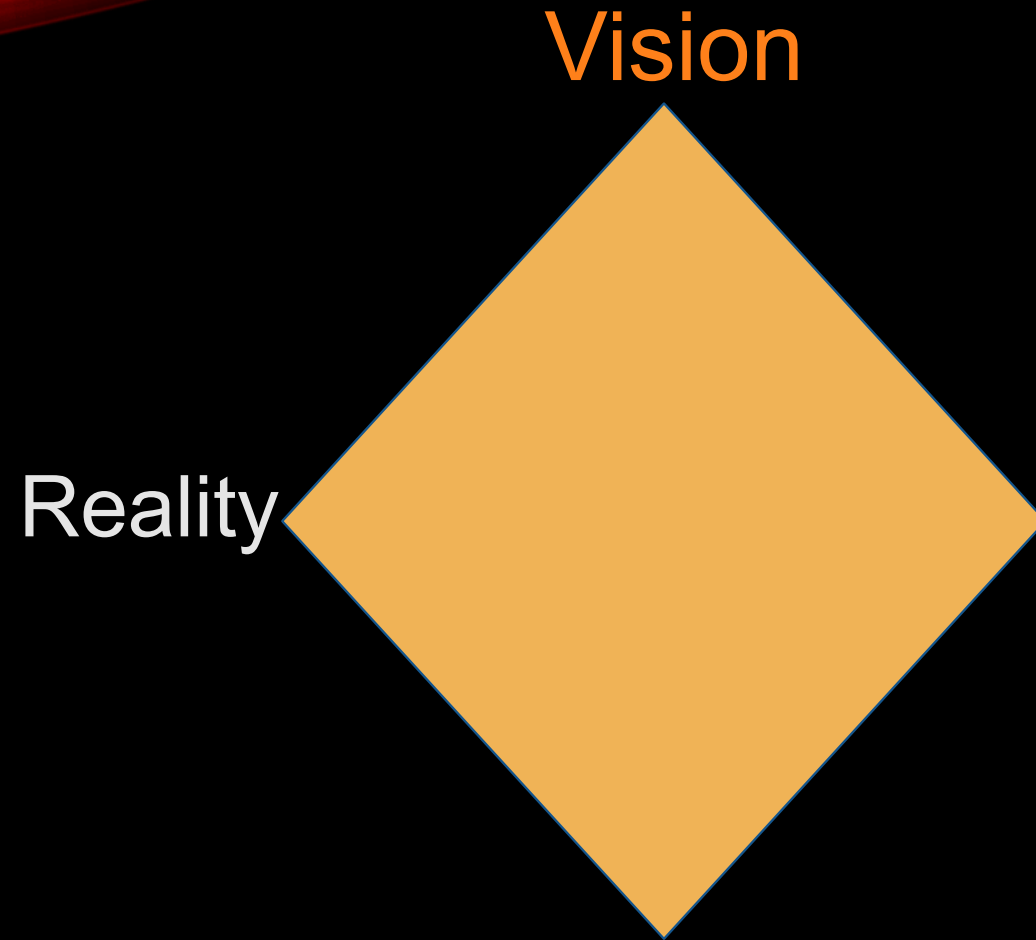
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It was a matter of reconnecting the message of the gospel with the purpose of the church expressed through the ministry of the church.

This desire came out of a holy discontent that the present life of the congregation was less than what people hoped for or believed God desired of them.



These congregations went back to Scripture to reclaim their purpose. They studied passages of Scripture focusing on themes such as the reign of God in the world and the vocation of the people of God and the church to be witnesses to this rule in the manner that Jesus embodied and taught it. They came to reaffirm that “The reign of God...is a present reality that often works in hidden, ordinary, and surprising ways.” They came to see the church as being in the process of becoming what it is called to be, freely and continually turning to God, and apprenticing through the Holy Spirit. Three key texts were Isaiah 43-44, Acts 1:1-14, and Revelation 1-3.



Imagining what could be, based on God's purposes, our gifts, resources and passions, and the needs around us.

GOING BACK TO CENTRAL

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- The discernment was that the building was aging
- The congregation was getting older and smaller
- The greatest asset was the land
- Then came a surprise encounter with an architect.
- Could they be something more than they were?



USING THE TOOL OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

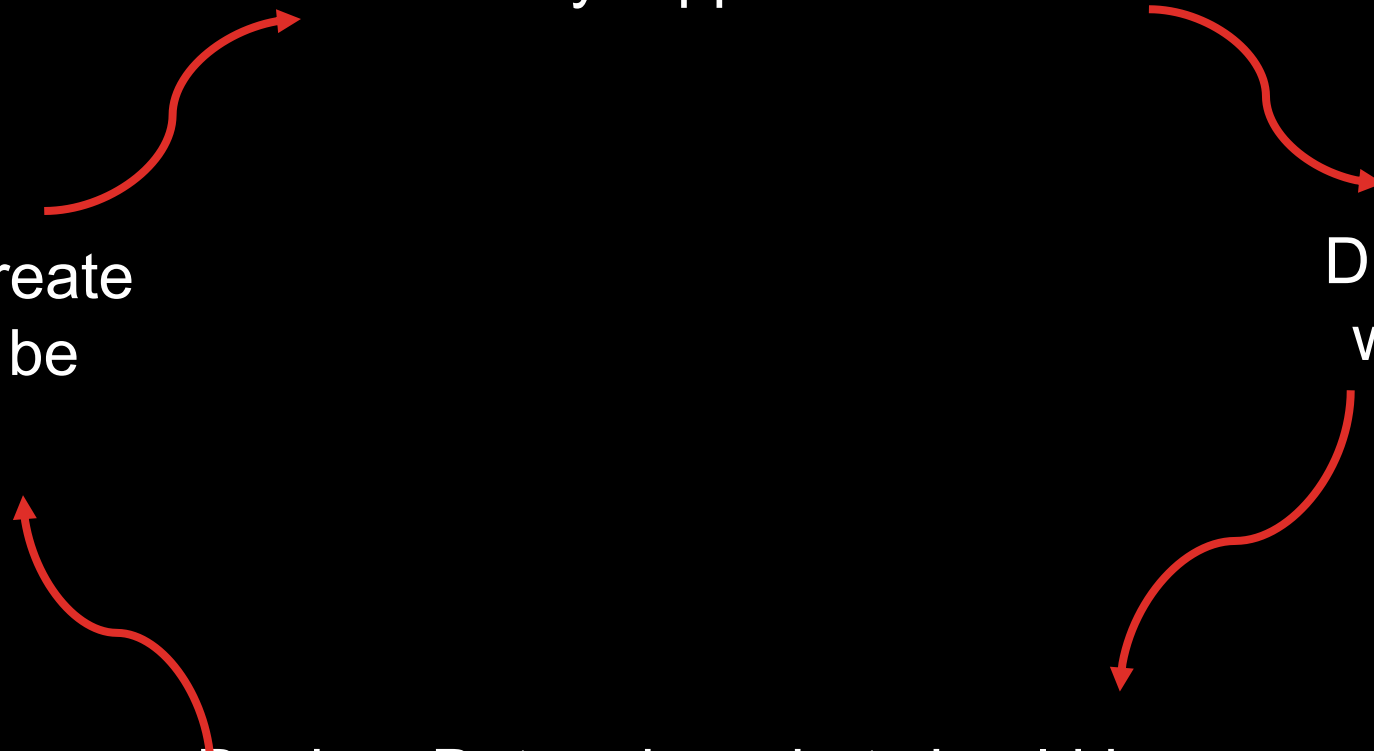
Decide
on the
question

Discovery: Appreciate what is

Destiny: Create
what will be

Dream: Imagine
what might be

Design: Determine what should be




AN OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL



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AN EXAMPLE








A Skeptic's Guide to Appreciative Inquiry

Watch laterShare



Alliance
for Strong Families
and Communities

Play (k)

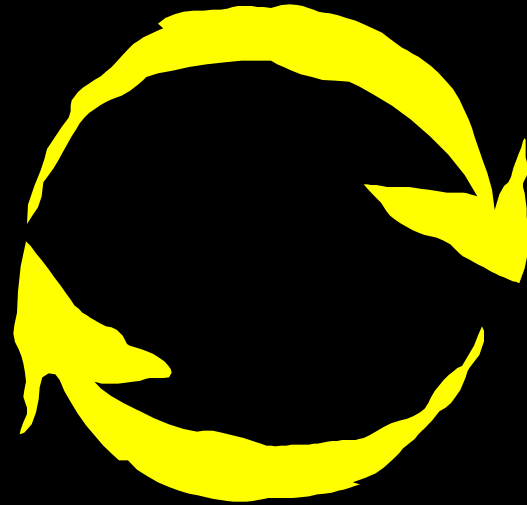
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THE CRITICAL CONVERSATION: WHAT BRINGS LIFE?

Clarifying the
question. →

Discovery: Appreciate what is present

Destiny: Create
what will be



Dream: Imagine
what might be

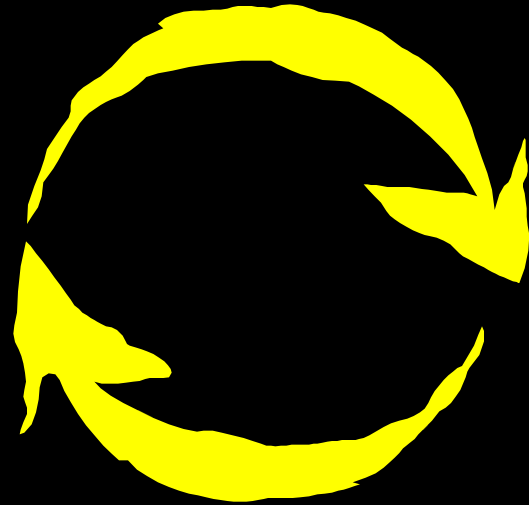
Design: Determine what should be

THE CRITICAL CONVERSATION: WHAT COULD BE

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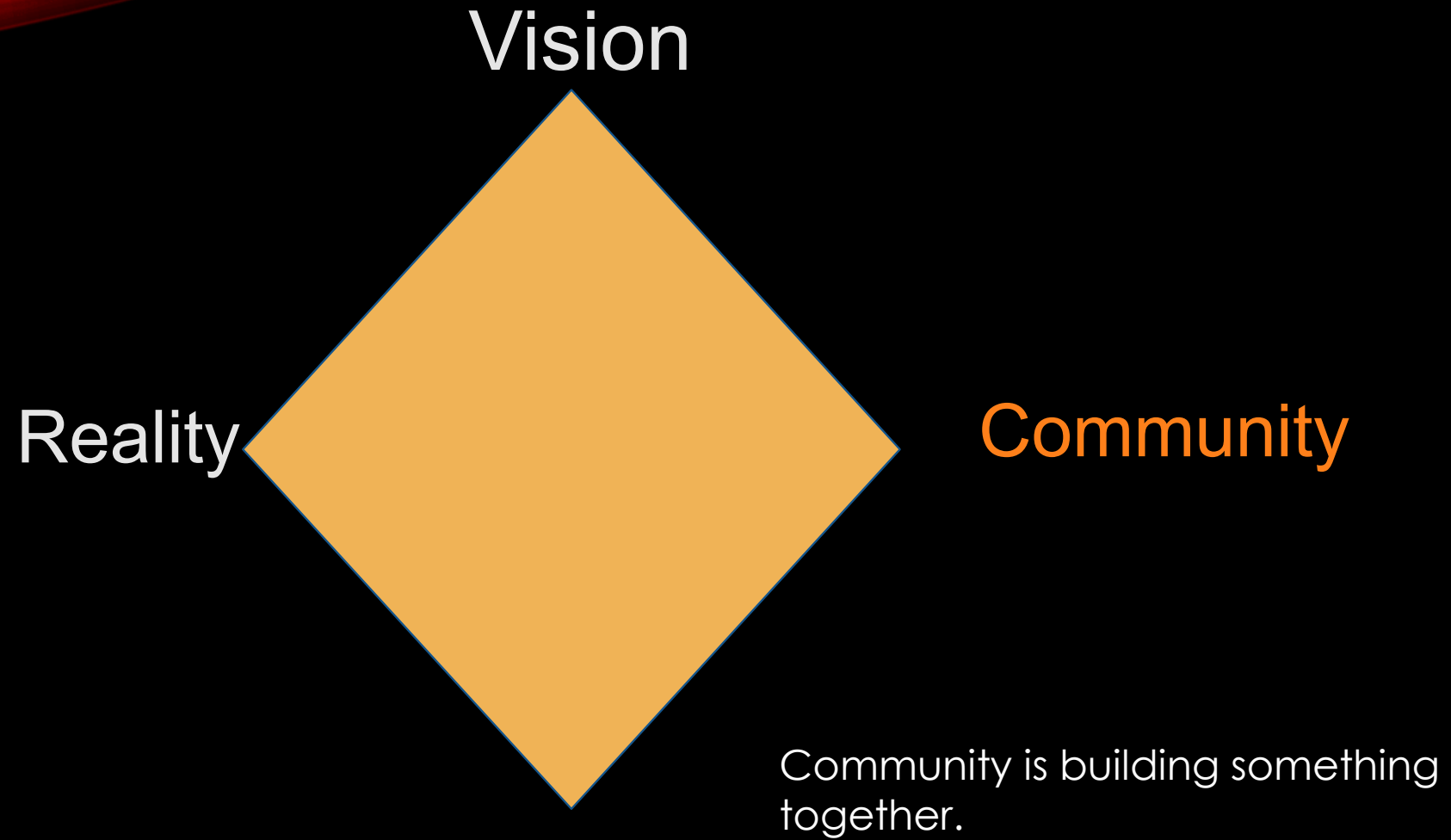
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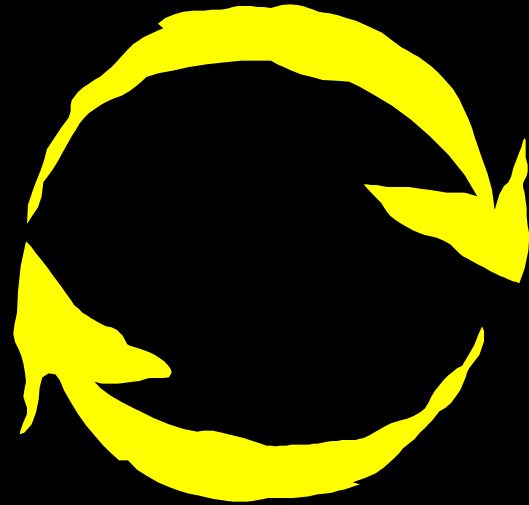


THE CRITICAL CONVERSATION: WHAT SHOULD BE

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Discovery: Appreciate what is present

Destiny: Create
what will be



Dream: Imagine
what might be

Design: Determine what should be

THE CRITICAL CONVERSATION: WHAT WILL BE

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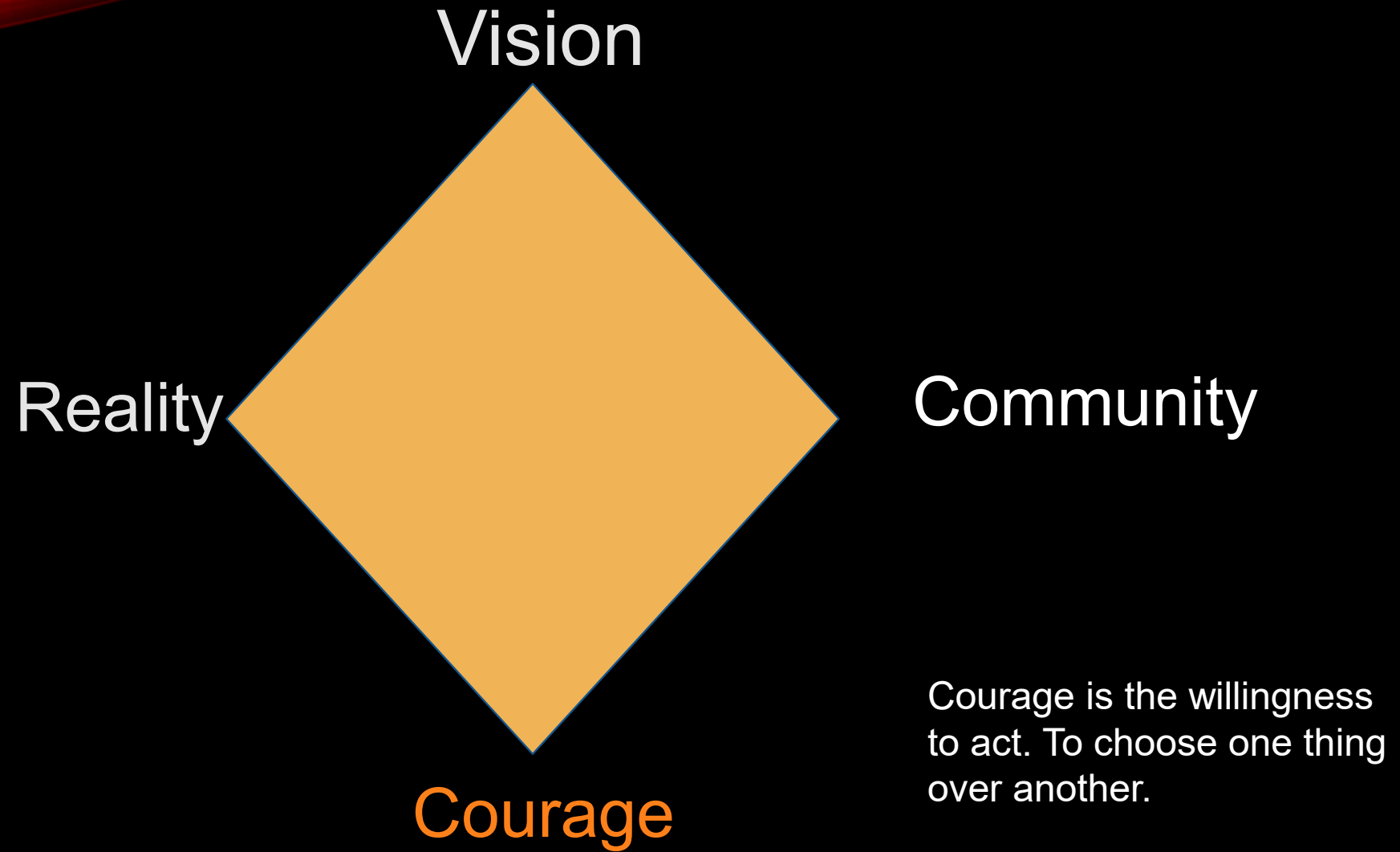
Discovery: Appreciate what is present

Destiny: Create
what will be



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Design: Determine what should be



SURPRISES ALONG THE WAY

- Along the way, unexpected people showed up.
- A chance encounter with an architect which led to a meeting with the builder.
- Finances were made available

SUCCESSSES

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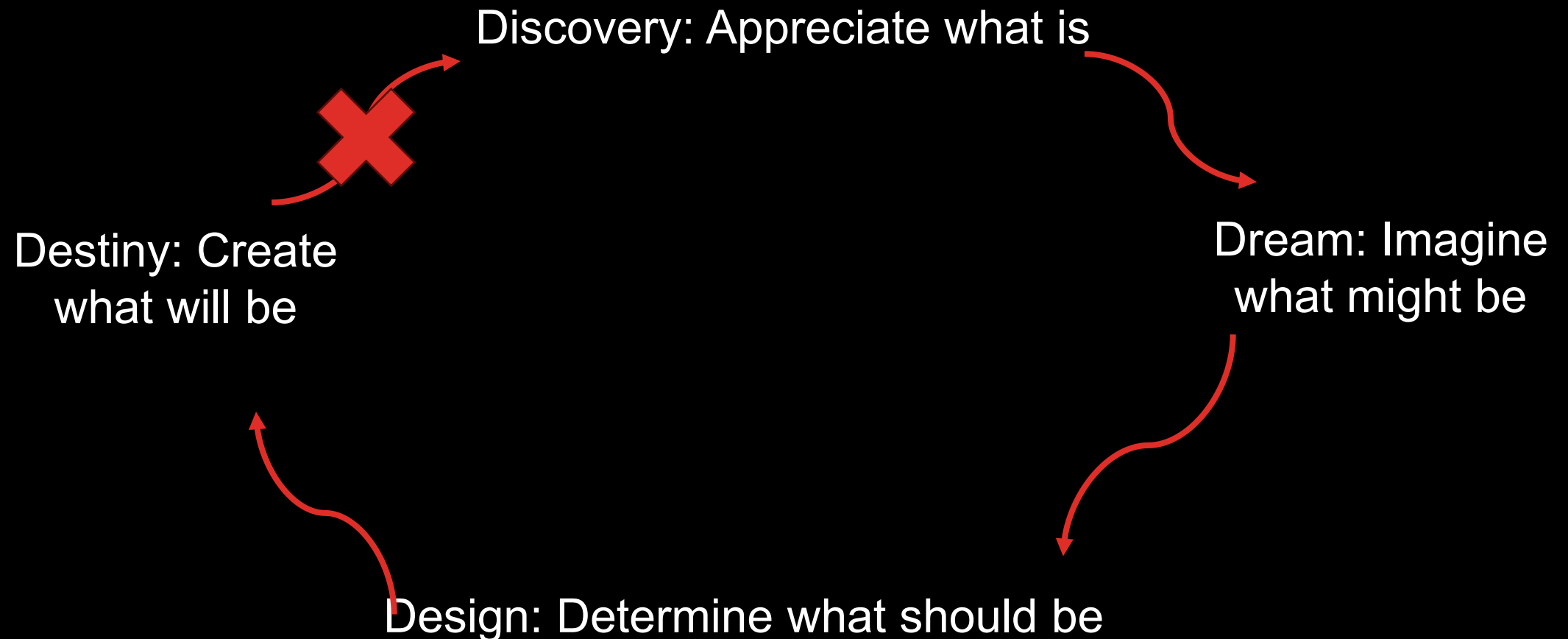
- Central ended up with a 45-unit housing complex that is first-class, particularly as a below-cost initiative.
- It created a worship space in downtown Vancouver that is now shared by five different congregations.
- It has a commercial space that helps raise revenues to be put toward a contingency reserve fund.
- The housing generates significant funds for the congregation and provides a place for ministry to those who live there.
- It is connected to a thirty-story tower, which gives it all the neighbours it could ever want.

STRUGGLES

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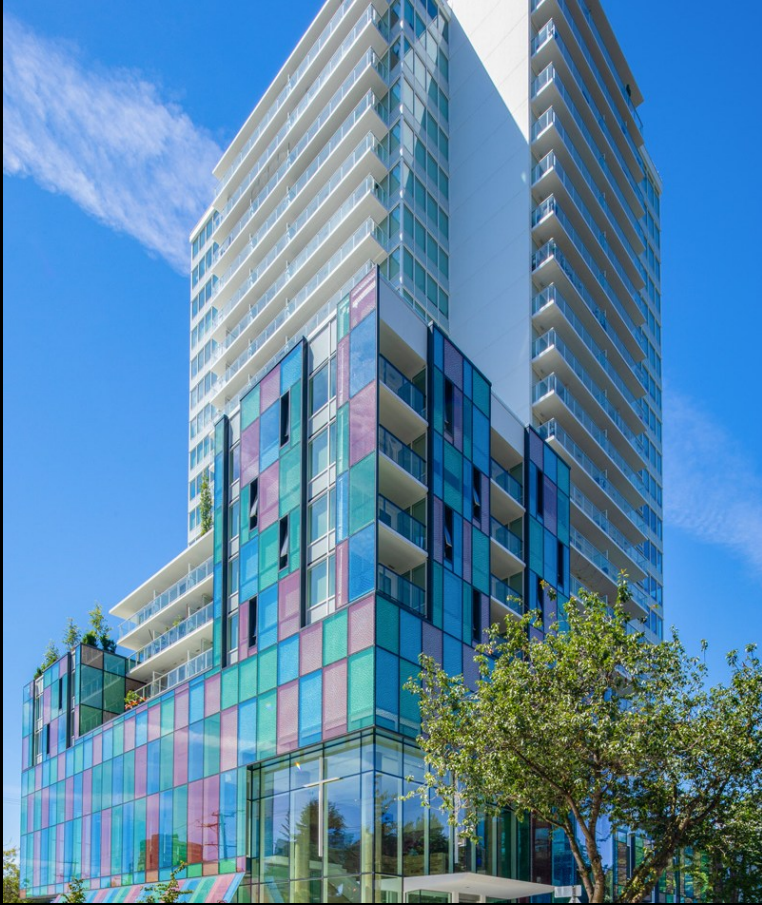
- There were challenges at the Presbytery level because the Presbytery oversees land and facilities.
- The conflicts got personal
- The new complex created a level of leadership beyond the capability of the congregation.
- The minister retired when the building project was completed, creating a leadership vacuum.
- A key elder passed away during the building program
- There were some financial miscalculations, leaving the congregation with close to a \$1 million debt.
- Covid came just after the building was completed.
- There was that inevitable sense in congregations 'that if you build it, they will come'. That did not happen.

USING THE TOOL OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

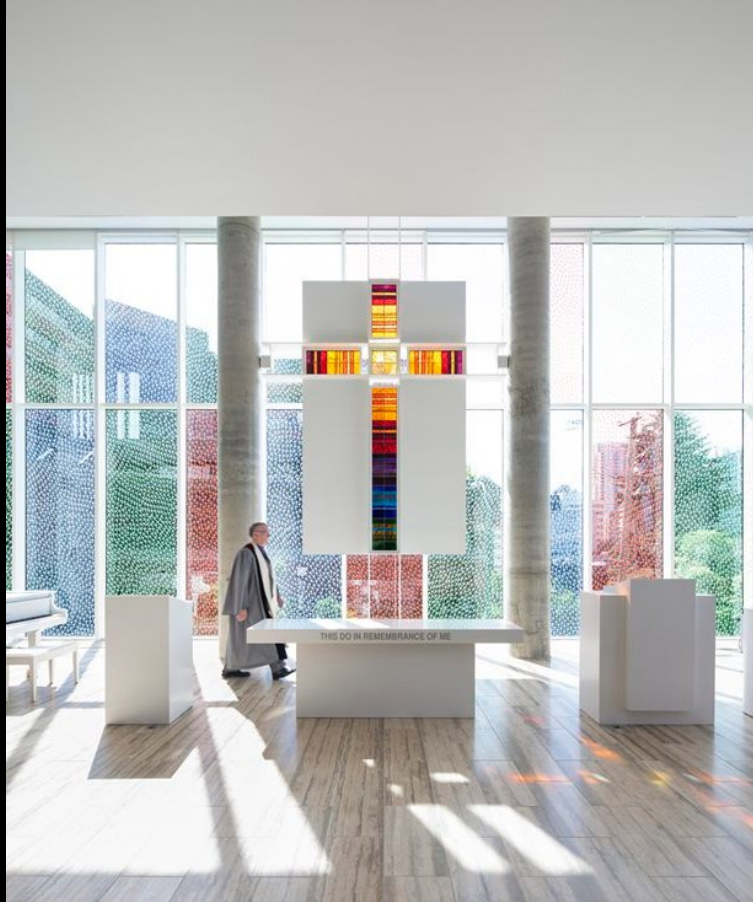


Final Thoughts

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Exterior of Central
Presbyterian Church



The Chapel



The Sanctuary