8 Strengths of Congregations

Strength to:
- Accompany
- Pray
- Give Sanctuary
- Connect
- Frame and Tell Stories
- Endure
- Bless
- Convene

Strength to Accompany
- Be present
- Come together
- Foundational to all other strengths
- Helping Roles
**Strength to Pray**
- Prayer moves us to the boundary of holy and human
- Many different forms of prayer
- Prayer pushes and pulls us into places that are new or uncomfortable
- Ritual

**Strength to Give Sanctuary**
- Physical space for programs or refuge
- Safe space for raising questions, sharing pain,
- Space for community

**Strength to Connect**
- Makes resources visible
- Depends on how much members reveal to each other
- Complexities yield fruit
- Tangible grows from intangible
**Strength to Frame/Story**
- Place little story in context of Big Story
- Drawing new frame around event
- Awareness of multiple characters, plots and roles
- Rewrite shared narrative

**Strength to Endure**
- Rejection of human time frames
- No success or failure is ultimate
- Kairos vs. Chronos
- Intergenerational potential

**Strength to Bless**
- Key to deep change/metanoia
- Must happen within context of community
- Critical for ministry with marginalized
- Profound links with healing and change
- Forgiveness
Strength to Convene

- Sharing of real needs and concerns
- Diverse groups meet around common concerns
- Micro and macro

Mining the Strengths

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How do we build them?

- Expect them. We expect gaps and needs, not strengths
- Call their names. They live in specific people. Who is it here that does this?
- Look in the roles. How does the role hold the strength?
- Listen for the stories. No heroic abstractions
- Look for functions
How do we build them?

- Make them visible. Hold people accountable by the fact that they're already there.
- Enhance role capacity through training. Building intelligence and capacity about the strengths that are there.
- Use them.
- Use them some more.
- Iron Rule. Never do for anyone what they can do for themselves.