

An aerial photograph of a dense urban neighborhood, likely in Boston, showing rows of red brick townhouses with dark roofs. Some trees with green and yellow foliage are visible between the buildings. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text.

LEARNING TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AGAIN

**PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING
AND ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES**

WHO IS KEN HOWARD?

Episcopal Priest for 25 years – Two-time church planter.

Co-Creator of Datastory for Faith Communities.

Founder and Executive Director of The FaithX Project.

ICF-Trained Coach

Consulting with dozens congregation, dioceses, and denominational organizations to make strategic missional decisions.

A MAP FOR TODAY'S JOURNEY

Introduction(s) and overview.

Context – How we fell out of love with our neighborhoods.

Strategy – How we can *learn* fall in love again.

Application – Developing a strategy for your context.

Q&A/Discussion

A cinematic photograph of Jesus and his twelve apostles walking along a dusty path in a rugged, rocky landscape. Jesus, with long brown hair and a beard, wears a white robe and a brown cloak, and is gesturing with his right hand towards the disciples. The apostles are dressed in traditional robes and some wear head coverings. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Jesus taught his disciples".

Jesus taught his disciples

A cinematic photograph of Jesus walking through a rocky, hilly landscape with a group of his twelve apostles. Jesus, with long brown hair and a beard, wears a white robe and a brown cloak. He is gesturing with his right hand towards a man in a grey robe. The other apostles, dressed in various robes and head coverings, follow behind them. The scene is set in a rugged, arid environment with sparse vegetation and a clear sky.

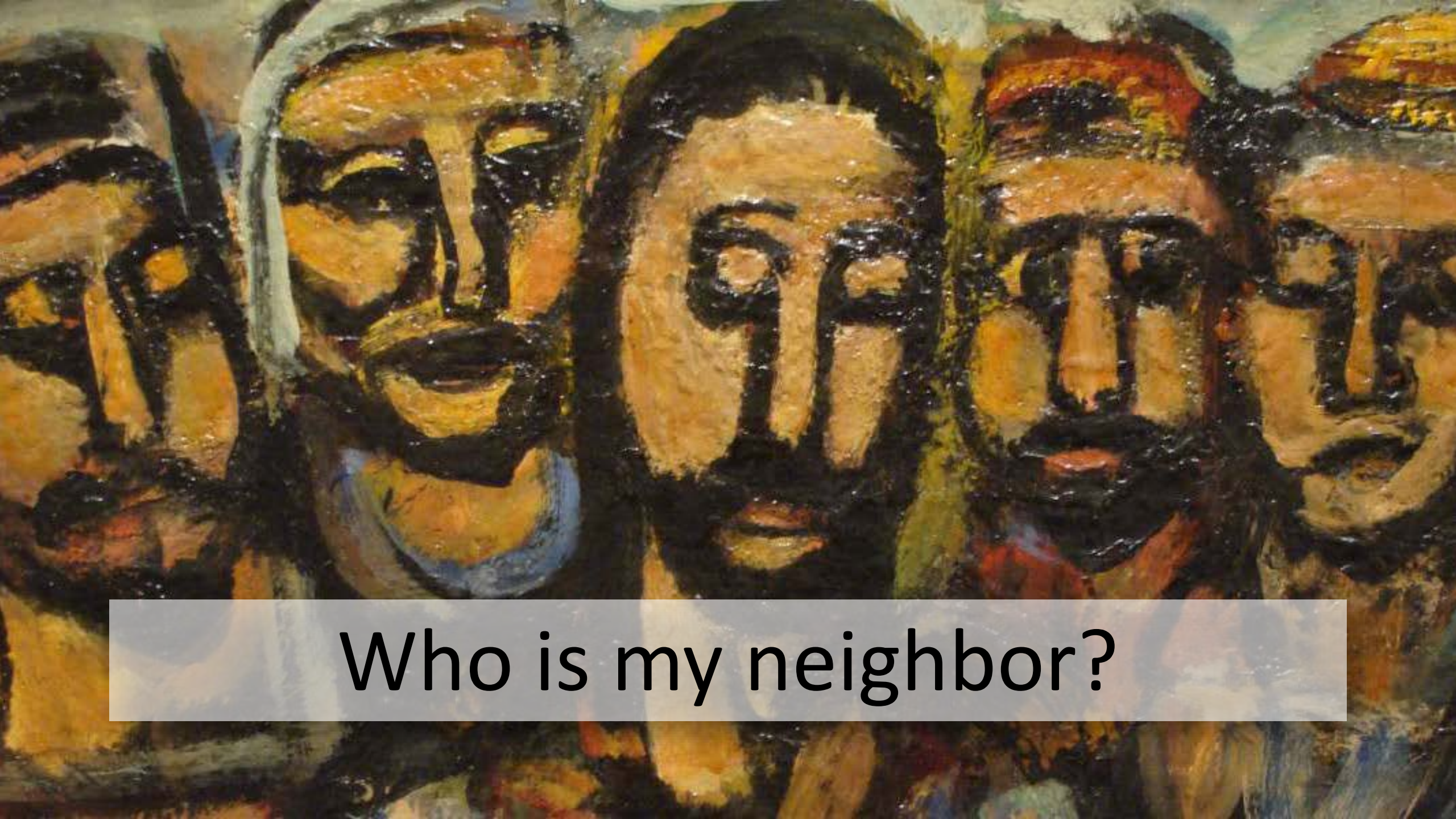
Love God
with your entire being

A cinematic photograph of Jesus walking through a desert landscape with a group of people. Jesus, with long brown hair and a beard, wears a simple white tunic and a brown outer robe. He is walking towards the right, with his right hand resting on the shoulder of a man in a grey robe. The group consists of men and one woman, all dressed in traditional Middle Eastern attire like robes and head coverings. They are walking on a dirt path with a rocky, hilly background under bright sunlight.

Love your neighbor
as though your neighbor was you

An abstract painting featuring several faces rendered in a distorted, expressive style. The faces are composed of thick, textured brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, and black. The background is a mix of dark, swirling colors like blue, green, and red. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the text "But a religious teacher asked".

But a religious teacher asked



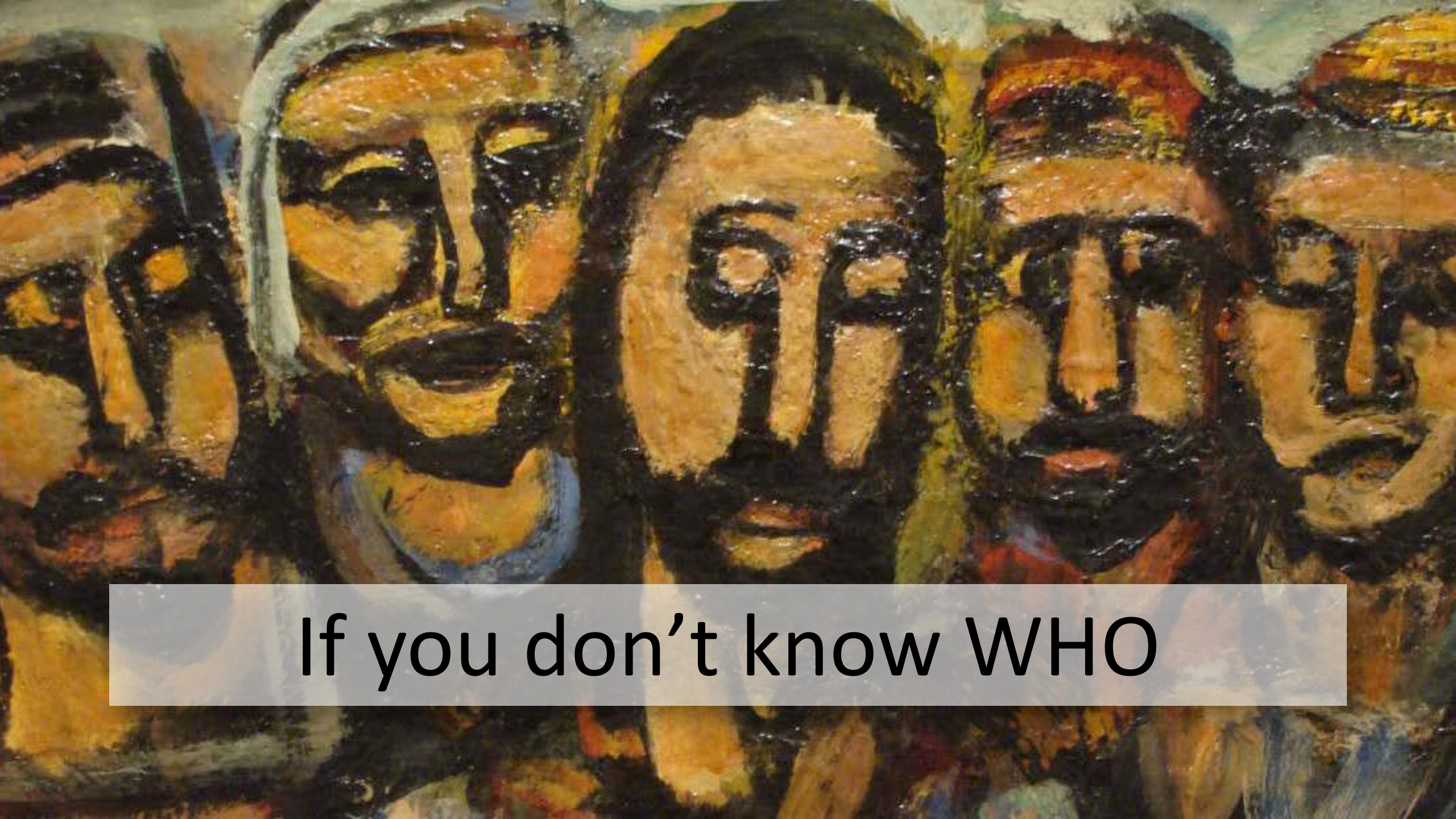
Who is my neighbor?

An abstract painting featuring several faces rendered in a distorted, expressive style. The faces are composed of thick, textured brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, and black. The background is a mix of dark, swirling colors, including black, brown, and hints of red and blue. The overall composition is dense and chaotic, with the faces appearing to emerge from a dark, turbulent sea of color.

It was an important question

An abstract painting featuring several faces rendered in a distorted, expressive style. The faces are composed of thick, textured brushstrokes in shades of yellow, orange, and brown, set against a dark, swirling background of black, blue, and red. The overall effect is one of intense emotional expression and visual complexity.

Because it's hard to now HOW



If you don't know WHO

A cinematic photograph of Jesus walking through a rocky, hilly landscape with a group of people. Jesus, with long brown hair and a beard, wears a light-colored tunic and a brown outer robe. He is gesturing with his right hand towards a man in a grey robe. The group consists of men and one woman, all dressed in traditional Middle Eastern attire like robes and head coverings. The scene is set in a dry, rocky environment under bright, natural light.

Jesus responded with a story



about a outcast



who be came a neighbor



by noticing a person in need



and treating him like family



We need to ask WHO, too



Do they have kids?

What are their names?

Where do they go to school?

Where do they work?

How can I help them?

Are they happy?

Who is my Neighbor?

Do they know Jesus?

How can I pray for them?

An aerial photograph of a dense urban neighborhood, likely in Boston, showing rows of red brick row houses with dark roofs. The houses are tightly packed together, with some featuring fire escapes and dormer windows. The image is taken from a high angle, looking down on the street-level buildings. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the text.

**BECAUSE WE HAVE FALLEN OUT OF LOVE
WITH OUR NEIGHBORHOODS**

An aerial photograph of a dense urban neighborhood, likely in New York City, showing rows of red brick townhouses with dark roofs. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "We cannot understand those we do not know." in a black, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in two lines, with "We cannot understand" on the top line and "those we do not know." on the bottom line. The background shows a variety of architectural details, including fire escapes, dormer windows, and small courtyards between the buildings. Some trees with green and yellow foliage are visible at the edges of the frame.

We cannot understand
those we do not know.

An aerial photograph of a dense urban neighborhood, likely in Boston, showing rows of red brick row houses with dark roofs. The houses are tightly packed, and some have small balconies or porches. There are some trees with green and yellow foliage interspersed among the buildings. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "We cannot love those we do not understand." in a black serif font.

We cannot love
those we do not understand.

An aerial photograph of a dense urban neighborhood, likely in a city like Boston or New York. The image shows a tightly packed grid of multi-story red brick row houses. The houses have dark, gabled roofs, many with dormer windows. Some roofs are flat and feature various rooftop structures like HVAC units, skylights, or small green roofs. The streets are narrow, and there are patches of green trees and foliage interspersed among the buildings. The overall scene conveys a sense of high population density and established urban architecture.

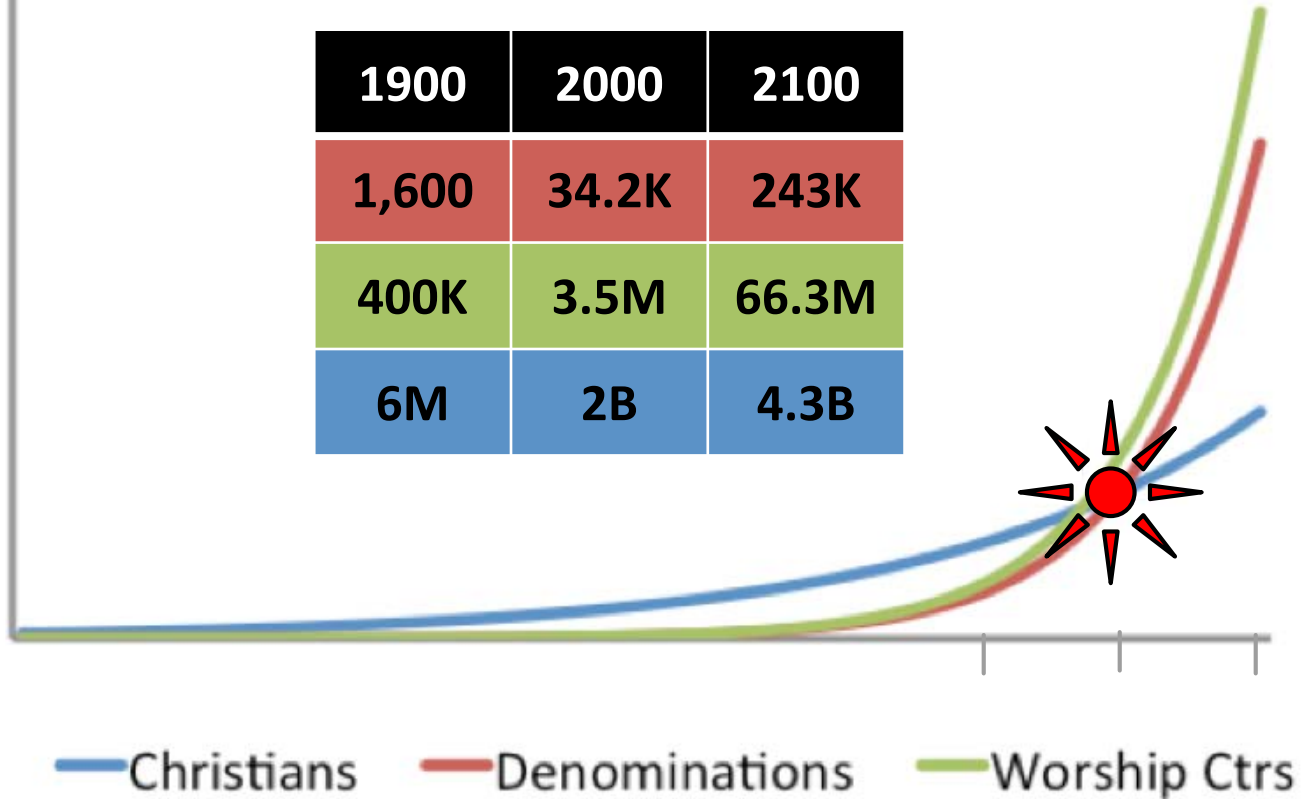
We cannot create Christian community
among those we are not prepared to love.



How Did We Get Here?

Individual vs. Institutional Growth

1900	2000	2100
1,600	34.2K	243K
400K	3.5M	66.3M
6M	2B	4.3B



**RUNAWAY
GROWTH
DENOMINATIONS
WORSHIP CENTERS**

Download the research at FaithX.net

Christians per Institution

1900	2000	2100
349K	58.1K	17.6K
1,400	570	64

Denomination

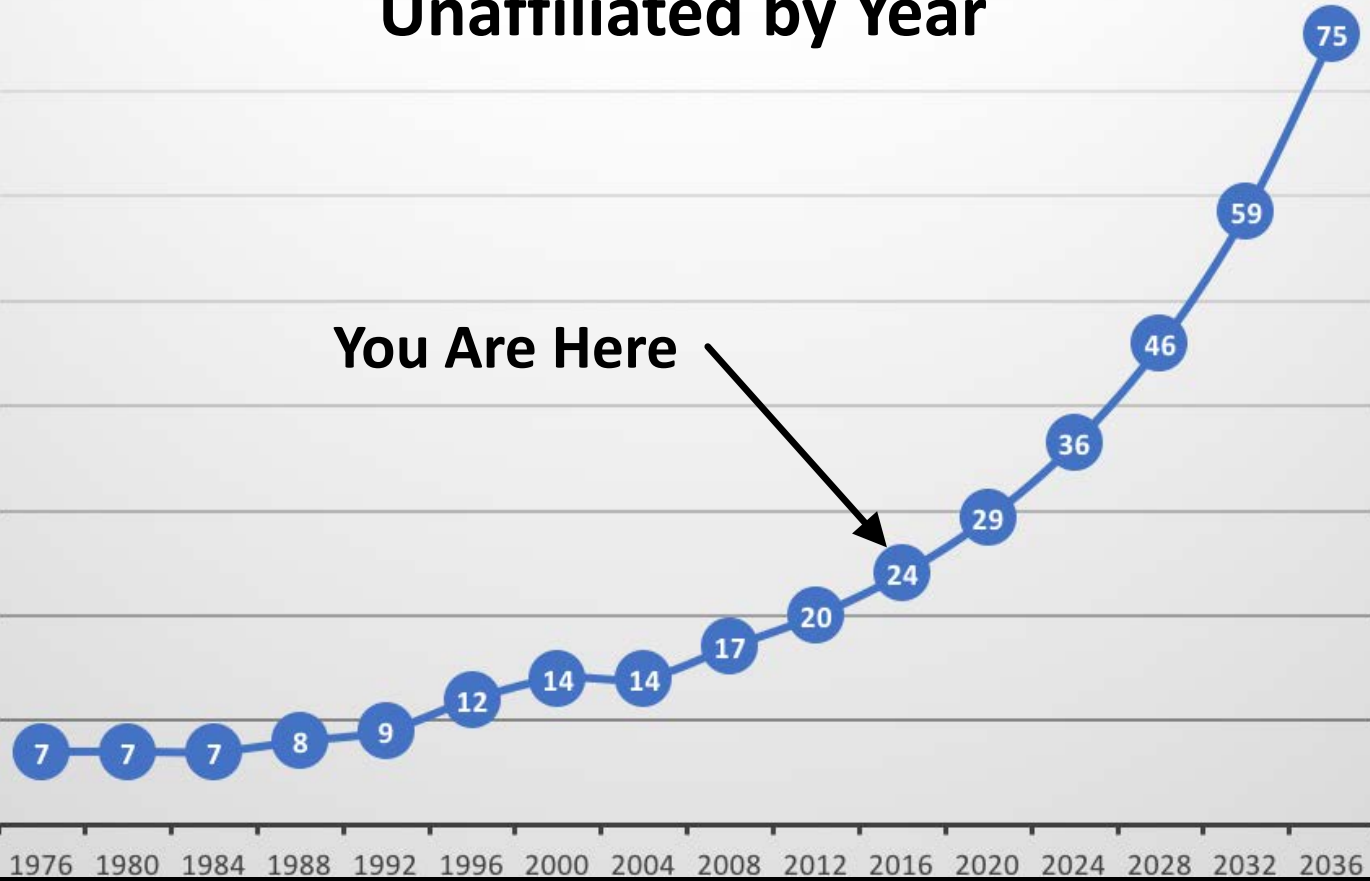
Worship Center

ECCLESIASTICAL
INSTITUTIONS
BECOMING
UNSUSTAINABLE
IN THEIR
CURRENT FORMS

Download the research at FaithX.net

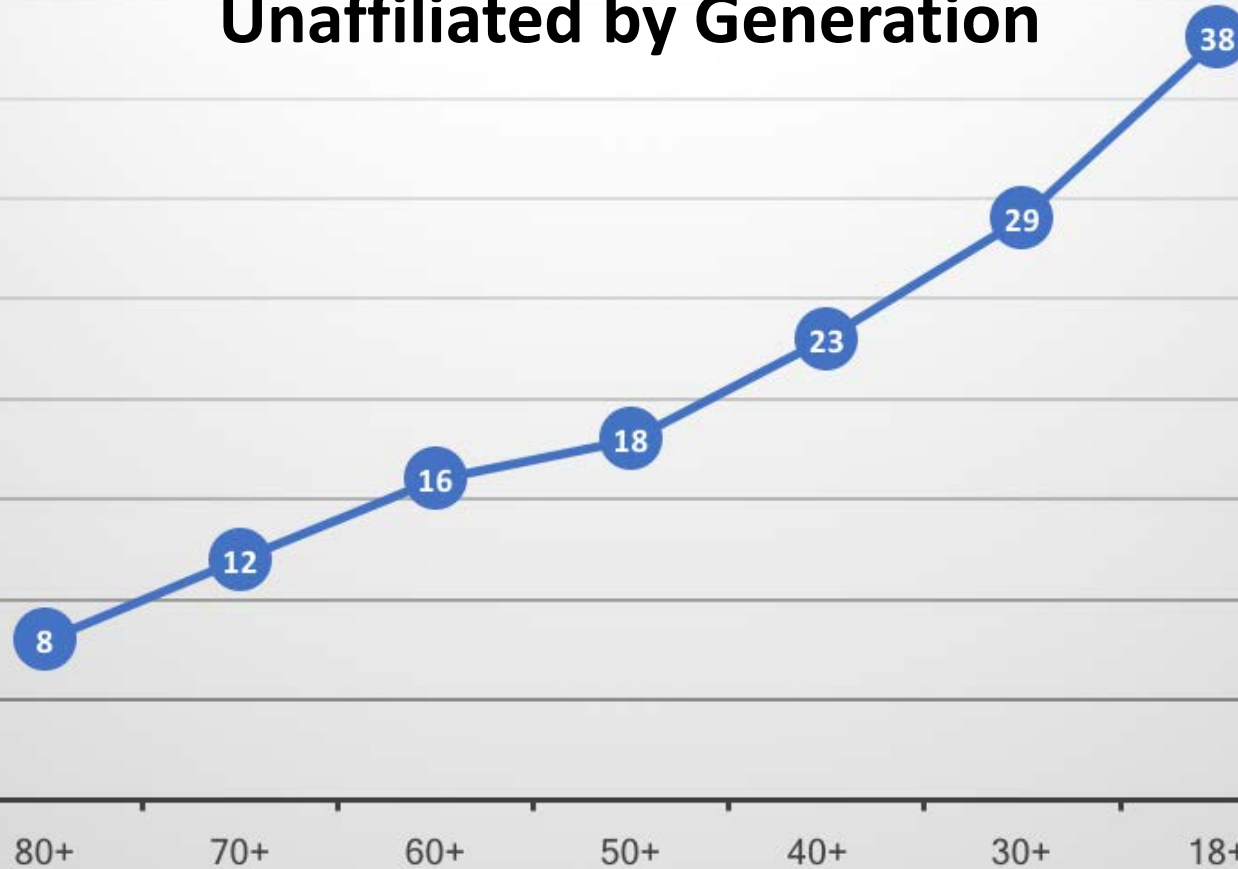
Unaffiliated by Year

You Are Here



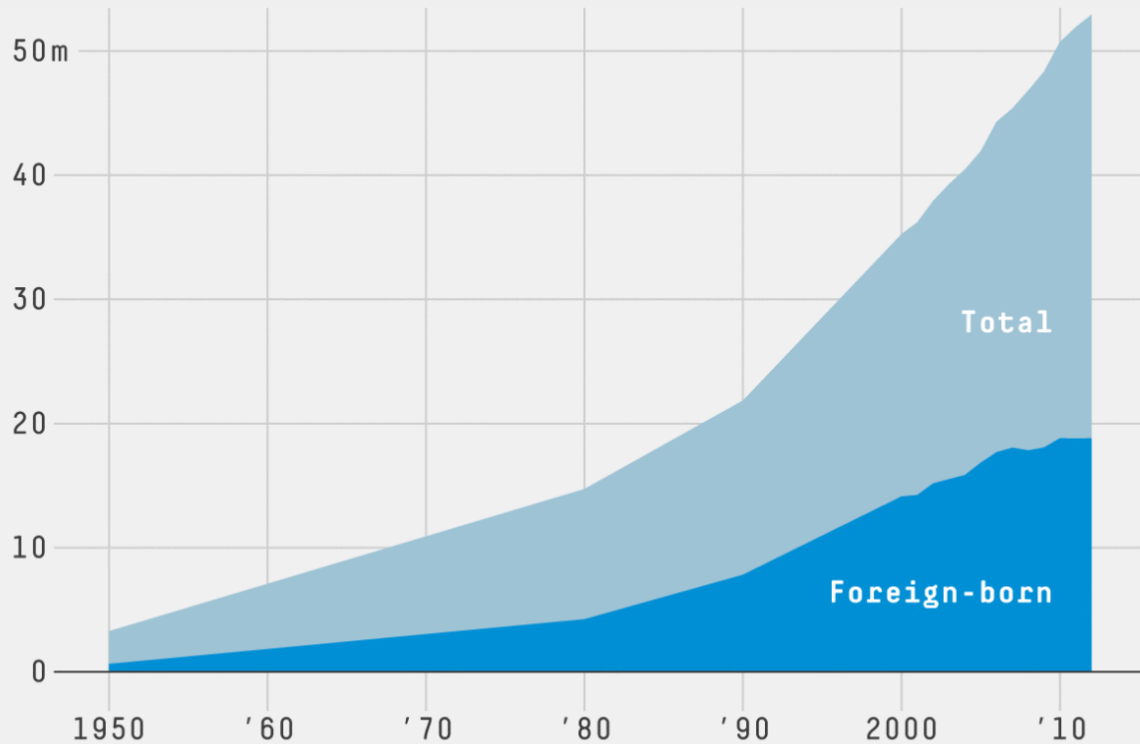
THE RISE
OF THE NONES

Unaffiliated by Generation



EACH
GENERATION
LESS AFFILIATED
THAN THE LAST

Latino Population Growth

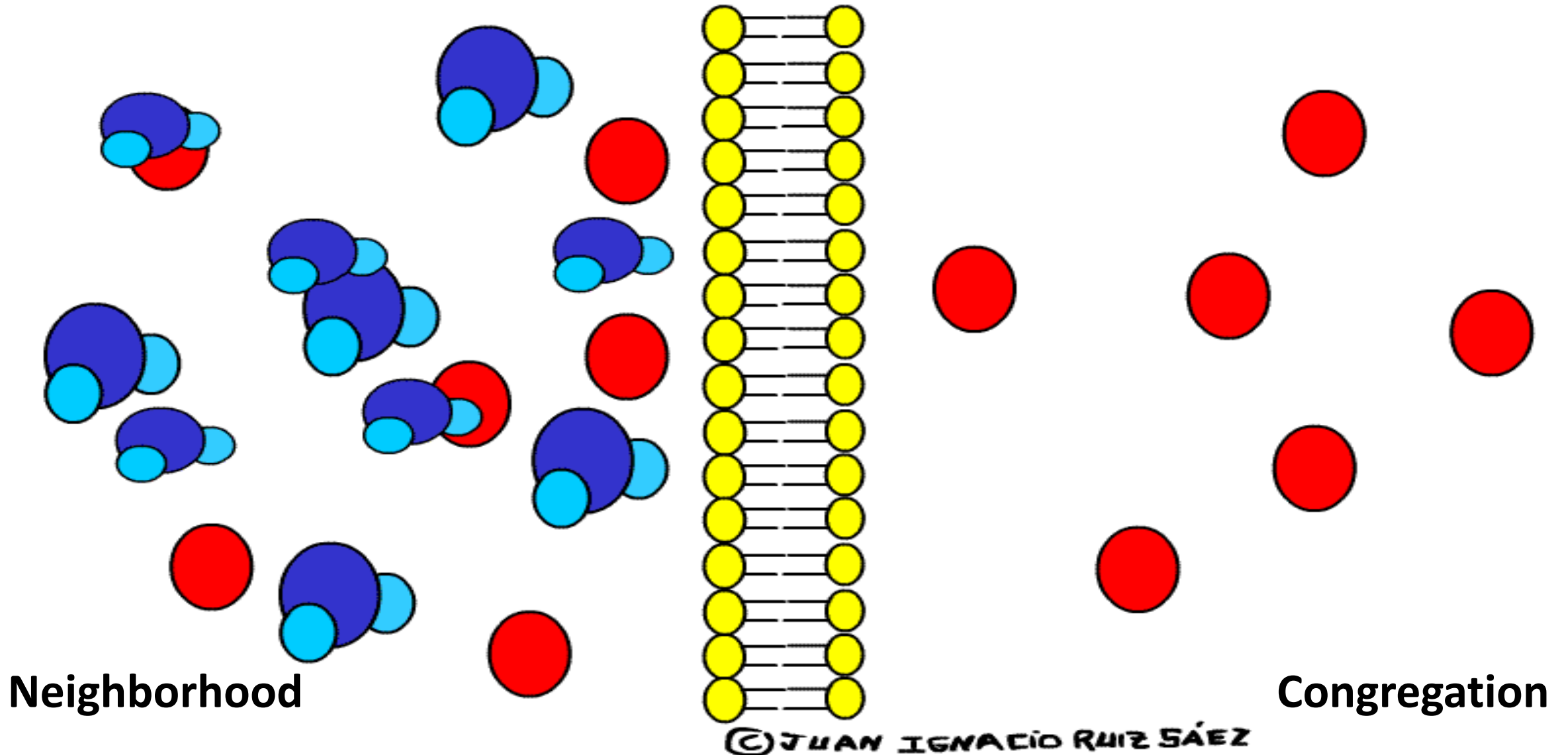


FIVETHIRTYEIGHT

SOURCE: CENSUS BUREAU VIA IPUMS

NEIGHBORHOOD
TRANSITIONS
WHICH
ONCE TOOK
GENERATIONS
NOW TAKE YEARS

**We used to have the time
to learn about our neighborhoods by osmosis**





But when our neighborhoods are changing this fast...



Learning by osmosis is no longer an option



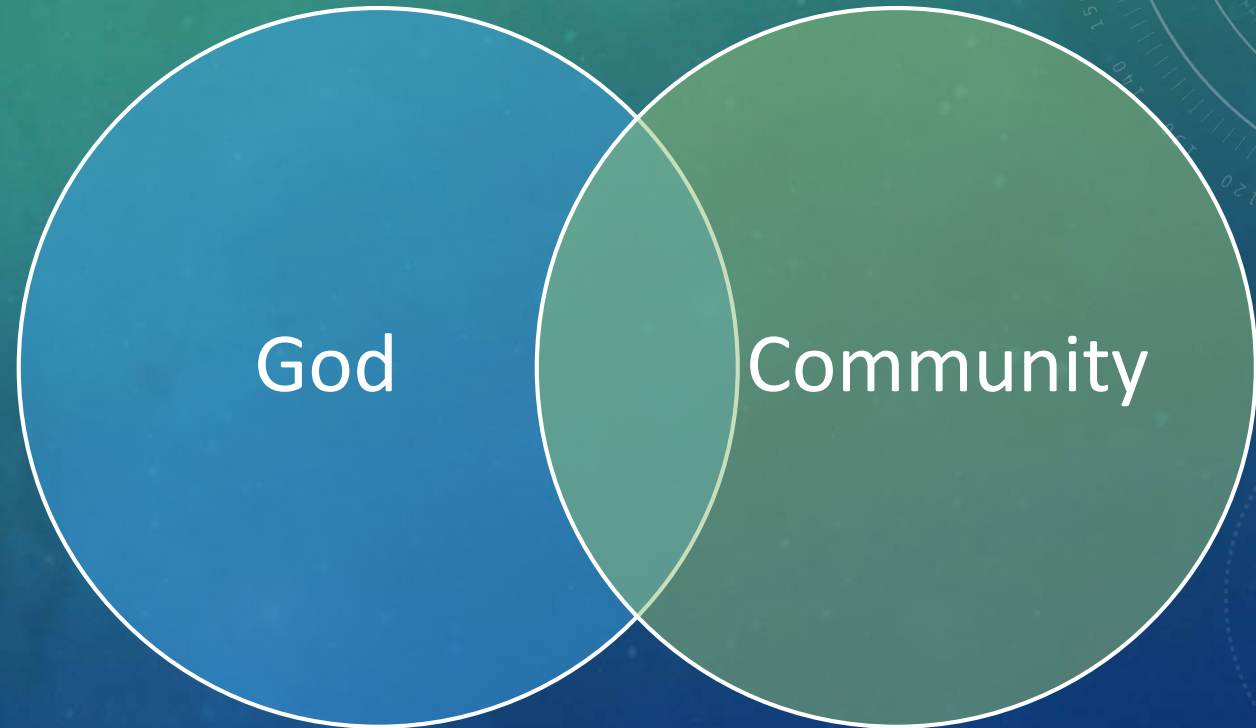
We need to learn at the speed of change



and we need to do it well

MISSIONAL AWARENESS

Missional assumes God is already at work in the community.



MISSIONAL INTENTIONALITY

A holy symbiosis
(collaboration)
between congregation,
community, and God.



MISSIONAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Getting to know
your neighborhoods
in three ways



STRATEGIC MISSIONAL PLANNING

(Seven Questions)

- 1 – What Is Our Neighborhood?**
- 2 – Who Are Our Neighbors?**
- 3 – What Are Our Neighborhood's Issues?**
- 4 – What Are Our Neighborhood's Resources**
- 5 – What Does It All Mean?**
- 6 – What Does It Say About Our Congregation?**
- 7 – Where Do We Go from Here?**

Find address or place

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Locate congregation on a map

Trinity Episcopal Church

1900 Dauphin St
Mobile, AL 36606

[Street View](#) | [Birds Eye View](#)

[Zoom to](#)

Find address or place

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Identify congregation's
MissionWeb
(equidistant drive times)

Trinity

Find address or place

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

*People from here
will visit you first
(low-hanging fruit)*

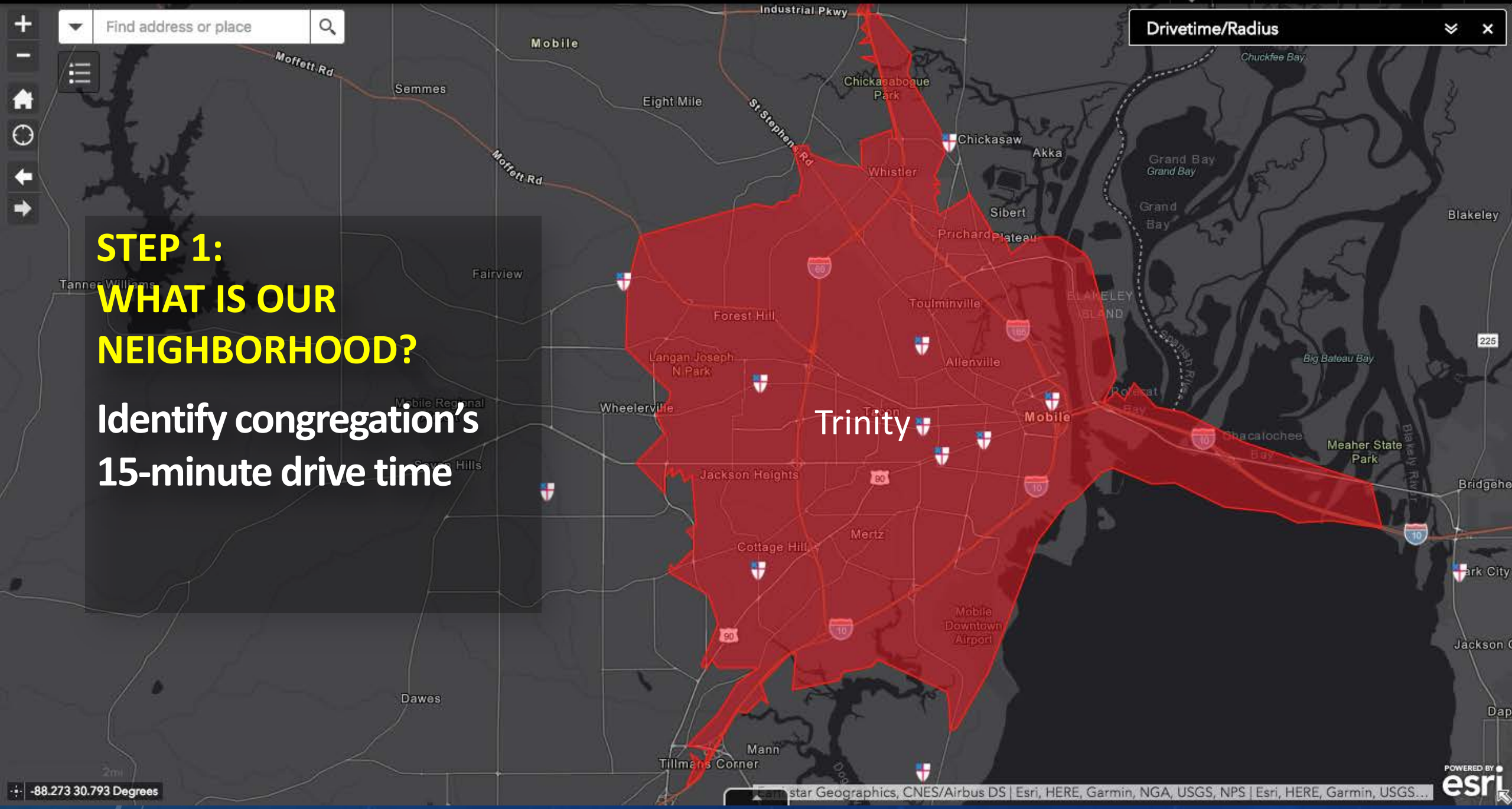
Trinity

Find address or place

Drivetime/Radius

STEP 1:
WHAT IS OUR
NEIGHBORHOOD?

Identify congregation's
15-minute drive time

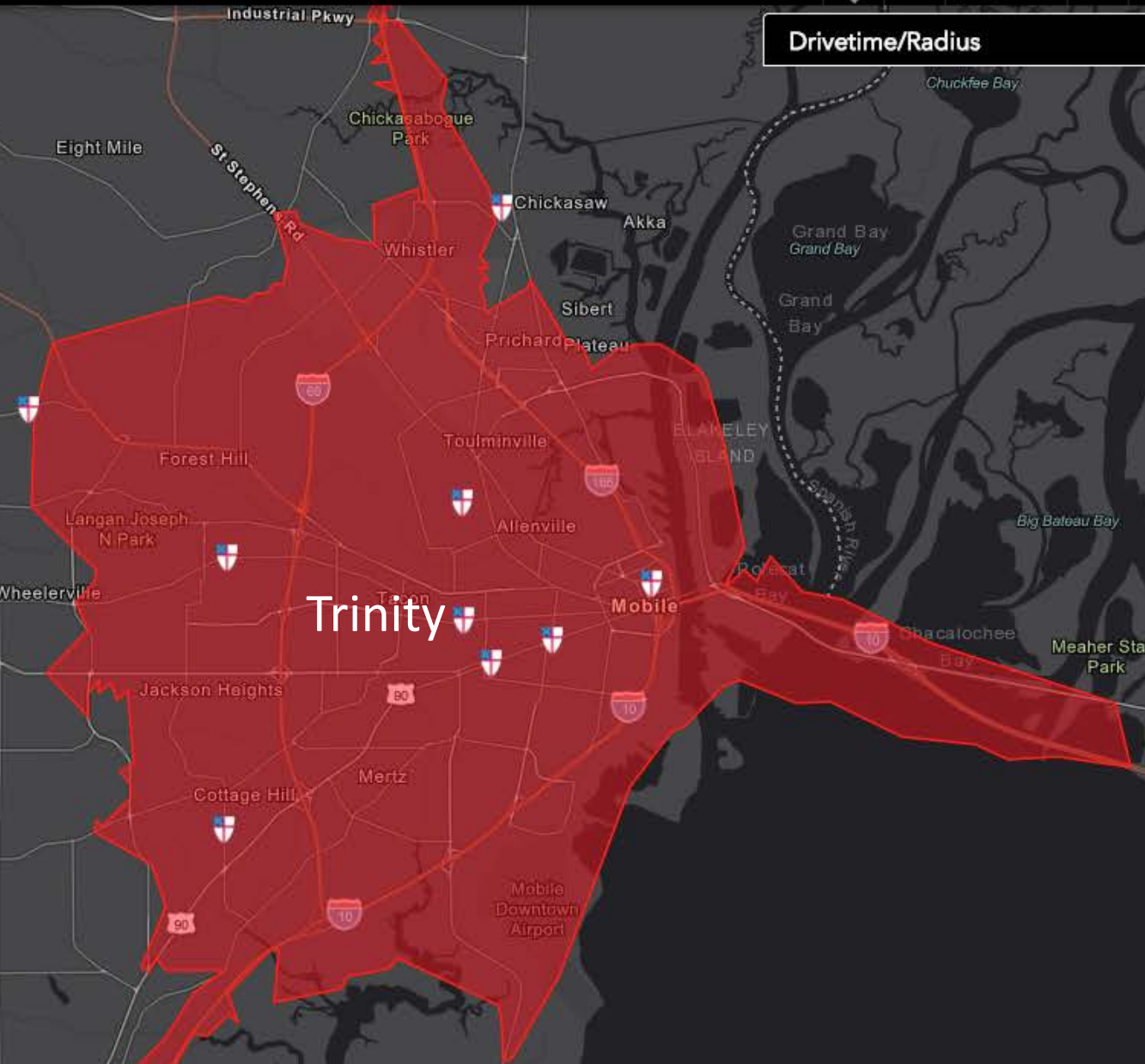


Find address or place

Drivetime/Radius

STEP 1:
WHAT IS OUR
NEIGHBORHOOD?

*70% of members will
come from here*

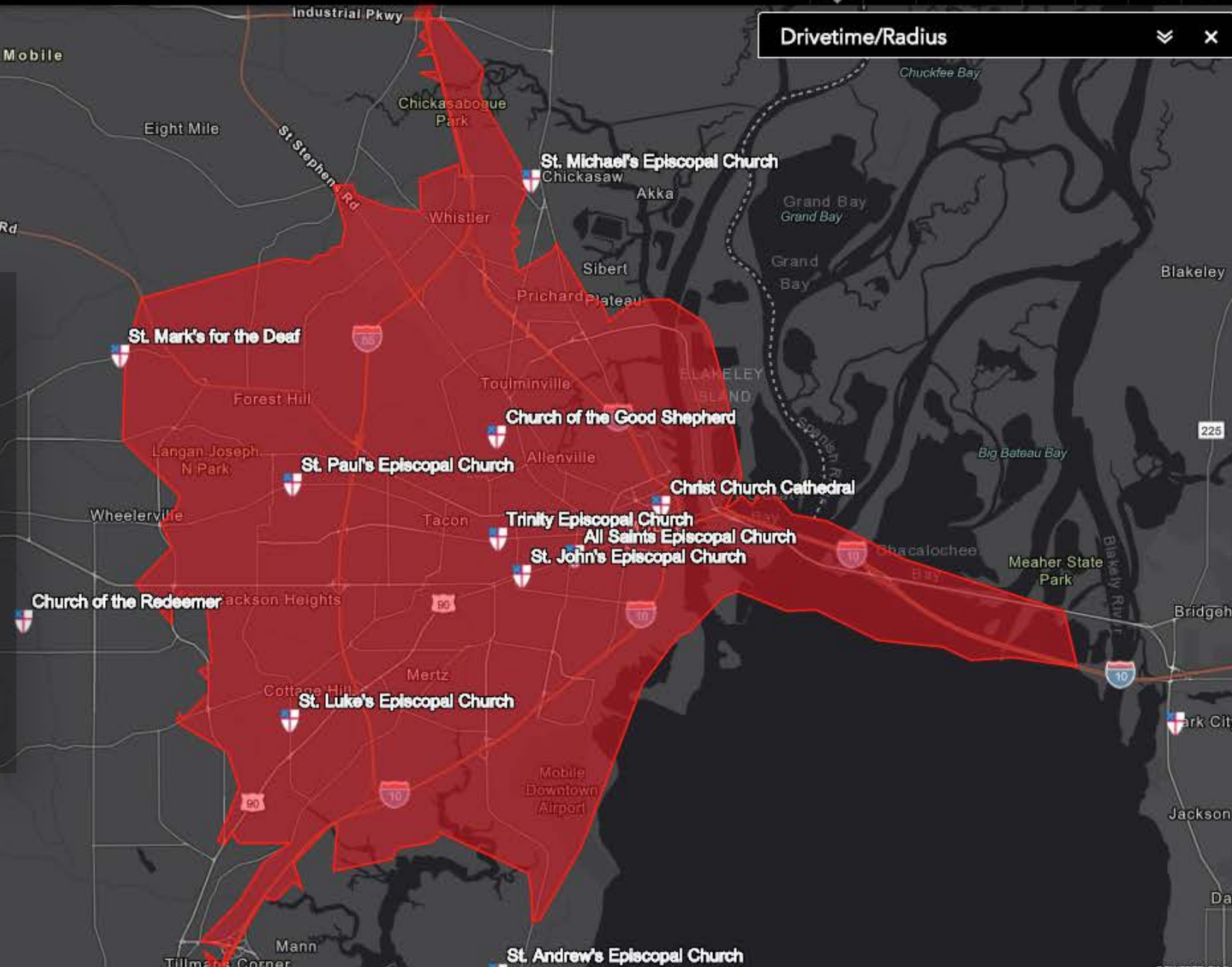


Count other same-denomination congregations

Find address or place

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

*Biggest competitors,
unless you make them
biggest collaborators*

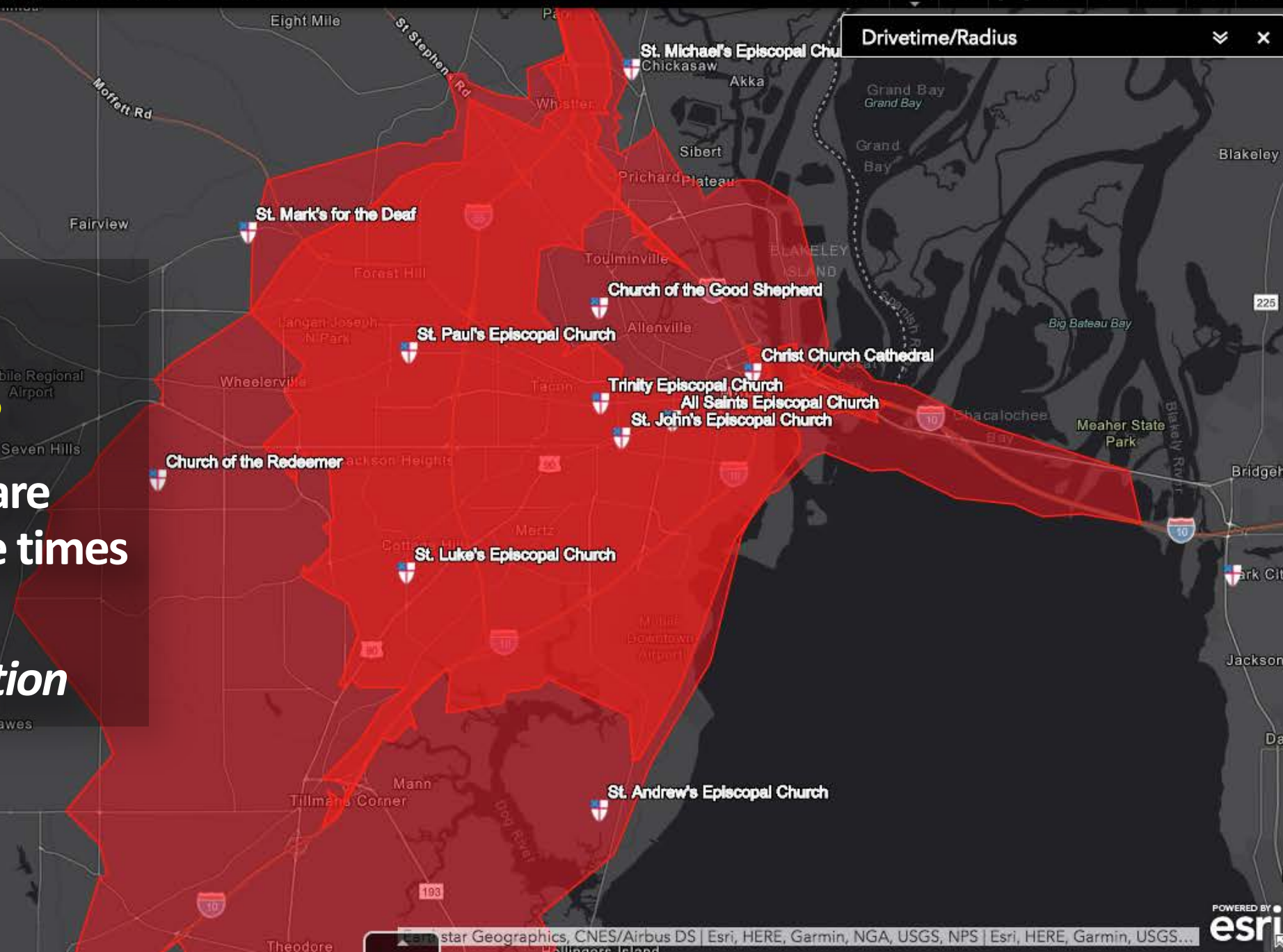


Find address or place

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Identify and compare
other 15-min. drive times

*1-50% overlap ---->
informal collaboration*



51-75% overlap ----> formal collaboration

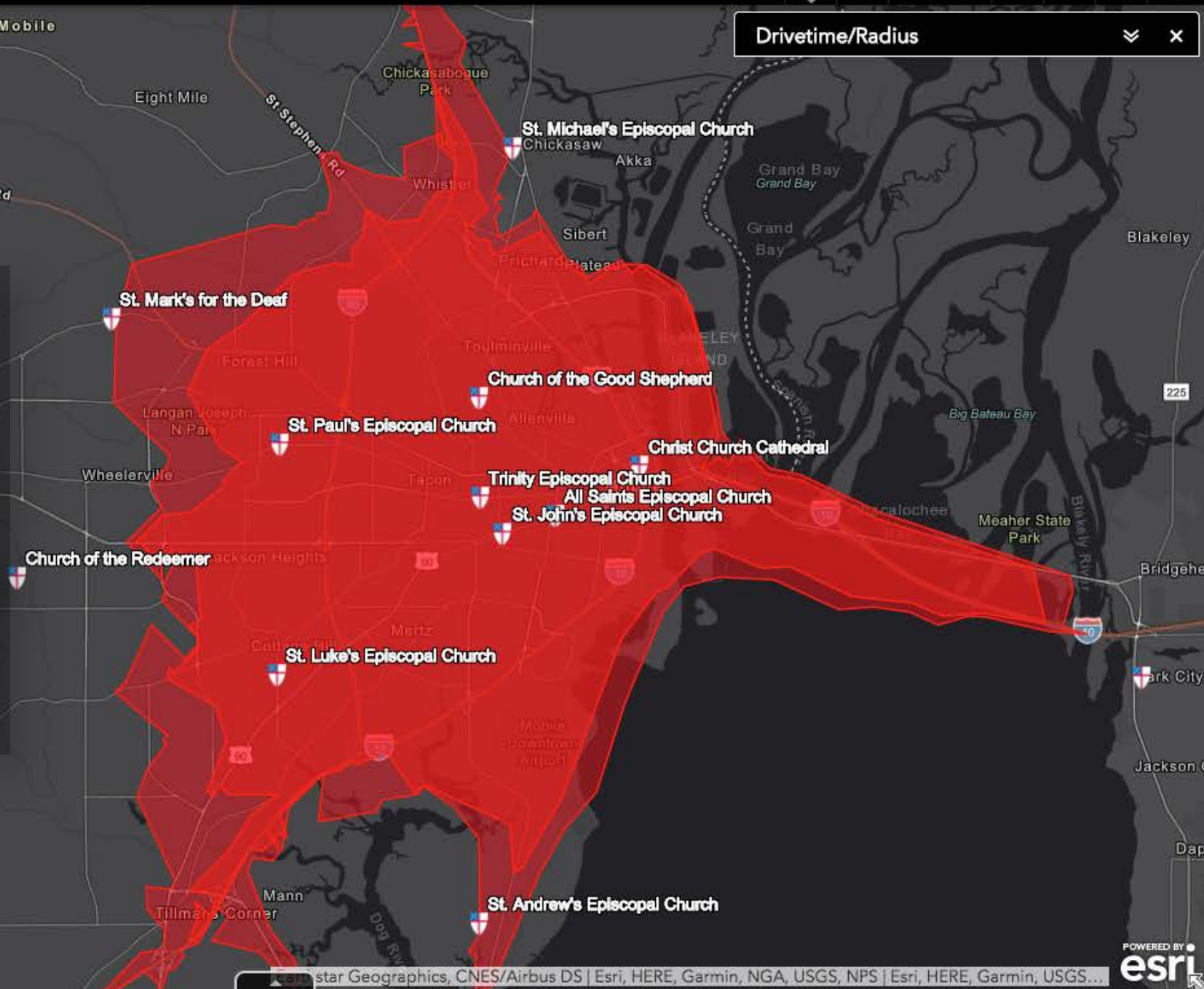
Find address or place

Drivetime/Radius

STEP 1: WHAT IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

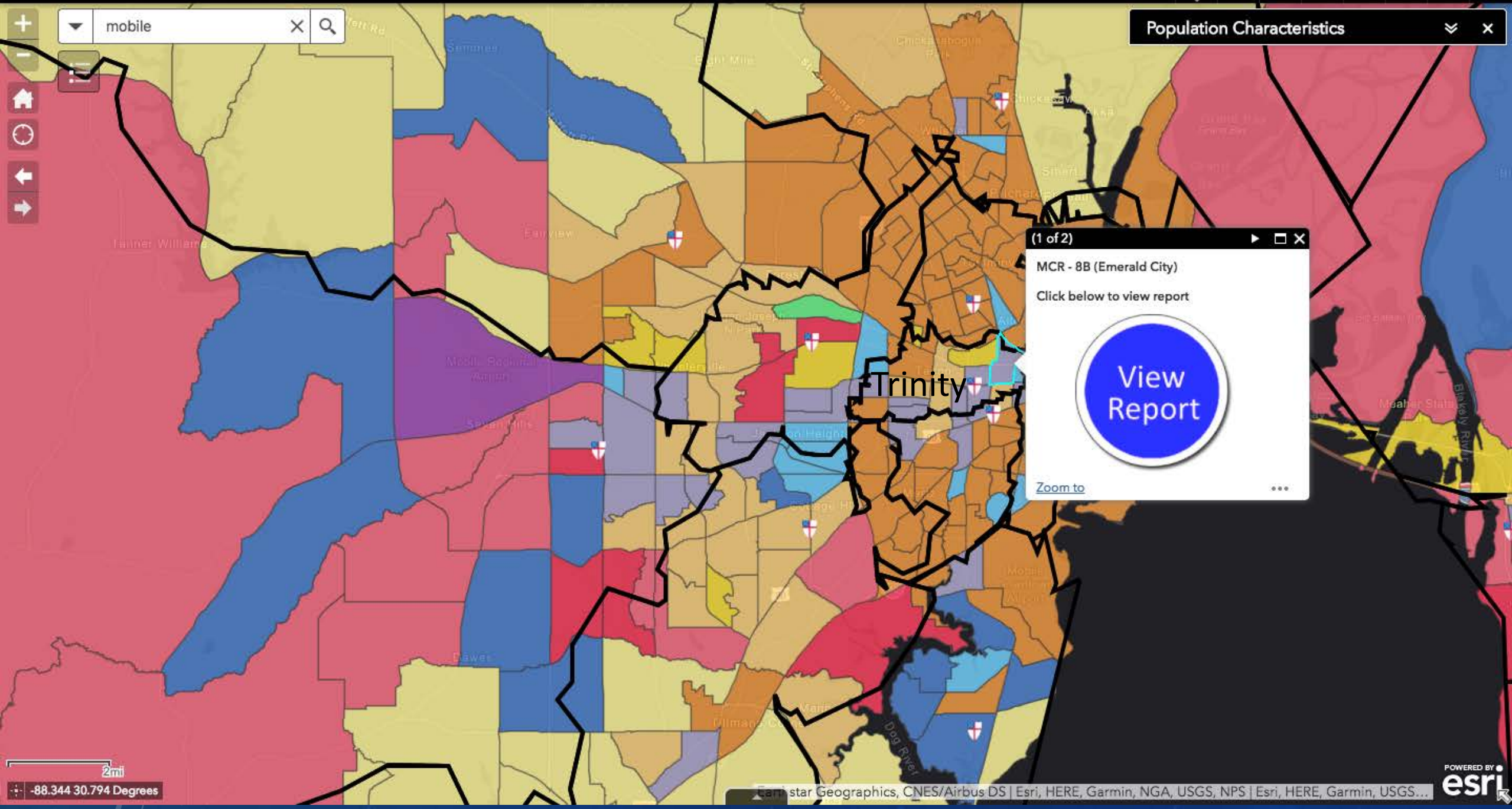
Identify and compare
other 15-min. drive times

*76-99% overlap →
consider merging*



***Census and updates
(or GIS data providers)***

Zoom to



Population Characteristics

(1 of 2)

MCR - 8B (Emerald City)

Click below to view report

View Report

Zoom to

...

Trinity

2mi

-88.344 30.794 Degrees



DATASTORY FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

Missional Context Report

Tapestry LifeMode 8B:
Middle Ground (Emerald City)

Communications and Technology

Preferred External Channels: Internet (professional networking, blogging, shopping, sports, news, music, social media like dating sites, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), email, Radio (NPR), TV (PBS). Consider ads and similar strategies that drive website traffic.

Preferred Internal Channels: Internet, email, social media.

Technology: Internet-resident, highly-connected, and comfortable with tech. Most own smartphones, active users of texting.

Education/Formation

Educational Level: About half are college educated. Plan adult formation programs accordingly.

Household Description: About half are college educated.

Neighborhood Issues

Diversity: Less than average diversity. White 79.3%, Hispanic 10.3%, Black 8.9%, Asian/Pacific 4.4%, Multiple: 3.3%, Other 3.2%, Native American <1.0%.

Economic: Household income is around national median, but net worth is 50% below national median.

Housing: More than 1/2 of households rent, meaning greater housing instability and homelessness.

Outreach

Affordable Housing: Provide, support, or advocate for affordable housing.

Homeless Services: Provide, support, or advocate for services for homeless people.

Pitch educational programs accordingly. Median Age: 36.6, Avg Household Size: 2.05. Households include families, both married couples with and without children, and single parents, as well as singles.

Children by Grade Range: About average number of children in K–PreK. Below average in all other grade ranges. Plan children’s formation programs accordingly.

Hospitality/Fellowship

Orientation: Favor socially and arts-oriented fellowship.

Leadership/Doership Skills Set

Occupational Skills: Predominantly management, followed by office/administration and sales: leadership, people, and technology skills.

Opportunities: Consider recruiting for leadership, people and technology/communications-related ministries.

Midweek Involvement

Availability: Fewer children means more availability.

Stewardship/Finance

Median Household Income: \$52,000 (102% of national median).

Median Net Worth: \$37,000 (37% of national median).

Capacity for Giving. Less disposable income for giving, but do give generous to some organizations, including PBS and NPR.

Theological/Political Orientation

Strongly Liberal: As a whole, this population tends to exhibit strongly liberal theopolitical preferences.

Worship

Age-Related: Consider service for families with young children and/or children in church area.

Technology: Likely to respond well to tech in worship and to want to use their tech in worship.

Find address or place

STEP 2: WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

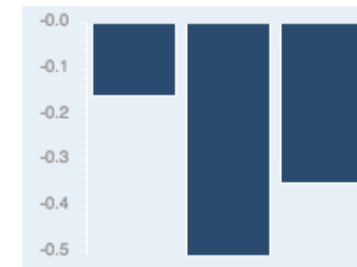
Review population growth

Population Characteristics

010970009.01

The current population here is 1,646 and is estimated to be 1,617 in 2022. The estimated annual rate of change is -0%. In comparison, the national annual rate of change is 1%.

Hover or click on chart to view the average annual compound growth rates during the indicated period. (%)



[Zoom to](#)

Find address or place

Population Characteristics

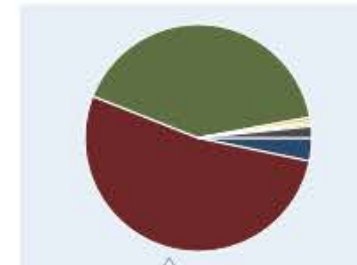
STEP 2: WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

Review diversity index

010970009.01

The diversity index here indicates that there is a 57% chance that two persons, chosen at random from this area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The national diversity index is 64%.

Hover or click chart to see population counts by race and ethnicity.



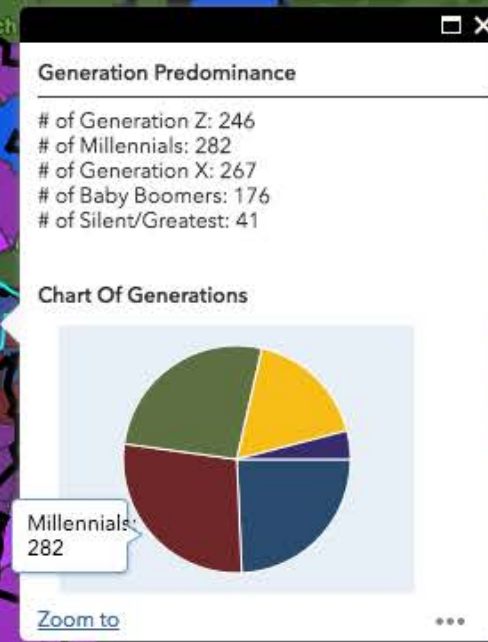
2017 White Non-Hispanic Population (Esri): 868

Find address or place

Population Characteristics

STEP 2: WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

Review generational predominance



OTHER POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS MIGHT INCLUDE

- Education Predominance
- Median Income
- Racial Predominance
- Specific age ranges (children, retired, etc.)
- Others?

Find address or place

Community Issues

STEP 3: NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES?

Review poverty rate

(1 of 2)

AL Block group 010970009.011

There are 332 households here living above the poverty line, and 44 living below. That is a ratio of 8 to 1.

For comparison, the ratio for the entire U.S. is six households living above poverty level for each one household living below (6.2 to 1 ratio)

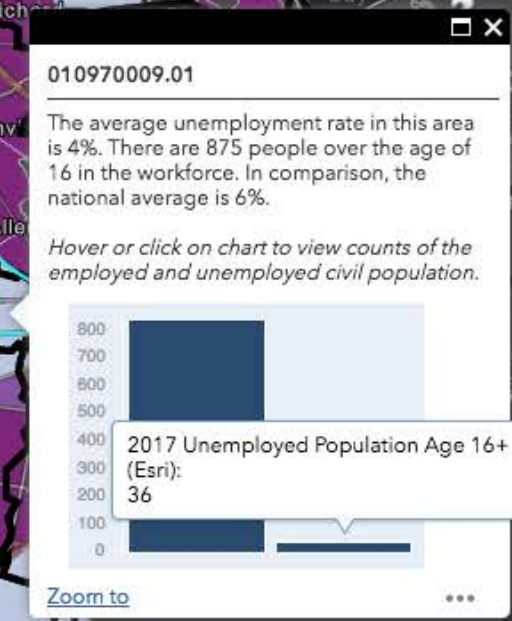
Below Poverty Level

Income Below Poverty: nonfamily, female head of household: 6

[Zoom to](#)

STEP 3:
NEIGHBORHOOD
ISSUES?

Review
unemployment rate



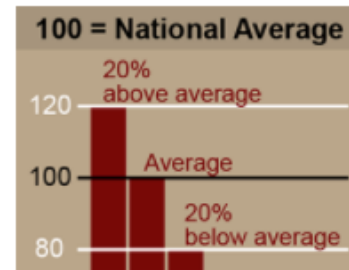
STEP 3: NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES?

Review crime rate

AL tract 01097000901

In comparison to the national average of 100, the overall crime index in this area is 257.

Click the arrow to explore additional crime indices.



Zoom to

OTHER COMMUNITY ISSUES MIGHT INCLUDE

- **Racial Predominance** (correlation with systemic discrimination).
- **Adult that exercise regularly** (correlation with health issues).
- Others?

STEP 4: NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES?

Locate schools
(public and private)

ST MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

107 N LAFAYETTE ST
MOBILE, AL 36604

Number of Students: 486

Source: NCES

[Zoom to](#)

STEP 4: NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES?

Locate
colleges and universities

Bishop State Community College

351 North Broad Street
Mobile, AL 36603-5898

Total Enrollment: 3,111.00

[Streetview](#) | [Google Earth](#)

Source: NCES

[Zoom to](#)

STEP 4: NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES?

Locate hospitals
and healthcare facilities

UNIVERSITY OF S A CHILDREN'S AND
WOMEN'S HOS
1700 Center St
Mobile, AL 36604-3301

Category: Hospital
Subcategory: Childrens

Hospital Based: Not Applicable
Facility Type: Childrens
Medical School Affiliation: Major

[Street View](#) | [Birds Eye View](#)

[Zoom to](#)

OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES MIGHT INCLUDE

- Childcare centers
- Senior care facilities
- Recreation centers
- Others?

STEP 5: WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

- What do we think we know and believe about our neighborhoods?
- What kinds of questions do we need to ask to validate our hypotheses about our neighborhoods?
- To whom do we have to talk to get answers to our questions?
- Where will we have to go?
- Who will go? When?

STEP 6: WHAT QUESTIONS DOES IT RAISE ABOUT OUR CONGREGATION?

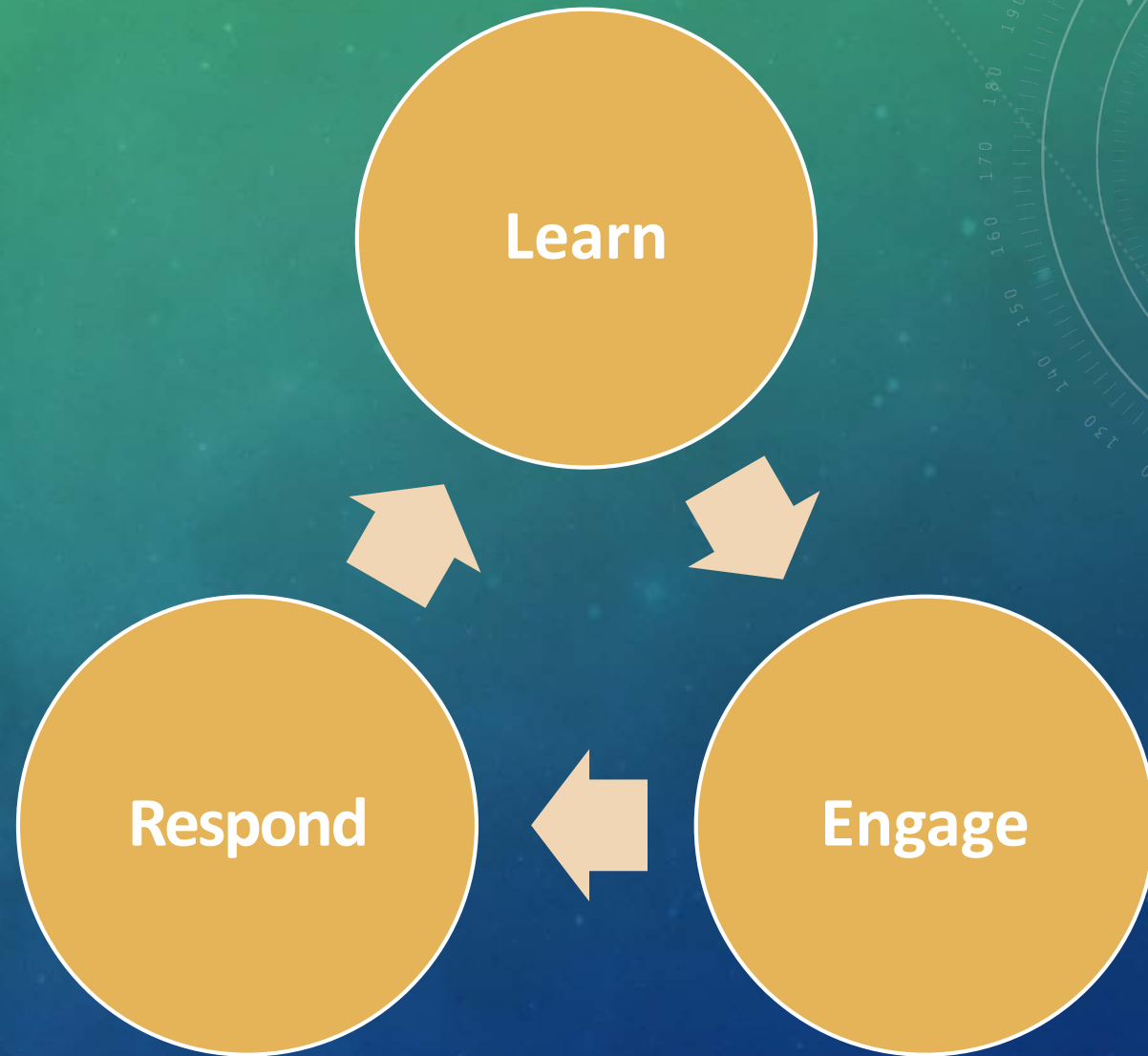
- About our Internal Sustainability?
- About our External Sustainability?
- About our Congregational Vitality?

STEP 7: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Part 1 – Congregational Vision
- Part 2 – Population Characteristics
- Part 3 – Community Issues
- Part 4 – Community Resources
- Part 5 – Opportunities and Strategies
- Part 6 – Milestones, Responsibilities, and Dates

THE MISSIONAL CYCLE

Repeat PRN



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



The logo features a stylized white 'X' that forms a large, open circle. A bright, glowing light source is positioned at the intersection of the 'X' arms, creating a lens flare effect. The background is a dark green to blue gradient with faint, technical-style circular patterns and lines.

THE FaithX PROJECT

CONTACT INFORMATION

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