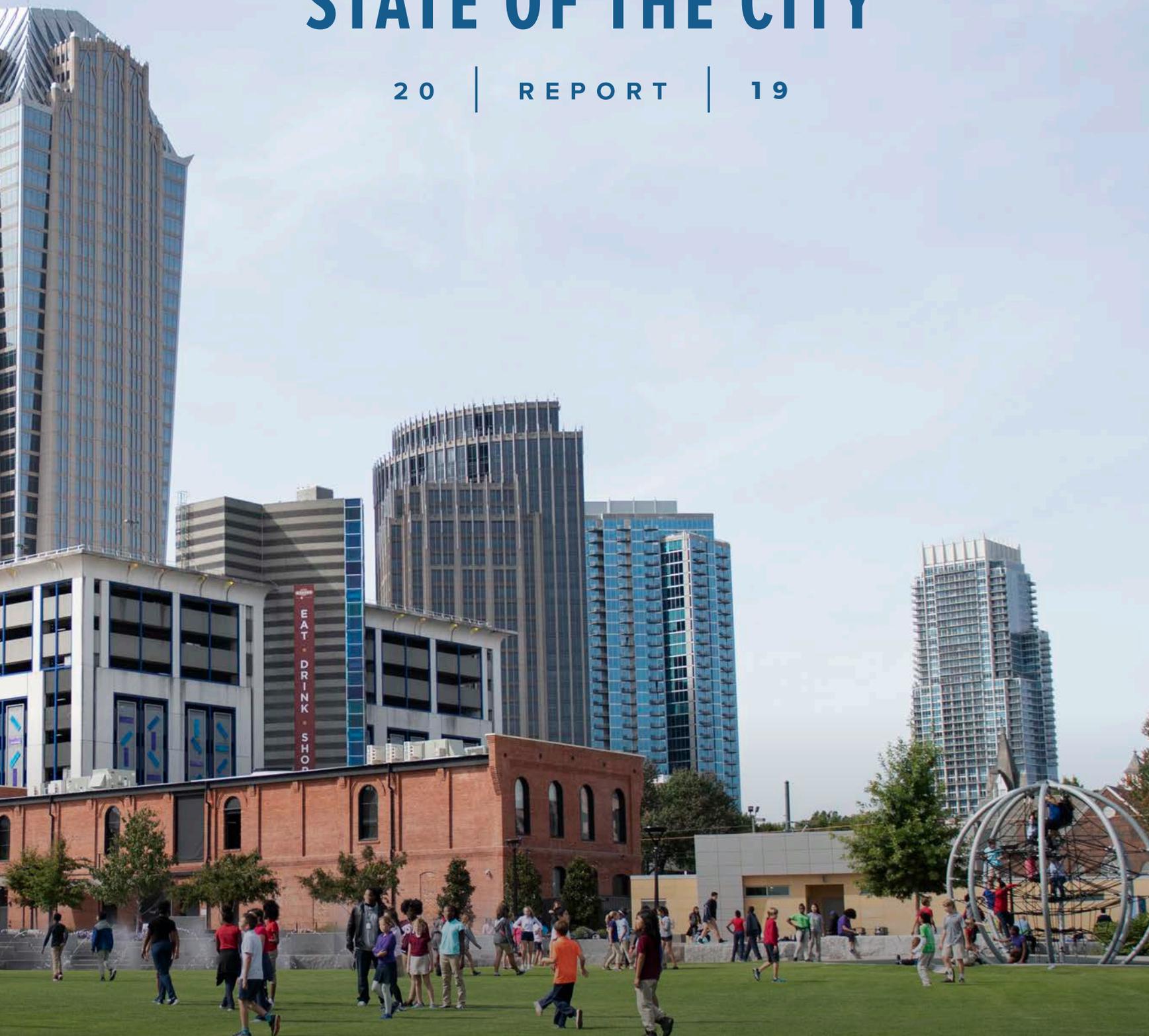


CHARLOTTE
STATE OF THE CITY

20 | REPORT | 19





Poverty. Segregation. Educational inequalities. Broken families. Lack of social capital. Affordable housing. Younger generations leaving the Church. Overall church attendance declining. The challenges that our city faces today didn't just happen. Our city suffers from systemic injustice, the result of dividing lines that have been forming over generations. As the Church, it is vital to recognize that the issues facing our city are not just social issues – they are gospel issues.

“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Jeremiah 29:7

As followers of Jesus, we are called to seek the flourishing of our city. However, the organizations that help engage these broken systems are oftentimes as divided as the systems themselves. We are divided theologically, relationally, and operationally.

The State of the City Report was created to be a trusted resource to equip the Church to understand the most pressing needs facing our city, and to catalyze the Church to meet those needs as a unified body of Christ. Over the past year, we have seen God bringing the Church together and building relational unity across our city.

But the work is far from done. If we are to truly create systems change, the Church must also build operational and structural unity as it continues to grow in relational unity. When thinking about structuring for unity, there are three levels to consider: internal, external, and citywide.

Internally, how can you establish a collaborative DNA within your organization? As an example, staff at Forest Hill Church often pose the question “Did it make the CUT,” meaning did it foster Collaboration, Unity, and Trust?

Externally, what partnerships can you form with organizations that are in your same lane? As an example, a close relationship, common purpose, and a heart for Charlotte resulted in New Charlotte Church merging with Church at Charlotte to form New City Church. Additionally, we saw The Harvest Center and Jackson Park Ministries structurally align to better serve those in systemic poverty in West Charlotte.

Citywide, where are opportunities for cross-sector collaboration? In recognizing the city as an ecosystem, what role does your church or organization play? As an example, the UCity Family Zone is a community partnership bringing together university, civic, marketplace, and church leaders to pursue transformation in the University City area of Charlotte.

It is our hope that as you read through this State of the City Report, you will prayerfully discern how you and your church or organization fits into the ecosystem of our city and how you might collaboratively engage needs and effect systems change so that we might see Charlotte transformed together.

For the City,

ROB KELLY
President & CEO
FORCLT



INTRODUCTION

For the Church to most effectively meet the needs of Charlotte, we must first know and love our city. In that spirit, our aim with the State of the City Report is to take an honest look at both the strengths and challenges of our city.

The intent of the State of the City Report is to provide trusted research on the major gospel needs in Charlotte and tangible ways the unified Church can respond.

Leading up to the 2018 State of the City Report, FORCLT identified five primary mission focus areas that emerged from extensive prayer and research. We believe if the Church were to engage faithfully and collaboratively in these five areas, measurable transformation in the city of Charlotte would occur. The five focus areas are:

- » (Upward) Mobility Matters
- » The Margins Matter
- » Millennials Matter
- » The Marketplace Matters
- » Multiplication Matters

Now in its second year, the 2019 State of the City Report provides an update to data where available, and shares the stories of people and organizations impacting the needs of the city. Four levels of engagement are provided in each area of gospel need:



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Verses to reflect on what God says about the issues facing our city.



STORIES OF ENGAGEMENT

Stories of people and organizations serving to meet the needs of our city.



MISSION ENGAGEMENT

This "Get Involved" section outlines actions to take to meet the needs of our city.



PRAYER ENGAGEMENT

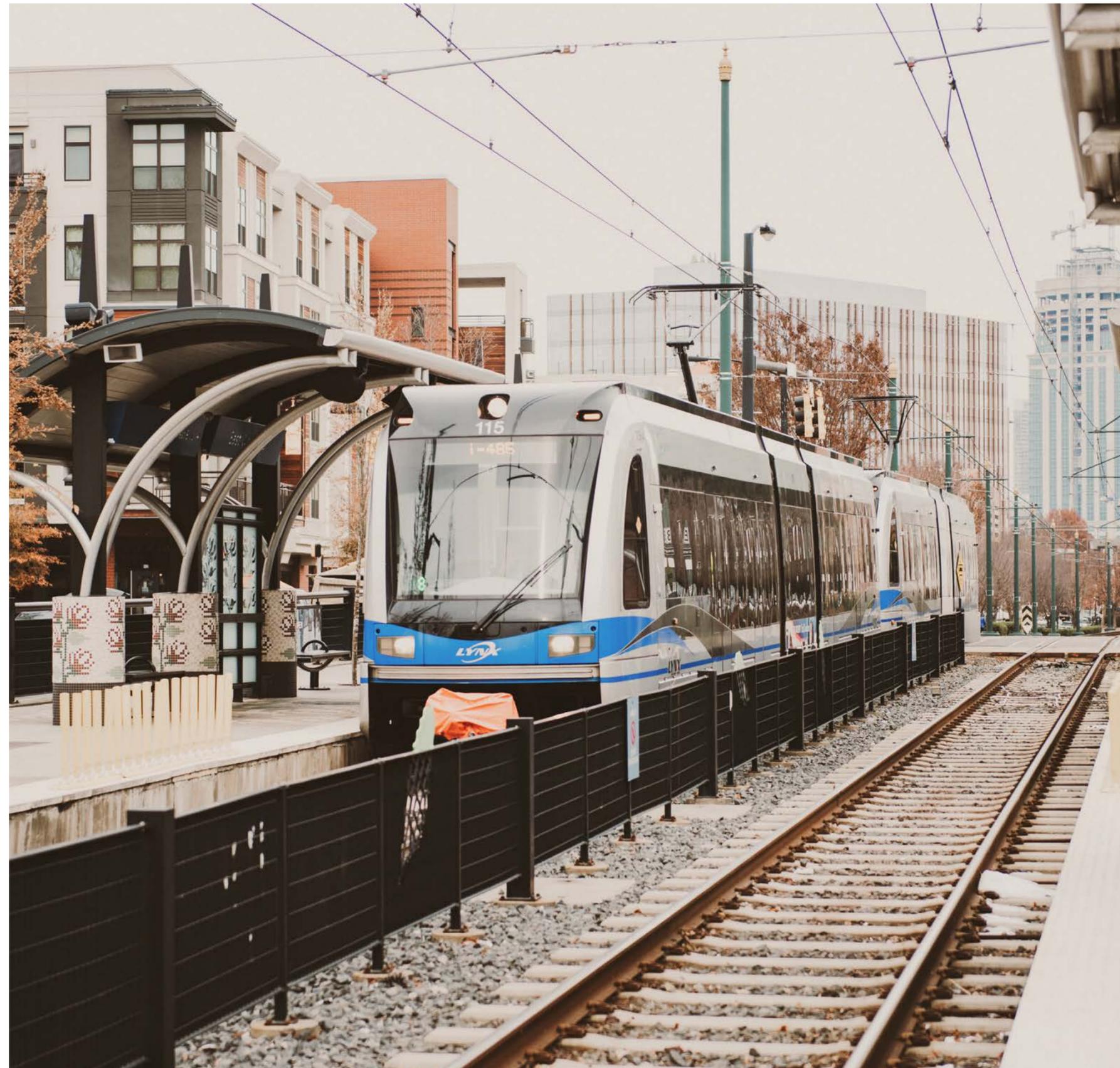
Ways to pray for specific needs of our city.



MARCUS JONES

City Manager
City of Charlotte

"One of the greatest things about Charlotte is the faith and commitment of our community. I'm proud of the relationship we've started with FORCLT. We are excited to partner with the faith community to help those most in need throughout our city."



Disclaimer: The research commissioned and compiled for this report, although broad in scope, is in no way comprehensive. Similarly, the recommendations for engagement are not exhaustive, but rather serve as recommendations for you and your organization to begin to discern how to engage the many needs in our city.



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Mobility

MATTERS

In 2014, a study published by Harvard University and UC Berkeley ranked the 50 largest US cities on economic mobility - the likelihood that a child born into poverty will move out of poverty, independent of family status and where they grew up. This study ranked Charlotte dead last, 50th out of the 50 largest cities in America, in terms of upward economic mobility.

It is harder to escape poverty in Charlotte than in any other large city in the United States.

The study found that only 4.4% of Charlotte children born in the lowest income quintile would move up to the highest income quintile by adulthood, while 70% would remain in the lowest two income quintiles.¹

When you break down the key components of the study, it reveals deep systemic

injustice plaguing our city. The study showed that Charlotte is deeply divided by race, quality of education, poverty and economic opportunity, level of social capital, and broken families.

Charlotte's bottom ranking in this national study sent shockwaves through the Charlotte community, and sparked a call to action to improve economic opportunity for all people in the city, including the creation of an Opportunity Task Force to study intergenerational poverty in Mecklenburg County. This study exposed a clear opportunity for the Church to come alongside agencies and organizations across the city to engage the upward mobility crisis facing our community.

For the Church to serve our city in ways that breaks down barriers to upward mobility, it is essential to know and understand the issues. Over the following pages, we will examine the key components of this upward mobility crisis facing our city.



Mobility Matters INCOME INEQUALITY

Charlotte is becoming increasingly divided by income and wealth, creating areas of concentrated poverty in the city. This economic segregation cuts off access to resources and contributes to low community economic mobility.

The map clearly demonstrates the division in income and wealth, with concentrations of wealth in south Charlotte and the northern part of the county. The top 20% of households earn over half of the income in the county.

Charlotte's economic segregation is evident across socioeconomic indicators including:

- » Median incomes and housing prices
- » Education levels
- » Access to quality employment and jobs that provide a living wage
- » Availability of affordable housing
- » Quality of schools
- » Socioeconomic composition of schools
- » Access to healthcare
- » Access to healthy food
- » Crime rates
- » Social capital

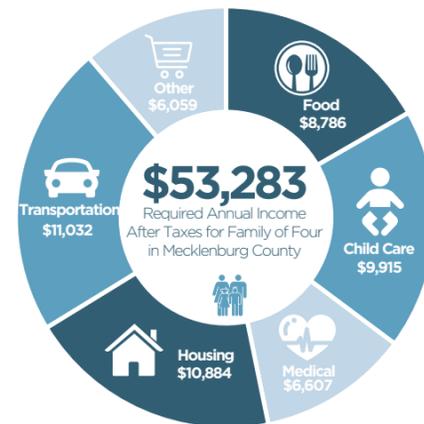
4.4%

Of Charlotte children born into to lowest income quintile will move up to the top quintile by adulthood.¹

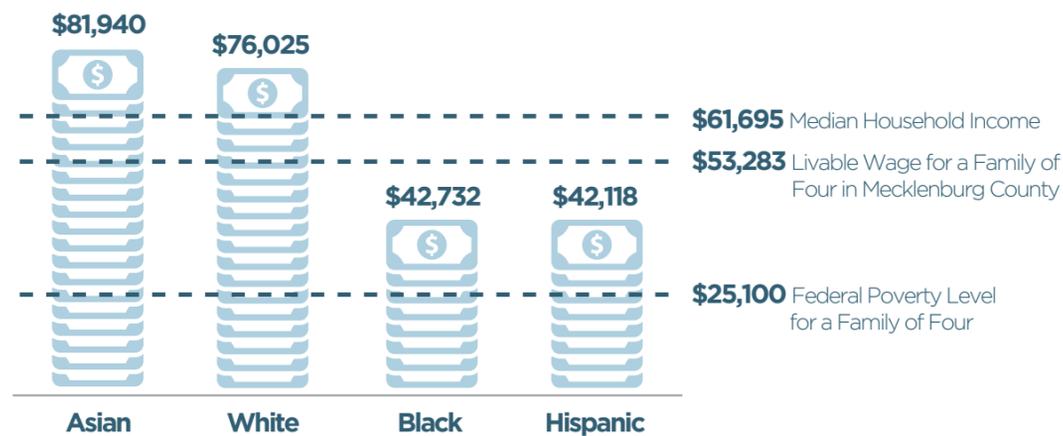
70%

Will stay in the lowest two income quintiles through adulthood.¹

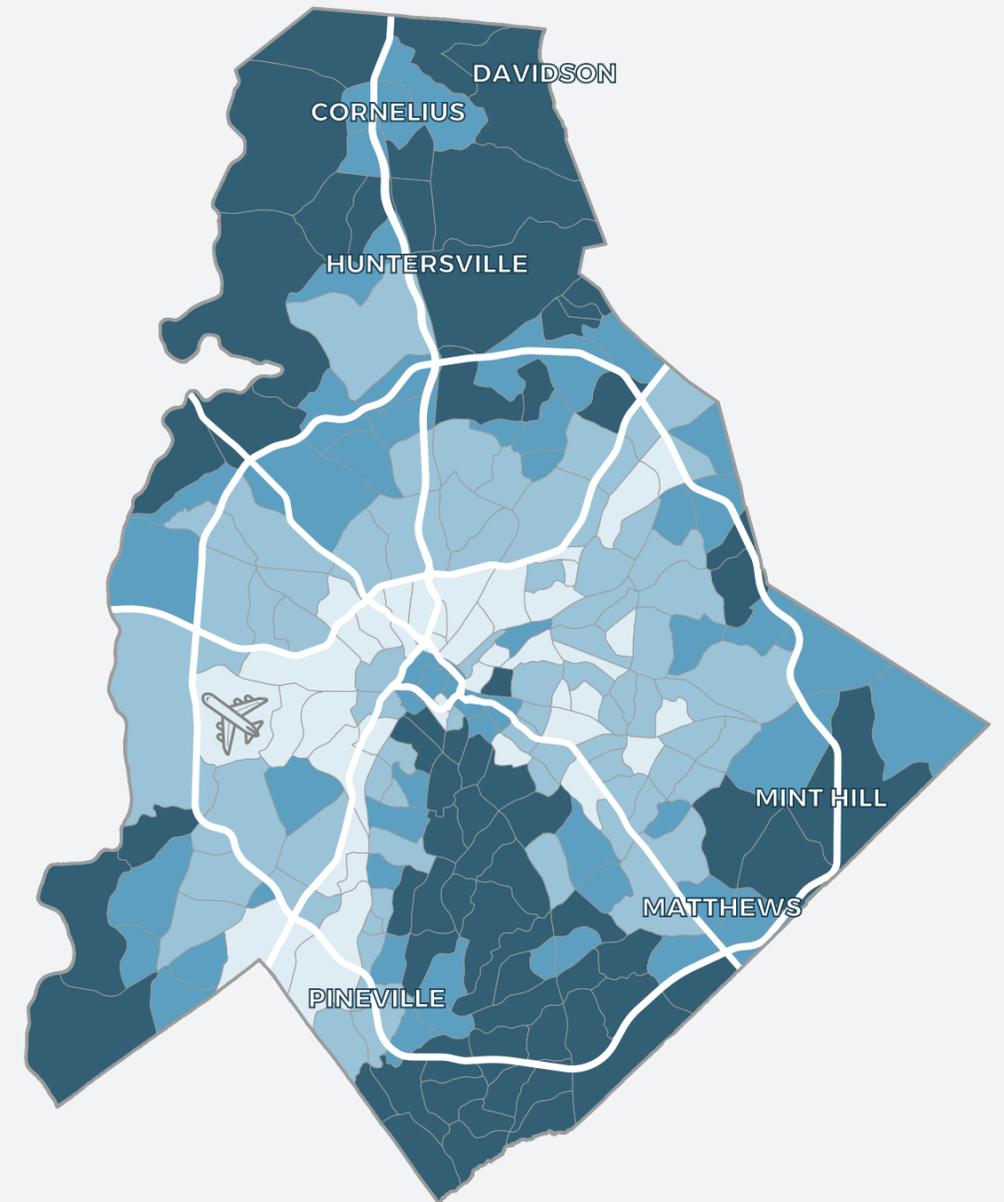
Liveable Wage²



Median Household Income by Race³

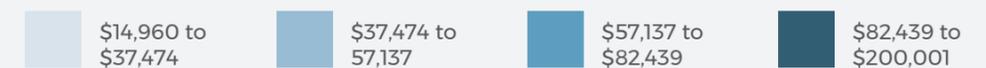


A CITY DIVIDED BY INCOME AND WEALTH



Median Household Income

Source: Esri 2018





The 25TH Annual McCrorey YMCA MLK Holiday Breakfast, January 2019

LIVING OUT THE "C" IN THE YMCA

Spotlight: YMCA of Greater Charlotte

With 19 locations and two overnight camps, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte is well-positioned to make meaningful impact in neighborhoods across the Charlotte metro. More than just your local gym, the YMCA is the largest health and human services nonprofit in the city, engaging nearly 300,000 people each year.

The YMCA's mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. In living out this mission, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte works as a catalyst to transform lives and the community. The YMCA recognizes the role it plays in engaging key issues in our city such as upward mobility, health, segregation, education and social capital. Through strategic partnerships and mobilization of volunteers, the YMCA focuses on personal and social change that leads to collective city transformation.

The YMCA mobilizes partners, members and volunteers to elevate drowning prevention, early childhood development, teens leadership, literacy and community health. The YMCA's Level Up program gives teens free access to YMCAs on weekend nights, replacing idle time with encouraging mentors, opportunity and wholesome fun in a safe and nurturing environment. The YMCA connects immigrants and newcomers with resources, language classes and life-skills training. Also, the YMCA's "Parents as Teachers" program, Y Readers literacy camp and preschool provide support for our youngest children and their families to promote early reading and positive child development. For more than 30 years, the annual YMCA Prayer Breakfast has mobilized the greater Church in Charlotte to come together to pray for our city. These are just a handful of ways the YMCA of Greater Charlotte serves to make the community a better place for all residents.

For more information on how you can get involved, please visit www.ymcacharlotte.org



"If we want to see Charlotte transformed, it is incumbent upon us as the big "C" Church to live out the red letters of Jesus in our city."

TODD TIBBITS
President and CEO
YMCA of Greater Charlotte



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What is the Church's biblical responsibility to those experiencing poverty?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Micah 6:8
- » James 2:1-5
- » 1 John 3:16-18
- » Proverbs 22:2

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:16-18



GET INVOLVED

How to Engage Upward Mobility

Recommendation 1: Raise Awareness

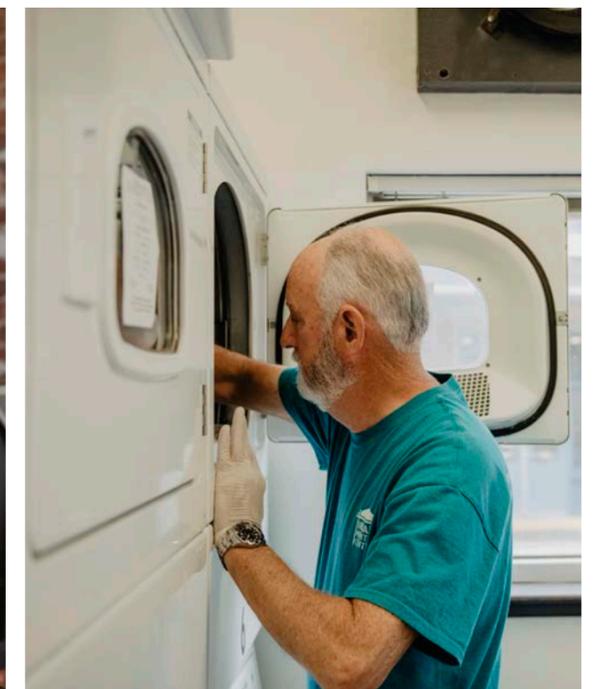
- » Educate your congregation/organization about the upward mobility crisis facing Charlotte.
- » Preach and teach about the biblical mandates that call the Church to engage the root causes of the upward mobility crisis: societal divisions, systemic injustice, racism, inequalities, etc.
- » Provide resources, such as copies of this report and others, that detail the needs and injustice in our community.
- » Bring in speakers from organizations across the city that are working to meet these needs.
- » Participate in a Poverty Simulation.

Recommendation 2: Be An Advocate

- » Advocate on behalf of those living in poverty in our city. Take up the biblical call to be a voice for the voiceless.
- » Leverage your congregation/organization to advocate for job creation and a livable wage in Charlotte. There are incredible resources within the Church to create jobs in our city.

Recommendation 3: Act

- » Call your congregation/organization to action.
- » Connect your people with opportunities to serve these needs in the city, while ensuring that the service is being done in a healthy way that promotes and builds dignity.
- » Remember that as you demonstrate the gospel, you gain relational credibility which allows you to proclaim the gospel.



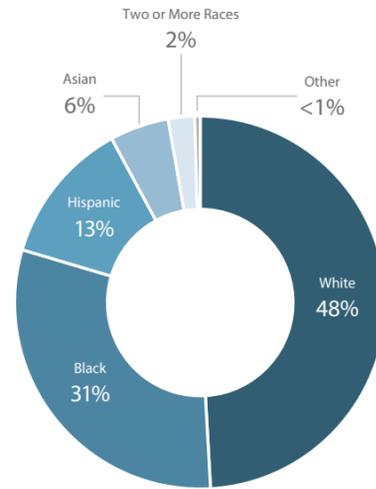


Mobility Matters RACE

As a whole, Charlotte is a very diverse city and is home to people from all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, Charlotte is among the most racially and ethnically segregated cities in the US, contributing significantly to low levels of economic mobility in communities across the city.

Racial segregation in our city, its root causes and the resulting impacts, are not only a social justice issue, but also a gospel issue that the Church has a mandate to address. The experience of reconciliation through Christ calls us into the work of reconciliation in our community.

RACE AND ETHNICITY IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY¹



SEGREGATION IN OUR SCHOOLS



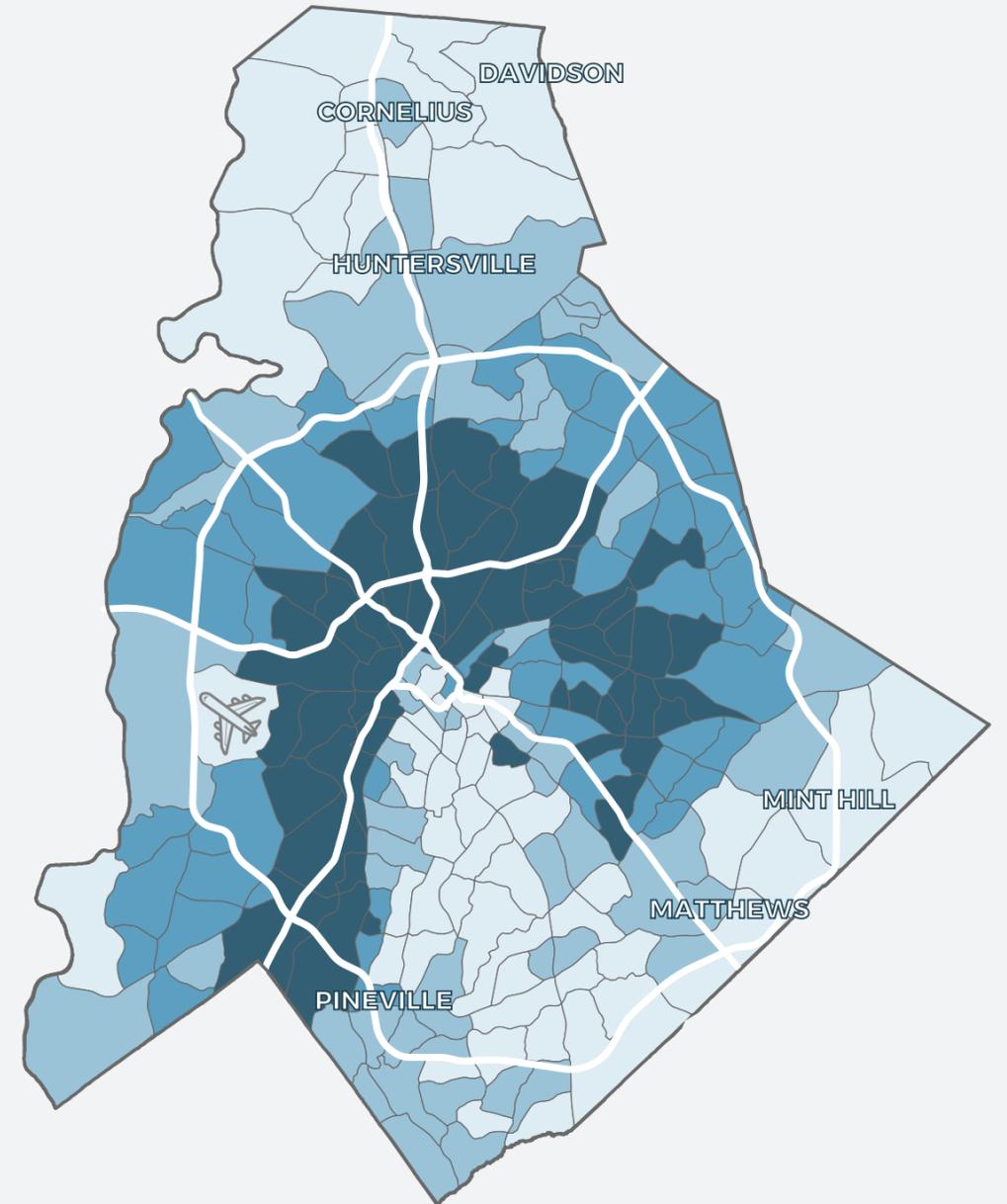
1 OF 2 SCHOOLS
are segregated by race²



1 OF 3 SCHOOLS
are segregated by poverty²

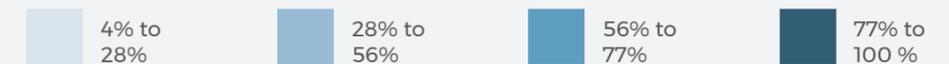


A CITY DIVIDED BY RACE



Percent Minority Population

(Source: Esri 2018)



Source: 1. U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | 2. Leading on Opportunity Report (2017)



"Reviving the Dream" MLK Commemoration in April of 2018

REVIVING THE DREAM

Spotlight: American Bible Society Cross-cultural Bible Studies

Racial tensions in our country, and specifically in our city of Charlotte, have reached a boiling point in recent years. The Church is uniquely positioned to lead in building trust and relationships that foster racial healing in our community.

In April of 2018, 28 churches from across the city gathered together to commemorate the life and work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the "Reviving the Dream" event presented by American Bible Society.

In the months following the event, predominantly black churches paired with predominantly white churches to engage in a 4-week cross-cultural Bible study. Focused on racial healing, the study encouraged courageous conversation around race while diving deep into Scripture.

For more information about how you and your church can participate in a cross-cultural Bible study, visit charlotte.bible/mlk-resources



"This study reminded us that God's word is relevant for every issue we face. By coming together around Scripture, we rediscovered the joy that comes from courageous conversations and saw the power of God's word at work through the Church."

NICOLE MARTIN

Senior Metro Ministry Mobilizer
American Bible Society



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

How does the gospel speak into the racial division within our city?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Colossians 3:12-14
- » Galatians 3:26-29
- » Ephesians 2:11-16
- » Revelation 7:9-10

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:26-29



GET INVOLVED

How to Seek a Reconciled City

Recommendation 1: Seek Understanding

- » Listen to the stories and life experience of people from different races than you.
- » Acknowledge the racial division within the Church and the city.
- » Educate your congregation/organization on the impacts of racial segregation.
- » Do not stand for racism in any form.
- » Remember that reconciliation requires both repentance and forgiveness.

Recommendation 2: Seek Justice

- » Be advocates for biblical justice in our community.
- » Proactively seek ways to engage systemic injustice.
- » Provide regular opportunities for your congregation/organization to promote justice.

Recommendation 3: Seek Cross-Congregational Partnerships

- » Provide opportunities for congregations to come together, learn from each other and form relationships.
- » As you build new relationships, celebrate the diversity within the body of Christ.
- » Utilize resources like Bible studies to equip congregations to have healthy dialogue and relationships within a diverse community. For more information and to get started, go to www.charlotte.bible.
- » Join a FORCLT pastoral network and connect with a diverse group of pastors in your community.



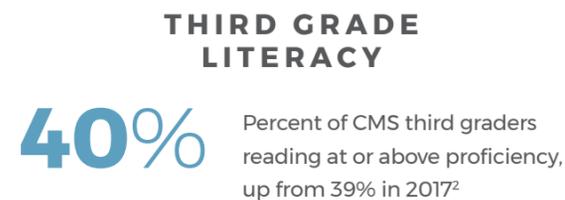
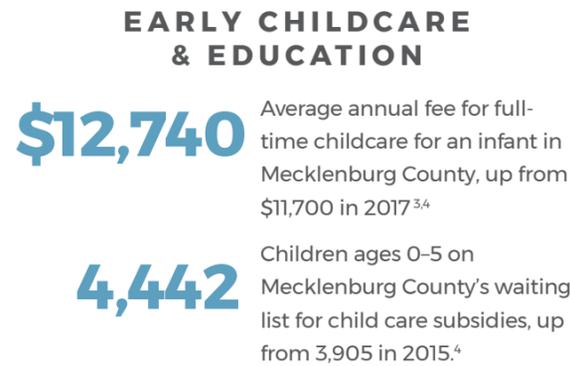


It is well-documented that quality early care and education are foundational to a child's development and have long-term effects on a child's life trajectory, given that 90% of brain development occurs by age 5. Children enrolled in high quality preschool programs experience lifelong benefits from this early care, being less likely to repeat grades, less likely to have interactions with the law, and earning significantly more income than peers that were not enrolled in high quality preschool. In addition to providing benefits to children, access to quality childcare enables parents to seek and retain employment, increasing economic and family stability¹.

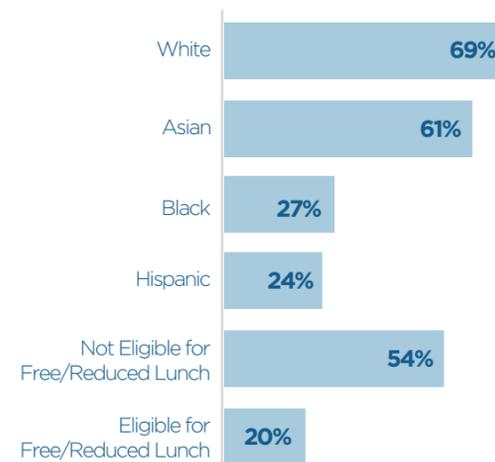
However, access to high-quality early care and education varies widely across Charlotte neighborhoods, with access limited by cost and available spaces. Childcare fees are challenging for many families, but are cost-prohibitive for families living in poverty.

Early education and third grade literacy are two areas where the Church can really lean in to improve upward mobility in our city.

Another critical educational milestone for upward mobility is being able to read proficiently by the third grade – a time when a child's education switches from learning to read to reading to learn. Children who are not proficient readers by the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. The third grade literacy proficiency rate is currently at 40% across CMS, but there is a wide variation in proficiency rates amongst race, gender, and socioeconomic status².

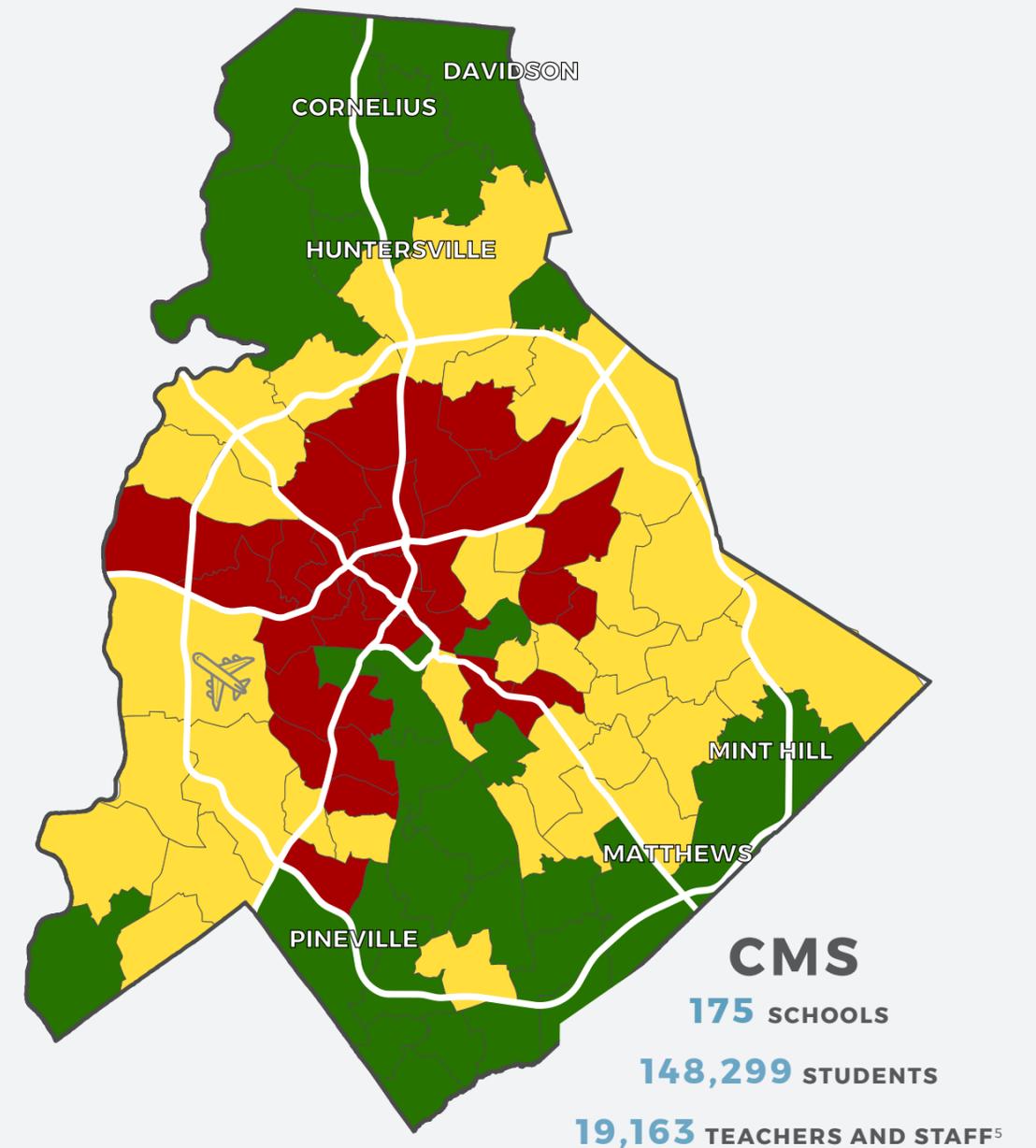


Percent of CMS Third Graders Reading at or Above Proficiency, by Race & Income²



SOURCES: 1. Leading on Opportunity Report (2017) | 2. National Assessment of Educational Progress (2017) | 3. Mecklenburg County Early Childhood Education Executive Committee Report, 2017 | 4. Child Care Resources Inc. November 2018 | 5. CMS Fast Facts (August 2018)

A CITY DIVIDED BY SCHOOL PERFORMANCE



School Performance Grade 2017-2018
(Source: NC State Board of Education)





THE PATHWAY TO 80

Spotlight: Read Charlotte

Read Charlotte is a community initiative formed in 2015 as a direct response to the literacy and upward mobility crisis in Charlotte. Read Charlotte aims to double third grade reading proficiency from 39% in 2015 to 80% by 2025 by uniting families, educators and community partners to support children's literacy.

After two years of research, Read Charlotte launched its "Transformation Network" in twelve targeted CMS elementary schools in 2018. The Transformation Network is comprised of literacy-focused school partnerships (School Networks) that aim to create transformative change by focusing on four evidence-based activities: help children build home libraries, empower families to support literacy at home, provide high-quality tutoring and stop summer reading loss.

In West Charlotte, churches are working alongside other community organizations to implement Read Charlotte's strategies in neighborhood schools. Recognizing that improving third grade literacy leads to higher graduation rates, lower levels of incarceration and increased mobility, churches in West Charlotte made a commitment to lean in to early literacy. As part of this commitment, community partners hoped to adopt a kindergarten class at Ashley Park PreK-8 School and provide a dedicated reading mentor for every child in that class, utilizing the Tutor Charlotte program. While the principle loved the idea, she insisted that if reading mentors are provided for one kindergarten class, they must be provided for all kindergarten classes. Stepping up to the challenge, the community mobilized in courageous ways to meet this need, providing 55 kindergarten scholars with a weekly trained reading mentor for the second year in a row to build the child's vocabulary, and form positive social connections with young readers.

Read Charlotte hopes to double the number of schools with a Transformation Network next year, but it cannot do that without more community partners. More churches are needed to join in the initiative and partner with Read Charlotte and CMS to increase literacy, build social capital and transform the lives of the next generation of our city.

For more information on Read Charlotte, please visit www.readcharlotte.org



"Read Charlotte has developed the playbook but we can't play the game by ourselves. We need the help of the entire community so we can transform literacy and the trajectory of our community."

MUNRO RICHARDSON

Executive Director
Read Charlotte



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What is the Church's responsibility in teaching and training up the next generation?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Psalm 78:1-7
- » 1 Corinthians 10:24
- » Deuteronomy 6:4-7

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

1 Corinthians 10:23-24

"What Read Charlotte does so well is they bring people and organizations together to work towards a common goal, to solve a very solvable problem in our city. It is vital to serve in partnership as we serve our city."



MARC DICKMANN

Director of Education & Community
Freedom Communities



"There is a face to each of the numbers, an opportunity for one of our kids to fully realize their gifts. We try to wrap the school in love and support in as many ways as possible, and are thankful for the trust and relationships built with the school."



MARY BOWMAN

Associate for Mission
Selwyn Avenue Presbyterian Church



GET INVOLVED

How to Improve a Child's Mobility Early

Recommendation 1: Improve Access to Childcare and Pre-Kindergarten

- » Provide scholarships and financial aid to existing quality preschool and early care programs throughout the city.
- » Consider creating a new affordable preschool at your church if one does not exist.
- » Partner with other churches to share resources in order to increase the supply of affordable, high-quality preschool and early care programs in areas of the city where they are most needed.
- » Encourage church members to become a child sponsor, expanding access to high-quality childcare to low-income children across the city.
- » Support early brain development by ensuring access to quality prenatal care, and by supporting parents, guardians and caregivers in their role as the child's first teacher.

Recommendation 2: Improve Literacy

- » Support the citywide effort to increase third grade reading proficiency.
- » Join a Read Charlotte Transformation Network.
- » Encourage church members to be reading buddies and tutors at local elementary schools.
- » Provide training and resources to tutors.
- » Offer storytimes and preschool programming within the community.



Recommendation 3: Establish a School-Church Partnership (10 Principles)

We are blessed to have a school system that invites the Church to serve in the lives of our students. School-church partnerships look different at every school, because each school has unique needs. However, the following 10 principles provide some guidance on establishing an effective school-church partnership.

- » Get buy-in from the Senior Pastor. The most effective school-church partnerships occur when the senior leader is on board.
- » Establish a person to serve as a primary liaison between your church and school partner, somebody that is relational, humble and kind.
- » Approach the Principal or Vice-Principal with humility.
- » Ask the school the appropriate questions such as how you can help, what are the greatest needs and are there other churches or organizations already partnering with your school that you can work alongside.
- » Understand that fruitful partnerships often require financial resources.
- » Under-promise and over-deliver, building trust with your school partner.
- » Let your "Yes be Yes." Do what you say you are going to do and when you say you are going to do it.
- » Be patient, understanding that the partnership process can be long and messy.
- » Try to engage the majority of your congregation in the partnership in some way.
- » Do not proselytize. Although your church cannot proclaim the gospel and proselytize at your school, you can demonstrate the gospel as you serve your school partner with humility and faithfulness.

To learn more about beginning a school partnership, go to: www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/cpfe/partnerships.



Mobility Matters FAMILY STRUCTURE

Family structure is the highest predictor of economic mobility. Children growing up in a neighborhood with a high percentage of single mothers are less likely to move up the economic ladder than those in a neighborhood with a smaller percentage of single mothers. Even with hard work and the drive to succeed, single parent households face strong economic mobility challenges that can endure over generations¹.

Single parents often feel overwhelmed, overextended and financially stressed. There is an opportunity for the Church to work together to support single parents and children in crisis.

There are 40,200 single-parent households in Mecklenburg County. Additionally, there are 6,610 households in which grandparents are responsible for the care of their grandchildren². As shown on the map, the percentage of single-parent households varies significantly throughout the city.



34% OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH
Children
ARE
Single Parent Households

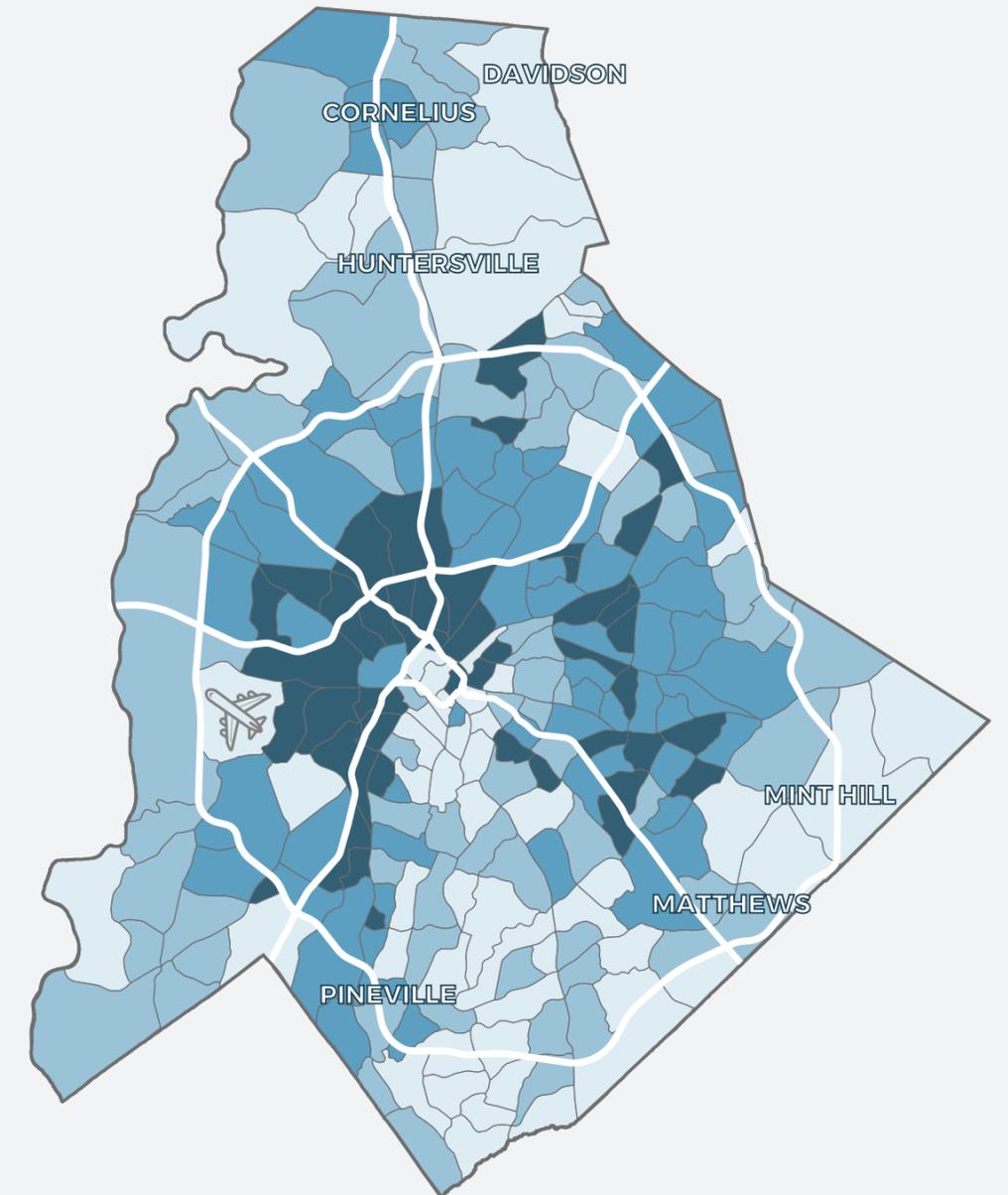
40,200 SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY²



1 in 3
Single Moms
IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY LIVE IN
Poverty²

SOURCES: 1. Leading on Opportunity Report (2017) | 2. U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

A CITY DIVIDED BY FAMILY STRUCTURE



Percent Single Parent Households

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)





SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What do we know about God's heart for those affected by broken families?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Isaiah 1:17
- » Deuteronomy 24:19-22
- » Matthew 11:28-30
- » Ephesians 5:25-27

*Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.*

Isaiah 1:17



GET INVOLVED

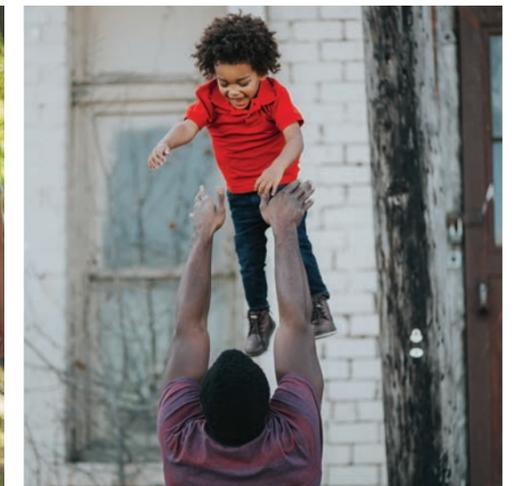
Family Matters

Recommendation 1: Support Marriage

- » Encourage and promote the importance of healthy marriages and two parent families, understanding that a child who comes from a healthy two-parent household has a much higher probability of upward mobility in life.
- » Offer marriage courses and resources for your church or community.
- » Provide free or reduced cost marriage counseling for low income families.
- » Find creative ways to invest in and support families.

Recommendation 2: Support Parenting

- » The Church must lead the way in supporting and caring for single parent families.
- » Provide access to early childcare and education, so that single parents can seek and retain employment.
- » Provide support groups for single parents that offer childcare. Make sure to provide resources, training and emotional support, while providing opportunity to establish meaningful relationships within the church.
- » Provide transportation to employment, school, after school activities, church, etc.
- » Ensure the church provides a welcoming environment for single parents.





Mobility Matters SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is the fabric of a community that enables it to function and thrive. In practical terms, social capital is who you know, and how those relationships support you in your everyday life. Social capital is also a measure of trust between people, people groups, and organizations.

There are three primary types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.

- » **Bonding social capital** refers to social connections and trust between homogeneous individuals or groups, often present within families, churches and groups of similar interest.
- » **Bridging social capital** refers to social connections and trust between heterogeneous individuals or groups, increasing the 'radius of trust' in a community. By creating a more inclusive and trusting society, bridging social capital leads to a stronger and more upwardly mobile society for all.
- » **Linking social capital** refers to relationships across formal, institutional or social power structures. Linking social capital creates a structural environment where bridging social capital can thrive.

Social capital is essential for emotional and social support, connections to job opportunities and trust. Conversely, lack of social networks, trust and support can have devastating and long-term impacts on communities.

Social capital is also crucial to youth and young adults when it comes to college and career readiness. The presence - or lack thereof - of a person in a student's life to guide them and help them navigate various pathways oftentimes makes all the difference. Parents, coaches and mentors help students become aware of career opportunities, learn to connect their interests and skills to a career and navigate postsecondary options and financial aid application processes. However, in many instances there is no one in a student's life to help guide them.

Research has shown that there is a great amount of inequality in Charlotte's social capital. Robust social capital exists among certain socioeconomic groups concentrated in the southern and northern parts of the county, while social capital is limited in other neighborhoods. Although social capital can be difficult to measure, two common indicators are voter participation and crime. Neighborhoods with low voter participation and high concentrations of violent crime tend to have lower levels of social capital.

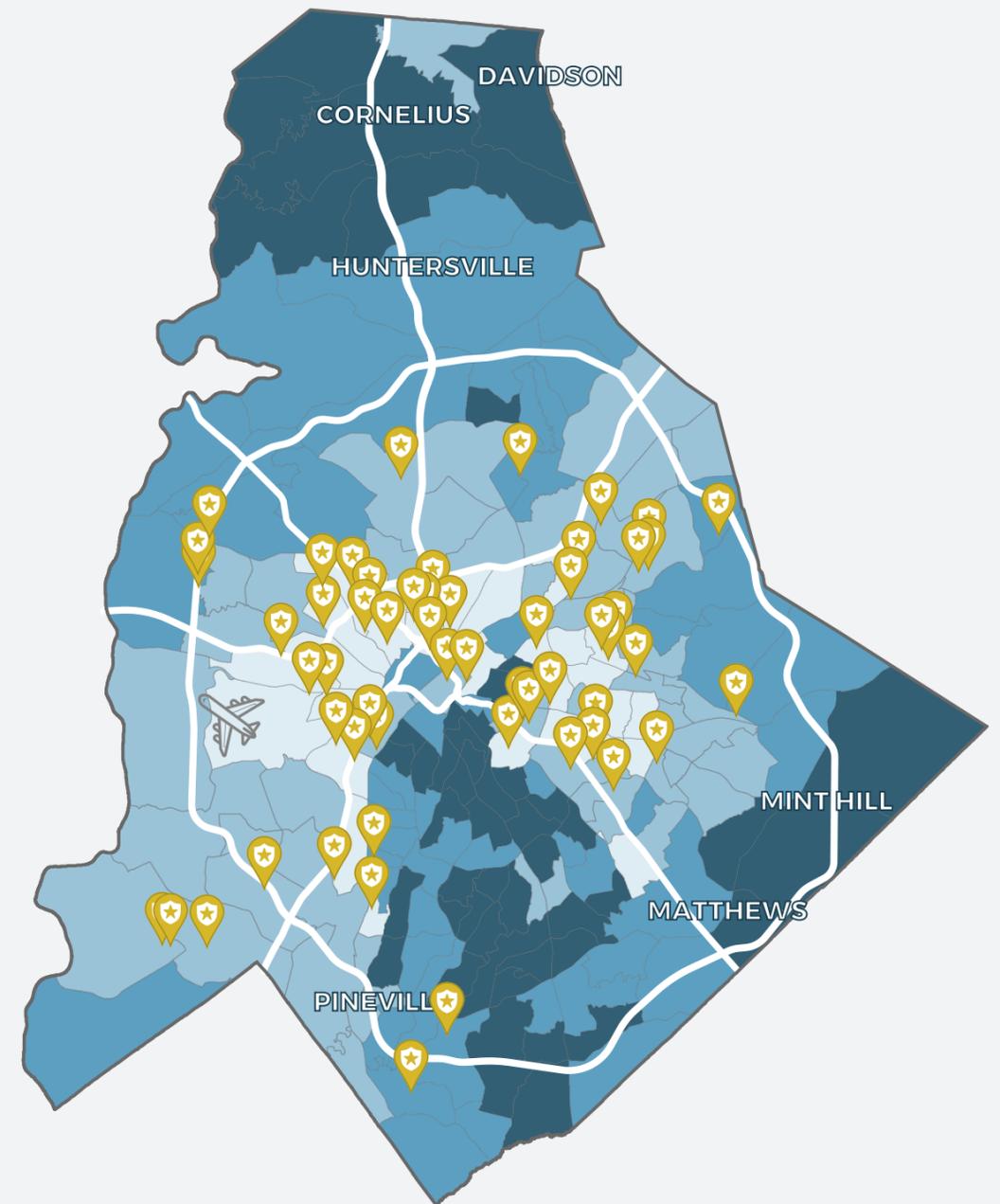


A series of Social Capital Benchmark surveys found that Charlotte scored high in terms of faith community involvement, organizational connection, volunteering and charitable giving, but scored 39th out of the 40 largest cities in the U.S. in terms of interracial and social trust.¹



10.3% of people in the Charlotte metro area between the ages of 16 and 24 are considered to be disconnected youth, meaning they are neither working nor going to school or training. The number of disconnected youth decreased from a high of 45,500 in 2010 in part due to an improving economy.^{2,3}

A CITY DIVIDED BY SOCIAL CAPITAL



Voter Participation In The 2016 Election* and 2018 Homicides**

(Sources: North Carolina State Board of Elections and CMPD)



* Low Voter Participation Leads to Low Social Capital

** High Concentrated Crime Leads to Low Social Capital



WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE SYSTEMS CHANGE

Spotlight: Leading on Opportunity

In response to the 2014 study ranking Charlotte last among the 50 largest U.S. cities in upward mobility, Leading on Opportunity was formed to foster collaboration across the city to improve economic upward mobility. Emphasizing systems change, Leading on Opportunity is charged with implementing the recommendations of the Opportunity Task Force that address early childhood education, college and career readiness and family stability as well as segregation and social capital.

Dr. Stephanie Cooper-Lewter, Executive Director of Leading Opportunity, has a unique and inspiring story that informs her passion and her work. Left in a cradle on the doorstep of Mother Teresa's orphanage in Kanpur, India, she was adopted as a toddler and raised by an American woman in Minnesota. Despite difficult beginnings and challenging young adulthood, Cooper-Lewter went on to earn a BSW, MSW & Ph.D. in Social Work and has dedicated her nearly 25 years of leadership to expanding opportunities for all.

True systems change requires collaboration among many sectors including government, business, nonprofit and faith groups. Our city is blessed to have a backbone organization like Leading on Opportunity to help provide clarity as we collectively engage in our economic mobility crisis. They are asking all houses of faith to play an active role, alongside - not for - others, honoring the agency, dignity and diversity of all.

From our perspective as the Church, engaging in improving economic mobility in our city is not only a social justice issue - it is also a gospel issue. Our Lord Jesus consistently calls His followers to love, serve and care for those around us. In Luke 4:18, we see that central to Christ's mission in the world is proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom to those in prison and to set the oppressed free. The economic mobility crisis that Charlotte is facing gives the Church the chance to tangibly live out this calling.

In addition to touching individual lives impacted by this crisis, it is important to apply a systems change lens that enables us to see the structures, policies and practices that also need to change. One of the core elements of Leading on Opportunity's systems change model in our city is to increase social capital. The Church is positioned perfectly to be an agent of change in building social capital in Charlotte as we live out Christ's command to build deep relationships and 'love our neighbor as ourselves.'

For more information on Leading on Opportunity and how to get involved, visit www.leadingonopportunity.org



"Faith traditions play such an important role in responding to economic barriers. We invite you to join us in this transformational work in our community."

STEPHANIE COOPER-LEWTER
Executive Director
Leading on Opportunity



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Why is it so important for the Church to lead the way in building trust and social capital in our city?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Psalm 119:138
- » Psalm 145:13
- » Matthew 5:37
- » Psalm 12:1-8
- » Acts 2:42
- » Philippians 2:1-4

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Philippians 2:3-4



GET INVOLVED

How to Build a “Bridging” City

Recommendation 1: Build Relational Bridges

- » Step outside your comfort zone - both individually and organizationally - and start building a relational bridge across a typical dividing line in our city (such as race, socioeconomic class, generation or denomination).
- » Be intentional about forming relationships with people that are not currently in your circles.

Recommendation 2: Build Mentoring Relationships

- » It is important to help the youth in our city to begin building social capital early in life. This will lead to a much higher probability of success in their education and social life now, along with their college, work and family life in the future.
- » Encourage your congregations and/or spheres of influence to build mentoring relationships with students that have

less access to a broad social network of opportunities. Encourage them that as a mentor, they can be a “bridge” in the life of a child.

Recommendation 3: Build a Connected Community

- » Take time to learn and understand the different assets (leaders, churches, organizations and centers of influence) in your local community.
- » Make an effort to identify the leaders in your local community, open a dialogue with them and together discuss ways that your congregation/organization can join with them in building a network of opportunity in the community.
- » Identify current needs, examine the gaps between assets and needs and discuss ways that your congregation/organization can work with others to fill the gaps.





Margins

MATTER

God commands believers to care for the marginalized among them. There are many different groups of marginalized and vulnerable people, including, but not limited to, widows, orphans, homeless, the disabled, people living in poverty, the jobless, immigrants, elderly, veterans, and the preborn. This section does not attempt

to provide a comprehensive examination of all marginalized groups living within our city. Instead, our research focuses on three of the largest marginalized groups in Charlotte: immigrants and refugees, vulnerable children, and people experiencing homelessness or seeking affordable housing.



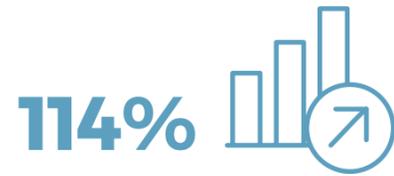
Margins Matter IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In the past three decades, Charlotte has experienced an extraordinary population boom, of which a significant portion comes from the growing immigrant community. From 1990 to 2013, immigration accounted for nearly a quarter of Mecklenburg County's growth¹.

Approximately 1 in 7 Charlotteans (15%) were born outside of the United States. While Charlotte is experiencing growth in immigrants from all around the world, the regions with the most representation are Latin America (48%) and Asia (30%)².

Charlotte is also home to many refugees, people that are unable to return to their home country due to fear of persecution. Approximately 17,000 refugees have been resettled in Charlotte since the mid-1990s. Over the past few years, between 600 and 700 refugees have arrived in Charlotte each year. The majority of refugees in Charlotte are from one of four countries: Syria, Burma, Bhutan and the Democratic Republic of Congo³.

Charlotte's immigrant community is unique in that immigrants tend to settle in the city's suburban communities instead of the city center. This settlement pattern, along with limited public transportation and language barriers, can lead to a feeling of isolation and separation from the community as a whole.



From 2000 to 2013, the number of foreign-born people living in the Charlotte metropolitan region grew by 114%, making Charlotte the 6th top metropolitan area for percentage change in foreign-born population.⁴

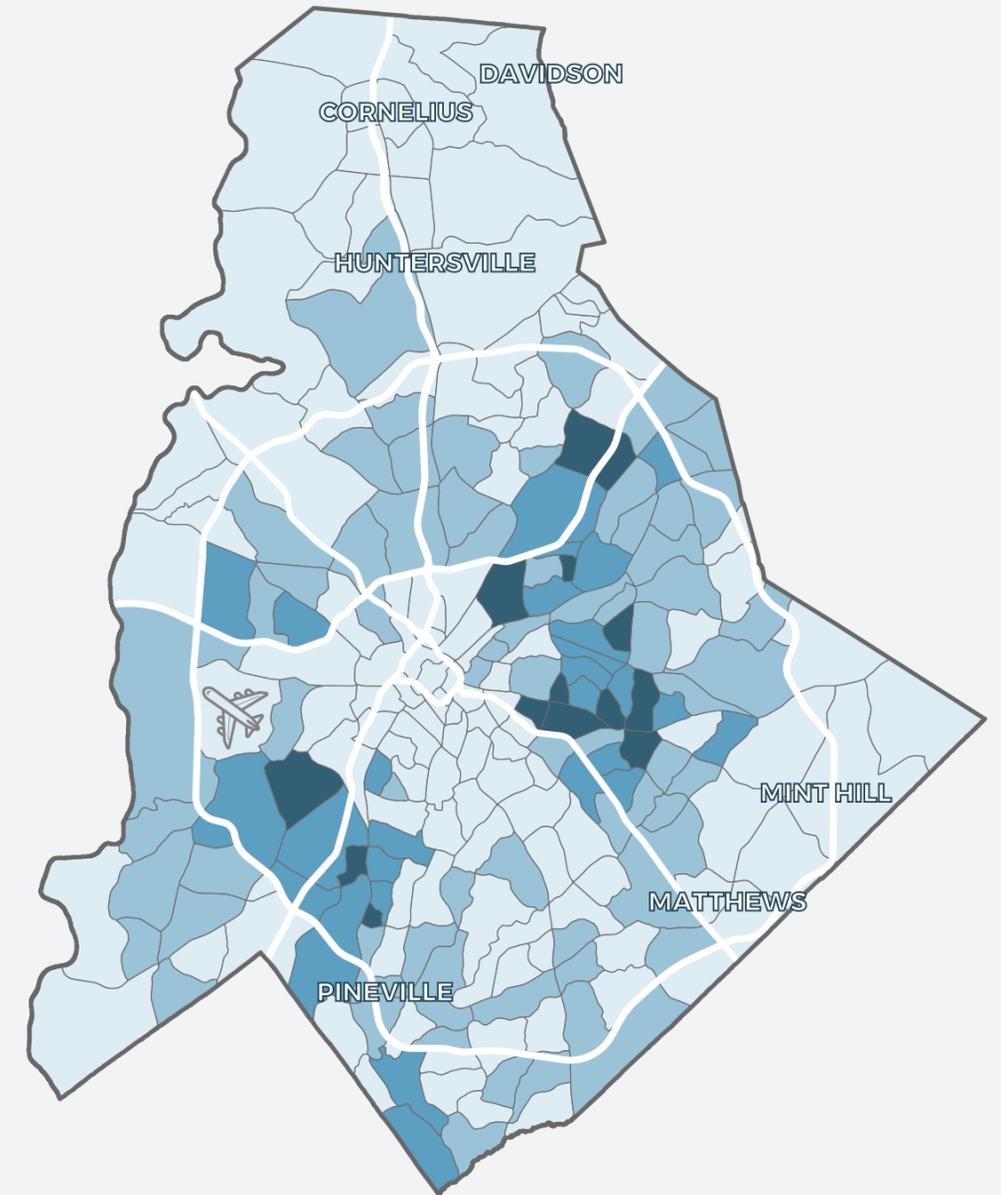


Approximately 1 in 7 Mecklenburg County residents are immigrants.²

1 in 2

Half of Mecklenburg County's immigrant population moved to the United States since 2000.²

A CITY GROWING IN CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Percent Foreign Born

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate)



SOURCES: 1. Immigrant Integration Task Force Report, 2015 | 2. US Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate | 3. Refugee Support Services, 2017 | 4. Brookings Institution, 2014



Latino Clergy Faith and Health Coalition

BRINGING THE LATINO COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Spotlight: Latino Clergy Faith and Health Coalition

In 2017, Latino leaders from Camino Community Center, Atrium Health, Novant Health and Enlace got together to organize the Latino Clergy Conference entitled “The Role of the Faith Leaders in Building a Healthy Community.” The goal was to create a space for the Latino pastors and faith leaders to have a conversation about the roles they and their congregations play in building a healthy community, and how they can share Jesus’ message to “Love Your Neighbor As Yourself” as part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s Movement to promote inclusion, equity and upward mobility for all.

As a result of this conference, a group of Latino pastors, faith leaders from over 20 Latino Congregations, and community leaders from the above organizations started meeting in 2018 to continue working together to create the Latino Clergy Faith and Health Coalition. Together, the Coalition is working to empower the Latino faith community to share God’s love and participate in building a healthy, equitable and inclusive community in Mecklenburg County.



“The most powerful way to share the gospel and glorify God is serving and empowering those marginalized in our community.”

WENDY PASCUAL

Co-Founder
Latino Clergy Faith and Health Coalition



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What role does the Church play in caring for immigrants and refugees in Charlotte?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Deuteronomy 10:17-19
- » Leviticus 19:33-34

When a foreigner lives with you in your land, don't take advantage of him. Treat the foreigner the same as a native. Love him like one of your own. Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt. I am God, your God.

Leviticus 19:33-34



“The most critical need in the life of a refugee family is a friend from the new city they live in. A friend that will walk next to them and help navigate in the journey they are facing in restarting their life in America. And that is something that we all can offer.”



DUSTIN SWINEHART

Executive Director
Project 658



GET INVOLVED

Becoming a Welcoming City

Recommendation 1: Build Relationships

- » The most important thing you can do when an immigrant or refugee family moves to Charlotte is to welcome them and begin a new relationship. Simply ask yourself the question: “What is the one thing you would hope for if you moved to a new city, with a new culture, where people speak a different language?” The answer is a friend.
- » There are many great programs that can help you intentionally foster relationships with immigrant and refugee families. Check out Project 658, Refugee Support Services, or Camino Community Center for more information.
- » Upon building a relationship, you will be able to help a recent immigrant or refugee navigate many of the common resettlement needs, such as finding a home or job. You can also answer many of the questions that can come with living somewhere new.
- » Encourage congregants to celebrate diverse cultures, attend festivals and events, and engage with people groups that are outside of their current circles.

Recommendation 2: Provide Ongoing Support

- » Once an immigrant or refugee family has established themselves in Charlotte, there are many ongoing barriers that can make life difficult, such as: language, culture, health care access, and mental health needs.
- » The Church has a great opportunity to serve alongside organizations to meet the needs of immigrants and refugees in Charlotte.
- » Partner with organizations such as Project 658, Refugee Support Services, Camino Community Center and the YMCA to provide volunteers and financial support that help meet practical needs.
- » Offer ESL classes through your church and encourage congregants to volunteer in ESL programs at partner agencies.
- » Ensure that immigrant families have sufficient access to early childcare and education.





Margins Matter VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Among the most vulnerable members of our city are children living in poverty and children of broken families. One in five children in Mecklenburg County live in poverty (about 46,000 kids)¹. Additionally, over 4,500 students in CMS experience homelessness at some point during the school year².

Chronic stress caused by poverty and housing insecurity often have negative effects on a child's mental, physical and emotional health as well as their development and ability to learn.

1 in 5 Children live in Poverty



4,598

CMS students experienced homelessness or housing instability during the 2017/2018 school year, a 4.7% increase since the 2014/2015 school year.²



SOURCES: 1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | 2. Charlotte-Mecklenburg State of Housing Instability and Homelessness Report, 2018 | 3. Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services, January 2019

As of January 2019, there are 564 children in foster care in Mecklenburg County, and 58 children seeking adoption without an identified adoptive placement.

Of the 564 children in foster care, 51 children are on a trajectory to age out of foster care without an adoptive family or support network.

The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services has stated that it is always in need of families that are willing and able to meet foster care needs, noting that the department often loses the same number of foster homes as it licenses monthly.

With over 960 churches in Mecklenburg County, providing support to these nearly 600 most vulnerable children is well within the realm of possibility. If each church cared for just one child, the need would be met.

In addition to providing support to children in foster care, it is important to engage in restoring families and righting injustices that lead to this point – many of which are discussed in other sections of this report.

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE³



564

Children in foster care in Mecklenburg County

51

Children on a trajectory to age out of the foster care system

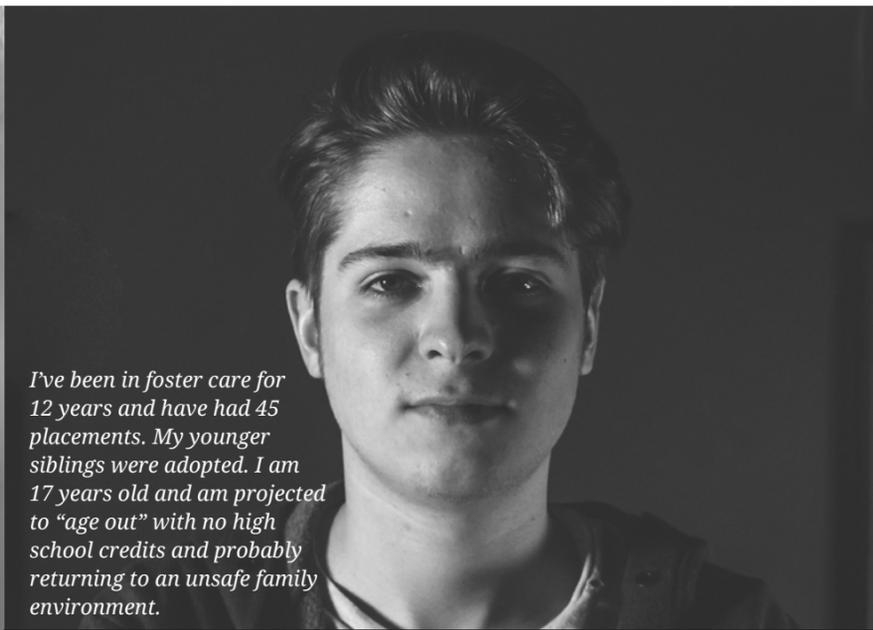
58

Children seeking adoption and do not have an identified placement





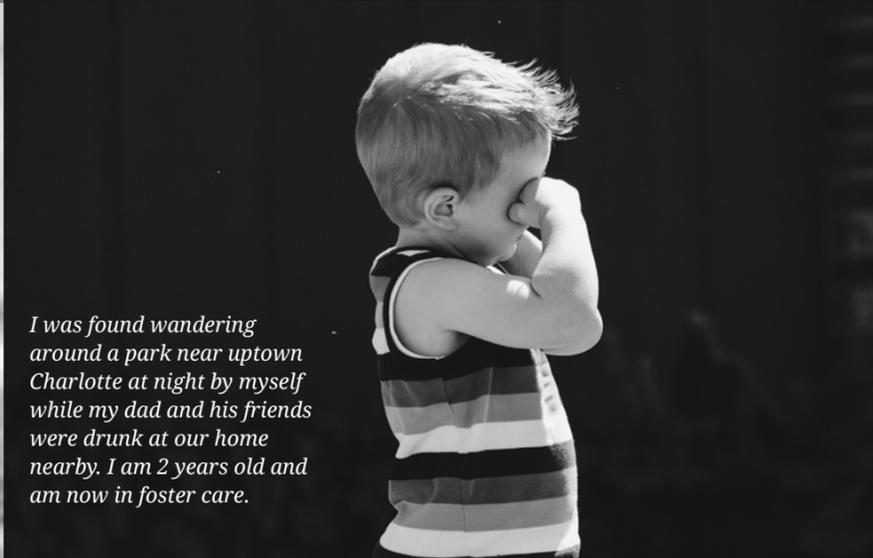
My brother and I were picked up on Tryon street before sunrise because our parents were high on drugs and were not caring for us. We are now in foster care.



I've been in foster care for 12 years and have had 45 placements. My younger siblings were adopted. I am 17 years old and am projected to "age out" with no high school credits and probably returning to an unsafe family environment.



We are a sibling group, ages 2-7. Our home has experienced domestic violence and we were placed in foster care. Our mom left our dad, but she is having a hard time getting a job and sustainable housing. She is working hard to regain custody.



I was found wandering around a park near uptown Charlotte at night by myself while my dad and his friends were drunk at our home nearby. I am 2 years old and am now in foster care.

We are all children living in the foster care system.

In your city.

Do you see me, Charlotte?

DO YOU SEE ME, CHARLOTTE?

Spotlight: Congregations for Kids

Coming out of a partnership between FORCLT and Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services - Youth and Family Services Division (YFS), Congregations for Kids (CFK) launched as a fully established network ministry in 2018. Founded upon the belief that God commands His people to care for the fatherless, the mission of CFK is to educate, encourage and equip the Church community by creating pathways to help care for foster children and those that support them.

CFK has a unique partnership with YFS, and is fortunate to have a seat at the table in serving vulnerable children in our community. Through this partnership, CFK is able to identify needs of kids in foster care in our community and offer tangible ways the Church can help meet those needs. CFK equips the Church to engage the foster care crisis by providing foster licensure training, mentoring programs and events that support and celebrate children in the system and the social workers that work tirelessly to serve these children.

For more information about how you and your church can get involved with Congregations for Kids, please visit www.cfknc.org. To read more real stories of foster kids in our city, follow @CongregationsforKids on Instagram and look for #DoYouSeeMeCLT



"We want these kids to know that we see them, we love them, God loves them, and we are coming for them."

NICOLE TAYLOR
Executive Director
Congregations for Kids



"Whoever said church and state working together is unheard of was simply wrong. The CFK partnership is proof this can be achieved and with great outcomes."

TAMMERA NELSON
Senior Social Services Manager
Mecklenburg County Youth and Family Services



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What is the role of the Church in caring for the most vulnerable among us?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » James 1:27
- » Matthew 19:14
- » Psalm 146:6-9
- » Psalm 68:5

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

James 1:27



GET INVOLVED

Loving and Serving the Most Vulnerable Among Us

Recommendation 1: Raise Awareness

- » Educate your congregation/organization on the foster and adoption needs in our community.
- » Host a representative from DSS or CFK to speak about the foster and adoption needs in our community.
- » Participate in National Orphan Sunday; one Sunday worship service each year calling your whole congregation to care for the needs of orphans in our city and around the world.

Recommendation 2: Recruit Foster and Adoptive Families

- » Recruit families to become foster or adoptive parents to ensure that children in the foster care system have loving home environments.
- » Provide financial assistance to families that desire to become foster or adoptive parents.
- » Provide ongoing training and support for foster and adoptive parents.
- » Provide financial support for recruitment events.
- » Donate space for orientations, training and meetings.

Recommendation 3: Mentor a Child

- » Be a mentor to a teen aging out of the foster care system.
- » Sign up to participate in a Congregations for Kids Weekend Miracles program that coordinates mentoring relationships.
- » Encourage your church or organization to host a Weekend Miracle event.

Recommendation 4: Support Those Serving Vulnerable Children

- » Sign up to participate in the Congregations for Kids Socialite program to provide support and encouragement to social workers in our community.
- » Provide basic necessities needed by families and children in the system.
- » Help DSS as they support families and kinship placements to prevent children from entering the foster care system, through financial support, resources and training.





Margins Matter AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Access to affordable housing is vital for a healthy and stable community, but unfortunately Charlotte is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. The crisis was created by a perfect storm of factors including a population boom, increasing housing prices, stagnant wages, cost-burdened renters, and disparities of opportunity along racial and economic lines. As the city's population has continued to grow, so has the affordable housing crisis. Average rents are on the rise, as are the number of persons experiencing homelessness.

Housing is considered affordable if a household does not have to pay 30% or more of their pre-tax income on housing costs. Almost half of renters and a quarter of homeowners in Charlotte are cost-burdened.¹ Cost-burdened households often have to make trade-offs with other living expenses and are at risk of becoming housing insecure.

Gentrification and displacement have also become key concerns in neighborhoods that are attracting new development, often resulting in the loss of naturally occurring affordable housing.

In recognizing the scale of the affordable housing crisis and the limited capacity of the City and County to address the growing need, opportunities exist for the Church to work with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to find innovative ways to address this community-wide issue.



1 in 2

RENTERS

AND

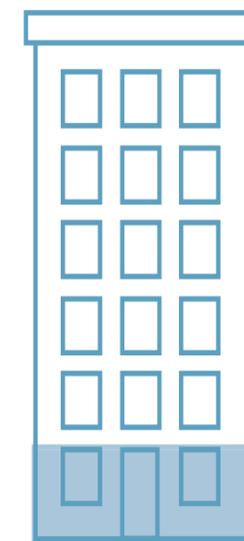


1 in 4

HOMEOWNERS

Are cost burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their household income on housing¹

Scale of Charlotte's Affordable Housing Crisis



32,128

Applicants for Housing Choice Vouchers in 2014¹

4,473

Voucher Holders in Mecklenburg County²

24,000

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS
needed in Charlotte for families at or below 80% AMI

In 2017, the Leading on Opportunity Report identified a deficit of 34,000 affordable housing units in Charlotte³. In the years that followed, the City has prioritized affordable housing, refining the most critical need as 24,000 units that are affordable to residents making 80% of the Area Median Income or less (\$59,300 for a family of four)⁴.

With nearly 50 people moving to Charlotte a day, and over 100 people moving to the metro area a day, the affordable housing crisis is likely to grow⁵.

Homelessness

The January 2018 annual point-in-time count identified 1,668 people in Mecklenburg County as experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, an increase of 13% compared to January 2017, but a 16% decrease from 2010.

17% of people experiencing homelessness were unaccompanied youth age 25 or younger. 217 people (or 13%) were identified as being chronically homeless. On the night of the 2018 count, there was a shortage of 73 beds in emergency shelters or transitional housing¹.



1,668

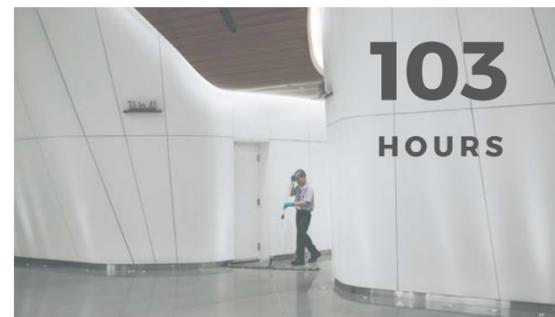
People experienced homelessness on one night in January 2018 in Mecklenburg County²



SOURCES: 1. Charlotte Housing Authority and UNCC Urban Institute "Characteristics of Charlotte Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List" (2015) | 2. Charlotte-Mecklenburg State of Housing Instability and Homelessness Report (2018) | 3. Leading on Opportunity Report (2017) | 4. Housing Charlotte Framework Handout (2019) | 5. US Census American Community Survey 2012-2016 and 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates



The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Charlotte, up from \$1,468 in 2017.³



A minimum wage worker earning \$7.25 per hour must work 103 hours a week (the equivalent of 2.5 full-time jobs) to afford a two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rate in Mecklenburg County. This is up from 96 hours in 2017⁴.

SOURCES: 1. U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates | 2. Rent Jungle (November 2018) | 3. Leading on Opportunity Report (2017) | 4. National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach Report (2018)



Mixed-Income Housing Developed on Church-Owned Lot Adjacent to Saint Paul Baptist Church

FAITH IN HOUSING

Spotlight: Congregations Stepping into Affordable Housing

Faced with a large shortage of affordable homes and an ever-growing population, Charlotte's affordable housing crisis can feel like an insurmountable issue. However, there are many different ways that the Church can engage in meeting the most basic physical needs of our neighbors.

In the fall of 2018, Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church hosted the Faith in Housing event that explored a spectrum of opportunities for the Church to work alongside the City and various nonprofits to serve people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Churches across Charlotte are coming alongside the city and nonprofits by volunteering their time, using their skills to provide pro-bono services, and giving both monetary and in-kind donations.

Following the findings of the Opportunity Task Force, Covenant Presbyterian Church asked itself what part it could play in increasing upward mobility in our city. Utilizing the skills, talent and resources of its congregants, the church collaborated with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership to make a \$2 million investment towards a 185-unit affordable housing development in West Charlotte. While the size of this donation may not be a possibility for most churches, Covenant provides a replicable financial model that enables churches to come together to leverage investments of a smaller scale.

The Mayfield Memorial Apartments, an outreach subsidiary of Mayfield Memorial Missionary Baptist Church, provides 60 affordable housing units for elderly residents and those with disabilities. The church also demonstrates love to the residents through programming that builds community.

After seeing parishioners being priced out of the neighborhood, Saint Paul Baptist Church collaborated with public and private partners to build a 112-unit mixed-income development on an adjacent lot owned by the church. The development supports affordable housing in the Belmont community, providing homes for senior citizens and families making 60 percent or less of the area median income.

Churches across the city are partnering with Charlotte Family Housing to serve as Hope Teams, coming alongside a family experiencing housing insecurity. Generally consisting of 3 to 6 volunteers, Hope Teams offer a sustained commitment to providing friendship, mentoring and support to families when they most need it.

The examples above are just a few of the myriad of ways the Church can engage the affordable housing crisis. For more information on how you and your organization can get involved, please see the recommendations listed on the following page.



PETER WHERRY
Senior Pastor,
Mayfield Memorial
Baptist Church

“For us as the Church to live out our mandate to transform our communities into Beloved Community, we must make sure that the families in our communities have a stable and healthy home environment. Caring for this most fundamental of a person's physical needs allows us to more powerfully care for their spiritual needs and draws us more faithfully into line with the call of God.”



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Why is one's home—one's dwelling place—so important to God? And how should that motivate the Church to care for those with no home?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Matthew 25:35-36
- » Acts 17:26
- » James 2:14-17
- » Psalm 90:1
- » Acts 2:42-47

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Matthew 25:35-36



GET INVOLVED

How to Engage the Affordable Housing Crisis

Recommendation 1: Engage the Heart

- » The Church has a unique opportunity to love and serve those in need of affordable housing and those that are homeless in our city. When someone has a house to call home, it impacts every other part of their life. The Church in Charlotte has more than enough volunteers, donors, landlords, developers, social service providers, etc. to abundantly meet the affordable housing needs in our city.
- » Help your congregation/organization see those in need of a home with new eyes. Teach them how caring for the homeless and those in need of affordable housing is a clear demonstration of the gospel. Once hearts are changed, actions change.

Recommendation 2: Engage Homelessness

- » Partner with nonprofits serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Charlotte, such as; Charlotte Family Housing, Urban Ministry Center, Room in the Inn, Salvation Army, Crisis Assistance Ministry, etc.
- » Encourage your congregation/organization to actively and consistently serve and form relationships with those living without a home.

Recommendation 3: Engage Affordable Housing

- » There are many different ways to engage the affordable housing crisis facing Charlotte. The key is finding where you can best serve. Where do you have capacity to give that would help in this area? Opportunities are provided in the table below.

Opportunities for Engaging Affordable Housing by Type and Level of Investment

	Financial Contributions	In-Kind Contributions	Contributions of Time
Small	Give a small one-time gift to a nonprofit working to construct or preserve affordable housing.	Donate furniture to a shelter.	Volunteer at a nonprofit working to construct or preserve affordable housing.
↓ Level of Investment ↓	Make an annual financial commitment to a nonprofit.	Offer space to serve needs and host events.	Offer professional skills and services pro bono.
	Large	Partner with developers to help fund and support an affordable housing development.	Donate land and/or buildings for affordable housing.





Millennials

MATTER

The millennial generation recently became the largest generation in America, with 75.4 million people between the ages of 18 and 34. Millennials are also now the largest generation in the US labor force, representing more than one in three American workers¹.

Charlotte is at the epicenter of these millennial growth trends. Millennials - and particularly college-educated talent - are attracted to Charlotte for its booming economy, housing options close to the city center, urban amenities, sports and entertainment venues, recreational opportunities and convenient transportation. Out of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the United

States, Charlotte ranked first in millennial growth from 2005-2015². Millennials now represent nearly a quarter of all Charlotteans, and millennial growth isn't expected to slow any time soon.

It's apparent that the large influx of millennials in Charlotte is having a major impact on the way the metro is growing. Millennials are shaping the city in everything from development patterns to new media outlets. As of May 2017, there were approximately 12,000 new apartment units under construction in the Charlotte Metro, largely marketed towards young professionals³.



Millennials Matter

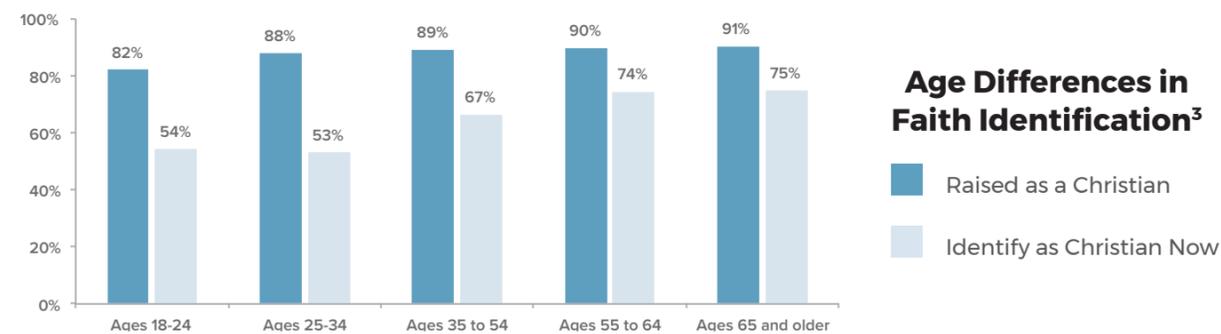
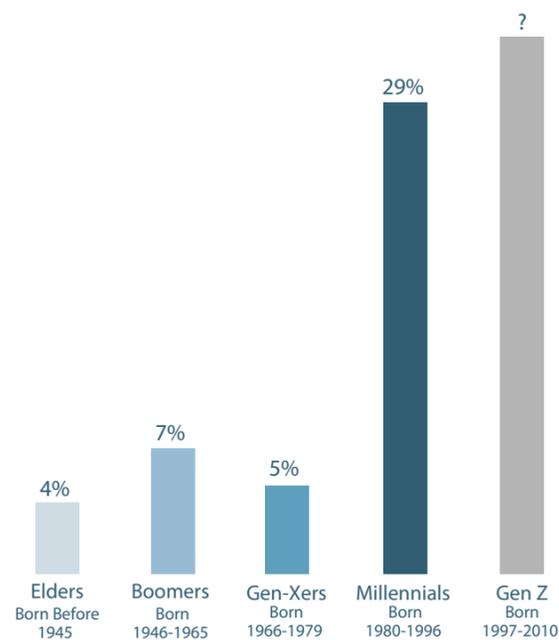
While growth in the millennial generation can be seen throughout the city, one place that the millennial boom is not well-represented is in the Church. Nationally, millennials make up 23% of the national population, but only 1 in 10 churches have at least that percentage of millennials, and 18% of churches have no young adults at all¹.

National trends indicate a rise of the "nones," or persons unaffiliated with any faith, and a survey of Charlotte metro adults mirrors those trends. Nearly 1 in 3 millennials in Charlotte are unaffiliated with a religion - a significant increase compared to previous generations, with just 7% or less having no faith affiliation². The trends are continuing with Generation Z. The percent of Generation Z that identifies as atheist is more than twice that of all other generations².

While nine out of ten Charlotte area adults were raised as Christians, only 64% identify as Christian today. This trend is particularly stark among millennials. Nearly 88% of Charlotte adults aged 25 to 34 were raised as a Christian, but only 53% identify as a Christian today³.

Rise of the "Nones"

Percent of Charlotte adults that have no faith affiliation, by generation²



Age Differences in Faith Identification³

■ Raised as a Christian
■ Identify as Christian Now

SOURCES: 1. Faith Communities Today, 2015 | 2. Barna Group | 3. Center for Bible Engagement (2017)

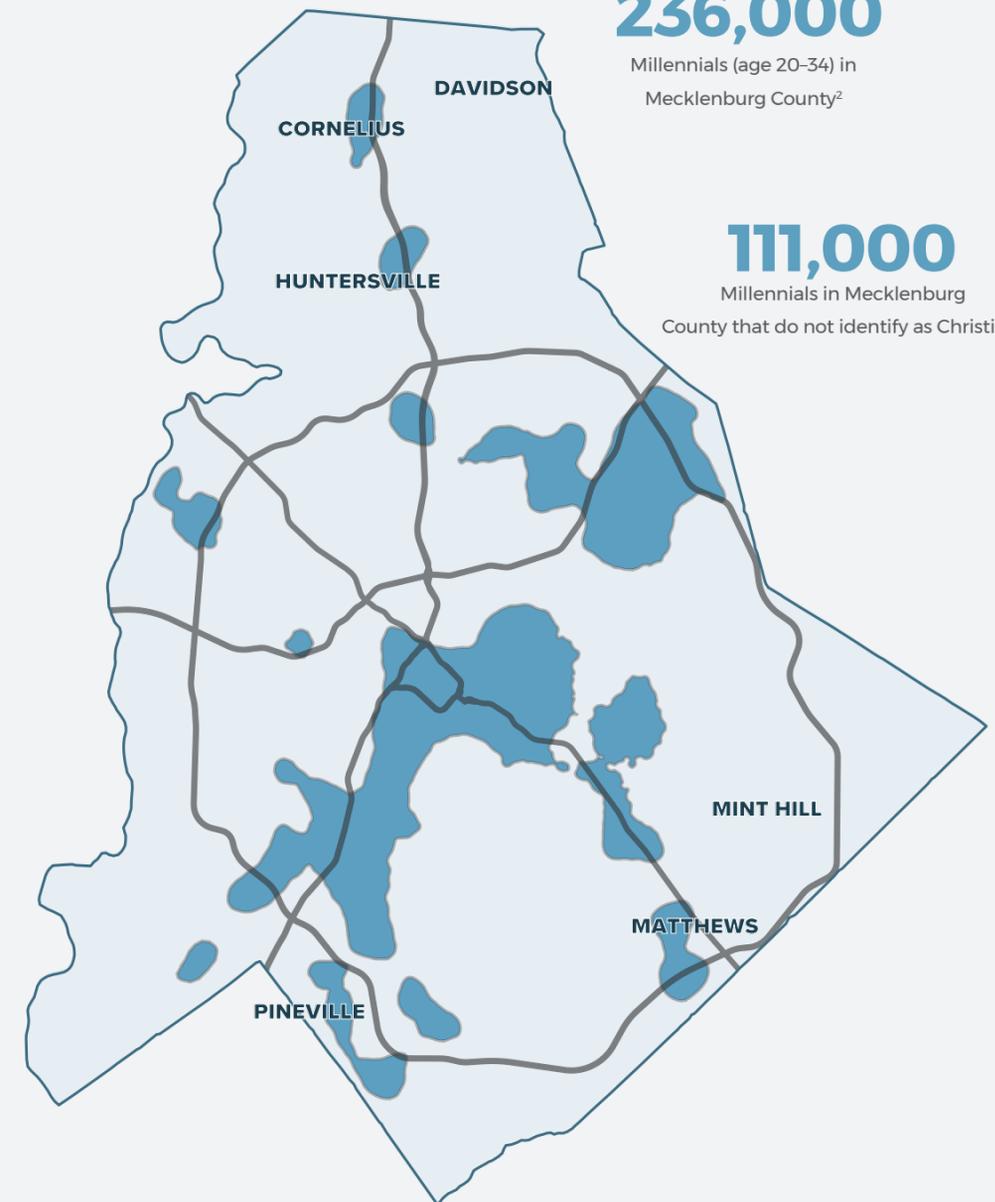
A CITY GROWING YOUNGER

236,000

Millennials (age 20-34) in Mecklenburg County²

111,000

Millennials in Mecklenburg County that do not identify as Christian³



Millennial Concentration Areas²

(Sources: 1. Esri (2017) | 2. U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates | 3. Estimate based on data from the US Census Bureau and the Center for Bible Engagement)

■ Millennial Concentration Area



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Why do you think the millennial and Gen Z generations are leaving the Church so rapidly? How do you believe the Church should adjust in how it reaches and engages the largest generation in our city?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Ephesians 4:11-16
- » Titus 2:6-8
- » Proverbs 27:17
- » Psalm 78:5-8
- » 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

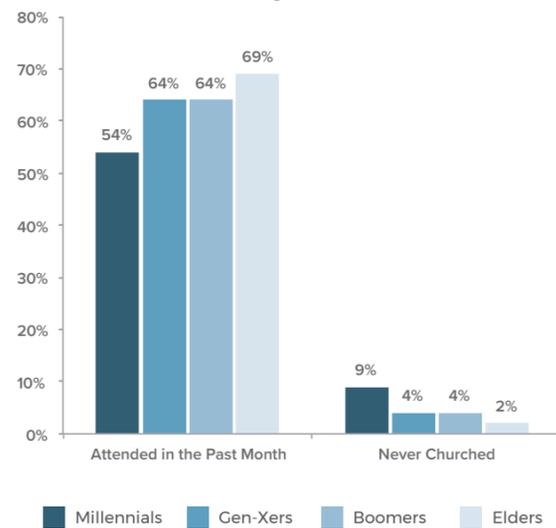
To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23

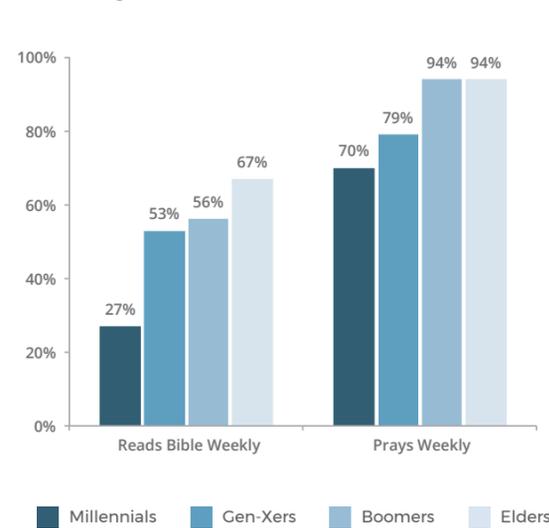
Millennials are significantly less likely to attend church compared to those in other generations. Only 54% of Charlotte area millennials attended church in the past month, compared to 64% of older generations. The percent of Charlotte area millennials that have never attended church (9%) is more than twice as high as older generations¹.

In addition to less frequent church attendance, on average, millennials are half as likely to read the Bible weekly compared with Gen Xers and Boomers: only one-quarter of millennials read from the Bible in the past week¹.

Church Attendance in Charlotte by Generation¹



Bible and Prayer Engagement by Charlotte Area Adults¹



SOURCES: 1. Barna Group



GET INVOLVED

How to Connect a Generation that is Increasingly Disconnected from the Church

Recommendation 1: Focus on the Gospel

- » Although millennials and Gen Z are decreasingly interested in the institution of the Church, they are increasingly interested in spiritual things. Therefore, make it a point to focus your conversations on the person of Jesus.

Recommendation 2: Focus on Relational Discipleship

- » Foster meaningful, intergenerational relationships in the Church through mentoring, one-on-one discipleship, community groups and service opportunities.
- » Seek to listen to, and understand the needs of, millennials and Gen Z, both inside and outside the Church. This is especially important for senior leaders in the Church.
- » As you build relationships, allow space for doubts and tough questions. Invite millennials and Gen Z to be a part of an ongoing conversation of faith.

Recommendation 3: Focus on Service and Mission

- » Disciple and develop millennial and Gen Z leaders to serve in every facet of leadership and life of the Church, including on leadership teams, boards, committees, etc.

- » Focus on engaging millennials on what you are “for” in the city, rather than what you are “against.” Connect your church’s mission with causes that millennials are passionate about.
- » Encourage millennials and Gen Z to lead in city-focused mission efforts. Give this generation of entrepreneurs and risk takers the freedom and resources to advance the gospel in new and innovative ways.
- » Focus on Faith-Work Integration. Show them the importance of seeing how their vocation is both a calling from God and a place to carry out His mission. (See The Marketplace Matters section for more details)

Recommendation 4: Focus on Family

- » Focus on partnering with young families, helping them to be the primary disciple makers of their children.
- » Offer children’s programs as well as childcare at events that teach the gospel at age-appropriate levels. Be intentional in your approach to children’s ministry.
- » Provide parenting resources for young families.
- » Foster relationships among young families through small groups, classes and events.





Pastor Barrett Berry of Empowered Living Church Presenting at the Church Planting Network Gathering

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION OF PASTORS

Spotlight: FORCLT Church Planting Network

Despite Charlotte being known as the city of churches, the percentage of Charlotteans that identify as Christian has been declining, especially among the Millennial generation. Rapid growth in our city has resulted in a new landscape that is much younger and much more diverse. This growth, coupled with declining church attendance, represents a unique opportunity for fresh church plants to breathe new life into the city.

Recognizing the need, dozens of sending churches and pastors are working to plant churches across the city. However, several factors including denominational discrepancies, differences in planting models, geographical distance, or lack of information sharing has often led to church planters working in isolation. Increasingly, churches are beginning to understand that they must work together to reverse the trends. The collaborative effort requires experienced pastors and those with more resources to invest in the new generation of pastors.

The FORCLT Church Planting Network provides a neutral space for regular, intentional networking where church planters can establish relationships, share resources, innovate and grow together on shared needs, despite any differences. Church planters benefit as they are mutually encouraged, the Church benefits from increased unity and the city benefits from increased collaboration across racial, denominational, socioeconomic and theological lines.



MIKE MOSES

Pastor, Lake Forest Church;
Church Planting Instructor, Gordon
Conwell Theological Seminary;
Network Mentor, FORCLT CPN

“In order for Charlotte to grow into being a city of spiritual unity, it is so important for older pastors to pour into the next generation of pastors, welcome them, and actually place a steady hand of blessing upon them.”



CASEY CRIMMINGS

Pastor, Multiply Church;
Co-Network Leader,
FORCLT CPN

“Never has it been more important for the new church planters in our city to be connected. The conditions for this new Church Planting Network couldn’t have been more perfect.”



Marketplace

MATTERS

Building upon its success as a financial hub, Charlotte is increasingly becoming a world class city with a diversifying and growing economy. The booming economy and high quality of life have made Charlotte a magnet for talented young professionals.

And yet, the city suffers from a sacred/secular divide, as Charlotteans often compartmentalize their faith and work lives, limiting the ways that Christians view and use their skills and talents. Opportunities exist to help Charlotteans understand how to integrate faith and work in a way that allows them to experience the full impact of the gospel on their lives.



Marketplace Matters

Charlotte is a national economic engine and is the 3rd largest financial hub in the United States. While it is best known for its prominence in the banking industry, Charlotte's economy is increasingly diversifying and expanding. Six Fortune 500 companies are headquartered in the Charlotte region and more than 250 Fortune 500 companies have at least one facility in the region. There are more than 1,000 foreign-owned companies in the metro area¹.

However, due to the highly "churched" culture in Charlotte, our city suffers from a massive sacred/secular divide, and is in deep need of faith-work integration. The compartmentalization of faith and work prevents Christians from experiencing the full impact of the gospel on their lives and limits how Christians view their skills and talents as ministry.

A Barna report on engaging millennials in the Church notes the importance of faith-work integration or vocational discipleship to millennials. The research found that millennials who remained connected to the Church (as opposed to those that walked away) were four times more likely to say they learned how their faith applies to their field of work. Opportunities exist to help millennials, and all marketplace participants, connect their faith with the unique work God has called them to².

Further, because over half of Charlotteans are engaged in the marketplace, the Church has an opportunity to unleash the latent Kingdom potential within the marketplace. A significant amount of missional leadership resides within marketplace leaders and remains an untapped resource.

3RD

Largest financial hub in the U.S.¹

250+

Fortune 500 companies in the Charlotte metro¹

537,798

Mecklenburg County Residents are in the marketplace³

34%

Percent of Christians have never thought of their work as something they were called to do²

4X

Millennials that remained in the Church (as opposed to those that walked away) were 4 times more likely to say they learned how their faith applies to their field of work²

Source: 1. Charlotte Regional Business Alliance (2018) | 2. Source: Barna Group (2013) | 3. US Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

What does the Bible say about work? Why do you think the Scriptures spend so much time talking about commerce, money and wealth?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Matthew 6:19-21
- » Colossians 3:23-24
- » Romans 12:3-8
- » Proverbs 3:9-10
- » 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- » Genesis 2:15

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24





BECOMING A GENEROUS CITY

Spotlight: National Christian Foundation Carolinas

What would the city look like if the Church were living out the generosity that the Scriptures call us to? How would our city change? How many lives would be transformed?

National Christian Foundation Carolinas, in partnership with our community of marketplace leaders, churches, ministries and non-profits, is working to spread the message of biblical generosity in Charlotte. The outreach will focus on inspiring and mobilizing the generosity of the Church to transform the city, recognizing that everything we are and everything we have is God's.

To learn how you can inspire biblical generosity in your city, please visit: www.ncfgiving.com/carolinas/generous-city/

"When a spirit of biblical generosity grows in the heart of a city, actions large and small hold the power to transform entire communities and miraculous things happen."



JOHN PUTNAM
President
National Christian Foundation Carolinas

BUSINESS AS MISSION

Spotlight: Torrent Consulting

The son of a pastor, Daniel McCollum grew up "in the church." However, he wrestled with the way the church often divides sacred and secular lines, unsure of how to fully engage who God created him to be while being part of the Church.

He and his family served as missionaries in Africa while still sorting out the inherent "division." Upon returning to the States and discerning his call, he formed Torrent Consulting in Charlotte. "Torrent" means a stream of water flowing with great velocity and abundance. The metaphor represents finding deep, sustainable meaning and purpose through vocation.

Torrent embraces a brand mantra of "Love and Serve," a direct application of deep biblical truth, and believes that employment is a powerful means of bringing dignity and worth to the Kingdom and specifically upward mobility. Recently asked if he is a CEO or missionary, Daniel simply answered "yes."

Daniel's story is a compelling reminder that every business leader has the opportunity to integrate faith and work, whether it be through servant leadership, structuring the business to live out mission, or by creating a culture of giving back to the community.



DANIEL MCCOLLUM
CEO
Torrent Consulting

"I believe that business is one of the greatest platforms to love and serve people, which leads to lives being transformed."





GET INVOLVED

How to Unleash Marketplace Leaders on Mission

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PASTORS

Recommendation 1: Focus on Faith-Work Integration

- » Work to create a culture of faith-work integration and vocational discipleship within your church.
- » Emphasize the importance of seeing one's vocation as both a calling from God and a place of mission. Help them see the vast opportunity for impact they have in the lives of their co-workers and clients throughout the work week.
- » Preach and teach vocational discipleship within the church through sermons, small groups studies and special events. Help members understand how their faith integrates into their work life (in decision making, how they treat others, etc.). Encourage conversation that leads to discovery, rather than giving lectures.
- » Help members recognize their spiritual gifts and understand how they can be used in ministry.

Recommendation 2: Focus on Leadership Development and Systems

- » Examine your current leadership structures and systems and ask hard questions:
 - » Do they allow leaders to exercise their spiritual gifts and talents?
 - » Do they force leaders to conform, or do they allow leaders to innovate?
 - » Do they focus your leaders inward, or do they help advance the mission of the church?
- » Develop leadership structures that empower marketplace leaders to lead in their gifts and talents. Recognize that the most room for innovation will be in external mission/city transformation efforts.
- » Listen and learn from the expertise of marketplace leaders. One of the greatest influences they bring is their emphasis on measurable impact and problem solving.
- » Connect marketplace leaders with your church's ministry partners, both local and global. Allow them to help your partners grow and advance their respective missions.



GET INVOLVED

How to Unleash Marketplace Leaders on Mission

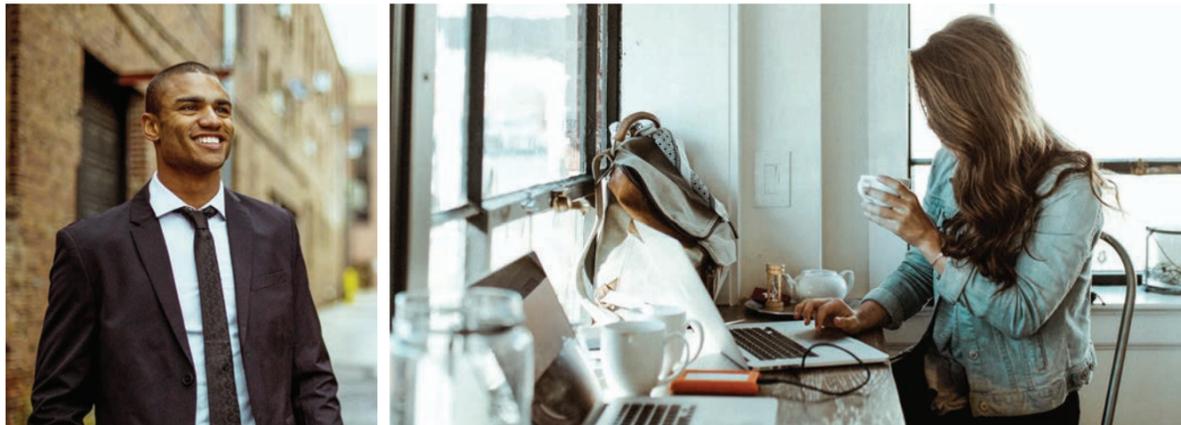
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MARKETPLACE LEADERS

Recommendation 1: Focus on Measurable Kingdom Impact

- » Focus on leveraging your business and abilities for Kingdom impact in the lives of your employees, coworkers, clients and community.
- » Build collective impact partnerships to transform communities.
- » Initiate conversations with pastors, ministry leaders and other marketplace leaders to seek opportunities to meet unmet needs in the community.
- » Remember that social and ministry issues often operate on different principles than the marketplace, so research and read up on issues before jumping to solutions.
- » Adopt a holistic approach to community transformation where spiritual, emotional, physical and mental healing takes place.

Recommendation 2: Focus on Organizational Culture

- » Build an organizational culture where people experience God's love, feel secure and appreciated, form deep community and develop a desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves.
- » Adopt a double bottom line for your business which includes "spiritual ROI."
- » Incorporate spiritual objectives into your business plan which includes the spiritual health and growth of stakeholders.
- » Meet regularly with other like-minded marketplace leaders to learn and challenge each other to make headway on spiritual ROI.
- » Intentionally set aside resources (personnel, finances, etc) to contribute to holistic community transformation and celebrate this value regularly and visibly.





Multiplication

MATTERS

Charlotte is among one of the most “churched” large cities in the nation, and is the 6th most Bible-minded city, meaning adults read the Bible weekly and affirm its accuracy¹.

While the number of churches and the number of church attendees in Mecklenburg County have seen significant increases over the past few decades, the growth in the Church has not kept pace with the staggering population growth in the county.

A growing number of people who call Charlotte home are not affiliated with a church and are not regularly engaged in Christianity.



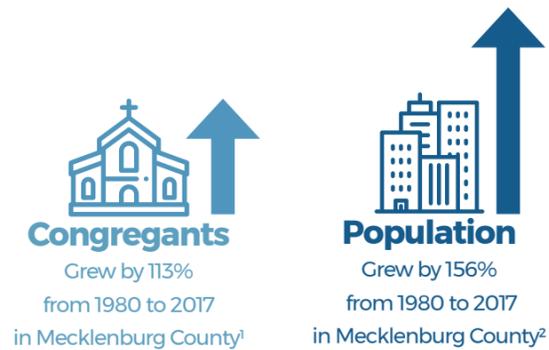
Multiplication Matters

Although Charlotte has been known as a city of churches, both Christian affiliation and church attendance has been declining over the past two decades. While the population boom in Mecklenburg has resulted in 156% growth since 1980, the number of congregants in the county has only grown by 113% over the same time period, a difference of 43%.^{1,2}

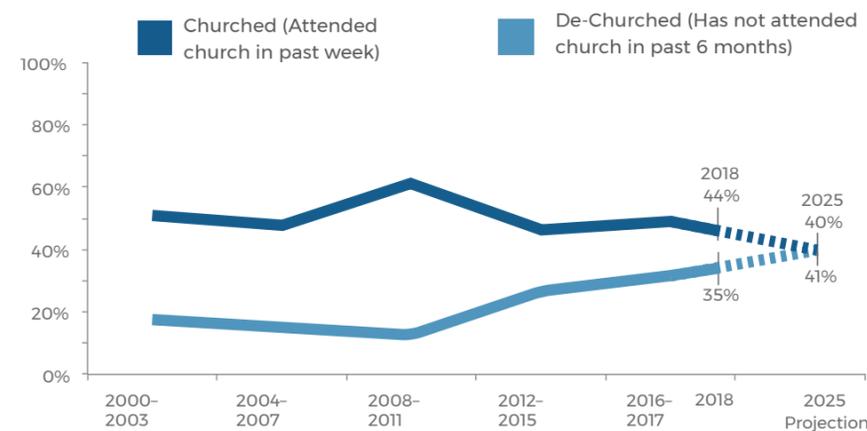
Growth in church attendance is not keeping pace with population growth in Charlotte.

Weekly church attendance is falling while the percent of Charlotteans that are de-churched (meaning that they have attended church before but not in the past 6 months) is on the rise. If trends continue, by 2025, the amount of Charlotteans that are de-churched (41%) will outnumber the number of Charlotteans that attend church weekly (40%).³

BETWEEN 1980 AND 2017,
Church Growth was 43%
Lower than
Population Growth



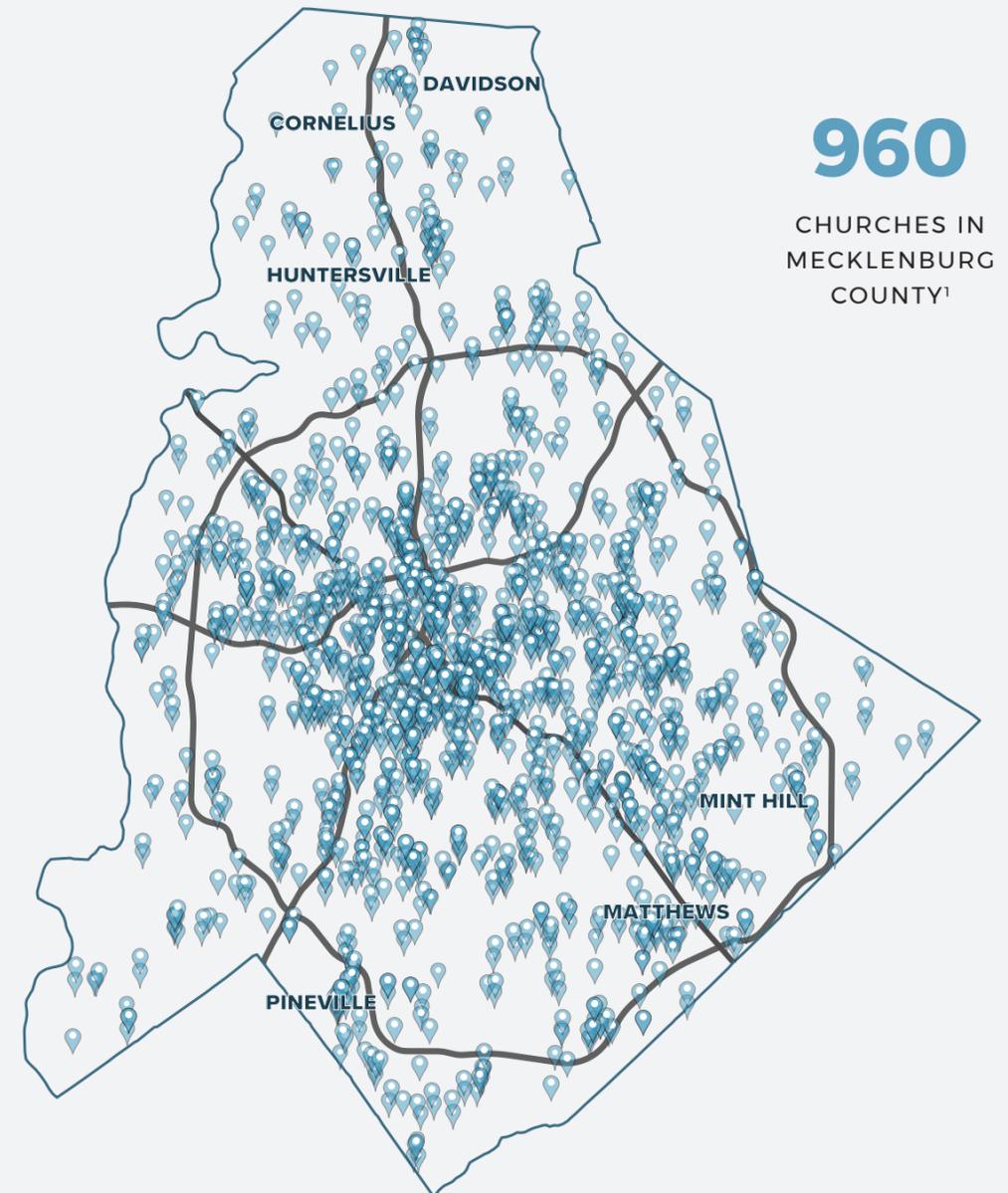
Churched and Unchurched Population in Charlotte, 2000-2025³



The percent of Charlotteans attending church weekly fell from 49% in 2016/2017 to 44% in 2018³

SOURCES: 1. ASARB 1980-2010; 2017 estimate from Barna data | 2. U.S. Census | 3. Barna Group, 2017

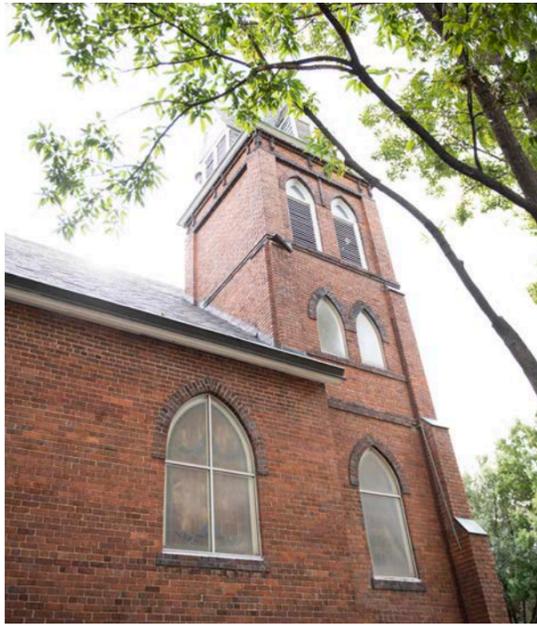
A CITY OF CHURCHES



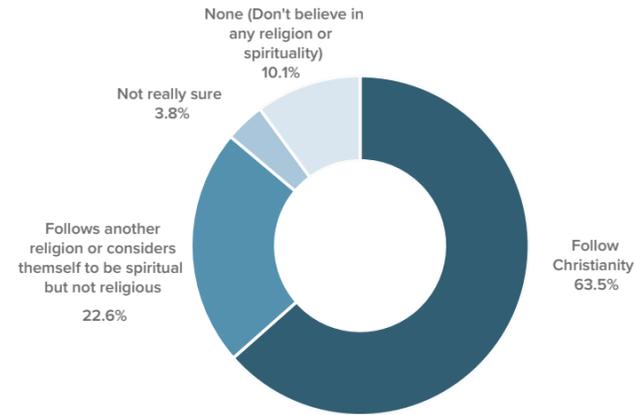
Churches in Mecklenburg County²

(Source: 1. Estimate based on Mecklenburg County land use and local knowledge | 2. Esri 2017)





Self-Identified Spiritual Life¹

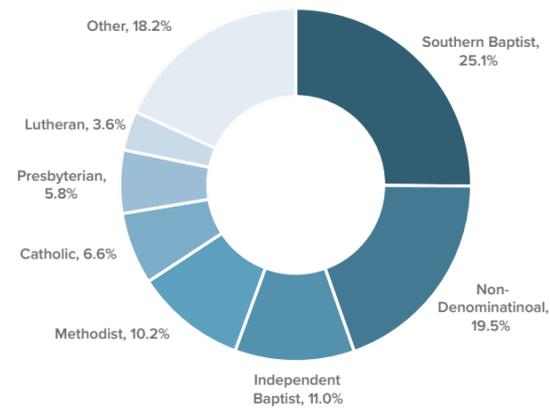


Of all Charlotte metro adults, 63.5% follow Christianity while 22.6% follow another religion or consider themselves to be spiritual but not religious.¹

Surveys of Charlotte metro residents indicate that there are significant spiritual needs for people both outside of the Church and within the Church. 44% of all Charlotte adults and 24% of Charlotte area adults within the Church do not believe they are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. An additional 34% of people within the Church and 30% of all adults are not actively practicing their faith. Men are significantly more likely to need evangelism (48% of men compared to 39% of women) and millennials are significantly more likely to need evangelism than older adults¹.

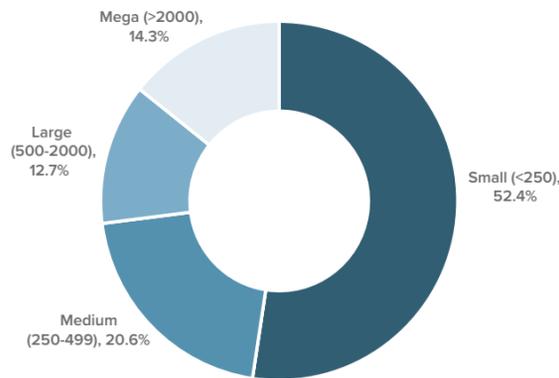


Denomination Affiliation of Charlotte Metro Adults Who Identify As Christian¹



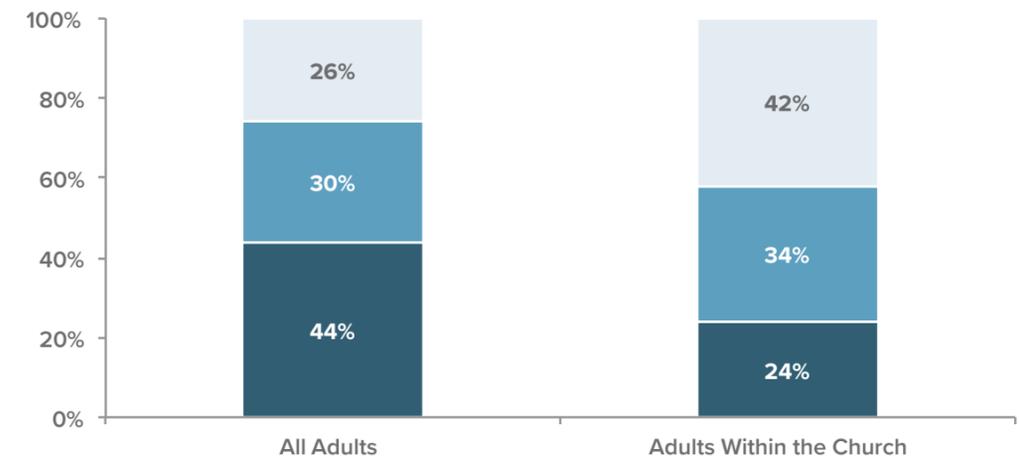
Of Charlotte adults that identify as Christian, one in four affiliate with Southern Baptists and one in five are non-denominational.

Church Size in Charlotte Metro¹



There is a wide range in size among Charlotte area churches. Just over half of the churches in Charlotte are small churches with less than 250 attendees, while 14% are mega-churches with more than 2000 attendees.¹

State of Spiritual Needs of Charlotte Adults¹

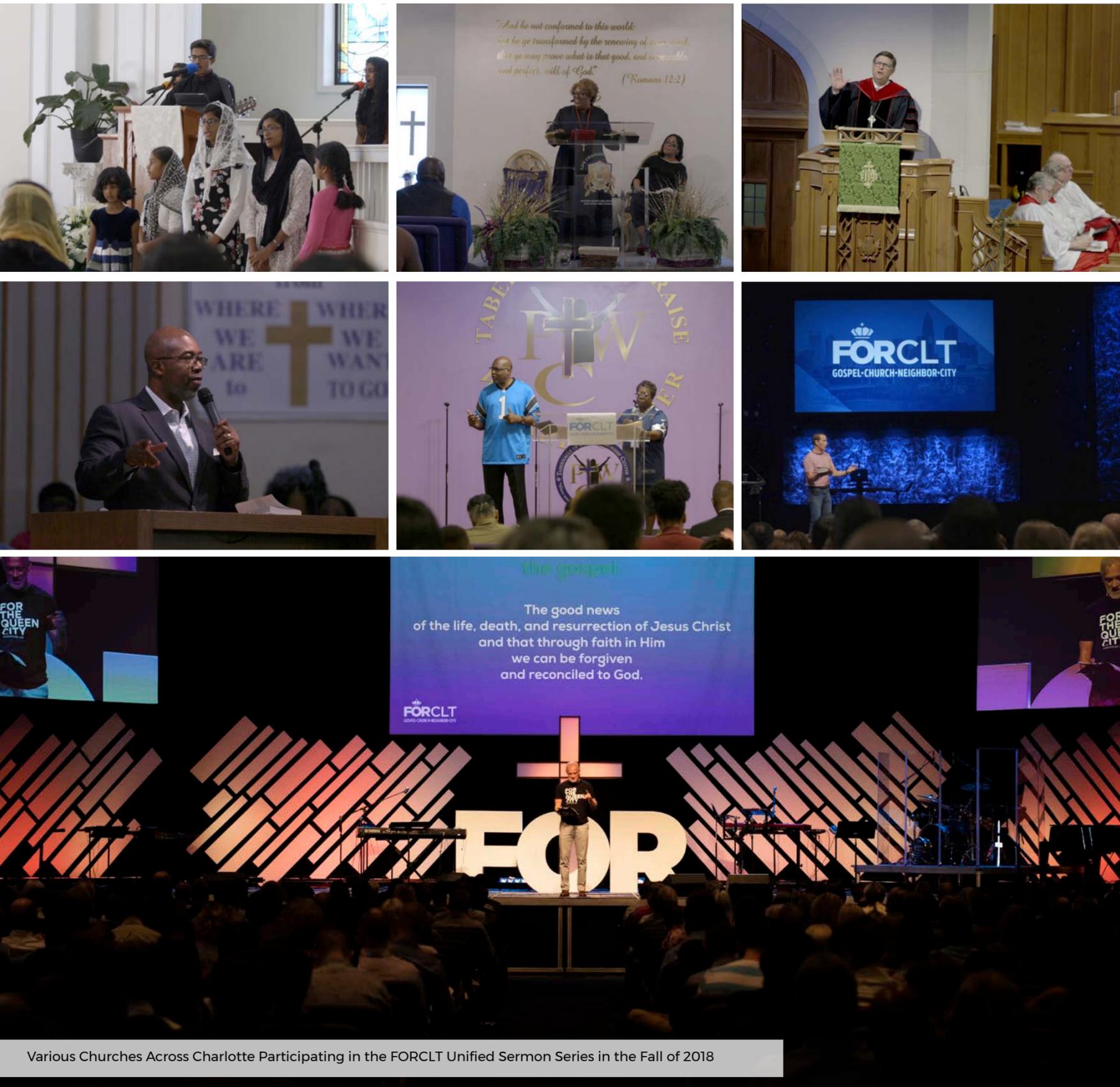


Needs Evangelism Needs Discipleship Potential Disciple-Makers

- » **NEEDS EVANGELISM:** Do not say they are “saved by grace through faith in Jesus”
- » **NEEDS DISCIPLESHIP:** Say they are “saved by grace through faith in Jesus” but are not actively practicing their faith
- » **POTENTIAL DISCIPLE MAKERS:** Say they are “saved by grace through faith in Jesus” and actively practice their faith

SOURCES: 1. Center for Bible Engagement, 2017

SOURCES: 1. Center for Bible Engagement 2017



Various Churches Across Charlotte Participating in the FORCLT Unified Sermon Series in the Fall of 2018

WHAT IF THE CHURCH WAS KNOWN BY WHAT IT IS FOR?

Spotlight: FORCLT Unified Sermon Series

One day, two friends went on a run together. This happens every day. But these two friends also happen to be local pastors that are part of the FORCLT network of pastors, Chris Payne of New Charlotte Church and Clay Smith of First Baptist Church Matthews. On their run, they began talking about an idea to share the deepening relational unity and trust they had been experiencing with each other and other pastors, and spread this message of unity to congregations across the city. This conversation led to the FORCLT unified sermon series, a city-wide sermon series demonstrating unity and shared vision for the transformation of our city.

The heart of the sermon series is the belief that we are stronger together, and that through honoring the prayer of our Lord Jesus in John 17, our city will see and experience the heart of what the Church is truly for: we are for the gospel, the Church, our neighbors and our city. In September of 2018, at least 75 churches participated in the unified sermon series, reaching over 41,000 people in our city.

Many of the participating churches also engaged in a small group study developed by American Bible Society that engaged congregants in Scripture to further explore the themes from the sermon series.

The response was so positive, that conversations immediately began about conducting another unified sermon series in 2019. Charlotte area churches are invited to participate in a 3-week unified sermon series in October of 2019 encouraging the Church to live out Jesus's command to love our neighbor.

For more information on how your congregation can participate, visit forcharlotte.org.



“Too often the Church is known for what we’re against. We wanted to let people know what we’re for: We’re for the gospel, the capital C Church, our neighbors and our city”

CHRIS PAYNE
Senior Pastor, New City Church



“My prayer is that the sermon series will catalyze the Church towards deeper unity for generations to come. For our unity is not a luxury, but a necessity, as we live out our call to advance God’s Kingdom together.”

CLAY SMITH
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church Matthews



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Why do you think the Church in Charlotte is decreasing as a whole? What do you believe the most effective thing the Church can do to change this and see the gospel multiply in our city?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » Matthew 28:18-20
- » John 13:34-35
- » Acts 1:8
- » Acts 9:31
- » 2 Corinthians 5:19-21
- » John 17:20-23

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35



GET INVOLVED

Multiplying What Matters Most

Principle 1: Jesus Matters

- » Ultimately, Christianity is about a person. With all the baggage that is so often associated with the Church, we must always push through to what matters most, or better stated, who matters most. Multiplying the gospel is about showing and sharing the good news that God has loved us perfectly in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. And the most loving thing we can do for anyone is to share this incredibly good news about Jesus. This is the heart of the Great Commission the Church was given: making disciples of Jesus.

Principle 2: Unity Matters

- » In the last supper Jesus shared with His disciples, He made clear that the greatest declaration of the gospel to the world is in the unity of the body of Christ. How well the Church loves one another will be a sign to the world of God's love for them.
- » Ensure that your church or organization does not operate on Christ's mission in a silo. Pray, plan and partner with other churches and like-minded ministries or organizations. This will multiply both the impact and the joy you experience.
- » For pastors, FORCLT provides pastoral networks that gather in close geographic proximity to one another around the Greater Charlotte area. These networks provide pastors the opportunity to pray, build relationship and trust with other pastors, all while learning the needs of the community, moving toward collaboration to meet the needs of their community. See a current list of FORCLT Pastoral Networks at www.forcharlotte.org.

Principle 3: Metrics Matter

- » What you measure as a church or organization is probably what you value most. The two primary measurements in most churches are attendance and finances, both of which are important. But it is imperative not to stop there. Any organization, whether church, ministry, or business with a desire to advance the Kingdom must create missional metrics.
- » Allow your community to be your primary metric. What are the most important needs in your surrounding community? This report is an attempt to help you as you create missional metrics for your congregation or organization.

Principle 4: Church Planting Matters

- » Church planting is the most effective evangelistic methodology in history.
- » Church planting creates greater evangelistic zeal both in the church being planted and the sending church.
- » In Charlotte, where the vast majority of churches are homogeneous, we recommend being intentional about planting multiethnic churches.
- » We also recommend churches consider collaborative church planting in Charlotte. Churches working together to establish a new gospel work makes a profound statement to the community.
- » If you are a pastor of a new church plant, join the FORCLT Church Planting Network to form relationships with fellow church planters.

Principle 5: Church Revitalization Matters

- » In the next five years, it is estimated that well over 100 churches will close their doors for good in Charlotte. We highly recommend churches make church revitalization part of their church planting strategy.
- » For churches on the verge of closing your doors, we recommend prayerfully considering the possibility of a merger or revitalization. There are many churches and denominations in Charlotte that have the resources to come alongside a church that is struggling to rebirth a gospel work in its congregation.
- » Remember, revitalization is not easy. It takes time, humility and perseverance. But it is worth it, as each church is a lighthouse for the gospel in our city.

Principle 6: Culture and Contextualization Matters

- » To see the gospel multiplied, it must be contextualized into every culture. The Church must always find new and creative ways to take the unchanging message of the gospel to an ever-changing world. To this end, the Church must be students of culture.
- » Commit to listening and learning the cultural narratives going on around you. Be aware of the values and ethos of the culture.
- » Prayerfully discern how you can both create and redeem culture in such a way to multiply the gospel in it.
- » Understand that language is the biggest culture maker. To communicate to the culture, you must be able to “speak the language.”



ABOUT FORCLT

FORCLT ANNUAL REPORT

The following section serves as the FORCLT annual report, outlining the major aspects of the organization and demonstrating how FORCLT lives out its purpose to unite the church and transform the city.



ABOUT FORCLT

OUR STORY

FORCLT was formed in April 2015 out of a burden placed on its founder, Rob Kelly, approximately four years earlier concerning the lack of church unity that he and many others were experiencing in our great city - Charlotte, North Carolina. Rob, a pastor of 13 years at the time, was meeting regularly with a close knit group of other pastors from across the city. As their relationships grew, their collective burden for the division in the Church and the needs of our city grew exponentially.

During the formation period, the founding team of FORCLT defined two major issues as related to the Church in Charlotte that FORCLT would engage:

- » The Church in Charlotte is divided; and
- » The Church in Charlotte is declining.

As this vision began to take hold with pastors and Christian leaders across the city, it became clear that no single church could lead this unified effort. Rather, it would require a neutral convening organization operating as a platform to connect all churches, denominations, nonprofits and organizations wanting to seek the transformation of the city.

Deeply burdened by these realities, they recognized that the answer to these issues was found in the prayer of our Lord Jesus to His Father before enduring the cross as recorded in John 17:20-23.

Committed to this prayer as their driving motivation, the founding team launched FORCLT with a commitment to honoring the prayer of Jesus in John 17 through creating platforms that unite the Church for the transformation of our city. Jesus is clear that when the body of Christ is truly "one," the world will know that the Father sent Jesus into the world and that the Father loves the world as He loves His one and only Son.

OUR PURPOSE

To Unite the Church to Transform Our City

OUR VALUES



Gospel - Centrality

We value the gospel. This gospel is the good news that God has loved and reconciled the world to Himself through the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the Church, we are called to live our lives for the sake of the gospel, and we believe that the gospel, when properly understood, stands firmly on two legs: word and deed. Thus, we are called to proclaim (word) and demonstrate (deed) the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Church - Unity

We value Church unity. Which means we value Christ's Church. We believe that the Church, when united and operating in the power of the Holy Spirit, is the most powerful change agent in the world, and must be the main driver of any lasting city-transformation efforts. Because we value Church unity, we focus on creating network platforms for the Church to grow deeper in relationship, trust, leading to gospel-centered collaboration for the good of the city.



City Transformation

We value Charlotte. We believe that God has placed His Church in Charlotte as His transformative change agents. The Scriptures call the Church to seek the peace (shalom) of the city. Because we are gospel-centered, we desire to see gospel movement in the areas of our city that need them most. Based on extensive prayer and research, the 5 Ms identified in this State of the City Report are our primary mission focus areas that we believe if the Church were to engage faithfully and collaboratively, will lead to measurable shalom in the city of Charlotte.



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

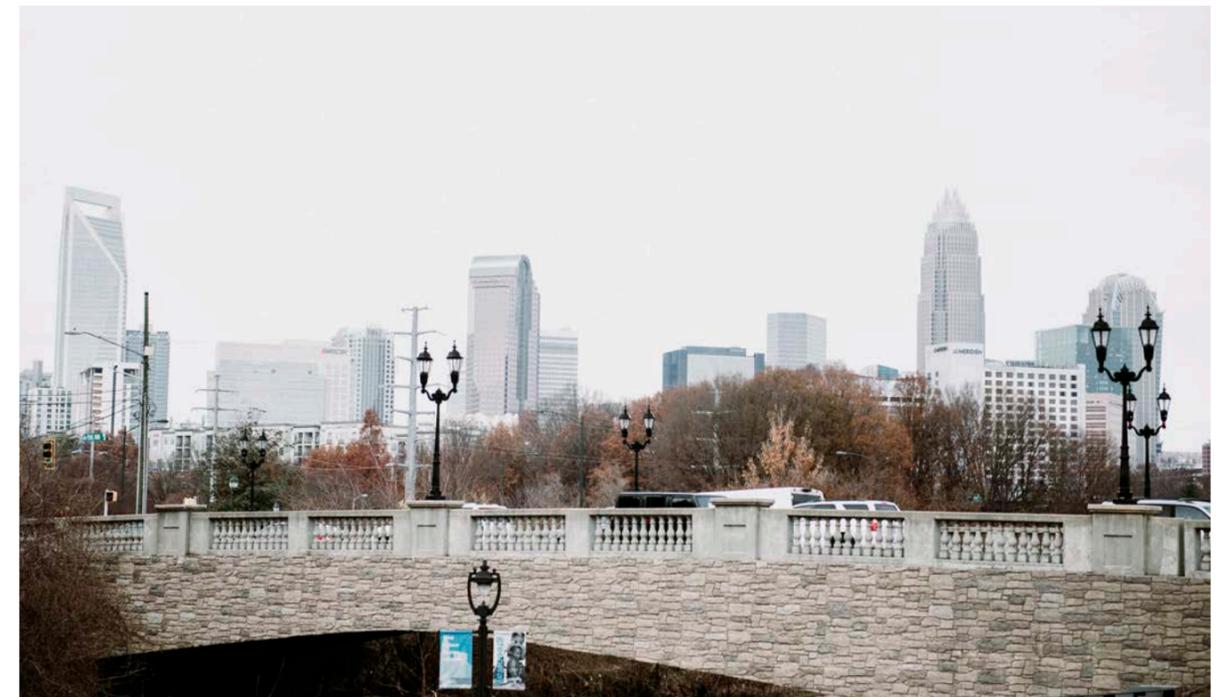
What does Scripture say about God's heart for the unity of His Church?

Read and dwell on the following Scripture passages:

- » John 13:34-35
- » Galatians 3:26-28
- » Ephesians 2:11-22
- » Psalm 133

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

John 17:20-23



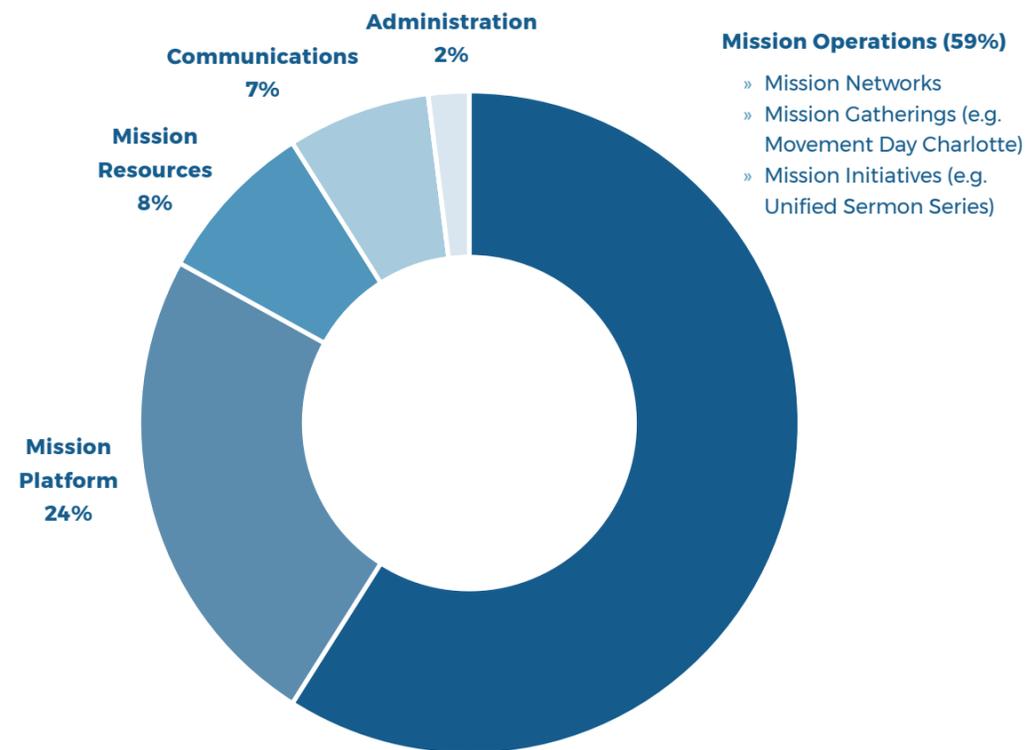
OUR STRATEGY TO UNITE THE CHURCH TO TRANSFORM OUR CITY

The initial strategy of FORCLT was simply create environments for Christian leaders throughout the city to convene together, build relationships and trust and see how they may work together to for the good of the city. This led to the first FORCLT pastoral network. Over time, and after extensive prayer and planning, the following strategic organizational verticals emerged to carry out our purpose to unite the Church to transform our city.

NETWORKS	RESOURCES	INITIATIVES	GATHERINGS	PLATFORM
Connecting Church leaders through relationship and prayer	Equipping the Church to understand the needs of the city	Mobilizing the Church to engage the needs of our city	Celebrating and accelerating gospel movement in Charlotte	Connecting churches, nonprofits, and schools to meet the needs of our city

FORCLT 2018 Budget

The 2018 budget totaled \$740,963 and was allocated as shown in the percentages below.



FORCLT NETWORKS



THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 FINANCIAL PARTNERS

CORPORATE PARTNERS



CHURCH PARTNERS



IN-KIND AND MINISTRY PARTNERS



“We are so grateful for all of our partners who generously believe in and give to this vision of uniting the church to transform our city.”

RJ CASWELL
FORCLT BOARD CHAIR

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*The financial partners presented on these two pages donated to FORCLT between January 1, 2018 and February 1, 2019.



Charlotte Pastors Praying Together at the FORCLT Network Leader Retreat, November 2018

BUILDING RELATIONAL UNITY

Spotlight: FORCLT Pastoral Networks

What would happen in Charlotte if the pastors in our city knew and loved each other? This is the question that drove FORCLT when it was founded and led to the creation of our first geographic pastoral network. These networks are made up of pastors in close geographic proximity to each other. The goal of each network is to provide a safe and neutral space where pastors and Christian leaders can pray, build relationship and trust, learn the needs of the city and collaborate together on mission for the transformation of the city.

By the end of 2018, the FORCLT network platform had grown to fourteen networks in the greater Charlotte area, representing approximately 200 churches in those networks. In addition to geographic networks, several networks have formed around causes, including church planting, prayer and foster care.

It is the hope of FORCLT that new networks form across the city and that existing networks continue to flourish, building deeper relational and operational unity for the transformation of our city.

For more information on FORCLT networks, please visit forcharlotte.org



RJ DAVIS
Pastor, Nations Ford
Community Church;
FORCLT Network Leader

“The personal value of being a part of a pastoral network is the friendships that are formed out of the deep love and support for one another. Our personal relationships and ministry partnerships remind us that we are part of the greater cause of demonstrating the unity of the Church.”



JONATHAN SCOTT
Pastor, Forest Hill Church
- South Park;
FORCLT Network Leader

“I have been so blessed with the network of pastors and spiritual leaders we meet with monthly as it has helped me to better see the reality of the One Church of Jesus in our city operating in the many churches. Gathering together to share burdens, joys and ministry opportunities helps us experience that oneness but also demonstrates the power and the hope we have in the Gospel of Christ.”

GATHERING THE CHURCH

Spotlight: Movement Day Charlotte

Since its founding, FORCLT has operated as a neutral convening platform, bringing together pastors and Christian leaders to connect and engage the most pressing physical, spiritual and societal needs of our city. The climax of our convening platform is Movement Day Charlotte, a citywide gathering focused on celebrating and accelerating gospel movement in Charlotte.

The first Movement Day Charlotte was hosted February 3, 2018. At this all-day event, a sold-out crowd of 920 church, civic and marketplace leaders from over 200 churches came together to learn details about the stubborn facts of our city and how to engage in them. We heard from missional thought leaders from around the United States, millennial leaders, as well as our Chief of Police and Mayor.

Through gathering the Church at Movement Day Charlotte, it is our hope that those in attendance will be inspired to take next steps in Church unity and city transformation.

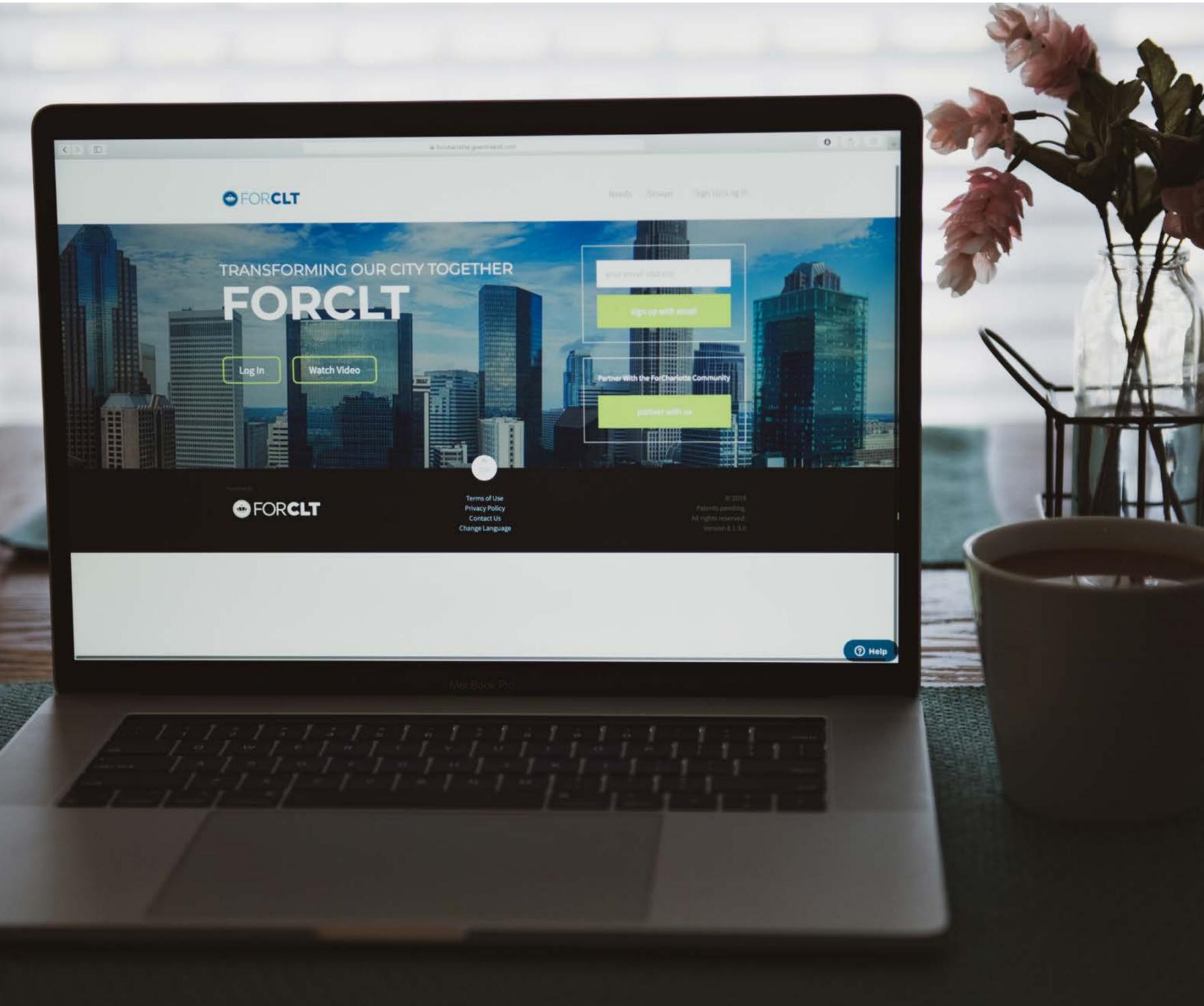


“Movement Day Charlotte was the most significant gathering of Christian leaders in Charlotte since the Billy Graham Crusade in 1996.”

LEIGHTON FORD
PRESIDENT
LEIGHTON FORD MINISTRIES
HONORARY CHAIRMAN, 2018 MOVEMENT DAY CHARLOTTE



Movement Day Charlotte, 2018



BUILDING OPERATIONAL UNITY IN THE CITY

Spotlight: FORCLT Platform

After years of building church networks focused on mission collaboration, one lesson that was clearly learned is that church collaboration is very messy! To address this issue, a business leader who had been following FORCLT's development and its success of building networks that disrupted the division within the church culture, approached us about building a technology platform to operationalize the relational unity that was growing throughout the city.

In 2018, FORCLT launched a citywide missional engagement platform to facilitate collaborative mission between churches, nonprofits, schools and other agencies. Branded as an extension of each connected organization, the platform allows members to see mission opportunities and needs, giving them immediate access to engage that need.

The platform streamlines the process for nonprofits, allowing them to share a need with all their church partners, and fosters unity by providing a way for churches to serve side-by-side for the good of the city.

By the end of 2018, nearly 100 churches, non-profits, schools and agencies in Charlotte were utilizing the platform to post and share opportunities. Additionally, over 1,100 individuals had registered to meet needs on the platform.

To connect your church or organization to the platform, or to see opportunities to serve, visit www.forcharlotte.goentrepid.com



ANDREW WEILER
PLATFORM DIRECTOR, FORCLT
DIRECTOR OF MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY,
& COMMUNICATIONS,
FOREST HILL CHURCH

"For us to achieve operational unity in the Church, we must have an operating system where churches, non-profits and schools can freely collaborate together for the good of our city."



Charlotte Prayer Guide



Charlotte Prayer Guide

This State of the City Report began with this vision: What would happen if the collective body of Christ in Charlotte engaged the needs of our city using shared, trusted research? With this vision as a foundation, we ask a potent question: What would happen if the collective body of Christ in Charlotte prayed for the needs of the city in a unified way? The following is a Charlotte Prayer Guide, outlining specific prayer points for each of the major needs addressed in this report. We encourage you, your church, or small group to use this prayer guide to pray for the needs of our city.

Mobility Matters: Income Inequality

- » Pray for those in poverty in our city, recognizing that poverty is not just material, but spiritual.
- » Pray that those in need of a job will have an opportunity to work for a livable wage and support their family with dignity.
- » Pray that God would reveal opportunities to bless those in poverty, recognizing that all that we have belongs to God and we are simply stewards of His resources.
- » Pray for those who put their hope in wealth, instead of God. Pray that they would understand it is God who is our true provider.
- » Pray for forgiveness for areas in your life where you are living with closed hands and are unwilling to trust God with all that you have.
- » Pray that God would give you a generous heart, to seek opportunities to live generously, whether personally or in your work.

Mobility Matters: Race

- » Pray that God would help you see every man, woman, and child as He sees them, created in His image. Pray that through His eyes, you would be able to give thanks and celebrate the beauty and diversity of all the peoples in His creation.
- » Pray that God would reveal to you your own biases and prejudices. Ask that He would give you the strength to repent and ask forgiveness for those you may have hurt with your biases.
- » Pray that God would reveal where Christ's Church has historically furthered racial prejudice in our society. Ask for wisdom to repent of these corporate sins.
- » Give thanks to God that the power of the gospel has the ability to unite the racial divisions in our city.

Mobility Matters: Education

- » Pray for all the school age children in our city, for their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- » Pray for the school teachers and administrators that faithfully pour their lives into the students in our city (public, private, charter, and homeschool).
- » Pray for our school system: Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Pray for its many dedicated teachers, faculty, leadership, and board. Pray that all the needs of the school system would be provided.
- » Pray for deepening relationships between churches and schools in our community. Pray that churches would serve our schools with humility, respect, and faithfulness.
- » Pray that all educational inequalities would cease. Pray that every child in our community would be able to gain the quality education they deserve, and pray for all those who are currently struggling to obtain it.

Mobility Matters: Family Structure

- » Give thanks for the gift of family. Pray for every mom, dad, grandparent, foster parent and other caregiver raising children in our city.
- » Pray for the 40,000 parents in our county that are raising children as a single parent. Pray that they may find community and support from friends, church, and others who can encourage and help them with the day to day tasks of being a parent.
- » Pray for the widows and elderly throughout the city.

Mobility Matters: Social Capital

- » Pray for a deepening relational unity and trust in our community across all lines: inter-racial, inter-denominational, and public and private sectors.
- » Pray that where trust has been broken, there would be repentance and forgiveness.
- » Pray that the Church would lead the way in fostering healthy relationships across all dividing lines in our city.

The Margins Matter: Immigrants & Refugees

- » Pray for the more than 17,000 refugees that have resettled in Charlotte over the last 20 years.
- » Pray that the Church in our city would be welcoming and loving to those moving here from other countries. Pray that the Church would live out biblical hospitality.
- » Pray that God will grow a deepening relational unity between American and immigrant believers. Pray for opportunities to minister side by side as one Church, despite having different backgrounds, languages, and cultures.
- » Pray for wisdom for city leaders to steward city resources and personnel in light of a population that is continually growing in size and diversity.

The Margins Matter: Vulnerable Children

- » Pray for every child in our city that does not have a safe place to call home.
- » Pray for the nearly 600 children in the Mecklenburg County foster and adoption system.
- » Pray for the leaders in the foster and adoption system, that they would be renewed and encouraged daily.
- » Pray that the Church would help find a forever home for every child in our community in need.
- » Pray that God would raise up loving, Christ following foster and adoptive parents who will open their homes to care for and love vulnerable children of all ages.

The Margins Matter: Affordable Housing

- » Pray for the thousands of families in Charlotte that face housing insecurity or are without a permanent home.
- » Pray that the Church and city leaders will work together to find innovative ways to provide affordable housing options throughout our city.

Millennials Matter

- » Give thanks to God that Charlotte is a vibrant, growing city that is a hub for younger generations.
- » Give thanks for the massive influx of millennials to our city, and for the life, innovation, and energy they bring.
- » Pray that the Church would prioritize developing intergenerational mentoring through discipleship relationships, and that through them, each generation in the church would be blessed.
- » Pray that churches would prioritize raising up millennial leaders.

The Marketplace Matters

- » As a city filled with marketplace leaders, pray that we would see these leaders unleashed to lead in Christ's mission for the good of our city.
- » Pray that God would help you see your workplace as a unique mission field He has placed you in to share and show His love with those in your sphere of influence.
- » Pray for stewardship of resources and relationships within the marketplace.

Multiplication Matters

- » Pray for a revival within Christ's Church in Charlotte, evidenced by a deepening love and unity within the Church. Ask that through this unity, the Church would find new and creative ways to collaborate on Christ's mission in our city.
- » Pray that the Church would experience a renewed commitment to proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- » Give thanks for the many diverse representations of the Church throughout the city. Pray that God would continue to raise up new churches and ministries to reach every language, people group, and culture in our city.
- » Pray for unbelievers in our city. Pray that they may experience the love of God, given in the person of Jesus. Pray that their eyes might be open to the hope and peace that exists perfectly in Jesus.
- » Pray that each follower of Jesus would recognize their role in the Great Commission, and work daily to make disciples for the glory of God.



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