Envision – Risking and Imagining New Ideas
Stepping Stone Summary Sheet

Leaders continue to cultivate safe and sacred space for emerging questions, conversation, and the willingness to risk imagining and sharing new ideas. From the questions, conversation, missional practices, and activities emerge new insights about what it might look like to “embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:9d) in existing and new ministry contexts.

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<th>Initial Questions</th>
<th>Initial Path Forward</th>
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<td>This stepping-stone is a turning point in the overall missional process. As a result of the missional practices, activities, encounters, and conversation prophetic imagination begins to emerge. <strong>Prophetic imagination</strong> (simple definition): a glimpse of God’s preferred future in a situation or relationship. Individuals and congregations do not move onto this stepping-stone at one time. Prophetic imagination can emerge anytime during the process as the Holy Spirit reveals the possibility of the future.</td>
<td>Congregations, typically, will tend to lean into this stepping-stone after work has been done with Encounter and Discovery. This makes sense in light of our Foundational Principles. Mission begins with encounter and is disruptive both to our agendas and understandings. As we immerse ourselves in missional practices and activities that deepen our understanding of mission, we will remove blinders that once hid our ability to see new ideas.</td>
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- How are we doing as a leadership team? Are we feeling tired, energized? What adjustments do we need to make so the burden and challenges of leadership are more equally shared?

- Think about how you would tell the current story of your congregation. What assumptions or guiding story has shaped the current imagination of the congregation? How has the current reality caused you to question the future viability of these assumptions or guiding story? How do these assumptions or guiding story help or hinder you from seeing God’s future in this place?

- How are we creating wide space in our gatherings and personal discipleship for the Holy Spirit to move and inspire? Is the Holy Spirit playing a leading role or are we trying too hard to engineer success (however we define success)? What is the right balance? Are we having fun? Are we laughing and playing, embodying the hope and freedom of the gospel? (D&C 161:1b) Or is it all about work?

- Review reflections from “Sharing/Discovering Our Congregational Story”

- Developing a bias toward being spirit led

- **Coming together for fun and fellowship**

- **Coming together in different venues**

- Practicing prophetic imagination in community

- **Review and implement “Facilitating Periodic Feedback Meetings”**

- **Encountering spiritual and physical suffering**

- Application of Dwelling in the Word to other forms of beauty

- **Review “Discerning and Utilizing the Gifts of all Ages”**

- Review “Exploring Congregational Gifts”
- What pathways are we opening up other than in words and abstract thinking or analysis to encounter God anew in art, nature, relationships, and even in some of the darkest places we would not expect to find beauty and hope?

- How are we continuing to deepen our relationships and create authentic and safe space for people to share new ideas? Do we have more work to do to create this kind of environment?

- Have we reached a plateau? Do we feel a pause in momentum that may signal a need to step back and be in conversation with the congregation on how things are going?

- What missional practices will help us encounter God in multiple ways (relationships, situations, nature, culture, etc.) and lead to prophetic imagination?

- How can we create different physical space? Should we consider a retreat as part of our envisioning?

- Have enough of us committed enough time to a set of missional practices that lead to new understanding, encounters, and prophetic imagination? **Do we need to reengage? Do we need to go deeper?**

- Have we integrated children and youth into our experiences and missional practices? How do we create safe space for their insights and questions?

**Note:** There is more detailed information on each activity suggestion in the LCM Field Guide Overview on pages 25-27.

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**Milestones**

Evaluating progress with this stepping-stone is a bit more challenging. In general we are looking for a change in the focus of the congregation from its current reality to future possibilities. This occurs as our encounter with the reality of suffering bumps up against the good news of the gospel. **If we don’t sense a change in focus it may be that our missional practices and conversations have been insulated from the reality around us.** It is out of the tension between the reality of the present and our deepening understanding of Christ’s mission that prophetic imagination is sparked and our language begins to lean into the future. A few indicators of movement through this stepping-stone are:
• Individuals in the congregation begin to view current activities, actions, attitudes, and priorities in light of deeper and new understandings of the good news of the Christ’s mission found in Luke 4:18-19.

• The inertia in the congregation begins to shift from maintaining the status quo to a bias for risking something new.

• Questions begin to emerge about skills and resources needed to respond to emerging ideas.

• There is a spirit of adventure and even playfulness emerging. People genuinely enjoy being together.

• Relationships continue to go deeper and a deeper sense of community emerges. Conversations are not as contrived and come naturally out of missional practices that connect individuals beyond the Sunday morning experience.

• Conversations are increasingly centered on matters of substance for both individuals and the congregation.