




A Digital  
New Worshiping  
Community

# TAPESTRY

Rev. Bethany Peerbolte

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“If a church like  
this was near me  
it would be the  
reason I returned  
to faith.”

@trebleapollo

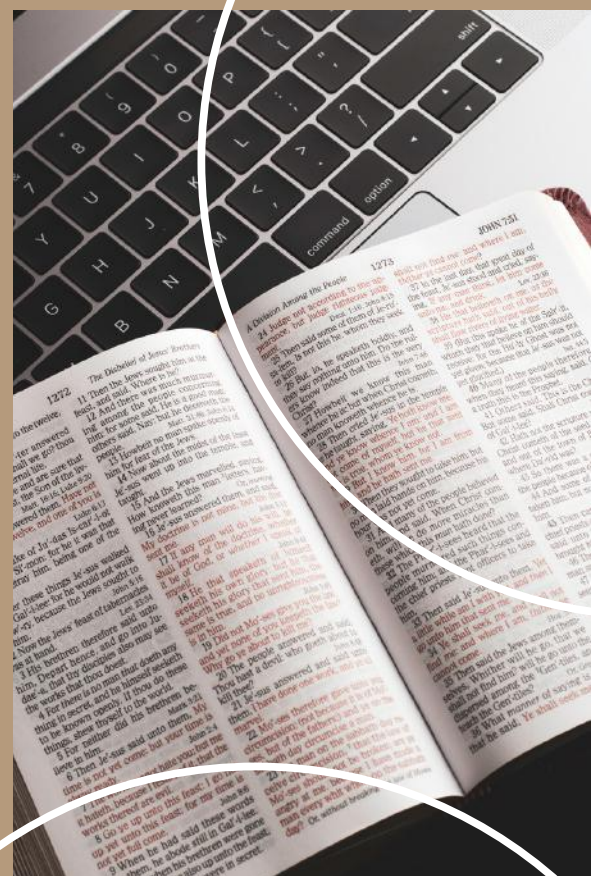
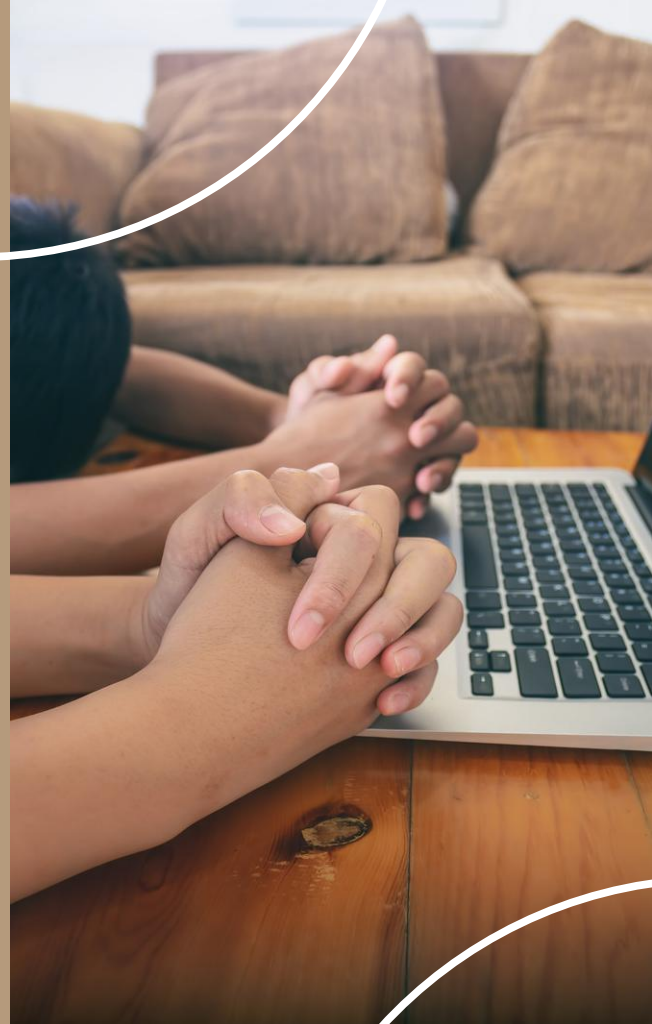
# ABOUT PROPOSAL

The world has been launched into a digital reformation. Every industry is assessing its effectiveness in digital spaces and investing in the entrepreneurs who will develop tomorrow's influential techniques.

The Church is also wrestling with understanding the impact of this digital movement. One thing we can be sure of is that innovation will be essential as we build the future of the PC(USA).

The innovation I have been experimenting with is called "Tapestry." This ministry is a way to access impactful sacred spaces and loving people of faith no matter what zip code someone calls home. Tapestry has shown me the heartbreaking truth that we have abandoned many siblings by exclusively channeling resources to brick-and-mortar spaces.

This proposal seeks to build on Tapestry's success by creating a New Worshiping Community (NWC) that intentionally gathers those who have no local options for affirming faith community. As this NWC experiments for their own vitality, they will inevitably discover valuable tools, metrics, lessons, and practices that will ensure PC(USA) sacred spaces thrive far into the future.



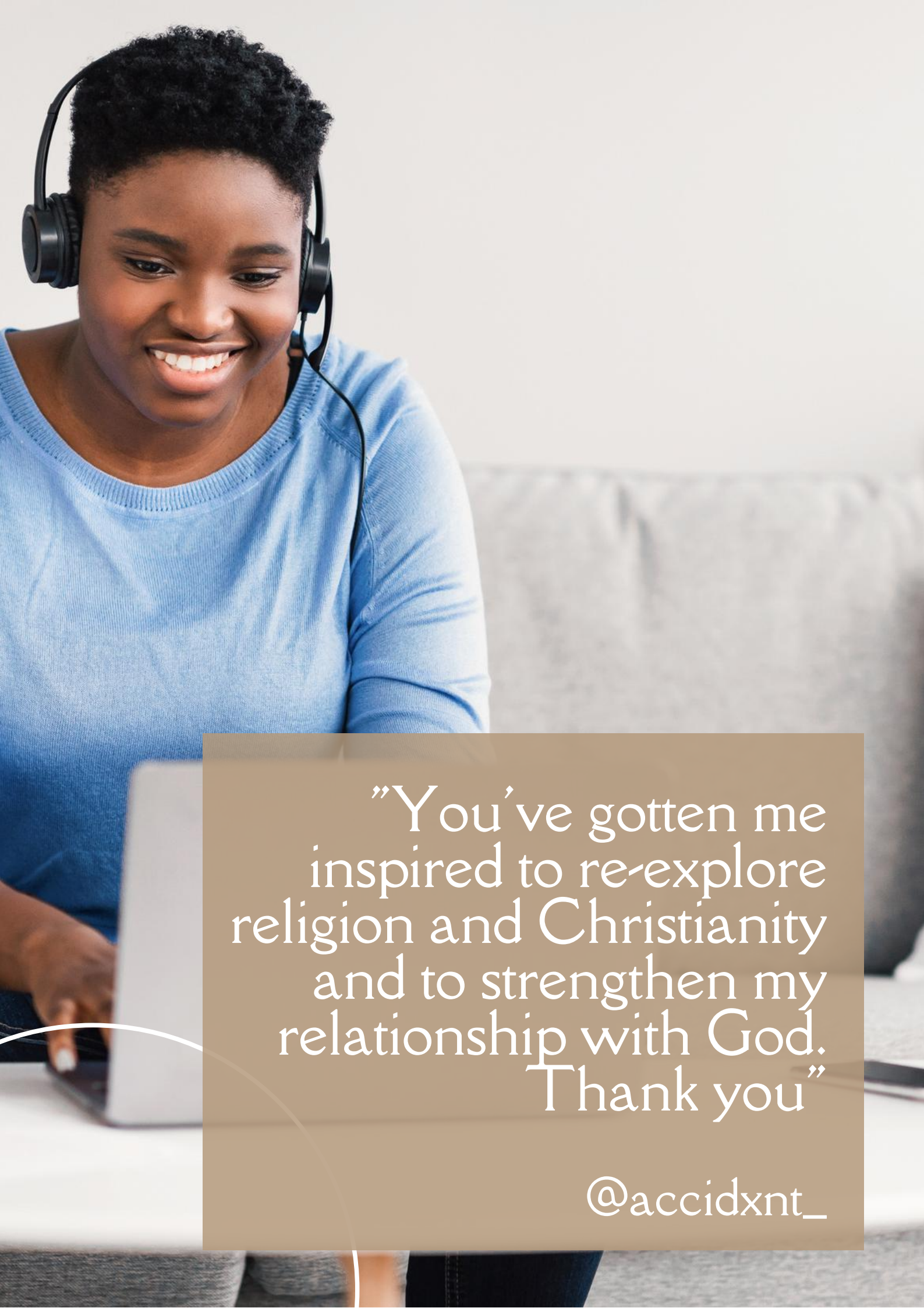
# Rev. Bethany



I am in my fourth year of ordained ministry in the PC(USA). My MDiv is from Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit Michigan. Currently, I am serving First Presbyterian Church in Birmingham Michigan as their Associate Pastor for Youth and Mission.


In the last two years, the Spirit has shown me how my gifts are uniquely shaped for digital ministry. The journey started on TikTok and quickly the 290,000+ people who follow my account compelled me to start Tapestry, a digital ministry supporting people in "theological deserts" by giving them access to pastoral care, faith formation, and loving community.

I believe the Spirit has begun in me and in Tapestry a ministry that will lead the PC(USA) into an exciting future and give those who have been abandoned by the Church a second chance at a relationship with God.



“You’ve gotten me  
inspired to re-explore  
religion and Christianity  
and to strengthen my  
relationship with God.  
Thank you”

@accidxnt\_



Every month, 30,000  
people search Google  
using the phrase  
“Church Online”

From: 2018 article by Reach: Right  
[reachrightstudios.com/10-church-statistics-need-know-2018](https://reachrightstudios.com/10-church-statistics-need-know-2018)

# DIGITAL MINISTRY

Building from the lessons Tapestry has already learned, this NWC will experiment, engage, and develop impactful digital practices for the church of today and tomorrow.

Digital content and online spaces will be the primary way this NWC nurtures community and faith development. Regardless of where someone lives, this online community will support each other as they heal from church hurt, strengthen their faith, and encounter God's love.

Our siblings living in theological deserts are crying out for help as they try to hold on to their created identity and their identity in Christ. This NWC will be the oasis their spiritual selves need.



## KEY APPLICATIONS



**Teaching:** Arrange weekly studies to build up biblical knowledge, individual faith, and fellowship.

Zoom, YouTube, Podcasts



**Care:** Provide pastoral care, spiritual coaching, one-on-one listening, and teaching.

Zoom, Calendly, In-Person



**Worship:** Design innovative and accessible sacred spaces for people to be in God's presence.

YouTube, Discord, Podcasts



**Stewardship:** Encourage generosity and teach the spiritual practice of missional giving.

Patreon, Venmo, Paypal



**Community:** Offer authentic affirming Christian community regardless of physical location.

Discord, Website, In-person



**Lifelines:** Create content that the Spirit can use to get to the people who are in need of this ministry.

TikTok, Facebook, Instagram

# CONNECTIONAL

As Tapestry has grown, I have also been serving in a traditional church setting. This has proven to be a huge benefit in many surprising ways. It has added validity to my message that affirming churches exist and can thrive. Participants have had fruitful conversations with the Christians in their daily lives because our weekly lesson followed the lectionary. Additionally, the questions coming from Tapestry participants have helped me be a stronger leader in the traditional congregation as I learn what people struggle with and how to help them reach a fuller understanding of faith and God.

For these reasons, I intentionally want the partner of this NWC to synergize and build a mutually beneficial ministry. Below are examples of ways Tapestry could help its partnering entity and itself benefit from being active in the partnering ministry.



## CHURCH LEVEL


Part-time positions offer a great way for the leader of this NWC to stay connected to the greater church. Whether a church needs extra help covering pastoral care or a solo pastor wants a break, the need for part-time help creates a great partnership opportunity for this NWC.



## MID COUNCIL LEVEL

The leader of this NWC could be mobile enough (possibly in an RV) to pulpit supply, moderate meetings, train elders, administer sacraments, and offer much more to a whole region of churches. Circuit Preachers use to support the church in this way, maybe it is time to bring back the practice.



A photograph of three people laughing together. On the left, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red and white checkered shirt under a grey blazer, is laughing. In the center, a man with glasses and a tan blazer over a blue shirt is laughing. On the right, a woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow top and a blue and white polka-dot scarf, is also laughing. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A semi-transparent brown box is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing white text.

“You restored my faith in faith. I used your website to find a supportive church in my area! Can’t thank you enough.”

@misschelsea9

# OUTCOMES

## FAR-REACHING/AFFIRMING COMMUNITY

We will have an active presence among people living too far from our brick & mortar churches to attend in person. Giving them a place to grow in faith and reclaim their identity in Christ. Working to honor the needs and experiences of everyone regardless of geographic location.

## ACCESSIBLE REFORMED CHRISTIAN CONTENT

An increased PC(USA) presence in digital theological discourse. As well as content that can be easily found 24/7/365 so that when people are in a moment of distress we are open and ready to speak love into their present needs.

Content created will help everyone to "fill in the gaps" with Spiritual formation by watching content during lunch breaks or listening in traffic jams.

Churches can focus their energy on the things they do best and offer digital content to their congregations for more options.

## ACCESSIBLE PROGRESSIVE PASTOR

Suicide rates and drug use among teens and young adults (especially in the LGBTQIA+ community) are astonishingly high. One reason is the lack of access to someone they believe can/will help. Another factor is their families' struggle to respond with love as they navigate the tensions between their theology and their loved one's identity. Tapestry allows anyone the opportunity to speak with a progressive pastor who is committed to compassionate listening and sensitive conversations.



## EASEMENT OF STRESS ON SMALLER CHURCHES

The potential to create a symbiotic relationship with established ministries is extensive. For example, if Tapestry partners with a mid-council it would give rural congregations a cost-effective way to have access to an ordained Teaching Elder for pulpit supply, sacraments, and moderator needs. Allowing them to embrace the call they have in their corner of God's kin-dom. It is a symbiotic blessing as it is also a way for the NWC to stay connected to the larger structure and traditions.

## EXPERIMENT & CONSULT FOR GREATER CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Dedicating a full-time ministry to trying new things, curating the best practices, developing modern formats, and keeping up with advancing technology sets the PC(USA) up to stay on the front line of church vitality.

Not every solo pastor has the time to research, implement, and analyze new faith formation techniques. However, they do have time to email questions or meet on zoom to brainstorm with someone who knows the options. The leadership of this ministry can be that resource for anyone looking into digital ministry options for their specific context.



## INVEST IN THE IMAGE OF THE PC(USA)

There are still people who are shocked to see a female pastor, let alone see a denomination that performs marriage regardless of gender, cares about issues like ending gun violence, or is willing to say black lives matter. The louder voices of other denominations are influencing the public idea of what it means to be a Christian. Investing in digital ministry means people online are more likely to see Christian siblings that stand for causes they value and churches that they never thought could possibly exist.

“While they went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went into the wedding banquet”

Matthew 25: 10



# BUDGET: YEAR ONE

## SOFTWARE

- 60 Discord
- 900 Alter Live
- 144 Calendly
- 600 HootSuite
- 130 Canva
- 20 Web Domain
- 150 Website (Weebly)

## HARDWARE/UTILITIES

- 1,500 Computer/Phone
- 1,460 Internet/Data

## CULTIVATION

- 4,000 Leadership Development
- 2,400 Marketing
- 2,000 Analytics Consultant

Total: \$ 13,364

The budget presented above does not include compensation for leadership. This proposal is meant to be the starting point that begins our exploration into how all the pieces fit together. Thankfully Jesus demonstrated for us appropriate expectations for this process (Luke 10:1-9) and demonstrated that compatible and connectional ministry is not only possible it is the preferred way forward.

## POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- 1001 New Worshiping Community Grants
- Other PC(USA) Grants
- Church, Presbytery, Synod Support
- Lilly Foundation
- Convergence CoLab
- Consulting work
- Pulpit Supply
- Online Giving: Patreon, Venmo, PayPal

# THANK YOU

It has been a joy to reflect on what the Spirit has been up to the last two years. I hope you also feel the Spirit moving in astounding ways. Thank you for taking the precious time to review this proposal. I look forward to the conversations we will have and discovering synergistic solutions that increase the impact of Tapestry and boost vitality in your distinct ministry context. I am confident the Spirit is clearing a way for us to meet the challenges we face today as well as preparing us for the possibilities of tomorrow.

Many Blessings,  
Rev. Bethany Peerbolte



## Contact Info

Mobile Phone: 1 (248) 895-3993

Email: [revbethany1@gmail.com](mailto:revbethany1@gmail.com)

Website: [rev-bethany.com](http://rev-bethany.com)