



Hi neighbour!

Creating a strategy for connecting with your neighbourhood.

Who is my neighbour?

While our Lord defines our neighbour as anyone in need, for the National Lutheran Open House we want to focus on our immediate, physical neighbours, who are also in need of the Gospel.

Where do we start?

Begin with a map of your town or city. Check the map scale and draw a one or two-kilometre radius around your location—more if you are ambitious. Define this area as your neighbourhood. If you live in a less densely populated area, your whole area can be your neighbourhood!

How do we reach them?

Drive around your “neighbourhood” and see what kind of housing is there. Apartments? Townhouses? Single family homes? Rooming houses? Watch the area to determine who lives there. Older? Younger? Young families? New Canadians? Poor? Rich? Middle class?

If you want to know specifically, we can put you in contact with Rev. Paul DeBlock, who, using Canadian census information can provide you with a detailed breakdown of your neighbourhood: age, sex, marital status, family size, religion, income etc. There is a fee for this service, but your district is willing to help out. See www.lutheranchurch.ca/openhouse/demo.html .

For single family dwellings, volunteers can hand out flyers, pamphlets, door hangers, invitations or knock on the door and extend a personal invitation.

In areas with apartment buildings, a Canada Post Contract Mail account can put a post card or flyer in every mailbox. Or perhaps a member living in the building can do the distribution.

How should we organize the distribution?

You can provide maps of the area and highlight streets, provide a package of the handout material and ask members to spend an afternoon or evening delivering on that specific street. Existing church groups may also want to take on an area (LWMLC; men’s group; choir; adult Bible class).

This is a project the youth may want to take on as a team building effort in early September. An afternoon delivery could be followed by a pizza party.

What information should be on the flyers or door-to-door handout?

LCC is developing an eye-catching design for flyers and door hangers. The back of the handout is blank, allowing your congregation to customize the information. You should include a warm invitation to join you for the National Lutheran Open House. Include all the important information for your event and/or service including what, where, when and a contact phone number, e-mail address and website address.

Congregations that have undertaken this kind of distribution have discovered people will phone the church immediately after finding the handout. Make sure you either have someone ready to answer the phone on delivery day or at least an up-to-date message on your answering machine.

What other things can we distribute?

There is value in leaving behind something that could provide a constant reminder of your presence in the community and would be useful to the household. Fridge magnets are a possibility, telephone note pads, a pad for grocery lists attached to a magnet, bookmarks, a list of helpful community telephone numbers including the church. See what is around your house that advertisers have left and you have kept. You can do the same thing! For greater and longer lasting (eternal) impact, you can distribute the DVD "The Story of Jesus for Children." Available for less than you'd pay for a fast food lunch, these DVDs tell the story of Jesus directly from the Gospel of Luke. Included are colourful brochures which you can customize using a standard self-adhesive label with your congregation's information. With a DVD aimed at children, you can guarantee a parent will watch it with their child! If you live in an area with many new Canadians, the DVD tells the story in 16 languages.

Response

Make sure you are prepared for response and visitors. See the *Congregation Checklist* (www.lutheranchurch.ca/openhouse/resources) and consider ordering *Practicing Hospitality* from Lutheran Laymen's League <http://www.lll.ca/resources/equippingseminars.htm> .

Evaluate

No matter which method you try to connect with your neighbours keep track of phone calls and visitors. Don't be afraid to ask "How did you hear about our church?" This way you will know what has worked and you can try it again, perhaps in a larger area.