

BEACON POWER SURGE:

Plugging into 2018 / 2019 actions and opportunities

A leader guide to offering education in your congregation

One of the ways to build power in your congregation is through information – sharing the what, why and how of the issues and our bold Beacon campaigns.

***Power Surge** is a new in-congregation learning opportunity with room for information, stories and relationship building, and an invitation to take action. This leader guide includes tools to help you offer Power Surge to congregation members: planning tips, story resources, sample agenda, training script, sample action card, and an evaluation form.*

Congregations are encouraged to offer Power Surge between now and the end of March 2019. The need is urgent; learning is one of the steps we can take right now!

Participants will:

- Understand the urgent need for affordable housing to address homelessness.
- Get informed about Beacon and our newest campaigns.
- Connect campaign opportunities to personal faith and values; to their congregation's mission and values [Clergy presence reinforces this message].
- Be inspired to take a next step (to act on their faith).

Beacon Leadership Team members will:

- Establish a goal for attendance and work together to meet it.
- Schedule and deliver the training.
- Follow-up with participants.
- Identify people for 1-1 visits – people who they want to get to know better, and who may have leadership potential.
- Develop and practice leadership skills.
- Help move their congregation into the public arena.

Congregations will:

- Connect their commitment to ending homelessness and affordable housing with their faith traditions.
- Begin to develop a relational culture based on common values and action.

Congregational Organizers will:

- Provide support for team members; answer questions.

Planning Tips

- **90 minutes is ideal** – allows for more discussion and relationship building. If your time is shorter, you'll need to cut some content or divide Power Surge into two sessions. Work with your congregational organizer to adapt it, and to ensure that objectives are met.
- Determine the best date and time to offer the training, and add it to your congregation's calendar. Consider availability of clergy so they can attend at least part of the event to demonstrate their support and connect it back to the faith traditions of your congregation.
Think outside the box! Consider times other than your adult education forum:
 - Saturday morning
 - After a worship service
 - Sunday evening
 - Wednesday evening or another weeknight
- Will you meet at your congregation? Would turnout be higher for a gathering in someone's home? Consider offering it with another collaborating congregation.
- Will you serve food? How about a potluck?
- Will you offer child care? Will that help people attend?
- Will you ask people to register or sign-up? By when?
- Decide who will coordinate communications in newsletters, emails, announcements, etc.
- Set a turnout goal and the ways you will meet it. How will you hold the team accountable to meeting that goal?
- Identify 'priority participants' and decide who will extend personal invitations.
- Schedule time for presenters to go through content, finalize agenda, and practice script.
- Schedule time for the team to evaluate; share the summary with your organizer.
- Plan and do follow-up with all participants.

Supplies/Set-up

- If you have the space, suggest setting up **chairs around tables**.
- **Sign-in sheet** to capture contact information (not everyone may fill out an action card).
- **Flip chart or white board** – for key points/messages you will highlight during the session; may want to prepare ahead of time. (See notes in script.) Or use optional PowerPoint slides.
- **Set-up for YouTube video** if you'll use it; test it ahead of time OR **a copy of Loretia's story** if you'll share that instead (see pg 11).
- **Set-up for PowerPoint slides** [Optional – available on website or from your organizer.]
- **Props for 'values activity'** [see pg. 5-6]
- **Agenda** – either individual copies (may help people take notes) or on a flip chart page.
- **Beacon campaign one-page summaries** [Available on website or from your organizer]
- **On**
- **"Parking Lot"** – Label one visible flip chart page as the "parking lot" and note questions and comments that are off the topic, or that you don't know the answer to; if you have time, come back to these at the end or in your follow-up.
- **Nametags, pens and Action Cards**. [see pg. 12 for sample]
- **Evaluation form** – to be completed by the training team. [see pg. 13]

Promotion copy

Use or adapt as needed. Follow up written notices with personal invitations.

You're invited to [CONGREGATION'S] Beacon Power Surge: [DATE] at [TIME]

Plug into our work around housing! We're beginning to take action so all people have a home. Join us for dinner, stories and conversation as we build our knowledge and discover how to have an impact through our work with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. The need is urgent and learning is one of the steps we can take right now! Childcare provided. RSVP by _____ to _____.

Sample POWER SURGE Agenda (Approximately 75 minutes)

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Welcome and purpose | 2 minutes |
| 2. Opening words/devotion/prayer | 2 minutes |
| 3. Introductions and connections | 10 minutes |
| 4. Why Beacon? Why affordable housing? Why now?
<i>Video or story</i> | 12 minutes |
| 5. Reflection 1: What stands out for you in this story?
<i>Share with large group</i> | 7 minutes |
| 6. Beacon campaigns: What will it take? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create 100 to 150 new homes with family supportive services.• Create a dedicated public funding source for rental assistance.• Respond to the Franklin/Hiwatha encampment. | 10 minutes |
| 7. Reflection 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would these campaigns connect with your faith and values – and with our congregation's values and mission?• What excites you about the campaigns? <i>Share with large group</i> | 15 minutes |
| 8. Act on your faith: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How can you imagine being involved?</i>• <i>What you can do right now!</i> | 10 minutes |
| 9. Closing words/prayer/song | 5 minutes |
| 10. One-word evaluation | 2 minutes |

POWER SURGE Facilitators' Script
Adapt to your time frame, and speaking style(s).

1. Welcome and purpose **2 minutes** _____

Welcome to Beacon Power Surge – an opportunity for you and the members of **[NAME OF CONGREGATION]** to plug into the bold actions and opportunities connected to Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative.

Our congregation is part of the Beacon collaborative, and we'll hear more about what that means in a few minutes. I'm **[NAME]**, part of a new Beacon Leadership Team here, along with **[NAMES OF OTHER TEAM MEMBERS]**.

We have 3 goals for our time together:

- To share information about Beacon and the newest campaigns – so that you're in the know about what's happening!
- To connect the work of Beacon to your faith and values – and to our congregation's values and faith traditions. We'll be doing some reflecting together on what that looks and feels like.
- To invite you to act on your faith in a new way – beyond the walls of our congregation and into the public arena.

[Explain whether people can ask questions as you go along, or if you'd like people to hold questions until the end. Let people know that they can take breaks on their own as needed.]

We've created a 'parking lot' – a place to note your comments or questions that might be beyond the scope of our time together, but that we don't want to lose track of. **[SEE NOTE IN "Supplies/Set up"]**

Sound ok?

I'll invite **[CLERGY or LEADER]** to share some thoughts to center us in the conversation.

2. Opening words/devotion/prayer **2 minutes** _____

Words, prayer and/or song that fits with your faith tradition and connects to themes of putting faith into action OR the power of working together OR a faithful call to justice. Contact your organizer for assistance.

OPTION:

A Prayer for Living in Tension

*If we have any hope of transforming the world and changing ourselves,
we must be bold enough to step into our discomfort,
brave enough to be clumsy there,
loving enough to forgive ourselves and others.
May we, as people of faith, be granted the strength to be so bold, so brave, and so loving.
-- Joseph M. Cherry, Voices from the Margins*

3. Introductions and connections **10 minutes**_____

Thank you [_____]!

Depending on the number of people and your set-up, invite people to pair up, or discuss at their table, or to share one-at-a-time with the whole group – (1) who they are, (2) roles they hold in this congregation, (3) what it means to them to act on their faith.

OR instead of (3), invite people to reflect on the opening words: What do you hear? Which words stand out for you? How do you connect with what you've heard?

4. Why Beacon? Why affordable housing? Why now? **12 minutes**_____

Video or story

Let me first share some of the basics of Beacon – the collaborative that we're part of. We're in good company – Beacon is more than 90 powerful congregations in the Twin Cities metro area, united in action to create homes and advance equitable housing. Our vision is all people have a home.

We act together in three main ways: we develop affordable homes, shelter families in crisis and work to impact housing policy [INCORPORATE HOW YOUR CONGREGATION IS INVOLVED]:

- *The Families Moving Forward program provides emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness. In Hennepin County, our program center in North Minneapolis is the hub for staff resources including case managers, and 40 congregations take turns hosting families in the evenings in our own buildings. Another 20 congregations participate in Scott and Carver Counties, and our program center is in Chaska.*
- *Beacon is an experienced and effective nonprofit housing developer: together, we have created 17 apartment buildings, home to 800 people. Our focus is on those who are experiencing homelessness or at the lowest income (\$25,000 or less for a family of four).*

[EXTRA: We believe high-quality affordable housing should be created in all communities – both in low-income and affluent neighborhoods. We created the first affordable rental housing in Edina since 1991 when the doors of 66 West opened. We broke ground earlier this year on Great River Landing, in partnership with Better Futures, MN, to provide supportive housing for 72 men exiting incarceration. And we're securing necessary funding for Cranberry Ridge, 45 homes for low-income working families in Plymouth.]

- *To make all this happen, Beacon congregations work to impact the public will for greater investment in affordable homes – from bonding dollars that support the bricks and mortar, to rental assistance funds, to onsite supportive services.*

I've already used the word "values" a couple of times, and we'll be talking about our own, soon – so let's take a minute to lift up the 4 values of the Beacon collaborative – which includes us, right?

[Have basket or box with 4 slips of paper, each with a value written on it. Invite a participant to draw one and read it – one at a time (any order is ok).]

“We value collaboration” [SAY: “We are more powerful when we work together.” Pulling together our different ideas, skills, faiths – and even the sheer numbers of us coming together gives us power to achieve more than we ever could alone.– OR share your own example.]

“We value risk taking” [SAY: “We take personal, public, and financial risks in the fight for justice.” It can take some courage to meet with public officials or unwelcoming neighbors and say boldly “THIS IS an excellent location for affordable homes.” – or share your own example.]

“We value race equity” [SAY: “We are all called to overcome the systemic racism that causes housing inequities.” In the Twin cities metro, a person of color is 3 times more likely to be homeless. That didn’t happen overnight – and so we work to understand and intentionally address those disparities. – or share your own example.]

“We value inclusive decision-making” [SAY: “We make better decisions when we have diverse perspectives and backgrounds.” Congregations and leaders are asked to weigh in on their interests in campaigns, on the actions we take together. We’re all part of setting the course for our work together – from our new Beacon leadership team, to the Beacon board.– or share you own example.]

[EXTRA: How do Beacon values compare to our congregational values? How are they similar / different? [Wait for responses.] Can we live out our values within the walls of our congregation? [Wait for response: NO!]

Our values are a faithful call to take action – and an urgent one at that! Here’s why it was important to invite you all to this session:

If you’ve driven past the Hiawatha encampment, or if you’ve been reading the newspaper, you can’t miss it. Minnesota – and actually the entire country – is in the midst of a housing crisis.

*And here’s a jaw-dropping local statistic: Almost **100,000 households in the Twin Cities Metro Area pay more than 50% of their income toward home.** For low-income families, you can imagine that they’re going without some basic necessities to keep a roof over their heads. It can be a losing battle: **20,000 of those families and individuals fall into homelessness** at some point every year – some of them facing multiple additional challenges such as mental illness, or substance use, or a past eviction or felony conviction.*

[Write statistic on flip chart, white board or PowerPoint: with statistic: 100,000 TC households paying > 50% of income for rent]

[EXTRA: Minnesota Housing Partnership or MHP just published a report about the housing crisis that included this statistic: A full-time minimum wage earner can’t afford a one-bedroom apartment in any of Minnesota’s 87 counties. Not a one. Alarming isn’t it?]

But statistics don’t tell the whole story.

[OPTION 1] I’ll invite you to hear Loretta’s story. [Arrange in advance to have one or two participants read Loretta’s story found at the end of the facilitator’s guide.]

*[OPTION 2] Let’s watch video of Keith and Lisa’s story:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1JcBoNipbg> [on Beacon’s YouTube channel, 2:55]*

5. Reflection 1

7 minutes _____

- What stands out for you in this story? Why?

- What sticks with you or perhaps surprised you?

Share with large group

[Have questions written on flip chart, whiteboard or display in PowerPoint. Invite people to take 5 minutes to discuss at their table, or in pairs. Let them know that you'll call them back together and take two more minutes to share some of their thoughts with the whole group. Thank people for sharing.]

6. Beacon campaigns: What it will take? 10 minutes _____

- Create three housing developments – 100 to 150 new homes – for families transitioning out of homelessness.
- Create a dedicated public funding source for rental assistance.
- Respond to the Franklin/Hiawatha Encampment with a Housing First development.

Write proposal titles on a flip chart, white board or use a PowerPoint.

Does anyone here know what the Beacon vision is? [All people have a home. Write on board.] It's a broad and bold statement. Do we really agree with that vision? Are we prepared to step outside of our comfort zone for ALL our brothers and sisters? To walk beside each other as people of faith in the messiness of full community?

Last June, Beacon began a conversation about several bold campaigns for the collaborative to consider – and that's bold with a capital B. We have a handout with the information on it, but let me give you an overview to begin with.

The first campaign is in direct response to the needs of families – something Beacon has experience with through Families Moving Forward. *[IF YOU ARE A HOST CONGREGATION, SAY: "something we have experience with."]* This campaign's goal is to create 100 to 150 new homes with family supportive services.

- That would be three apartment buildings – potentially in North Minneapolis on our FMF program site – 1808 Emerson Ave. N. (which Beacon owns), and in a Scott County community, and at another location in suburban Hennepin County.
- Services to support families will be right on site that have been proven to help families maintain stability – such as employment assistance, budgeting and financial literacy, parenting support and life-skills training, and case management support to connect families to other needed resources. *[IF FAMILIAR WITH 66 West: think of it as a 66 West for families.]*
- Homes like these might focus on a particular population such as a parent with a serious and persistent mental illness, or in recovery from substance use, or multiple challenges at the same time . . . people who need ongoing, rather than transitional support to thrive.
- Significant resources will be needed. To create these homes, we'll need capital funding, funding for the supportive services families will need, rental assistance funding, seed funding (it takes \$15,000 to organize and plan each new affordable home within a development), and public support to win land use approval.

Campaign number two would create a dedicated public funding source for rental assistance. This is about significantly growing our public investment in homes that people at the lowest income levels can afford -- and removing the uncertainty of annual requests and supplications.

- Here's a creative way to think about it: Halloween's right around the corner [OR Most of us just celebrated Halloween]. Did you know that Twin Cities metro residents will spend/just spent nearly \$260 million on candy, costumes, and decorations – for a single day? And did you know that \$700 million a year would provide rental assistance to every single family in the metro that needs it? A big number that's really only three Halloweens.
- So in the proposal, we're saying the new dedicated funding source – potentially a tax at some level – should produce **at least** \$100 million a year for the Twin Cities metro area – planting the seeds for the full \$700 million needed.
- And it would generate needed, ongoing resources for households who make \$25,000 a year or less. In technical terms, that's 30% AMI or Area Median Income.

A third campaign is still in the discernment phase. Who has driven by the tent encampment along Hiawatha?

The encampment of nearly 300 people at the corner of Franklin and Hiawatha in Minneapolis is shining a painful spotlight on the need for safe, deeply affordable, supportive homes for community members with high needs and very low incomes.

- Beyond the more than 300 people living at the encampment, an additional 800 people are on the waiting list with Hennepin County, yearning for a stable place to call home.
- One model that holds promise in getting people out of homelessness and into a home where they can thrive is known as 'Housing First' – proving permanent housing for a person FIRST, without requiring them to address other problems they may be facing, such as sobriety.
- This dignified and effective philosophy embraces the understanding that people are more easily engaged in support services and experience great success once the chaos and health risks of living on the streets has been lifted from their lives.
- As we work to understand how we're called to act, we'll rely on the strength of those Beacon values we discussed, including inclusive decision-making. Beyond our own commitment, it will be essential for us to enter humbly into conversation with Native American and other impacted communities, organizations and leaders to figure out whether our expertise adds value to the collective response.

So there's family supportive housing for 100-150 people, a dedicated funding source for rental assistance, and a possible Housing First campaign. What questions do you have so far?

What will it take to make these campaigns happen? Any ideas? [Wait for responses.]

Power and persistence!

- *We need to build the power of this congregation and the entire Beacon collaborative – and then we need to leave the safety of our worship space, and bring our influence to those who have the power to make change happen. The public arena is the place where decisions are made about funding for buildings and services – about who gets rental assistance, and where people get to live. About who gets to have the safety of home.*
- *We need to lean into our values, and plug into emerging campaign plans. All campaigns will be supported by three efforts:*
 - *An ally strategy to build support with public officials and influencers.*
 - *Research and campaign action teams to keep the focus on our priorities and strategies.*
 - *And Beacon Leadership Teams at a growing number of collaborating congregations. Our Beacon Leadership Team is the connecting point between the power of the collaborative and the growing power of this congregation.*

Frederick Douglass famously said, “Power yields nothing without a struggle. It never has and it never will.” The good news is that we’re not in this alone. Other congregations are having these same conversations now, making this a priority, and getting ready to walk into the public arena together.

So let’s reflect on that in our second conversation.

7. Reflection 2 **15 minutes** _____

- *How do these campaigns connect with your faith and values and with our congregation’s values and mission?*
- *What about the campaigns excites you? What might get in the way?*
- *How might our congregation benefit from being part of it?*

Share with large group

Write questions on flip chart, whiteboard or display in PowerPoint. Invite people to take 10 minutes to discuss at their table, or in pairs; encourage them to have a note-taker. Then take 5 minutes for some people to share with the whole group.

8. Action steps **10 minutes** _____

*How can you imagine being involved?
What can you do to act on your faith?*

[CONSIDER CREATING A CUSTOMIZED ACTION CARD AND INVITE ATTENDEES TO COMPLETE IT; THEN USE AS A TOOL FOR YOUR FOLLOW-UP]

These next several months are about building our power:

- *Build your personal knowledge and power by attending a Beacon Academy workshop [highlight upcoming workshop]*

- See firsthand what quality, affordable housing is like – so you can speak confidently about it. Join a group from our congregation for a tour of [66 West OR Nicollet Square OR Prior Crossing], a Beacon apartment home with supportive services for young adults who were experiencing homelessness [OR Creekside Commons, Beacon apartment homes for families with low-incomes].
- Build our congregational and collaborative power by:
 - Joining our Beacon Leadership Team [if you're looking for additional members]
 - Help plan our ally strategy – how we'll build relationships and influence with the people whose support we need to do this work. Be part of a team to set up visits and arrange public meetings with elected leaders and decision makers – some focused on our congregation and some done in partnership with other Beacon congregations in our area. [If prior to an Ally Strategy Planning Summit, will you invite people to join your group for that working session?]
 - Register for the January Beacon Convening – Jan. 29 at Bet Shalom Congregation in Minnetonka – or let our team know and we'll register you. The Beacon collaborative is planning for up to 1,000 to attend this inspirational all-congregation gathering. Together, we'll demonstrate our power and commitment to the new governor as we publicly ask for his support of our campaigns and priorities. [Don't include if it's after Jan. 29.]

What if our congregation demonstrated our commitment – and our power by showing up with ____ people? Will you take action by joining us? [Will your team set a congregational goal for the Jan. 29 convening?]

[OPTION: If your congregation hosts Families Moving Forward, will you invite people to volunteer, to attend Beacon Academy Inclusive Hospitality training, to step into a leadership/coordinator role?]

What questions do you have about these opportunities? Take a few minutes to consider how you are being called to take action – and complete the cards.

9. Closing words/prayer/song **up to 5 minutes**_____

Close with words, prayer and/or song that fits with your faith tradition and connects to themes of this gathering, such as putting faith into action, community, and love/power. [Contact your organizer if you'd like ideas.] Consider inviting participants to close by forming a circle or joining hands – in a show of community/solidarity.

10. One-word evaluation **2 minutes**_____

Thank you for being here, for making a home for all people a priority. As we end, I'll invite you to share one word that describes how you're feeling right now. [Leader starts – go around the space.]

LACRETIA'S STORY: Giving Up Isn't an Option

August 10, 2018

“Sometimes I don’t know how I got through the day, but I did it. Running on zero sleep, zero energy, but still being forced to step up every day because you want a better tomorrow for your kids. That’s really hard.”

Lacretia is struggling. She loves her job, she had great rental history, and she can’t wait to get back into school to finish her degree and become a kindergarten teacher. But when she had to go on bedrest due to complications with her pregnancy, Lacretia’s day-to-day balance was derailed. She couldn’t work, so soon the eviction notice came. And with a critical shortage of apartments to rent anyway, landlords she’d contact could overlook her previously stellar rental history and deny her because of that one word on her report: evicted.

Since coming to Families Moving Forward, Lacretia has searched constantly for somewhere for her family – an 8-year-old, 6-year-old, and 4-month-old Ayyah – to call home. Trying to take care of her children, working, and viewing apartments is a lot to juggle, and some days it’s really frustrating that she just doesn’t feel like she’s going anywhere. “Giving up isn’t an option,” she says, the steel audible in her voice. “But every day, my children ask me: ‘When do we get to go home?’ and it’s hard to have to say – again – ‘Sorry, baby, not today.’”

The time families like Lacretia’s have to stay in shelter is getting longer, because there just aren’t enough apartments that are affordable to move into. And after a while, the rhythms of shelter life – even in the warmth of supportive hosting congregations – feel draining. “I’m not able to just kick my feet up and rest for five minutes when I want to. We don’t get to set our own routine, and you have to make sure your children aren’t disrupting other families who are there with you.”

She is determined. “I want to get back to a normal routine. I want to get my rental history back on track. I want to have a place where my children can just relax and be themselves.” Lacretia believes that someone will finally give her the break she needs, so she keeps searching and advocating for herself. “I’m proud I had the strength to come here,” she beams, that same steel showing up now in her smile. And with that, it was back to juggling children, work, and the search for their next home.

UPDATE: Glad to be home

Sept. 28, 2018

After months of hearing ‘no’, Lacretia finally heard a ‘yes’ from a landlord willing to see her whole story – a great rental history impacted by a difficult pregnancy – and work with her. Just a few weeks into living in their own place again, the change is palpable. “We’re all just glad to be home.”

SAMPLE ACTION CARD

Adapt as appropriate.

CALL TO ACTION

I'm ready to act on my faith!

- I commit to take action to help create community where all people have a home. Keep me informed about what I can do.

- I will attend a Beacon Academy workshop to learn more about what I can do.
- I will take a tour of one of the Beacon homes. Contact me!

- I'm interested in being part of our congregation's Beacon Leadership Team.
- I would like to help plan our congregation's Ally Strategy.

- Register me for the January 29 Beacon Convening!

- I would like to become more involved with hosting families through Families Moving Forward. Contact me!

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____



POWER SURGE Evaluation

Please complete with your planning team as you debrief following Power Surge – and then share with your organizer.

Congregation: _____

Power Surge planning team/facilitators: _____

Date you delivered Power Surge: _____

Time/format: _____

Number of participants: _____

Number of Action Cards completed: _____

1. How helpful were the Power Surge resources in your planning and delivery?
2. What part(s) of the session content had the most impact?
3. What would you change? What suggestions do you have for improving future Beacon education in your congregation?
4. How did participants respond? Did they feel the information and conversations were valuable?
5. What is your team's plan for following up with participants? Who will you do 1-1s with?

What else would you like us to know?