

SAME
MISSION.
STRONGER
PEOPLE.
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.
A BRIGHTER
TOMORROW.

RESET

CHURCH FORWARD • NIGHT FIVE

Where Do We Go From Here?

FAITH, CIVIC READINESS, AND
COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

PEOPLE | POLICIES | PARTNERSHIPS | PROGRESS

REAL
CONVERSATIONS
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS



1

Faith, Conviction, and Community

Living our faith in a changing world
and seeking the peace of the city.



2

Your Voice, Your Vote, and Your Values

Understanding the issues, evaluating
leaders, and making informed decisions.



3

Leadership, Partnerships, and Collective Power

How churches, organizations, and
institutions can work together for greater impact.



4

Government, Resources, and Accountability

Understanding how decisions are made,
how resources flow, and how to hold leaders accountable.



5

From Conversation to Community Action

Practical steps to organize, track commitments,
and create measurable change.



A PRACTICAL READINESS REPORT FOR CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Findings, Recommendations, and Practical Next Steps

Mount Ollie Baptist Church | October 3, 2026
Hosted by Rev. Reginald Lee Bachus

KNOW
THE ISSUES.
ASK THE RIGHT
QUESTIONS.
HOLD LEADERS
ACCOUNTABLE.
BUILD STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.

One Car. One Community. A Shared Future.

The final night of CHURCH FORWARD began with a question bigger than an election: How do we move forward together when we do not all see the road the same way? Host Rev. Reginald Lee Bachus pictured five people riding in one car. Each carries a different history, concern, conviction, and perspective. They cannot drive backward to change what has already happened. They can glance in the rearview mirror to learn from it, but the purpose of looking back is to travel forward more wisely.

That image was not an invitation to forget injustice or silence disagreement. It was a challenge to steward three gifts Bachus named in the opening: our agency, our voice, and our collective power. We are responsible for how we use them, especially when the future is uncertain.

Jeremiah 29: Build where you are. Seek the welfare of the city.

Bachus grounded the conversation in Jeremiah 29:4–14. The people in exile were instructed to build houses, plant gardens, raise families, and seek the peace and welfare of the place where they lived. They did not choose all their circumstances. They still had responsibilities within them. The lesson for the church is not that we must approve of every leader or policy. It is that our neighbors' well-being cannot be someone else's concern alone.

A church can celebrate a powerful Sunday service and still ask difficult Monday questions: Who cannot reach a doctor? Who is missing from the public conversation? Which young people no longer believe participation matters? What commitments have leaders made—and who is keeping track?

The destination is not simply another conversation. It is a community better informed, better connected, better served, and better prepared to act.

How to read this report

Begin with the people and places you care about. Explore the five areas through the panelists' experiences and practical church actions. Ask: What is happening? Why does it matter? What do we need to learn? What will we do? How will we know it helped?

RESET Is the Way We Navigate

RESET guides our journey from reflection to action. Its principles also shape how we think, choose, serve, and treat others along the way.

Grounded → Aligned → Aware → Intentional

Posture	The car illustration	The leadership question
Grounded	Remember why we are traveling and what guides us.	What faith, values, and responsibility anchor our choices?
Aligned	Agree on the destination before debating every turn.	What shared community outcomes are we seeking?
Aware	Look through the windshield, check the mirrors and read the signs.	What do evidence, lived experience, and differing views reveal?
Intentional	Choose a route, assign responsibilities and keep moving.	Who acts, by when, with what resources and measures?

RESET Is a Way to Think and Act

RESET	Questions that guide our choices
Respect	Have we heard people who are affected, including those who disagree?
Educate	What can we verify, and what do we still need to learn?
Serve	Does this decision meet a real need beyond anyone’s personal profile?
Efficiency	Are our time, money, relationships and capacity being used well?
Transparency	Can we explain the request, the decision, the promise and the result?

Faith and community give us a reason to travel together. Our voices and values help us name a destination. Partnerships supply people and resources. Understanding government clarifies the route and its responsibilities. Accountability keeps us on course. Intentional action turns shared hopes into measurable progress.

RESET helps people become the author of their next decision instead of the product of their last experience.

Pillar 1 | Faith, Conviction & Community

Who is in the car—and why must we travel together?

Jeremiah's instruction to seek the welfare of the city begins with a fact that politics cannot erase: people who disagree still share streets, schools, hospitals, utility systems, and a future. Bachus introduced Rev. Patrick Young as a friend with whom he had sometimes stood on opposite sides of an issue, while preserving their relationship. The example matters: common responsibility does not require identical views.

Marc Little described praying for presidents and leaders across party lines because of his reading of 1 Timothy 2. He also discussed helping neighbors enroll in Affordable Care Act coverage despite disagreeing with the policy. His testimony distinguished service to a person from endorsement of a program. Rev. Young challenged the panel to apply moral concern consistently, including the consequences of public policy for children, families, and health after birth.

When the passengers disagree

The panelists expressed different concerns about immigration, religion, demographic change, and political ideology. Some emphasized perceived risks in social and institutional change; others challenged broad claims about communities. These differences deserve careful listening and honest examination. Criticism of a policy does not establish that everyone in a religious or demographic group shares the same beliefs or intentions.

RESET asks us to distinguish conviction from evidence, criticism of policy from disrespect for people, and shared interests from forced agreement. A church can create a place where disagreement is disciplined by respect and a responsibility to tell the truth.

A church conversation worth having

- Ask each participant to name one community condition they want to improve, before naming a political party.
- Invite each person to describe the experience or evidence informing that concern.
- Identify where needs overlap; record where policy disagreements remain.
- Agree on one practical step that does not require surrendering conscience or dignity.

The church's role is not to make every passenger think alike. It is to help people travel responsibly together.

Pillar 2 | Your Voice, Your Vote & Your Values

Where are we trying to go? Start with the issue.

A destination cannot be chosen by a campaign slogan alone. Bachus pressed the panel about people who are not participating, younger generations who seem disconnected from familiar political arguments, and a rapidly changing world shaped by technology, artificial intelligence, globalization, and economic disruption. His underlying question was strategic: How do we prepare people to make decisions in a world that keeps changing?

Amanda Edwards described conversations with residents who felt their votes would not matter or who had lost confidence after promises were not kept. She emphasized listening to the issues affecting their lives and showing how public decisions connect to healthcare, housing, and opportunity. Marc Little described examining policy questions with his family before choosing a political position. One begins with lived concerns; the other stresses examining one’s convictions. Both challenge automatic allegiance without understanding.

Five questions before choosing a candidate or policy

Question	What to collect
1. What is the problem?	Residents’ accounts, scope, who is affected, and the consequences of inaction.
2. Who has authority?	The office, agency, institution or board that can change the condition.
3. What is proposed?	Written plans, costs, timelines and credible alternatives.
4. What is the record?	Past decisions, public documents, completed work and unmet promises.
5. What would success look like?	A measurable result and a date to review it.

Numbers need context

The conversation raised voter participation, population change, and generational trends. Those topics matter, especially in an election season, but figures require a location, date, population definition, and primary source. A turnout percentage for registered voters is not the same as a percentage of all eligible residents. Forecasts about future demographics are not established outcomes. This report treats such figures as research questions unless independently documented.

An informed vote begins before Election Day, and accountability continues long after the polls close.

Pillar 2 | Make Civic Education Useful

Do not confuse mobilization with understanding

A voter-registration event can be valuable, but registration alone does not explain which official controls a road, a school policy, a public benefit, or a utility decision. People are more likely to engage when they can connect a public question to an issue they recognize and understand the practical choices before them.

For churches, the strongest educational approach is nonpartisan and issue-first. Use the same questions for every candidate or officeholder. Direct participants to official election information and public records. Do not treat a speaker’s appearance in the sanctuary as an endorsement or substitute for independent evaluation.

A sample 60-minute community learning session

Minutes	Purpose	What participants leave with
0–10	Listen: name a local issue.	A clear problem statement.
10–25	Learn: who controls the decision?	An agency or office contact.
25–40	Compare: review proposals and records.	A common set of evidence-based questions.
40–50	Discuss: what are the tradeoffs?	A respectful summary of differing views.
50–60	Decide: what should happen next?	One follow-up assignment and date.

Protect the integrity of the church

For organizations subject to federal 501(c)(3) restrictions, candidate campaign intervention is prohibited. Nonpartisan education may be permissible when conducted consistently and without favoring or opposing a candidate. Activities should be reviewed in light of the organization’s actual circumstances and applicable law.

Churches should also take care not to present an individual member’s or leader’s personal political opinion as an institutional endorsement. Clear speaker policies and accurate records protect the credibility of both the congregation and the conversation.

Do not ask people only to show up. Help them understand what is at stake, who can act, and what evidence deserves their trust.

Pillar 3 | Leadership, Partnerships & Collective Power

Who has the resources to help us reach the destination?

A church may know its neighborhood deeply and still lack the capacity to meet every need. Partnerships become essential when problems cross institutional boundaries. They should be built around documented needs, defined responsibilities, and results—not only photographs of leaders standing together.

Rev. Patrick Young: trust becomes capacity

Young described how his congregation and partners responded during COVID, reporting that they served more than 2,700 families each Saturday. He also discussed relationships with healthcare organizations, including Northwell Health, and civil-rights networks. The number is his reported experience, not an independently audited figure. The deeper lesson is that trusted local institutions can connect people to food, healthcare, information, and partners when the relationships and operating systems already exist.

Tony Suber: representation must become results

Suber reflected on work connected to Rev. Floyd Flake's congressional campaign and development in Southeast Queens. His account distinguished winning office from governing well. The question for a community is not only who won, but what investments, opportunities, services, and institutional improvements followed. Bachus introduced this example to ask how other communities might learn from organized political and economic transformation.

Partnerships that last beyond a public event

- Listen: Identify one need from members and neighbors, including those outside the congregation.
- Map: Find who already has expertise, authority, space, funding or access.
- Agree: Put responsibilities, boundaries, costs and referral pathways in writing.
- Measure: Record people served, unmet needs, resources used and lessons learned.

A partnership can be modest: a healthcare-information session, youth listening forum, benefits-navigation referral, or neighborhood preparedness meeting. The important test is whether it solves a defined problem and can be sustained.

Collective power is not the size of a crowd. It is the ability to coordinate people and resources toward a useful result.

Pillar 4 | Government, Resources & Accountability

Who controls the road, the resources, and the rules?

A community can spend years asking the wrong office for the right solution. Public problems often involve several layers of responsibility. Some are local; others are regulated or funded by the state or federal government. The first task is to identify the decision-maker, not assume the most visible politician controls every outcome.

Issue	Likely starting point for verification
Unsafe intersection	Local transportation or public works agency.
Utility reliability	Utility provider and state public utility regulator.
Healthcare access	Provider, health department, insurer or relevant regulator.
Schools and youth programs	School or district and the responsible funding office.
Voting information	Official state or local election authority.

Amanda Edwards: public service between elections

Edwards described meeting residents during Hurricane Harvey while serving on Houston City Council. Some were surprised to see an elected official outside an election campaign. She also connected her public-service commitments to her family’s experience with serious illness and healthcare access. Her stories make the same point from two directions: public policy has human consequences, and public officials should remain answerable after the campaign is over.

Follow the decision. Follow the dollars. Follow the results.

- Decision: Who can authorize or change the action?
- Dollars: Where does the funding originate, and what is it designated to support?
- Promise: What specifically was said, by whom, and on what date?
- Result: What happened, and what independent evidence can confirm it?
- Next review: Who will follow up, and when?

Access to an elected official is an opportunity. It is not itself a community outcome.

Pillar 4 | The Church’s Accountability Register

Give the congregation an institutional memory

A visiting politician may speak from the pulpit, attend an anniversary, participate in a forum, or meet with church leadership. Too often the appearance is remembered, but the commitments are not. Appoint a designated public-commitments record keeper—with a backup—to record each visit under the church’s established governance process. This is a service to the congregation, not a campaign function.

Before, during, and after a visit

When	Record keeper’s responsibility
Before	Confirm the visit’s purpose and applicable nonpartisan ground rules; collect up to three congregation-approved community requests.
During	Record date, office, context, community questions, precise commitments, staff contact and available source material.
After	Send an accurate recap for confirmation; assign follow-up dates; report progress and unresolved questions to church leadership.

A standard that protects the people

The church should know what it wants from an official before the official arrives: safer streets, reliable services, youth opportunities, accessible healthcare, fair public processes, or another documented priority. Requests should be about legitimate congregational and community needs, not a leader’s private advantage.

It is unethical for a leader to use the congregation’s trust, platform, or collective influence to negotiate an undisclosed personal benefit while placing the people’s interests second. Any actual or potential conflict should be disclosed, reviewed by disinterested decision-makers, and documented under applicable law and the organization’s policies. The register should preserve both favorable responses and unmet promises, without presuming misconduct merely because a request was declined.

What a useful record includes

- Name and office; date and event; purpose and ground rules for the appearance.
- Community priority and exact request; response or commitment, with source if available.
- Staff contact, responsible church officer, due date, follow-up outcome and next review.

Use the fillable Public Officials Register near the end. Store completed records securely and share factual summaries with church leadership and the congregation as appropriate.

Pillar 5 | From Conversation to Community Action

What does arrival look like?

The last pillar asks the question every earlier section has prepared us to answer: What will actually change? A church can host a thoughtful conversation, register voters, introduce an official, or announce a partnership and still leave the underlying problem untouched. A useful initiative has an identified need, a responsible team, a realistic action, and a way to evaluate the result.

A practical 30-60-90 day route

When	Decision and action	Evidence to keep
Days 1-30	Listen to residents; identify three priorities; appoint a lead, a backup and a public-commitments record keeper.	Needs summary, priorities, assigned roles.
Days 31-60	Research responsibility and funding; meet partners; hold an issue-first, nonpartisan learning session.	Verified contacts, records, meeting notes.
Days 61-90	Launch one achievable response; follow up on promises; report what changed and what remains unresolved.	Outputs, outcomes, gaps, next date.

Choose one manageable destination

Rather than promising to “fix healthcare,” a church could arrange a clinic-information session with qualified providers and track successful referrals. Rather than announcing a major youth initiative without resources, it could pilot one six-week program, invite young people to help design it, and evaluate what participants learned or gained.

Measure more than attendance

- Who was reached—and who was not?
- What practical assistance, information, or access did people receive?
- Which public commitments were fulfilled, delayed, or left unanswered?
- What resources were used, and what can be improved?

These measures help the congregation learn without exaggerating success or ignoring progress that takes longer than one reporting period.

A full sanctuary is not a finished assignment. We measure what changes for the people.

The Journey Continues | Review, Learn, RESET

The rearview mirror is a tool, not a destination

Marc Little described surviving a violent robbery that resulted in the loss of his right leg. He connected that experience to resilience, purpose, and service. His testimony is a reminder that people enter public conversations with histories that deserve respect. But a painful experience need not dictate every future decision. We can learn from the past without becoming captive to it.

The same is true for a church. We should remember broken promises, neglected neighborhoods, missed opportunities, and successful partnerships. The purpose is not to remain angry in the rearview mirror. It is to use the lessons to make the next decision more informed and more intentional.

Five questions for the next leadership meeting

- Grounded: What is our responsibility to this community under Jeremiah 29?
- Aligned: Which one or two outcomes matter most right now?
- Aware: What do the facts, neighbors, and different perspectives tell us?
- Intentional: Who is responsible for the next action, and by when?
- Accountable: What will we review at the next meeting?

The work of the record keeper and leadership team

Use the following four fillable worksheets in sequence: A assess current readiness; B name the priority; C record an official's commitments; and D document integrity, decisions and follow-through. The tools are designed to be saved electronically or printed. Make a separate copy of the public-commitments register for each visit.

We cannot agree on every turn. We can agree that the people deserve truth, service, accountability, and a future worth building.

WORKSHEET A | Civic Readiness

Complete together as a church leadership team. Select the most accurate answer.

Organization / congregation

Completed by / date

1. We know the three most important concerns of nearby residents.

Choose an answer



2. We provide accurate, nonpartisan civic information.

Choose an answer



3. We know which public offices handle our priority issues.

Choose an answer



4. We have a process to record visiting officials' commitments.

Choose an answer



5. We maintain active, useful community partnerships.

Choose an answer



6. We give young adults a meaningful role in decisions.

Choose an answer



7. We review and report progress on community initiatives.

Choose an answer



WORKSHEET B | Community Priority

Move from a broad concern to a specific, measurable request.

Priority issue (one issue per worksheet)

Who is affected and what have they reported?

Evidence or source (meeting, data, public document)

Responsible office / agency / organization

What change are we requesting?

Who will lead follow-up?

Priority status

Select status



Next review date

Use dates and specific requests. Do not record unnecessary personal or sensitive details.
Attach source documents separately when needed.

WORKSHEET C | Public Officials Register

Record each official visit consistently, whether or not a campaign is underway.

Official name / office / staff contact

Date and event / capacity in which the official appeared

Community issue or request presented

Commitment made (use exact wording where possible)

Document or recording reference

Person responsible for follow-up

Commitment status

Choose status

Follow-up date / response received

Next action and due date

WORKSHEET D | Integrity & Follow-Through

Keep public commitments and organizational decisions transparent.

Any potential personal or financial conflict identified?

Select

If applicable, disclosure / review reference

What benefit is expected for the congregation or community?

Approving body / date / meeting record

30-day action and owner

60-day action and owner

90-day action and owner

Evidence of results / remaining gaps

Next leadership review

Select timing

Same Mission. Greater Impact.

Five people. One car. Different experiences, convictions, and views of the road. Jeremiah 29 reminds us that the welfare of the place where we live is connected to our own. RESET reminds us how to respond: get grounded, become aligned, grow aware, and act intentionally.

We have looked through the rearview mirror. We have heard different voices in the car. We have examined the road, the responsibilities, and the resources. Now the real question is whether we will move forward together in ways that improve the lives of the people we are called to serve.

A church should not be measured only by whom it welcomes to the microphone, how many people attend a program, or how persuasive a promise sounds. It should also be able to say what needs it identified, what it requested, what it documented, and what changed.

Know the issues. Ask better questions. Record the commitments. Serve the people. Measure the results.

Continue the Conversation

This report is an invitation to begin with what you have and build responsibly. For assistance with a RESET readiness assessment, facilitated community conversation, church leadership workshop, or practical implementation planning, contact reggie@reggiebachus.com.

Important information

This report is educational and nonpartisan. It summarizes attributed perspectives from the Night Five conversation and adds separately framed RESET analysis and planning tools. Panelist-reported experiences and numerical claims are not independently audited unless expressly stated. It is not legal, tax, or financial advice. Churches and other tax-exempt organizations should consult qualified professionals concerning candidate-related activity, governance, conflicts of interest, and applicable law.

Public references: IRS, Restriction of Political Campaign Intervention by Section 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organizations ([irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)); U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Voter FAQs ([eac.gov](https://www.eac.gov)).