



Join the Beloved Community Lab Online Cohort



Thursdays, 10:00AM–1:00PM | Starts October 1, 2026
Application Due August 21

A New Kind of Leadership for a Divided Time

What kind of discipleship is needed to form leaders who uphold God's call for unity and oneness in today's world?

Despite Jesus' clear mandate for unity and welcoming all to the table, churches remain some of the most divided institutions in our society. With over 45,000 Christian denominations and countless divides over race, gender, theology, and politics, the Church's fractured witness stands in stark contrast to Jesus' prayer that we would be one (John 17).

A team of diverse Christian leaders in Boston recognized this gap and came together to ask: What kind of discipleship is needed to form leaders who uphold God's call for unity and oneness in today's world?

Through prayer, study, and listening, UniteBoston has been on a two-year journey of developing the Beloved Community Lab, a unique opportunity for Christian leaders to come together across lines of difference to learn and practice unity, justice, and reconciliation in their leadership contexts.

We call this a "lab" because it combines core theological concepts with real-world application through case studies, interactive exercises, and spiritual practices. This cohort is a space for spiritual formation—shaping participants into peacemakers and reconcilers, growing into the life and way of Jesus.

The things that are keeping us apart are deep-rooted: we need a vision of togetherness that doesn't only lean into our differences but also brings about holistic gospel transformation.

If we want to see a different kind of world and a more embodied Christian witness, we must become different kinds of people. Our pilot Beloved Community Lab cohort is an experiment in Christian unity that seeks to change not just what we know, but how we live.

Is this Cohort for Me?

- Do you long for a depth of unity that honors our unique cultures, backgrounds, and experiences, rather than ignoring them?
- How do we follow Jesus' call to love our neighbors - and our enemies - while holding fast to our deepest convictions?
- Do you want to explore how our differences can strengthen our connections to one another instead of fracturing us apart?
- Do you long for the Church to be known for what we are for, rather than what we are against?
- Do you desire to be an ambassador of reconciliation and grow in learning how to lead your community in the peacemaking, reconciling Way of Jesus?
- Do you have a longing to see the Church get beyond our fractured witness?

**If these questions stir up something inside you,
then the Beloved Community Lab might be for you!**

Cohort Expectations

◆ **Logistics & Presence:** Because the majority of this cohort is virtual, we ask that you set aside undistracted time and space for the training. Cohort members should have a quiet room with a strong Internet connection. Please refrain from multi-tasking (e.g., driving, childcare duties) during sessions to ensure you can be fully engaged in our community life.

◆ **Relational Engagement:** This is a lab, not a lecture. We are building a community, and our growth relies on your active participation, honest reflection, and willingness to step out of your comfort zone. Please come prepared to be fully present—including keeping your camera on to facilitate the relational depth that is central to this experience.

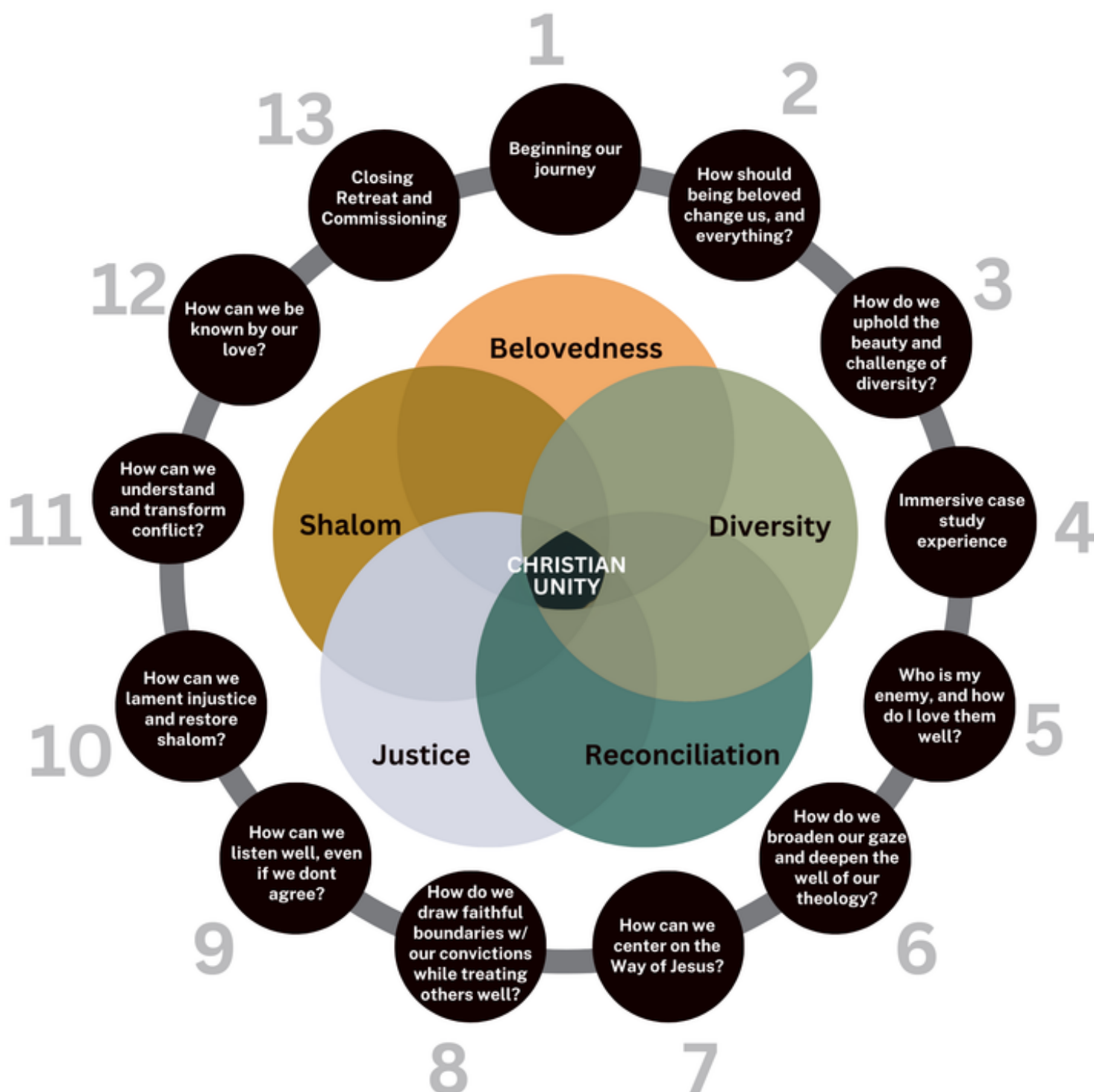
◆ **A "Lab" Mindset:** Bring a spirit of curiosity and holy experimentation. You are invited to bring your full self—your questions, your struggles, and your convictions—into a courageous space where we can listen, learn, and grow together.

◆ **Attendance:** Consistency is the foundation of our cohort. Because the power of this experience lies in the trust built between members over time, we ask that you prioritize attendance at all twelve sessions and the in-person retreat.

◆ **Time Commitment:** In addition to the 3-hour training sessions, there will be modest "homework" (reading and/or integrated spiritual practice) that will take approximately 1 hour in-between sessions. This is designed to support a holistic, formative experience of learning, integration, practice, and reflection.

Our Learning Journey

Here is an overview of the learning journey featuring the foundations of Christian unity: Belovedness, Diversity, Reconciliation, Justice, and Shalom, and the central questions for each of the thirteen gatherings for the Beloved Community Lab cohort:



What You Will Learn

- **Embrace deep unity** rooted in the imago Dei, which upholds the dignity and belovedness of all people
- **Apply a holistic theological framework**, using Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience to reflect on and strengthen your spiritual foundation and relationship with Jesus Christ
- **Discern the Way of Jesus** with the complexity of situations today, utilizing a unique toolkit and drawing wisdom from diverse Christian traditions and theological streams
- **Clarify your community's theological commitments**, using the Conviction Mapping exercise to distinguish between core convictions and areas of legitimate diversity for your community
- **Cultivate Christlike character and self-awareness**, recognizing and transforming righteous hubris into humble curiosity as you hold your own convictions while learning from the perspectives and commitments of others
- **Navigate conflict constructively**, learning a 9-step model for holistic reconciliation and repair that can be applied to both interpersonal rifts and deep systemic fractures
- **Cultivate justice and shalom** by recognizing Jesus' call to systemic interdependence, using cruciform solidarity as a framework for repairing what has been broken.
- **Collaborate for the common good** by recognizing Jesus' prayer for unity as an evangelistic witness and committing to tangible steps to work in partnership with others.

What You Will Experience

- **A Lab, Not a Lecture:** This is a lab—a space to experiment with applying your faith in the complexity of where you live, work, and play. You'll engage in case studies, role plays, spiritual practices, and honest reflection.
- **A Deeply Formational Journey:** Scripture makes it clear that Christian unity is a deep holistic journey where our unique cultures, histories, and experiences can be held together in Christ to reveal a deeper, more beautiful reflection of God's image. It is a journey of unity, diversity, justice, reconciliation and repair, towards shalom.
- **A Diverse, Committed Community:** You'll be journeying alongside Christian leaders across the country of different ethnicities, denominations, generations, and theological backgrounds. The cohort experience fosters friendship, vulnerability, and mutual growth. We don't dictate where you should land on any given issue—but we do provide a courageous space to listen, learn, challenge, and grow.

A Vision of Success

We envision church leaders who are equipped as reconcilers—grounded in Scripture, attuned to injustice, and able to lead with humility and courage across difference. They treat conflict as an opportunity for growth and embody a deep, Christ-centered unity rooted in the imago Dei.

We envision congregations that reflect the beloved community—engaging hard conversations with grace, and becoming places of healing, justice, and spiritual transformation.

We envision a culture shift in the wider Church—where Christians are known not by division, but by loving like Jesus did, and where we become a collective signpost of God’s shalom in a fractured world.

Details

WHEN: Thursdays from 10:00AM–1:00PM (Approximately every three weeks)

FORMAT Online via Zoom

COST \$600 to \$1000 (Sliding Scale - See Cohort Cost section)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 21, 2026

WHO SHOULD APPLY: Christian leaders who value unity, reconciliation, and justice—and want to grow in living these out. We are seeking to convene a cohort community that come from a wide range of denominational, theological, racial/ethnic, and generational backgrounds. This cohort in particular is designed for Christian leaders who are interested in bringing the Beloved Community Lab to their contexts and cities.

FELLOWSHIP & ONGOING SUPPORT:

Upon completion of the cohort, you will be invited to become a **Ambassadors of Reconciliation**—a growing network of leaders committed to ongoing formation in reconciliation and peacemaking. Through annual in-person gatherings and regular connections, you’ll receive ongoing encouragement and tools for living out “beloved community” in your leadership context.

2026-2027 Cohort DATES:

All Gatherings will take place from 10:00am to 1:00pm on Zoom

Thursday, October 1	Welcome to the Journey
Thursday, October 22	How should being beloved change us, and everything?
Thursday, November 12	How do we uphold the beauty and challenge of diversity?
Thursday, December 3	Immersive Case Study Experience
Thursday, December 17	Who is my 'enemy,' and how do I love them well?
Thursday, January 7	How do we broaden our gaze and deepen the well of our theology?
Thursday, January 28	How can we center on the Way of Jesus?
Thursday, February 25	How do we draw faithful boundaries w/ our convictions while treating others well?
Thursday, March 18	How can we listen well, even if I don't agree with you?
Thursday, April 8	How can we lament injustice and restore shalom?
Thursday, April 29	How can we go deep to understand and transform conflict?
Thursday, May 20	How can we be known by our love?
Thurs., June 3 - Sat., June 5	Closing Retreat & Commissioning Ceremony at Cedar Hill Retreat Center Boston, MA



Closing Retreat & Commissioning Ceremony

We will have an **in-person closing retreat and commissioning ceremony** at the beautiful Cedar Hill Retreat Center in Cape Cod. Nestled on 12 acres of tranquil conservation land with private beach access, this retreat offers space to step away, deepen our relationships, and reflect on our year-long journey. As a communal aspect of our experience living in "beloved community" together, we will share a home throughout the retreat, which includes shared sleeping arrangements. Together, we will reflect on all that God has accomplished, take time for rest and play, build implementation plans for our specific contexts, and prayerfully commission one another as ambassadors of reconciliation in our leadership contexts.

Thursday, June 3, 2027 - Saturday, June 5, 2027
at Cedar Hill Retreat Center, Duxbury, Cape Cod, MA



Cohort Cost

We believe beloved community is formed when people make room for one another, contribute according to their capacity, and help create access for those who might otherwise be excluded. For that reason, we offer a sliding-scale fee that allows participants and their organizations to contribute according to their financial circumstances.

\$600 — SUPPORTED RATE

For participants or organizations experiencing financial challenges who need a reduced rate to make participation possible.

\$800 — SUSTAINING RATE

Reflects the approximate cost of the direct participant expenses associated with providing the cohort experience.

\$1,000 — SOLIDARITY RATE

Covers your participation and includes an additional contribution that helps remove financial barriers for others and sustains the shared work of the cohort.

We invite you to select the rate that most honestly reflects your current capacity. This model reflects our belief that equity does not always mean everyone contributes the same amount, but that together we ensure everyone has access to the same meaningful experience.

If none of these options reflects what is possible for you or your organization, please reach out and share what support would make participation possible. We will work with you to explore a payment amount or arrangement that reflects your circumstances and helps make the cohort accessible.

YOUR COHORT FEE INCLUDES:

- Twelve facilitated three-hour Zoom sessions
- Lodging and meals for the two-night, in-person closing retreat at Cedar Hill Retreat Center
- Transportation between the Boston area or airport and the retreat center for participants who are flying in
- Participant supplies, including the cohort handbook and commissioning gifts
- Access to the Beloved Community Lab curriculum upon completion of the cohort

Participants are responsible for their own travel costs to and from the Boston area for the closing retreat.

Endorsements from Beloved Community Lab Alumni



The BCL has provided a meaningful space for deep reflection on the core issues dividing our nation. Through this program, I was challenged to reimagine what true unity within the body of Christ can look like and why it matters for the Church's public witness today. The experience has inspired me to envision the body of Christ as a model of reconciliation, justice, and abundant life for a hurting world.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Montañez

Executive Director of Center for Public Theology and Migration



The BCL was both eye and heart opening. As a queer member of the clergy in a mainline church, I thought I knew a lot about tolerance and radical welcome. But being in close contact with Christians who profess quite different theological views was something I was little prepared for. The point was not to change one another's minds, it was to find ways to love each other. And I can say that this really did happen as we came to know each other over the course of the year. This alone feels like a miracle and I am deeply grateful for it.

Rev. Cristina Rathbone

Executive Director of Common Cathedral in Boston



If you have a desire to grow in your capacity to cross lines of difference among the diverse Church, and to do so in ways that move toward greater shalom in our world, I urge you to consider participating in a Beloved Community cohort. For many - including myself - it is a journey from tentativeness to greater dimensions of security and affection.

Rev. Dr. Gregg Detwiler

Senior Consultant of Intercultural Ministry, Leadership Health and Organizational Development at Emmanuel Gospel Center



The BCL has given me an opportunity to understand others and myself better. It has given me a better understanding of the perspectives with which I differ and how to express my own. It has equipped me to better love my brothers and sisters in Christ and my neighbors who are not yet followers of Jesus.

Rev. Rocklyn E. Clarke

Senior Pastor of Life Church Boston

Are You Ready?

The Beloved Community Lab is not just another leadership program—it's an invitation to a way of following Jesus that meets this cultural moment. A way that leans into difference without fear. A way that faces conflict with grace. A way that embodies love across every line that seeks to divide us.

We believe there's no better time than now for Christ followers to prioritize the ministry of reconciliation - and for Christians to be peacemakers in a fractured world. Today's algorithms and siloes will seek to keep us fractured and divided, but God calls us to a different way.

Not only will you have the opportunity to learn this content, but you will be equipped as an ambassador to support the development of a toolkit for replication to bring this transformative experience to your community.

Some of the most transformational moments in life happen when we journey with others. Are you ready to walk the uniting, reconciling way of Jesus—with courage, compassion, and community?

APPLY BY AUGUST 21 TO JOIN THE ONLINE COHORT.



Biblical Foundations

- John 17:21–23

“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.”

→ Jesus prays for a deep, divine unity among his followers—so that the world may know God’s love.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20

*“God...reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”
“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”*

→ Reconciliation is not just a gift we receive—it’s a mission we carry, as Christ’s representatives.

- Isaiah 58:6, 12

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen...to loose the chains of injustice...and to set the oppressed free?” “

You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”

→ God calls us to embody worship through justice—repairing what has been broken in society and relationships.

- 1 Corinthians 12:12, 26

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts... so it is with Christ.”

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.”

→ The Church is one body made up of many parts—unity honors difference and shares in each other’s joy and pain.

- Ephesians 2:14–15

“He himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier...” His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.”

→ Through the cross, Jesus dismantles the walls of hostility and forms a new, reconciled humanity.

- John 13:35

“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

→ Together, our collective witness grows stronger as we join in to love our neighbors and pursue the common good so all might flourish.

Inspiration for our Work

"The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the Beloved Community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men."

-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Love for those who are like us is ordinary. Love for those who are unlike us is extraordinary. Love for those who dislike us is revolutionary. This is the kind of love that our Lord God calls us to."

-Unknown Author

"Holiness is easy if you don't care about unity. Unity is easy if you don't care about holiness. Somehow the church has to hold both of these together."

- NT Wright

"For the first Christians, love was the sign that they were God's children (1 Jn 4:7)... In other words, love was the mark of the Christian church. Failure to love was seen as a blatant denial of Christ... This love, more than anything else, was their greatest apologetic."

-John Armstrong

"Churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately."

-Lund Principle

"Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature."

- "Unitatis Redintegratio." The Second Vatican Council.

"If Christians can't speak about reconciliation, they can't speak about anything."

-Corymeela Community in Northern Ireland

Christian unity is not achieved by paper declarations of theological agreement and formal expressions of mutual recognition; it is achieved only when those 'in each place' who have been separated begin to live together as one people of God 'in one full committed fellowship.'"

-David Yeago

"We don't know when the agreement will come... We must continue to study theology, to clarify the details, but in the meantime we must walk together, not wait for those things to be resolved in order to walk...It gives me comfort when I find this: the outstretched hand, the fraternal embrace, thinking together, and walking. Ecumenism is accomplished by walking. Let us walk."

-Pope Francis