



What (and why) is Kinship Plot?

Kinship Plot is a community of learning and practice that cultivates resonant relationships with God, each other, and creation, particularly where those relationships have grown dull, silent, or unresponsive.

The vision of Kinship Plot is to create an emplaced, intentional community that witnesses to the gospel of Jesus by providing transitional housing, cultivating a plot of land, and embracing hospitable life together characterized by collaborative learning, formative artistry, and contemplative action.

The *plot* in our name has three meanings. First, *plot* alludes to the story of God in which we participate, a story of God's mission to create reconciled relationships of kinship instead of estrangement. Second, *plot* refers to the place where this story unfolds, and how inhabiting, caring for, and receiving from a particular plot of land is essential to fullness of life. Third, *plot* denotes a Spirit-led scheme to subvert forces of division and rootlessness in our world, a scheme that involves joyful resistance to dynamics that keep us from experiencing resonant relationships with God, each other, and creation.

Where is Kinship Plot?

We are rooted in Charlotte, NC, and building toward our vision of an emplaced community while currently operating on a smaller scale from our little plot in West Charlotte. At the same time, we are growing a kinship network that connects people locally and around the world who desire to cultivate resonant relationships with God, each other, and creation.



The People of Kinship Plot

Kinship Plot is a nonprofit organization led by people who are motivated by their Christian faith to cultivate resonant relationships and enhance the mission of the church.

Kinship Plot has two teams of co-shapers, the Board of Directors and the Wisdom Council, who support the leadership of Wes and Stephanie Vander Lugt as founders and directors. These teams of co-shapers are intentionally formed to model kinship across racial, socio-economic, and cultural differences.

Stephanie Vander Lugt is a social worker and serves as the Executive Director of Kinship Plot. Wes Vander Lugt directs the Leighton Ford Initiative in Theology, the Arts, and Gospel Witness at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and serves as the Operations Director of Kinship Plot. Both Wes and Stephanie are ordained Presbyterian ministers and they have three elementary-aged children: Eden, Beata, and Chalmer.



Rather than serving a particular demographic, Kinship Plot serves a “psychographic” of people who experience dissatisfaction with disconnections and divisions in contemporary life and long for more resonance. We often serve people who are questioning faith, have grown distant from God for a variety of reasons, or have struggled to find a place of welcome in the institutional church. For so many of us, loneliness, division, and anxiety are on the rise. Healing relationships with God, each other, and creation takes intentionality, slowness, and a commitment to place, which Kinship Plot seeks to provide.

For many Christians, kinship with creation is a missing ingredient in their discipleship journey, and one of Kinship Plot’s goals is to offer opportunities for individuals, groups, and churches to be attentive to creation as a part of their holistic spiritual formation. Kinship Plot serves people both in and out of the institutional church with a desire to be a bridge toward more resonant life with God, others, and creation.



The Motifs and Programs of Kinship Plot

We delight in creating times and spaces for people to kindle a vibrant relationship with a God who often feels distant, with people who often remain disconnected because of differences, and with a creation that is easily degraded or ignored. In doing so, we have five primary motifs that guide our course of action, which weave together in our work like melodies of a song, informing our strategic priorities and programming:

Collaborative learning: We invite others to read, reflect, and discuss both in dedicated learning cohorts and as an ongoing practice woven through our other activities of cultivation, artistry, and hospitality. The root of learning, like the root of love, is paying attention. Our learning cohorts explore topics related to connecting to God, each other, and the natural world. Some cohorts we have led include Embodied Kinship, Our Entangled Existence, Healing Haunted Histories, and Cinematic Kinship, and Creation Care(s): How the Earth Keeps Us in Our Earthkeeping.

Slow cultivation: Through our urban gardening and cultivation program, we invite others to build and prepare gardens, grow and cook food and medicine, attend to nature, explore permaculture, and learn about the local ecosystem as a way of embodying resonant relationships with the earth and each other. We do this through open garden days, produce distribution, apprenticeships, and special projects in partnership with local organizations. In 2024 we are establishing a fruit-for-all community orchard and food forest in northeast Charlotte.

Formative artistry: We invite others to create and enjoy art that helps us grapple with the problem of alienated relationships and imagine possibilities for resonance. We will never practice what we fail to imagine, which is why the arts are so central to our mission. We have commissioned artworks for projects and gatherings that include painting, spoken word, music, film, movement, and poetry. We also view our gardening, cultivation, and hospitality efforts as forms of participatory artistry and delight in the healing and joy this brings.

Contemplative action: We believe the most healthy and effective forms of activism flow from a place of peace, joy, and communion with God, so we offer opportunities to engage in contemplative practices that lead to action. Some examples of our contemplative activism projects include Away with the Mangers as a way of resisting housing injustice, Advent contemplation on the theme of Beauty First, 40 miles in 40 days during Lent to contemplate our movement away from alienation and toward resonance, Funeral of the Empire, and various community conversations and public witness on racial and social justice.

Liberatory welcome: Whether we are gardening, creating, learning, or gathering, we believe in open doors and liberatory spaces where all are wildly welcome. This offer of liberatory welcome is often the first step toward recovering resonant relationships and encountering God, and this includes welcoming all members of the more-than-human world who are entangled with and enhance our lives. One prominent example of this motif is our Oddkin Unite project, which gathers a small group of people on a monthly basis to experience resonance and liberatory welcome through a shared meal, original artistry, and facilitated discussion.

Ways to Engage

- Join us for a learning cohort, garden work day, or special event
- Bring a group to Kinship Plot to learn, grow, and serve
- Invite us to speak, consult, or lead a kinship collaborative at your location
- Invest financially by giving regularly and/or toward a special project
- Pray for the mission, vision, and people of Kinship Plot

