What Does It Mean to Be a Missional/Incarnational Church?

First, before "missional/incarnational" is about a way of being a church, it is about a way of living your life. Churches are primarily missional/incarnational to the extent their members live missional/incarnational lives.

Second, living a missional/incarnational life essentially means taking Jesus at his word about what it means to live for him and the Kingdom. It means committing to a true life of discipleship as defined by Christ and the early church in the New Testament.

The first step in leading a missional life is recognizing you are sent—you are a missionary, wherever you live, sent to share the Gospel through how you live. It is not, in-your-face, knocking-on-doors, accosting strangers and friends with, Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? It is lifestyle evangelism. It is letting people see what it means to be a Jesus follower simply by how you live day-in and day-out. Because you’re sent, you’re focus is primarily outward, on others and on the community, on going and being where people are rather than expecting they will come to you.

Leading an incarnational life is an outgrowth of leading a missional life. If people can see what it means to be a Jesus follower by how you live each day, it’s because you’re incarnating—putting flesh and bones on—what Jesus teaches. He describes how his followers (his disciples) should live, and you make his words visible in your own life.

Thus, a missional/incarnational church is a church that, first, understands everything it does in terms of participating in God’s mission in the world, which is to demonstrate the love of Christ and good news of the Gospel to its community and the world. It establishes a rhythm of coming together and sending out: coming together for worship, fellowship, prayer, and spiritual formation to equip its people to be sent out into the community to live their daily lives in ways that they witness for Christ and the Kingdom.

Missional/incarnational churches...

- honor traditions and history as guides but because the church belongs to God, are unafraid to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit
- don't think of "church" as a place you go but as a people on mission together in their community
- value worship while mindful that God can be worshiped in a multitude of ways and places
- are good stewards of their resources and take care of one another but are more focused on people outside the church
- welcome growth of the church but are more committed to growing the Kingdom
- see their member’s growth and service in the church as primarily equipping them to serve others in the community
- get to know their community and ask people what they need rather than giving them what the church wants them to have
- practice biblical hospitality by thinking in terms of "God's" rather than "ours"
- strive for a church structure and organization that facilitates their ability to be a blessing to the community