

Lutheran-Methodist Partnership Team meeting, November 26, 2013

Present: Ralph DeCristoforo, Sue Fletcher, the Rev. Cora Aguilar, the Rev. John Schaumburg, Carole Tate, Jen Salta, the Rev. Eric Brown, Carol VanBatavia, Matt Rynearson, Rich Miller, Norm Collins

Meeting opened with prayer.

Eric's announcements: As was previously noted, Eric is going to be entering the Navy as a chaplain next year. The date has been announced and is Feb 1. Eric's last Sunday as the pastor of the Journey United Methodist Church is January 26. The UMC Bishop will be providing an interim pastor. The Bishop has directed that no agreements be started nor any changes made until after the interim pastor arrives.

John summed up the SWOT analysis – no truly negative announcements. The loss of identity and the overworking of the pastor were the overriding concerns. They Lutherans felt like there was a more positive sense and feeling about the partnership after the meeting. It felt like, after the meeting, people were “settled down,” and much of the anxiety was settled.

John suggested we move forward in this way: first, enjoy the blessing of the seasons. Second, say good-bye to the pastors in good and decent ways. Third, get started seriously in January and February about what we need to do. The “need to do” will be a series of agreements or covenants, worked on at several different times – worship space, offering, leadership, etc —and presented at a variety of times.

John again spoke about the Call Process. He strongly encourages MLC to encourage the Methodists to participate in the Call Process, and for us to think that there will eventually be just one pastor. He explained that first a Mission Site Profile (MSP) be developed. Once the MSP is complete, that document is loaded into the ELCA computer in Chicago and will be visible to all Lutheran pastors nationwide. The pastor who is interested will then provide a Rostered Leaders Profile, a document that is about as long as the MSP, to the Bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod. The Bishop then matches the MSP to the best candidate and sends three names to the congregation. The congregation interviews those three and takes the best candidate, or not. They are welcome to ask for more names and consider more candidates.

While John explained the process, he noted that this team needs to be clear about the future process – we need to set the parameters for future teams of leaders to get pastors, from both denominations. John imagines a Call Committee starts soon (a Lutheran committee with Methodist representation) and that there be a series of votes, perhaps around Easter.

Carol suggests our next step be a meeting to find a shared site. After that is concluded (if that is concluded), we are ready to move to the next step. There was a consensus around the table that this is the logical next step.

John asked that we keep the mission in the forefront of our conversation: we need to explain to people how God is calling us, and the mission to which God calls us. Eric asked that this group hold the feet of the interim pastors to the fire to make this happen.

Next meeting date: January 21, 6:30pm at Carol Van Batavia (45794 W Sheridan Rd, in Maricopa Meadows).