

FEBRUARY 2023 CHURCH COUNCIL RETREAT MINUTES DENVER, COLORADO 2/11/23

Attendance: Lisa Grimm, president; Diane Jowell, vice president (via Zoom); Judy Ekberg, secretary; Scott Ikenberry, treasurer; Susan Linner, council member at large; Taz Walkowich, council member at large; Interim Pastor Julie Brooks.

- Opening Prayer
- Ice breaker/get-to-know-you activities: 1) We were offered Valentine conversation hearts, then discovered that we had to tell a fact about ourselves for each heart taken! 2) This or That - indicate personal preference; 3) "Two truths and a lie" about yourself
- Communication activity: after random pairing of council members, each pair held the ends of six-foot strings with the strings crossing over each other to form a star. After various moves to intertwine the strings, participants closed their eyes and followed instructions given by two of the individuals to untangle the star. We found we were more effective if we all participated in solving the problem.
- Lectio Divina: ancient practice of meditative prayer. Pastor Julie read *Isaiah 55:10-11*
"For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it."
Pastor Julie read the passage and we meditated on it; on the second reading she asked that we pick out a word or phrase that God had prepared for us; after the third and fourth readings, we made prayerful connections with our own lives. This process promotes Holy listening to the Word and promotes communion with God.
- Melinda gave a presentation on communication skills with insights from the corporate world.
 - Specialty groups within an organization tend to create silos of communication in which like-minded communicate with each other;
 - This makes it difficult to be unified and focused on a common goal;
 - Start with open conversation - be interested in who people are, what are their values;
 - The key is actively listening: address the emotion behind the person's comment, then reflect back what they said (e.g. "I heard you say one thing we can do is...")
 - Problems in communication usually come from expectations, we expect others to see the same way we do;
 - Conflict comes when people don't feel valued or heard;
 - Rigid breaks; flexibility leads to collaboration;
 - With God's help, we can use improved communication to create something beautiful!
- Collaboration/Communication/Coordination
 - What is it? We want to invite an atmosphere of sharing, create a comfortable environment.
 - Why is it important? We want to strengthen the church to bring us back to God, create unity.

- Everyone wants to know what's happening, wants to feel included.
- Current situation: improving! Information is on the website, in weekly Happenings
- Ideal situation: continue with Big Picture communication, improve inter-group communication, create a process to deal with conflict;
- "IWWC " In What Ways Can We...
 - 1) Written guidelines, such as organizational chart
 - 2) Continue to talk about Communication process
 - 3) Sign up for the Information Booth after worship services
 - 4) Sit at fellowship time with unfamiliar people
 - 5) Conflict resolution/ dispute process
 - 6) Expand information to Facebook, YouTube, audio file, other social media
- Questions:
 - What do we want to aim for?
 - How do we want to connect more with God?
 - How do we want to be leaders?
- Elements of a communication plan
 - 1) Groups - February Zoom meeting with representatives from 26 interest/activity groups at HSLC. What kind of communication do you want? Text, email, phone call, Happenings
 - 2) Interpersonal -
 - 3) Conflict management
- PRIORITIES FOR 2023
 - 1) Create a framework to identify and discuss issues in order to strengthen our church
 - 2) Create a church that runs well regardless of who is the rostered minister
 - 3) Clarify our communication process with the 26 interest/activity groups
 - 4) Decide how to use technology to communicate with the congregation members
 - 5) Long range: Consider revision of the worship service bulletin [how much detail, use hymnals or print words to hymns]
 - 6) Long range: Seek to involve all members in worship, learning, witness, service, support
- Council members will set their own individual goals for 2023.
- Council will write a goal for the council to accomplish by December 31, 2023.
- Approval of minutes from the Congregational Annual Meeting held on January 29, 2023. Melinda motioned, seconded by Taz, to approve the minutes from the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.
- Council meetings for 2023 will be held in person at the administration building, at 6pm on the second Tuesday of each month.
- Housing Allowance of \$45,000 for Pastor Julie Brooks for 2023 was approved by council.
- The council retreat adjourned at 2:20pm

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Ekberg, council secretary