

Notes from Unglued Church Project Open Gathering March 2, 2019

Present: Wally Blyth, Gale Dyke, Larry Dyke, Vickie Eggleston, Jim Eggleston, Joanna Elletson, Carol Hanna, Lynn Sears, Cindy Knapp, Gloria Lasher, Ray Pring, Dru Schoenborn, Rebecca Taylor

The gathering began in prayer with refreshments in hand

Rebecca opened the gathering with a conversation about what we can agree to whenever we get together for discussion because apparently there were “hurt feelings” out of the last gathering. She distributed the “Touchstones” from the Center for Courage and Renewal founded by Parker Palmer as a possible guide. What was expressed is as follows:

- To be clear about the PURPOSE for gathering
- To be RESPECTFUL of others’ opinions and ideas
- To have an OPEN mind
- To WONDER about others’ journeys (one of the Touchstones)
- To LISTEN
- To remember that we are BOUND TOGETHER as family
- To hold open both the FREEDOM to speak *and* to call for suspending a topic until the next gathering
- To ACCEPT that not all issues will be resolved/all ideas implemented

Rebecca then shared some of the discussion from the Session meeting during which it was expressed that there was confusion about “Unglued Church” and “Way Forward,” and the desire to only have one conversation. She indicated that the primary focus of Unglued Church was to strengthen the congregation’s connection and service to the community (living into the new mission conviction: “Following Christ so all may thrive”) while the Way Forward was designed to consider how to do what needs to be done within and for the congregation (*not* doing away with Deacons or committees but potentially restructuring!). Apparently, there were suggestions written in on the interest forms distributed at the Way Forward gathering that could be ways for the congregation to connect with the community (ala Unglued Church). The interest forms were discussed and Ray Pring distributed the summary of the forms to date. The consensus was to focus time and energy into one conversation.

Clearly the hope is to tap into the passions of members so they may serve God with enthusiasm! Joanna Elletson reported that the hope is to provide a list of persons willing to serve in various ministries to the “point person” for that area of ministry. The desire is to be as inviting as possible and to emphasize that one does not have to be on a committee to serve.

A discussion about finding a new designation for the gatherings followed in order to be free of the term “unglued” (which means “unstuck” rather than “falling apart”!). “Pathfinders” or “Pathfinding People” or “Pathfinding Ministry” were suggestions. It is clear that the conversations consider both POSSIBILITIES and NEEDS... new ideas and opportunities for service

and ongoing responsibilities and tasks to be carried out. Holding an “open forum” as a follow-up to the interest sheets was suggested. The consensus of the group was that Saturday mornings were good for the conversations and that a Sunday when people are already at the church for worship would be good for an open forum. The date of April 6th at 9:30 was selected for the next “Pathfinding” conversation. Joanna Elletson volunteered to make an announcement about it in worship. The open forum could be held the next day, on Sunday, April 7th, although some details were not finalized: where will it take place? who will coordinate it? will the “point persons” from Session be on board? will there be a luncheon or coffee hour?, etc. Rebecca raised the issue of the need to commission Deacons and indicated it could be good to do so that Sunday as well.

Dru Schoenborn spoke to the idea of offering an informational gathering to dispel the “myths” about various important legal documents (such as a will, power of attorney, etc.) for the benefit of the congregation (not open to the community). She asked for help in putting it all together and presenting it to the Session for its “blessing.” Cindy Knapp and Joanna Elletson volunteered to work with her on this project.

Other ideas expressed: the need for a person dedicated to utilizing media as effectively as possible, even if that person is paid to do so; and offering a workshop or series of workshops on “life skills” such as budgeting, nutrition, etc., geared primarily toward young adults/families.

NEXT GATHERING FOR CONVERSATION: Saturday, April 6th, 2019 at 9:30 AM