

Bethany Lutheran Church Council Report

1. Reported By: Pastor Ronald T. Glusenkamp
2. Organization: Church Council March 22, 2011 Meeting
3. Date: March 22, 2011
4. Report Purpose and Scope:
 1. Lent 2011
 2. Update on Vision Process and work of Vision Team
 3. Health and Wellness Coordinator Search Process Update
 4. Intern candidates 2011-2012 update
 5. BE THE BLESSING -May 22, 2011
 6. AVENUES of Hope- 9 10 11
 7. Sabbatical Committee

5. Summary for Council:

1. Lent 2011 is off to a grand start. Upcoming weeks will focus on
 - The Blessing of Community
 - The Blessing of being Unplugged
 - The Blessing of being Plugged in
 - The Blessing of Feasting

There is a lovely interplay and connection between the "discipline of Lent" and what we have planned for our community. There is a building sense of commitment and resources undergirding the Lenten journey which will culminate in our Easter celebration and "BE THE BLESSING" day on May 22, 2011.

Dr. Dennis Dewey will be in residence during Holy Week. Consult the website and April Beacon for timely details regarding performances. As we make our way from ashes to alleluias I want to thank you for participating in "the blessing of the Word" on a regular basis. I also want to raise your awareness and invite you to amazing opportunities to experience "the blessing of the Word."

During Holy Week, Biblical Story-teller Dennis Dewey will be presenting the Passion story of Jesus Christ. Be sure to watch for announcements in bulletins and the web for up to date info on where and when he'll be presenting the "good news." Dennis will be with us on Palm Sunday at all three services, as well as both services on Good Friday. He'll be making "guest appearances" at regularly scheduled events throughout the week. Be sure to check out www.bethany-denver.org for the latest and be sure to invite family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to these "blessings of the Word." As leaders of the congregation, I invite you to support these great celebrations of the Word.

2. Vision retreat and Vision team timeline.

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TENTATIVE TIMELINE

March: Pastor Rouse met with Vision Team, staff, and church leadership.
April: Communication to congregation about vision process (newsletter, temple talks, website). Begin interviewing key leaders and staff.
May: Vision Team works on drafting a "vision for mission" document and plans focus groups for summer or fall.
Summer: Vision Team meets with church leadership to finish drafting proposals.
September: Focus Groups review "Vision for Mission" specific proposals.
October: Vision Team updates "Vision for Mission" in consultation with council.
November 5, 2011 Leadership Retreat (Part 2).
November 6 Sunday Open Forum for congregation led by Pastor Rouse.
November 13, 2011 : Congregation affirms "Vision for Mission" Strategic Plan Proposals.

3. Health and Wellness Coordinator Search Process Update

The Health and Wellness Cabinet interviewed two candidates for the position on March 17th. These two candidates had previously met with representatives from Covenant and then also Pastor Ron and two members of the HWC.

By a unanimous decision, Janet Mortinsen was the favorite candidate. She is a member of BLC.

The committee feels that Janet would be a very strong fit for the following reasons:

- Long-term membership at Bethany - she is well anchored in the church community
- Leadership skills through PTO and other volunteer activities
- Inter-personal skills and calm approach
- Flexible schedule as a homemaker

Bill Lange from Covenant has indicated that:

They have contacted Janet directly and will have her fill out an application and get her into the necessary pre-employment assessments- physical, background checks, drug screening etc. "She will also need to go through our orientation process, including spending a day or two with our wellness nurse to get her familiar with the wellness visits we do for our residents on campus, and help her with the spiritual component by spending time with our chaplain. We will then have her arrange her orientation with Bethany orienting to your structure and expectations." A copy of her vitae is available upon request.

4. Intern candidates 2011-2012 update

I interviewed seven candidates for the position. Assignments will be made in April. I was deeply impressed by the competencies of all candidates. The time of internship will start some time in mid to late August 2011

5. BE THE BLESSING -May 22, 2011

Intern Jess will update council on the progress so far.

6. AVENUES OF HOPE- 9-10-11

I have had several planning meetings with Lynne Butler et al at Metro CareRing. A goal for our congregation is to raise \$20,000 and 20,000 pounds of food.

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7. Sabbatical Committee

The Sabbatical Committee comprised of Jack Lindsey, Bob Pote, Stacie Schubert, Sherri Koebel, David Furgason, Ron Guse and Pastor Ron has met four different times. Our next meeting is April 3 although various work teams and online collaboration continues.

They have come up with a SCOPE and SEQUENCE document:

Preface:

A primary concern of the committee and Pr. Ron is that the operations of the church continue seamlessly, and, in the words of the grant material, that we “thoroughly plan in advance to keep the extra load on other clergy and staff to a minimum.” Concurrent to our work (and in some cases proceeding it) Council and staff is working on the operational aspects of the planning, and Pastor Ruth Ann is centrally involved in that planning.

Key tasks of the committee:

1. To understand Pr. Ron’s vision for his renewal experience and help discern how the Bethany congregation can participate meaningfully in a parallel, connected renewal experience here in Denver;
2. To develop a plan to help the Bethany congregation understand the purpose, meaning, context and opportunities in this renewal experience, and to help discern means by which congregational support may be developed;
3. To provide a means of accountability for ourselves and Pr. Ron in getting the plan outlined and the grant proposal written;
4. To take a leadership role during planning and implementation to help keep the various activities of the congregation true to the goals and vision of the renewal experience. This is not to imply a “veto” power, but a commitment to providing guidance to congregational groups about the activities proposed for congregational renewal.

DRAFT Timeline:

Task	Due
Completion of congregation letter, budget, congregation plan outline, grant proposal	5/1/11
Submission of grant application	5/11/11
Development of congregation plan outline to specific tasks	7/1/11
Solicitation of congregational groups’ proposals	10/1/11

Due date for congregational groups’ proposals 12/15/11

Ron’s sabbatical begins (approx.) 1/1/12

Ron’s sabbatical ends (approx.) 4/1/12

Study groups and other initiatives begin meeting 1/15/12

“Developing the vision” groups begin 8/15/12

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Renewal initiative ends, consolidation into everyday practice 12/15/12

SABBATICAL Part A- Program Rationale and Design by Pastor Ron Glusenkamp

I find myself living in a couple of worlds. Maybe it's because I have dual citizenship- in the church and the culture. My sense is that the church and culture I grew up in (while at times functionally separate) appeared to be mutually engaged in the same means and consequently the same ends. This is no longer the situation we find ourselves in.

Today there seems to be an ever deepening gap, rift or chasm between the church and culture. The church while being aware increased secularism and decreasing levels of attendance and participation is worried about survival and turns inward. Culture has decided to go off in search of answers to questions that church is afraid to handle, but is uniquely qualified in my perspective, to answer. Culture struggles with issues like:
When does life begin?
And at the other end of the spectrum when does life end?
Individuals in the culture ask:
Where do I find meaning?
What's my purpose?

The purpose of my sabbatical is to be immersed in church and culture in such a way as to find commonalties and differences which can facilitate how I and the congregation I serve fulfill our purpose in faith formation. Our congregation defines faith formation in this way, "as an intentional life-long process of equipping, empowering and unleashing people for an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, learning, service, prayer, community and life experiences in order to live out one's baptismal calling." On a personal basis I want to discover and uncover elements of the Gospel in culture i.e plays, music, various artistic media so that I can utilize them in fulfilling my personal mission which is to "enlighten, entertain and evangelize."

The sabbatical is a renewal to discern how our (traditional) church (BLC) can stay relevant to the faith and body of Christ. I find a model in St. Martin in the Fields (SMITF-London) which is relevant to the culture of today - without compromising the message of Christ . Being immersed in the life of this congregation would help me understand how to carry that forward to our congregational context. Being immersed in the cultural life of London would help me understand where these elements of the Gospel exist in the world today.

It seems that we are called to "retrofit" the relevance of our brick and mortar church identity which is critical to our faith community identity. This is necessary in a world where the lines of strict structure are fast evaporating -

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being relevant to the culture and to singular, isolated lives which make up a community "at large" is really key to moving the faith into the community - and hopefully moving the community back into the pews in order to experience the grace and love of God through Word and Sacrament.

What has brought us to this point needs to be reformed in order to move us forward. Jesus was a reformer. Luther was a reformer. I believe that I am being called to reflect the light and warmth of that Reforming Spirit. What I mean by this is that church needs to experience a culture change. We need to shift from being concerned about institutional survival and move to a spirit of co-missioning. I want to learn how to help the people of God capture and reclaim their baptismal calling. I want our congregation to grow so that we might com-mission people to use their spiritual gifts in the world today.

It is more than putting a screen on the wall, or creating a new worship service, it is a search to renew what is core and central in order to "go and tell." I want to learn more about how to significantly influence our community's dna so that we can go out into the world as former ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson would say, "to say "bna" "BE NOT AFRAID."

This time of rest and renewal would take advantage of the abundant educational, worship and cultural resources in London, such as the London School of Economics, St. Martin in the Fields and the Theatre District in the West End.

I want to explore a deep conversation with leaders in the church (faith community) and culture by asking questions like:

- How does a Christian person rationally live in church and culture today?
- Are there parts of culture that can inform church?
- Jesus talked about light, leaven and salt. Often we see this as the role of church. What if the paradigm is flipped and see that culture might be offering light, leaven and salt to the church.?
- What does culture have to say to church?
- What does church have to say to culture?
- How do I as a leader help church navigate conversations with culture.
- How do I as a leader help culture navigate conversations with church
- How does our faith help us wrestle with the tough stuff?
- How does the tough stuff help us wrestle with our faith?

There are Biblical stories that help us understand major cultural shifts.

Naaman's slave girl- 2 Kings 5

Esther

Psalm 130

Peter and his dream regarding non-kosher food-Acts 10

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Paul @ Aerogapagus –Acts 17:16-34
Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch –Acts 8:26-40
Samaritan Woman at the well with Jesus- John 4

6. Detailed Plans or Next Steps:

5. BE THE BLESSING -May 22, 2011- Stay tuned
6. AVENUES of Hope- 9 10 11- 100 day kickoff is June 1, 2011
7. Sabbatical Committee-next meeting April 3, 2011