

August 5, 2016

Transition: First 100 Days

Milepost 97

The objectives for the transitional period were determined by leadership in December:

- 1) experience healthy closure of the last chapter
- 2) clarify current identity (mission)
- 3) discern future direction (vision)
- 4) evaluate the organizational structure
- 5) prepare to call long term leadership

The first four are essential preparation for the last objective.

The new Transition Task Group (Cheryl Martin, Herb Troyer, Becky Wigginton & Gary Martin) met last Sunday to plan the next Congregational Dialogue (Aug. 14). TTG is comprised of those who volunteered to help discern processes for the transitional period. Let's review the first 100 days in transition.

May-June

Results of the May home visits were reported to the congregation via e-mail in mid-June. The report is also attached to this milepost message. Presenting an overview of the transition period processes was delayed so that the first Congregational Dialogue (June 19) could focus on concerns about the exit agreement.

July

At the second Dialogue (July 10), we reflected on the congregation's history in light of a congregation's life cycle. It is of interest to note that the above objectives describe the task of redevelopment, which is essential in reversing congregational decline.

Those requesting additional conversation about the exit agreement met on July 14, which resulted in greater understanding of what happened and readiness to move forward with transitional work.

After 100 days, what has become clear?

- 1) Some are tired of congregational process.
- 2) There is confusion regarding transition.

3) Shalom's mission (Who are we? Why do we exist?) is not clear.

4) There are different perspectives regarding where Shalom is on the congregational life cycle: stability or decline?

The good news: all four are normal at this point in a transition. Recognition of the value of transitional work increases over time. The challenge is that transitional work by definition is *congregational*. The objectives need to be accomplished by the congregation. And, despite what some think, transition is *organic*: each subsequent process builds on discernment and accomplishments of the previous process. This has been demonstrated already in changes in focus of each Congregational Dialogue, from original projections.

Participation in the first two dialogues has been positive in both numbers and quality. While process fatigue is reality, the only way forward is through additional process. What will be different is that our focus is on foundational matters which have not been previously addressed. Faithful reading of weekly mileposts enables us to be more productive in our Congregational Dialogues. If you hear someone say "I don't know what's going on," ask if they are reading the mileposts.

A proposal for the remainder of the transitional period will be presented and discussed at the Aug. 14 Congregational Dialogue. The meeting will end with an introduction to the September Dialogue's focus on clarifying a congregational mission statement.

Additional preparation materials for Aug. 14 will be sent with the Aug. 12 milepost. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment of the transition process.

—Gary Martin

Looking Ahead:

Aug. 7 9:30 a.m. *What is the Gospel?* Acts 10:36-43 (Brian)

Aug. 14 9:30 a.m. *That they may be one* John 17:20-26 (Gary)

11:00 a.m. Congregational Dialogue #3: Transition overview

Sept. 11 11:00 a.m. Congregational Dialogue #4: Mission Statement

Gary's projected in town schedule: Aug. 7-8; 15; 21-22