



Minutes from the Christ Memorial Church Congregational Meeting
With The Leader's Journey Consultants About the "Current Reality" Document
Sunday, October 27, 2019, 3-5pm, in The Gathering Place at Christ Memorial Church

Terry Edewaard: Prayer and opening remarks:

- 1) 1) We do not have a search team/job description/mandate for a lead pastor yet.
- 2) 2) We are here to discuss the "current reality" document with the consultants. After this process with the consultants is finished, they will make recommendations on how we can move forward, reiterating that that is not happening today. Today we will discern "who and where we are."

Jim Herrington/Trisha Taylor:

- 1) Over the course of the summer, Jim and Trisha interviewed 14 people with a wide range of attendance, membership, age, etc. to form the Discernment Team (D-Team) with Brad Laninga as the "chair" of that group. They had a day of training, and then the D-Team (along with Trisha and Jim) interviewed 82 people having a wide scope of attendance, age, and membership longevity, including the staff at Christ Memorial. They then held meetings, trainings, and video conferences and compiled the data from the interviews to create the current reality as accurately as possible. This team tried it's best to have a faithful representation from these 96 people with an overarching consistent set of themes they heard. They then put into writing the "current reality" report of Christ Memorial.
- 2) There is nothing wrong with Christ Memorial Church. We have some problems to solve similar to what many other churches are going through, including the one mentioned in the Book of Acts where that church was doing what we are doing today. They talked and shared information and perspective. "It seemed good to us and the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 15:28).
- 3) Jim and Trisha gave us some guidelines as to how to talk and share information for this meeting. They wanted us to consider thinking and implementing such as, "I have an opinion and it's important for me to say my opinion- but it's also going to be important for me to listen." The Spirit is going to be at work in this so that we can create something that we can't do on our own.
- 4) An example of two pictures:
 - a. Three blind people have an elephant in their hands, each holding one part of it and saying with passion, intensity, and assertiveness, "This is what an elephant is like." When someone has a different perspective and says that what they say is right and

what you say is wrong, conflicts arise, and you don't see a bigger picture. Imagine a bigger perspective where we can hold on to what we see, but also see what the others see. This requires two things: conviction and humility.

- b. Having a shared sense of where we are is critical to healthy congregational life. If I am in Houston and want to go to Dallas, I need a map. However, if I want to go to Dallas and I THINK I am in Houston, but am actually in San Antonio, that map will be useless. That is what happens in congregations all across the country. One (often a small) group of people say, "This is where we are," and then they determine strategy about the future based on saying where they think we are and saying how we are going to get where we are going. However, the rest of the congregation doesn't think that is where we are because their experience is different. If we don't come to some clear sense as to where we are, we as consultants can't make any helpful recommendations, and you can't choose strategy that will be helpful. What you CAN do is choose some strategies that will make people either winners or losers, make people leave or stay, and make people "insiders" or "outsiders." But what you CAN'T do is choose some strategies for helping us move together for the success of the future as to where God has called us to be. The imagery of the elephant and the map can serve us well if we act with humility and conviction.

- 5. Trisha prayed and then gave good instructions about listening and talking around the tables, as well as how to disagree. She said, "One of the things that comes through loud and clear is that you love this church, that you have seen Christ Memorial do great things, and that your heart is to see God continue to be at work here. As you do this work, getting clear about and solidifying the current reality, what you do is really important, but how you do it is going to be at least as important.

- a. Talk so people can listen and listen so people can talk (simple, but not easy). When you speak, just speak for yourself (do not say, "well people are saying" or "they think that"). Speak for yourself: "This is how I see things," and please do this in a way that acknowledges that what you see is legitimate and yet it's not the only legitimate way to see everything. A little bit of humility makes it easier for people to listen. Come in having AN opinion and not THE opinion. When you talk so people can listen that means for some of you introverts- you need to talk, even if you feel you are not "qualified"- we need representation from every person.

We also need you to be able to disagree by saying "I see that differently. I don't agree with this, but it's important for me to hear it." Listen for 15 seconds so everyone can contribute. Stick with the three questions below that we asked you to consider for our purposes today. Don't try to "fix" anything today. Focus on whether this version of "current reality" reflects how you see things, and where it does not.

- 1. What parts of this report resonate as being true in your own experience?
- 2. What parts of the report do you find yourself resisting?
- 3. What parts of the report pique your curiosity for more information?

6. People were divided into groups of approximately eight in The Gathering Place and the chapel. They went over the three questions, allotting 15 minutes per question. The table hosts consisting of the D-Team and consistory were there only to listen to and record both the sentiments and opinions shared. No one was quoted specifically- there was only general feedback from the table.
7. Everyone came back into The Gathering Place after the 45 minutes of "table time." Jim and Trisha passed around a microphone to have the table hosts share what the experience was like at their table.

Katie Prins: "...wonderful- better than I expected. Main thing that I heard was relationships: everyone loves this church, and everyone wants everyone to come together with one mission and one community. Very inspiring to hear."

Phil Holmes: "Wonderful people centered on the topic of communication almost the entire time. Pain... disappointment. Unresolved conflict and pain were very evident in my group. Everyone loves this church and is committed -and are hurting. They want to be a part of the process moving forward..."

Barb Kiekintveld: The idea that was neat and unique was found at the bottom of page two where it talked about Christ Memorial consisting of two separate ideas and groups. Barb's group felt that their group is and can be both.

Mari Martin: "A great group that would concur talking about 'we believe we can be both.'"

Conni VandeBunte: "Enjoyable time- resonated with however we move forward...curious about how our church operates, the consistory, how it all happens, financial reporting, what is the protocol for communicating this..."

Cherie Elhart: "...if we do things according to Acts 13- pray, fast unanimously...we will grow if we carry this out"

Stephen McCarthy: "Curious as of why, and the hope of building trust because we are communicating better."

Carole Aardsma: "Communication, sharing positive things and celebrating being a caring congregation. What are our pastoral gifts? Is it possible for someone to be both a leader and a shepherd?"

Jolie Wennersten: "... if we change, we will decline in membership- and if we stay the same, we decline. If we make changes and move together as a group this church can grow."

Dan Griswold: Two things - 1) universal agreement of the accuracy of the CR document. 2) Someone said, "I will need to change."

Les Lanser: "Report was well- done and positive about the process- a lot of enthusiasm, love for the church and the desire to see it grow whatever happens."

Cliff Carr: “Have pride in the heritage of our church and not be thinking that it is not going to grow- be positive and passionate.”

Jose Duran: “Everyone agreed with the CR document ...the love and care for the church is huge here and we want to work together to succeed.”

8. Jim Herrington: “The process from here: it sounds as if there is a lot of agreement, but we still need to meet with the table hosts to discern. If we are all starting from the same place, we can move forward with a recommendation. If we are not quite in the same place, we have more work to do. Facilitators are going to give us their report from their table in writing. Jim and Trisha will make some assessments and then recommendations about how to move forward.

We will move with as much haste as possible. However, if we move with too much haste we can't communicate well. Please be patient with the pace of the process. We will want to make recommendations, but will want to talk with you about those recommendations and why. This way we can all participate in the process in a way that your 'yes' can really be a 'yes.' Keep talking about the report. 'Keep talking so people can listen and keep listening so people can talk.' (Trisha)

Pray, pray, pray, pray, for God's wisdom - and for change if that is what He is asking for. Trisha was struck by the comment from one of the tables, 'I NEED TO CHANGE,' and we can start on that this very minute.”

David VanOpstall closed the meeting with a thank-you, a communication, and a prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy Ankerman
Executive Assistant