



Pastor Sorensen's August First-of-the-Month Letter

August 1, 2023

Last month I talked about the difference between decision-making and discernment. I spoke of how we need the skills to do both in the life of our congregation. In this liminal time we lean into the skills of discernment more than our decision-making skills. The primary tasks of the Transition and Writing teams earlier this year, and the on-going task of the Call Committee, is one of discernment.

Discernment is practicing deep and generous listening to the scriptures, listening to the work of the Holy Spirit in our neighbor, and listening to that 'still-small-voice' of God within each of us. The coalescing of those voices helps us in this messy process of discernment.

Parts of the fruits of this discernment are the new Mission Statement and the revised Core Values. These living documents now become both guideposts and a lens for future discernment of God's preferred and promised future for Christ Lutheran Church. Every new and existing ministry and mission can be evaluated on how it aligns with "Christ's radical acceptance" and our commitment to "bridging the gaps of our community with unconditional love and grace."

In practical terms this "bridging the gaps" looks like a congregation who opens its doors seven days a week to a dozen different types of community recovery and support groups (AA, NA, etc.). Unconditional love and grace looks like a congregation that really does love unconditionally, so that the LGBTQIA+ community and especially LGBTQIA+ students know that they are not only welcomed but loved into this community of grace.

It is these guideposts of discernment that are helping guide the Call Committee as it does its work. God is preparing a pastor with the gifts and passions that align with this lens for ministry. The work of the Holy Spirit will be to guide us together so that decades of faithful and life-changing ministries will continue.

It is these guideposts of discernment that are helping guide your Church Board as it does its critical work of walking the path of God's future for this congregation.

It is through this lens of discernment that the focus of our worship from now until the spring of 2024 will be our mission statement and core values.

It is through this lens of discernment that the congregational small groups studies in the fall of 2023 will lean into some Biblical stories behind each of the six core values.

The days before Christ Lutheran Church are filled with continued hope and possibility. But these days will also be filled with challenge and a measure of struggle. Just as the shape and scope of mission and ministry do not look the same as they did in 1995, or 2005, or even 2015, the mission and ministry will continue to be reshaped by the Holy Spirit who is constantly leading us into God's future, where we are unconditionally loved, and invited to live that love with our neighbors.

See you in worship,

Pastor Scot