



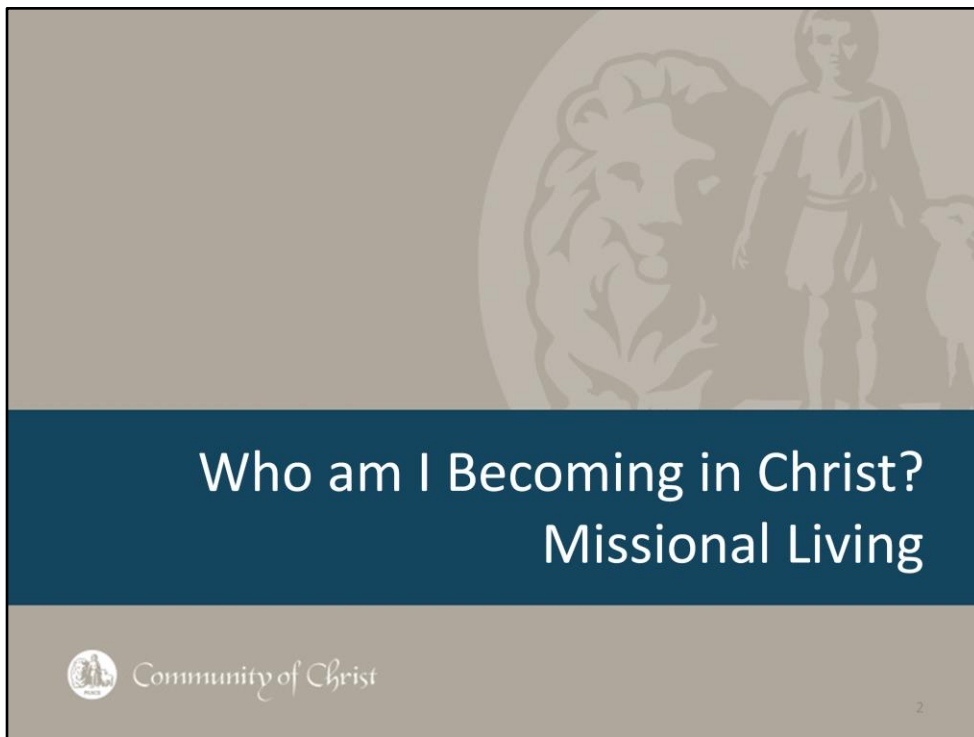
Community of Christ

Pastor Leadership Team Retreat 7

“Poised to Fulfill God’s Ultimate Vision”



Have music or music video playing as people gather



First, invite participants to spend a moment or two greeting one another at the tables.

Note to Facilitator: In this session we return to the source and essence of mission – God. Our journey has not been about programs or a set of tasks. Our journey continues to be about how God in Christ is shaping us into the people we are called to be—

People who are so compelled by our vision of sacred community that we begin to overcome our natural fear of relational and spiritual transformation (D&C 164:9). We are exploring mission as a way of life where we awaken to the sacredness of each moment and each opportunity that unfolds before us.

Spirit of the Living God

Community of Christ Sings #567 – One License #A723145

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

3

Welcome everyone and share your appreciation for their presence and ministry this weekend.

Introduce how “Spirit of the Living God” calls us to be shaped by the Spirit when we are in mission and lead singing several rounds (2 minutes) (Play soundtrack or sing together)

Ask someone to offer prayer. (5 minutes)

Essential questions for this session:

- Who am I becoming in Christ?
- How is this transforming and disrupting every aspect of my life?



Share the following points: (5 minutes)

Essential questions for this session:

Who am I becoming in Christ?

How is this transforming and disrupting every aspect of my life?

We live in a **pivotal time** in human history. We stand at the edge of a new era of global awareness and interdependent loving community or an acceleration of self-interest, individualism, and fear-based actions across the globe.

Our identity and calling as Community of Christ **has never been more relevant** and needed than in this defining moment. It is grounded in ancient prophetic yearnings for a time when a new awareness of our interdependence is lived out in signal communities of justice and peace.

The source of our identity, calling, courage, and vision **MUST COME FROM A DEEPER PLACE** – a place not of our own making but **of the One** who calls us into a transforming and disruptive relationship. A relationship that **changes everything and reorients our focus** around the concerns and passion of Christ in a hurting world.

These questions call us to explore and encounter the very essence of God.



5

Share:

These questions call us to explore and encounter the very essence of God.

We continue to return to this source—Christ—as we explore these essential questions.

Even as we ask these questions as individuals ***we recognize the deeper answers are not perceived through the lens of individualism*** but ***a new awareness*** of the communal nature of our existence.

Who am I Becoming in Christ?



6

Refer participants to the handout “Who am I becoming in Christ” found in Handout Tab on pages 1 & 2.

Provide personal reflection on this handout “Who am I becoming in Christ” with the following instructions: (30 Minutes)

Take **30 minutes** to reflect on the pictures and writings in this handout. The images and writings are intended to draw you into a time of contemplation about the nature of your experience and relationship with God in Christ. Pay particular attention to the questions on page 2 of this handout. You will have opportunity to share in groups of three when you return. Be back here in the room by _____.

Welcome Back!

- Please get into groups of 3, people you are less familiar with.
- You have 15 minutes to discuss your responses to the questions on page 2.



7

Invite participants when they return to get into ***groups of three*** with people they are less familiar with and share the following instructions: ***(15 - 20 Minutes)***

You have 15 minutes to discuss your responses to the questions.

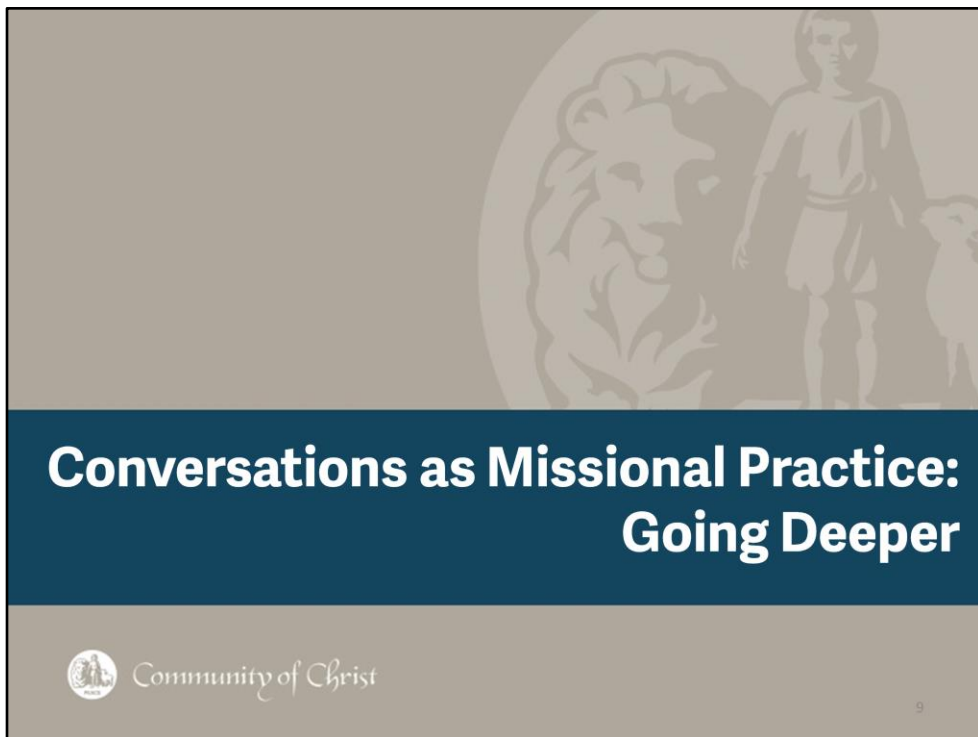
End your time together with a prayer of thanks for the presence of the Spirit in your midst.

Break Time 9:30-9:45 AM (15 minutes)



Share:

Break Time 9:30 – 9:45AM



Welcome participants back. (1 Minute)

Reflection Moment: Being Safe Space by Being a Friend

“When you really feel understood, you feel free to release yourself into the trust and shelter of another person’s soul.”

John O’Donohue, *Anam Ćara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, HarperCollins, 1997



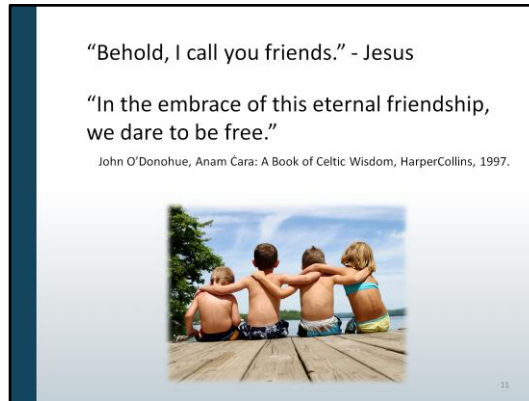
10

Invite participants into a reflection by reading on the slide: (4-5 Minutes)

Reflection Moment: Being Safe Space by Being a Friend.

“When you really feel understood, you feel free to release yourself into the trust and shelter of another person’s soul.” -

John O’Donohue, *Anam Ćara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, HarperCollins, 1997.



Share the following points:

“Behold, I call you friends.” - Jesus

“In the embrace of this eternal friendship, we dare to be free.” - John O’Donohue, *Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom*, HarperCollins, 1997.

The word “friend” has its origin in the Old English word “free.” “Free” was a term of endearment, used by family members, to convey “dear one” or “precious one.” Today, a friend is someone with whom can say (think out loud) and do things (fail or succeed) without worry or fear of being rejected or judged.

We (congregational leaders of mission) **share a common responsibility: to cultivate “safe space” where people can encounter Christ’s peace in relationship with one another as friends.**

“Safe space” builds sacred communities of trust where people feel free to imagine and risk something new to “embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ.” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:9d)

Perhaps cultivating safe space begins by being a friend—embodying the name that Jesus gave us?

The essential question:

What if . . . we approached every conversation as a missional practice?



12

Share:

The essential question:

What if we approached *every conversation* as a missional practice?

Remember...

Missional Practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.



13

Share:

Remember the “tag” line placed just below the title of all of our mission practices.

Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.

Conversations as a Missional Practice

- Conversations as a missional practice are about conversations as instruments of Christ's peace!
- Not about forcing or manipulating a conversation.



Share:

Conversations as a missional practice are about ***conversations as instruments of Christ's peace***. Conversations become more than ways to “transact words” but become instruments of blessing.

This not about forcing or manipulating a conversation. This is about our thoughts and words coming from a much deeper place of compassion, thoughtfulness, and deep appreciation for others.

Note to Facilitator: Consider sharing an experience that illustrates this deeper level of conversation.

Refer participants to Conversations as Missional Practice: Going Deeper in the Handout Tab, page 9.

Invite participants to review along with you what missional practices are (located mid-page 9).

If we adopted conversation as a missional practice we can say these points about Conversation as Missional Practice:

Note: read the next 5 slides pausing for a moment at each slide. (3 Minutes)

Conversations as Missional Practice

- Intentional and repetitive patterns of individual and community actions.
- They lead to encounters...
- They lead us into relationships ... of healing and wholeness with others.



15

Share:

Conversation as Missional Practice:

Are intentional and repetitive patterns of individual and community actions?

They lead to encounters where God's activity and God's invitation to Christ's mission are discovered.

They lead us into relationships with God, the Living Christ, and the Holy Spirit which in turn lead us to develop relationships of healing and wholeness with others.

“Creating Safe Space: A Closer Look”

Cultivating conversation to enhance understanding and promote or restore deep, healthy and right relationships, is at the heart of what it means to be the church.



16

Refer participants to **Conversations as Missional Practice: *Going Deeper*** in the Handout Tab, page 10 for “Creating Safe Space: A Closer Look.”

Share the following points on this and next two slides: (3 Minutes)

Cultivating conversation to enhance understanding and promote or restore deep, healthy and right relationships, is at the heart of what it means to be the church.

Remember Doctrine and Covenants 163:2 reminds us that **restoring relationships** is that the heart of the purpose of our journey as a people of faith!

“Creating Safe Space: A Closer Look”

An important key for conversation is creating safe space where each person feels secure and valued to offer her or his perspective.



17

Share:

*An important key for conversation is **creating safe space** where each person feels secure and valued to offer her or his perspective.*

“Creating Safe Space: A Closer Look”

Creating safe space involves creating open space and free space where something new can happen.



18

Share:

Creating safe space involves creating open space and free space where something new can happen.

Safe space allows the Spirit to breathe so transformative experiences can take place.

Safe space is welcoming. It opens up and frees people to respond to Christ's invitation for all to become part of a new creation.

“Creating Safe Space: A Closer Look”

- Conversation as Missional Practice is about ***cultivating safe space*** for conversations about what matters most.
- What matters most is mission—ways to ***embody and share Christ’s peace*** in peoples’ lives.



Community of Christ

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Share:

Conversation as Missional Practice is about cultivating safe space for conversations about what matters most.

What matters most is mission—ways to embody and share Christ’s peace in peoples’ lives.

Dwelling in the Word

Accept the grace of God with humility and hope. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'

– 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 Adapted

20

Refer participants to **Conversations as Missional Practice: *Going Deeper* in the Handout Tab, page 11** under the heading ***“Intentional Conversations—A Missional Practice”***.

Have each person team up with a person they do not know well. Ask them to do a brief *Dwelling in the Word* by sharing responses to the questions on slide 33: (10 minutes)

Share:

Dwelling In the Word

*Accept the grace of God with humility and hope. For he says,
'At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.'*

– 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 Adapted

Questions

- What word, phrase, image or feeling helps you to now understand that conversation can be a missional practice?
- Share with your partner what, why or how the word, phrase, image or feeling uncovers a deeper appreciation for conversation as missional practice.
- What new insights do you have?

21

Share:

Questions and process step:

What word, phrase, image or feeling helps you to now understand that conversation can be a missional practice?

Share with your partner what, why or how the word, phrase, image or feeling uncovers a deeper appreciation for conversation as missional practice. What new insights do you have?

Intentional Conversations as Missional Practice

“intentional”
means
deliberate and
infers a level of
***thoughtfulness
and prayerful
reflection.***



22

Share the following: (2 Minutes)

The word “intentional” means deliberate and infers a level of thoughtfulness and prayerful reflection.

1. Intentional Conversations challenge us to slow down and go much deeper than transactional conversations.

Intentional Conversations—A Missional Practice

Intentional Conversations challenge us to slow down and go much deeper than transactional conversations.



23

Refer participants to **Intentional Conversations as Missional Practice: in the Practice Tab, page 1.**

Share:

The purpose of Intentional Conversations—a Missional Practice. (2 Minutes)

Intentional Conversations challenge us to ***slow down and go much deeper*** than transactional conversations.

This... invites us to connect with others at a deeply personal and authentic level... deeply spiritual where we begin to encounter the presence of Christ that dwells within the soul of each person we meet. This way of living begins to profoundly impact... each conversation as though we were in conversation with God.

Share with one another

What are your personal challenges or questions as you review the steps for *Intentional Conversations—A Missional Practice*?



24

Share the steps for *Intentional Conversations*—a Missional Practice:

1. Pray the Mission Prayer in the morning.
2. Pray, “Help me be fully awake and ready to respond” often in your work day.
3. In conversations throughout the day imagine you are greeting the risen Christ.
4. After each conversation give thanks for your encounter with Christ.
5. Before sleep, reflect on how Christ was revealed.

Ask participants at their tables to share with one another this question:

What are your personal challenges or questions as you review the steps in *Intentional Conversations*—a Missional Practice? (12 Minutes)

Bring group back together and ask for questions or comments.

*Be a voice of transformation, gentle hands to
help and heal,
Be an ear to hear creation's wounded plea.
Be a friend to those who have no friend and in
God's blessed name
We will demonstrate God's dream for unity.*

3rd verse of hymn, Send Me Forth, by Danny Belrose,
copyright by Community of Christ.

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Closing statement for this session:

Be a voice of transformation, gentle hands to help and heal,
Be an ear to hear creation's wounded plea.
Be a friend to those who have no friend and in God's blessed name
we will demonstrate God's dream for unity.

– 3rd verse of hymn, Send Me Forth, by Danny Belrose, copyright by Community of Christ.

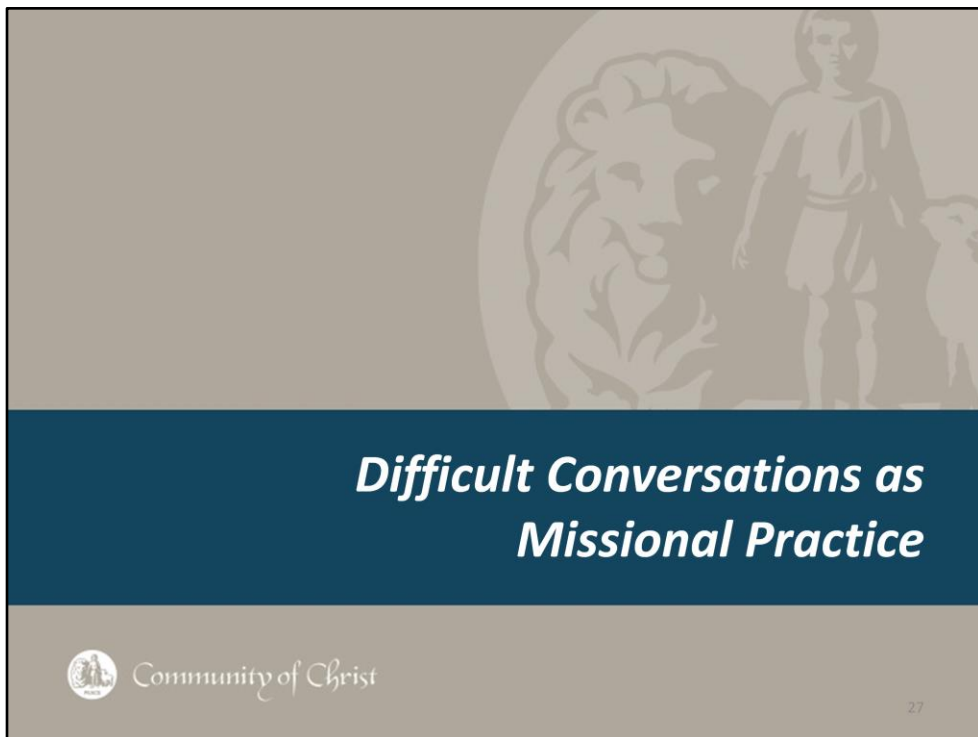
Break Time 10:45-11:15 AM (30 minutes)



26

Share:

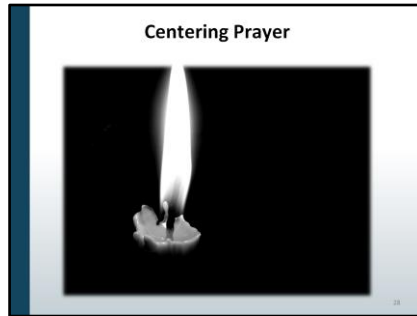
Break Time 10:45-11:15 AM (30 minutes)



Welcome participants and ask that they sit with their Pastor Leadership Team.

Share this passage of scripture:

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people. —
Psalm 85:8 NRSV



Lead a Centering Prayer (5 Minutes)

Start by sharing these points:

A centering prayer is a simple way of praying in which breath and a “prayer word” or a “prayer phrase” are used to create a space for being with God.

It is about learning how simple things such as our breath can create a sacred rhythm in our relationship with god.

In our centering prayer we will all use the same “prayer phrase.”

The Practice (Steps)

Invite participants to sit in a relaxed position. It may help to have both feet on the floor, hands open and receptive in your lap, and your eyes closed.

Offer a brief prayer on behalf of the participants that they might simply rest and experience a sense of peace and be empty of worry and inner chatter.

Invite participants to take a few deep breaths to create a sense of peace and letting go into God. Encourage participants to breathe deeply, slowly, and calmly. Encourage them to breathe in deeply and when they exhale to feel the tension in the body flow out with the air.

Focus on breathing God in, breathing all else out until you feel calm and centered. Continue paying attention to your breath as you focus your body, mind, and spirit on the reality that God is present and that you are here with the intention of loving and being loved by God.

Together as we breathe in and out, let’s say under our breath as we breathe in: **“Fill me”** and as we exhale say under our breath: **“Use me.”**

When the time for prayer has elapsed, offer a brief word of thanks to God, take several more deep breaths, become aware of the room around you, move or stretch in your chair, and open your eyes when you are ready.

The Essential Question

How do we embody Christ's peace and engage in "difficult" conversations around conflict, misunderstandings and hurt relationships?



29

The Essential Question and 2 subset questions: (3 Minute)

Note to facilitator: Ask participants to note and reflect quietly about the significance of these questions: One aspect is about us "embodying" Christ's peace and the other aspect is about conversations "becoming pathways" for Christ's peace.

Share:

How do we embody Christ's peace and engage in "difficult" conversations around conflict, misunderstandings and hurt relationships?

What do I need to learn about myself to be an instrument for Christ's peace?

What do I need to learn about how to create safe space for the Spirit to breathe so conversations become pathways to Christ's peace?

A Challenging Call

We are to embody Christ's peace when confronted with having a difficult conversation.



30

Share these points: (1 Minute)

In this session we are asking all of us to positively consider and be open to this challenging call:

We are to **embody** Christ's peace when confronted with having a difficult conversation.

(Conversation as missional practice is about us being instruments for Christ's peace ***in our thoughts and words***. It is about *cultivating new understandings and ways of living Christ's mission.*)

Remember these words in our Mission Prayer (This is about **embodying** Christ by **becoming** and **being a blessing** of God's love and peace.):

Grant me courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace.

Difficult Conversations as Missional Practice

- Difficult conversations around conflict, misunderstandings and hurt relationships are not easy!
- There are “risks” and “blessings.”

31

Continue with these points and add commentary in your own words: (1 Minute)

Difficult conversations around conflict, misunderstandings and hurt relationships are not easy!

Skills and clarity of purpose are required. We need skills and clarity of purpose that moves us from a ***“fix-it” paradigm*** to a ***“create safe space for healing” paradigm***. We will expand on this new paradigm later in this session.

There are “risks” and “blessings.” Sometimes even with our most thoughtful attempts difficult conversations don’t lead to wholeness and wellbeing.

Not only are difficult conversations hard, requiring time, effort and skill. We avoid difficult conversations for fear of making matters worse.

Yet, not facing difficult conversations also may mean the ***loss of forward movement*** towards God’s blessings of reconciliation, healing and peace.

The word “difficult” suggests:

a level of effort or skill is needed to work through a situation or problem where there is potential for an unintended or unfortunate outcome.



32

Refer participants to **Conversations as Missional Practice: *Going Deeper* in the Handout Tab, page 13.**

Share the following:

The word “difficult” suggests:

a level of effort or skill is needed to work through a situation or problem where there is potential for an unintended or unfortunate outcome.

Be ***thoughtful and prayerful*** when both considering and having a conversation around conflict, misunderstanding or hurt feelings.

Before engaging in a **difficult conversation** consider the following:

- Is your purpose for the conversation clear?
- Are you struggling with emotions you need to sort through?

33

Share:

Before engaging in difficult conversations consider the following:

Is your purpose for the conversation clear?

Are you struggling with emotions you need to sort through?

Have you examined how you might be contributing to the problem? You may want to ask a professional or good friend for perspective.

Is the other person able to engage in a rational conversation or would emotions quickly get out of control? You may need a third party to help mediate the conversation.

Do you or the other person have a pattern of conflict in relationships? You may want to ask a professional or good friend for perspective.

Are you currently encountering significant stress or physical challenges? You may want to ask a professional or good friend for perspective.



Refer participants to **Conversations as Missional Practice: *Going Deeper* in the Handout Tab, page 14.**

Share these points:

Difficult conversations can be a blessing when approached with a level of self-awareness, thoughtfulness, and prayer.

The word "blessing" means "to say good things," "to speak well of." Sometimes, avoiding a conversation undermines "speaking" the good news of the gospel.

Refer participants to ***Moment of Blessing* found in the Handout Tab on page 7** to transition participants from "risks" in difficult conversations to "blessings."

Read the following passage, allow a moment for reflection, and then ask participants to share in table discussion their thoughts and feelings about difficult conversations being a blessing: (10 Minutes)

- a. Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.*
- b. Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and unredemptive.*
- c. Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.*
- d. Understand that the road to transformation travels both inward and outward. The road to transformation is the path of the disciple. – Doctrine and Covenants 161:3*



Refer participants to **Conversations as Missional Practice: *Going Deeper* in the Handout Tab, page 15.**

Share about “The Essential Paradigm Shift” and read quote by Henri Nouwen: (1 Minute)

How do we move from a ***“fix-it”*** to ***“create safe space for healing” paradigm*** to “let the Spirit breathe?”

Listen to this quote from Henri Nouwen:

Our most important question as healers is not “What to say or to do? but “How to develop inner space where the story can be received?” Healing is the humble but also very demanding task of creating space where strangers can reflect on their pain and suffering without fear, and find the confidence that makes them look for new ways right in the center of their confusion. – Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out*

Note to facilitators: One of the most important shifts is for us as leaders of Christ’s mission to see persons with whom we have “issues” as persons to uphold and bless rather than “problems to be fixed.” This shifts our understanding of ourselves as persons who “uphold” persons rather than “fix” problems.

Consider sharing a brief experience of a time when you were surprised by the outcome of a difficult conversation when you approached it with humility, openness, and loving attentiveness.

Conversations as Missional Practice: Going Deeper

Three proactive approaches:

1. A “Learning Conversation”
2. “Three Conversations”
3. How to Begin the Conversation (Adapted from “the Third Story”)

36

Refer participants to Conversations as Missional Practice: Going Deeper in the Handout Tab, page 16 and introduce the following points with commentary in your words as needed:

In your handout you will find three proactive approaches that can help lead to better outcomes in difficult conversations:

A “Learning Conversation”

“Three Conversations”

How to Begin the Conversation (Adapted from “the Third Story”)

A “Learning Conversation”

Purposes for LCM are:

- For mutual understanding and well-being.
- For reconciliation, healing and peace.
- To move forward together into the future together! (Not backwards to who was right or wrong!)

37

Share the following:

Lets first look at a “*Learning Conversation*”. Looking at the learning conversation as missional practice we identify three hoped for missional outcomes:

For mutual understanding and well-being.

For reconciliation, healing and peace.

To move forward together into the future together! (Not backwards to who was right or wrong!)

A “Learning Conversation”

*Sustain a **constructive conversation** with **four objectives**:*

1. To understand the other person’s point of view,
2. To explain your point of view,
3. To share and understand feelings, and
4. To work together to figure out a way to go forward.

38

Share:

A “Learning Conversation” has the potential to sustain a constructive conversation with four objectives:

- To understand the other person’s point of view,
- To explain your point of view,
- To share and understand feelings, and
- To work together to figure out a way to go forward.

A “Learning Conversation” — *Three Skills:*

1. Inquiry: inquire to learn.
2. Paraphrasing: Paraphrase to clarify to understand and *embody* attentive listening.
3. Acknowledgment: Acknowledging the feelings of another person demonstrates that you want to understand.

39

Share:

A “Learning Conversation” requires three basic skills:

Inquiry: inquire to learn and truly understand.

“Reach out in understanding...” by asking safe or invitational questions. (See Doctrine and Covenants 161:2, 3). Tip: Before you ask a question, ask yourself, “Why am I asking this question?” The only good answer is: “To learn.”

Paraphrasing: Paraphrase to clarify to understand and *embody* attentive listening.

Acknowledgment: Authentically acknowledging the feelings of another person demonstrates that you want to understand. *Remember, feelings are real even if you don’t understand the reasons behind them.*

A “Learning Conversation” *Two Important Questions*

1. “Could you say more about that? Tell me more...”
2. “What in your life experience brought you to that feeling... perspective... or view?”



40

Share:

A “Learning Conversation” — Two great questions (Source – Diversity Training)

:

“Could you say more about that? Tell me more...”

“What in your life experience brought you to that feeling... perspective... or view?”

“Learning Conversation”

Three Mistakes

1. We make assumptions. (The first mistake is we think we “understand” the other person.)
2. We don't ask enough questions.
3. We start off wrong. **Start from an open stance and clearly state your purpose.**

41

Slide 41

Share:

A “Learning Conversation” — Three Mistakes:

We make assumptions. (The first mistake is we think we “understand” the other person.)

We don't ask enough questions to truly understand.

We start off wrong. **Start from an open stance and clearly state your purpose.**

At your tables discuss the following question:

What are some challenges with shifting from a ***problem solving mode*** to a ***learning mode*** when approaching difficult conversations?

42

At your tables discuss the following question: (10 minutes)

What are some challenges with shifting from a ***problem solving mode*** to a ***learning mode*** when approaching difficult conversations?

“Three Steps”

Clarify Purpose and Decide

Step One: Imagine being in the conversation by having three conversations with yourself.

- “What is happening?” or “What Happened?”
Conversation: to see it from their and your perspective.
- The “Feelings Conversation” - to sense what pressures, feelings or anxieties may be present and how you will handle them.
- The “Identity Conversation” - to sense the impact on your and their identities and anticipate what the conversation means or says about you and them.

43

Share:

There are “Three Steps” that are important to clarify your purpose and decide whether you are ready for the conversation. Note: These three steps are in the At-a-Glance “Whether to Engage in Difficult Conversations.”

Step One: *Imagine yourself in the conversation by having three conversations with yourself.*

- “What is happening?” or “What Happened?” Conversation: This is where we step back and try to determine what happened from our perspective and their perspective.
- The “Feelings Conversation”: This is where we try to become aware of the pressures, feelings or anxieties that may be present inside us and the other person and how we will handle them in a difficult conversation.
- The “Identity Conversation”: This is where we try to evaluate the impact of the conversation on our identity/self-worth and their identity/self-worth. In other words, will this difficult conversation potentially lead to either person feeling like less of a person?

Step Two: *Clarify Your Purpose*

To promote moving forward and toward:

- learning one another's story, one another's points of views and feelings,
- mutual well-being, and
- foster healthy relationships.

44

Share:

Step Two: *Clarify and Refine Your Purpose for Having the Conversation*

This is a critical step. Sometimes our emotions get the best of us. We need to be able to step back and evaluate what we hope to accomplish in a difficult conversation. Is it about proving we are right or someone else is wrong? Is it about wanting someone to know they hurt us? It is about trying to fix the other person? Is it about trying to achieve a result that is more about our desire to control a situation than what is in the best interest of all concerned?

Be self-aware enough to recognize when you need help from a friend or professional counselor to clarify your purpose. **Don't enter a difficult conversation without this clarity.**

Remember, we want to promote moving forward and toward one another by:

learning one another's story, one another's points of views and feelings, continuing to pursue mutual well-being in the conversation, and fostering healthy relationships.

Step Three: Make a Decision

- Decide whether to proceed.



Share:

Step Three: Make a Decision

Decide whether to proceed.

Are there any reasons why we should not proceed?

Specifically, are we self-aware and in control of our emotions enough to engage in a learning conversation and uphold the worth of the other person?

Do we have clarity about our purpose? Is our purpose directly related to our three hoped for outcomes:

For mutual understanding and well-being.

For reconciliation, healing and peace.

To move forward together into the future together! (Not backwards to who was right or wrong!)

If there is time, ask the table groups to consider this question:

As you consider the three steps for determining whether you are ready to have a difficult conversation, what seems most challenging to you?

Close with: This afternoon we will venture into the challenging territory of planning and initiating difficult conversations.

Lunch
Personal Renewal and Revitalization/
Rest Period
Be Back at 1:30pm



46

Lunch 12:15-1:00 PM (60 minutes)

Personal Renewal and Revitalization/ Rest Period 1:00- 1:30 PM

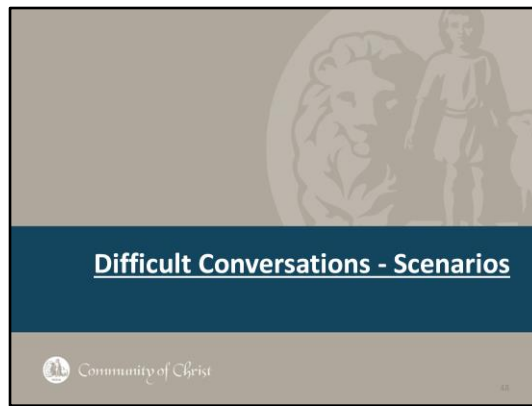
Prayer for Peace



47

1:30-1:35 PM

Please line up a group to do the Prayer for Peace.



Participants sit at a table of their choosing.

Note to Facilitator: In session 1, “Who am I becoming in Christ,” we explored the relational nature of God – a God that is not separate from creation but deeply connected to the reality of our lives and our universe. In Christ we discover the deepest longings of God to journey with us in the midst of joy, sorrow, and all forms of human suffering.

In Christ we discover a vision of what could be, what will be when we embrace simple yet profound practices and elements that awaken us to the nature of reality itself. The table, living water, bread of life, wine of sacrificial love, conversation, prayer, simple servant ministry, invitation, and extravagant hospitality were all earthly forms that were infused with divine purpose and meaning. ***Their sole purpose was and is to draw us into a new awareness of our oneness in Christ, to provide glimpses into what could be when we truly become brothers and sisters in Christ in the family of God.***

In this session we continue our exploration into what we are becoming together in Christ. How is the relational and disruptive nature of God’s mission in Christ changing ***how we are together in Christ*** (i.e. congregations and small groups) and ***how we embody and share the invitation to Christ’s peace in a changing world?***

Become very familiar with the talking points below so you can share them with conviction.

How to Begin the Conversation:

Begin the conversation to communicate and embody that you:

- Have an “open stance” to *open up* (not close up) the conversation.
- Acknowledge and welcome *differences*.
- Acknowledge your need to better understand thoughts and feelings.
- Acknowledge your purpose (be genuine!).
- Invite various alternatives for hopes you have to go forward together.

49

Share:

This morning we looked at how to approach conversation as a missional practice and how to determine if we are ready to have a difficult conversation.

This afternoon we will look at *how to begin the conversation* and then look at three scenarios.

We want to begin a conversation to communicate and embody that we:

- Have an “open stance” to *open up* (not close up) the conversation.
- Acknowledge and welcome *differences*.
- Acknowledge our need to better understand thoughts and feelings.
- Acknowledge our purpose (be genuine!).
- Invite various alternatives for hopes we have to go forward together.

Four Handouts

1. *Difficult Conversations: A Missional Practice*
2. Three Scenarios for PLT
3. Whether to Engage in Difficult Conversations: At-a Glance Guide (Flip side of How to Engage in Difficult Conversations: At-a-Glance Guide)
4. A Word List of Feelings Related to Conflict, Misunderstandings and Hurt Relationships.

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Refer participants to four handouts:

Difficult Conversations—A Missional Practice, in Practice Tab page 2

Three Scenarios for PLT, in Practice Tab page 3

Whether to Engage in Difficult Conversations: At-a Glance Guide (Flip side of How to Engage in Difficult Conversations: At-a-Glance Guide) **(Blue card in pocket of folder)**

A Word List of Feelings Related to Conflict, Misunderstandings and Hurt Relationships. Located in Handout Tab page 22 of Conversations as Missional Practice, Going Deeper document.

Assign one of the three scenarios to each table so all three are assigned and ask each table as a team to complete the following: (25 Minutes)

Discuss the three steps in **Whether to Engage in Difficult Conversations: At-a Glance Guide (Blue card in pocket of folder)** and apply them to your scenario.

Write out how you would “begin the conversation.” For reference see page 19 in

Conversations as Missional Practice: Going Deeper in the handout tab for an example script to begin a “difficult” conversation:

I (a pastor) want to understand your (chair of the building committee) thoughts about the upcoming budget. I sense you have concerns or even perhaps strong feelings against the recommended budget. I want to understand your perspective and share my perspective as to why I want to spend less money on building improvements and more money on our neighborhood after school program. I am open to your thoughts and feelings. I hope with better understanding of each other we will make decisions best for the congregation.



Debrief and question time: (15 Minutes)

May our conversations about what matters most contribute to our cause:

“Through the gospel of Christ, a new community of tolerance, reconciliation, unity in diversity, and love is being born as a visible sign of the coming reign of God.”



Close with this affirmation:

May our conversations about what matters most contribute to our cause:

Through the gospel of Christ, a new community of tolerance, reconciliation, unity in diversity, and love is being born as a visible sign of the coming reign of God. – Doctrine and Covenants 164:5.

Break Time 2:30 – 3:00pm



53

Break Time 2:30-3:00pmpm



Participants sit at a table of their choosing.



“There is a tendency in the West to absolutize our religion. Instead of viewing it as a road sign that points beyond itself, we consider it a stop sign. It becomes the destination, the end. When that happens, it becomes confused with the Ultimate Reality that is always beyond utterance, beyond embodiment, beyond form.”

Phillip Newell

55

Share:

From the beginning of our journey we have discussed how the Word must become flesh in every new context. Doctrine and Covenants 163:2d challenges us to convey and live essential truths in new language and form.

We honestly struggle with being a prophetic people. We have a tendency to want to lock into specific language and forms when it comes to encounter with the Holy.

Listen to this quote from Phillip Newell:

“There is a tendency in the West to absolutize our religion. Instead of viewing it as a road sign that point beyond itself, we consider it a stop sign. It becomes the destination, the end. When that happens, it becomes confused with the Ultimate Reality that is always beyond utterance, beyond embodiment, beyond form.”

“Although churches seem the most natural space to perform spiritual awakening, the disconcerting reality is that many people in Western society see churches more as museums of religion than sacred stages that dramatize the movement of God's spirit.”

Diana Butler Bass



56

Share:

Here is a reality of modern life articulated by Diana Butler Bass in *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*,

“Although churches seem the most natural space to perform spiritual awakening, the disconcerting reality is that many people in Western society see churches more as museums of religion than sacred stages that dramatize the movement of God's spirit.”

“ . . . the last thing any of us needs is more information about God. **We need the practice of incarnation**, by which God saves the lives of those whose intellectual assent has turned dry as dust, who have run frighteningly low on the bread of life, who are dying to know more God in their bodies. Not more about God. More God.”

An Altar in the World by Barbara Brown Taylor (pg. 45)



57

Share:

Also from An Altar in the World by Barbara Brown Taylor (pg. 45),

“ . . . the last thing any of us needs is more information about God. **We need the practice of incarnation**, by which God saves the lives of those whose intellectual assent has turned dry as dust, who have run frighteningly low on the bread of life, who are dying to know more God in their bodies. Not more *about* God. *More God.*”

So we face a ***disturbing dilemma***; perhaps never before has there been deeper cultural longings for meaning and connection in western society and yet lower participation in churches of all shapes and sizes. ***Perhaps our decline in recent decades is a gift that is calling us to ask questions we should have been asking all along.***

Perhaps we stand at the threshold of a new awakening – an awakening of what it means to be authentic loving interdependent communities of Christ in a changing world. Perhaps our awakening is the same awakening stirring the cultural longings for meaning and connection.

“Sunday Morning” by Susan Werner
The lyrics are included in your handouts. Page 5



58

Refer participants “Sunday Morning” song in Handout Tab, page 5.

Share:

Listen to this song by Susan Werner entitled ***Sunday Morning***. The lyrics are included in your handouts.

After listening to the song, ask participants at their table to reflect on the following questions on next Slide: (15-20 minutes)

Questions

- What is the “feeling” that keeps coming over Susan on Sunday mornings?
- What is required of us to meet the deep longings of Susan and so many others who are not connecting with the current form of religion expressed in congregations week after week?

59

Share questions for group discussion:

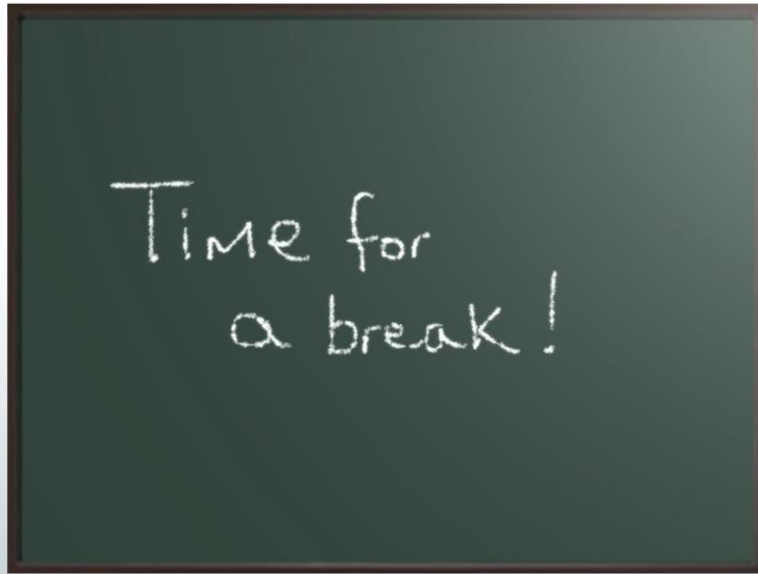
What is the “feeling” that keeps coming over Susan on Sunday mornings?

How do we meet the deep longings of Susan and so many others who are not connecting with the current form of religion expressed in congregations week after week?

Put another way, how is the Spirit disrupting us to experiment with new forms and language that connect with these deep longings?

Before Closing Share – Tomorrow we will take a look at a tool to help us continue to explore the relationship between our ministries and the cultural longings of those who do not attend church.

Break Time 3:30 – 3:45 pm (15 minutes)



60

Share:

Break Time 3:30-3:45pm (15minutes)



Participants sit at a table of their choosing.

Note to Facilitator: In session 1, “Who am I becoming in Christ,” we explored the relational nature of God – a God that is not separate from creation but deeply connected to the reality of our lives and our universe. In Christ we discover the deepest longings of God to journey with us in the midst of joy, sorrow, and all forms of human suffering.

In Christ we discover a vision of what could be, what will be when we embrace simple yet profound practices and elements that awaken us to the nature of reality itself. The table, living water, bread of life, wine of sacrificial love, conversation, prayer, simple servant ministry, invitation, and extravagant hospitality were all earthly forms that were infused with divine purpose and meaning. ***Their sole purpose was and is to draw us into a new awareness of our oneness in Christ, to provide glimpses into what could be when we truly become brothers and sisters in Christ in the family of God.***

In this session we continue our exploration into what we are becoming together in Christ. How is the relational and disruptive nature of God’s mission in Christ changing ***how we are together in Christ*** (i.e. congregations and small groups) and ***how we embody and share the invitation to Christ’s peace in a changing world?***

Become very familiar with the talking points below so you can share them with conviction.

At this point on our journey...



62

Share the following talking points: (10 minutes)

At this point on our journey it is important to reflect on **how** the Spirit is **disorienting and reorienting** our vision of what it looks like to be disciples and the church in our local neighborhoods.



Share: “Where is it leading us?”

Are we experiencing the **life-giving spiritual awakening** that comes as we engage in practices that open us to deeper and new relationships with God, one another, and strangers? And **where is it leading us?**

In Christ we discover a vision of what could be when we embrace **simple yet profound practices and elements** that awaken us to **the reality of God with us in all aspects of life**. The table, living water, bread of life, wine of sacrificial love, conversation, prayer, simple servant ministry, invitation, and extravagant hospitality were all earthly forms that were infused with divine purpose and meaning.

Example (Ron Harmon): A few weeks ago I stayed in the home of Richard and Elaine Chapman in Nuneaton England. I realized as I was sitting at the table for dinner that all the elements of God’s vision were being lived out in that simple meal:

- Extravagant hospitality
- Meaningful conversation
- Prayer
- Food for physical nourishment

All my spiritual, emotional, and physical needs were being met in the simple elements of food, table, conversation, invitation, hospitality, and prayer.

AND, the Spirit was so evident in that experience – a place at the table has been prepared and with it a sense of deep wellbeing . . .

Where are the practices leading?



At this stage of our journey the missional practices are pivotal to discovering our future. They move us beyond mission as tasks and programs to ***mission as a way of living!***

64

Share the following points:

Where are the practices leading?

At this stage of our journey the missional practices are pivotal to discovering our future. They move us beyond mission as tasks and programs to mission as a way of living!

Missional Practices = Spiritual Practices, not disconnected from mission and life but fully living into our lives as spiritual venture!

Are they leading us into a holy unsettledness and even chaos as our preconceived notions of what it looks like to be the church are reoriented around the concerns and passion of Christ?



Share:

At this stage of our journey the missional practices are pivotal to discovering our future. They move us beyond mission as tasks and programs to mission as a way of living.

Note to Facilitator: Consider sharing a brief testimony about how you have been challenged to move beyond the practices as tasks to a new way of living.

Example: Do you remember our passage of scripture from Retreat 4:

3-8 "What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. ***Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.*** **9** "Are you listening to this? Really listening?" –Matthew 13, MSG

We are moving deeper into the ***heart of where mission comes from*** and ***how we are continually shaped and sent by that Spirit***, recognizing the ***integral relationship between the inner and outer life.***

Missional Practices

They stretch us way beyond our current understandings and ways of being the church (i.e. congregations).



... radically disrupts and reveals how we are to become communities of Christ.

66

Continue with the following points:

They stretch us way beyond our current understandings and ways of being the church (i.e. congregations).

In fact, this is a **key indicator we are engaged** in the journey - ***when Continuing Revelation becomes more than an enduring principle but a way of life*** that radically disrupts and reveals how we are to become communities of Christ in our neighborhoods!

Experience (Ron Harmon): God where will your Spirit lead today. Help me be fully awake . . . When I used to work out in my back yard I was pretty task focused. Recently I have noticed that my neighbor Stan moves over by the fence whenever I come outside. I never used to notice this.

I have made it a practice when I see him in the backyard to bypass going directly to my shed and walking over toward the fence to connect with him.

This simple practice is about ***cultivating the soil*** – a rich soil of hospitality and meaningful conversation. Here is what is happening – the space over by our shared fence is becoming sacred space and we are both receiving and sharing Christ's peace. The Spirit is literally nudging us into relationship with one another. **Why did it take me so long to see it?**

The other day I was trying to get out large tree stake and Stan came over with tools to help. It was a spiritual experience – the two of us working together. **Where is it leading – I am not sure but I am fully awake now and ready to respond.**

“The Essence of Our Journey”



67

Note: Share this request before showing video:

As you watch this video journey through our past three years jot down ideas and concepts that have been formational for you. There will be a moment of silent reflection after the video is played.

Show video “The Essence of Our Journey” (21 minutes).

Questions for Consideration

- How are you experiencing spiritual awakening as you engage in specific missional practices?
- How are specific practices leading to new insights (i.e. prophetic imagination) and new ways or experiments that embody and share the invitation to Christ's peace with neighbors, friends, and strangers?

Refer participants to the handout entitled “The Essence of Our Journey” found in the handout Tab on page 3 and process these two steps. (20 Minutes)

First, invite participants into 2-3 minutes of silent reflection on the video and the two questions before group discussion.

Second, invite table groups into discussion on the two questions outlined below and suggest 10 minutes for each question. (20 minutes for table discussion)

Note: Remind the group to address both questions by inviting them to move on to the next question after the first 10-minute segment)

Two Questions in handout “The Essence of Our Journey:”

How are you experiencing spiritual awakening as you engage in specific missional practices?

Be specific and honest. If you are struggling, share about the challenges you are facing.

How are specific practices leading to new insights (i.e. prophetic imagination) and new ways or experiments that embody and share the invitation to Christ’s peace with neighbors, friends, and strangers?

Be specific and honest about what is really happening or not happening for you and your congregation. Also remember we are taking about a new way of receiving, embodying, and sharing the invitation to Christ’s peace – a deeply relational way that leads us into the sacred space of one another’s lives.

Large Group Reflection



69

Invite the table groups into large group reflection on important insights shared at their tables. (7-10 minutes)

This is about making it real...

The nature of this journey is captured in the revelatory spiral shape of The Temple.



70

Continue with the following points:

This is about making it real – perhaps too real! The Word must become flesh!! It must become flesh in community or no one will see what invitational Christ-centered communities of justice and peace look like.

The nature of this journey is captured in the revelatory spiral shape of The Temple.

The journey is not linear but is inward and outward. Spiritual awakening occurs in the dynamic interplay between what goes on inside of us and what goes on around us.

We become a new creation in Christ as we encounter the Spirit within us and around us in situations, relationships, and places just waiting for God's future to emerge!!

Table Conversation

How is our identity and calling as Community of Christ radically changing your approach to gathering a in a changing w

Church With Out Walls



71

NOTE: Only if there is time. If the discussion goes longer on the video and questions cut out this section.

Refer participants to “A Church Without Walls?” found in the Handout Tab on page 4.

Invite persons into a few moments of silent reflection.

Play sound track “*Spirit of the Living God*” by Daniel Harmon by clicking on speaker icon lower left corner.

Then invite the group into 10 minutes of table conversation around the following question:

How is our identity and calling as Community of Christ radically changing your approach to gathering and being sent as the church in a changing world?

Put another way, **is the relational nature of God disrupting our traditional patterns of congregational life and birthing some new?**

Celebration Banquet Starts at 5:30pm



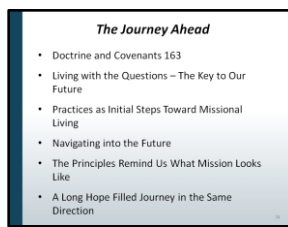
72

Announce the Celebration Banquet Starts at 5:30

- **Please have staff set up banquet hall for dinner. To be served by staff.**
- **Have music and or videos playing during dinner.**



Welcome everyone back.



Refer participants to “Discerning What Matters Most for the Journey Ahead” in the Next Steps tab on pages 5-8 and provide the following instructions:

Share these points:

This resource describes **three cultural trends** prevalent in research on the spiritual landscape in western nations. There is a deep yearning for meaning and connection and yet there is record low attendance in most denominations.

For each Cultural Longing is an associated question to evaluate our existing and new ministries.

Regarding existing and new ministries let’s ask:

Why do we do the things that we do?

How do the things we do connect with these cultural longings?

If they don’t connect are there ways to creatively modify them?

Should we discontinue them all together and experiment with new forms of ministry and mission?

These are challenging questions to ask as we have one foot grounded deeply in the gospel and the other in culture. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

Refer participants to page 5 and 6 and walk through the steps of the process.

Then share the following points:

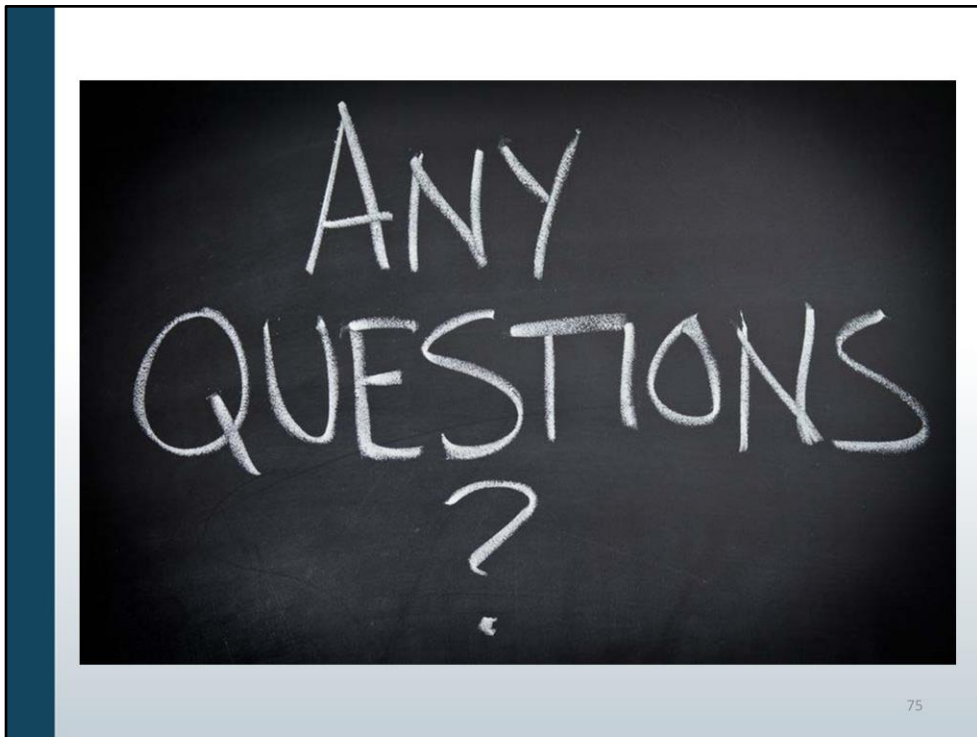
The three essential questions on page 2 challenge us to look at current and future ministries and activities through the lens of our local context and then consider how to re-vision these ministries and activities.

Note to facilitator: Walk through each of the three cultural longings and questions.

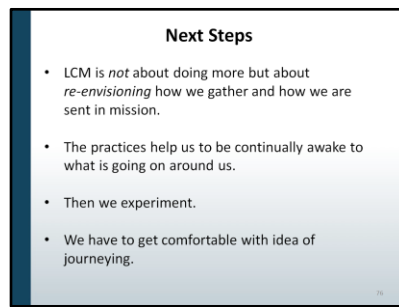
These questions **specifically ask** how “essential truths” can be *shared and lived* in “new language and form!”

This is not something we do once. It is an ongoing process as we more intentionally become students of our culture but keep our bearings in the transforming power of the gospel!

This is why we are sharing this resource in Retreat 7.



Ask if there are any questions. (5 minutes)



Next Steps

Share the following: (5 minutes)

How do we continue to sustain what is emerging and live into our identity and calling as Community of Christ in a changing world?

As we have said from the beginning, LCM is ***not about doing more*** but about re-envisioning ***how we gather and how we are sent*** in mission.

If we have simply added LCM activities and practices into our existing packed schedules individually and on Sunday mornings, we have ***not fully grasped the essence of this journey as a new way of being.***

Because we live in a time of transition between what once was and what is emerging we don't know exactly what language and forms will connect with our local neighborhoods.

The practices help us to be continually awake to what is going on around us.

They begin to shape who we are, how we come together, and how we are sent as communities of Christ.

We then experiment with these new insights as we step our way into that future together.

We have to get comfortable with idea of journeying just as the Israelites had to get comfortable with figuring out how to be the people of God in a strange new place.

Next Steps to Remember for the Future

- First and foremost, this is your journey!
- Every congregation is a unique expression of the body of Christ!
- *Sharing in Community of Christ* 3rd Edition grounds us in the vision, mission, enduring principles, mission initiatives and beliefs that unite us as global faith movement.
- Your expression of what it looks like to be Community of Christ will look different than other congregations.
- Live fully into who you are called to be as a unique Community of Christ.

77

Refer participants to Retreat 7 – “Next Steps for the Future” in the Next Steps tab on pages 9&10 and Share the following:

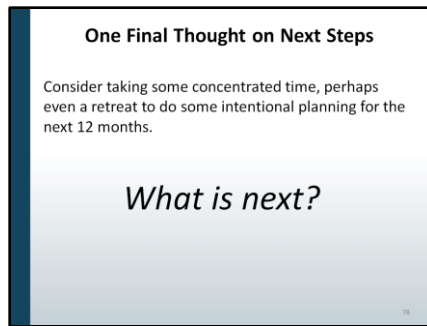
Our last Next Steps document is less a series of steps and more some things to remember on your journey.

First and foremost, **this is your journey!** This was never about LCM or whether you are doing it right. LCM has simply attempted to provide some perspective and tools for the journey.

Every congregation is a unique expression of the body of Christ!! In this way ***how we are together in Christ and sent in Christ*** is how the Word becomes tangible for others. **In short this is about how we make it real!!**

***Sharing in Community of Christ* 3rd Edition** grounds us in the vision, mission, enduring principles, mission initiatives and beliefs that unite us as global faith movement. Your expression of what it looks like to be Community of Christ will look different than other congregations.

Live fully into who you are called to be as a unique *Community* of Christ.



Continue with the following points: (5 minutes)

You can read through the rest of the Next Steps at your next Pastor Leadership Team meeting. Some of you have asked for suggestions on how to establish future pastor leadership teams as well as helping persons transition off existing leadership teams.

There is a resource entitled ***Shared Leadership and Pastor Leadership Teams*** (found in your overview tab) that addresses a number of questions we have heard about Pastor Leadership Teams.

Refer participants to the *LCM Resource List in your folder pocket*. (have everyone change the title of video "Event Horizons" to "The Invitation")

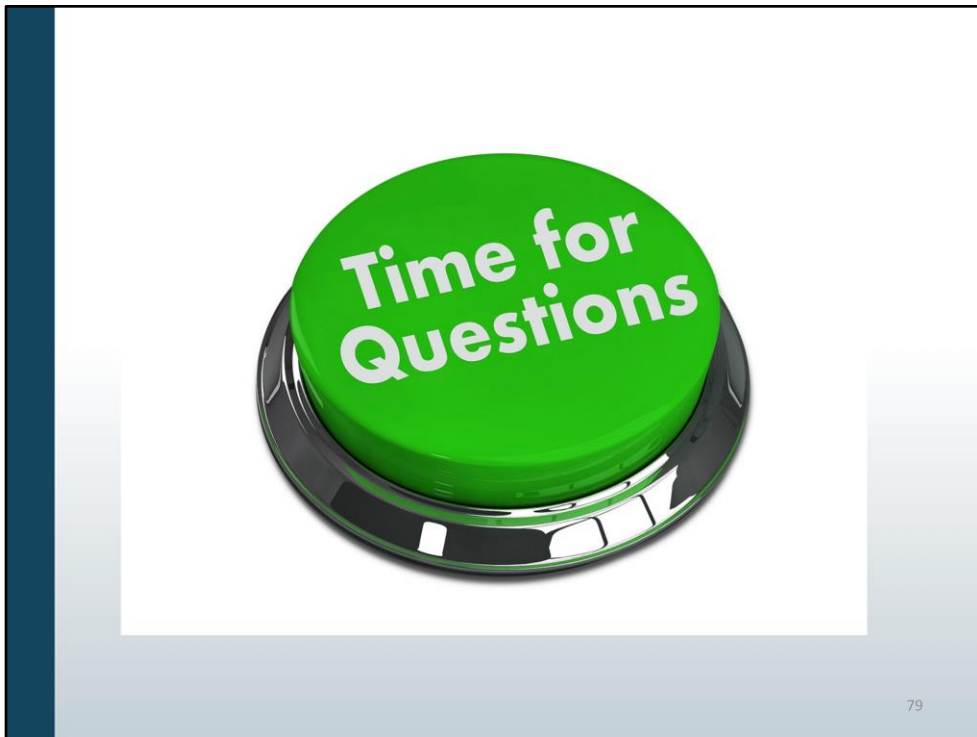
One final thought on next steps. As you can see there are many resources, activities, and practices which can be used as you move forward into the future. ***We would like to strongly encourage you to consider taking some concentrated time, perhaps even a retreat to do some intentional planning for the next 12 months.*** Consider asking your CSM, mission center president, or Ron Harmon or Rob Borkowski for help designing and facilitating the planning session or retreat.

Also, some of you have shared how you are struggling to get the congregation engaged in this journey. *We are willing to help facilitate one day retreats for your congregation. Let us know and we can help design and/or facilitate retreat experiences for your congregation.*

What is next? We will be evaluating LCM based on feedback from all the retreats and feedback we have received this weekend. We plan on providing opportunities for regional web discussions for existing congregations and may experiment with an annual LCM Retreat in some locations.

In addition, we will be working on an approach to LCM that can occur in congregations that do not have access to retreats.

We will also be working with Mission Support Leaders and Mission Center Presidents to determine if we can provide the newly modified LCM Retreat Model to new groups of congregations.



Provide time for questions. (12 minutes)

Note to Facilitator: If people start to provide evaluative feedback remind them they will have an opportunity in the next session.

“What We Crave”

By Katie Harmon-McLaughlin



80

Refer participants to “What We Crave” in the Handout Tab pages 25-26 and have someone lined up in advance to read the blog aloud. (3 minutes)

Note: This will close the session. (Be sure to save time for this reading.)

Table Conversations will start, no PowerPoint see Page 50 Facilitator Guide.

Break Time 15 Minutes



81

Announce: We will now take a break. Be back in 15 minutes.



Note to Facilitator: If more time is needed for the prior session, use this 30 minutes. It is important PLTs have time to share how they have been impacted by the LCM journey. We will send this survey out via Survey Monkey.

Be sure to emphasize how critical it is that EVERYONE commit to responding promptly.

Share the following instructions:

Your personal feedback is very important in shaping what LCM looks like going into the future.

Refer to *Leading Congregation in Mission–Evaluation Questions in the Evaluation Tab page 1*.

Please take the next 20 minutes and respond to the six questions outlined.



Reconvene large group at 10:50.

Ask if there are any specific reflections or comments people would like to share in the large group. (10 Minutes)

Note to Facilitator: If this goes over a few minutes we can shorten the break time between this session and the final worship experience.

Announce: “We will now take a 15 minute break and then share in our final worship experience.”

Note: KEEP VIDEO AND SOUND EQUIPMENT FOR VIDEO AT WORSHIP.