

Go and...!

Notes from 7/28/2022 Gathering on Zoom – 22 participants on screen

Planning Team: Pastor Judy Anderson, Pastor Jay Berry, Pastor Jill Collict, Pastor Maristela Freiberg, Pastor Danielle McCleary, Pastor Courtney Smith, and Pastor Dianne Lewis

Theme: Go and Share the Story

Welcome and Prayer: Rev. Dianne Lewis

- 1 Corinthians 14:26 “What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.”
- We are to share our personal stories and those of our church and community
- How we share our knowledge of who we are and whose we are is so important
 - o Sharing our stories praise God and help others know God

Dwelling in the Word: Habakkuk 2:1-3 (The Message)

“What’s God going to say to my questions? I’m braced for the worst. I’ll climb to the lookout tower and scan the horizon. I’ll wait to see what God says, how he will answer my complaint. And then God answered: ‘Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what’s coming. It aches for the coming- it can hardly wait! Ad it doesn’t lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It’s on its way. IT will come right on time.’”

- Breakout Rooms Discussion Question: What do you think is God’s vision, hope, and future for your congregation?

Story Matters: Rev. Jay Berry

- Pastor Jay shared his personal story as an example of why our stories are important
 - o In short summary: he shared his story of being excluded from the Communion Table which led to him questioning his faith. Then after going to a Lutheran church, he rediscovered God through the forgiveness of sins
 - o Confession and Forgiveness: Your Sins are Forgiven That’s it!
- Matthew 9:9-13 (Jesus eating with tax collectors) is a Bible story Pastor Jay thinks of in relation to his faith story

Questions to ponder when thinking about faith stories in relation to Bible narratives

- What is your faith story?
- Who are you and how did you get here? (you personally or your church)
- Why do you keep going to church?
- What is our vocation and faith journey? (congregation or community)
- Is there a Bible story that reminds you of your journey?

Congregation Story and Biblical Narrative: Rev. Jill Collict

- Congregations should be a place where we can practice telling our faith story
- It takes practice for it to feel natural
- What is your congregation known for?

- What is your vision and direction?
- What does it mean to be church?
- Ephesians 3:17-18 “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love may have power, together with the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”
- Pastor Jill shared the story of her congregation Faith Lutheran Church, Hillsborough, NJ
 - A story the congregation identifies with is the Nativity of Our Lord since the Holy Family didn’t have a home and Faith didn’t have a building for a while.
- Turn to your congregations’ archives, remember your roots as you work to figure out how to tell the story of your congregation
 - How did your congregation get here? What photos or documents does your church have that help tell your story?

Food for thought: How is God’s story intersecting with your story?

Breakout Room Discussion Questions

- What caught your attention about this conversation?
- What is your congregation passionate about?

Story Matters and Communication as a Ministry: Rev. Marc Stutzel, Christ Lutheran Church Woodcliff Lake, NJ

Pastor Marc’s presentation is available on the Go And page of the NJSynod website. These notes expand upon his presentation but do not cover the bulk of the material he shared. Please see the presentation handout available.

- Our Stories
 - A faith story is an encounter with God
 - Faith is a gift from God but we can sow seeds of faith for one another
 - How do you tell your story or who do you tell it to?
 - Family and friends
 - In the church
 - On social media
- Why we share
 - When we get value out of something, we want others to have access to it
 - Human and Godly thing
 - Think about it: when you read a good book or discover a new restaurant, you share that information with others!
 - Understanding, sharing meaning, and creating value are important to relationship building
 - Sharing is a ministry!
 - John 20: 17-18 “Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples

with this news: ‘I have seen the Lord!’ And she told them that he had said these things to her.”

- Mary sharing the story: it can be difficult to share because we cannot control how people respond to or receive what we say, but we have to do it anyway
- Imagine if Mary didn’t share the news of the resurrection because she was worried about not being believed
- Faith is a team sport: an assembly of believers living, sharing, engaging, and modeling the Christian life
- **When we gather, we become a library of believers – just as the Bible is a library of stories about God’s work in the world, so too are our congregations’ libraries of stories about God’s work in the world**
- Congregational Stories
 - Your story and congregation’s story matter and should be shared in the congregation and with the world
 - Spend time sharing and studying your story
 - What stories help sustain your faith and help it grow?
 - How do you share that story?
 - Relationship Building
 - Social Media: patterns are always changing. Social media is encouraging friendships based on shared interests. How do you share your faith with those who are interested in learning more?
 - When you find your story, you find what makes you special how does this become a shared interest? Your story will share what makes you unique and help reach further.
 - Shared interests lead to deeper connections and relationships that build community, this can happen when we share our story!
 - Share and tell your story, but also take time to listen to others
- Don’t be afraid to try!

Pastor Marc extended the invitation to reach out to him if you have questions or want to talk further on any of the topics:

Email: marc.stutzel@gmail.com

Phone: 201-391-4224

Resources:

- The Practicing Congregation:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00JMYHDOO/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

- The Social Media Gospel:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B016F1Y3DC/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1
 - This book was printed in 2015. The technology aspect is slightly out of date but the information and materials are still important and applicable.
- Handouts from the gathering available on the website:
 - Summary of Story Matters: Naming, Claiming, and Living Our Biblical Identity
 - Our Congregation Story Matters steps

See You Next Month!
August 25th at 7:00 pm, est.