

GROWING TOGETHER
Belonging & Being Love to One Another
A Congregational Retreat



The people of The United Methodist Church*

University United Methodist Church
Rev. Paige Eaves, Pastor
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GROWING TOGETHER: BELONGING & BEING LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER

- 9:00 Gathering & Impromptu Networking
- *What's challenge do you bring to this day?*
 - *What do you hope to get from this gathering?*
 - *What do you hope to give to this gathering?*
- 9:30 Opening Worship
John 13:34-35 & 1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Together We Serve (2175) & They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love (2223)
- 9:45 Dogs & Cats, Fists & Fights: A Time of Fun & Games
- 10:00 Conflict & Communication: A Conversation
- 10:15 Beach Ball Blast: A Time of Playing on Teams
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 Mullah & The Camels: A Mathematical Fable & Conversation
- 11:15 Animals & Prototypes: A Time for Improv & Role Playing
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Hear – See – Respond: A Time for Listening & Learning
- 1:30 Questions & Comments
- 1:45 Closing Worship
- 2:00 Departure

Thank you for sharing your time and insights with your church family today!

CREATE COMMUNITY OUT OF COMMON GROUND

- **Be Love**
- **Belong**
- **Communicate**
- **Create**

CREATE COMMUNITY WITH COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATE TO FIND COMMON GROUND¹

- Create an open & loving atmosphere
- Create mutual understanding
 - What do I want?
 - What do you want?
 - What do we want?
- Generate options

CREATE COMMUNITY OUT OF CONFLICT

Cool Down ~ Slow Down ~ Engage Constructively

Use this method to be "Conflict Competent"²

1. Cool down
 - a. Understand, monitor, & calm your own emotions.
 - b. Stay balanced to avoid emotional triggers leading to fight/flight
2. Slow down & Reflect
 - a. Delay Responding
 - b. Use this time to reflect
3. Engage Constructively
 - a. Listen for understanding
 - b. Take perspective – strive for empathy
 - c. Express emotions
 - d. Reach out, particularly when conflict seems to be deadlocked
 - e. Move toward a search for solutions

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHURCHES & CONFLICT

1. Conflict has been a part of the human experience since the dawning of creation.
2. Conflict has been a part of Christian community since Jesus first called the disciples.
3. Conflict challenged and strengthened the early church, and can do the same today.
4. Conflict is neutral. Conflict is neither good nor bad – but the outcomes might be!
5. Conflict is inevitable “where 2 or 3 are gathered.”
6. Conflict, when engaged constructively, can lead to amazing creativity.
7. Conflict, when engaged lovingly, can create & strengthen community.
8. Christ’s grace can heal any conflict and the Spirit’s power can transform any conflict.

¹ Based on the work of Nan Joesten, *Rapid Revolution*

² Based on the work of Craig Runde and Tim Flanagan, *Building Conflict Competent Teams* and *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader*.

CREATE COMMUNITY WITH THE HELP OF GOD

SCRIPTURE OF LOVE

John 13:34-35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

PRAYER IN A TIME OF CONFLICT

Holy God,

there is something about connecting with those we love,
the sense of something holding us together—
invisible strings, silent songs echoing back and forth;
one cord, with one person on each end.

But when disagreement creeps in

and we enter into conflict—

how the ropes tighten;
how the notes become strained.

We are tempted to cut the ribbons that bind us together.

Help us remember that we are created

to reflect your image.

Help us recall that the reward comes from holding on—

from saying to others,

“I am not like you, but I am with you”;

“I do not agree with you, but I am still here,
connected to you.”

God of Conflict, God of Reconciliation,

prepare us for the discomfort of disagreement.

Let us hold fast to the ties that bind us together.

In our anxiety, let us twist and adjust,

but give us the endurance to never let go. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS (Make me an instrument of your peace....)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.