

## Council Happenings

May 2023

Council started 2023 with two significant, immediate objectives for St. Mark's. The first was to successfully conduct the first in-person Annual Meeting in three years, and the second was to nominate members of a Call Committee to begin the process of identifying our next Senior Pastor. Since those two objectives have been met, Council has turned its attention to St. Mark's future. Here are some of the highlights of the February, March, and April Congregation Council meetings.

### Call Committee:

- Although a half-time interim pastor was approved in the 2023 budget, Bishop Curry had not made an appointment at the time the congregation approved the Call Committee. At the February meeting, Council recognized the need for an interim pastor to assist the Call Committee in its work, as well as to preach and provide pastoral care to members of the congregation. Since one of the challenges in making an interim appointment was the part-time status of the position, Council authorized greater flexibility to facilitate the appointment.
- The Executive Team provided early support for the Call Committee until an organizational meeting took place with Pastor Sunitha Mortha, Associate to the Bishop and Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and the Call Committee selected its own leadership.

### Council Development:

- Early in 2022, Council engaged in a conversation about Enneagram of Personality, which describes patterns in how people interpret the world and manage their emotions. This pathway for growth can be used to explore interaction styles and communication preferences to help people work better together. The March Council meeting allowed us an opportunity to re-engage in that work after a long period of absence. Lynnette Brent facilitated a discussion in Leveraging the Enneagram that helped Council members make discoveries about themselves with the goal of improving communication and collaboration. Similar exercises using the Enneagram archetypes have been used within the staff and the Call Committee.

### Strategic Planning and Vision Priorities:

- The COVID 19 pandemic and events that followed the return to worship, resignation of Pastor Charisse and transitional activities required St. Mark's to be flexible and respond to short-term needs. With the Annual Meeting and Special Meeting to elect the Call Committee completed, Council initiated discussions about the long-term planning needs for St. Mark's at its April meeting. This discussion, which is in the earliest stage of development, has started with the review of the Vision Priorities approved in 2016. Council anticipates conducting a careful process that will include conversations with multiple stakeholders. Council will keep the congregation informed as the process develops.

Interim Senior Pastor:

- At its April meeting, the Council approved for the ELCA Synod to seek a full time interim senior pastor. This decision was based upon the needs of St. Mark's and marked a change from an initial decision to seek only a part time interim pastor. A full time interim senior pastor would be better able to provide guidance for the Call Process and the Call Committee. In addition, a full time interim senior pastor would offer St. Mark's regular pulpit supply and allow Pastor Patrick relief from "wearing all of the hats". The Annual Budget reflected money for a half-time pastor, but since we are nearly at mid-year, the available resources can be used for a full time interim senior pastor without creating any significant financial hardship. Please know that this decision is for the ELCA Synod to appoint an *interim senior pastor*—not a new senior pastor. An interim pastor is appointed by the Bishop to guide congregations through the Call Process. The Synod has been unsuccessful in finding an interim senior pastor for St. Mark's since we initiated the Call Process in January. However, we anticipate an appointment in the very near future.

The Council would like to thank members for the support you have provided to St. Mark's this year. Although we have decided to reserve "Chat with Council" sessions to specific occasions, we welcome your questions before or after weekend services at the Welcome Desk, as well as other times throughout the week.