St. John Transition Task Force  
Meeting Minutes  
October 10, 2018  

Persons present were Task Force Members Carlene Gardner, Larry Prohaska, Melanie Wirtz, Russ Potratz, Carolyn Martin, Kelly Turner, Adam Puls, Sandra Stavnes, Marty Postel, and Samantha Tetmeyer. Denise Hanson (Facilitator), Robin Abraham (Recording Secretary), Jim Langel (Council President and Ex-Officio Member), and Pastor Paul Svingen (Interim Pastor and Ex-Officio Member) were also present. Scott Leisinger and PJ Mills were absent.

Pastor Paul  
Pastor Paul welcomed everyone and offered a devotional from Romans 12. “Do not be conformed to this world” – referenced the thinkpiece “Canoeing the Mountains”. The message is that we can’t be canoeing anymore! We are not here to create structure to reinvent the past. We need to dream and dare to follow our dreams. “Be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” We have to begin with imagination and not be yearning for the past. Adaptive leadership is not linear thinking. Pastor pointed out a shelf in the library that contains resource books for the task force and the congregation during our transition time.

Previous Meeting Minutes  

Minutes of our September 26th meeting were reviewed and we discussed how best to distribute them to the congregation. Robin will ask Jenny to create a Transition Task Force tab on the St. John website.

Reflections on early work from member conversations  

Discussed the possibility of increasing revenue by selling ads in Happenings. Also discussed ways to communicate immediate needs, like a representation of a tree with leaves marked with tangible needs (e.g., utility bill, office supplies). Some people like to know exactly what their donation is going to. Example was shared of a congregation where a member converted all the lighting in the building to LED in lieu of making a monetary donation.

We need to get our heads around how we got here. There hasn’t been an opportunity for people to discuss and grieve followed by a time for the congregation to mark the end of grieving and move forward.

As a part of the Resource Development Commission the Council will create a Financial Resource Team. The team will lead the development, management, and investment of financial resources. In addition, Gary Jones and Katy Clapham and others are working on short term and long term financial problem solutions. People want to know what the budget is, and where the money is going. There was a time that information was reported in the bulletin.

Discussed thinkpiece “Canoeing the Mountain”  

Can’t paddle harder – have to adapt.
Church has a formal structure. A member of the congregation once said that “We’re a business selling God”.
Whatever is in front of you isn’t going to move. Don’t put your energy into the canoes (i.e., something that’s not useful anymore).
What does it mean to be a Christian in this secular world? What’s the new face of the church? Everything we currently do needs to be examined. What are the new opportunities we see, to be the voice of Christ in the future?
Challenges of seminaries – leadership and spiritual leadership formation.
Sacajawea was the most important person in the thinkpiece – she knew the terrain.

**Reflections on early work from member conversations**

Bringing food into the church (e.g., funerals, Wednesday night meals) is a topic of some debate. A note will be placed in Happenings that we are working on the issue.

Conversation about Lutheran Student Center – can they meet in a space in one of the churches? They are struggling. Kathy does their books. Jon Fry had planned on going to seminary but is holding off for a year to help with the transition.

What will work going forward? What are the core values of our congregation? – topic of October 14 forum.
How can our core values be a part of the experience of groups who use our facility?
Need to welcome all people. Those who can’t commit to membership should still be valued as part of our community.
Be permission *giving* instead of permission *withholding*
Have to create an urgency that things have to keep moving. Sitting still won’t work. But, we need to respond rationally, not with a knee jerk reaction. Sometimes churches are reluctant to experiment because they don’t want to fail.
It would be more welcoming if the church were open more often, but there are security issues with people roaming the building, especially concerning the daycare and preschool.

**Team Reports**

Each team decided on a point person, who will be responsible for sharing their team’s individual meeting notes with Robin and Denise. Mission & Values – Larry, Self Study – Kelly, and Staffing/Leadership – Melanie. The teams should choose a few key items from their meetings that they want to highlight on the TTF tab of the website.

**Mission & Values Team Report**
Larry: Our core business is fulfillment of the gospel
What is it we want to be at St. John? What’s the vision to accomplish that mission? Want many voices of the congregation to be heard (e.g., altar guild, members of Bible studies, other individuals who want to talk).
Not *what* you want to be, but *why* -- how does this fulfill our core values? Larry referred to the Bethany report in the Task Force Resource binder.
Sandra: Our core values should be backed up with Scriptures
Mission and values will be the round table topic this Sunday. Ideally, we will inform the congregation of the topic in advance of each Sunday roundtable so they can ponder it in advance. We will keep rotating between the three focus teams to lay forth a question for the roundtables. Have Jenny post topic on Facebook as a reminder. Is there a way for people to contact the church if they can’t make the forum but want to contribute to the conversation? Question was raised, is it appropriate to have a forum on staffing? Perhaps just one.

Self Study Team Report:
Adam distributed a survey sample “St. John Reflections and Dreams” which will be available online and in paper form at church. There will be a box in the atrium for the paper copies.

Staffing Team Report:
Marty showed us a staff survey (based on a sample that was in our resource book). We need to ensure all survey respondents are aware that individual responses will not be shared, only aggregate responses. As part of the survey process, interviews will be set up with current staff members (including child care staff), key volunteers, and some previous staff members. Interviews will be conducted during the employees’ work hours. We want to know, what worked well, and what hindered your ministry? Current job descriptions will be examined. The church is not a business but needs to have some structure. St. John should explore creating a Human Resources team.

Council Matters
Jim Langel: Financial Resource Team was discussed and Jim distributed description of the team’s responsibilities. Charisse Folken should be on the team, as well as a couple members from the congregation.

Our next meeting on October 24 will begin at 7 PM (instead of 6:30) due to a conflict with Trick or Trunk. The individual teams will each meet at least once before our group meeting on the 24th.

The point was made that God doesn’t call the equipped, He equips the called!

Meeting ended with Pastor Paul leading us in the Lord’s Prayer.