

## **EPC Midweek Update – February 8, 2017**

peace to you all! pastor julie writing this week.

i wanted to share with the community regarding the great conversation we had after worship on sunday to debrief the annual meeting. there were many nice reflections and insights, and i hope this is just the beginning of our ability to learn and reflect upon our experiences! the write-up from the meeting is at the end of this note.

just some highlights be aware of for our community this week:

- wednesday, feb 8th (tonight) 7pm the **growth and outreach team** is meeting at angelie's house (1251 Van Buren Ave in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood of St. Paul)
- thursday, feb 9th 6:15p **session** will have our regularly monthly meeting at epc
- sundays, feb 12th and 19th celebration of **confirmation and new members**. time to celebrate the spirit's work and movement among us as 7 young people join our church through confirmation and we receive 2 adults as members through reaffirmation of faith. and (!) there will be a baptism as well on the 12th. these will be amazing services with the youth leading the services! please consider inviting your extended community to join with us on these celebration sundays!!

a word from deacon ingrid:

*I (Ingrid) would like to organize the treats, and juice for the two new member Sundays! People could call me ([651.647.0266](tel:651.647.0266)) me if they want to bring something, and I can fill in gaps. Suggestions: juice, fruit, cheese, crackers, cookies, bars, muffins or similar.*

please consider connecting with ingrid!

may god's peace be with you all this week!!

with joy, pastor julie

**the write-up from the annual meeting debrief:**

**January 2017 – Annual Meeting Debrief compiled by Pastor Julie**

What facilitates good conversations?

(as brain-stormed by the annual meeting debriefing participants)

- a clarity of guidelines and intent of conversation
- being able to hear and physically see all participants
- listening to each other
- participation/inclusion of all voices, to the degree that people are able to speak

- not preparing what you are going to say when others are speaking, but deeply hearing one another
- respect for varying perspectives
- looking for places of commonality, even with differing opinions.
- positive curiosity of each other, and ask open ended questions to learn more about another's point-of-view
- staying on topic
- noticing when exhausted, and taking a break
- if/when negative energy, try an exercise in touching (such as having people rub own hands)

*the above are techniques and strategies to employ, but the essential foundation for good conversation lies in the desire to connect with each other.*

*\*\*it was suggested by the debriefing group that this list be reviewed at each meeting of the congregation to re-affirm the intention to do the business/work of the church with a desire to connect with each other and to employ the ideas listed above.*

#### what worked?

- the mixture/interweaving of brunch, reports and worship
- the time for self-reflection (and having others read) and table reflections
- the reports of the meeting took less time this year. (new this year—reports were not read out loud, but rather the writer stood up and asked for questions.)
- moderator/worship leader talked/lead while others could continue eating

#### what did not work?

- could not hear each other
- the set up around tables—could not see each other
- there was no opportunity to visit with each other
- the blending of worship with reports
- when the business part started, people did not have an opportunity to move—felt like they were locked in chairs
- seemed there was a build-up of issues which was beyond the scope or capacity of meeting
- no one knew to get the pastors to come back, so the ending felt fuzzy
- long and exhausted by the end
- no chance to say thank you for the work and coordination of the morning

### considerations for future meetings

- ensure hearing—utilize microphone
- seating in a circle? desire to see each person
- location—perhaps a bigger space?
- keep people on topic, otherwise “we are a talking congregation” and can easily end up re-hashing ideas
- bring the “guidelines for good conversation” and have people recommit to intentions
- incorporate gratitude and joy throughout meeting time
- consider dividing meeting into two dates
- consider hiring an outside moderator to facilitate the “pastoral terms of call”
- encourage people to engage with session throughout the year, not to save up issues
- visits to session always welcomed
- review/re-communicate the procedure to bring a topic for session to discuss: the sunday before session, notify by email the moderator (the pastors) with the topic you want to discuss, and a sense of how much time your conversation will entail
- have other containers for conversations before the annual meeting, where people can engage with the material and ask further questions