

Small Group Discussions



Knowing & Telling Our Stories

What draws me to this church?

- ★ I was invited.
- ★ The inclusiveness and welcoming
- ★ The acceptance of many views
- ★ The ability to question
- ★ The door is open to all, welcomed from another tradition
- ★ It's very okay to disagree.
- ★ The liturgy; The tradition
- ★ The sameness; doing things together; can go anywhere and be on the same page
- ★ Born into this tradition; it's home
- ★ "Via media" ~ it's the middle way
- ★ Loving God and each other
- ★ You became my family

Here's what I want you to know:

- ★ God is here. You are loved. There is a place for everyone.
- ★ You are accepted and included in love.
- ★ Even though we aren't judgmental, we have a strong faith!
- ★ We are all God's children; whatever we have to endure, God is there.
- ★ We can support and love each other despite many different perspectives.
- ★ Living our baptismal covenant is real and empowering.
- ★ Everyone can take communion; there are no guilt trips, just let God love you and you can start over.

Conversation & Our Covenant

Divisions we see in our families,
churches, communities:

- ★ Fear
- ★ Blind clinging to beliefs that entrench opinions and fear of “the other”
- ★ Political; conservative vs. liberal
- ★ Socio-economic and class
- ★ Wide differences in social and political power within the community
- ★ Lifestyles
- ★ Old and new
- ★ Race; Nationality
- ★ Education
- ★ Generational
- ★ Negativity
- ★ Sense of hypocrisy in the church
- ★ Seeing the other as the enemy

How we seek reconciliation:

- ★ Sacred listening
- ★ Finding common ground
- ★ See the other person as Jesus sees them
- ★ Actually listening and not cutting off the other
- ★ Decide we can serve God together in spite of differences
- ★ Taking action
- ★ Ask ourselves how we live into our faith and let that be more important than differences and divisions
- ★ Reconciliation for what? Not everyone can agree what differences we are arguing over
- ★ Not enough emphasis on contrition before the start of reconciliation

Looking Outward: Our Story in the World

How we're engaging people during the week:

- ✦ St. John's Talks
- ✦ Bible & Book studies
- ✦ Blessing of the animals
- ✦ Help at Manna food bank
- ✦ Food pantry
- ✦ Prison ministries
- ✦ Choir
- ✦ Facebook
- ✦ Fine Arts Series
- ✦ Share with workers
- ✦ Laundry Love
- ✦ Hot dog Love
- ✦ Supper at Grace
- ✦ Thrift shops
- ✦ Family Promise

What else might we do to in the community:

- ✦ Freedom School
- ✦ Laundry Love
- ✦ Navy chaplain with NAS
- ✦ Ashes to Go
- ✦ Evangelism
- ✦ Theology on tap
- ✦ Invite, Welcome, Connect
- ✦ Praise & Worship block parties
- ✦ Community events
- ✦ Float in Mardi Gras parade
- ✦ Ecumenical programs; work together
- ✦ Assist Wilmer Hall in some way
- ✦ Do more with Kairos
- ✦ Justice ministries
- ✦ Active listening to discern needs