

life after "journey"

notes from conversation # 2
10 October, 2010

1. SUMMARY OF LAST WEEK'S MEETING

Last week, we began by talking about why we're here, in very general terms. We listed our reasons-for-being. Things that make us who and what we are. And we came up with a pretty good list. In fact, what we put on the board, I realized later, was in line with the reasons listed in the Preamble of our constitution. "We, baptized members of the Church of Christ, responding in faith to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, desiring to unite together to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission. . . ." Those are important verbs: Preach, Administer, and Carry out. That's, bottom line, why we are here.

It's important to remember and to get that out before we start the real discussion. At times like this, it's easy to overlook that. To forget that. Back in 1989, I was serving in a congregation just a couple hours away from here. And, needless to say, we were in the same shape we were here. Sixteen percent unemployment. The bottom had fallen out of the potash market. Israel and Canada allegedly were dumping it on the market. Prices plummeted. Something like oil. In the congregation, we were feeling the pain. So, we went immediately to the pastor, cut his salary by 50%, and moved on. We never had a discussion about any other options, that I remember. It was the easiest, simplest, least complicated "fix". And twenty years later, the congregation is the same size now that it was then. The story here is pretty much the same. In 1989, we cut back. And, it seems to me,

once a congregation has done that, it has a difficult time moving ahead again.

So, we need to make sure that we look at a whole range of options. Yes. We may still have to "cut back." But that should be the last resort. On the other end of the spectrum, however, it expanding. . . reaching out. . . going beyond. . . And, of course, there's everything in between.

So, this afternoon, I'd like us to begin to list some of the things that come to mind that might begin to address the challenge we're facing at this moment. . . Expenses outpacing income. . . And while we do, please keep in mind those three basic, basic activities. . .

- PREACH + ADMINISTER + CARRY OUT -

2. NEXT STEP: HOW DO WE ACHIEVE CONCEPT (MINISTRY)

- organize a choir
- project the service – make worship easier for visitors
- "singable" songs
- be friendly, attractive, & inviting people
- follow up with visitors
- improve communication among/about members
- remember each other's names
- get new people through doors
- make an inventory of congregation – both people & facilities
- start a bilingual ministry
- get out our vision/version of god and god's word
(figure out how to share our little "secret")
- learn how to invite people into church
& determine why we'd want them here!
- establish group to visit visitors a.s.a.p
- have follow-up events after things
like kids' nights out and trunk 'r treats

have greeters/hosts
establish small group bible studies
focus on grace/faith
utilize the building as an asset for community

3. NEXT STEP: THINKING INTO THE FUTURE

We've done a good job. It's very much outside the budget. However, it's still pretty much inside the box. One hour. Sunday morning. Are there other things to consider that we haven't thought about before. Other ministries. Other times. Other places. Next time. . . 2:00, Sunday afternoon, October 24th, we'll stretch our imagination a bit more. . .