

A Process of Discipleship, Gifts Discovery, and Spiritual Formation
For New Households of
Ascension Lutheran Church

by
Randall G. Olson

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Project Proposal

Our current new member experience/path involves personal conversation and contact between pastor and the new household, an informal gathering with other members and new members in a home, a packet of information and data request forms, and a new member reception during and following worship. While these pieces have some value they are not part of a productive life support system that is directly related to God's mission...neither do they nurture a deepening experience of relationship with God and the community that is Ascension Lutheran Church. The more global issues in our community of faith include the need for spiritual formation, hospitality, and maturity that deepens personal responsibility and participation in what God is doing in and through the life of this congregation.

Theological Assertions

1. Gifts of the Spirit are given to build community.
2. Fruit of the Spirit is given to build character in disciples and maturity in the community.
3. Because of what God is doing in the world, new members enter the congregation as gifts and messengers from God.
4. The Spirit of God is already at work in and through new members who join the community. Both community and new members are mutually enriched by faith in and participation with the perichoretic God.

5. Hospitality involves both giving and receiving for everyone who participates in community.
6. Communal discernment informed by theological reflection that results in action for the sake of the world is at the heart of membership/discipleship rather than assimilation.

Biblical Foundations

I Corinthians 12:4-31
Galatians 5:22-23
2 Timothy 2:22-23
Ephesians 4:1-16

Plan

The specific target for this project will be the development of a new member process by March 31, 2004, that utilizes a timeline of inquiry and theological reflection, together with conversation and commitment prior to membership in the congregation. The new member experience and design will flow out of communal discernment by staff, hospitality leaders, members and prospective members of the congregation. The timeline and journey will include:

1. Initial period of communal discernment and action informed by theological reflection prior to membership involving prospective members and others from the faith community

2. Plan and expectations for continued spiritual formation extending through the first year of membership and the next three-five years of their discipleship at Ascension.
3. How is the calling and sending part of this journey over time? How is recommitment and renewal continuous?

The initial period of discernment and action will include:

1. Personal conversation with appropriate staff, leaders, and members.
2. Gathering of preliminary personal information, personality, life and spiritual gifts assessment by team of members/leaders.
3. Small group experience related to spiritual formation practice and introduction to Ascension community of faith.
4. Participation in several of the following practices informed by theological reflection: greeter, lector, usher, communion assistant during worship, prayer writer, worship planner, participation on preaching team, and/or personal witness during worship.

Consideration will be given to specific faith practices appropriate to Ascension's context in the spirit of *Practicing Our Faith*. These practices will be used as the basis for communal discernment by congregational leaders and members. Some or all of these, and possibly other practices, will be incorporated into the initial process as well as into the three to five year plan for spiritual formation and discipleship at Ascension Lutheran Church. The goal is that both new and existing members grow in their passion for, understanding of, and participation in what God is doing in the world through them and the faith community.

Introduction

Following the January seminar this project proposal was shared with leaders of our Hospitality ministry at Ascension. These members were very receptive to developing and implementing the plan. We decided to recruit a new group who would be called the *New Household Team*. Their task would be to work with the pastoral staff in the development and implementation of a new process for receiving new members into Ascension's life and ministry. We originally recruited five individuals consisting of a female single adult and two husband/wife married couples. All five had recently indicated their interest in joining the congregation.

We began to meet on a regular basis. This New Member Household Team reviewed the project proposal. Each member of the team reviewed the *Life Keys* resources which included the *Life Keys* book and *Life Keys Discovery Workbook*. The workbook contains all of the inventories included in the *Life Keys* text. After reviewing the inventories the team determined they would incorporate only the personality and spiritual gifts inventories from the *Life Keys Discovery Workbook* into the new member/new disciple experience. Their concern was to refrain from overwhelming the new members with hoops and paperwork and in the process lose the missional focus and the enthusiasm of the new members. Our goal is to develop an effective, relational, and faith formation process/experience for new members that will deepen their relationship with God and the Ascension community and influence their faith practices.

We now have a team of two couples who are deeply committed to this new household strategy. Originally, the single female met with us. However, after taking the *Life Keys* personality inventory she expressed, and we discovered, that she is *not* a

planner but a doer. Her passion is to work with the nuts and bolts of a strategy or project that is already in place. She is now working with some other leaders on the nuts and bolts task of follow-up related to worship ministry and connecting members to that ministry. Out of that same small group experience with the personality inventory, one of the four remaining participants confirmed her passion *for* planning the details and will be the coordinator of the New Household Team. Her husband confirmed his passion for relating directly to people. He will take the lead making the initial contacts and training others to make the initial contacts with all who join the Ascension community of faith.

The personality exercise has helped the group to grasp more clearly the best way for each member to participate in this new household ministry. Both of these couples have a history and experience marked by a deep and growing commitment to faith formation. Each couple prior to membership, at their initiative, has already become involved with and explored several areas of Ascension's ministry in the spirit of how we will invite *all* new households/members to participate/engage prior to membership. All of this is an awesome illustration of what God has been doing and how we are participating in God's new and creative kingdom work.

We have decided to receive new households into the congregation on a monthly basis. This decision is based on our commitment to meet the new member at the point of his interest and commitment in a personal and timely manner. We previously took a class or large group approach, two to three times per year. The monthly sequence provides latitude for the new disciple to commit in his time frame and take more ownership of the discipleship process. One Sunday each month is identified by our worship planners as the Sunday we will receive new households. When the new members have completed the

time of reflection, dialogue, exercise, and involvement, they are received into membership during worship on Sunday morning.

Nomenclature

Member is used in reference to I Corinthians 12. Each Christian is a vital member of Christ's body in the magnificent way God has created and designed the human anatomy. This biblical reference to member and membership transcends the cultural meaning of member as one who belongs to a club or organization, pays dues, and attends a specified number of meetings. The task of congregational leadership is to recover and redeem the biblical meaning of the term *member*.

Disciple is also used in reference to baptized individuals in the community of faith in the spirit of Matthew 28 when Jesus commands his disciples to go into the world make disciples of all people, baptizing them in the name of the perichoretic God.

Missionary. Those who belong to the body of Christ are called to be missionaries--to bring and be Good News to the community and world--to be God's witnesses. This term contributes to a missional understanding of the church that takes seriously the priesthood of all believers...many members with a common mission.

Members, disciples, and missionaries in this context are those who have been called and sent by God to bring God's kingdom. Wherever they go they bring God's kingdom near.

.People Resources

New Household Team

This team oversees the new member ministry. They have committed to meet monthly with a staff member to review current new disciple process and discuss appropriate support for those currently in the process. The team will also recruit and train leaders from the congregation for this ministry so that the new household team expands consistent with the need to support and mentor new members who are entering, or have recently entered, the congregation.

The team coordinates the necessary follow-up that involves staff and other ministries. This includes

1. Collaboration with the office staff to ensure that personal/gift/ministry information is accurate and available to the congregation's leadership and consistently track this information on the church software system.
2. Review with pastoral staff each new household and meet with the new disciple after the first six months of membership and thereafter on an annual basis for the first three years of membership. The purpose of both these meetings (team with pastoral staff and team member with new member) is encourage communal discernment rooted in faith reflection. This depends on a mutual conversation grounded in the questions "What is God doing?" and "How is each member in the community of faith participating in what God is doing?" These questions will be used to nurture relationships with God, the community of faith, and the world instead of a task/worker-bee orientation to members and new households.

Pastor/Pastoral Staff

The pastor/pastoral staff provides ongoing resource support to the leadership, team, and new members/disciples/missionaries. This support includes visiting each new household during the interval between when they first decide to join the congregation and eventually are received into membership. The purpose of the visit is to get acquainted and invite conversation around the theme of faith formation and faith practices in daily life.

Office Staff

The office staff plays a vital role in managing the congregational data base and information provided by the new members. . The office staff has the responsibility to maintain current and accurate information that is both easily accessible and disseminated to appropriate congregational leaders and ministries. This information becomes a key resource for other congregational leaders who seek to meet the new members at the point of their gifts, passion, and experience.

COMPONENTS AND SEQUENCE

Initial Commitment

Prospective members/disciples indicate their interest in joining the ministry. Prior to this time these individuals have worshipped regularly and may have requested information or even personal visits from staff or members of the congregation.

Personal and Mutual Communication

New Household team and staff are alerted to prospective member initiative. The team communicates with the prospective member for the purpose of setting up interview/visit to get personally acquainted, share missional expectations, gather personal information, and respond to questions.

Personality and Spiritual Gifts Inventories

During the actual visit the Hospitality team member leads the prospective member(s) through the Life Keys personality and spiritual gifts exercises. This information has value both for the prospective member and congregational leadership. The information is stored/on file in the church office. Out of a process of dialogue and mutual discernment with our New Household Team, we have determined that in our setting it will be most effective to administer these inventories in person with an informal interview format in

the new member's home or at church using the *Life Keys Discovery Workbook*. Each new member will be given a workbook which contains several forms and journal-like exercises the new member may choose to pursue later, depending on individual interest. For the purpose of joining Ascension we have chosen to limit ourselves to the personality and spiritual gifts inventories. Our leadership group determined that while the entire *Life Keys* system is a valuable resource, it could be overwhelming as a pre-requisite for membership. Our goal is to use these resources as a catalyst for theological reflection and discovery.

Digital Picture

A congregational photographer takes a digital picture of the new members in their home and this picture is projected during worship on the following Sunday as a way to introduce them to the congregation. If prospective member consents, he/she is invited to stand where he/she is seated as part of this personal introduction. The purpose of this introduction is to alert the congregation early on of the prospective member's desire to join the congregation so that the prospects can be visible and welcomed from the outset into the community. The digital photo of the new member is shown at both worship services as a prelude to or during the Offering as one more way to nurture an experience of community regardless of which worship hour anyone attends. The congregation receives encouragement and learns to participate in the extending of hospitality to prospective members as a normative practice. These pictures will be stored and organized on the office computer system so that they can be readily accessed for future

power point presentations or illustrations during worship, as well as for use by leadership in connecting names with faces.

We have a member in our congregation who sends out a weekly email newsletter he calls *Ascension Days*. He is the editor and gives it a *Garrison Keillor* spirit in the process of sharing the story of what's happening--what God is doing at Ascension. We plan to provide him with the new member digital photos so that more of our folks can connect names with faces and use technology to help us deepen our experience of community.

Participation in Three Areas of Ministry

Prospective member chooses at least three areas of ministry to participate in prior to joining the congregation as a way to become involved immediately. These areas may include assisting in worship (greeting, ushering, assisting with communion, reading scripture, being a personal witness, writing prayers), assisting in the church office, attending a choir practice, attending a monthly Vestry meeting, or possibly another area of special interest. These experiences help the new disciple become acquainted with Ascension's ministry and people, and at the same time help the community become acquainted with the new disciple.

This practice affirms God's presence and work in the life of the prospective member beyond his/her involvement in the congregation...and drives home the message that the congregation can learn/receive from the stranger/outsider. Wherever possible the prospective member's involvement in these three areas of ministry is designed to facilitate or simulate a small group experience. This means that relationship and

community take priority over the task. More important than doing a job is the opportunity to meet with other congregational members.

Pastoral/Staff Visit

An appointment is scheduled by Pastor/Pastoral Staff to meet with new household in their home or at the church, depending on preference of new members. This visit is pastoral in nature and is designed to build relationship and provide the new member with the opportunity to raise faith/spiritual questions and share his/her spiritual journey. When the new member is unfamiliar with the Lutheran Christian tradition, this meeting provides an opportunity for the new disciple and pastor to discover together the strengths/value of the new member's spiritual journey and the key contributions of Lutheran Christianity to the Lutheran tradition. In this way, rather than attending a one-size-fits-all class, the conversation addresses the specific and personal context/needs of the new member. Also, resources can be provided for ongoing reflection and study as needed. This approach is designed to nurture an ongoing commitment to spiritual formation rather than a more static "I took the class--that's all folks" approach.

Furthermore, the pastoral visit provides an opportunity to invite the new member/disciple/missionary to tell his/her faith story/narrative in the context of what God has been and is doing and how they have participated in what God has been doing. Rick Bliese suggested that we cannot do spiritual formation without having a narrative. In my pastoral experience, many new members join the congregation with an information/knowledge-based orientation to the faith. They either presume to already

know the basic faith information or they need to learn or brush up on the basics. Inviting the new member to share her faith story helps refocus and reframe the meaning of this kairos moment. The sharing of one's faith story affirms the truth that God is the active subject in one's life and in the life of this faith community. Aspects of the new member's faith story may later become the basis for a personal witness during worship.

Personal witness is defined as linking some aspect of my faith/relationship with God to daily life, again, rooted in the questions of what God is doing and how I am participating in what God is doing. While not mandatory for any member, the sharing of a personal witness for three to five minutes in worship is a powerful means to articulate God's perichoretic work in daily life. The personal witness comes out of mutual conversation and discernment between the pastoral staff and/or worship leaders and the new member. The occasion for the personal witness is usually informed by the season of the church year or the specific lectionary texts or worship theme for the day in relationship to the witness's faith experience.

Informal Meal Gathering

My partner in ministry and I will each host an informal meal gathering in our homes during the year. This means that every six months those households who have joined our community of faith during that time will be invited to meet together for conversation and camaraderie. A few of the congregational leaders and the New Household Team leaders will also be present.

Faith Practices—What Ascension Community of Faith Does

This is a preliminary list of nine faith practices that are especially relevant to our Ascension community and context. This list will be the springboard for communal discernment by the New Household Team and staff in deciding on the specific faith practices that new disciples at Ascension can expect to learn in the first three to five years of their membership in the congregation.

Hospitality--create a hospitable space through our words, actions, and management of the environment for the individual and the community; looking for and welcoming the stranger; inviting the other into God's love and grace; grow in capacity to both give to/ and receive from others and God.

Personal Witness--develop a personal narrative of how one is participating in what God is doing; deepen awareness and experience of faith connections to daily life; in community learn how to share this witness so that others discover a new dimension of what God is doing in the world;

Forgiveness--cultivate the ministry of reconciliation in the congregation and daily life as a primary way to restore and nourish the community; deepen personal experience of confession with others; discover rituals of confession and forgiveness that can be used as resources for renewal and growth in personal relationships.

Prayer--cultivate confident practice of prayer as vital exercise and discipline in the Christian life; learn to incorporate retreat time into personal and community experience; participate in the congregation's expanding prayer ministry; grow in the practice of prayer as one of God's primary vehicles for transforming lives, communities, and the world.

Dying Well—in a death-denying-aging-baby-boomer culture reflect on the meaning that Christ's death and resurrection has for our living and dying; deepen understanding of grief and loss in daily life so that we can be comfort to others in their grief and loss; strengthen the community and nurture hope by affirming the care-giving ministry of all believers in the experience of death and dying;

Witness through the Arts-- learn to discover and interpret the Gospel through music, drama, media, and the visual arts; use these discoveries and interpretations of the arts and faith as witness to how God is at work in the world and how we participate in God's creative work.

Life-Long Faith Formation--deepen experience as student and mentor in the faith community; commit to learn and explore; through communal discernment identify and create learning opportunities appropriate for specific age and stage of life; participate in and encourage multi-generational learning in ways that value the gifts of each generation.

Love For Our Neighbors--bring the kingdom of God near to those who are neighbors at church and at home; value differences and diversity in our neighborhoods and community; learn from and celebrate the gifts of those who surround us in daily life; become missionaries in the context of affluence and abundance.

Community Outreach to the Navajo and Working Poor--deepen mutual relationship with the communities of the Navajo people in their third world environment of northeastern Arizona and with the Latino working poor in central Phoenix through Breaking the Cycle health care ministry; learn how to share our abundance and poverty.

CONCLUSION

This is the plan that is gradually evolving out of the communal discernment of the New Household Team and pastoral staff. It is taking longer than I hoped to organized completely. However, already this small planning group is a microcosm of the congregational macrocosm that is our goal. Already each of us as leaders is being shaped and influenced as God works through us and among us. We are coming to new and shared awarenesses of who we are as leaders in terms of our identity, leadership, and spiritual life. I have included Appendix C not only as a valuable resource for leadership in any congregation, but also on a personal note, as the means to a new level of understanding of myself as an affliator. In working with any ministry how crucial it is to seek and nurture the variety of gifts and contributions already present, waiting to be discovered in the community.

Our New Household Team will resume meeting after Easter. We need to work and massage the plan, especially in the area of the proposed nine faith practices. We need to determine what Ascension's fundamental faith practices will be and how they will take on flesh and bone during the first three to five years of membership. The personality and spiritual gifts inventories will be used to discover and affirm the identity and nurture the discipleship of our new members. The very plan that we expect God to use, with us as collaborators, to deepen and transform Ascension's new members and households in their experience as disciples, missionaries, and vital members of Christ's body---this is the plan and process God is already using to transform us in the very same way!

APPENDIX A

Dear

We are glad that you have made the decision to join us in ministry at Ascension! We are a missional congregation committed to the questions “What is God doing?” and “How can we participate in what God is doing?” These are questions we invite you to consider as you enter into a period of personal and faith reflection and share ministry with us.

We believe this time prior to your joining the Ascension community of faith is a *kairos* moment in your life and in the life of this community. God is doing something brand new in our lives. A *kairos* moment is a pivotal point or turning point like the moment of birth that follows a pregnancy or when water heating on the stove reaches the boiling point. This creative and new work of God involves both reflection and practice or exercise. We believe the Christian life is a life-long journey that begins at baptism. We count it a privilege to walk with *you* on this new path God has called us to share.

Please complete and immediately return the enclosed basic personal information form to the church office. This information will ensure that you receive all congregational mailings and any other relevant information for your household related to Ascension’s ministry. This is the first step. After receiving this information one of the leaders on our New Household Team will meet with you and provide you with a packet of valuable information and faith exercises.

Prior to your reception into membership at Ascension we ask that you choose 3 ways to participate in the life of our faith community. These possibilities may include assisting in worship (greeting, ushering, assisting with communion, reading scripture, being a personal witness, writing prayers), assisting in the church office, attending a choir practice, and/or attending a monthly Vestry meeting. These experiences will help you become acquainted with our ministry, and at the same time help the community become acquainted with you. God has been at work in all of our lives in a variety of ways and we want to celebrate God’s bringing us together for ministry at this time.

We receive new households into the congregation on a monthly basis. When you have completed this time of reflection, dialogue, exercise, and involvement we look forward to celebrating your reception into Ascension’s life and ministry during worship. We thank God for you and look forward to the adventure of ministry we will share for the sake of God’s purpose in the world. If you have any questions about our life and ministry please contact Daryl Alseike (480-948-6732) or me (480-948-6050).

Sincerely,
Pastor Randy Olson

APPENDIX B

MISSIONAL QUOTES FROM *CREATED AND CALLED*

by Jean Morris Trumbauer

These quotes have been selected for inclusion in the Ascension Sunday Worship Brochure throughout the year. The purpose in making the quotes visible on Sunday morning is to consistently educate the entire community of faith, not only the new households, on the priorities and language of gift discovery, discipleship, and ministry.

We are God's work of art.
Ephesians 2:10, Jerusalem Bible

Let the Lord your God show us where we should go and what we should do.
Jeremiah 42:3

Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the only hands with which he can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go around the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body but yours.
Teresa of Avila, quoted in Simple Abundance, Sara Ban Breathnach, September 4.

What God does first and best and most is to trust...people with their moment in history.
Walter Bruggemann, "The Trusted Creature," Catholic Biblical Quarterly

I believe we are being called to be midwives for a new church... We are at the front edges of the greatest transformation of that church that has occurred for 1,600 years... That transformation is occurring because of the persistent call of God that our whole world be made new, and that the church's mission in the world be itself transformed in new patterns of reconciling the world to God.
Loren Mead, Transforming Congregations for the Future, p. 41

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.
I Corinthians 9:8

We are in the spiritual position of having an unlimited bank account. Most of us never consider how powerful the creator really is. Instead, we draw very limited amounts of the power available to us. We decide how powerful God is for us. We unconsciously set a limit on how much God can give us or help us...And if we receive a gift beyond our imagining, we often send it back.

Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way, p.91

The role of leaders in the church community is to equip others to use their gifts so that everyone can grow.

Sarah Jane Rehnborg with Sue Mallory and Brad Smith, The Starter Kit for Mobilizing Ministry, pp.1-16

If the Spirit provides the gifts necessary for the body of Christ to function, why aren't we more serious about discovering those gifts?

Mary Schramm, Gifts of Grace, p.38.

Each of us is a completely unique creature and...if we are to ever give any gift to the world, it will have to come out of our own experience and fulfillment of our own potentialities, not someone else's.

Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers, The Power of the Myth, p.151.

If we are to make ultimate sense out of our lives, all of the disparate elements in us have to be integrated around God's call.

Elizabeth O'Connor, Cry Pain, Cry Hope, p.15.

When you have the time of your life doing what your're doing, this has a way of calling forth the deeps of another person...You are not talking about "good news"; you are "good news".

Gordon Crosby, "Christians and the Love of God", sermon.

Creation isn't over; it's barely underway!

Edward Lindaman, talk at United School of the Church, Storm Lake, Iowa, July 29, 1982.

We are the Body of Christ in today's world. It is thus both our call and our fulfillment to permit God to act in and through us.

Suzanne G. Farnham et al., Grounded in God, p.3.

We cannot be ourselves unless we are true to our gifts.

Elizabeth O'Connor, The Eighth Day of Creation, p.14.

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of someone else.

Judy Garland

The gift turned inward, unable to be given, becomes a heavy burden, even sometimes a kind of poison. It is as though the flow of life were backed up.

May Sarton in Sarah Ban Breathnach, Simple Abundance, August 12.

People are gifted with distinctive competencies, not greater or lesser. The art is to help people discover and maximize what they do best.

Kennon L. Callahan, Effective Church Leadership, p.129.

God has not called me to be successful. God has called me to be faithful.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

The call of God may be so faint you can barely make out the message, but if you listen, you will hear it.

Sarah Ban Breathnach, Simple Abundance, September 4.

To search for our calling...is to believe that when we follow God's leading, God will not lead us to work that makes us miserable. Instead, God will lead us to that which makes us fulfilled and whole as persons.

Lyman Coleman, ed. Gifts and Calling, p.48.

Vocation may be described as setting aside our fears and our ego-centered work and embracing God's dream.

Roy Lewis, Choosing Your Career, p. 42.

The Spirit prays within us "with sighs too deep for words." As we listen to the Spirit, those prayers begin to surface into our consciousness.

Roy W. Oswald and Robert E. Friedrich, Jr., Discovering Your Congregation's Future, p.6.

When we first start practicing discernment, we suppose that we are searching for God; when we get used to discerning we discover that, in each decision, God was there searching for us, giving us a rendezvous at the core of our being.

Pierre Wolff, Discernment, p.116.

When that surrender is made...one is connected not only to one's own life, but to the pulsating, energizing heart of God at the center of the universe and at the center of every life.

Elizabeth O'Connor; Cry of Pain, Cry of Hope, p. 134.

Commitment is healthiest when it is not without doubt, but in spite of doubt.

Rollo May, The Courage to Doubt, p.14.

Our response-ability is our ability to give back the gifts entrusted to us.

Mary Schramm, Gifts of Grace, p.19.

Talents that are used multiply and those saved are lost.
Letty Russell, The Future of Partnership, p. 25.

Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others, the special gifts he or she has received from God.
I Peter 4:10 TEV

We are artists...life is our canvas...it takes a lifetime to create the work of art for which we were born: an authentic life.
Sarah Ban Breathnach, Simple Abundance, August 29.

Most people go to their graves with their music still in them.
Benjamin Disraeli

Discernment...involves opening our entire selves to the working of the Holy Spirit. It bids us to let go of preconceived ideas so that we can be open to new possibilities with a readiness to view things from new perspectives...it beckons us to be still and listen with the ear of the heart. It draws us into alignment with God.
Suzanne Farnham, et. al., Grounded in God, p.7

The capacity for delight is the gift of paying attention...standing knee-deep in the flow of life and paying close attention.
Julia Cameron, The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity, p.53.

The secret to a fully alive life is learning how to reframe our life questions over and over, letting go of what is no longer relevant, and taking on new questions guided by our evolving purpose.
Richard F. Leider, The Power of Purpose, p.53.

Discernment can be like driving an automobile at night: the headlights cast only enough light for us to see the next small bit of road immediately in front of us.
Suzanne G. Farnham, et al., Listening Hearts, p.27.

Simply because a task or undertaking is good to do does not mean that we are called to do it or that we should continue to do it. To be doing what is good can be the greatest obstacle to doing something even better.
Suzanne G. Farnham, et al., Listening Hearts, p. 12.

I hope that you will go out and let stories happen to you and that you will work them, water them with blood and tears and your laughter till they bloom.
Clarisa Pinkola Estes, Women Who Run With the Wolves, p.

Our talents are the special blessings that each of us received from a loving Creator who prizes the diversity and abundant variety of all creation.
Ad hoc committee on stewardship, Stewardship and Development in Catholic Diocese and Parishes: Resource Manual, p. 24.

We know people best when they tell us their story, and we know ourselves better when we reflect on our own.

James Conlon, Earth Story, Sacred Story, p.8.

The church as a community of disciples is, above all else, a learning community.

Thomas R. Hawkins, The Learning Congregation, p. 21.

We like to be on the giving end. We like to be in control. It is not easy to admit that we are vulnerable, that we have needs, limits, and wounds. It is hard to admit it to others and it is hard to admit it to God. Perhaps it is hardest of all to admit it to ourselves.

Flora Slosson Wuellner, Prayer, Stress, and Our Inner Wounds, p. 20.

Passion, whether caused by profound discontent or fierce hope, moves us from the armchair into the street.

Jacqueline McMakin and Sonya Dyer, Working From the Heart, p.38.

Passionate creativity is about coloring outside the lines. And when we don't nurture our own creatively, when we stop approaching life with enthusiasm, we are not still within—but stifled, not serene—but stagnant. True spiritual passion is a daily commitment to fully experience God...that God is good and because God is good, life is good and it's worth pouring ourselves into. It's worth taking risks and being creative if we can bring more beauty and meaning to each other and the world.

Mary Jensen, Still Life, pp.59f. and 66.

Without a dream, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Joel 2:28

Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: if you're alive, it isn't.

Richard Bach quoted in Zen and the Art of Making a Living, p.169.

As the years went by I realized that it was necessary to do something rather than everything. I saw that my life had been permeated with the "lazy-susan" syndrome: I sampled a bit of everything. We must instead choose what we most want to create...When we can say, "I want to do this, not that," the doorway to creativity opens and energy flows.

James Conlon, Earth Story, Sacred Story, p. 29.

It is in the here and now, the ordinary situation of normal life, that we find God. A true call is likely to be modest in scope. If we try to save the world, we become immobilized.

Suzanne G. Farnham et al., Listening Hearts, p. 39.

Our congregation has moved from a system where we have “jobs” that need to be filled to understanding we are a people who have unique and special gifts and we need to find where we will best use these gifts.

Nancy Johnson, administrator, Redeemer Lutheran Church, White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

Discovering the purpose of your life on this earth can be a very emotional and exceedingly powerful experience. You realize your purpose in life is tied to the gifts God has given you. Joy comes from doing what you’re called to do and using your gifts.

Margaret Fell, former shared ministry coordinator, St. Anne’s Episcopal Church, Sunfish Lake, Minnesota.

Shared ministry lives out the affirmation that God calls all people to ministry. As members of faith communities...we strive to discover, develop, utilize, and support the gifts of each person.

Jean Morris Trumbauer, Sharing the Ministry, p. 50.

God’s graciousness and initiative with us are seen in the gifts given to us...which enable us to respond with faithfulness to the mission we have been given.

United Church of Christ, “The Ministry of Volunteers”.

APPENDIX C

Achievement, Affiliation, and Power: A Leadership Resource

David McClelland and John Atkinson, two researchers, developed a theory that categorized human needs into three groups: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power and influence. They believed that all people have these needs, but my needs may be in different priority order than yours. In the course of our lifetime, one or another of these needs or motivations may emerge as more important. Our priorities change.

We can readily recognize strong achievers. They are goal oriented, focused on outcomes. They prefer challenging work but usually work that seems doable. They wouldn't think of taking a trip without an itinerary and a roadmap!

Strong affiliators are easily recognizable as well. Their focus is on building friendships, enjoying community and a sense of belonging, maintaining an atmosphere of trust and greater intimacy, and having fun.

Finally, some folks choose involvements because they want to influence the direction of a program or system, see their ideas and values incorporated into a community or empower others. Each of these styles is needed for a whole community. Each is a great gift to a group. Fortunately, we don't all have identical motivation or a lot of ministry might go undone! But like most gifts, each of these motivational styles also comes with liabilities, a shadow side.

Achievers may have to be careful not to sacrifice people to their concerns for quickly reaching a goal or being successful. And they need to make sure they don't always just pursue goals that assure them of absolute success. Achievers often hate to risk failure.

Affiliators have to monitor their tendencies to avoid healthy conflict or to be overly dependent on the approval of others. They must try to value their own gifts and identify rather than sacrifice their authenticity in order to fit in.

The shadow side of influence is the need to control, manipulate, or dominate. Those whose primary style is power and influence will benefit from asking others to hold them accountable for their use of power.

Jean Morris Trumbauer, Created and Called, pp199-120.

In explaining the McClelland and Atkinson theory it is important to reiterate that one style is no better than another. And all of us have some need for achievement, power, and affiliation. Moreover, the prevailing motivation may change during our lives...Second, it is helpful to emphasize the key factors of each style. Achievement is about seeking goals and concrete outcomes; affiliation is about relationships; influencing and power are about change.

SUPPORT FOR ACHIEVERS

- Written goals and work plan
- Staying on task
- Established standards
- Established time line
- Challenging work
- Clear organization
- Progress reports
- Regular feedback
- Opportunities for learning new skills or knowledge
- Written position description
- Training necessary to success
- Available resources
- Concrete measurement of results

SUPPORT FOR AFFILIATORS

- Being called by name
- Check-in time
- Community building time
- Guidelines for handling conflict
- Consensus decision making
- Collaborative styles and processes
- Coffee and lunch breaks
- Making new friends
- Chance to have fun
- Parties and celebrations
- Prayer partners
- Trust and deeper intimacy

SUPPORT FOR POWER/INFLUENCERS

- Environment welcoming change
- Chance to push the envelope
- Access to information
- Freedom to explore new ideas
- Risk-taking environment
- Measurable change
- Seeing others empowered
- Engaging others in change process
- Emerging shared vision
- Affirmation of leadership skills
- Feedback on extent of change and role played in such changes

Finally discuss the shadow sides of each of the styles. This is important because participants, especially in congregations, seem to ascribe a shadow to only one style, namely power/influence. Yet each of the three styles has shadow characteristics...the shadow side of achievement is an obsession with personal accomplishment. It can lead to a kind of “works righteousness”, as well as fear of failure...The shadow side of affiliation is people-pleasing, dependency, or conflict avoidance. We may depend on the approval of others for our sense of security...The shadow side of power is trying to dominate others or control outcomes, or being overly concerned with our reputation. At its extreme, this need for power may result in our trying to play God, rather than acknowledging our role as creations of God.

Jean Morris Trumbauer, Created and Called, pp.105-107

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