



RE:claim  
TriCon History and Ministry

### **“The Way We Were: In Ministry Together”**

Sunday, May 21, 2017, 5-7 PM

#### **SUMMARY SHEET**

Eighty-six individuals of different age groups gathered in the Parish Hall to enjoy a pizza/salad supper and to participate in a program focusing upon the manner in which TriCon has carried out its ministry, clergy and laity working together, over the last twenty-five years. The TriCon Transition Team hosted the event with the assistance of many volunteers.

At 5:30 PM, Jean Vandergrift, Interim Minister for Spiritual Development and Congregational Life, welcomed the group and led it in a sung grace for the meal – “For Health and Strength and Daily Food” – accompanied by Vickie Wagner.

The children left to participate in their activities.

What followed next was the reading of Ephesians 4:4-7, 11-13, Lectio Divina style. We read it three times in a row, listening deeply for the words and phrases that would capture our attention, while Charity Temblay drew a visual impression of the text. (A few others drew their impressions on paper at their tables at the same time.) This passage tells of the gifts God gives to the church, enabling it to carry out its ministry as the body of Christ, and of its oneness:

**4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. **5** There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** there is one God and Father of all people, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all. **7** Each one of us has received a special gift... **11** It was Christ who "gave gifts to people"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. **12** He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of ministry, in order to build up the body of Christ. **13** And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature.

We closed this segment with the singing of “Forward Through the Ages.”

During her introductory words, Jean Vandergrift first referred back to the May 7<sup>th</sup> Evolve Event, and then shared a number of talking points: 1) People think of “ministry” in various ways. In Ephesians, the Greek word means “service,” but service in Christ’s name, in his stead, as his body. 2) God gives each of us gifts to carry out this ministry together, so ministry is actually all that the church does together to exercise those gifts, equip the members, and reach out in the world. 3) This evening I will be using the term “pastoral leaders” to refer to the ordained ministers, and “members of the congregation,” for the lay leaders, so in TriCon’s case, besides the Senior Minister, John Lombard, there have been Associates, Interns, Staff, and volunteers (congregants) involved in its ministry. 4) All of you present tonight would have had different experiences of the pastoral leaders, either due to the timeframe in which you were involved, the degree to which you were involved, the way the working relationship between you changed over time, or the way that the emphases of TriCon’s ministry changed over time. Therefore, it is normal and okay for you to have different perspectives on the ‘way you were.’ 5) She reviewed the individual worksheet questions, and since these would provoke diversity of opinion, she led the group in a round-robin reading of the Guidelines for Shared Conversation that was to be the norm for the small group conversations. This document is based on the frame of Ephesians 4:15 – “speaking the truth in love.” 6) The aim is for this to be a time of compassionate remembering and some visioning for the next era of ministry together, so we will follow three ordered steps...

First, individuals worked by themselves to write responses to the three questions on the worksheet:

1. What ministry did the congregation and its pastoral leaders accomplish together over the last twenty-five years?
2. Pastoral leaders and congregational members develop a style of working with one another over time. How would you describe the working relationship in ministry that you experienced with the various pastoral leaders during this twenty-five year period?
3. Going forward into the future, what about this style of working together in ministry would you want to continue and what would you want to do differently?

Second, the table groups went to locations in the church building where they could circle up and share highpoints from their reflections with each other under the able leadership of designated facilitators, Jeff Campbell, Matt Boger, Sue Richards, Mary Jane Knudson, Ann Noyes, Michele Forinash, Cynthia Schweppe, Allie Kussin, Leslie Mahoney, Betsy Swaim, and Charity Tremblay. They were to especially attend to question #3, hopefully coming to consensus on one thing they would want to continue and one thing they would want to do differently.

Third, the groups returned to the tables in the Parish Hall with dessert in hand. The facilitators then shared this finding from their groups on question #3 out loud, with Jean recording them on newsprint. Inserted here is the result:

Under the question “Going forward into the future, what about this style of working together in ministry would you want to continue and what would you want to do differently?”

**Continue**

Maintain and create an environment of sharing gifts and questioning  
Cultivate different avenues for peoples’ journeys of faith...

\*Small groups

Theological knowledge and strength of the pastor

Pastoral care

\*Youth

\*Small groups

Very active membership

Welcome

Being all together

Tradition, but open to the new

Mission outreach very important

\*Also that of the youth

\*Small groups critical

\*Strong children and youth programs

Faith-based strength

Practice our faith well

### **Do Differently**

Not be so quick and easy to say, "Here, Staff, you do it."

Senior Minister to spend more time with youth

\*Be open to new ideas

\*A collegial relationship between pastoral leaders

Try not to burn out pastors

Give more attention toward members - more introspective - looking inward

(as contrasted to outward mission)

Return more to "bubble up ministries"

\*The role and relationship of the Senior and Associate Minister

\*Strategic thinking

\*Be up on what's going on now

Have a more formalized feedback loop

\*Have a committee or smaller group attending to long-term future

Collaboration

\*Collegiality - particularly the roles of the ministers

\* = said more than once

The written individual worksheets are presently being transcribed, and the data from these will go to the Transition Team, becoming available to the congregation as soon as possible.

After a brief evaluation, the total group formed a circle and sang "We Gather Together" as its closing prayer. The Meeting adjourned at 7 PM.