



RE:claim
TriCon History and Ministry

“Telling the TriCon Story”

Sunday, May 7, 2017, 5-7 PM

SUMMARY SHEET

An intergenerational crowd of ninety-three individuals gathered in the Parish Hall to enjoy an old-fashioned pot-luck supper and to participate in a program highlighting formative events and key moments of TriCon’s hiSTORY. The event was sponsored by the TriCon Transition Team and hosted by the Fellowship Committee.

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 Jeannette Taylor.

The skit entitled “Telling Our Story” came next. Allene Kussin played the narrating mother to her two children, Mary Lou Esposito and Andrew Thut, as hat-wearing TriCon members, Matt Boger, Tussie Williams, and Bob Lawson portrayed five vignettes of TriCon’s 1826 founding, its 1836 anti-slavery stance, the renovation of 1898, the fire of 1924, and the construction of the education wing in the 1950s. Many thanks go to Judy Walpole for writing and coordinating the skit. It was taped by Rev. Bob Brown and can be viewed on the TriCon website and on youtube - **TriConChurch Concord** - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWgMhU9v9PxIkxZnGmBKINg>.

During her introductory words, Jean Vandergrift called attention to Bob Watson’s history of TriCon, copies available in the church library, and invited attendees to sign a get-well card to him. She released the children present to their special programming and play, and then emphasized the following talking points: 1) People view history in different ways, this Evolve Event taking the position that TriCon’s history is actually its *story* of identity and faith, carrying within it traits that make TriCon unique. 2) Knowing the story allows the congregation to reclaim what it wants to carry into the future, and telling it instructs and inspires subsequent generations. 3) Moreover, TriCon’s story is connected to and a continuation of the good news story of Jesus Christ. 4) “Formative events” refers to happenings of its history that had a significant impact, either positive or negative, upon TriCon, and these key moments may have been motivated by circumstances *outside* the church or from *inside* due to its own decision and design. They also happened within the larger context of what was going on in the world. 5) It takes all of us to

remember the story, and we may not remember it the same, but together we can surface highlights that will empower us anew. We will follow three ordered steps to fill in the timeline covering the period of 1970 to the present.

First, individuals worked by themselves to recall and note key moments. Second, they shared these and some related stories with those at their tables. Under the able leadership of designated facilitators (Matt Boger, Sue Richards, Mary Jane Knudson, Ann Noyes, Michele Forinash, Cynthia Schweppe, Nick Bruning, Andrew Thut, Hjalmar Pompe van Meerdervoort, and Rev. Bob Brown), the tables arrived at their top two or three. Third, table facilitators shared one event at a time, in rotation from table to table, altogether filling three newsprint sheets with formative events. Scribe, Sue Stumpf, also wrote these on the timeline.

Prior to this evening, Jean looked for traits of TriCon embedded in the five selected formative events from its 1826-1950s history, listed them, and reviewed them before the group:

1. Theological reflection and convictions
2. Being ready to walk into the unknown
3. Generous donors along the way
4. TriCon occupies a solid place in the community of Concord
5. Concerned and active about children and youth and their religious education/development
6. Mission work among the needy
7. Took stands on social justice
8. Acted on behalf of the oppressed
9. Ventured into capital projects
 - + to care for its property
 - + to prepare for growth
 - + to do ministry
10. Courage and determination in the face of adversity
11. Welcome of newcomers
12. Deliberate about money decisions

She then offered several questions for further contemplation:

- + Are these still active characteristics of TriCon? If so, which ones, and to what degree? Which have fallen away and why might that be?
- + Did you notice any interesting patterns of belief and behavior across these years?
- + If you look at your conflicts, what do they reveal about your identity and faith?
- + What do you want to forgive and let go of the past, and what do you want to be sure to carry into the future?
- + Can you trace the line of mission running through your story?
- + Where do you see God working/leading? What might this look like were an artist to trace it?

Later, Jean took the compiled list of formative events from 1970 to 2017 and looked for further traits of TriCon that she saw embedded therein. See the attached document.

After a brief evaluation, a closing circle prayer, and a sharing of dessert with the incoming youth group, the meeting adjourned at 7 PM. THANK YOU, ALL, and come May 21 for “The Way We Were: Together in Ministry.”

TRICON TRAITS (Addendum to the Summary Sheet)

Jean Vandergrift's ideas from the early years of its story; the five-plus formative events in the skit:

1. Theological reflection and convictions (i.e. Jesus and the Trinity)
2. Ready to walk into the unknown (i.e. across the mill dam to form a church)
3. Generous donors along the way (i.e. Hubbard property)
4. Occupies a solid place in the community of Concord (i.e. even after the separation of church and state; community to the rescue after the fire)
5. Concerned and active about children and youth and their religious education/development (i.e. "Sabbath schools")
6. Mission work among the needy (i.e. for slaves and the poor)
7. Took stands on social justice (i.e. resolution on slaveholding)
8. Acting on behalf of the oppressed (i.e. the minister praying for the slave)
9. Venturing into capital projects
 - + to care for property
 - + to prepare for growth (i.e. renovation of 1898)
 - + to do ministry (i.e. Sunday school wing)
10. Courage and determination in the face of adversity (i.e. after the fire)
11. Welcome of newcomers (i.e. post-WWII influx of people to Concord)
12. Deliberate about money decisions (i.e. mortgage or not)

Jean Vandergrift's ideas about **additional TriCon Traits** derived from the list of formative events from 1970 to 2017 that was compiled from the table groups on May 7:
(Some of the twelve traits above are echoed in this list.)

13. A place of dialogue on current events (i.e. Pasley daughter after presidential election and the Al Filipov forums – see also #4 above)
14. Intentionally open and affirming of LGBT community (O & A decision, Coming Out stories – see also # 7 above)
15. To do something constructive after tragedy (i.e. 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, youth suicide – see also #10 and #4 above)
16. Priority on mission giving (i.e. 20% benchmark established; Antique show – see also #6 and #4 above)
17. Emphasis on adult spiritual growth (i.e. Small groups, spiritual development efforts with other staff at different times, Coming Out stories, Anchor, Women's retreats)
18. Priority on music (i.e. Vickie Wagner, organ – see also #9)
19. Hiring competent staff (i.e. Judy Walpole, Carrie O'Brien, Wagner, Crampton, first youth minister, 1987, etc.)
20. Building used by community (i.e. Leap school – see also #4 above)
21. Hold the role of clergy in high esteem (i.e. Gilbert, Lombard, Brown, and even the resignation of Butler indicates integrity of the minister is important to TriCon)
22. Attention to global mission/ministry (i.e. Burma, South Africa, etc. – see also #6 above)
23. Weathered the economic crises of 2008 and 2012, caring for one another (see also #12 above)
24. Pastoral care by the clergy and the laity

25. Reinvigorate ministry programs through the years (i.e. Christian Education and Youth – see also #5 above)

Other examples from 1970 – 2017 that illustrate the *first* group of twelve TriCon Traits:

Youth Mission Trips begin in 1988 (#5 and #6)

Renovation of 1998-2001 (#9)

Rev. Butler's resignation (#10; the resulting conflict may also reveal other TriCon Traits)