

Draft
The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
Meeting
June 23, 2008

President Barbara Senness introduced Roger Schwanze.

Roger gave devotions and prayer. He handed out copies of the report and then read through his report with the congregation.

Kris Jank -- Under the first recommendation, it says that the task force is to be composed of seven members selected from those who strongly oppose the process and seven members from those who support the process. Can you clarify what you mean by the process?

Roger -- Good question. I mean the way in which things have been done in the past. Where I define the process is those (and it is defined differently by both sides) that are on one side of the issue are saying that the process is one which is totally top down. Those that are on the other side of the issue are saying that the process is one in which they have worked through and they feel they have faced the presentation and done some talking. What I am looking at, is that the two sides sit down and say, what is the process. There is a difference of opinion as to how things should be done or have been done and in my recommendation, I'm looking for a group of people that would sit down and say this is how we can do this together.

Ron Hovland -- You were at those meetings and I was not there. Do you have a sense, you said there were a 150 people, do you have a sense for how people are split on this, for confirmation?

Roger -- No. I have no way of knowing that because I was with two different groups and the other people (some of us were with two different groups) and we did not take a head count and choose up sides.

Mark Thiede -- How would you suggest to go about selecting the people to serve?

Roger -- I think that has to be something that is done with the people know who their leaders are on the two sides. My feeling is, in a congregation, people know who speaks for them. You would be sitting down and they deciding, maybe you'd have two caucuses, one in Denver and one in St. Paul (I'm kidding on that one), where they sit down and say let's come up again and each group choose who they want to be their spokespeople for that. I don't think you could turn this over to the Council, at this point, and say who they choose. I think it has to be chosen by the people who are on both sides of the issue.

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Dan Patton -- These are your recommendations, but who is it that decides that we follow your recommendation?

Roger -- That's up to you. That's up to the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Dan Patton -- When the vision statement was predrafted, at the large meeting, the vote was 100 to 20. My first reaction on seeing this group of seven and seven is that it gives that 20 half the vote in deciding how this curriculum moves forward. That is not capital to the process.

Roger -- Thank you.

Denise Engen -- We had somebody ask about the strength of the feelings on the two sides and you did not do a tally. I see the recommendations of the seven and the seven and I have a concern, a question, I guess, on how do we know that it is two sided. From my observation in the one group that I was in but talked with many people who were in all the groups, it did not seem clear that there were two sides. It seemed more clear that there were people in a power structure that were exercising their authority between us and to you and other people who were either upset about that or who were concerned about what they saw and the outcome. That to me is not clearly two sided, it was clearly a large group of concerned people and a smaller group of satisfied people. I don't know if dividing up into two is really going to be the representative of the solution or representative of the hard feelings of the group.

Roger -- My point is that what I felt in listening to, in the two groups that I sat with and the feeling that I got from the other people who were here, is that the two sides have not been able to sit down. Again, two sides always infringe, in wider scope in that the people have not sat down and been able to just talk about, face to face, how do we work together and do what is best for the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Julie Burrows -- I also was not able to be there, since my son was actually in a couple of events, but my question revolves around this congregation. Did you hear an impact that this was having on our children or teens?

Roger -- I didn't. To my knowledge, at looking and reading all submitted, I don't have a recall as to how much was said about the young people of the congregation.

Bud Thorvilson -- Is there a budget problem involved in this?

Roger -- I don't know.

Bud Thorvilson -- Then we'd better find out.

Marion Fronk -- When we went to the meetings, those people who felt strongly to the ways things stand, were very organized as they came with lists. I think that they had been talking together. Those of us who weren't, aren't against the way that things have been done, had not gotten together and don't know if we should get together.

Roger -- Again, the point of the task force is to get people talking to each other. Not talking, necessarily with each other in small groups, but talking to each other.

Marion Fronk -- No, I'm thinking of the seven people and where those seven people would come from.

Sally Williams -- In the small group I attended, there was a lot of discussion about communion, but it's not listed here. Didn't the other groups have a discussion about communion and how often we have it?

Roger -- I just mentioned in the report that the differences range from the time of the discussions about communion. So if it was raised, it was not felt to be a real major issue compared to some of the other issues. But it was mentioned, yes.

Sylvia Peterson -- In the group that we participated in, there was quite the concern about what they felt was the lack of support for Sunday School. Some of the people were very emotional about that, that if you don't start (that's what brings young people in, is the Sunday School program). I thought that, with some of the changes that have been initiated originally, was pretty pathetic.

Roger -- Thank you.

Bill Bockelman -- My name is Bill Bockelman. I will talk as loud as I can and try to talk straight into the microphone as that's the way we are supposed to do. I have had some problem hearing despite the fact that people have used microphones. It seems to not carry very well with all the people. I think I may have a positive suggestion. As most of you know, I have been a member since 1960. My first wife died and I was remarried several years after to my present wife. She has been very, very wonderful, very good experience. She is a Methodist. We don't really have a lot of arguments about that at all. I'm a retired pastor. I still get my pension from the Lutheran Church, so I can't very well leave this church. Not for that sake at all, but the fact of the matter is that we do go to two churches. Not every Sunday, the same two churches, but regularly. Since both churches use, are using, the system of the lectionary, which becomes the basis of the sermon for the day, we get the opportunity every Sunday to get a second opinion. This last Sunday, yesterday, we got the same opinion all the way through from both sermons (from the Lutheran sermon and from the Methodist sermon). They were both very good. But there was one sentence in the sermon from the Methodist church. There was one sentence that said virtually the same thing, in maybe different words. The Associate Pastor of the Methodist Church captured it in one very, very short sentence that I think

gives us a positive opportunity. Her sentence was something like this, and I don't recall word for word, but it was something like this, her statement was that there are two ways, two ways that the Spirit of God works with people. The one way He works with people is when these people are already very happy together and have a good experience together. They may have their ups and downs now and then, but it is really quite easy for the Spirit of God to work among them. The other, she said, may have said the same thing but in different words, but these were the precise words that we heard from the Associate Pastor of the Methodist church. Her name is Becky Seacrest. I had a good opportunity yesterday to give her what I think was a helpful thing. I don't think that there is a member in this church (speaking of the Methodist church now) who thinks that on the day when the Associate Pastor preaches, well, its got to be second rate, so those are the days that I can stay home. I don't think there is a single person in that church who would ever think that. I made this comment to somebody else and he said that's right, that's right. We have two very good preachers, the Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastor. Yesterday, the Associate Pastor, and she had the same text, read the same text, said many of the same things, said in a slightly different way, said the same thing. The thing that she said that impressed me the most, the one statement, was that there are two ways that the Spirit of God can work in the congregation. One is what is a good congregation to start with. Everybody is reasonably happy, with few arguments here and there, but everybody is reasonably happy. The other way is if there are problems in the congregation, that also can bring them together. I have a feeling that was the word that I heard that as a second opinion from the Methodist Church, but I think it will hold water in the Lutheran Church, too. We are aware that we have something of a situation or problem here. Have had our meetings on this, but maybe that is the way that we come together, are guided by God, by the Holy Spirit, are guided to find a way through this (shall we call it a difficulty, shall we call it an issue or what shall we call it). I think that may be exciting, that the Spirit of God can work with us at this time.

Roger -- Thank you. Anybody else?

Rolf Engstrom -- My comment is that I am taking the Lutheran viewpoint of being in the middle of everything. I don't feel like I'm on one side or the other side. I know there are problems. My overall concern is that there is a problem. I don't want to pick sides on one way or the other. But we need to work through and I think there is a lot of people who feel the same way, is our voices won't be heard if there are two sides.

Roger -- Thank you. I don't mean to prolong this.

Britta Taracks -- I know you don't want to prolong this and yet, I would feel very at odds if you leave without a sense of a plan for direction of what is the next step. I know that you want this leadership to have a decision on how to move ahead to come from us. There is certainly great wisdom in that, but I really feel as if you are still needing in having a sense of what that leadership is. I'm just wondering if there are outside consultants, or other people, or yourself, anybody else, to perhaps lead us down that path

to figure out the process of what to do. I also am a little bit leery of dividing the views of the congregation into two camps. I think that there are positive things that we all share that I almost wonder if, maybe, we should get together into small groups and start generating positive ideas of things that we treasure about being a congregation and use those positive things, as well as dealing with the fears and the disappointments.

Roger -- Thank you.

Don Meyer -- I've been around here for 51 years and there is nothing that I want more than happiness for everybody in this congregation. I have some ideas, but so do other people and we need to talk about them. But we were discussing this, a fellow who I had class in school and who I have a high regard for (and I think he does of me), made a comment (first of all I made one, then he made in a slightly different way) and I had to agree with him. I have to think about what other people are saying and try to understand. Changes will be made, but we have to get together and even if we disagree with somebody, to listen to what they are saying and have them listen to you. Most of the time, we will find ourselves agreeing before we get done. I believe that that is true.

Roger -- Thank you.

Andrea Norman -- My concerns about the recommendation, as far as your report, is that there is nothing specific related to the vision and strategic plan and that there have been many, many people in this congregation that have invested a lot of time and a lot of energy. I don't know how long a period of time it was, but I feel like we need to honor them, we need to honor the people that have worked on that, we need to somehow get back to them. I fear that the time talking about, working together and coming together (which is important), but I also think we need to keep looking at how can we bring the plan together in a way that we can support. I think that there are many good things in that plan. My question is, why is that not part of the recommendations and I would like to see it there.

Roger -- All right. I had to limit the recommendations, which I made in the general recommendation of setting up the task force. I believe that that is a part of moving forward with what happened in that vision statement and the process of how do we do those kinds of things if they are the things that the congregation wants.

Andrea Norman -- And then just in my sense of the staffing plan, that's what really kind of brought this to a head, was the definite moving of the strategic plan forward. I personally support that, but I don't want to lose sight of that.

Roger -- Thank you.

Andy Horstman -- I certainly think that we could be a little more concrete before we take steps going forward. When I started reading your report, Roger, I was very sad that I had

not attended the listening sessions. I think that I disagree entirely with everything - 1, 2 and 3. Declining membership has been occurring for a long period of time and you can attribute many reasons to it. One of the minor ones, I would think, is current leadership. It certainly isn't the most prominent. We've lost some very strong members over the last five years. Not just because of the natural aging of the congregation. Except I think we heard, in that respect, that the rest of you knew and just capitalized in some of the people saying this. I think that just gives that view a little more strength than it should have, which leads to the next two (which I think are more important). The idea, in paragraph two, the only comments are that there is a lack of community here. I think that that is absolutely wrong. I think at times people do feel uninvolved, they don't feel properly treated, they don't feel like having a conversation at times. Every time I'm here, I've seen a community in action, one way or another, even if I haven't had a sense of being involved. So I think we are overlooking the true strength of this congregation; and the fact that it has been very resilient in the community, as with children, music, artistic expression we have here for the respect of the foundation of our church. The third paragraph really stumped me. I have been here on Sundays when I haven't gotten a lot out of the service, most likely because I was daydreaming or thinking of something I needed to get done. I find it very hard to blame any pastor for those things. I heard one member who inspired sermons from every pastor that's ever preached in this church that took me out of those daydreams and helped me to focus and learn something. When I talk to people who don't come to church very often and they say why do you do that, you don't need to be there to believe as you believe. I said perhaps not, but I wouldn't underestimate the power of Christ and say I have the words you can believe. But the reinforcement that comes from being here is significant, its substantial and it has kept many of us in the faith with the support as we've gone through troubling times. I read paragraph three here and I can't keep up. I guess, maybe, when we have these listening sessions, you should put a mirror up so folks can take a look at themselves. I don't want to say that you can't be critical of the pastor, certainly you can be critical of all of us, but we have declining membership for many reasons. It is a crisis. You have to focus on it and treat it, but we do not lack community here in such an extent that I think an outside consultant needs to come in and consider this. We certainly do not lack reasons for being inspired on Sunday because of what our pastors have done. I think the one concrete thing that I have seen over the last six months that's raised a lot of concern is something we can actually look at and treat, it's the vision plan. People worked very hard on that and I think that part of the anxiety and tension that came out of that was that after working so hard, some of that effort was given very short shrift rather than sitting down and saying here's part of the plan I don't like and I think you could make that up. What concerned me about all of this discussion is that there's like there's some underlying fundamental mistake here, that we have people who are acting in an unchristian way or something like that. I don't see it, what I've seen are people acting to the best of their ability and doing work voluntarily that we've asked them to do as members of boards and committees here. I would think that we do need to talk directly to them and not divide this into sides, but take that drawing and perhaps take out the vision plan and look at it again. We don't have to rush anything, but I don't see that we are going to get very far if we single out

pastoral leadership or some board leadership or something along those lines and say that's the reason, that's why we are not succeeding or moving forward like we want to or that's the reason some younger families have left because they don't find our Sunday School attractive or that's the reason musicians have left because they don't like our program here in music anymore. It's not going to be that simple. As I said, the reason I stood up is the first three paragraphs in the report helped me to hear how people feel and to carry me, probably every day of the week, a sense of community and the inspiration we receive on Sunday from this church. Thanks.

Roger -- Thank you.

Jan Dobies-Hein -- I would like to make a suggestion, that we think about how we've handled things over the years. We have a church council, we have a board who chose a task force to be efficient forces. I would like to suggest that we integrate the recent task force with the boards and with the education of the church council so that everything that was discussed by the task force is discussed with the relevant board and that discussions of value by the representative at the church council. I would like it if both sides had a way to be looked at the issues involved, than to create a new system because that I think would be time consuming and to question the process might bring about more challenges. So I'm just hoping that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water and that we look at what has happened and try to integrate that.

Roger -- Thank you.

Rod Pedley -- I have a few concerns. First the community. I worked here for five years as custodian. During those five years, my wife had been very ill and died. I can't express the human community that I had, with the support the congregation, as well as the staff. They were fantastic. Currently, as far as the worship is concerned; but first let me report my new situation, I'm gay. My partner comes to church with me and he's Catholic. He loves this church. I think so much of this church. Simply enjoying it. So as far as worship is concerned, as music is concerned, I have nothing that is wrong. I think it is a fantastic church, it's one of the few times that I feel like I belong to a church. Thank you for all of you.

Roger -- Thank you.

Janet Dietrich -- I have a very pragmatic question. Two of your recommendations involve outside consultants and a third involves a three-part workshop. I'm wondering if we go with your recommendations, how long you would expect the consultants engaged with us and how much each of these different recommendations would cost.

Roger -- I don't know. I'm sorry, that's my response. Again, it's up to the congregation to choose what they choose to do. I was asked to make some recommendations and those are some things which I believe would be helpful. It could be done, it depends upon on

how much the congregation gets involved with the consultants and how they choose to move forward.

Kris Jank -- I was wondering if you could help us understand what Healthy Congregations workshops 1, 2, 3 is?. What will it involve? I'm not familiar with that concept.

Roger -- That's one question that I can answer. Healthy Congregations is a series of workshops. Each workshop is five sessions long. Each workshop is designed to create and to help congregations move forward in their ability to talk with each other and to work with each other to exude health in serving together. Workshop one deals with how a congregation is an emotional system and how that works together. The simplest statement of a system is that it looks at, not the individuals within the system, but the whole system as responsible for what happens within the congregation, not certain individuals within it. The second workshop deals with what is it that makes for poor health in a congregation. The third workshop talks about healthy leadership. By the way, there are three more workshops, there are a total of six. One is on stewardship, one is on relationships and one is on spirituality.

Nancy Rystrom -- The people are asking about practical questions. I was wondering if you could share why you chose, in your recommendation, seven participants versus five or four. If there was any particular decision making or other rationale for that.

Roger -- I could give a smart answer and say seven is a biblical number, but no, it could be five, it could be seven. It just seems to bring about the best discussion and people feel best represented and by the same token, if you get any bigger than that, the group can't function.

Paul Grangaard -- I have been a member here 49 years. I have a suggestion. I don't know how we pick seven and seven. I'd agree with Rolf, saying that there are many people between two poles. So I'm not sure how you muster seven from the same pole from members of this congregation. I also think this is a healthy group of people and we can discuss and we can agree the process that's been used to date is, sort of, I think that variable conversations, there has been a number of conversations behind or in small groups off to the side that haven't had any opportunity, really, before tonight to stand up and to speak to each other. My comment would be that we can actually disagree respectfully. I would have to disagree with many who stood up. I think that there are things that could be done on Sunday morning that would inspire us more and I would be happy to have a discussion about that, but you could disagree. I think people have left this congregation because of that reason and I think that we can talk about how we improve. Improvement is the natural thing; that it isn't something which I preach, self improvement is something that works for you. I believe that Christianity is all about how we improve our relationships with each other and with God over time. So I have a hard time picking seven people. I would suggest that we have a town meeting and have

formal discussion and then we decide, as a group, who our leaders might be to lead us forward in this process that you are suggesting. I'm not sure we need this much outsider help as is suggested here. I think I'm much more in favor of looking to ourselves to lead us forward. The last thing that I'd like to say is leadership is hard. It's a tough job and it's not easy, Teddy Roosevelt said that being a leader; its blood, sweat and tears, it's not down on who's trying. Leadership with change is extra hard. There's no question that this congregation needs some change. We're talking about what kind of change. I would ask that those who might be at the pole who lay this all at the feet of pastoral leadership and I think that's a very small minority of people in this congregation, but I'm sure that there are some. I would ask them to think about how beneficial that leadership is and how difficult that leadership can be. Thank you.

Roger --Thank you.

Don Meyer -- I've just got to make another comment about friendship, talking and listening to each other. This young man is the one who made a comment this morning that straightened me out and I thank him for it and thank you again.

Roger -- Thank you. Let's go about five more minutes.

Nancy Larson -- As a parishioner, I just want to say the problem that perplexes me the most is changes were recommended in that visions book. I'm trying to read the book very carefully, but the main question I had was for some of the changes, was why. I think, as a congregation, it wasn't discussed as to why these changes were recommended and that may help us.

Roger -- Thank you.

Herb Morgenthaler -- I tend to agree with many of your recommendations, but I wanted to say a couple of things. This congregation has been there and done that. We have gone through change and we've had opportunity to understand change, to buy into change, to put our own thoughts and ideas together and then to implement that change. It comes from the climate in which things are presented. I'll give you an example. The congregation was in time of an interim pastor and rather than just not doing anything, this congregation put itself to work and said we are going to reach out and expand our mission work. What did we do. We started to have a series of three committees. One committee was to explore what this congregation wants to do. That committee spent time getting people's opinions and putting them together. There were focus groups. There were online surveys. There were opportunities to go out and to talk to youth at junior high schools and senior high schools. We met with people at 7500 York. We got a lot of ideas and people were very comfortable that they were heard. Those ideas were compiled and we came up with seven reasons why we would do mission and what would be the criteria. That criteria was handed to a second committee. They then chose the actual products and the third committee put together the financial piece. By the time we

had that ready to go to the congregation, everybody understood it. Everybody knew what was happening. Everybody had a chance to say their word. Everybody had input. Unfortunately, with the vision statement and process it came out and there was very little opportunity for that. I think that is probably the core reason why they are having difficulty. We need leadership that creates an environment for change. People will buy into change if they understand it and know its good for them and for this congregation and that has been in my mind what has lacked here. Too much comes down per the report. We need participative management of this congregation to express themselves with their heart and not be told we can't do this or to be just told this is how it's going to be.

Roger -- Thank you.

Dave Anderson -- There's been a lot of things that have been said tonight, talking about why we are doing this, why we are doing that. A lot of its come from people who weren't at listening sessions. The thing that I'm disappointed in is that your report does not really express the emotion of the listening sessions, that I am aware of. Certainly not the one that I went to and from what I've heard, does not reflect the feelings that were at, maybe, at the other meetings. This is a healthy congregation. I have good thought on that. We have done so many healthy things in the past. But it is being projected as an unhealthy group and I disagree with that. I agree with Herb; that if we go about things in the correct way, that changes and progress will come and we will return to the status that we have had in the past. But it's almost like this listening thing is going to be a detriment to that, rather than help. I have to say that I am very disappointed in your report.

Roger -- Thank you. Thank you for running that microphone (to Bob Stein).

Roger introduced Heather Hammond for benediction and prayer.