

Rethinking what it means to be Church today!

Join in the conversation on the second Tuesday of the month to help us rethink what it means to be Church today. Our next meeting will be on February 13, 2018 from 7:00-7:45 PM. On January 9th, several members of the congregation engaged in lively conversation in response to the fourth chapter of Kelly Fryer's book *Reclaiming the "C" word: Daring to be Church Again*. Below are some quotes from the book and our reflections. Thanks to all who participated.

Chapter 4

Daring to Get Focused

Opening Ourselves and Listening for God's Will through Prayer

- In the past, how have we, the people of Good Shepherd Lutheran discerned what and how God is calling us to be God's church?

Reflections:

Leadership Training

Long range Planning

We have had a very structured church with the services being the same each week

Coming together – trying to bring ideas together

Committees, council, discipleship group

Guidance from Mission Statement

Needs of the community – food pantry, Rally for Riley, Pre-school, Kids Korner

- How would you describe the communal (not individual) prayer life of the people of Good Shepherd with regard to planning and decision making?

Reflections:

Not so good – mostly listening to the pastor

Non-existent

We respond in prayer during the service, because it is written in the bulletin.

Often start with prayer – but it is perfunctory

Nothing specific to decisions

We as a congregation are so focused on doing things the way that we have always done things and not being led by the Spirit.

- Respond to the first full paragraph on page 54.

When we pray together as a church, we are agreeing to curb our own desires and park our agendas at the door. We are inviting God to come in. We are daring God to get busy in and through us. We are agreeing to let ourselves be turned into people through whom God's wonderful mission to bless the world can happen. We are looking to be changed. And for a lot of us, that is just asking for trouble.

Reflections:

When we pray and work together as a “whole church” – God’s mission will become apparent and will help us to change. Change can be very scary and frightening and for some of us it may not be very welcomed, but small steps can happen and not be so troubling. Accepting God to work through us will generate change.

Curbing our desires for us(PA Dutch) is tough – But if we could, the possibilities are endless.

We are not accustomed to doing things like actual praying together

This feels like this would be hard for our congregation to accept and put into action. It does not feel like we are inspired and led by God. We, as Lutherans, are more reserved in our prayer life.

- What challenges are there to adopting the four guidelines (listed below and described on pages 54 and 55) in the work that we do together as God’s church here in this place:
 - There are no experts
 - Know what God’s voice sounds like
 - Prayer is not optional
 - Expect things to happen

Reflections:

Maybe congregation needs to start by reading a book of the Bible together.

Some think only the pastor prays

Time needed to spend in Scripture

Having enough time for prayer may be a challenge because we are always in a hurry

We may not see things happen immediately – may take time

Prayers lead to transformations

Prayer is a challenge.

Scripture study has always been outside of the church.

People will fight adding Scripture reading to meetings

Fear of having to be an expert on the Scriptures – pastor’s job

Experts – there are none – we can all pray

God’s word – open our ears and listen, spend time in the Word together. Take the time to read and talk about Scriptures if we are serious about hearing what God is saying to us

Prayer is not optional – do everything in prayer, begin everything in prayer

Expect things to happen – praying together would be transforming, we should as a congregation, get focused as a congregation

The way we have always done it – people will not be open to change. We get tied up in traditions instead of hearing and feeling God’s word in action. People have their roles and we get lazy and let them handle their roles instead of working together.

Lack confidence in our ability to pray in a group.

- Other thoughts and comments
 - Sounds promising – but can we move past ideas*
 - Pray your way through your whole day – I like that*