

CRC Team Meeting 8/3/18 7pm

In attendance: Joe Lee, Jean Harris, Richard Young, Ann Young, Patty Ferguson, Laura Baumgartner

Agenda:

- Brainstorm resources for 9/16 Table Talks during worship
- Plans for facilitating conversations around Reconciling Ministries Network and General Conference 2019 in fall-winter 2018-19

1. We began by discussing the extent to which becoming a part of Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) is still the right question to be asking at Aldersgate, given General Conference 2019. We considered whether to back off from the question of whether to join RMN so that congregation members could focus instead on the process of understanding what is happening leading up to and during General Conference in February 2019. The decision was made by consensus that discontinuing using the word Reconciling would be confusing to the congregation. However the conversations we hope to facilitate in fall-winter 2018-19 will be primarily about what it would mean to be open and inclusive, which applies to both questions (whether to join RMN and how to respond to whatever decision is made at General Conference).
2. We reviewed a chart that Joe created based on an article published by the United Methodist News Service summarizing the three plans that will come before General Conference. A few revisions were suggested to the chart, which Joe will complete. The request was made for a similar chart to explain what changes would happen at Aldersgate if we decided to join the Reconciling Ministries Network. Joe and Laura are working on such a chart.
3. We turned our attention to September 16 worship and how to structure the Table Talks within the framework of a one hour worship service. We have several recommendations to be made to Pastor Brad and the worship team.
  - a. The heart of the Table Talk structure is discussion in small groups. We recommend groups of four, so that all voices can be heard. We recommend suggesting that congregation members find heterogeneous groups, but that we not assign groups so that people will find people with whom they are comfortable having an honest conversation. We hope to err on the side of building trust rather than facilitating disagreement for this first set of conversations.
  - b. Three questions from the protocol used in Edmonds seemed to be most fruitful for this setting. We recommend approximately 10 minutes per question, for 30 minutes in discussion, total. The three questions we recommend are listed below (exactly as they appeared in the handout from Edmonds UMC Table Talks on April 28, 2018):
    - What was it like to deal with conflict in your family of origin? How did you learn to deal (or not) with conflict? How are you handling conflict in a similar or different way today?
    - What has been your experience talking about the complex issues of sexuality with your extended family and your network of friends?
    - Why is it important that our congregation talk about the complexity around the issues of sexuality? If we widened the circle, what would we hope for, be concerned about, or fear?
  - c. We believe that having a note-taker is unnecessary and perhaps not helpful. However having a paper and pen available so that the group can raise ideas that have come up in their

conversation to the attention of everyone else, will help all understand that their voices and contributions are important and also allow cross-group communication.

d. Song ideas that we thought might be helpful include

Bind us together (in TFWS)

Bound Together (camp song)

Weave us together (UMW song)

They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love (in TFWS)

e. Possible order of worship that gets us close to an hour

Song/Prelude

Opening Prayer (first service)/Call to Worship (second service)

Ground Rules

Table Talks

Communion

Song

Benediction

Song/Postlude/Offering plates available on the way out

4. We looked at the fall calendar. We are hoping that distributing some of the Bishop's history and some of the summary of the three plans that the Commission on the Way Forward has developed in writing can mean that we need to cover less of that orally on the 16<sup>th</sup>. We also hope to be able to work with materials that the conference/district provide about possible outcomes of General Conference more once additional materials become available. We are hoping that Brad's sermon on the 9<sup>th</sup> will also help set the stage for some of the honest dialog we hope to make space for on the 16<sup>th</sup>. We talked about whether October 7 would be too early to have another congregational event. Tentatively, we wondered about a revised schedule that looked like this:

- October: Possibly a Wednesday evening event to discuss new materials available about the Way Forward/General Conference
- November: Possibly a Saturday event around a panel discussion about Reconciling Ministries in other churches
- December: Possibly online materials and/or a service project (one idea was to collect socks for LGBTQ homeless teens/raise awareness about how homelessness is more likely to affect LGBTQ teens). In lieu of an event in person, due to holidays.
- January: Possibly another round of Table Talks

We adjourned at 8:30pm. Minutes respectfully submitted by Laura Baumgartner. Please correct and revise.