

More about Faithful Innovations

By now you are familiar with the parish activities connected to our involvement in **Faithful Innovations**. The Lenten Program, “What might God be Up to At St. David's?” is complete and we are turning our attention to the next phase, focused on getting out into our neighborhood. But did you know that we are supported by a whole network of diocesan and interdenominational innovators?

The St. David's guiding team is being trained and inspired by Blair Pogue, Canon for Vitality and Innovation with ECMN. We train with 6 other metro parishes and Blair also trains southern and northern cohorts within the diocese. She describes Faithful Innovations in this way: “Faithful Innovation invites participants to focus outward, to be curious about where God is already at work in your community. Guiding teams of 3-8 lay leaders from participating faith communities and their clergy will gather three times over a 9-10 month period, work with a coach to process learnings, then envision and enact small experiments to learn more about what the Holy Spirit is up to in the lives of their neighbors.”

In addition to this diocesan support, our guiding team is connected to Luther Seminary's Faith+Lead team, a group designed to connect and educate learners and leaders to know the difference Jesus makes and equip them for God's calling in their lives and communities. According to the website (faithlead@luthersem.edu), it provides an ecosystem of resources, meets people where they are with courses, coaching, learning communities, digital resources and consulting to help them know Jesus better, be guided by the spirit to find their purpose, join with God in healing the world.

Three Members of the Faith+Lead team at Luther have just published a book, *Leading Faithful Innovation, Following God into a Hopeful Future* by Dwight Zscheile, Michael Binder, Tessa Pinkstaff. According to the book preface, they “build on Scripture, theology, and the latest leadership and change theories to guide church leaders on a journey toward grassroots, participatory spiritual growth. This faithful innovation begins with a three-step process: listening to God and to each other, acting so we can learn, and sharing our stories in community. Real-life stories and supportive spiritual practices make each step toward effective change accessible and actionable. Throughout the book, the authors demonstrate that faithful innovation is not another program or an add-on to what readers are already doing. It is a path to a new normal. It is an ongoing way of following God that allows the Spirit of God to drive the energy among the people of the church.”

To celebrate the book launch, the Faith+Lead team at Luther presented a Webinar on Tuesday, 4/19/23 which will be made available at St. David's soon. During the Webinar, the book's authors, along with panelists Holly Rankin Zaher and Matt Short, discussed

the hopeful work of faithful innovation. Michael Binder posted a blog about Faithful Innovations in advance of the webinar:

“The idea of faithful innovation can be found in stories like the one about Paul and his companions in Acts 16. The story is about a group of Jesus followers trying to figure out how to follow God’s leading to share the kingdom of God with communities they aren’t familiar with. It’s a messy process of trial and error as they figure out what God is leading them to do and how to do it. They faithfully follow God’s leadership as they meet new people and learn more about new contexts. This is the same kind of process we need to live out our Christian faith in the changing contexts we all live in today.”

Watch for more information on how to view the Webinar and to learn more about **listen, act, share**.