



# **SPIRITUALLY GROUNDED WORK GROUP REPORT**

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**From:**

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**To:**

*Graciously Delivering Work Group,  
Faithfully Living Work Group*

## Introduction and Purpose:

The Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) Council established three Work Groups to provide information to help establish the Transition Team for TLC to move forward:

- » Spiritually Grounded
- » Faithfully Living
- » Graciously Delivering

Based on the [\*TLC Crossroads - An Overview\*](#) pamphlet, the Spiritually Grounded Work Group was tasked to “review, assess, and explore ways to enhance the spiritual vitality and relationships of TLC and among the Crossroads transition Work Groups.”

In order to accomplish this task, the group set out to learn from individuals in and around the Trinity Lutheran congregation, both at Trinity-Lynnwood and Pointe of Grace-Mukilteo, how they spiritually connect with God, how TLC nurtures those connections, and how TLC nurtures each individual’s sense of belonging within the TLC congregation.

During the process of meeting as a team and as we gathered information, some very important things happened, worth mentioning. Our team developed very close relationships with each other. We learned about each other in a very personal and trusting way through sharing, exploring, discussing and praying. Although we were all quite different in our thinking and thought processes, we grew to respect and learn from each other. Throughout all of our meetings and our work, it was clear God’s spirit was moving among us.

In addition, we were thanked by many of the people we interviewed. They were sincerely appreciative that we were reaching out, asking spiritually meaningful questions about their faith, attempting to get to know them, and learning about their interests. Many were honored to be invited into conversation.

## Methodology

Three central themes were developed as the basis for our interviews with people from different groups within and around the church.

1. How do you connect with God?
2. How does TLC as a congregation nurture those connections?
3. Talk about your sense of belonging and engagement in the TLC faith community.

Different methods were used to reach out and learn about people’s spiritual and relational vitality as it relates to TLC.

- » A World Café Conversation drew approximately 35 people to a pizza and salad luncheon following the 10:30 worship service on July 17, 2016. Several tables were set up to accommodate four individuals at each table. Ten minutes was allowed for each table to discuss each of the questions listed above. After each question, people moved to different tables in order to change the dynamics of the group discussion. Responses were captured on butcher paper at each table.

- » The Spiritually Grounded Work Group divided into several focus groups and either through group meetings or individual interviews initiated discussions focused on the three central themes listed above. Focus groups included:
  - Parents of children under 18 years old
  - Young adults 18-30 without children
  - Church Council
  - Church Staff
  - Point of Grace
  - Seniors
  - Marginally connected individuals
  - New members

## Data

As a result of the interviews and group meetings, the following data was collected and is summarized below:

### Connecting with God

- » Individual practices
  - prayer, reflection, quiet time, meditation, personal devotions, reading scripture, music, nature, journaling, walking, contemplation, running, dreaming, hiking, creating, driving, and performing or viewing art.
- » Interactive
  - bible study, worship, serving others, friendships, small group activities, coffee hour, retreats, conferences, fellowship, family, sermons, music, random acts of kindness, and listening.

### How does the Congregation nurture those connections

- » Positive feedback
  - physical space to worship, build relationships, and allow for artistic creativity; devotional books; well thought out Sunday worship; bible studies; music ministry; small groups; friendships; open communion table; being challenged; sermons; talking about God and current events, Pastors and pastoral care, youth services; Vacation Bible School; Preschool, freedom to form groups; and coffee hour.
    - Examples of groups and events: Common Threads, Sowing Seeds of Hope, Neighbors in Need, All for Peace, Mexico Mission trips, Vacation Bible School, Journey, Communiversity, book group, Stephens' Ministry, Christ Care and Council.
- » Possible improvements
  - providing spiritual mentors, leading bible studies more frequently that focused on bible passages, making the youth group more visible to the rest of the congregation, developing a young adult group, welcoming new members, new member classes, lessons on the sacraments and their significance, better use of technology for prayer requests, a couples' club, something for widows and widowers, an activities director, leadership from pastors, emotional availability of leaders, a better structure for the Sunday morning worship services (are 3 services the best approach), better communication about the opportunities to serve, name tags, and better coordination between the ministries and the congregation.

## Sense of belonging and engagement at Trinity

- » Engaged
  - participation in the many ministries of TLC; serving on committees, attending educational and musical offerings, contributing money, and engagement through prayer including praying for the TLC faith community, pastors, lay ministers, staff, and people on our prayer list.
- » Suggestions for assisting with a sense of belonging and engagement
  - more small groups and opportunities to get connected; eliminate the inner circle and provide a way to break through the core; provide a more welcoming environment for new worshipers; develop a stronger process for integrating newer people, helping them feel a part and connected; identify a central point of contact for ministries; make it easier to find out what is going on beyond the What's Happening; personally ask people to participate, identify their gifts and encourage wider participation; create a better sense of family within the community as opposed to a group of individuals who worship at the same place; provide bible studies for several different age groups; a grief support group; better information about the multitude of ministries, including Points of Contact, mission statements, summary of mission, activities; and name tags

## **Improving the Spiritual and Relational Vitality of TLC**

As a result of the Spiritually Grounded Work Groups review, assessment and exploration, the following needs were identified and broken into three categories to improve the spiritual and relational vitality of TLC.

Focus on more clearly identified processes and developing leaders in the following ways would benefit the congregation and ministry of TLC.

### Connecting with God

- » Faith formation that assists in
  - the growth of our relationship with God for are whole life
  - living as disciples of Jesus at home, at work, in the community, and in the world
  - developing an understanding of the Bible
  - deepening our spiritual life and practices
  - engaging in service and mission to the world
  - addressing life's transitions, including, but not limited to:
    - entering retirement age
    - dealing with grief
    - life after divorce
    - working with aging parents
- » Groups or activities should reach out to a variety of age groups at different times of the day to reach different audiences.

### Connecting with each other

- » Better communication about and invitations to the many ministries TLC sponsors
- » Clearer processes for integration of newer worshippers
- » Central Point of Contact for Ministries
- » A means to connect members who attend different Sunday worship services
- » Personal invitations to participate in church worship activities, ministries or other faith formation activities
- » Recognition and acknowledgement of special talents and gifts, including invitations to participate
- » Social activities to further fellowship, learn about each other and develop relationships
- » Identify staff positions and responsibilities
- » Reach out to adult population between the ages of 20 and 59

### Connecting with others outside the church

- » Sensitive and intentional engagement with guests and new members
- » Better communication about and invitations to the many ministries TLC sponsors
- » Central Point of Contact for Ministries
- » Recognition and acknowledgement of special talents and gifts, including invitations to participate

## **Final Thoughts**

These recommendation flowed from the work our group did developing interpersonal cohesion, a chance for the Spirit to be at work; accomplished by developing trusted rituals (including regular prayer and interpersonal sharing), developing a plan, and then following it. As such, we believe our recommendations will be most valuable to the Crossroads leadership, council and congregation if they can be included in a plan that has both general and specific metrics to help develop accountability for the work of ministry. The Spiritually Grounded Work Group will be available and eager to enter more in-depth conversation with any individuals or groups about how this happens.