

Tuesday Reflection for January 26, 2021

Moving Forward!

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) recently announced their vision for moving the church forward, the ELCA Future Directions 2025. There are five goals: A thriving church, an equipping church, a welcoming church, a visible church, and a well governed, connected, and sustainable church. Each of the five goals has priority action areas to reach the goal. Areas of leadership and congregational vitality are designed to help facilitate each of the goals.

Using data from the congregational vitality studies our leaders determined that vital congregations do three things:

1. Strengthen their relationship with God
 - a. Leadership articulates how God shows up in and through the congregation and its people.
 - b. The congregation has a clear understating of God's larger mission and members know their purpose in this time and place.
 - c. The congregation can articulate that purpose and create a plan for implementation.
2. Nurtures relationships
 - a. Relationships among leadership, pastors and staff, and members create a loving community with good communication.
 - b. People work together respectfully through successes and challenges.
 - c. There is a sense of ownership and belonging that drives the commitment and engagement in the mission of the church.
3. A strong presence in the community
 - a. The congregation opens its doors to welcome the stranger and goes beyond its doors to share the love of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Creates and nurtures partnerships within the community to make a positive impact on the strength of the community.

As I look at this list, I can see some things that we are doing well and some areas that need some attention. As you read this list what jumps out at you? Can you identify some areas where you see good progress? Can you identify areas where you see we need to grow? And finally, can you see how you fit into the vitality of our community of faith?

These are important questions as we move through our work together. I hope and pray that you see yourself as a valuable and needed member of our community of faith. I hope and pray that you will be willing to move forward, finding ways to grow together in God's love.

If you would like to read more, please see the ELCA website, www.elca.org and look at the top for the future directions tab. All the info in my reflection is taken from the ELCA website. I encourage you to explore the ELCA website and look at what our national church is doing and calling us to do. I will be reflecting more on our Future Directions in the weeks to come.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne