



So now that it's been decided to merge New Life and Shepherd of the Hills, what's next?

What's next is what I would call "The exciting part," putting together a vision and mission for the new congregation. Determining what the Lord is calling us to be - and what he's calling us to do in order to accomplish what he's called us to be..

This next step is a great time to remember that verse from Ephesians that we often use after our Benediction: "God can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine - according to His power that is at work in us."

Putting together a vision and mission is a time for imagining what God can do. And since he tells us that he can do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, we should imagine great things, not small things!

Rev. Rick Hans from the MN-North District Office will lead us through this "imagining" process called "Vision, Values, Mission." He will get us together for three sessions that take only about an hour and fifteen minutes each:

1st Session: "Values" "What we value as most important to our ministry."

2nd Session: "Vision" "Where we see God is leading us to go in ministry."

3rd Session: "Mission" "What God would have us do to get where he's leading us."

Pastor Hans said, "Another way to sum up this process would be: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How are we going to get there?"

A couple of reminders as we head into this process:

Merging two different congregations will not always be easy. Sacrifices will be necessary. Each of us will need to set aside some of the things on our "I want" list. That will be easier if we make the commitment right at the start to always seek God's guidance through prayer and Scripture and to focus on what He wants for us and through us.

The overwhelming "Yes" vote to merge the two congregations into one new congregation at a new location, made it evident that there is a great desire for 1) coming together and 2) a new building. Throughout this process of bringing the two churches together with a new mission in a new location, you will hear me say over and over: "While a new building and coming together are both valuable goals, we need to keep in mind that the most important thing is neither coming together nor is it having a new building. The most important thing is what coming together in a new building can enable us to do for the Lord."

With that focus on what God wants for us, the next step will be an exciting one, indeed!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to <mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net>