

TRINITY NEWS

October 2018

Trinity Reformed Church
North Plainfield, N.J. 07063

Rev. Scott R. Harris, Pastor
Ginger Smellie, Editor

Members & Friends,

November 2nd and 3rd is coming! On those days the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will be at our church presenting their workshop **Healthy Congregations**. **Healthy Congregations** is a workshop designed by Peter Steinke, author of the books **How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems** and **Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach**. A key concept at the heart of **Healthy Congregations** is "self-differentiation," people's capacity to calmly articulate what they think and value, and to act on that basis, while staying in active relationship with those who disagree. This crucial training for both clergy and lay leaders alike.

The **Healthy Congregations** workshop uses the insights of family systems theory to help church leaders and all members become more effective stewards of their congregation's health. The workshop is based on the work of Dr. Edwin Friedman, author of *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*.

Since the publication of *Generation to Generation*, many pastors have come to recognize the importance of understanding family systems theory as it relates to congregations. The **Healthy Congregations** workshop helps both leaders and all church members expand their insight into how churches function as emotional systems.

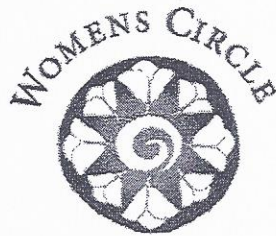
Friedman noted that in many congregations today negative, reactive forces are allowed to set the agenda for the church. What can be done to prevent anxiety from becoming a toxic force in your congregation? The **Healthy Congregations** workshop is designed to equip leaders to respond to the presence or potential threat of anxiety in a congregational system in ways that prevent destructive conflict and help the church stay focused on its unique mission and purpose.

The facilitator for this program will be Richard Blackburn, LMPC Executive Director of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. He is an accredited training facilitator for the **Healthy Congregations** workshop. Moreover, LMPC staff have extensive training in family systems theory and significant experience consulting with pastors and congregations from that theoretical framework.

We anticipate the workshop will begin on Friday evening (November 2, 2018) at 7:00 with an explanation of what "systems thinking" is. The evening will end at 9:30 and we will gather at the church again on Saturday morning at 9:00. There will be breaks in the morning and afternoon and a break for lunch as well! We will conclude with "Planning for a Healthier Congregation" and will be done at 4:30 p.m.

In order for our church and spiritual growth efforts to be successful, we want and need every member to participate in order for this to be successful in helping us find the path toward growth. Each week we have been placing a brochure in the bulletin with a registration form. Please fill that form out and place it in the offering plate or turn it in to the church office if you haven't done so already. You may also call Shawn Borelli in the church office and leave word with her as to whether you are going or not. This will aid us in planning and setting up for this very important event in our lives together as a church.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Scott



BROEK CIRCLE – will meet on Tuesday
October 9th at 10:30pm at the home of Joanne
Nuber.

If you ordered Creamy Potato and Italian Flag
Soup, Sunday, October 14th is the pickup
date.

JACOBA CIRCLE – To Be Announced



October, 2019

- 10. Linda Raysick
- 30. Joshua Jackson



October, Newsletter Deadline
Monday, October 15th



World Communion SUNDAY
October 6th – 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary



HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS

The deadline for registration for this workshop
to be held on November 2nd and 3rd is Monday,
October 15th.



Please make the following change:

Nora Macaulay
5000 Abbey Way SE
Lacey, WA 98503-3200

From Gordon Wich:

A big thank you again to Trinity for asking me to be a delegate for the Classis of New Brunswick at the 2018 General Synod meeting in Grand Rapids Michigan. And a special thank you to Consistory for covering Tina's expenses so she could share the experience with me. For both me and my fellow delegate Ann Hayes it was our first major meeting other than Classis meetings and certainly our first General Synod. We were both nervous but received a lot of help before leaving for General Synod as explained in my report for the Classis Meeting September 23rd in Spotswood. The report is included in this newsletter.

One day in the commons where meals were served, there was a large poster with the word "listen" surrounded by quotes, phrases etc. all related to "listen" there is one I will always connect with my first General Synod meeting

Listen to understand
Not to solve

It was an exciting week, and exhausting week (breakfast at 6:30am and meetings until 9:30-10 at night) and a great experience.

The best description of General Synod I received (and there were a lot) was in a letter addressed to General Synod Delegates from Don Poest. "General Synod is more than the place where we did the business of the church. It is where we experience the life of the church and learn how God is working in other places of the church. It offers the opportunity to share in relationships with women and men called by God to be leaders in the RCA. It provides interested and deepening of faith as we worship and praise God together."

The General Synod Delegate Webinar and Conference call with Rev. Trish Sheffield and fellow delegate Ann Hayes were very helpful in preparing for General Synod. Thanks to Juel Grevenstuk for her help before, during and after the meetings and to Pastor Scott for all his responses to my many calls and emails. After over 55 years it was back to dormitory life again. A big thank-you to Trinity Church for covering the costs for my wife Tina so she could share the experience with me. The dormitory arrangements were 2 rooms sharing a bathroom. I knocked on the door next to our room the first night to say "Hello" and somehow never saw anyone again. One beautiful evening sitting on a bench in front of the dorm, Tina and I were having a great conversation with a Minister from Queens, NY. When I mentioned that we hadn't seen the couple next door, I was reminded to practice my evangelism and knock on my neighbor's door. I explained leaving the room by 6:30 each morning for the walk to the commons for breakfast and returning close to 10:00 each night after the gatherings following the end of the meetings didn't allow for much "friendly evangelism."

The Plenary sessions were located down 23 stairs from the Main floor. As the days passed I realized the last day that meant:

- 23 steps up for morning break
- 23 steps up for lunch
- 23 steps up for afternoon break
- 23 steps up for dinner
- 23 steps up the end of each session

Total: 115 steps each day

I guess it was good exercise after sitting all day!

There were golf carts available for a ride to or from meals or meetings. The first two or three days it felt good to walk after sitting all day at the meetings. The fourth day we took advantage of a few rides. The fifth day we were looking for a cart and enjoying some rides.

There were several special meetings to attend.

1. The "Room For All" get together opening night, after the joint worship service in the Calvin Chapel for RCA and CRCNA (Christian Reformed Church in North American), to review and discuss items that were expected to come up during the plenary sessions.
2. The Synod of Mid Atlantic's breakfast was held at 6:30 a.m. on June 8th to discuss the request by "City Classis" of the Regional Synod of the Far West to transfer to the Regional Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. During Monday's session General Synod voted to approve this transfer which is to be complete by September 30, 2018.
3. Sunday, June 10th the "Room For All" worship service was held in the Prince Conference Center.
4. The New Brunswick Theological Seminary dinner, 5:25 on June 11th was an opportunity to meet the new president of the seminary and discuss new plans and projects.
5. There were several choices of workshops to attend.
6. There was also a choice of 1 of 4 Advisory Groups where RCA and CRCNA delegates joined together to discuss the future of the two General Synods. The RCA and CRCNA Synods met together for several joint morning worship services before the General Synod meeting started, and also during the week for joint church services. For the first time both Synods not only worshiped together but also met together for joint Advisory Committee Discussions. These joint discussions were very successful and resulted in strong recommendations for more numerous joint studies.

The introduction of New Churches and plant churches and how they were developed was an exciting part of the meeting. The formation of a new 2020 Vision Committee as proposed by General Secretary Don Poest to study the future of the RCA. There will be a one year progress report to be given at the 2019 General Synod. The final report and recommendations and proposals will be presented at the 2020 General Synod and could result in major changes for the RCA.

It was an exciting week meeting delegates from across the country and Canada, several from the CRCNA. One evening we had dinner with delegates from California, Idaho, Texas and Canada.

The week at General Synod was a very busy week and an exhausting week. But a great experience.

As a delegate we were reminded that we did not represent our church,
we did not represent our classis
we did not represent our regional Synod
we did not represent our General Synod
we represented Jesus Christ

George Wick