

# Full Discussion of Three Year Plan

## Cross of Life and Christ the King Collaboration

### Why Would We Want to Collaborate?

As Christ's church we exist to grow in faith through our mission areas, "Worship, Learn, Serve, and Invite." The Christ the King /Cross of Life collaboration facilitates this mission by expanding opportunities and activity in each of the four tenets, strengthening both congregations, as well as the ELCA presence in our community:

***Worship:*** A two campus ministry will expand worship opportunities, permitting differing services at additional times and locations;

***Learn:*** A partnership will promote additional opportunities for youth programming, adult studies, and music ministry;

***Serve:*** Pooling resources will exponentially increase both congregation's ability to serve and reach out to those in need physically and spiritually;

***Invite:*** A strong and growing ministry will summon members and non-members alike to worship and pursue Christian opportunities in furtherance of our mission.

Each congregation has unique strengths, and these strengths complement and offset each individual congregation's shortcomings. To be sure, maintaining the status quo is the easy, more comfortable option in the short term.

No journey toward the unknown is without trepidation and risk. Standing still, however, is not an option for the long-term viability of either congregation. The risks associated with the collaboration are small compared to the risks of failing to exploit the efficiencies of a two-campus ministry. They are far outweighed by the benefits a partnership will generate now and for years to come in this faith community.

Every journey begins with a single step. Our congregations have successfully taken our first steps toward collaboration, and it is time to proceed further. Together, we can accomplish more than either could achieve alone.

## A CTK-COL Collaboration Could Look Like This...

### I. Covenant

Everything about our biblical tradition reminds us to covenant with each other. Think of this like wedding vows. A covenant covers virtually none of the details but gets at the way in which we plan to treat each other. Here is a possible covenant between our two congregations:

*We promise to come together to further the work of Jesus. We will be guided by the Holy Spirit to pray for each other, to see God's goodness in every person, to exceed each other in seeking our common mission, to devote ourselves to those at life's margins, and to be known as a Christian community that promotes wellness in the lives of individuals and reconciliation in the life of the world.*

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ~ 2 Corinthians 5: 18-20*

### II. Core Principles

1. *This will be an evolving relationship.* We will propose a three-year plan that leads to a full collaboration by the congregations. We will do this for mission-driven, Christ-centered reasons. We will be open to where the Spirit leads us, and as a result, each step in the sequence allows space for reconsideration and course adjustments.
2. *Collaboration depends on honesty and communications.* We all have feelings, questions and doubts, and need to voice them directly and respectfully. We also need to give equal or greater voice to our opportunities to do Christ's work better together than apart. This positive hope is the solid foundation on which all Christ's people best stand.
3. *Honesty and communication lead to trust.* Trust is built over time and easily lost. Trust is maintained when leaders listen, admit mistakes, and are transparent. Trust is also maintained when memberships pray for their leaders, are not hasty in drawing conclusions, and offer their best energy to the ministry.
4. *Trust allows for imbalance.* There are lots of potential imbalances in our relationship. If we try to measure everything and account for it in some way, we will lose our way. We will end up trying to make a policy for everything or count votes from one "side" or another. Having the heart to allow for imbalance will be one of our greatest challenges, but if we can meet it, we will thrive.

### III. Essential Details

If we keep these core principles and essential details in mind, we will be in the best possible company, walking with those faith ancestors of whom the book of Hebrews took note when it described faith in this way...

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. ~ Hebrews 11:1-3*

1. *The long-term goal is a two-campus ministry.* Each location has benefits and unique advantages. We will gain maximal benefit by utilizing them both. There is no intent to merge on a single site or to dispose of one of the sites.
2. *Two-campus ministry also means two names:* Christ the King Lutheran Church and Cross of Life Lutheran Church sound good, right? In the event of an organizational union, the shared name could be something quite generic and not on display (United Lutheran Ministries of Brookfield, for example), or, it could be something more symbolically meaningful. We will want to give thought to how any name or names create an identity (what marketers would call a brand) for the whole. This is a decision can be deferred until it actually needs to be made.
3. *Members will retain their worship “home.”* There is no intent to *make* people go to worship at the other site. People like to anchor into one place or the other and everything about this plan supports that instinct.
4. *Members will gain choices.* Over time we hope to evolve programs and service times so that they become complementary. Some of this already exists. For example, a Christ the King member who wants to worship on a Saturday evening could come to Cross of Life. While confirmation is currently combined and offered at only one time at Cross of Life, over time we hope to offer an identical program at Christ the King and at a different time. This would allow families from both congregations a choice in time.
5. *Pastors will both anchor and move.* Like members, Pastors would anchor at a congregation. Jim would remain the lead at Christ the King, John and Sherrie would remain the team at Cross of Life. With time, the three of them would also represent a combined team. Jim would preach at Cross of Life often enough to be a known and trusted leader there. The same would be true of John and Sherrie at Christ the King. The huge long-term advantage is better pastoral coverage at both places while retaining a meaningful connection with the pastors you’re used to.
6. *With time, staff would be ministry specific rather than site specific.* One of the blessings of sharing is utilizing the expertise of the program staff to the benefit of both congregations. Our shared Youth Minister, Kelsey Peterson is an example of how this can function. One person leads a common set of ministries and allows each site to benefit from shared resources (money and materials for sure, but also relationships, ideas, and member talents). Perhaps the most exciting area where we

could see this blossom in mission partnerships beyond ourselves and/or in the eventual construction of the Wellness Center that has been proposed to the Siebert Foundation and Synod.

7. *Communications and Technology will be of huge assistance to us.* Think of the benefits of shared: web sites, videos for use in worship, SMART Board games in Sunday School, and social networking so that small groups can communicate easily between meetings. Our churches should not under-invest in these things! By combining ideas and sharing costs we will maximize the impact for each campus.
8. *Think ten years down the road.* People who are members of the current congregations will benefit from staff and resource sharing and will probably always think of themselves as a Cross of Life or Christ the King person and that's good! As people join in the future though, they'll join the combined entity and will be more likely to go to either campus, depending on their schedule or the event. This is the type of thing that will be far more visible in ten years than anything we'll see in year one.

#### **IV. What Our Collaboration Might Look Like In Three Years**

Each Year in January 2014, 2015, and 2016 the congregations will be able to vote as they may choose to revise this plan. This creates both an exit strategy if the collaboration is not effective and it cements the collaboration if it proves to be dynamic. The specific features of the relationship should largely be left to the Councils. It is the role of the congregations to decide whether to proceed with the overall relationship.

##### **A. Year One, Beginning March 1, 2014**

##### **Collaborative Staffs and Councils**

This first year would be devoted to doing as much as we possibly can to combine the staffs of the two congregations and to begin do our ministries as collaboratively as possible. Councils would meet frequently to build a common foundation of oversight and support for the staffs. The primary goals and measurements for this year would be three:

##### **1. *Build collaborative Councils***

The Councils would begin Lent 2014 with a joint retreat. They would then meet together on alternate months to facilitate common planning, solve problems, and build connections. Each would retain independent decision-making authority for their congregation. Together, they would make every attempt to develop a common ministry plan, prioritizing needs on an overall basis rather than in a way that was specific to one congregation or the other.

##### **2. *Build a collaborative staff.***

From March through August the two staffs would work to know each other better through regular weekly meeting times and monthly mini-retreats. They would probably also benefit from a retreat where an outside party could nurture them spiritually. The

congregations would see signs of this new collaboration in more frequent pulpit exchanges and an increase in the number of jointly done events.

Beginning in September of 2014, the two staffs would largely function as one. The three pastors would preach on a rotation that would bring Jim to COL once a month (3 services in a weekend) and John and Sherrie to CTK twice a month. (4 services total, two on each of two weekends). This means two of the three pastors would be preaching on any given week. The non-preacher would handle baptisms, hospital visits, and other pastoral care needs for both congregations. Non-pastoral staff time would be adjusted to create a coordinator of member care of members through a home visitation and communion ministry. (This would remind CTK members a bit of their parish nurse ministry, but would utilize more member-to-member contact than before)

Other ministries would also reflect a single-staff approach with full attention paid to either replicating events at each location or inviting participation from both congregations (Sunday School teacher training, small group creation and schedules, servant events, etc.) Shared administrative staff would be trained on each other's equipment allowing office tasks and hours to be shared as much as possible.

### **3. *Build common technology***

Both congregations would agree to make the financial and time investment needs to share as much technology between the congregations as possible. At a minimum, this would include the creation of the following:

A common web site that would go live in August 2014 for Sunday School registration. Installation of a SMART Board and projector at CTK so that SMART learning enhancements are available to both Sunday Schools as of September 2014.

## **B. Year Two, Beginning March 1, 2015**

### **Collaborative Budgeting and Common Capital Fund Appeal for Wellness Center**

In late January 2015 both congregations would approve a single-combined operating budget that would go into effect on March 1, 2015. Beginning in September 2015, the two congregations would also undertake a common capital fund appeal for the construction of a Health & Wellness Center at the CTK site.

The primary goals and measurements for this year would again be three:

#### **1. *Establish a Common Operating Budget***

The existing operating budgets of the two congregations would be combined. Assets would continue to be held separately and separate operating checking accounts would remain open. A common account would be established to which both congregations contributed and out of which all operating costs were paid.

The Finance Committees of the two congregations would collaborate to create an efficient payment system that maximizes transparency and accountability. The analogy

here is to a married couple that keeps separate accounts and assets but pays all their bills out of a common account.

The two congregations would go into this part of the relationship deeply committed to the faith step of giving more than their share! In other words, both congregations have a long-demonstrated ability to contain costs. We will continue to be diligent about the expense-side of the budget.

As a result, true ownership of this relationship will not reside all that much in who *spends* what. True ownership will be seen in two memberships that *give* generously and sacrificially to the common mission.

As a part of this, both congregations will be asked, during a Fall 2014 stewardship appeal, to consider a common increase in giving that reflects a general increase in operating costs (perhaps something like 3%). Both memberships will also be asked to consider a like increase in their giving to support new, common initiatives (the possible addition of staff to enhance shared education or visitation ministries).

Perhaps the most significant disparity in the current operating budgets of the two congregations lies in the amount each directs toward benevolence. This part of the plan does not address that but both congregations will want to be creative in helping each other expand their commitments to needs beyond their walls.

## **2. *Establish a Common Vision-setting Group by May 1***

This group would include the pastors and approximately 7 key leaders from the two Congregations. This group would provide guidance to the two Councils on common issues and model an eventual combined leadership team.

The majority of key leaders should intentionally come from Cross of Life in a 4-3 mix. Why? Cross of Life's much larger and younger membership means leadership of a future collaborative ministry (likely) will come from COL, at least for the immediate future. (Long-term, that may change and that possible change will be discussed in Year 3.)

If a COL majority is imposed on CTK, it will create problems. For CTK to *choose* in favor of a COL majority best happens at this point when CTK can still back out of going any further in the relationship.

This new entity will give all involved a chance to work and lead together with an eye to the welfare of the common ministry and with all concerned deeply covenanted to listen, pray, and minister together.

## **3. *Undertake a Common Fund Appeal for a Wellness Center***

To continue to build our Health & Wellness ministries, proposals call for new construction of 10,000-12,000 square feet of space at the CTK site, renovation of much of the existing CTK space, and improvements to the grounds at CTK to create outdoor, as well as indoor, health and wellness ministries.

The common decision-making group will be charged with the oversight of this appeal as well as all that leads up to it (preliminary project plans and a process to share that information) and depends on it (a proposed way of sharing in the investment).

### **C. Year Three, Beginning March 1, 2016**

#### **Collaborative Union and Construction of a Two-Campus Ministry.**

Much work will have been done at this point, changes will have taken place, and we will know each other much better than we do now. Most of all, if we have been true to our original covenant, we will be spiritually aware of the many benefits to collaborative ministry and sensitive to its weaknesses as well.

If the prior two years have produced growth in our relationships, our serving, our giving, and our willingness to welcome newcomers, then in year three, the following could represent an “Emmaus Road” moment for us.

The Emmaus Road story is found in Luke 24, set on Easter evening, and involves two people who have travelled away from Jerusalem with Jesus alongside them, but he is unrecognized to them. When they reach Emmaus, Jesus breaks bread with them and they suddenly recognize the risen Lord!

*Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us? Luke 24:32*

The two exclaim these words to each other and then return to Jerusalem to proclaim the Good News to the other believers!

Like every believer since, our two congregations will surely have been unaware of all Jesus is willing to do through and in us. But, in the breaking of bread together, we will find him revealed in our midst, our hearts will burn within us and we will be deeply inspired to jump forward to that time where  $1 + 1$  not only  $= 3$  but where “us” and “them” disappears from our vocabulary and all of us become “we.”

#### **1. The primary goals and measurements for this year would be as follows:**

##### **a. *Completion of a Collaborative Union Between the Two Congregations***

The Vision-Setting Group created in 2015 will study and make a recommendation regarding shared properties, revising constitutions, and creating a permanent united overall structure for the two-campus ministry.

This would involve both legal changes and many decisions about a future style of governance. We will be wise to establish a structure that seeks the best possible people for elected leadership rather than establish ratios for representation from each campus. The vision of all who lead should be driven by who we are together rather than apart. The goal for the congregations to approve a union will be the Easter season in 2016. This will set in motion necessary changes that will take months to accomplish.

***b. Construction of Health & Wellness Facility beginning in the Spring of 2016***

There is surely the possibility that we could undertake the project in steps if our efforts do not generate the type of dollars needed to build the entire project at once.

**2. The above timeline leads us to the sort of “new creation” Paul imagined:**

***So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ~ 2 Corinthians 5:16***

Anytime Christ’s people are dedicated, above all else, to his ministry of healing reconciliation, new things are created!

We will plan a gala weekend to coincide with the Epiphany of our Lord. Perhaps no season is better suited to celebrating a new revelation of Jesus’ work in our midst! We will use the weekend to dedicate the renewed facilities at the CTK campus, we will plan and devote great attention to our many partners in ministry, and we will begin a new thing together as a united collaboration.

Though the exact name and design of that united ministry remains to be revealed, we trust Christ’s Spirit to enlighten our path.

As with the amazing vision found in the book of Isaiah, we will share common voice when proclaiming...

***“In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain and hill be made low... then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all people shall see it together! ~ Isaiah 40:1-3***