

Proposal for St. Paul's Lutheran church partnering with District Reconcilers

In discussion with the elected leadership of St. Paul's, Crofton it has been proposed that it would be beneficial to the membership of this congregation to learn how to better respond to conflict in a more Biblical manner. What follows is a proposal from Rev. David Ziehr, who will serve as the lead for the District Reconcilers. [Since, there is a short planning period for this proposal, it is unknown who also may be assisting]. This is a two-part proposal that should be discussed by the leadership group at St. Paul's. There is great flexibility in the service that we provide, so please do not hesitate to make suggestions or to ask questions.

PART A: *Blessed are the Peacemakers Seminar – June 22 & 23, 2018*

"Blessed are the Peacemakers" is a Bible study seminar designed for the entire congregation that will equip members to respond to conflict (congregationally and/or personally) in a Biblical manner that glorifies God and ultimately provides healing and grace. Conflict is unavoidable in our lives, but we will learn about how to address conflicts and hurts in a Christ-like way. In general terms, the seminar will discuss the role of confession and forgiveness which is the basis of reconciliation. Additionally, we will learn about the root causes of conflict and how working to change our "church culture" can prevent serious conflict in the future. Based upon Holy Scripture, much of the material for this seminar are adapted from the book The Peacemaker by Ken Sande. There will be time set aside both days for Q & A and group discussion of applicable issues.

Additional information:

While this seminar can be done in a single day, it is best to split it over a couple of days (e.g. Friday, 6:30-8:30 pm and Saturday, 8:30 am to noon). This allows for more fellowship and time for discussion and "processing" of information.

PART B: *Individual Conflict Coaching – limited time following seminar*

Once the *Peacemaker* seminar is completed, we will make ourselves available for individual Conflict Coaching. This is a process of listening and sharing through which individuals are assisted in personally applying the Biblical principles of conflict resolution. The goal is that relationships can be healed and restored, thus preventing division within the Church and a poor witness outside of it. We can provide a sign-up sheet during the seminar for those interested – or if you know of people who might need/want to participate, that can be pre-arranged.

What can St. Paul's Lutheran Church expect from the District Reconciler(s)?

We are committed to faithfully serving God's people within the Southeastern District in the task of bringing people together and working on differences and conflicts in a way that shares Grace and glorifies God. We will provide caring support and encouragement as we listen to the challenges, hurts and issues that are relevant to the people of St. Paul's and we will provide Biblical instruction and coaching to help bring healing.

What can the District Reconciler(s) expect from St. Paul's congregation?

Since we are committed to the sharing of a Biblical process of resolving conflicts and reconciling relationships, we ask the people of St. Paul to commit attend the “Blessed are the Peacemakers” seminar and to participate, at an appropriate level, in the process of receiving and sharing God’s grace and forgiveness.

What is the cost commitment?

At a minimum we ask each congregation for reimbursement for our travel expenses (mileage at a rate of \$0.50/mile, lodging and food). If you are able to provide a place for us to stay and any food to save expenses, we welcome that. See further discussion below on lodging and meals.

District Reconcilers are appointed without provision for compensation, but in some cases, the time and effort commitment is considerable. We do not know of any particular congregation’s ability to compensate us for our labors, but we would ask you to give it some discussion. We love to share God's Grace with people and we will always do our best. Our commitment is to serve without any required cost, but an appropriate honorarium is appreciated. We believe that there is value in what we offer and we hope that you view our work as a significant investment in the future of the congregation.

Other practical needs and considerations:

Lodging – We will gladly forgo the cost of lodging by staying with a member of the congregation. One important point must be considered, for obvious reasons: Whoever we stay with must not be directly involved in any major conflict in the church and they should generally be considered neutral or independent by the other members of the congregation.

Food for Seminar – The church will provide simple refreshments for breaks. If the Seminar starts on Friday, then it could begin with a pot-luck meal as an option to increase fellowship.

Room setup – For the Seminar, a room of adequate size with tables and chairs is best. A fellowship hall is ideal, but we also often teach in the sanctuary. In any case, we need the ability to project PowerPoint slides (we will bring the computer).

Who are the District Reconcilers?

David Ziehr has served as a pastor since 1992 (currently at St. Stephens Lutheran Church in Hickory, NC) and has been involved with Peacemaking as a core part of his ministry for more than a decade. He is also a Certified Christian Conciliator through Peacemaker Ministries. A District Reconciler is an officially appointed position within each District of the LCMS, the goal of which is to facilitate stronger relationships between brothers and sisters in Christ.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns

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