

Transition Time: Lessons from Step 1 – Sacred Circles

For 40 years, Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness, and it wasn't easy. However, the years spent in the desert were vital and necessary to prepare the Israelites for their future. Wandering wasn't a passive time, rather, it was full of lessons and reflections and growth.

Lessons, reflections, and growth are the purpose of our transition time and the five Stepping Stones we have identified for our faith community. We are moving from Step 1 – Sacred Circles, to Step 2 – Café Conversations, a time of deeper conversation about the matters that are most present in our hearts.

Step 1: Sacred Circles

Held in July, August and
September

Approximately 250 church
members participated in
the Sacred Circles

Through the guided discussion in the Sacred Circles, we shared feelings of sadness, anger, mistrust, isolation, division and confusion. We shared questions about church governance, a feeling of the lack of transparency, that our strength as a great church had been bent (but not broken), that we had lost the certainty of our common direction, and yet certain that our commitment to each other and to God's Church

would lead us into a brighter future; and we heard sadness for those who had left the church in recent years and those who had left following Matt Laney's departure.

Alongside our deepest concerns were feelings of hope and healing: that we, as a faith community, will rise up and become a truly open and affirming community, a community of glorious diversity, a community where trust and support of leadership is ever apparent; that we would be a people unafraid to take risks, to take seriously the Gospel mandate to love one another, to do the work of justice; and in all of this, experience the joys of fellowship.

Watch for emails, the
Sunday bulletin, the
Transition webpage and the
Transition bulletin board
across from
Rev. Thompson's office for
the latest information.

Our work in the Sacred Circles focused on some foundations for transition work. We learned that people process feelings at different paces, requiring us all to practice patience and compassion. We practiced our ability to listen to others with respect and curiosity, rebuilding an atmosphere for open, honest, and courageous conversation. We entered the conversation with caution, and left with hope.

ASYLUM HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Helping people grow in faith and love as disciples of Jesus

It is our hope that as a community of faith we will use our transition time wisely, learning how to intentionally “wander” together – having the difficult conversations, taking in the lessons, reflecting and growing together, so that we can be ready for the future. It’s not always comfortable, and that’s why we do it together. We ask for your prayers, your patience and your participation.

Step 2: Café Conversations

Sunday, November 5,
10:15am or 11:45am

Sunday, November 19,
11:45am

Sunday, December 3, 10:15am

Sunday, December 10,
11:45am

Wednesday, January 17,
6:00pm

Sunday, January 21
10:15 or 11:45am

Thursday, January 25, 6:00pm

We continue our transition work with Step 2 – Café Conversations, a series of gatherings scheduled over the next few months allowing for more time and deeper conversations. The first gatherings will address Diversity and Inclusion; AHCC Governance; Faith, Justice and Action. Subsequent gatherings will address Nurturing and Supporting Clergy; Church Growth, Our UCC Covenant.

And be sure to sign up for Step 2 – Café Conversations, as we know that the church is all of God’s people, and we look forward to being in fellowship and conversation with you.

In faith,
Erica, John, Holly, Bart