

Report on the November 18 TEAM Meeting

This meeting convened after the Weave Us Together worship and lunch. It started with devotions led by Darrell Hargreaves from Reclaiming the L Word and prayer led by Larry Lehlbach.

The primary agenda was a presentation of case studies of three congregations that were formed by consolidation. The first, United in Faith in Chicago, was a consolidation of eight struggling churches. It started on Easter Sunday in 1998. Three years later it moved into a former printing plant that was remodeled into a church. United in Faith currently has 450 members. It's worship attendance has fluctuated from 200 in 2003 to 160 in 2006 and is back to about 200 in 2007.

The second case study is Grace Community Church, a Christian Reformed congregation in suburban Chicago. Grace was formed from three nearby churches in May, 2005. Its consolidation plan called for it to start a new church in an adjacent suburb. This new church, Jacob's Well, will be starting soon. Over 60% of the members of Grace are age 65 or older. Its membership and attendance has remained stable since the consolidation.

Northeast Community Lutheran Church in Minneapolis is the third case study. This church started on May 6, 2007 from three smaller inner city churches. Many members had emotional ties to their churches and church buildings, so grief counseling was provided as part of the consolidation process. Before the consolidation two of the three churches had effective pastors who ended up being called as the pastors of Northeast Community. One is the pastor for congregational care and the second is the pastor for development. The consolidation plan for Northeast Community calls for the church to start a second worship service designed to appeal to the community around the church.

The TEAM then looked at several maps showing population patterns in West Pasco County, to start thinking about where a new congregation or congregations might be ideally located. The TEAM also looked at 4 models for consolidation based on the case studies.

The TEAM will meet next at 7:00 on Tuesday, December 4th at King of Kings. The TEAM will schedule another longer meeting in early or mid January.