

# FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST LONGMEADOW CONGREGATIONAL

## **PREPARING TO WELCOME A NEW PASTOR**

### DISCUSSION & SHARING SESSION

Facilitated by: Sandy Dickson

1

A blue gradient rectangle with a darker blue horizontal bar in the center. Inside the bar, the text "We are our stories." is written in white. In the bottom right corner of the rectangle, there is a small white number "2".

We are our stories.

2

NOTES:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## IMPACTING THEMES

**Loss:** Pam, Marisa, Dan, connection within congregation, connection to external community

**Lack of Transparency:** Communication perceived as limited, and decisions made by small group of leaders.

**Historic Trauma:** Last associate pastor division

**Personalized Hurt/Disillusionment & Anger** At committees making decisions, words said, at UCC/SNEUCC

**Sense of Loyalty:** To past minister's narrative, associate pastor narrative

3

### Consider the Following:

Are your experiences reflected in these themes?

---

If yes, how?

---

---

---

If not, how is your experience different?

---

---

---

How has it impacted your experience for FCC Longmeadow?

---

---

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

3 components

<p><b>1. Start with Heart</b></p> <p>What do I really want?</p>	<p><b>2. Learn to Look</b></p>	<p><b>3. Make it Safe</b></p>
<p><b>4. Master your Story</b></p>	<p><b>5. Restate your path</b></p>	<p><b>6. Take Action</b></p>

NOTES:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What do I really want?

*Embraced by the love of God in Christ, our mission is to love and serve our world. We seek to grow in Christ's family through our journey inward towards faith and knowledge, outward toward love and justice, always rooted and nurtured in worship.*

Why are you here?  
Why do you care?  
What does this congregation mean to me?  
Where does it fit into your spiritual journey?  
What gifts does it offer?

5

**DEFINE YOUR WHY**

**ANSWER:**

Why are you here?

---

---

Why do you care?

---

---

What does this congregation mean to me?

---

---

Where does it fit into your spiritual journey?

---


---

What gifts does it offer?

---

---

START WITH HEART



What do I really want?

Think about a conflictual relations.

- What do you really want?
- What do you want for the other person?
- What do you want for the congregation?

6

Reflection exercise: [You will not have to share]

What do you want for yourself?

---

---

Challenge yourself by asking why you want that? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Challenge again by asking what is really important about what you want? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

What do you want for the other person?

---

---

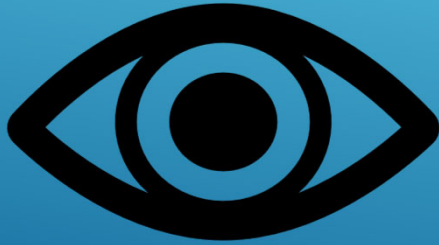
---

What do you want for the congregation?

---

---

## LEARN TO LOOK



What has this triggered in my beliefs, experiences, past traumas?

What is happening in my body?

What contributed to your reaction beyond what is in front of you?

7

REFLECT ON THE FOLLOWING AND ANSWER:

- ✓ Am I making any assumptions?
- ✓ Can I access empathy for other's positions?
- ✓ Am I feeling protective of another person?
- ✓ Am I trying to protect myself, my understanding the past or maintain the status quo?
- ✓ Has my internal reaction shown up in my reaction?

What am I learning about myself? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## MAKE IT SAFE



Recognize assumptions  
Fix misunderstandings

Apologize when  
appropriate.

Commit to seek mutual  
purpose.

8

- What can you do to create a safe space for a crucial conversation??

---

---

---

---

- Have you recognized any assumptions or behaviors that you where you want to craft an apology?

---

---

---

- Are you ready to seek mutual purpose even beyond disagreement? If not what other actions can you take for yourself to get ready?

---

---

---





Retrace your path and ask how you can expand the context of your narrative.

What assumptions have you made?

---

---

What do you need to learn more about?

---

---

## STATE YOUR PATH



SHARE YOUR FACTS.  
TELL YOUR STORY.  
ASK FOR OTHER'S  
PATHS.

TALK TENTATIVELY.

ENCOURAGE  
TESTING.

10

Create other possible versions of your story.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**EVELOPE EXERCISE:** Six months from now I would like the congregation story to be..... (use a separate sheet of paper, put it in your envelope, seal it and put your name on the envelop. No one will see what you have written. It will be handed out to you in 6 months.

## MOVE TO ACTION



**TAKE ACTION**

### **CHEAT SHEET FOR MAKING IT SAFE AND TAKING ACTION**

#### **Step 1: Ensure it is a good time**

“Wondering if we could set up time to connect to talk about X?”

#### **Step 2: Establish shared purpose / care**

“Thank you for taking to time to talk about this. "I know how much we both care about X" or “ I care about our relationship“

#### **Step 3: Own your perspectives & be concrete**

“I’d like to share my reaction to when you (did x, said x, ). It made me feel (fill in feeling... angry, uncomfortable). I’d like to share why then then hear your perspective...”

#### **Step 4: Ask a question / show curiosity/listen with empathy**

Thank you for listening. I’d like to hear about your perspective/where you were coming from.

#### **Step 5: Validate you heard them. Clarify your position. Bring it back to shared purpose**

You can express understanding without expressing agreement.

#### **Step 6: Solve and agree (or agree to disagree) to move forward**

## **Behaviors that increase trust:** [Adapted from Stephen M.R. Covey, Speed of Trust]

### **1. Talk Straight**

Say what is on your mind. Don't hide your agenda. Talk straight, tell the truth and leave the right impression. Straight talk needs to be paired with tact. Being **blunt** hurts feelings and **destroy** relationships.

### **2. Demonstrate Respect**

Treat people the way you want to be treated. Our actions show we care. Be sincere. People will notice if an action is motivated by a lesser reason or an impure value. Respect is demonstrated in the "little" things we do.

### **3. Create Transparency**

Tell the truth in a way that can be verified. Transparency is based on principles of honesty, openness, integrity and authenticity. It is based on doing things in the open where all can see.

### **4. Right Wrongs**

To right a wrong is much more than apologizing. It involves making restitution.. It is the principle of going the extra mile.

### **5. Show Loyalty**

Give credit to individuals responsible for success. It will foster an environment where people are encouraged to be creative and innovative. It will increase trust and have a direct impact on the bottom line.

### **6. Deliver Results**

Results give you instant credibility and trust. Delivering results is based on competence. Delivering results converts the cynics, establishes trust in new relationships, and restores trust that has been lost due to lack of competence.

### **7. Get Better**

Constantly be willing to improve. When others see you continually learning and adapting to change, they become more confident in your ability to lead into the future.

### **8. Confront Reality**

Do not close your eyes to tough realities. Be honest about the difficult issues and address them head-on.

### **9. Clarify Expectations**

It is important to focus on a shared vision of success up front. This is a preventative measure. When expectations are not clearly defined up front, trust and speed both go down.

### **10. Practice Accountability**

Build trust by first holding yourself accountable then holding others accountable. Holding yourself accountable includes taking responsibility for bad results. Holding others accountable allows performers to feel good about the job they are doing.

### **11. Listen First**

Listen before prescribing. Remember that communication is more than just words so you will have to listen to nonverbal messages as well. If a person is displaying a high level of emotion, they don't feel understood. Keep listening.

### **12. Keep Commitments**

When you make a commitment you build hope. When you keep a commitment you build trust. Make only the commitments you can keep. Also, don't be vague when making commitments. There are implicit and explicit commitments, and violating either is a huge withdrawal from the trust account.

### **13. Extend Trust**

We should extend trust to those who have earned it. Be willing to extend trust to those who are still earning it. Be wise in extending trust to those who have not exemplified a character worth trusting.

