

CONNECTING POINT

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Getting Started

The reason for this newsletter is to provide a monthly Connecting Point with your pastors. In each newsletter you'll find two articles:

This month both articles are written by Pastor Brian. There will be a special newsletter coming out next week all about Easter Joy by Pastor Derrick.

What is PLI?

By: Pastor Brian Larson

When our two campuses came together my title received a little adjustment. To show how our roles are different I assumed the title Lead Pastor and Pastor Derrick assumed the title Mission Pastor. Sometimes the title Lead Pastor is about as comfortable as the collar I wear on Sundays that cuts into my neck to remind me that, though I lead, I am still Jesus' servant.

Actually the title "Lead Pastor" is no more uncomfortable than being simply pastor. In fact, it is a bit redundant. It's like saying I am Atonement's lead leader or shepherding shepherd. After all, every pastor is a leader. It's the nature of the position, even if every pastor isn't a natural-born leader.

Pastors do a lot of leading...whenever we preach, teach, administer the sacraments, provide counsel and consolation, coach, and carry the Gospel into the community. Given the leadership nature of our role, it might surprise many to learn that our seminary education came with only one class on leadership. The purpose of seminary is to give pastors the theological

Supporting Our Mission Campus

By: Pastor Brian Larson

I recently visited a PLI mentor congregation in Woodbury, MN. Over the last seven years they worked hard to plant a daughter congregation called The Alley (see Luke 14:21). We met with the pastor of The Alley and learned how their ability to reach their community was directly linked to the support they received from their mother congregation.

The most important supplies that Woodbury Lutheran Church sent to The Alley were members. They commissioned 150 of their members right off the bat (they are a BIG church) to worship, lead, and reach the community they were planting in. This provided an atmosphere worship guests described as vibrant and a strong core of people who could represent Jesus to their community as they served, built relationships, and connected people to Jesus and His Church.

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toolbox they need as they lead. So then, where do pastors go to gain and fine-tune leadership skills?

First, just like every sheep in Jesus' flock, pastors need to be served by the Good Shepherd. If we are led by Him, we'll lead more like Him. Also, pastors need pastors. We need to receive the servant-leadership of one of Jesus' under-shepherds who can forgive us in the place of Jesus, apply God's Law and Gospel to us, and coach us as we set goals and work to achieve them.

Second, it is helpful to be around effective leaders. For this reason, both of Atonement's pastors have been involved with Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI). You notice it when it takes us away from our regular labor 3-4 weekends each year. We have truly appreciated the grace and patience our two campuses and our families have shown when we are missing.

What is PLI? Cont.

PLI believes that “leadership is more caught than taught.” Reading up on leadership skills, while helpful, is not nearly as effective as interacting with leaders in their settings. So, along with the yearly PLI conference where we catch leadership concepts from church leaders and business leaders, we also travel in small groups to mentor congregations throughout the U.S. where we see how these concepts become concrete for the sake of people who are living without the security and hope that only Jesus can provide.

Pastor Derrick is ready to begin Year 3 and Pastor Brian is ready to begin Year 4 of the four year program. We have been able to visit mentor congregations that have shown how there is no one way to accomplish the Church’s mission by taking the Gospel to people who are not connected to Jesus’ Church. These congregations show us what PLI calls a “signature ministry” in which they have

lived out the mission in a way that is unique and authentic for each particular congregation.

Our most recent mentor site visits include Pastor Derrick traveling to Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, TX and Pastor Brian to Woodbury Lutheran Church in Woodbury, MN. Pastor Brian also visited missionaries working among multiple ethnic groups in New York, NY as part of PLI’s emphasis on taking the Gospel to “the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8) as the nations continue to find their way to the U.S.

At each of these visits effective leaders show us how they have implemented leadership techniques in their specific contexts. We see how they have continually placed the mission in front of Jesus’ Church for God’s people to embrace and act upon it. We come away with leadership caught in a way that it could never be taught. Thank you for making this continuing education/formation possible for us. Please pray for PLI and for your pastors as we learn to lead when we are away and as we lead our two campuses into mission when we return home.

Supporting Our Mission Campus Cont.

By Pastor Brian Larson

When Atonement and Living Truth decided to become one church in two locations, we knew that it would be essential to commission members from the main campus to worship and serve with the mission campus. It will be equally as important for the mission campus to embrace these members when they show up, just as the Marysville campus has received me on my once a month trips to Living Truth Worship Center.

The first several months of our partnership have been a staging ground in which:

- Our staff has developed our understanding of how we relate with each other.
- Our two campuses have been introduced and better acquainted with our two pastors.
- Our Mission Pastor has been praying and seeking guidance on which members from our main campus might answer the call and serve well at the mission campus.

We are fast approaching the time when I and Pastor Derrick will approach main campus members with the opportunity to consider a one-year, two-year, or indefinite commitment to worship, lead, and serve with Atonement’s mission campus. If you already have a heart for considering this, will you please let one of the pastors know?

Your pastors want to talk with you, pray with you, and potentially commission you. If you haven’t prayerfully considered how you might be a part of this movement, please start praying and considering it. If you are at the mission campus now, please start praying for God to supply you with the right people-resources so Living Truth Worship Center can connect [even more] people to Jesus.

You’ll hear us praying about this and talking about it in worship after Easter. After having worshiped with both campuses in the past several months, I am even more excited about our partnership than I was as we provided you with the opportunity to embrace this partnership. Continue to pray that God will use our one church in two locations to be the beat of Jesus’ heart in Atonement’s community.

Connect !

This month’s connecting point will be a Blood Drive/Health Fair at Governor’s Square Apartments. The goal of this Health Fair is to reach into the Community around our Main Campus with tangible examples of God’s care for us, His Creation. More details soon!