



The Nourishing Vocation Project: Phase 2

Where Have We Been?

Parish Gathering 1

Beloved in Christ:

This is the worksheet for the first of two **Parish Gatherings**. Please prayerfully and thoughtfully think and reflect upon the questions listed below in preparation for building our **Congregational Story Line** as seen on the chart on the following pages.

Every congregational participant, from those with the lengthiest connection to this congregation to the most recent connection is invited to be involved, and the voice of everyone connected with the congregation is critical.

THE TASK: Find your entry point on the “story line” and respond as are able. Begin with the first pastorate that you remember. There are no “right or wrong” answers or opinions. All comments are welcome. This reflection upon where we have been in our life together is critical to discerning who we are called to be, what we are called to do, and why we are here, while acknowledging, celebrating, and sometimes grieving various chapters in our story.

Reflection and Discernment Questions

Find your entry point on the life line chart and write your observations, feelings, etc. in the appropriate box. Use the questions below as a guide in completing your chart. Remember to bring your completed worksheet to the first parish gathering.

1. What congregational stories come to mind from the period indicated?
2. What words would you use to describe the congregational experiences, attitudes, and feelings during this time period?
3. What did the congregation value during this period?
4. What was the congregation open to during this period?
5. How would you describe the congregation’s call during this period?
6. Where did the congregation invest its time and attention during this period?
7. What were the celebrations and regrets in the life of this congregation during this period?
8. How did your congregation experience God’s presence during this period?
9. What were the celebrations and regrets in the life of the wider community and world during this period?
10. What were the major congregational events or experiences during the time period indicated?
11. At the end of the period, what were (or are) your expectations, hopes, and fears for your congregation, its ministry, and your pastoral/ministerial leadership?

This resource is provided as part of the Nourishing Vocation Project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College.

The Pastorates of the congregation will be added to the boxes before distribution to the congregation. The chart begins with the first pastorate and concludes with the current pastorate. Add extra space for each pastorate and extra sheets as necessary.

Pastorate

EX: Pr. J. Doe 1932-1945

World War II. **Values** – faith, patriotism, a “share-and-share alike” table in the narthex where people could leave whatever they could spare, and take whatever they needed. The winter that everyone shared coal was one of the hardest winters ever. **Openness** – coming together when times were hard. **Call** – call of country was prominent. **Attention** – what really mattered, pulling together, support, getting through, thanksgiving when it was over. **Regrets** - 7 members of the congregation fought in the war. Three never came home. Services were suspended one winter because of rations. The American flag was added to the chancel. **Experience God’s presence** - through support for each other, and the worship service at the end of the war was so full that it spilled out into the parking lot. It was a time of hardship, but everyone pulled together. Confirmation classes included examinations. The whole country lamented the war and was scared for our boys in combat. The future looked bright for our church and our community when the war was over.

Pastorate

Pastorate

Pastorate