

Transformation in the church, what is it?

by Pastor Helga Jansons Director for Evangelical Mission

You may have heard the term Transformational Ministry and even plan to attend one of the workshops on March 5th in Pasco, WA or May 14th in at **Trinity Lutheran Coeur D'Alene**. **But what does Transformation look like?** Perhaps it is easier to describe what it is not. Here are some examples:

- When people just go through the motions in worship out of habit and do not feel connected with God or others,
- when people in the community see your church as a building that a group of people go in and **out of but they don't know anything** about the congregation,
- if a person has a pressing question about faith or God but **doesn't think to go to the pastor or church** to find answers or talk about it.

Perhaps one way to tap into what Transformation looks like is by thinking of words you might associate with Transformation. For me this would be a list of the words:

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| ❖ open | ❖ belonging |
| ❖ new | ❖ connection |
| ❖ passion | ❖ welcome |
| ❖ joy | ❖ engaged |
| ❖ fear | ❖ listening |
| ❖ presence | ❖ respond |
| ❖ paying attention | ❖ relationship |
| ❖ wholehearted | ❖ accessible |

Have you experienced transformation in your own life, where your worldview, identity, values or the way you relate to others has been dramatically changed? Perhaps you even felt it happened to you rather than that you intentionally made it happen. Some would say the Holy Spirit was at work within you. It could be that you created the circumstances and were particularly open or receptive to transformation. **For example you may have made a commitment to pray with someone or to read God's word regularly,** or you may have been vulnerable with someone and found the incarnational presence of God in doing so.

In the congregation transformation happens one person at a time. It can happen to a whole lot of people at once where they are inspired by a meaningful event or sermon or music. But when it is to be more than a momentary thing, transformation happens on an individual and personal level.

There are things we can do to foster a climate that can lead to transformation of a congregation so that people can feel and see that God is alive and present and doing something new. There are even activities that the whole congregation can engage in, such as inviting everyone to have an intentional one to one conversation with another church member about faith, hopes and fears. I have been in places where people all pair up and do this and come back radiant.

Transformation is unpredictable but we can prepare ourselves for the possibility of God stepping into our lives to transform us so that we are made new. It is exciting, scary and wonderful. It is Easter!