



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2021

A publication focused on the journey ahead for
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Woodstock, GA

All About Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry

During the call process, the Congregation Council has approved using a method known as **Appreciative Inquiry** as a way of gathering information from the congregation.

This method uses questions and interviews to provide data that will help us bring elements of a preferred future for Good Shepherd into being.

Appreciative Inquiry provides a way of discovering stories and practices that are creative and life-giving. For congregations it provides a way of bringing our own stories into conversation with the biblical and historical stories of our faith.

If you want to know more about the Appreciative Inquiry process, see *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry, Missional Engagement, and Congregational Change*, 2nd ed., by Mark Lau Branson; or *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, 2nd ed., David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline M. Stavros; or *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*, 3rd ed., Sue Annis Hammond.

How does Appreciative Inquiry work?

The process

- Chooses the positive as the focus of inquiry.

- Inquires into members' life-giving stories about their experiences in the congregation.
- Locates themes that appear in the stories and selects topics for further inquiry.
- Creates shared images for a preferred future.
- Finds innovative ways to create that future.

Who participates?

- Ideally, everyone in the congregation, including young people, through being interviewed or being an interviewer, through processing data collected through the interviews, through imagining a future, or through experiments and implementation.
- The Call Committee, in partnership with the Congregation Council, serves as the guiding team.

Appreciative Inquiry Assumptions

- People have more confidence in the journey to the future when they carry forward parts of the past—and those things should be what is best about the past.
- Organizations lean toward sources of energy and life-giving nourishment, especially if there is a hopeful, imagined future.

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Council Highlights

October 2021

- Council discussed the steps needed to initiate Appreciative Inquiry in the process of calling a new pastor.
- Preparations are underway for the congregational meeting in November. The congregation will be electing new council members at that meeting.

All About Appreciative Inquiry

- What we focus on becomes our reality. If we focus on past failures or problems, we get stuck in them. If we focus on what has gone well, we can bring that experience into our future.
- Language and questions change reality. How we talk about events and people shapes our perception of them. How questions are framed can guide responses.
- everyone has time to think about them and provide the best responses possible.
- The responses will be collated, similarities and differences noted, and the information shared with the committee and the council, who will look for life-giving themes.
- If more information is needed to get details about a theme or event mentioned by a number of people, additional focused questions may be asked.

Benefits

- The process focuses on what is positive and life-giving, not deficits, weaknesses, and failures.
- It engages Scripture and weaves the biblical story together with the congregation's story.
- It emphasizes what God has done and is doing in our lives, in the life of the congregation, and in the life of the world—and how we as a congregation respond in gratitude.
- The committee and council begin imagining “what might be,” and with the partnership of the congregation move toward building consensus concerning “what should be.”
- The data, themes, and elements of a preferred future provide information for the congregation's Ministry Site Profile (MSP), which is the document provided to the Southeastern Synod that describes in detail the congregation and its ministries, community, and hopes for the future.

What's going to happen at GSLC?

- The Call Committee and the Congregation Council have been trained so that they can interview the members of the congregation.
- A list of active members with their basic information is being developed. Each Call Committee or Congregation Council member will be given a list of people to interview face-to-face during November and December.
- The interview questions are being provided in this newsletter so that

The synod uses the information in the MSP to provide names of ELCA pastors who have the gifts and interests that would help lead the congregation into the future where it has discerned God is calling them.

Call Committee

Next Steps

- **November:** Call Committee meets to elect a chairperson, appoint a secretary, set regular meeting dates and times, and review the Ministry Site Profile form.
- **November-December:** Call Committee and Council members interview congregation members, using the questions printed in this newsletter.

Questions Good Shepherd Members can expect for the Initial Active Member Interviews

All active members will be interviewed in a face-to-face format by either a Call Committee member or a Council member sometime during November and December. In order to make the best use of your time and the time of the interviewer, please look over these questions so you will be prepared with answers when you are interviewed. Thank you.

- ♥ Reflecting on your entire experience at GSLC, when has the congregation seemed to be at its best? Describe what it was like. How or why did it occur? What happened? How did it feel?
- ♥ What are the central characteristics or ways of life that make GSLC unique?
- ♥ Reflecting on your entire experience at GSLC, remember a time when you felt the most engaged, alive, and motivated. What did you do? Who was involved? What happened?
- ♥ What contributions has the congregation made to your life? When have you known the most significant growth for yourself? Tell how this has happened. What made a difference? Who was most helpful?
- ♥ Don't be humble; this is important information: What are the most valuable ways you contribute to GSLC? Give some examples.
- ♥ Make three wishes for the future of GSLC. Describe what the congregation would look like when these wishes come true.

GratITUDE is not just a fleeting emotion—it is foundational. As a response to God's gracious initiatives, gratitude changes us at our very core. Gratitude is not first affect (emotions), although it often helps us move from fear or doubt or anger; rather gratitude is a stance that changes our perceptions, our thinking, our discernment. When our beginning place is thankfulness—for God, for God's creation and redemption, for God's ongoing mercies, and for evidences of God's grace—we give attention to any and all signs of God's grace. Our thankfulness, especially when voiced, makes grace more available, more present, more powerful—to oneself and to one's community.

Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations*, p.54.



THE BACK PAGE ANNOUNCEMENTS



Daylight Savings Time ends this Saturday, November 7th. Remember to set your clocks back 1 hour.



Save the date, November 14th

We will have **ONE WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:30 am**, followed by our Semi-annual Congregational Meeting and Thanksgiving lunch.

Read all the biographies of members running for seats on Council, along with the full Annual Report of the Congregation on our website at gslutheran.org.

Please review the proposed amendments to the GSLC Constitution online. A vote will take place to approve these changes at the Semi-Annual meeting on November 11th at 11:15 am. Members of council will be in the Fellowship Hall between next Sunday to answer questions about the proposed amendments.

R.S.V.P. and sign-up for a side dish and/or dessert contributions at Sign-Up Central, in Fellowship Hall or [Sign-up Central Online with this link](#).
Please only sign-up in one place.

No Sunday School on November 14th.

Due to the schedule of one worship service, Semi-annual Meeting and Thanksgiving Lunch, we will have no Sunday School on November 14th.



Thanksgiving Eve Service – 7:30 pm
November 24, 2021

Financial Statements

You should have received your quarterly financial statement in the mail. Please note that the statements reflect your giving from July 1, 2021—September 30, 2021. Your pledge amounts are based on the church's fiscal year that runs from July 2021—June 2022. You will receive your year-end statements sometime in January.

Thankfulness in Action

Thanksgiving is a spiritual exercise, necessary to the building of a healthy soul. It takes us out of the stuffiness of ourselves into the fresh breeze and sunlight of the will of God.

Elisabeth Elliot, *Keep a Quiet Heart*

To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven.

—Johannes Gaertner

Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.

—Maya Angelou

