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### A Congregational & Legal Study in the Practice of Hospitality at Faith Community Center, Lacey, Washington

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A CONGREGATIONAL & LEGAL STUDY IN THE PRACTICE OF HOSPITALITY  
AT FAITH COMMUNITY CENTER, LACEY, WASHINGTON

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A Major Applied Project  
Presented to the Faculty of  
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

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By  
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May 2017

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To Alf who abounds in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

Now you love yourself suitably when you love God better than yourself. What, then, you aim at in yourself you must aim at in your neighbor, namely, that he may love God with a perfect affection.

—St. Augustine

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I am also grateful for congregational president Gary Magonigle who demonstrated his fondness for policy and statute and also served as a helpful think tank throughout this project. I have much appreciation for Floyd Ivey who provided legal counsel *pro bono* as part of Lutheran Legal League. I wish to also thank the congregation of Faith, Lacey, for their support—especially Alf Howald and Don Glitschka for taking part in the interview. To those who participated in the surveys and presentation and provided helpful feedback, you have my sincere gratitude. I hope we continue to revisit these questions. I do believe in the importance of hospitality as a way of life, especially as children of the Father whose love is perfect.

To God be the glory!

## ABBREVIATIONS

Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
ESV	English Standard Version
FC	Formula of Concord
FCC	Faith Community Center
LC	Large Catechism
LCMS	Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
WLAD	Washington Law Against Discrimination

## **ABSTRACT**

Henry, Matthew R. “A Congregational and Legal Study in the Practice of Faith Community Center.” Doctor of Ministry. Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, 2017. 171 pages.

Churches that practice hospitality by operating community centers must remain faithful in their confession and abide by anti-discrimination laws. This project provides the necessary theological and legal guidance for community center ministry in morally diverse settings. Surveys conducted before and after a congregational presentation at Faith Lutheran Church, Lacey, WA, reveal opinions of both limits and freedoms as to what activities and groups may be permitted or disallowed. As an expression of love for all people (Matt. 5:43-48), facility use policy should reflect clear values of faith and—wherever possible—permit facility use by those who hold different moral viewpoints.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until recently, the North American church was respected as an important center of the community. Yet today the church finds itself increasingly relegated to the societal fringe and the church's lost influence as a cultural outsider is apparent. However, certain congregations, such as Faith Lutheran Church in Lacey, Washington, insist it is still possible and beneficial to have a strong community presence, even in a secular and pluralistic culture.

As a four-in-one entity, Faith Lutheran is a LCMS church, school, child care and most recently, a community center.<sup>1</sup> Community centers are defined as facilities owned and operated by the church which are open to the public for renting for a wide variety of legal functions, including meeting, celebrating, selling/buying and recreation. Community centers may or may not be in a separate building from the sanctuary and other church structures.

While school and childcare ministries benefit from a history and tradition of support on district and synodical levels, no such developed support system exists for community centers as they are a relatively new ministry effort. Much of the supporting framework, policies and practices at Faith have been learned along the way since its beginning in 2009. While ministry is always somewhat of a venture into the unknown, well-researched community

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<sup>1</sup> Begun in 1963, Faith Lutheran Church is a medium-sized congregation, which had an average weekly worship attendance of 204 in 2016. The school began in 1971 and has 188 students, pre-school-8<sup>th</sup> grade. The childcare has 100 children, ages 1-11. The community center was constructed by Men of Faith and Laborers for Christ and opened in 2009. It features a large central gymnasium/court, surrounded by an exterior hallway with meeting rooms, a large kitchen, locker rooms and the church office.

center management is very much needed. Some risks—particularly when in the public eye—are too great not to take into account.

### **Problem**

A challenge arises because religious freedom and certain aspects of anti-discrimination laws represent opposing tenets and values. Church and state hold different views as to what is permissible and deserving of legal protection under public accommodation statute. Churches which seek to operate in the public realm by owning and operating community centers are encountering a new legal landscape which, if followed, may appear to be—or in fact be—contrary to the church’s confessional stance.

Like many other churches and Christian business owners, Faith Lutheran Church is having to navigate the contested intersection of religious freedom and anti-discrimination laws. Washington State’s 2012 anti-discrimination law (R-74) has the potential to force churches that engage in public business to be involved in activities they may deem to be immoral or face ministry-inhibiting financial penalties. On Nov. 6, 2012, voters passed R-74 (53.7% to 46.3%) and affirmed the state legislature’s vote in June to legalize same-sex marriage. That law also made it illegal to refuse same-sex weddings or receptions at facilities that are open to the public, as Faith Community Center is.

As the anti-discrimination law brings uncertainty as to what activities religious groups can sanction or refuse, it is doubtful the practices and facility use policies of community centers operated by churches are keeping pace. Churches must operate their community centers with a clarified and updated set of facility use principles that are both legally and confessionally sound. Most churches—including Faith, Lacey—are not fully prepared. Faith Community Center, then, faces a likely dilemma as it rents the facility to many different



outside groups for their competitions, meetings, celebrations and events, including wedding receptions.

There is yet another factor to consider—not compulsion from the state, but resistance within the church. Church members may be uncomfortable with certain external associations and likely disapprove of some groups meeting at the community center. There is likely a gap between what activities they deem acceptable on church property and what state law permits—even protects.

As part of the “Free to Be Faithful” effort, a recent publication from the LCMS and Alliance Defending Freedom entitled “Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Lawsuits” equates facility use with endorsement of a group’s beliefs and purpose.

This facility use policy is consistent with our belief that allowing our property and facilities to be used for purposes that we determine are contrary to this church’s beliefs would be an endorsement of those purposes and a contradiction and grave violation of the church’s faith and religious practice (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:22).<sup>2</sup>

Is the Synod offering a fair conclusion? The assumption is guilt by association and a passive participation. The issue is one of semiotics, the study of how meaning is created. What does an action mean? What does it say? By allowing outside groups to use the community center, what is communicated either intentionally or unintentionally? Further, is it reasonable to expect outside groups to agree to and abide by values of a church to which they do not belong as members?

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<sup>2</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation Gender Ministry Lawsuits: A legal guide for LCMS congregations, schools and ministries* (August 2016) 39.

What Faith Lutheran Church needs—and likely other churches interested in community center ministry need—is a clear understanding of the distinction that exists, if any, between permitting facility use and condoning whatever values the group espouses. On what legal, practical and biblical basis may facility leaders accept or deny groups and/or activities? If this criteria is not determined and continually revisited, the potential for misunderstanding on both sides looms large on a variety of situations, including use by other church groups.

At risk is the church’s community presence, financial viability and its integrity between confession and actual practice. If the church is not able to welcome people at large in the spirit of hospitality, then it loses a key function and attribute. The church’s community footprint will shrink. The financial liability of a community center is also present in potential legal troubles and expensive litigation.

With community centers comes both risk and reward. Community centers are a unique incarnational ministry and place for the church to put into practice what it believes about hospitality while still giving clear witness to the Gospel. Pastors and churches must behave in a winsome and informed manner so as to make the most of this opportunity. It would be safer and easier to only operate in safe boundaries of church circles and be “faithful in the right things,” but what Faith is resisting is an inward mentality that would leave it “seriously hampered by self-imposed privatization.”<sup>3</sup> Other leaders in the Synod, such as Northwest District President Paul Linnemann, are encouraging a more engaging and challenging course (see Appendix C, 138–39). “As we respond to challenges in the culture, we need leaders who

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<sup>3</sup> Richard H. Warneck, “The Pastor as Religious and Civic Leader: Breaking with Quietism” in *Witness and Worship in Pluralistic America*, ed. John F. Johnson (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2003), 28–29.

are not just looking to fortify existing barriers. We need people who have the ability to take the Gospel message across those barriers without sacrificing their identity as God’s people.”<sup>4</sup>

Caution must be exercised: while the biblical teachings have not changed, the cultural and legal landscapes most certainly have changed and will continue to do so.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to answer this question: Can Lutheran community centers, like Faith Community Center, permit facility use of groups who do not share the church’s values (e.g. wedding receptions for same-sex couples) without compromising the church’s confession of faith in light of new state laws that prohibit the exclusion of any group on the basis of its values? And if so, how might the theological principles of church-based community centers shape their policies and practices? As stated above, the Synod and Washington State have widely diverging opinions as to what are acceptable practices for Faith Community Center. The congregation and legal counsel may provide different opinions still. In gauging the current level of congregational support for certain activities, the strength and malleability of their opinion will be tested when presented with the legal perspective.

This Major Applied Project (hereafter abbreviated as MAP) is an attempt at enhancing an existing effort. I want to be able to possess and share with Faith’s campus manager (who is in charge of the community center and supervised by the pastor) a practical set of guidelines and questions as part of a decision-making plan so Faith Lutheran may minister effectively, clearly and faithfully in the public realm without undue fear of legal recourse,

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Linnemann, Northwest District President, 2015 Same Sex Marriage Letter from DP to Congregation, 30 June 2015, accessed February 27, 2017, <http://nowlcms.org/sites/www.nowlcms.org/files/Letter%20re%20Same%20Sex%20Marriage%20to%20NOW%20district.pdf>.

loss of biblical/moral values and congregational conflict. I will develop a diagnostic tool to evaluate both the congregational and legal perspective of the appropriate boundaries of community center ministry, and just as importantly, the justification and reasoning underlying them.

There are landmines to certainly avoid, but finding a way forward is critical. I am hopeful that other pastors, facility managers and churches will find value in these results and are encouraged to study their own congregation so they better know the legal and cultural context in which they minister.

The desired outcomes for this project are as follows:

1. Greater congregational awareness and appreciation of community center ministry as being unique, diverse, and essential to our configuration and operations.
2. A clarified and guided decision-making process that is theologically and legally informed for the church's proper practice of hospitality in the public realm.
3. Legal clarification and counsel of community center operations.
4. Increased community presence and engagement for the purpose of more faithful and effective witness and service in the community.

Those who seek to engage the community in this manner need to consider many factors. This project will not provide an easy "one size fits all" answer, but offer guidance in approaching what is a complex issue. Applying even the best theology is challenging in today's postmodern and evolving society.

The problems confronting us in formulating strategies for carrying out the God-given responsibility to confess our faith in a meaningful, genuinely

communicated ways are manifold and complicated. They thus demand hard theological labor to produce proper and effective ways of exercising our responsibilities for witness in their place and time. ... [There are] no easy answers in many cases, and the answers may create contradictory advice for specific situations.<sup>5</sup>

Such a prognosis is not trying to have it both ways. It is an admission that navigating a cultural minefield is not easily done.

Lutheran theology often demonstrates a way of recognizing and appreciating the tension of two opposing—but still true—viewpoints and still manages to chart a navigable course. I hope to find it here. It would be too easy for the church to retreat into a refuge or club mentality. Without expending much effort, we could easily fill the rooms and schedule with internal uses only, especially among the school and childcare. It would be too convenient to regard the community center as a mere revenue source and not as a ministry. Instead, it is critical to view the community center as a place of real and viable ministry which establishes relationships we hope will go deeper in time.

As Faith and the church at large are afforded less discretion by the state in how community centers operate, facility leaders will hopefully realize the parameters for ministry have changed and adjust accordingly. To be avoided is capitulation where no moral code is given and “anything goes.” The congregation and pastor must be equally averse to limiting and restricting participation to Faith activities, thereby essentially making the community center into a “church club.” If the community is truly welcome, the church will encounter people that have a different moral code and way of living. The congregation will be tested in

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<sup>5</sup> Robert A. Kolb, “That God’s Kingdom May Advance with Power Throughout the World,” in *Witness & Worship in Pluralistic America*, ed. John F. Johnson (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2003), 71.

their own values of love, truth and acceptance. A community center, then, provides a venue for the congregation to practice what it preaches and determine its faithfulness in action.

### **Process**

The field research will involve interviews with key people including a former pastor, the volunteer building project manager and head elder. It will also involve creating a survey via Survey Monkey which will be distributed to the interested voting members of congregation, including the Church Council. The survey will offer opinions that raise theological and legal concerns and invite their response using a spectrum of strong disagreement to strong agreement. It will also present various hypothetical situations and groups that seek to meet at Faith Community Center and inquire as to their suitability or lack thereof. From these responses, I will gather the quantitative data and look for general areas of consensus. The purpose of this survey is to establish the spectrum of congregational opinion as it currently exists. It is the “before” picture.

Legal counsel will also be sought from Lutheran Legal League. The purpose of this largely unknown but helpful organization is to be a resource for LCMS churches, schools and individual members. Their interest is to provide legal services that benefit and strengthen the church and ministry. An attorney who is licensed in the state of Washington will be selected and asked to provide legal counsel for this research. Since all Lutheran Legal League attorneys are actively involved and belong to LCMS churches, it is presumed they hold similar moral and spiritual values to the congregation of Faith, Lacey. The intentional sharing of values will show legality as an independent variable. It is possible his/her legal expertise may lead him/her to arrive at a different conclusion as to the propriety of certain activities and groups using Faith Community Center. The attorney will also be asked to evaluate

Faith's current guiding principles, facility use policies and contracts to determine their sufficiency. It will be essential to converse with this attorney, obtain written counsel and explore with him/her the legal dynamics and implications for churches who wish to provide community center ministry.

Once legal opinion is obtained, I will present to the congregation in a special presentation the theological and legal issues that are involved. With the individual survey responses in back of their mind, they will see how their generalized opinion either concurs or differs with the biblical exhortation (chiefly Matt. 5:43–48) and also the attorney's counsel. The same survey will be given again to the same group of people who took the first survey in order to determine any change of opinion. Text boxes and open-ended questions will help reveal their reasoning. Of particular interest is measuring and understanding what positions changed or stayed the same as a result of my presentation.

I will work with and direct the campus manager to present to the Church Council any necessary changes to Faith's guiding principles, facility use policy contracts based upon the research of this project.

Finally, I plan to inform congregations within the Northwest District of the availability of this research for possible use in their own context of ministry, specifically that it be available through Mission Training Center and the Center for Applied Lutheran Leadership at Concordia University–Portland. In addition, the executive assistant to the Northwest District President has asked me to record and share my findings in a short video.

### **Parameters**

For this MAP, presuppositions are as follows:

1. Not all churches are equally equipped or financially endowed so as to pursue community center ministry, nor should they be.
2. Community centers are still church property even if they are in a detached building from the sanctuary and other places of key church functions.
3. Not all congregations see the need for the guidelines proposed in this project. For example, most liberal churches were supportive of R-74. Most conservative churches, such as Faith Lutheran, Lacey, were not and even gathered signatures so voters could repeal the law in the November 2012 election.
4. While there are other aspects of public ministry potentially impacted by R-74, such as clergy officiating weddings and funerals for non-members and the remuneration for these services, this project will focus solely on the implications of legislation like R-74 on the ministry of community centers.

I anticipate during my time of research certain political developments and court decisions may provide further evidence of cultural shift and legal consensus. Whether the church is in denial by refusing to see the need to change ministry practices in the public realm, or it does not know how to faithfully and effectively proceed, it needs help either way.

I expect to find a range of opinion among the congregation, Synod and legal counsel. I anticipate that the congregation is largely uninformed, and the Council is more informed, concerning the day-to-day operations of the community center. Faith's own history, particularly its first event, is worth documenting in that it pushed the boundaries of what many people thought was acceptable. Even today, seven years after the fact, it is still a topic of conversation and fascination.



From the bibliographic research, I hope to encounter some honest admissions from facility leaders who are struggling or succeeding in this area. What is the future of community center ministry? Possibly, community centers may become more open, rather than closed, as a result of R-74, but not for the reasons of being politically correct, the desire to be relevant or to be commercially viable. They may become more open for biblical reasons which is the best reason of all. Or possibly, it may be determined that the political, legal and theological dynamics of renting out a church facility are just too difficult to navigate and community centers cease to exist.

But for now, let there be an idyllic virtue and hope: community centers can function for the general good and order of society as a way of supporting the created realm. Just as “the rain falls on the just and the unjust” (Matt. 5:45 ESV) community centers can seek to meet certain facility needs of people whoever they may be. However, the church’s mission and witness to the Gospel must not be lost in this process either. The community center should operate strategically as it reaches out to groups who are more likely to benefit and connect with Faith in the future. While community centers do not impose the moral code that pertains uniquely to believers, they are not without procedure or protocol. Civic law and additional center policies still apply.

From the congregational research, I suspect to find the greatest resistance to operating community centers in an inclusive manner will come from within the church, not beyond it. The evaluation of the MAP—the presentation and the facility ethics guide itself—will be very direct since the surveys will show any shifts in opinion. I will look to see if certain areas still need to be addressed for future study. After this project will come the harder work of updating, revising and adopting policy that is informed by the theological principles that

follow in the next chapter. Finally, I believe the passage of R-74 (something Faith, Lacey, worked to prevent) and other state laws may actually bring about something good in that they cause facility leaders to truly consider the teachings of Jesus in regard to not only greeting the brothers, but being willing to sincerely and gladly greet all people who enter through our doors.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The theological basis for this MAP draws from four core theological assumptions and frameworks: the doctrine of creation, two kingdom worldview, the practice of hospitality and degrees of association. Also applicable is the practice of Jesus welcoming and eating with sinners in their homes. His teaching in Matt. 5:43–48 to love all as the Father does, without exception or qualification—even for those who do not share the same values—seems to be especially pertinent to this project. By examining the biblical and theological principles, certain limitations and freedoms will become apparent and help guide the project as it seeks to find the boundaries of what is permissible, forbidden, appropriate or required. There will be some things that we affirm, and other things which we should discourage, but with regard to our perspective, people in the world are to be engaged and enjoyed, not evaded. For even if we are not of the world, we are always in the world (John 17:14–18). The world is the realm in which we live out our faith. Further, it remains *God’s* world and the object of His desire. By observing God’s presence and activity in His world, the Christian should be comforted and encouraged to become involved. “Our participation in God’s work of creation and redemption does not remove us from the world but thrusts us into the world with renewed life grounded in hope.”<sup>1</sup> So the call is not to withdraw, but to take the plunge! The

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan R. Wilson, *God’s Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 221.

motivation and intent for doing so is good and even though it may be questioned or require explanation as to the meaning, it can still happen.

Permitting outside groups to use the facility is not an actual endorsement of the positions of that group and it should not be construed as such. In fact, permitting outside groups (even for some of those who oppose us) fits within the boundaries of Lutheran theology. Instead of being perceived as a violation of faith or a compromise of the gospel, the action of loving people who are different from us and welcoming them is an expression of fidelity to commandments of Jesus. But it requires some theological work to get there and see it this way. First, the doctrine of creation will address how people should be viewed and regarded. Second, a two-kingdom theology will provide the context and meaning for particular actions in each realm. Third, hospitality will provide the motivation and manner for interaction between the church and community. Fourth, understanding degrees of association will allow for the proper interpretation of the meaning, or semiotics, of shared space. Taken together, these four theological concepts which follow provide the necessary doctrinal guidance for the church which seeks to faithfully and effectively minister in the public realm.

### **Doctrine of Creation**

Creation provides all living creatures with a universal point of connection. We are already in relationship with God and our neighbor by matter of sheer existence—the question remaining is what kind of relationship do we want it to be? The presence of a community center—as an element in creation—is the desire for good and mutually beneficial relationships to be realized. Creation is the basis for the demand of faith in God and of doing good works for our neighbor. “The important truth is that love of one’s neighbor is in fact the

same thing as love of God, and this in turn is the same thing as man's free dominion over the things of Creation."<sup>2</sup> This is the kind of life and love that marks our purpose as human beings. Through the lens of creation, we view and understand our relationship to God and each other.

### "God Daily and Abundantly Provides"

God made and sustains the world as Luther's explanation to the First Article of the Apostles' Creed makes clear. No one draws life independently nor can anyone sustain what is required for life. Everything we need—everything!—comes from the Creator, as Luther explains, "For here we see how the Father has given to us himself with all creation and has abundantly provided for us in the life" (LC II.24). He gives so we may recognize His "fatherly heart and boundless love" (LC II.23). What we should do in return then, is use what He has given us for His glory and service, a desire which is often satisfied in caring for our neighbor. A community center can then be seen as a way of blessing people by providing a part of life's necessities.

Which people then should be involved? God "daily and abundantly and provides" *for all* (SC II.2). He does not show partiality or favoritism in this provision. Jesus says of the Father, "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and unjust" (Matt. 5:45). God does not discriminate in His provision for the basic needs of life. The First Article shows how God cares for all of creation by providing good things. Both the just and unjust dwell in creation and as His creatures, they receive God's care, whether they recognize it or not. There should be, however, something we recognize and emulate about

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<sup>2</sup> Gustaf Wingren, trans. Ross Mackenzie, *Creation and Law* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, American Edition 1961) 151.

this aspect of “creature care” as Jesus tells the crowds and disciples, “You shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). The perfection spoken of is not in reference to righteousness (or the demanding standard of the curb, the first use of the law), but in how we relate to other people in creation and not exempt ourselves from loving them. It was Bonhoeffer who warned that having close friends is actually a threat to the Christian requirement to love all people.<sup>3</sup> We tend to love people who are like us and who love us back. Jesus observes it is not altogether special or unique to love those who reciprocate love. There is no mention of a special reward for this kind of normal, expected behavior. Jesus’ call to us is to love all people just as the Father does. God deals with a rebellious world by loving it and giving it life. “By God’s sovereign love, the ‘world’ is made to participate in God’s purpose, which is life.”<sup>4</sup> God deals the world into life by love.

#### The Church’s View of the World

The designation of the world as wicked, sinful and thoroughly corrupt is something of a default position for the church. There is more than sufficient cause for this view, as the wickedness of the world even grieved God’s heart prior to the Flood and surely must grieve Him still in many ways. Certainly God is compassionate and patient in holding back His deserved wrath upon Creation. And yet for all its faults and fallenness, still there remains something good and admirable about the world because of the One who made it and lays claim to it still. The designation of the Creation as good (six times) and as very good (a seventh) is the opening declaration that the material creation is the point of continuity for the

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals and the Etiquette of Democracy* (New York: Basic Books) 98.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, *God’s Good World*, 64.

entire story of redemption.<sup>5</sup> God is not done with the world or humanity—why should we be? God is still about giving life and creating clean hearts for “sin does not exist on the face of the earth, but in the heart of man.”<sup>6</sup> Sin obfuscates the goodness of community which means community must be revisited and reclaimed.

Man’s alienation from God, his neighbor, and the world around him, does not mean that he has no longer anything to do with the world which God has made. On the contrary, he continues to live in the world, and the things of Creation around him are purer than himself.<sup>7</sup>

In this world, there remains beauty, adventure, companionship, challenge, opportunity, wonder and abundance—the very things that awaken and inspire us as human beings to live. The world still has something to offer and appreciate. Like Louis Armstrong’s song, “What a Wonderful World,” the best lyrics depend on what one chooses to consider in life. Such an optimistic view of the world does not ignore the preponderance of evil. It is to maintain, however, there is good to be cherished and nourished here. Luther commented in his Genesis lectures, “If you ponder in your heart the whole course of nature and of this whole life...you will find more good than bad things and you will also see that a very small part is subjected to the power of the devil.”<sup>8</sup> How we view and relate to the world is important because it is the context for our actions. Acknowledging the goodness of the world might just put us in a better mood, which, in turn, might just brighten and bless our witness and deeds. We want people to recognize the true Source of our actions.

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<sup>5</sup> Surburg stresses the continuity of creation and contends the Christian faith may be properly categorized under four headings in this order: creational, incarnational, sacramental and eschatological. The material realm is created, entered into, redeemed and awaits final restoration. Mark P. Surburg, “Good Stuff! The Material Creation and the Christian Faith,” *Concordia Journal* 36, no. 3 (June 1, 2010): 245.

<sup>6</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 101.

<sup>7</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 115.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, trans. Paul Zellar Strodach, vol. 6: Genesis, Chapters 31–37 (Philadelphia: Fortress and St. Louis: Concordia, 1958, 1986), 90.

The goodness which exists in anything that we do for our neighbor's sake is the Creator's goodness, mediated to him by a human act...The human instrument is caught up into the activity of the Creator, and because God's activity is directed towards the world, those who are instruments of His goodness are also directed towards the world.<sup>9</sup>

Toward the world we must go, for withdrawing from it goes against the paradigm of created life and fails to recognize the activity of God in it. It is not the world that we reject but rather worldliness "as a foolish, indulgent captivity to the belief that the way things are is the way they have always been and will always be."<sup>10</sup> The doctrine of creation keeps us from settling for what currently is. Instead, we desire the fulfillment and restoration—even the *telos*—of creation by practicing presence and patience.

#### Common Condition

There is, of course, a distinction in creation between believers and nonbelievers but there is also commonality. We share a "common creatureliness."<sup>11</sup> As such, we are mutual objects of God's concern and care and share in this important relationship. When we fail to regard the fellow humanity of one another, the consequences are often historically tragic and manifold. "We stand alongside everyone else as fellow creatures of God...So what happens to our witness when we place ourselves on the same side of the ledger as non-Christians, co-recipients of God's goodness and grace?"<sup>12</sup> Are we hesitant to consider this fundamental relationship? It is our confession, as Luther explains in the Explanation to the First Article, "I believe that God has created me *together with all that exists*" (SC II.2, emphasis added). It

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<sup>9</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 154.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, *God's Good World*, 206.

<sup>11</sup> Charles P. Arand and Erik H. Herrmann, "Living in the Promises and Places of God," *Concordia Journal* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 102.

<sup>12</sup> Arand and Herrmann, "Living in the Promises," 103.



means we are equally dependent upon God. The question remains whether the primary view the church has of all people is those who still bear God's image—fallen human creatures to be sure, but still His creatures. If Luther was able to answer his question with these words, “I hold and believe that I am God's creature” we should be quick to add—“and so is everyone else!”

The implication then might suggest a change in paradigm, or at least an addition. While *simul iustus et peccator* is true, it is incomplete in that it only accounts for the condition of the believer. What about the rest of the people in the world? Shall they be viewed without any positive spiritual attribute? They still bear the image of God as does the believer. “I would propose that we think of *all* people as simultaneously creatures and fallen creatures (*simul creatus et peccator*). This distinction is the theological contribution and importance of Article I of the Formula of Concord.”<sup>13</sup> The distinction is important because it allows us to see while original sin is a “spiritual poison and leprosy,” it is not part of the human condition as God originally created. Regarding our spiritual capacity, original sin is an “indescribable impairment and a corruption of human nature so deep that nothing pure and good remains in it or in any of its internal and external powers” (FC SD I.60). But it does not make anyone inhuman or not our neighbor.

There is a difference between our humanity (which can be cleansed and redeemed) and sinfulness (FC SD I.45). Original sin is *accidens*, not substance, because it cannot exist by itself. Although the human being is completely corrupted by sin which is inherited, he or she is still a work of God's creation. “Scripture testifies not only that God created human nature before the fall but also that even after the fall it remains the creature and work of God” (FC

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<sup>13</sup> Arand and Herrmann, “Living in the Promises,” 106.

SD I.34). We need to be reminded that “God did not make junk. The problem with human living does not spring from our humanity. It springs from abandoning our humanity, centered in God and lived in service to rest of God’s creatures.”<sup>14</sup> God is found—or better, hidden—in the neighbor and His presence should cause us to show respect for one another.

I suspect it will only be possible to treat each other with love only if we are able to conceive doing so as a moral obligation that is absolute, something we owe others because of their personhood, bearing no relation to whether we like them or not. . . . Every encounter with another human being should inspire in us a powerful sense of awe. Why? Because that other human being, whatever his or her strengths, weaknesses, and simple complexities, is also a part of God’s creation.<sup>15</sup>

Creation is the relation. “Creaturely life at its most profound realization leads to the loving embrace of the other, an embrace that does not stifle or diminish others but instead nurtures them to become more fully themselves.”<sup>16</sup> Coming into the presence of fellow human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude is not often done. A further tendency may be to even regard the person according to our own likeness and there are many human labels that assign similarity and difference. The problem is these markers can become dehumanizing.

Spiritually, it is easier for the person to be seen as a sinner or deficient in some regard—even “evil” or “unjust” to use the descriptors of Matt. 5:45. No wonder such a designation leads to distance and separation from the church. It should be noted, however, the good and just person is *equally unworthy* of these gifts of sunshine and rain from the Father. Knowing the Source does not make the believer worthy—just thankful. The giving is done in grace, after all, not merit! But if the evil or unjust person is also seen as a part of

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Kolb, *The Christian Faith*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993) 59.

<sup>15</sup> Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals and the Etiquette of Democracy*, 101.

<sup>16</sup> Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015) 119.

creation, as someone whom God cares for and loves, then the church is more likely willing to greet and accept this person. In the instance of community centers, that greeting and acceptance may be evidenced by making available facilities for their use and benefit. Guidelines will follow, but what matters here is the principle to not preemptively disqualify people who do not share Christian values and morals.

### Creation and Creed

Man cannot ever live apart from God. He remains an entirely dependent creature of God throughout life. This relationship must be the starting point for a complete biblical theology and relate other actions of God done on our behalf to this aspect of creation. In this way the First Article informs the Second Article. “God’s sovereignty in Christ is a sovereignty of victory over the Destroyer of man and Creation.”<sup>17</sup> Christ accomplishes a salvation which *extends* the work of Creation.<sup>18</sup> Creation and redemption go together. Both flow from the love of God but entail different things. Goodness refers to God’s creaturely gifts while grace refers to the redemptive works of Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. God is continually creating and upholding creation each day (*creation continua*). Even as creation groans, it will one day be set free from bondage and decay (Rom. 8:20–22). “This world—wounded, broken, fallen, sinful, suffering, rebellious—this world is, by God’s gracious rule, *creation*, the stuff of redemption. Apart from this, there is no redemption, there is nothing.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, God in Christ redeems only what has been created.

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<sup>17</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, *God’s Good World*, 65.

The First and Second Articles then inform the Third Article. “The Incarnation purifies and perfects Creation and accentuates the commandment which God has already given in creation.”<sup>20</sup> The commandment is to go to work on our earthly tasks, exercising dominion and making life better for our neighbor. The reality of creation also sparks a desire within us for holiness and sanctification in our lives as we learn to keep in step with the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). Physical life and spiritual life are joined in the process of becoming a new creation in Christ that, in turn, serves the neighbor. “Every encounter between human beings involves an unexpressed demand to be responsible for one another’s life as long as we are able to do so. To receive life means to be implicated in this reciprocity of demand.”<sup>21</sup> We are always in need of something. Needs are precursors to relationships in which one person gives and another receives. Asserting an independence from God and our neighbor is damaging and baseless. Failure to grasp this point voids life of meaning.

As an example, in the 2007 movie *Into the Wild*, a rebellious and naïve 19 year-old man, Christopher McCandless, forsakes his family, donates the sum of his entire savings to charity and hitchhikes to Alaska to live a solitary life in the pristine wilderness. It is a short-lived experiment. He will die in isolation from the frigid elements and hunger due to his poor planning and lack of supplies. But approximately three weeks prior to his death, he reads a book and underlines a passage, “Unshared happiness is not happiness.”<sup>22</sup> He writes in the margin these words, “Happiness [is] only real when shared.” It is an important discovery that he tragically makes all too late in life. He finally realizes—although he was headstrong and

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<sup>20</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 98.

<sup>21</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> “Into the Wild Forum” 30 August 2016, accessed January 10, 2017, <http://www.christophermccandless.info/forum/viewtopic.php?t=5479>.

determined to be his own man—that he missed the deepest truth all along. It was there in the experiences he had with all those people who cared about him along the way and those he left behind. His destructive selfishness is discernible to him at last but it is too late and he dies tragically by himself because he forsook everyone around him. He feels then what everyone around him felt but could not convince him as being true: life is meant to be lived in community. He had immersed himself in the primal elements of creation—encountering the unspoiled Alaskan frontier—but he did not have anyone with whom to share life. In creation, we are made not to exist unto the self, but for each other. While part of the movie’s closing scene, the character’s realization is among the first observations to be expressed by God. “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). If it was not good for a human to be alone before the Fall, it is especially not good to be alone after it. In this regard, loneliness is inhuman.

### Enriching Life

A community center is under the auspice of the church, but in the greater picture, a community center is an element within creation that helps to order and enrich life. Therefore, it seeks to meet the needs of people in the community by providing a place for them to meet, learn, play and celebrate. What better place is there to do these things than in a place that recognizes and affirms the worth of the people, the source of all gifts and the presence and redemptive activity of God throughout this world? A community center provides numerous occasions to share in life together and to invite the coming together of people as a way of leading to deeper relationships.

It may also be that in life together and by loving our neighbor—even our enemies—we see God at work in the life of nonbelievers in ways we did not expect. Such signs are

encouraging and a reminder of God’s activity and ways being higher than our own (Isa. 55:8–9). It is important to recognize and listen for the stories that show God working independent of our efforts in people’s lives. While other aspects will be considered, thus far, the universal scope of creation gives the church a green light to pursue community center ministry in an inclusive manner.

### **Two Kingdom Theology**

There is an inescapable tension to two kingdom theology.<sup>23</sup> Both the kingdom of the left and the right exist as established by God and are distinguishable, but inseparable. The two kingdoms have different interests and qualities. The kingdom of the left (the kingdom of power) is temporal and material, guiding daily affairs that benefit mankind and upholding civic order and the common good. It yields the power of the sword and human authority. The kingdom of the right (the kingdom of grace) is spiritual, proclaiming salvation through the Gospel, assuring eternal life through faith in Christ and administration of the Sacraments. Power in the right hand kingdom is drawn from the Word.

The two kingdom perspective was labeled “Christ and Culture in Paradox,” one of five relationships provided by H. Richard Niebuhr.<sup>24</sup> While both kingdoms exist, one tends to guide and outperform the other depending upon the task. In the instance of community center ministry, the right-hand kingdom guides the ministries of a church as they function in the

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<sup>23</sup> For a contemporary treatment of the two kingdoms that articulates and endorses Luther’s understanding of the two kingdoms, see Joel Biermann, *Wholly Citizens: God’s Two Realms and Christian Engagement with the World*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017) 250.

<sup>24</sup> Commission on Theology and Church Relations, “Render Unto Caesar...and unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State,” (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, September 1995), 32–34. Niebuhr’s 1951 work *Christ and Culture* described five different relationships between the church and civil government: 1) Christ Against culture, 2) “The Christ of Culture”, 3) Christ above Culture, 4) Christ and Culture in Paradox and 5) Christ the Transformer of Culture.

left-hand kingdom. Can the left hand ever guide the right hand? No, but this project is about the state's left influencing the church's left. The church must be reminded who and whose she is in order to minister effectively. Yet, in the kingdom of the left, the God of life demonstrates His desire to create, sustain, order and further life in this world. He invites us to join Him there in many ways, including upholding the law, provided the law is virtuous.

Hence the church operates with an awareness that what it does in the left-hand kingdom is compelled by the right-hand kingdom. In other words, the church's witness and mission, which are right hand functions—are conducted in the context of the left hand. The challenge is to keep this witness faithful to the Scriptures. The church's involvement in the temporal affairs of society can be complicated and messy but it is permissible and needed.

#### Two Kinds of Authority

With such a stance, the relationship and limitations of two kinds of authority are recognized: civil authority and church authority. Instead of detracting or usurping civil authority, the Lutheran Confessions actually strengthen civic order and affirm civil ordinances as having a divine quality in Apology XVI. "For the gospel does not destroy the state or the household but rather approves them, and it orders us to obey them as divine ordinances not only on account of the punishment, but also because of conscience" (Rom. 13:5). Hence, Christians make for good citizens.

Both the church and state have limitations to power. Sensitive to the charge that their teaching was undermining the state or promoting insubordination, the Confessions state, "Our teaching does not weaken but rather strengthens the authority of magistrates and the

value of civil ordinances in general.” (Ap XVI)<sup>25</sup> The Confessions also railed against the idea that the pope is lord over the entire world, possessing “both swords, the temporal and the spiritual” (Ap VII and VIII.24). Bishops may not depart from the gospel and if they do “teach wicked things, they should not be heard” despite the office they hold (Ap XXVIII.21).

Just as ecclesiastical power has limits, so does civil power, according to the Confessions. In the 19th century, the famed exodus of Lutherans from Saxony to America was prompted by the Prussian Union which “exemplified the abuse of government power inserting itself into the life of the church.”<sup>26</sup> While making a distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power, the Word of God remains the ultimate source and extent of authority.

### The Church

The church exists in both kingdoms. As an institution, it exists in the left-hand kingdom. As a theological entity, it exists in the right-hand kingdom. So the church building, property and budget are all left-hand kingdom items guided by right-hand kingdom thinking. Thus it is correctly and often stated the church is not a building. The inquiry of this project, though, examines the church’s proper use of its facilities by groups who have a different set of moral values. Let us consider the nature of the church before considering its proper activities, especially hospitality, and relationship to external organizations.

The need to repeatedly and clearly define the nature of the church is evident in Apology VII and VIII. It is more than just a civic organization. Briefly stated here:

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<sup>25</sup> “Sedition was a standard charge against Lutherans, especially after the Peasants’ War of 1525.” *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) footnote 574.

<sup>26</sup> William W. Schumacher, “Unionism and Syncretism in the LCMS Constitution,” *Witness and Worship in Pluralistic America* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2003) 53.



“The Church is not only an association of external ties and rites like other civic organizations, but it is principally an association of faith and the Holy Spirit in the hearts of persons” (Ap VII and VIII.5)

“The church is a spiritual people...a true people of God, reborn through the Holy Spirit (Ap VII.14).

“The church truly exists, consisting of true believing and righteous people scattered throughout the entire world. And we add its marks: the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments” (Ap VII.20).

It is the kingdom of Christ which stands in contrast to the kingdom of the devil. The church is the assembly of saints who truly believe the gospel of Christ and have the Holy Spirit (Ap VII.28).

The invisible church (*coram Deo*) is located in the right-hand kingdom as a “creature of the Word; the visible church (*coram mundo*) is a sociological organization located in the left-hand kingdom that imparts that Word to people.<sup>27</sup> Keeping these distinctions in place gives clarity as to how a person is found to be and remain in them. As the church lives out its life, it bears the infallible marks of Word and Sacrament that accomplish its existence. *De iure divino* determines what should be done; *de iure humano* determines how it may be approached in a particular context.

In the visible church exist both believers and unbelievers. Only faith in Christ, not the observance of traditions or customs, brings a person into the true, invisible church (*coram Deo*). We are gathered and bound together by the Holy Spirit. Membership here is not a matter of institutional rites or human traditions although these may be beneficial. Since unity is not dependent on human traditions, nor is righteousness a fruit of them, the Confessions allow flexibility and variety of customs so long as they help to promote “good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the building up of the church” (FC SD X.9).

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<sup>27</sup> Charles P. Arand, “A Two-Dimensional Understanding of the Church for the Twenty-First Century,” *Concordia Journal* 33, no. 2 (April 2007): 147–48.

The church enjoys much freedom in its choice of polity, structure and function so that it may be effective and winsome.

The opportunity to do good for others is an invitation to make a real difference in people's lives. We hope it will lead to further and deeper relationships, but even if it does not, good was still accomplished. Needs were met. Our neighbor was loved. The neighbor may not have been saved. As important as salvation is, it is not the only or closest interest the neighbor has. People do not want to be a project so it is important to just do good for their sake. Otherwise, their suspicions about our good works are justified. We do not want to do good works with an ulterior motive or instrumentalize people, but we do want what is best for a person.

It may then be asked, "How is the cause of the Gospel advanced in community center ministry?" A community center creates an environment for events to happen and relationships to begin. Sometimes the former happens without the latter but on splendid occasion both occur and the church has gained a friend. It is "good" to make a difference; it is "better" to make a friend; it is "best" to make a disciple.<sup>28</sup> The Gospel is best shared and received within relationships. Discipleship cannot happen apart from relationships and relationships are not built without a shared context in life.

### Incarnational Ministry

The setting for every church is unique, therefore, to some extent, the nature of its ministries will be unique. The culture in which the church conducts its ministry largely determines the viability of programs and endeavors. These ministry efforts should be shaped

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<sup>28</sup> I am indebted to Pastor Brian Banke (Our Savior LCMS, Tacoma) for presenting this insightful evaluation of church activity at a Five-Two local.

to meet the particular unmet needs of the community of which there are many. Community centers meet an initial need, but the greater benefit is not really about providing space or a venue. It is about inviting people to a place where God's people, the church, can meet and associate with other people in the community.

In his explanation to the Second Petition to the Lord's Prayer, Luther specifically prayed for the kingdom to come "to us, among us and with us" thereby putting an emphasis on togetherness (LC III.50). Wherever Jesus is proclaimed there the kingdom of grace comes and that promise is thankfully boundless. Community centers, then, can be and are a place where the kingdom comes. Certainly community centers have a role to play in assisting and improving people's lives. They provide a venue to meet, learn, play and celebrate. They help to maintain a good and decent society. Community centers foster relationships and life together. They do these things all while pointing to a greater fellowship and community that is centered on Christ.

#### Shared Interest

The church and the government share a mutual interest in a well-ordered and peaceful society where people's needs are met and life is as secure as possible. Everyone wants to live in a good community. "Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). The community center is meant to be seen as an expression of goodwill and care toward the people in our community at large.

To engage the community with a public facility means being subject to pertinent laws. In operating a community center in compliance with public accommodation laws, the church chooses to submit itself to governing authorities as Scripture directs (Rom. 13:1). It submits but it does not cease to scrutinize what it is being directed to do for there is always a limit.

The existing structure of the earthly government must continually be re-examined and criticized, otherwise its harsh regulations will continue unchanged. Undeviating allegiance to an outmoded and rigid order of government can often be as lacking in love and consideration as calculated ill-will. The order of earthly government must always be flexible and elastic, if it is to be of use.<sup>29</sup>

The use of the law is to protect, order and further people in society. The church should stand to benefit from the law as well. As an institution subject to civil law, it has a rightful claim to make its concerns known and to address the government with legal or institutional interests or concerns.<sup>30</sup> For the Reformers, if it were permissible for clergy on an individual level to own property, as the following quote shows, then it is also a permissible left-hand function for the church to do the same.

And it is permissible for Christians to use civil ordinances, just as they use air, light, food and drink. For as this universe and the fixed movements of the stars are truly orders of God and are preserved by God, so legitimate governments are truly orders of God and are preserved and defended by God against the devil (Ap VII.50).

God intends for the law to bless His fallen creation. But what happens when the law is used *against* the created order?

#### Areas of Conflict

The government has an interest in protecting all citizens and ensuring they live peaceably and without discrimination. What if, in the pursuit of this interest, the government does not respect the realm of the church and its ministry, nor other organizations in society? What if the government attempts to compel the church to do something it would not otherwise do? If it were to influence the church's message or cause a different gospel to be preached, as the Apostles so clearly stated, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts

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<sup>29</sup> Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 144.

<sup>30</sup> CTCR, "Render unto Caesar...and unto God," 66.

5:29). But I believe the government has actually done something edifying for the church in its principles of anti-discrimination. It does not sound that far off from loving all people—our neighbor—be they friends or enemies.

Surely the state is not entirely virtuous. Where necessary, the church must stand up to the tyranny and the compulsion of the state even if it means losing the cherished 501(c)3 status. “The call for the church, then is not that she be subsumed into the idolatry of the state, but that she call it to account.”<sup>31</sup> Christians are formed in the church and therefore “positively resist being formed by the state.”<sup>32</sup> If they do not, then the church is remade in the image of the state. “The greatest threat is when the state replaces religious life.”<sup>33</sup> An ominous sign of this replacement is the public’s consideration of government as the source of provision, instead of God.

The church should respect the state but it is a respect and submission that comes with clear limitations. C.F.W. Walther, acutely aware of government interference in the church’s affairs, stated the Word of God and individual conscience are bounds the government does not have the right to cause people to transgress.

The Lutheran church believes, teaches and confesses, in accordance with God’s Word, that the secular government does not have the power to command its subjects to do anything that God has prohibited, nor does it have the power to prohibit anything that God has commanded, nor does the government have the power to force its subjects to do anything that violates their conscience.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Gifford A. Grobien, “The Christian Voice in the Civil Realm,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 78 (2014): 124.

<sup>32</sup> Craig Hovey, “Neither Cyclops nor Sophist: Christian Formation against the State,” *Political Theology* 12, no. 1 (2011): 50.

<sup>33</sup> Grobien, “The Christian Voice in the Civil Realm,” 123.

<sup>34</sup> C.F.W. Walther, *All Glory to God* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016), 467.

We render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Mark 12:17), which means despite what the coinage stated, Caesar is not God. But statism is insecure, unrelenting and not easily dethroned. "With the reduction of authority to one institution, the state, a society becomes inherently intolerant, excluding all points of view that challenge, conflict with or oppose the state position."<sup>35</sup> Statism cannot tolerate divergent points of view that call into question its assumed superiority. It seeks to delegitimize the church's taller truth as irrational, outdated or just plain impractical for today's world. Having stated these things, the possibility still remains that the state might just be promoting a value the church is also meant to model.

### Finding a Way

Therefore, in order for the church to most effectively express her views and have influence, Robert Benne suggests considering the kind of interaction by which the church engages the political realm.<sup>36</sup> Benne advocates the use of reason and experience instead of theological discourse in order to articulate a position on an issue since this approach has a broader and more intellectual appeal.<sup>37</sup> After all, why should the public adopt a viewpoint or a behavior of the church when the public does not subscribe to the church's moral standards and teachings? In the setting of a community center, is it sensible to expect such behavior as a courtesy to the church or is the expectation unrealistic and unfair?

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<sup>35</sup> Grobien, "The Christian Voice in the Civil Realm," 123.

<sup>36</sup> Benne's four connections between church and politics are indirect and unintentional influence, indirect and intentional influence, direct and intentional influence and, lastly, direct and intentional action. The last of these should be used sparingly and only when there is moral clarity and urgency as the potential for politicization of the church is high. CTCR "Render unto Caesar," 71-90.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Benne, "How Should Religious Convictions Be Expressed in Political Life?" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 51, no. 2 (2012): 106.

The outside person may be persuaded by a moral and intellectual argument that is based on natural revelation, not on special revelation that comes through the Scriptures. The ineffectiveness of simply quoting a Bible verse in support of a position on an issue is evident in that both sides, sometimes even using the same verse, offer opposing justification. An irreligious person or secular government casts aside dogmatic arguments as inadmissible.

The church would do better if she appealed to natural law which belongs to the left-hand kingdom. Natural law is drawn from the observable order of the world and the individual conscience. Natural knowledge of God “*might* sometimes be true, will *always* be incomplete, and will *never* suffice for salvation” [emphasis original] and yet it is still useful as a common ground for conversation around contentious issues.<sup>38</sup>

As an example, the Supreme Court’s landmark 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision (5–4) recognized same—sex marriages and made such recognition part of civil law. Not only is this a reversal of many states’ civil laws and a departure from traditional moral values, the decision goes directly against natural law. Since natural law is harder to deny than a specific morality or viewpoint, some of those who did not favor same—sex marriage (such as Family Research Council and Focus on the Family) shifted their strategy and terminology. Instead of framing the issue as “traditional” marriage or same—sex “marriage,” they used the terms “natural marriage” and “unnatural marriage.” The basis of their appeal shifted from traditions and biblical morality to natural law, since, as evidenced by nature, the biological principles of life and reproduction are indisputable. This change in terminology came much too late to

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<sup>38</sup> Commission on Theology and Church Relations, “The Natural Knowledge of God in Christian Confession and Christian Witness,” *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, (April 2013): 37.

change the outcome or shape the public discourse, but it shows the potential of advocating a position from common ground. But even then, success is not guaranteed.

In defending its domain, the church might win the cause or it might suffer a setback, even a stinging defeat on an issue, but the foremost call is to be faithful. For a time, faithfulness can appear as loss. Christians have to accept the possibility of losing battles—but only for the right reason. Any foray into politics should not be done lightly for it runs the risk of the church losing her central focus of the Gospel and her public credibility.<sup>39</sup> Still, “there is a fight to be made in the temporal kingdom. There may be periodic political improvements, and the church should not shirk from seeking these within the context of faithful concession and faithful action.”<sup>40</sup>

The church is ordered to live and remain until the end of this world, standing in relation to the government but never being subsumed into government; speaking the truth to the government and never compromising her voice for political gain; and acting in humble service toward all men, whether that is in harmony with the state or whether the church ends up fined or sued for her insistence to obey God instead of men.<sup>41</sup>

### **Hospitality as Morality**

Hospitality is a deeply moral act. It recognizes what has already been bestowed but is sometimes overlooked—the common humanity and equal value of a person. It sees the image of God in people. Hospitality is transformative as it honors the dignity of the receiver and the giver alike. It acknowledges the blessings travel a two way street. The helper must also be

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<sup>39</sup> CTCR, “Render unto Caesar...and unto God,” 92.

<sup>40</sup> Grobien, “The Christian Voice in the Civil Realm,” 123.

<sup>41</sup> Grobien, “The Christian Voice in the Civil Realm,” 130.



able to receive. “The pinnacle of lovelessness is not our unwillingness to be a neighbor to someone, but our unwillingness to allow them to be a neighbor to us.”<sup>42</sup> According to an ethicist, hospitality is the opposite of cruelty.<sup>43</sup> Hospitality may look tame, but it is fiercely countercultural. It is subversive and resistant to the ways of the world.

Hospitality sets the high standard to love all as Jesus taught. “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than other? Do not even Gentiles do the same?” (Matt. 5:46–47). Jesus calls us to a higher, exceptional and surprising standard. The church hopes to manifest God’s perfect love by loving all of the people we meet along the way. People need it.

As humans created by God for communion, we crave belonging and acceptance. All of us share a common need for friendship, for being included, and thus value welcoming and being welcomed. Hospitality is the practice or ritual that speaks to those aspirations of the human family....We thus feel connected to others through friendship and the hand of welcome, but also feel marginalized from others when rejected and excluded.<sup>44</sup>

### Hospitality in Ancient Texts

We are not the first people to struggle with being hospitable in a pagan society. Hospitality as an ancient and contemporary practice provides helpful guidelines and lessons. The Greeks considered hospitality a basic characteristic that distinguished them from the primitive type or barbarian who exhibited xenophobia.<sup>45</sup> The Romans viewed hospitality as a

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<sup>42</sup> Allan Aubrey Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1977), 5 quoted in Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, 120.

<sup>43</sup> Philip Hallie, “From Cruelty to Goodness,” *The Hastings Center Report* 11 (1981): 26–27 quoted in Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Leopoldo A. Sanchez, “Can Anything Good Come Out of \_\_\_\_\_? Come and See!” *Concordia Journal* 41:2 (Spring 2015): 114–15.

<sup>45</sup> Ilsup Ahn, “Economy of ‘Invisible Debt’ and Ethics of ‘Radical Hospitality: Toward a Paradigm Change of Hospitality from ‘Gift’ to ‘Forgiveness’,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, no. 2 (June 2010): 244.

virtuous privilege of patrons, even classifying how the *ius hospitii* (the law of hospitality) related to seven categories of relationships.<sup>46</sup> Both the Greeks and Romans were still interested in the reciprocal benefit, however. Christian hospitality sought to show kindness to the least and the poorest with the expectation of nothing in return for they had no means.

Perhaps there is also some insight to the contemporary situation from the ancient documents of The *Didache* and Benedict's *Rule*. Granted, the culture and context is entirely different, but something similar about the challenge for a successful encounter between the Christian community and the guest remains.

The *Didache* exhorts hospitality while acknowledging its limitations and potential abuses. It calls on Christians to give freely, expecting nothing in return. The twelfth section is particularly revealing. There limits are set on duration of stay—two days, but no more than three. The nature of their character is revealed by their being tested and known, perhaps by their willingness to work and help earn their keep. The tension comes from seeing Jesus in every stranger, while at the same time recognizing, there are proper limits to what may be extended or demanded. Specifics aside, Christian hospitality is seen as normative and necessary and the fact that directives exist in how to deal with possible challenges show that the issue is not always easily addressed.

From the earliest of writings, hospitality is presented as the way of interaction. The *Rule of St. Benedict* was very influential. Echoing Matt. 25:35, Benedict writes in *Rule* 53:1, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ.” Functionally, Rule 53 prescribes for a special kitchen and workers to provide sojourning guests with meals. It was an accommodation as well as a boundary. This facility provision is an indication of the

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<sup>46</sup> Ahn, “Economy of ‘Invisible Debt’ and Ethics of ‘Radical Hospitality’”, 245.

necessity of balancing the needs of the external guest with the ongoing needs of the institution which remained in control in how it operated. Monastic life was not at the mercy of meandering peasants.

The fact is that we all have to learn to provide for others while maintaining the values and structures, the balance and depth, of our own lives. The community that is to greet the guest is not to barter its own identity in the name of the guest.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, community centers should never have to lose their identity in the associations they make. But it is an association that is done in a thoughtful and orderly manner. The guest abides by the instruction given him. Benedictine spirituality viewed hospitality as a form and expression of worship. In this approach of welcoming the stranger, Christ was received and given. “The message to the stranger is clear: come right in and disturb our perfect lives. You are the Christ for us today.”<sup>48</sup> Luther points out that Christ is hidden in our neighbor and also in our vocation.<sup>49</sup> To welcome in a persecuted believer meant, according to Luther, “God Himself is in our home, is being fed at our house, is lying down and resting.”<sup>50</sup> In this respect, even though we are not Benedictine monks, hospitality never gets old.

### Hospitality in Scripture

Hospitality is a very important theme in Scripture. Abraham and Sarah entertained messengers of God (Gen. 18:1–8), Lot insisted the two angels spend the night with him (Gen. 19:1–3), Abigail served David (1 Sam. 25:14–35) and the Gentile widow of Zarephath cared

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<sup>47</sup> Joan Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict: A Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1992) 233.

<sup>48</sup> Chittister, *Rule of Benedict*, 228.

<sup>49</sup> Gene Veith, *Working for Our Neighbor: A Lutheran Primer on Vocation, Economics and Ordinary Life*. (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2016) 3.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, vol. 3: Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 15–20 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 189.

for Elijah (1 Kings 17:8–24). Hospitality may serve as a gracious deterrent, as when the Syrians were instructed by the king of Israel to be fed instead of killed (2 Kings 6:8–23). God commanded the Israelites to show hospitality to strangers. As they regarded aliens, they were reminded that they too were once aliens in Egypt (Lev. 19:33–34). Fields were not to be completely harvested so the sojourner may not starve (Deut. 24:19–22). A triennial tithe of grain was reserved for sojourners among others (Deut. 14:29).

Practicing hospitality helps the scriptures make the most sense.<sup>51</sup> Hospitality is less about the resources themselves, however, and more about willingness to share. As has been experienced by those who give the most who have the least, somehow “in God’s remarkable economy, as we make room for hospitality, more room becomes available to us for life, hope and grace.”<sup>52</sup> Hospitality also points to the final eschatological feast where sinners are welcomed. “The inclusion of sinners in the community of salvation, achieved in table fellowship, is the most meaningful expression of the message of the redeeming love of God.”<sup>53</sup> A simple shared meal is a kingdom expression that has its ultimate fulfillment in the eschaton.

Hospitality is a good work clearly commanded to be shown to the stranger (Heb. 13:2) and the believer (Rom. 12:13) alike. God compels us to show consideration and generosity to those in need or simply as a way of honoring the guest. Hospitality is an applied discipline of servanthood. By being hospitable, the church seeks to love and show genuine care for people. How we treat one another matters deeply as it authenticates and earns a hearing for the

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<sup>51</sup> Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 34.

<sup>52</sup> Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, xiii.

<sup>53</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology Vol. 1* (London: SCM-Canterbury Press, 1977) 115.

message we bear. But even if there is no further opportunity, hospitality still gives sacrificially in the moment because the need exists and that is sufficient reason. People matter.

Jesus spent time with sinners, eating with them in their homes. He insisted on being with them. As N.T. Wright observes, “Most writers now agree that eating with ‘sinners’ was one of the most characteristic and striking remarks of Jesus’ activity. . . . Jesus was, as it were, celebrating the messianic banquet, and doing so with all the wrong people.”<sup>54</sup> Jesus walked the ill-reputed border between Samaria and Galilee. He found a way to receive and be received by the people. Likewise, the church needs to leave the comforts of Jerusalem and join Jesus in exploring the marginal places—not in terms of economics necessarily, but in terms of our comfort zone and perspective.<sup>55</sup> There we may find a surprising response to the gospel, like the one leper—a Samaritan nonetheless—who returns to thank Jesus (Luke 17:16).

In Jesus’ day (and our own), hating one’s enemies was typical behavior. For the people had seen it done and heard it taught even though there is no such statement in the Old Testament.<sup>56</sup> In Matthew 5:21–48, Jesus offers the correct interpretation of the Torah and displays the standard of spiritual greatness for God’s people to follow.<sup>57</sup> These broadly spoken truths have even wider implications that intentionally are not provided in the text. Applying these truths in specific situations requires wisdom, but the actions must be practiced as they are commanded by the Lord. The call is to love everyone and pray for them,

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<sup>54</sup> N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 431.

<sup>55</sup> Sanchez, “Can Anything Good Come Out of \_\_\_\_\_? Come and See!” 122.

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 304.

<sup>57</sup> Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 277.

especially our enemies. This commandment follows very closely to the summary of the Law: love God, love your neighbor. It is hard to find a loophole for there is not one. The purpose of loving one's enemies is to show and demonstrate a real relationship to the Father.

Why will love even for the enemy reveal that the Jesus' disciples are the Father's adopted sons? Because the Father is good to both the evil and good, to just and unjust. This is so *in the realm of creation* [emphasis added], where God does not withhold his good gifts from those who have set themselves against him in unbelief and rebellion.<sup>58</sup>

Such recognition is given and such provision is made to all people in the created realm.

Jesus' words are a reference to the kingdom of power, not the kingdom of grace. The sun and rain are not validating any behavior or ideology. In fact, they are given by the Father *apart from* any consideration of the worth or (or lack of worth) of the individual. The wicked and the good are both warmed by the rays of the sun. The righteous and the unrighteous receive the same drops of rain. The Father is not guilty by association. Rather, the perfection of the Father is seen in that He excludes no one! Jesus tells us to be like the Father in our love and prayer for all people. That kind of radical love necessitates equally radical attitude and action.

What is so stunning about the approach of Jesus is that He inverts the relationship between hospitality and holiness. The hospitality of Jesus becomes the means of holiness. Instead of avoiding unclean things or people in order to remain clean, Jesus draws near, making social and, often, physical contact. "Instead of sin and impurity infecting him, it seems Jesus' purity and righteousness somehow 'infects' the impure, sinners and the Gentiles."<sup>59</sup> How much of this example is paradigmatic for Christ's followers? Separation

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<sup>58</sup> Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1–11:1*, 306.

<sup>59</sup> Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 130.

and isolation is discouraged; proximity is welcomed. As God taught Peter through Cornelius in Acts 10, different rules now apply. Adjustment in attitudes and behavior is necessary.

Radical, Christ-like hospitality is a much better practice than simply tolerance which calls all things equally good. Tolerance ignores but hospitality acknowledges and engages. Tolerance is not in our tradition, but hospitality is commanded. Hospitality does not judge, but calls the church to do something kind and meaningful. It may serve as an often needed prerequisite demonstration for hearing the gospel since truth, unaccompanied by acts of love, often makes the church appear hateful.

What about, though, the biblical imperatives to avoid ungodly people (cf Rom. 16:17; 2 Tim. 3:5)? Those passages are directed inwardly and refer to a fellowship of believers. They are stated in the interest of preserving and protecting the church against the charge of hypocrisy and immorality. Otherwise the reputation of the church would be impugned. Paul clarifies this important directive in 1 Cor. 5:9–13.

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone *who bears the name brother* if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges the outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

In recalling God’s word in Deuteronomy, Paul is giving an internal directive to the church.

As to our conduct as individual believers, we must shun and “abhor evil while holding fast to what is good” (Rom. 12:9). The church should not sanction sin.

Community center ministries have hospitality at their core, but unlike true hospitality, there is an expectation of remuneration of some kind, be it financial or relational. The use of contracts, insurance and staffing show the commercial side to this venture. In addition, it is

an institutional endeavor. It is one thing for a Christian individual to practice hospitality in his or her own home, but something else when it is done corporately and legally. These differences should be noted.

Community center ministry is a way of reaching into the lives of people who may have been marginalized in some way or perhaps not. But it is in the welcoming of them we recognize and affirm people for who they are in order to make them feel valued. If the default approach is to welcome the stranger, it is then easier to handle the ambiguous or difficult situations. Welcoming strangers does not mean coercing conformity and it would be a misuse of hospitality as a means unto an end. Hospitality does not imply we share their values; it does mean we value the person as a fellow human being and part of creation. That should suffice. The church invites and hosts the world even as it journeys through the midst of the world.

### **Degrees of Association**

Degrees of association is a pertinent concept for this project. The degree to which we relate to one another shapes our mutual expectations and behavior. In general, the greater the degree of unity, the closer the relationship may become. For example, as exhibited by LCMS congregations and 38 partner churches today, a shared set of values, beliefs and a common confession may result in a high degree of association known as pulpit and altar fellowship.<sup>60</sup> Community center ministry does not involve this church–body level relationship as described and outlined in greater detail in other places.<sup>61</sup> Community center ministry should not,

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<sup>60</sup> Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “Partner Church Bodies,” <http://www.lcms.org/partners/partnerchurches> (16 January 2017).

<sup>61</sup> Commission on Theology and Church Relations, “The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship,” *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, (April 1981): 1–46.



however, confuse the matter of giving clear witness to the gospel or be unfaithful in its confession.

Church fellowship can be regarded as an outgrowth of unity and understanding of the faith. But association makes no such demands. Community center ministry does not need formal agreement from outside parties on the nature of the gospel. It is able to recognize relationships with other organizations and people that may simply be associative and not as deep. It does not read into or imply a greater deal of agreement than exists. It welcomes business relationships, friendships and the stranger. It tolerates and appreciates differences without difficulty because its expectations do not exceed the level of association. Understanding the level of association keeps people from reading more into the situation than they should.

The Synod has described something similar as “cooperation in externals.” It is not a matter of doctrine, but of practice.

Cooperation in externals does not imply communion in sacred things in any way. It has acknowledged two critical principles with regard to cooperation in externals: (1) that it is often appropriate to engage in cooperative work with another church body or group of Christians, and (2) that such cooperative work may not be done at the expense of doctrinal integrity.<sup>62</sup>

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to determining whether cooperation should or should not occur. Some people expend energy to make sure these partnerships do not happen, while others go out of their way to forge such relationships.

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<sup>62</sup> Commission on Theology and Church Relations, “Principles for Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity (2010 Res. 3–03), *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, (17 December 2010): 3.

In a presentation entitled “Leveraging Strategic Partnerships,” Mark Junkans encourages churches to form partnerships in order to accomplish the work that God desires.<sup>63</sup> Since God is actively directing and using the resources He has placed in the community, there is opportunity to join Him in that work. It seems the church could always use more resources if it had them—yet it does have them—in the community! Partnerships are also beneficial to the church because working alone in the community is unsustainable and not enjoyable. Building partnerships brings sustainability and relationships. The church may be hesitant to form working relationships with people for a variety of reasons, such as pride, desire for control or fear of the unknown. There may be an incorrect notion that nonbelievers have nothing to offer the church or that their input is somehow suspect or deficient in civic matters.

With whom could the church partner? Potential partners include institutions (schools, hospitals), businesses, agencies, churches and other religious groups, associations (civic, neighborhood), government officials, outside resources. Junkans suggests the final category of outside resources should be consulted last as local resources are more germane to building relationships and thereby offer a larger community footprint.

Junkans offers a helpful taxonomy of partnerships that range from minimal involvement to a high degree of association. The bigger or more complex the issue is, the higher the level of association is needed.

*Stage One: Communication*—Networking yields a general mutual awareness in what each other is doing. Services, locations and clientele type is understood.

*Stage Two: Coordination*—Each organization operates in a coordinated effort. Agreement is reached to not overlap or duplicate activity.

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<sup>63</sup> Mark Junkans, “Leveraging Strategic Partnerships” as presented at Five-Two Wiki Conference, CrossPoint Community Church, Katy, TX (24 September 2014).

*Stage Three: Cooperation*—May involve referrals for service. Events and space are shared at this level of association.

*Stage Four: Collaboration*—Ownership is shared as joint projects are undertaken. Services are shared.

*Stage Five: Coalition*—Necessary for the big issues, this level involves the formation and maintenance of formalized partnerships between multiple entities.

This range of levels of engagement is helpful for arriving at shared expectations and understanding. It shows how partnership may progress or regress over time and that not all relationships are created equally.

In terms of a community center, there is an important distinction between allowing a group to use the facility and actual endorsement of the group's message. An event may be *held at Faith* that is not *hosted by Faith*. In most cases, we do not host or sponsor outside groups who use the facility, with the exception of Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls, both groups for whom Faith is an official charter organization. We do not advertise for outside groups; we simply provide a service to the community by providing affordable space.

The church will certainly want to let potential partners know of the facility's community purpose. Potential partners may be found in formal leadership (local government, municipal services, agencies), service providers (schools and non-profits) and recognized community leaders. Once identified, finding common ground is the next step. It may be helpful to ask: "What is best about the community? What is an unmet need? What good can we do here?" The church will find a lot of people asking similar questions and the answer may be arrived at mutually.

Cooperative work is work that is done better in tandem than it would be if it were done separately, not only for the result of accomplishing the task at hand, but for the purpose of

building relationships.<sup>64</sup> It has been observed that in the business world, relationships exist to get work done. But in the church, work exists to build relationships.

As people work side by side, different standards of behavior are to be expected among those who follow Jesus and those who do not. It makes little sense to impose the same set of moral expectations and behavior upon those who profess faith in Christ and those who do not. As for the church's involvement, "the Christian person can cooperate with his neighbor in many things, but not in sin, not in denial of the Gospel, not in anything that is contrary to God's Word or a conscience shared by the Holy Scriptures."<sup>65</sup> Another boundary: "Any witness, any worship, any work or word that confuses the true God with other gods is, indeed, a breach of the First Commandment."<sup>66</sup> These are the fixed boundaries, but they still leave an expanse for work to be done.

The distinction between fellowship and simple association is relevant to this project as it informs the proper level of engagement. It should keep the church from unreasonable expectations and it should encourage the church to receive certain people whose behavior or purpose it might otherwise find objectionable. The ways and purposes of church and community center are not necessarily exclusive as the mission is the same, but they begin with different starting points and utilize different strategies.

## **Conclusion**

The above biblical foundation and theological framework show interrelated and deep principles that are given in broad terms. Only in applying them will answers for specific

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<sup>64</sup> CTCR, "Principles for Cooperation in External with Theological Integrity," 4.

<sup>65</sup> CTCR, "Principles for Cooperation in External with Theological Integrity," 5.

<sup>66</sup> Andrew H. Bartelt, "No Other Gods," *Witness and Worship in Pluralistic America*, ed. John F. Johnson (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2003) 44.

situations emerge. Perhaps theology is better understood as an art, rather than a science, as it requires a technique of properly framing the issue. Creation, the two kingdoms, the practice of hospitality and degrees of association offer boundaries but also permission and encouragement for the church to engage the world through community center ministry.

So which groups and what activities are permissible? Whatever functions are permitted would have to be for the good of creation and relate to provision needed in life. Good is an admittedly subjective term, but at least it can be understood as the good of community, not only the good of the church. Activities or events that strengthen the family, build relationships or help meet the needs of the community merit consideration. Whatever functions are rejected would have to demonstrate a harm or disordering of creation that would hinder or lessen life, or somehow weaken or threaten the community that exists. Of course, any activity that breaks civil law is not permissible.

The example of Jesus as He ate with sinners and tax collectors is instructive, as is His clearing of the temple of people and activities that did not belong (Mark 11:15–19). The corporate witness of the moneychangers had made the “house of prayer for all nations” into a “den of robbers.” As a corollary, church facilities have proper and improper functions. In no instance should an event that contradicts the Gospel or lead to a compromise of our witness be permitted. Our relationship to these events needs to be closely considered in order to determine what actually constitutes such violation.

The church should never change what it is, but it can change what it is in the minds of the community by demonstrating an affinity for being open to greeting people and spending time with them. Sometimes welcoming the stranger also means welcoming the strange. That does not necessarily mean it is wrong to do so.

Jesus has a tendency to take human reasoning, push it to its logical conclusion and then flip it on its head. “You have heard it said, but I say to you,” is such a move in the Sermon on the Mount. Before the crowd and the disciples could learn the new and proper teaching, their old convictions had to first be deconstructed. Even when the teaching is given clearly, sometimes people can go overboard in the opposite direction by not understanding how to apply it. For example, Paul is forced to comment that it is impossible to not associate with sexually immoral people in this world, but we should purge the evil among us in the church. It seems like we are still being taught the basics of how to live life together in the realm of creation and in the fellowship of the church. The timeless Word is always timely.

Consideration of humanity shows people have different standards and worldviews, but in creation, we have a common need and dependency on God whether it is recognized or not. We can have the right answer, but unless we know to whom it applies, we are like the lawyer who sought to justify himself, “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). It is in the “going and doing likewise” that we affirm a mutual, neighborly identity. In the end, our call is still to love all people as we hold onto truth. How we go about it in the context of community center ministry will be the heart of the facility ethics guide.

In the next chapter, the theoretical perspective of the MAP will be considered. First, the history of Faith Community Center will be provided as the realized vision that was literally five years in the making. From the surprising first event to the present, I hope to show how Faith Community Center has changed the church’s future for the better. Second, important legal issues will be considered and evaluated in light of recent developments and an important decision from the Washington State Supreme Court regarding the contested area between religious freedom and public accommodation laws. Third, a review of literature, will

provide an opportunity to learn from those who are trained in the field. Special consideration will be given to evaluating Synod's recent resource meant to protect and equip the churches, schools and ministries who are facing these very issues.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**THE PROJECT IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Historical Context**

A vision five years in the making, Faith Community Center (FCC) was proudly dedicated on Sunday, October 11, 2009, by the congregation. I directed the people to stand along the perimeter of the court and lay their hands on the walls to dedicate the facility “for the community in Jesus’ name.” The wording was intentional as it was hopeful. The construct of that blessing foreshadowed well the way the FCC has been used since its beginning by leading us into relationship with people in our community. In addition to church, school and childcare use, a wide variety of community events—including athletics, receptions, bingo nights, concerts, luncheons, sale events—have taken place here.

There have been events that were not planned, but occurred out of necessity. In several instances of crisis, the center has been the go-to place for power, safety and refuge from extreme heat and cold. In one memorable instance, the center was a gathering point for people who could not enter their own neighborhood because SWAT was negotiating with a man holding his own child hostage. Always prepared and in the midst of conducting an award ceremony at the FCC, Boy Scout Troop #2446 seized the moment by feeding a spaghetti dinner to the dozens of people who could not return home. We even received a letter of thanks from the office of Thurston County Sheriff John Snaza for our cooperation and hospitality.



## Casting Vision

Faith Community Center began as the result of a vision cast by Rev. Charles Keogh, Faith's pastor and military chaplain from 2001–2006. He presented the congregation with the necessity of making a choice to expand, even predicting one Sunday if no action was taken, the congregation would not exist in twenty years. The congregation was surprised to hear such a declaration from their pastor, but it encouraged dialogue and a deep questioning of purpose and ministry strategy.

Faith has ample property to build as the campus is ten acres in size, with a good location on a main thoroughfare. But the initial question revolved around what should be built first—a new sanctuary, expansion of our school or a community center? A series of cottage meetings was held. Once the seniors group (the More Mature Members or 3Ms) decided that a community center should be built first as phase one, the rest of the congregation fell in line. They felt it would give the most impact if the church built specifically for the benefit of the community. The sanctuary, while it was very much wanted, remains delayed until the last phase of the long-term building plans. The school and childcare expansions were slotted for phase two and three respectively. On May 23, 2004, in conjunction with Faith's 40th anniversary celebration, Faith broke ground for the multi-purpose building and actual construction began on May 11, 2006. The next three and a half years would bring progress and setbacks, but most importantly, it united people in purpose.

## Friends in High Places

Other churches doubted that Faith, which was not a large congregation, could pull off such a grand project. For this reason, Faith earned the reputation of “the little church that could.” God's provision was amazing in that one Saturday morning in 2001 at a Men of Faith

breakfast, Pastor Keogh accidentally discovered certificates of stock stowed away in the church kitchen drawers. Their value exceeded \$160,000! They were given by a congregational member, Dan Dittes, who died a few years later. How they ended up in the kitchen drawer, no one knows. This surprise gift became the seed money for the building campaign.

Securing the financing for such a large undertaking came about through several three-year long capital campaigns, including “Building Faith” and “Faith Forward,” which yielded approximately \$350,000 and \$200,000 respectively. For the remaining amount, a construction loan was secured through LCEF for about \$1.6 million which translates today into a monthly mortgage payment of approximately \$8,100. Because of the requirement of the loan, certain systems—such as fire suppression and alarm, electrical and HVAC—had to be professionally installed. But where volunteer labor could suffice, it was utilized.

The arrival of the Laborers for Christ was a surprise to some. Alf Howald, building project coordinator, remembers getting a call from Pastor Keogh one evening asking where to put the first few Laborers for Christ and their RVs. Alf replied, “I didn’t even know they were coming.” But more people would eventually arrive. A group of people from St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Federal Way, Washington, assisted the Men of Faith in construction. Led by Wayne Valentine and Frank McKinley, the skill of about ten Laborers for Christ and their wives was particularly helpful.<sup>1</sup> In welcoming them, Faith had to first construct a RV park, complete with water, sewer and electrical hookups for the RVs of the Laborers who stayed on site for 7–8 months. They helped to get the frame of the building in place. Their

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<sup>1</sup> The Laborers for Christ are a group of retired, paid skilled workers who travel to help build LCMS churches, schools and other facilities. Participants who helped build the FCC include Tony & Evelyn Belendez, Don & Lil Breech, George & Jeanine Cover, Ron & Marlup Dowell, Alec & Lois Finney, Joe & Carla Fury, John & Rhonda Johnson, Frank & Pauline McKinley, Olaf & Rosemary Thingvall, Wayne “Val” Valentine.

involvement was nearly derailed because of a change of regulation in the liability insurance for the Laborers for Christ. Suddenly, the top elevation of the multi-purpose building was four feet too high for them to work on it. But the policy was not yet finalized so the Laborers proceeded and finished their work before any insurance requirement was made official.

The need to have a single point of contact from Faith was apparent in terms of communication and coordination of efforts. Alf Howald, who is the self-described, “arm-twisted volunteer project manager” filled the role in admirable fashion through selfless service, faithful determination and the perfect combination of kindness, humor and skill. Alf remarked, “God’s hand was in this project from the very beginning.” Alf became the face of Faith Lutheran as he worked with companies, inspectors and agencies. His uprightness of character strengthened Faith’s reputation in the community. His good nature and patient temperament came in handy when a favor from the county was needed down the road. Agencies worked with us, especially the City of Lacey which lowered fees for water meters, because “people understood what we were trying to do.” The willingness to make adjustments was an indication they saw the benefit to the community at large.

### **Thinking outside the Cage**

In May of 2009, Alf was contacted by his co-worker about the possibility of having a “sports tournament” in the multi-purpose building. She and her husband own a popular martial arts business in town. Alf recalled at the time that he envisioned something like a high school event, with mats on the floor. Alf and the Men of Faith were excited how quickly the building was already attracting outside attention before it was even finished! We had no campus manager at the time so Alf handled the contracting of the event. The building, while close to being completed, did not have a temporary occupancy permit from the county, but

the event was six months away. No one anticipated a problem with the permit when most of the work was already completed. A verbal agreement was made and the November date was reserved. As time went on, we learned that the event was actually a kickboxing tournament. This revelation caused some to take pause. It was not what we had envisioned, but they had fulfilled all the requirements we had asked of them, including insurance and down payment. Alf asked for \$1,500 total for the event which was far too low, as became apparent. Still, however, no occupancy permit had been received from the county and the event for 500 people, according to the paperwork, was about a month away. One day, Alf got a phone call from a friend who had seen a flyer left on his car at the mall advertising “Northwest Fight Challenge” with Faith’s name and location. The “sports tournament” that involved kickboxing was actually a cage-fighting tournament!

This revelation raised a few eyebrows in the church—including my own. I can specifically recall a conversation with another area LCMS pastor who asked, “You’re not going to go through with this, are you?” But ultimately, we felt it was appropriate to honor a signed contract which had been paid in full. We did not want to risk damaging our reputation as the place who reneged on a contract just before a large event—a large event that featured strong, angry people no less. However, the matter was not entirely within our control. If we did not have a permit for temporary occupancy, there would be no event at all. The pressure was on and Alf went to the county one more time seeking a timely favor. Fortunately he had accumulated years of good will with county officials. The permit was granted just a few days before the event much to the relief of everyone. The people in the know at Faith were praying for the permit, but now also for the cage-fighting tournament! The church was encountering a

new cultural frontier. June Olson, our beloved church matriarch asked Alf on the day of set-up, “Is it okay if I go over and see the cage? I’ve never seen a cage like that before.”

### **Ready to Rumble**

On Saturday night, November 7, 2009, cars filled the Faith parking lot beyond capacity. New lines of parking were formed. The entire surrounding neighborhood was filled with parked cars on both sides of the street and on the grass. Parking lots of businesses across the street up to a quarter mile away were filled as more than 1,000 people came to the Northwest Fight Challenge. There would have been more in attendance, but the organizers of the event had to turn people away at the door. Even so, our own fire code max of 420 for the court was easily surpassed, but no fine was issued. The numbers were overwhelming, but the event was still orderly in that they provided off-duty police officers as their own security and they had staff to run concessions.

Alf remarked how organized and respectful the people were. Some people even brought their children. While the fighters themselves were well-tattooed, they were well-spoken and very grateful that Faith was open-minded enough to host the event. For set-up, they loved our concrete floors which could not be scratched. At the beginning of the event, the organizer stepped into the cage at center court and among her announcements, thanked Faith Lutheran for opening their doors.

Round after round, the event happened. Don and Alf worked the facility to the best of their ability, taking care of trash, bathroom needs, and cleaning up the blood of a pummeled and apologetic fighter. The fighters did wear protective gear of head guards and mouth guards. As for what the sign girls wore, admittedly, some discretion was required. But

overall, the crowd, the fighters and the organizers were all so respectful it was as if they knew they represented a whole industry and profession by their conduct.

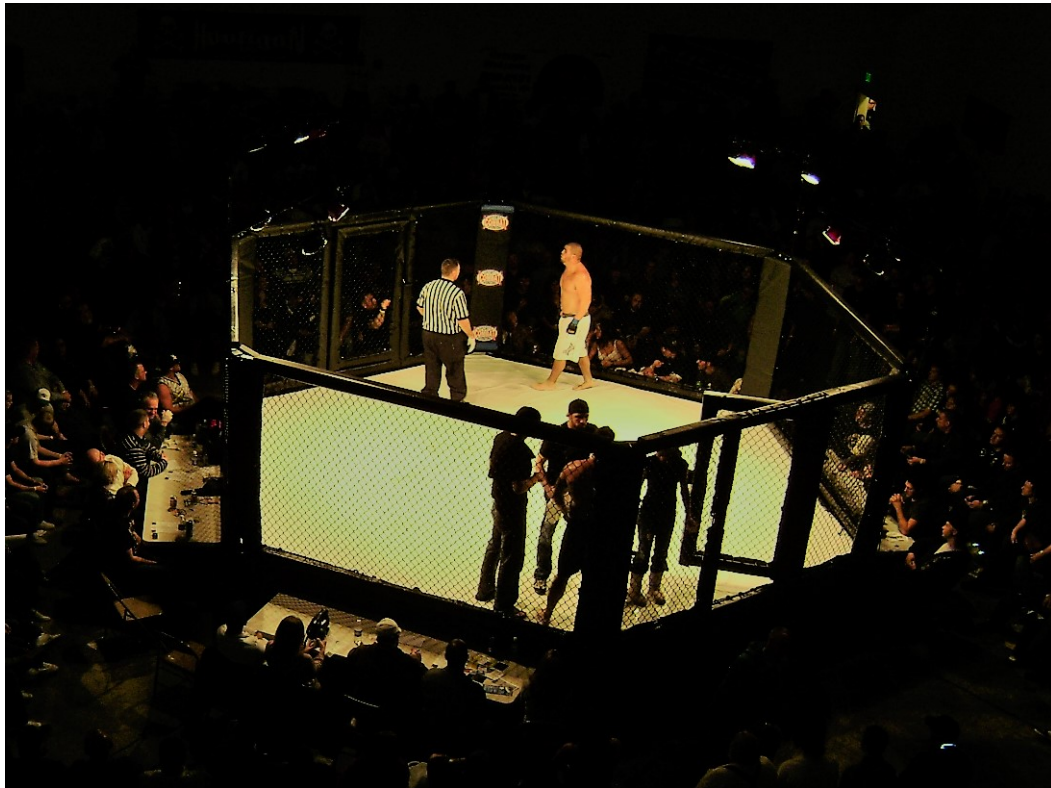
Figure 1. Cage fight crowd, November 7, 2009.



Perhaps the crowd handled themselves with such respect because they knew they had a stigma to overcome. There was an entirely different segment of the population on Faith's property that evening.

I [Don] never heard one curse word and the place was packed. And when the fight was over, it was over. I was so impressed with the people that were here...and at the end when it was time to clean up, they all helped. I even ran into another family from Trinity. There are all kinds of people here—even Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2. Fighters between rounds, November 7, 2009.



The next morning, I was eager to try and quell any unnecessary congregational angst over this event. I remember rising earlier than normal on Sunday morning and collecting the street-side fluorescent green cage fight signs that pointed to Faith. There was no way I could KO the talk, however. But in the end, it did not matter because about whom were the people going to gripe? The people who just built the building? There was no political pushback, no

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<sup>2</sup> Don Glitschka and Alf Howald, interview by Matthew Henry, Faith Lutheran Church, Lacey, WA, 22 Jan 2017.

upheaval or upset, just pure awe at what had actually happened. In the morning announcements, I told the congregation on Sunday morning that 1,000 people had come to the community center last night. The gasp was audible and the fellowship time was brimming in conversation with this unbelievable debut for the facility. We learned after the fact that the event was to be originally held at Saint Martin's University (a Benedictine Catholic university in Lacey) but it was deemed as "not an appropriate venue for a Christian school."

In hindsight, Alf affirmed, "They looked like they should have been in a gang...but I was so impressed with the people that were here." He observed the event was "a great shakedown for this building." As to what he would have done differently, aside from having a clear indication at the beginning as to the nature of the event, Alf suggested that like any sporting event, it be opened in prayer! Alf and Don both believed that having this event at Faith actually strengthened our reputation in the community and did not compromise our witness. It also challenged our assumptions of people who attend events like these. Alf said,

We saw it as an opportunity . . . I heard people in the community say, 'A church having a cage fighting tournament?' I said, 'What's wrong with that? We're all human beings. It opened the eyes to people's thinking that there's a stereotype out there for people who don't go to church very often or at all, thinking that church is stuffy and they prejudge people and all this other kind of stuff. What I heard from a couple of people is 'Wow, it's nice to see that there's a church that just opens their eyes and that's not judgmental.' That was a really positive part of this whole thing for me, besides it being scary as hell. Not the fight—just the logistics of running this thing.<sup>3</sup>

The famed first event in the FCC is now part of our story and past. How has having a community center changed Faith? Alf replied, "I think it's brought a lot more awareness of Faith Lutheran Church into the community," and Don added, "And it has brought community

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<sup>3</sup> Glitschka and Howald interview, 2017.



awareness into Faith. It's a two-way street." The activity itself may have been questionable, but the outcome was better than we had hoped. As Don understated, "It was an experience."

Logistically, Faith's venue was just too small for what was needed that their return is doubtful, but it is an interesting hypothetical to consider. What if they asked again? Would the FCC be up for a rematch? As Faith's first event at the community center, it is hard to think of anything other event that would push the envelope as this one did. It could have been a disaster but the relationship of trust and respect for Alf was sustained. We came away with respect for the people in the crowd, and hopefully they came away with respect for us. There was no vandalism. As Alf attests, we have had more damage to the building from preschoolers and their tricycles than we ever did from the cage fighters. Some people even stayed to wash the line of blue off the walls from the blue jeans pressed up against the wall! From the first time we opened the doors, the Community Center has given an entirely new future for Faith and it also gives us an unlikely and amazing story to tell.

#### Church within a Church

If Faith is open to having a cage fight tournament on its property, it may seem that any group would be welcome with no or few questions asked. But we have actually dissuaded groups from using the facility. Perhaps surprisingly, the groups we are most likely to turn down today are other Christian church groups who want to use the FCC on a regular basis. But this was not always the case.

In 2011, we were approached by a small, charismatic church belonging to the International House of Prayer (IHOP). They wanted to use the FCC on Sunday afternoons, a time slot that was generally available. We asked them to submit their statement of beliefs and key doctrines which they were happy to do. The Elders were tasked by the Campus Manager

with the duty of determining whether or not to allow them to meet at the FCC on a weekly basis. Permission was granted.

IHOP was very conservative in dress and morals. All the men and boys wore ties, if not suits. The women and girls wore long dresses. But in worship, every one let their hair down. The music segment of worship consistently climaxed to some kind of peak and the preaching, while lengthy, usually morphed into a time of speaking in tongues. I can remember a time peering through the window and seeing everyone, even the children, walking around in the gym in spiritual fervor and excitement speaking words I did not recognize. And so began a saying among the event staff and me, “What happens in the community center stays in the community center.” IHOP used the facility for more than a year until they found a place of their own. They were kind and respectful people, most considerate and genuine in their faith. Why was I glad to see them go? The difference in doctrine bothered me somewhat, but I knew I could not expect agreement from a heterodox church body.

Another church came along some time later. They were from Tacoma and looking to start a satellite location in the Olympia/Lacey area. They were a husband/wife pastoral team, largely based on values of prosperity gospel. The Elders again considered the request, but this time, they rejected the request, as I urged them to do. The pastor was disappointed and he cautioned us because if we truly were a public building, it would be difficult to decline groups and he did not want us to get into legal trouble. He was right. We needed a policy that guided other church use of the FCC and so we drew this line. Church groups that wish to use the FCC may request time for occasional or special events, but not for regular use. The reasoning for this limitation is two-fold: first, we want to maximize use of the facility by as

many groups as possible; and second, having a group regularly meet on Faith's campus appeared to confuse or join the church brands. We want a distinction to remain in place when it came to spiritual matters.

Another decision we made along the way was not to advertise for outside groups on our church sign or reader board. This keeps some distance between groups that meet at Faith and the ministries that are our own. On few occasions, we have even had to explicitly ban and remove the mention of Faith from a group's advertisement because they implied a stronger association or benefit to Faith that did not exist. Contractual language spells out this prohibition in clear detail. Most people understand why the distinction is good and necessary. Boundaries are simply wise to have.

#### Getting It in Writing

Before the multi-purpose building opened, the Church Council had begun a process of drafting facility use policies by asking other Puget Sound area LCMS churches to share their policies. By 2007, a facility use policy was adopted for the existing facility and the community center still under construction was adopted. It gave a tip of the hat to community groups in its opening paragraph by agreeing the building and property have a dual purpose: "as resources and assistance to the larger community as well as a 'home' for its own activities." But when it came to double bookings, church groups had priority. Interestingly, the document makes a specific mention that the building and property is *not* for rent and yet a "contribution schedule" is provided. Smoking was not permitted and consumption of alcohol was only allowed with the approval of the pastor. All groups were asked to abide by a pledge of non-discrimination on the basis of "race, class, handicapping conditions and gender." Absent from the list is religion, sexual orientation and gender identity (since this final

category is proposed to be a separate consideration from physical gender). While an argument from silence is not the strongest, it is telling that these three categories were omitted. It may indicate an unwillingness on Faith's part at the time to associate with people who have a different set of moral values. Or it may be a way of preserving leverage in events or groups that were controversial. As a way of maintaining oversight and keeping values congruent with our own, religious services (including weddings and funerals) were required to gain approval from the Pastor and Board Elders before scheduling. The version was never officially adopted by the Council or the Voters, however. The congregation entered into a time of vacancy and interim in 2007 and 2008. The construction of the building continued. When I received a call from Faith, Lacey, I was astounded to see a congregation that was actually building for the community. I was installed as pastor on January 25, 2009.

The building edged closer to completion. Recognizing the need to have a formalized policy in place, on June 28, 2009, the voters approved six guiding principles. They were simple and undeveloped, but they gave enough direction to proceed in booking the facility.

- 1) Faith Lutheran building facilities are there to serve God and the community.
- 2) Facilities use will not be at a net operating loss to the church.
- 3) Different rates will be charged for different purposes or groups.
- 4) Any organization using the facilities will have appropriate insurance coverage.
- 5) Alcohol is allowed under the control of WSLCB and State and local laws.
- 6) Reservations are prioritized on a first come, first served basis.

Notably, the view of the audience is tilted more to the community and the even-handedness of granting facility use on a first come, first served basis is different than elevating church above the community groups. Wider permission is also granted for alcohol which was seen as an important accommodation for large events and receptions.

Faith's first campus manager, hired in February 2010 at 20 hours per week, modified a facility use agreement from her former place of employment which sufficed for bookings.

The facility use contract has gone through two major revisions based on legal input and the prior experience of two campus managers. (For the current facility use contract and addendum, see Appendix A, 128–36). The facility use contract and supporting documentation give us an excellent opportunity to express our core values and mission statement as a church–owned community center. Putting into writing an actual statement of belief and clear positions on issues such as sanctity of marriage and sanctity of life affords greater religious liberty for the church, protects ministry and provides a platform for public confession of the faith. This disclosure is a positive witness because it is not asking people to change or suddenly agree to these core values; it is simply letting people know what we believe and confess. Frankly, if a community group or individual is so opposed to the church or the views it espouses, it is highly unlikely that group will choose to financially support it. They will simply go elsewhere. By not preemptively refusing service on the basis of different moral values, the claim of discrimination does not materialize. Being clear in our beliefs lets people know of our values and that chief among them is a love for the neighbor and a desire to build relationships with people in the community through hospitality and welcome. In a respectful way, a statement of faith that accompanies the facility use contract acknowledges differences of beliefs and opinions that exist in society on certain issues. Being forthright and honest, instead of papering over latent disagreement, puts the situation more at ease because it does not raise unrealistic expectations. It keeps both sides comfortable in who they are, not who they want the other to be.

### Nice to Meet You

In the eight years since its beginning, the people of Faith Lutheran have welcomed groups and met people we would not have otherwise encountered if it had not been for an

outwardly-directed community center. The FCC has brought new friendships and partnerships, introduced an important stream of outside revenue, and increased our community presence. These are all welcome accomplishments. In addition, many more people have formed a positive association and awareness of the church and our attitude toward doing good in the community. The genesis and history of this building has shown us that God is faithful and that its existence has created a whole new future for Faith.

There are always ways to improve. We have learned and are learning what is legally permissible. In the next section, the tax and legal dynamics of community center ministry will be presented and evaluated according to legal counsel of Lutheran Legal League. Examination of “Protecting Your Ministry”—the much-needed 2016 legal guide for LCMS congregations, schools and ministries—will follow. Finally, a review of literature will show existent research and results of applied theory to date.

### **Legal Considerations**

The operation of a community center as a public entity has legal implications that continue to change and minimize operational discretion and religious freedom. As mentioned in the introduction, the passage of R-74 on Nov. 6, 2012, affirmed the state legislature’s vote in June to legalize same-sex marriage (HB 2516 and SB 6239). The bill’s description aimed to “end discrimination in marriage based on gender and sexual orientation.”<sup>4</sup> Effectively, it

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<sup>4</sup> This summary statement of R-74 was published in the WA Secretary of State November 2012 voters’ pamphlet. See Appendix B (137).

“If approved, this measure would allow same-sex couples to marry. Other prohibitions on marriage, such as those based on age, being closely related, and already being married to somebody else would continue to apply. Marriage laws would apply without regard to gender. This measure specifies that gender-specific terms like husband and wife will be construed to be gender-neutral and will apply to spouses of the same sex.

This measure provides that clergy are not required to perform or recognize any marriage ceremony. No religious organization, or religiously-affiliated educational institution, would be required to provide accommodations, facilities, advantages, privileges, services, or goods related to the performance of a marriage.

made marriage a genderless institution to the point that even on the marriage license itself, the terms husband and wife are replaced with “Spouse A” and “Spouse B.” That law explicitly protected clergy from having to perform ceremonies he or she did not want to do, but that same law also made it illegal to refuse same–sex weddings or receptions at facilities that are open to the public, as Faith Community Center is. This requirement is in place even though Faith Lutheran Church is a bona fide religious organization and would otherwise be entitled to greater legal protection.

There is one key legal question on which this whole study turns: Is Faith Community Center a place of public accommodation? If not, the church can go about its business without much interference or imposition from the state. But if so, then anti-discrimination and consumer protection laws apply. The main statutes involved are Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD) 49.60 and Washington Consumer Protection Act RCW 19.86.

Public accommodation is defined in RCW 49.60.040(2) as

Any place of public resort, *accommodation*, assemblage, or amusement includes, but is not limited to, any place, licensed or unlicensed, kept for gain, hire, or reward, or where charges are made for admission, service, occupancy, or use of any property or facilities, whether conducted for the entertainment, housing, or lodging of transient guests, or for the benefit, use, or accommodation of those seeking health, recreation, or rest, PROVIDED, that *nothing contained in this definition shall be construed to include or apply to any institute, bona fide club, or place of accommodation, which is by its nature distinctly private, including fraternal organizations, though where public use is permitted that use shall be covered by this chapter*; nor shall anything contained in this definition apply to any educational facility, columbarium, crematory, mausoleum, or cemetery operated or maintained by a bona fide religious or sectarian institution.

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Clergy, religious organizations, and religiously-affiliated educational institutions would be immune from any civil claim or cause of action, including a claim or cause of action based on the Washington Law Against Discrimination, based on a refusal to perform or recognize any marriage, or to provide facilities, advantages, privileges, services, or goods related to the performance of a marriage.” While the summary statement seems to exempt religious institutions, it is only in reference to private organizations. If a facility is open to the public, as a community center is, then the door is also opened for public accommodation law to be applied and these previous protections are jeopardized.

While it seems obvious that a church is a private institution, a point of contention arises when a private organization chooses to operate publicly. Faith Lutheran Church, School, Childcare and Community Center are one legal entity with one tax ID number. The church owns and governs the whole. By our own choosing, we serve the public and welcome non-member use of the Faith Community Center within certain guidelines that are clearly and uniformly applied. As the previous section attested, interesting things have happened, but we have not faced the test of a same-sex wedding or reception. That particular issue remains hypothetical for now.

In approaching this issue from a legal perspective, I sought the services of an organization called Lutheran Legal League who provide *pro bono* work for LCMS pastors, churches and schools. Attorney Floyd Ivey, JD, MBA, BSEE of Ivey Law Offices in Kennewick, Washington, graciously responded to my request. When I inquired of him as to whether anti-discrimination laws applied to Faith Community Center, he replied, “This is a big question—one that would be briefed for hours by counsel getting ready for an eventual presentation to the Supreme Court. If your place can be rented by non-members for a wedding reception then you would likely violate the statute if you denied a satanic wedding reception.”

Most interestingly, on February 17, 2017, the Washington State Supreme Court did in fact issue a decision closely related to this matter. In a unanimous 9–0 ruling, *State v. Arlene’s Flowers, Inc.*, the Court found a florist violated the same anti-discrimination and consumer protection laws cited above by refusing to provide a floral display for a gay couple’s wedding. Even though she claimed religious freedom and First Amendment protections, Baronelle Stutzman of Arlene’s Flowers lost her case. She was sued in both a



personal and business capacity and plans to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court did not agree that flowers or floral artistry constituted speech so they found no burden to her free speech rights. In her view, providing a floral display was an endorsement of same-sex marriage. Tellingly, Stutzman acknowledged in her deposition that providing flowers for a wedding between Muslims would not necessarily constitute an endorsement of Islam, nor would providing flowers for an atheist couple endorse atheism. Why then, would the association or endorsement be inferred for a same-sex couple? It goes back to the issue of semiotics and drawing an inference that is not supported.

I believe the Court was right to apply the law as it did. Stutzman is providing a service to the public. Even though the State was overly vindictive, they won the case because “sexual orientation, gender expression or identity” are protected classes from discrimination in Washington State as of 2006 when the Anderson–Murray law passed.<sup>5</sup> Stutzman lost the moral ground because she was not treating people fairly and equally, even though she is a kind person who is sincere in her Baptist Christian faith. In my opinion, she was reading more into her role than she should have. The action of providing flowers may be forced and against her will, but it does not entail agreement or the condoning of sin.

In Matthew 5, Jesus mentions many things going against our will (the striking of the cheek, the taking of a tunic, being forced to walk a mile), but instead of an assertion of rights or the self as a way of resistance, the call is to love the neighbor. Granted, the Court’s job

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<sup>5</sup> Lambda Legal, Washington’s Law Against Discrimination Protects Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender People 19 Sept 2007, [http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/fs\\_law-against-discrimination-protecting-lgbt-people-in-wa\\_0.pdf](http://www.lambdalegal.org/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/fs_law-against-discrimination-protecting-lgbt-people-in-wa_0.pdf) (17 March 2017).

The Anderson–Murray amendment to the WLAD specifically exempts federal, tribal and non-profit religiously controlled employers from workplace regulations. However, it is aimed at protecting the rights of people in three critical areas including employment, public accommodation, and housing and financial transactions. The designation of Faith Community Center as public accommodation appears to be the critical legal determination as to whether these protections apply, even though Faith is a non-profit, religious organization.

was not to do a Bible study, but the Jesus “card” is played here because Stutzman herself mentioned her personal relationship with Jesus to the gay couple as the reason why she could not provide the floral arrangement for their wedding.

This timely Supreme Court decision shows well the cultural and legal context in which Faith Community Center operates. As an institution, the church has greater legal protections than individual Christian business owners, but it cannot be assured of it. In response to this ruling, my attorney wrote,

I predict that any general community use will require that community use to be allowed by every type of user. I predict that the denial will result in litigation which will cost \$10,000, \$100,000 or some number sufficient to severely impact the sponsoring institution. If receptions [are] allowed generally then [they are] allowed for all. If weddings are allowed for all, include same-sex. If the facility is open to [weddings] other than LCMS, then probably it is open to all weddings.

Then he posited another question.

If another Christian denomination were allowed to worship in the community hall then would Satan worship be allowed and, if refused, would litigation ensue? The groups advancing such values are aggressive.

Moral issues aside, this is the bizarre legal situation that has a parallel. In 2017, a public elementary school in Tacoma was forced to permit an after-hours satanic club for students since it also allowed Good News children’s evangelism group.<sup>6</sup>

There are steps we can take to maximize legal protection and make the most of whatever freedom of religion exists in this realm. The document “Protecting Your Ministry” (which will be covered in the next section as part of the literature review) details the recommended actions, including approving a clear statement of faith and having defined facility use policies. My attorney did not hold out any hope that charging less in rent than the

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<sup>6</sup> Nadia Romero, “Christian group meets to combat satanic temple club at Tacoma elementary school,” 18 October 2016, <http://q13fox.com/2016/10/18/christian-group-meets-to-combat-satan-club-at-tacoma-elementary-school/> (27 February 2017).

market rate would offer any protection. This tactic has been suggested as a way of shoring up the ministry side and thus making it look less like a business.

When I asked my attorney where he saw the greatest liability for the Faith Community Center, he responded, “Having non–member activity.” So there we have it. The very group we are attempting to reach, the level we want to participate on presents both opportunity and liability. This is the nature of community center ministry. Unless the church wants to simply have a bigger club house for itself, it has to figure out these issues. Legally, the church is not likely to find support from the courts in Washington if it sought to deny services to certain groups who have a different set of moral values than we do.

#### A National View of the Courts

Nationally, different courts have arrived at different answers as to the question of whether churches are exempt from public accommodation laws and if so, under what circumstances or conditions. The emergence of gender identity as a legally protected class has raised issues and concern on how to respond. “Few courts have addressed these issues, and second, any answers will depend on the terms in a veritable patchwork quilt of hundreds of local, state and federal laws forbidding discrimination by places of ‘public accommodation.’”<sup>7</sup> In general, the current legal opinion is that *most* churches still have broad discretion and protection for their operations. The preaching of sermons is well within the bounds of what legislation describes as the protected activity of a *bona fide* religious organization. However, churches may not be protected if they exhibit certain behavior, such as:

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<sup>7</sup> Richard R. Hammar, “Churches, Gender Identity and Bathroom Access,” 14 Feb 2017, <http://www.churchlawandtax.com/cltr/2017/march-april/churches-gender-identity-and-bathroom-access.html> (13 March 2017).

1. relinquishing programmatic control of the event by allowing the outside group to determine its content and activity
2. permitting facility use by outside groups, especially in instances of receiving rental income through a lease agreement
3. permitting non-religious events to be held on campus that are not connected to the expressed mission of the church

Taken together, these behaviors are indicators of a public service being rendered and received. The legislature may not have intended for churches and private clubs to ever be subject to anti-discrimination laws, hence the stated exemptions. Nonetheless, the interpretation that churches are subject to anti-discrimination laws is based on the behavior and conduct of those organizations that appeal directly to the public. Again, it is imperative for churches to know the law and how it is interpreted in their jurisdiction. Otherwise, they may be sued for declining the services they may find morally objectionable that are in reality legally protected.

#### Tax Law Consideration

Tax law is another means of regulation. The FCC is budgeted to receive \$53,000 in rental income for fiscal year 2016–17 (which represents 11% of the church’s \$494,950 budget). Faith pays a B&O tax, but it has never had to pay tax to the state on the rental income because the operating costs outweigh the revenue. The threshold of the rental income tax should be and is closely monitored so as to avoid an unforeseen tax liability. Federally, the rental income is not subject to Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) because it meets the IRS condition of being “substantially related” to a charity’s exempt purpose even if the

property is debt-financed.<sup>8</sup> (Rental income from debt-free property is not subject to UBIT.<sup>9</sup>) A church is subject to UBIT unless “at least 85 percent of the property (in terms of physical area) is used for the charity’s exempt purposes.”<sup>10</sup> The legal purposes of Faith Lutheran Church are expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, but also more importantly from the state’s view, they are contained in the Articles of Incorporation, which was filed with the Secretary of State on June 18, 1965, at 1:05 pm.

The purposes for which this corporation is formed are: to minister to its members and spread the Kingdom of God by the preaching and teaching of His Word; for the administration of the sacraments; for the religious instruction of youth and adults; for the administration of charity; adherence to the confessional standards of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; and to preserve and propagate the doctrines and ordinances of Jesus Christ. To do all things necessary for the maintenance of the said Church and for such purpose shall have power to purchase, own, and sell real estate; to hypothecate, mortgage and convey the same; to construct and maintain houses of worship and education and do any and all things for the purpose of maintaining such facilities for the worship of God.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, state law limits pecuniary gain which means Faith may only host twelve non-Faith, for-profit events each year before taxation applies. This fiscal limitation gives the church a perfectly legal and valid reason to consider and weigh the suitability of groups that

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<sup>8</sup> Richard R. Hammar, “Rental Income Not Taxable, Says IRS,” 01 September 1997, <http://www.churchlawandtax.com/cft/1997/september/rental-income-not-taxable-says-irs.html> (18 Jan 2017).

<sup>9</sup> “Even if the church’s rental activities are subject to UBIT, there are three additional observations to note. First, the tax is assessed against net earnings. This means that the church is entitled to deduct all of its expenses incurred in making the rental property available. This would include a number of items including an allocated portion of insurance, utilities, custodial services, etc. Second, the tax is a prorated tax—meaning that only that percentage of net rental income that corresponds to the percentage of the property’s value that is encumbered by debt is taxable....Third, there is a \$1,000 exclusion, meaning that the first \$1,000 of taxable income is excluded from tax.” Richard R. Hammar, “Use of Church Property by Outside Groups,” 20 December 2016, <http://www.churchlawandtax.com/lessons/content/use-of-church-property-by-outside-groups.html> (18 Jan 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Hammar, “Use of Church Property by Outside Groups,” 20 December 2016, <http://www.churchlawandtax.com/lessons/content/use-of-church-property-by-outside-groups.html> (18 Jan 2017).

<sup>11</sup> A. Ludlow Kramer, Secretary of State, “Articles of Incorporation of the Domestic Corporation: Faith Lutheran Church, Lacey, Washington” (18 June 1965) file no. 174218.

seek to meet at the FCC. As such, pecuniary gain is an important factor to consider in determining whether to accept or deny a facility use request.

### The Law of Love

The question remains though: is such refusal necessary and appropriate? Or is there a way to uphold the anti-discrimination and consumer protection laws while at the same time being faithful in our witness? There certainly is. I maintain the state has actually done the church a favor. While it sees itself as uniformly enforcing a standard of anti-discrimination and so forth, it is in reality forcing the church and believers to go back and consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:43–48. Loving all people (even our enemies, even people who are not like us) does not mean they are right or that we agree with them. Providing a service—in this instance, facility space—does not constitute an endorsement of values, but is instead a valuing of a person as a part of creation. “Love is the welcoming and hospitable gesture that makes oneself available to others, sets them free to be themselves, and nourishes them in the way of life.”<sup>12</sup>

The predictable and reflexive response of those who are aware of the legal trend is to move into a mode of protectionism. In doing so, the concern is to avoid legal troubles and headlines which is understandable. However it is critical and more helpful to undergo some honest reflection about the values we are espousing if we retreat from the public square and just minister to the faithful. The Synod suggests the limiting of facility use to LCMS membership which would eliminate many of the risks. But that is not the real issue. Such limitation and inward focus exposes a deeper problem that religious insiders are forced to

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<sup>12</sup> Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation*, 72.

address. We tend to love ourselves more than our neighbors and this imbalance is justified by invoking a desire to follow God's ways. Do we have a heart—or even an interest—for people who are not like us? Do we allow either a fear of association or a desire to be morally upright serve as a license to exclude, overlook and avoid other people?

### **Literature Review**

While much is written about hospitality, both ancient and modern, there is a paucity regarding the specific application of hospitality in the modern context of a community center. Of the literature that does address the topic, some seeks to keep distance and distinction. The tone is cautious and protectionary. Other writers seek to affirm sharing of resources. These writers are honest to admit living out the neatest theology gets messy. Reggie McNeal observes the inherent tension or mixed signals the church sends, “Another question for churches with facilities is, ‘How can we use what we already have to bless the community?’ The typical church has thick policy manuals aimed at keeping the community out of its buildings. The missional church figures out ways to serve the community with the facilities it has.”<sup>13</sup> Sharing facility space involves political, legal, spiritual and moral considerations.

### **Protecting Your Ministry**

The institutional church is fortunate to have Family Policy Institute of Washington (FPIW) on its side as a group that values the free exercise of religion and is taking steps to equip the church in its facility operation. In 2016, FPIW hosted statewide events for church leaders featuring a resource published by Alliance Defending Freedom entitled, *Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Lawsuits*. It recognized the

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<sup>13</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 80.

cultural threat to the church of the elevation of certain interests over religious freedom—namely sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) ordinances—and putting them on the same level of protection as race and religion so that all classes receive protection from discrimination as enforced through state law. The political conversation has moved past tolerance to an actual attempt to suppress any dissent. Even further, Christian businesses are being compelled to take part against their will “to accept, endorse, and even promote messages, ideas, and events that violate their faith.”<sup>14</sup>

The church’s appeal to religious freedom is not a sufficient line of defense. It is not enough to be the church, although there may be some level of institutional protection that individual Christian business owners do not have. There are many examples in the news of florists, photographers, and bakers—who happen to be Christian—who refused to materially participate in same-sex ceremonies. While their situation is different from a community center, their collective experience of lessons learned the hard way should prove to be instructive for the church at large—especially a church that desires to be faithful to what the Scriptures teach about human sexuality and gender.

The LCMS took the Alliance Defending Freedom project further by adapting it—and in some cases—significantly expanding and tailoring it for LCMS congregations, schools and ministries as part of its “Free to Be Faithful” campaign. While community centers are not mentioned specifically in the booklet, the general parameters for ministries are given, including facility use policy. Having an official and contemporary document from the Synod on this matter is very helpful and responsible guidance. It does a lot of the heavy lifting so congregations can draft and implement the necessary policies that will afford the church the

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<sup>14</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom. *Protecting Your Ministry*, 4.



widest latitude in ministry in the public realm. In doing so, its editorializing of some points deserves some scrutiny.

I do not wish to criticize the work as a whole. It was sorely needed because the church is vulnerable. The checklists of action to take are clear and warranted. It recommends the statement of belief be broad in its scope, yet detailed especially in areas of marriage, gender, sexuality. There should also be a statement of final authority for matters of faith and conduct and who makes those decision. Finally, a statement on the sanctity of human life gives clear witness of the church's value on life and its unwillingness to participate in anything that harms or takes life. We all want the church to endure and not be hamstrung by legal difficulty. This legal guide will cover the needs of most congregations and schools that basically wish to serve their own interests with minimal community engagement. It is helpful for personnel matters as well. But in terms of facility use, the essence of the booklet is aimed more at distancing people than welcoming them. That stance just does not benefit a community center. The ADF/LCMS booklet does have some references to facility use that apply to a community center, but this is one of those documents where the footnotes are the most helpful and telling parts. For example,

If a church rents out its property for weddings and wedding receptions (or other activities), without limiting usage through policy, it could be accused of discrimination if the church subsequently declines to rent its facilities to a particular couple. If challenged, a court may review whether or not facility usage is a for-profit business operation or ministry activity of the church.<sup>15</sup>

The accusation of discrimination is entirely appropriate because the church *is* engaged in discrimination. Some may argue it is justifiable and necessary, others might say it is reprehensible and mean-spirited. No matter one's opinion, discrimination is occurring. Even

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<sup>15</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom. *Protecting Your Ministry*, 47.

so, it may still be narrowly exempted in the law. But that exemption seems to dissipate if the facility is rented to the public.

Under current law, no church is forced to open its buildings for uses that conflict with its religious teachings. (However, care must be taken not to jeopardize this right by allowing your property to be used in such a way that might be construed under your local laws to make the church property a place of public accommodation.)<sup>16</sup>

The designation of public accommodation is something this booklet clearly warns against churches from attaining. It is a risky liability because under this category, a different set of statutes apply that pertain to public accommodations would apply to the church. The booklet also discourages the commercial rental of property and it cautions if such arrangement is made, that the church not charge a rental fee or alternatively, if that is not possible, that the fee should reflect below-market rates. In a letter to congregations and ministers of the Northwest District, dated June 30, 2015, President Paul Linnemann also encouraged churches to not charge facility use fees as a way of circumventing anti-discrimination laws (see Appendix C, 138–139). This financial offset may help the church appear to be more of a non-profit ministry and less of a for-profit business engaged in commerce. This gesture of generosity is no sure protection however. Depending on the jurisdiction, simply the invitation of the public onto church property may trigger the protection of anti-discrimination laws.

#### Fair Practice or Pharisaism?

At some point, in some way, the church has to find a way to connect with people who hold different values. While Sunday morning is always a hoped-for point of welcome and assimilation, the reality is most outsiders have a hard time transcending church culture. The

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<sup>16</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom. *Protecting Your Ministry*, 47.

member distinction and club mentality are large reasons for this barrier. When it comes to a community center, whom do we want—people like us or not like us? This excerpt from the ADF/LCMS booklet suggests only like-minded people are approved and qualified to meet on site.

Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we sometimes make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian service that is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings...<sup>17</sup>

The caution is clearly stated because, as the next excerpt shows, such facility use is equated with endorsement of the group's purpose. It is curious how this concern goes only one direction. No one from an outside group views their use of our facility as an endorsement of our views. Why would we think the same about us of them? With our doctrinal positions and mission statement in place, Faith is not changing our message or beliefs simply by welcoming outside groups. We are expressing our beliefs. This hospitality works against the notion that the church is an unwelcoming place for most people.

This document wrongly jumps to a conclusion that facility usage equates endorsement, and it does so in the most sanctimonious way.

This facility use policy is consistent with our belief that allowing our property and facilities to be used for purposes that we determine are contrary to this church's beliefs would be an endorsement of those purposes and a contradiction and grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:22). Further it is important that the church present a consistent message to the community and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their Christian life and as a witness to others that is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom. *Protecting Your Ministry*, 39.

<sup>18</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom. *Protecting Your Ministry*, 39.

Of course we should be consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ—as well as His example. But if church policy looks more like the approach and attitudes of the Pharisees than Jesus then something has gone wrong. The Pharisees kept their hands clean by not engaging in the needs and daily life of the people. They took pride in themselves and saw the people as being unworthy of their association. But Jesus was a friend of sinners and tax collectors. He found a way to connect with people as they were. Jesus was not “unequally yoked with unbelievers” (2 Cor. 6:14) but he spent time in their homes. Jesus “abstained from every form of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22) but he still ate with sinners and tax collectors. More than the message, at least initially, Jesus’ willingness and insistence for association was the chief offense. It was a necessary offense to the Pharisees, but a refreshing gesture of acceptance to many people spurned by the religious establishment.

The intent of the ADF/LCMS document is to keep people from using the facilities who are not like-minded enough to otherwise warrant inclusion. The motivation is apparently having a clear confession and public witness, but it just does not square with the example of Jesus.

Those who agree with the stance of the ADF/LCMS document might make this counter argument: Jesus is not the same as a community center. That is to say, the example of Jesus is best and most directly applicable to an individual, as a follower of Jesus, in his/her personal context of life. To invoke the custom and practice of Jesus’ in regards to facility usage is not the same because it involves a *corporate* witness. In addition, there is material participation in the rental income received and agreement of facility use. Therefore, what happens in a community center is not really pure hospitality or ministry, but a business transaction.

The involvement of financial transactions does not mean community center activity is not ministry. In this reasoning, neither would school or childcare be considered ministries for the services that are rendered in exchange for payment. It is true, however, there is a level of passive participation and support on behalf of Faith Community Center with any event because it is making the event possible. We are validating the event as having at least some worth. We cannot say there is no relationship.

So what is the relationship that could exist between two groups that have far different set of moral values? The incoming user may have no interest in relationships or share the goals we have. They may be the ones who are leery of any greater association with the church! They want space for their event and that is it. But for us, motivation for permitting facility use involves demonstrating love for the neighbor, complying with state law, promoting civic virtue, strengthening the community, aiding creation and the possibility of building relationships. These are not the same functions as discipling, but we have to start somewhere. It starts by meeting, talking, acknowledging the existence of others and spending time with them in shared space.

### **Practicing Hospitality**

In this world, questions about what to reject or embrace constantly confront Christians. Bretherton suggests the difference between Christian and non-Christian may be understood eschatologically.<sup>19</sup>

This understanding of eschatological specificity, and how God is present to the church, points to how Christians are involved in relations of simultaneous distance and belonging, with their non-Christian neighbors. This is because the church is to be a people specified by its relationship with Jesus Christ, which is at the same time to display a given culture's own most eschatological truth.

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<sup>19</sup> Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity*, 106.

Therefore, Christians cannot stand outside their culture, or against it, but must participate in their culture and the enterprises of their neighbors, as those transfigured. No clear dividing lines can be drawn.<sup>20</sup>

Bretherton finds Niebuhr's church and culture distinctions as simplistic. He taps into Karl Barth who notes, "Between the community and Christians on the one side and the rest of the world on the other, there is a distinct yet not absolute, but only fluid and changing frontier."<sup>21</sup> But Bretherton takes a peculiar approach in describing believers as having undergone transfiguration. While we will be changed (and I suppose transfiguration would be a proper term for the reception of glory that Paul describes in 1 Cor. 15) it is not the same thing as conversion or salvation. It is too odd to treat transfiguration this way. But his focus on eschatology is helpful because apart from any other human label or social construct, this distinction is what matters. If creation is what the Christian and non-Christian have in common, eschatology is what sets us apart.

Christian hospitality is inaugurated at Pentecost, bears witness to the eschaton, whereby it is established but not yet fully manifest. As an eschatological social practice, hospitality is inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who enables the church to host the life of its neighbors without the church being assimilated to, or colonized by, or having to withdraw from the life of the world.<sup>22</sup>

So there is reason to take courage as we practice hospitality. It is one of those Christian disciplines that gets messy and complicated. Dorothy Day, who devoted her life to Catholic Worker houses of hospitality, commented, "Mistakes there were, there are, there will

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<sup>20</sup> Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, IV:3*, 192 quoted in Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity*, 146.

be...The biggest mistake, sometimes, is to play things very safe in this life and end up being moral failures.”<sup>23</sup>

Jonathan Wilson’s assessment of consumerism was striking. Instead of taking the guilt-laden “we are overconsuming” approach, he follows it up with “we are being consumed” and “we are consuming others.”<sup>24</sup> In this paradigm, we are competitors operating in the realm of scarcity and the prospects are bleak and worrisome for the long-term not because of supply concerns but because these things do not ultimately satisfy. Instead of improving the economy of consumption, Wilson suggests the economy of communion. What he means by that term is an acknowledgement that life is not maintained by consumption of food, and that man does not live by bread alone. In the economy of communion, fellow human beings are not competition, but creation. This identity lends itself much more easily to hospitality and the sharing of true life.

### **Personal and Institutional Hospitality**

Hospitality was always meant to be personal and to benefit people in need. The advent of hospices, hostels and hospitals corporatized and institutionalized care away from individuals. Texts such as Matt. 25:31–46 and Luke 14:12–14 shaped hospitality as an act done for those who are likely to be overlooked and do not have the ability to return the favor. John Wesley lamented how in his day hospitality was no longer an act of charity and kindness, but instead an exercise in indulgence and excess. This was not hospitality at all, but only a selfish way currying social favor and status. Wesley encouraged personal interaction

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<sup>23</sup> Dorothy Day, quoted in Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1987), 40.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, *God’s Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation*, 208.

between people of different classes by advocating for visits to the home. If people were made aware about the plight of the poor, then they would be more likely to respond.

Wesley reminds us of the complex interaction between spiritual deadness and social heartlessness, and of the ongoing threat that money and status pose to spiritual growth, holiness, community, and truthful seeing. By viewing mercy as a means of grace to the giver, the settings associated with hospitality, welcome, and care become holy ground, a place where everyone can expect to be transformed.<sup>25</sup>

How can community centers be a place of transformation? The realm of friendship must be discovered. Since the nature of community center ministry allows mainly for events that are short in duration, it is challenging to build relationships. With repeated contact and visits, eventually relationships form. This is critical because hospitality is not about just the sharing of space, but the sharing of lives. Getting to this level is important because it says something about the host.

Welcome is one of the signs that a community is alive. To invite others to live with us is a sign that we aren't afraid, that we have a treasure of truth and peace to share. A community which refuses to welcome—whether through fear, weariness, insecurity, a desire to cling to comfort, or just because it is fed up with visitors—is dying spiritually.<sup>26</sup>

The degree of suffering and evil in this world can be overwhelming. We are called to “not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). The way to ensure radical hospitality is practiced is to remember our own indebtedness. What we do and give flows from what has been done and given us by God in Christ Jesus.

Still, there are limits to hospitality, for example, if conduct is not agreeable or is disruptive to the whole environment. This is why it is important to have appropriate boundaries and clear guidelines, depending on the nature of the event, needs of the guests

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<sup>25</sup> Christine D. Pohl, “Practicing Hospitality in the Face of ‘Complicated Wickedness,’” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 42, no. 1 (2007): 28–29.

<sup>26</sup> Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 266–67 quoted in Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, 160.



and requested resources. Rules bring security and understanding for both sides. In welcoming the stranger, the identity of a place is shared and revised ever so slightly. While this sharing of space and its meaning can be beneficial, occasionally, a place may be stretched beyond recognition.<sup>27</sup> In order to remain distinctive without becoming exclusive, Pohl suggests being clear about the rules and values at the beginning. It just may be the outside group chooses to remain outside and self-excludes. Therefore, it is prudent and helpful to state positively and clearly in the facility use policy the values that make Faith Community Center a special and distinctive place. This is not exclusion. It is self-witness and it is paired with a clear statement to love all people and not expect them to hold the same values.

Community center ministry can still be personal. The touches that make a home so welcoming can also work in community centers—such as the importance of a warm greeting and sending, proper upkeep of facility, enhancing the space with simple beauty of creation, providing good food and a restorative environment that is a bit of respite from the world. If the staff laments about damage of items that go missing, while the concern may be valid, it cannot be the paramount interest, nor should payment be. In such a commercialized world, Christine Pohl argues for the need for alternate places of hospitality and she posits that hospitality is most potent when the host is marginal to larger society. (The church is eligible to meet this condition!)

Pohl also explains the decline of hospitality because of the assertion of rights the rise of individualism. The power of a community center is not in providing space and venue to people but granting them the opportunity to become hosts themselves. Pohl observes how

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<sup>27</sup> Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, 136.

Jesus gave Zacchaeus this transformational privilege by insisting He eat at his house that day (Luke 19:1–10). Zacchaeus is made the host. Jesus gives him the opportunity to serve. That is no small invitation. In a similar way, a community center enables other people to become hosts themselves which is empowering because it acknowledges they have something to offer and the authority to offer it. Another way of making people feel comfortable and valued is to invite their involvement by asking them to help or contribute in some way.

In the end, hospitality is a way of life and sharing of ourselves that begins in worship. “Radical hospitality is the core of the Christian faith because it originates in God’s forgiveness of all debtors through God’s self–sacrifice.”<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, we want hospitality to be seen as a Christ event. Pohl suggests the final criteria in assessing guests as they depart is to ask two key questions: Did we see Christ in them? Did they see Christ in us?<sup>29</sup> Hospitality is adaptive to culture and circumstances but it is about finding a way to give of ourselves to others in Jesus’ name. “Faithful Christian disciples in any day can find ways to address the complicated misery and evil in the world with a complication of divine and human work, welcome, challenge and love.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, hospitality does not always look the same, but the timeless motivation behind it is.

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<sup>28</sup> Ahn, “Economy of ‘Invisible Debt’ and Ethics of ‘Radical Hospitality’,” 263.

<sup>29</sup> Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, 173.

<sup>30</sup> Pohl, “Practicing Hospitality in the Face of ‘Complicated Wickedness’,” 28–29.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE PROJECT DEVELOPED**

The project entails providing a set of practical guidelines and encouraging the congregation to use them in their decision making process. It is not possible to anticipate every scenario a community center might encounter. Therefore the project is about showing people *how* to think, not *what* to think. Having located the theological, moral, legal and financial boundaries, I want to see how the congregation applies, rejects or ignores the material I present to them. Touching upon controversial issues is potentially divisive and emotional. Be that as it may, thinking through these hypothetical situations before they manifest themselves in real life should help Faith minister effectively, clearly and faithfully in the public realm without undue fear of legal recourse, loss of biblical/moral values and congregational conflict.

The field research will involve creating a survey via Survey Monkey which will be distributed to the interested voting members of congregation, including the Church Council. The survey will offer opinions that raise theological and legal concerns and invite their response using a spectrum of strong disagreement to strong agreement. It will also present various hypothetical situations and groups that seek to meet at Faith Community Center and inquire as to their suitability or lack thereof. From these responses, I will gather the quantitative data and look for general areas of consensus. The purpose of this survey is to establish the spectrum of congregational opinion as it currently exists. It is the “before” picture.

Legal counsel will also be sought from Lutheran Legal League. The purpose of this largely unknown but helpful network is to be a resource for LCMS churches, schools and individual members. Their interest is to provide legal services that benefit and strengthen church and ministry. An attorney who is licensed in the state of Washington will be selected and asked to provide legal counsel for this research. Since all Lutheran Legal League attorneys are actively involved and belong to LCMS churches, it is presumed they hold similar moral and spiritual values to the congregation of Faith, Lacey. The sharing of values is intentional as it will better show legality as an independent variable. It is possible his/her legal expertise may lead him/her to arrive at a different conclusion as to the propriety of certain activities and groups using Faith Community Center. The attorney will also be asked to evaluate Faith's current guiding principles, facility use policies and contracts to determine their sufficiency. It will be essential to converse with this attorney, obtain written counsel and explore with him/her the legal dynamics and implications for churches who wish to provide community center ministry.

Once legal opinion is obtained, I will present to the congregation in a special presentation the theological and legal issues that are involved. The individual will be able to see how his/her survey responses concur or differ with the biblical exhortation (chiefly Matt. 5:43-48) and also the attorney's counsel. The same survey will be given again to the same group of people who took the first survey in order to determine any change of opinion. Text boxes and some open-ended questions will help reveal their reasoning. Of particular interest is measuring and understanding what positions changed or stayed the same as a result of my presentation.

I hypothesize the answers to the second survey will show flexibility in the majority of people's opinions and this majority viewpoint will embrace a wider, more inclusive approach to community center ministry. I hypothesize there will be a smaller portion of responses which does not move and that it is also inclined to have a narrower, exclusive, perhaps even self-serving approach to community center ministry. If my hypothesis is correct, then I am hopeful Faith will be able to navigate a course. But if my hypothesis is wrong, if the starting position is inward and protective and there is no movement toward the approach I am advocating, then my fear would be the community center will not function as it ought. Instead, it will be slowly assumed into internal benefit and use to the point where it has lost its capacity to externally engage.

From the time of its final county permitting to the time of the survey and presentation, not much consideration has been given to the ethics of community center ministry aside from my research. One disconnect I have noticed in my time at Faith (January 2009 to present) is few people know of the actual workings of the community center. It is not their fault; it is just a reality that much activity happens in the week between Sunday mornings and most events are not communicated to the congregation, although occasional notable events and stories are mentioned. One hoped for result I have for this project is for people to not only be aware, but are willing to engage the issue and think critically and theologically about the ministry of the community center. I want what God is doing in our midst to be on our mind.

The study was designed by returning to the same group of people who authorized the construction of the multi-purpose building in the first place. For this reason, respondents were limited to voting members of the congregation who were at least 18 years in age, had an e-mail address and a working internet connection. I wanted to tap into the voters as the most

informed and influential group of the congregation. I also wanted to honor their past initiative and commitment by allowing opportunity for continued input and guidance. In limiting the participant pool to voting members, I excluded other people who were interested, such as school parents and church members who were not yet officially voters. That being said, all voting members of the congregation in attendance were invited by spoken and written announcement. I set a goal to involve fifty voting members in the survey since that seemed to be the average size of the typical voters' meeting. Among this group of fifty, I made a special point to invite and involve the Church Council and the Elders as additional congregational power brokers. Not only was this step critical for implementation, I knew I needed their backing as I would touch on some sensitive issues. As is well-attested, people can love the church and the Lord and still feel their opinion must prevail. The last thing I would want for this project is for it to create division, but instead I want it to foster a unity toward community engagement that is informed, loving and thoughtful.

As stated in the introductory chapter, the purpose of this MAP is to answer these two questions and create a consensus around them: May LCMS community centers permit facility use of groups who do not share the church's values (e.g, wedding receptions for same-sex couples) without compromising the church's confession of faith in light of new state laws that prohibit the exclusion of any group on the basis of that group's values? And if so, how might the theological principles of church-based community centers shape their policies and practices?

In my original MAP conception, I had planned on visiting, observing and interviewing four different community center locations in Washington State. This multi-site approach was lofty and also unnecessary. I soon realized focusing on one location—the context in which I

serve—was challenging and fruitful enough. Focusing on my own realm of influence also afforded the greatest latitude for implementation, rather than becoming an unknown consultant giving recommendations. The design of my study was centered around a one-hour presentation to the voters on February 19, 2017, a Sunday morning, from 10–11 a.m. The effectiveness of the presentation and the guiding principles introduced there will be determined largely by any shift or reinforcement of opinion as shown in the second survey of the congregation—the “after” picture.

I wanted to be able to assess their knowledge and attitudes about facility use and community center ministry. Hopefully, congregational opinion will more closely align to the doctrinal framework and legal counsel that are presented. The Church Council will be asked to incorporate and implement proposed recommendations into existing policies. Such action will give clarity to the campus manager and provide proper boundaries for ministry.

The Sunday prior to the presentation, I made a written and verbal announcement asking for people to take part in a survey and my research. I provided a stack of informed consent forms on the Info Center for people to read and sign the back page (see Appendix J, 164–67). I received this form from Dr. Mark Rockenbach, associate professor of practical theology, who was responsible for ensuring proper research and survey design. I modified it to properly reflect what was being asked of the participants. After that Sunday, I only received about half of participant forms that I needed. Not having the benefit of another Sunday for sign-ups, I decided to be bit more direct in my approach and that afternoon I e-mailed a list of people I considered to be good candidates and people responded positively.

Participants were asked to complete the exact same survey twice—once before the presentation and once after it. In this way, I was able to detect any changes or shifts in

answers. Since my respondent group was the same, I could logically attribute the change or maintaining of their answers to their assimilation and response to the presentation. The survey was designed to give valuable data as to the degree of conviction or uncertainty of people's answers. Open-ended questions were included to cultivate issues or concerns that were not addressed in previous parts of the survey. It was absolutely critical for respondents to complete the first survey before Sunday morning. To ensure results could not be tainted, I set a deadline in the survey software to close at the time the presentation began. By the end of the week, I had 52 respondents who had returned their informed consent form. They were eager to take the survey—now if only it were written and ready for them!

### **Creating the Survey**

A week prior, I had arranged for a phone conversation with Dr. Rockenbach to finalize my survey form and questions. Writing a survey was much more difficult than I had anticipated. My original draft of questions was not as helpful as I thought it would be because not every question directly related to the research question. Dr. Rockenbach was kind in helping me tighten and align the questions. He encouraged me to ask “agree or disagree” questions in order to assess their opinion of proper facility use policy. Instead of asking about the acceptable groups, he encouraged me to mention more controversial groups and also better ascertain how their faith helps form their answers. The purpose of this survey was to provide quantitative data as a “snapshot” of the current state of the congregation's attitude toward community center ministry. There were many things I wanted to know from the congregation, but at the end of the day, I wanted to find a facility approach that upheld Lutheran doctrine *and* state law. Some of the questions that we arrived at pulled from the theological work; others were derived from a legal point of view.



I originally planned on having my attorney also take the survey. My plan was to compare his results with the congregation's. But I decided that would not work because the attorney was not part of the presentation as he lives several hours away. Dr. Rockenbach suggested using Skype and share the presenter role with him in part, but he was not interested in doing so. Instead, I used the legal input gathered from the attorney in framing the questions as well as the aspects of the public accommodation law as part of my presentation. Another reason why it would have been unwise to share the results of the first survey as part of the Sunday morning presentation is that doing so would have wrongly influenced the second survey and introduced bias into the results. People needed to arrive at their own answers by themselves.

The online survey was designed using Survey Monkey. This was the first time I had used it, but it was manageable. I opted to upgrade to the "select" level so I could ask as many questions as I wanted. I decided I only wanted to evaluate responses as a group, instead of individually, although the individual "A-B" format is available. To add some degree of authenticity and customization, I incorporated Faith's logo into the survey so people could recognize it as legitimately sent. About a third of the people had problems recognizing the survey as it came from Survey Monkey, not me personally, and landed in their spam folder. Most people were able to navigate the survey without any technical problem. I found it touching that an elderly couple went out of their way to access a public computer with limited availability just so they could participate in the survey.

The first two questions were asked as self-evaluation of awareness of activity at the Faith Community Center and the legal aspects of facility use in Washington State. A scale from 0-100 was provided. They were not intended for research but just as a way to orient the

mind about two main ideas as they completed the questionnaire. The next set of questions sought the level of disagreement or agreement to statements and opinions. Respondents could choose “strongly disagree,” “somewhat disagree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “somewhat agree,” and “strongly agree.” Not every question is theological, but where possible, I tried to integrate theological aspects into the questions. The questions were weighted (or assigned a point value of -10, -5, 0, +5, +10 accordingly) so each question had a comparable numerical average.

In the survey, I asked questions that probed the suitability of groups. What is the criteria for acceptance and rejection? Is the motivation theological, financial or something else? This information provided a “before” picture. No teaching accompanied it. Unchallenged—perhaps even uninformed—opinion is what was sought at this point in the process. Respondents’ identities were kept completely anonymous as to solicit honest opinions, not the “right” answers. They were not asked for gender, age or any identifying information.

The survey was finalized February 16, distributed by e-mail on February 17, giving respondents 48 hours to complete it. More time would have been helpful, but it came together in time. By the day of the presentation, I had 52 completed surveys. For a complete list of survey statements and results along a spectrum, see Appendix F, 142–45. Open-ended answers from both surveys are provided in Appendix G, 146–49.

## Creating the Presentation

I used Prezi to visually capture and present the competing issues. The presentation is public and may be viewed online.<sup>1</sup> I had never used Prezi before but the free trial month was enticing enough and so I gave it a try. The benefit of Prezi is its visual appeal. Instead of Powerpoint's slide by slide progression, Prezi offers a more holistic, see-the-big-picture approach. There is a lot of zooming in and zooming out but since images are more memorable than words, I went with Prezi.

Rather than start from scratch, I perused the stock templates. As I searched through them, I considered the nature of my topic. Image-wise, it was not suitable as a pathway, puzzle, chart or map. But when I came across the image of a fulcrum, balancing on its platform empty circles, this communicated the idea of competing interests, two sides or forces that had to be taken into account. The teeter-totter was the perfect image and ended up carrying the main idea very well. It even inspired some functional creativity.

Of the four empty circles on the cross beam, two were on each side. I labeled the two on the left "purpose" and "theological aspects." I labeled the two circles on the right "finances" and "legal concerns." These were the main categories of issues that needed to be taken into account. All of them have weight and worth. However, this is not to say that money is equally important as theology! It is to say that all of them affect decisions that pertain to community center ministry.

I then began to think of the cross beam and what it represented: a standard of some kind. As the secular and religious sides are so often pitted against one another, it occurred to

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, "Community Center Ministry: A Balancing Act," 19 February 2017, <https://prezi.com/hka6anmodmmi/community-center-ministry/> (30 April 2017).

me both sides actually carry similar ideals. I watched a short video clip from Human Rights Campaign which features an ongoing and compelling #LoveYourNeighbor storytelling campaign on their website.<sup>2</sup> It struck me how “loving your neighbor” is out of our playbook and yet, here it was in use! For this reason, I knew I had to challenge the congregation to think about the standard that is expected of us in how we treat people “on the other side” who may not be like us. As part of my presentation, I wrote across the edge of the crossbeam. On the left or “religious” side, I wrote the summary expressions of the Law. “Love God, love one another. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” By that point the words had crossed over the midpoint of the fulcrum and onto the right or “secular” side. There I wrote, “End discrimination. Don’t judge. Hate is not a family value. Equality and justice for all. Love all.” The point was that both sides were essentially saying the same thing: choose to love no matter what. There should be no exception to the law of love. If we take Jesus seriously, there is not one valid exemption. So the standard of perfection is to love; that which gives society its equilibrium is love.

### Filling the Circles

The first circle I filled was about purpose. I revisited the words “for the community, in Jesus’ name” which we spoke when we laid hands on the walls of the gym at its dedication on October 11, 2009. I spoke briefly of its purpose as a way of providing a venue for people

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<sup>2</sup> HRC's #LoveYourNeighbor campaign is a storytelling project focused on sharing the stories of LGBTQ people and allies in Tupelo, Mississippi. In this video, a gay man was speaking about his experience in the workplace in Mississippi where he claimed townspeople actually started a petition to have him removed from his job working at the cosmetics counter. “The way to be an ally to anyone is meeting those people, knowing those people, just listening, opening, sharing your stories, conversation. The only way to come together is to understand each other, not that we necessarily agree, but that we see each other humanly.” Human Rights Campaign, #LoveYourNeighbor, 17 Feb 2017, <http://www.hrc.org/videos/loveyourneighbor-jeremy> (18 Feb 2017).

within the community to meet, learn, play and celebrate. Another purpose was to enhance Faith's existing ministries of church, school and childcare. At the same time, we wish to expand our community presence by practicing Christian hospitality to our guests.

The second circle I filled was about theological aspects. I mentioned the left and right hand kingdoms, doctrine of creation, levels of association, our view of our neighbor and the example of Jesus in how he dealt with sinners and Pharisees. I asked them to read Matthew 5:43–48 in small groups at their tables. Some had just heard these sermon preached on this very text.

Now to the other side, the third circle I filled in was about finances. I reminded the people we are a tax-exempt and non-profit organization. We have budgeted to receive \$53,000 in rental income this fiscal year. As the guiding principles allow, different rates apply to different groups depending on size and nature of the event. I explained, briefly, pecuniary gains and the taxes which we pay. My last financial consideration recognized legal claims are expensive to fight in both money and energy, even if the outcome is in our favor.

I filled the fourth circle with legal aspects including the existence and scope of anti-discrimination and consumer protection laws. I emphasized the central legal determination is whether Faith Community Center is a place of public accommodation or not. I shared the final page from the summary judgment against Arlene Stutzman. The court found “Washington Law Against Discrimination does not compel speech or association” and it affirmed the trial court's rulings which barred discrimination in public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Washington State v. Arlene's Flowers, Inc., No. 91615–2, 58 (2017).

## Dividing the Spheres

In addition to the four circles that I filled with purpose, theological aspects, finances and legal concerns, there were also two more spheres on the teeter–totter, one on each side. Each sphere was shaded into two different tones. I decided to use this spheres as way of grouping events and activities. The sphere on the left “religious” side represented groups or activities that have occurred. I divided it into two groups: the permissible and the questionable. The sphere on the right “secular” side represented groups or activities that have not occurred. I divided it into two groups: the permissible and the impermissible. This classification and the placement of the groups into the spheres were my opinion. I recognized not everyone would put the groups in the same place as I had done.

The permissible/done category had the most activities which is probably a good sign! It featured childcare, indoor recess, Trail Life, American Heritage Girls, rummage sale, Life Line screening, Upward basketball, exchange student program, steel pan band from Trinidad, a Catholic high school’s parent/teacher conference, church functions, volleyball, school functions, indoor recess, birthday parties, Christmas bazaar, youth night, SWAT team, art expo, fashion show, auctions, Samoan cultural events, weddings and funerals. I could have listed more. These widely diverse events were considered all non–controversial.

In the same sphere, but on the other half, were listed activities that we have done, but probably should not have: International House of Prayer (IHOP), Festival of St. Mike’s, Bingo and the infamous facility debut of the cage fight. My main point of contention with IHOP was not their theology, but how having regular weekly meetings decreased our capacity to meet other people. I would still permit outside churches to use the facility for a special one–time event. One of those religious events, however, the Feast of St. Mike’s, I question somewhat because it was less about St. Michael the Archangel and more about

tequila. However, if the law pertaining to alcohol is followed, it would be permissible. Bingo is played for money and ironically, it is put on by a local church as a way of raising funds. Essentially, though, it's gambling which is regulated by a host of laws. The limits of pecuniary gain, for example, should apply and give us reason to decline this event. Finally, the cage fight remains an event that seems like it should belong in church folklore, but it happened and we learned a lot through the process. Aside from the issue of inflicting physical harm, it was not sage to more than double our maximum occupancy. (But as I look back, that particular sign had not been posted yet.)

The sphere on right "secular" side represented groups/events we have not had at Faith Community Center. In one semicircle were the icons from events that we could permit at Faith, even if they are controversial or represent different values and morals. I listed in this group a PFLAG support group, same-sex wedding ceremony/reception, Celebrate Recovery, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, Boy/Girl Scouts (after Trail Life/AHG formed), Sierra Club (representing environmental groups). I continue to maintain that permitting an outside group to have a same-sex wedding ceremony or reception (or any of these events for that matter) is not a compromise of our witness or violation of our faith. It would be a violation of faith if we were to host it and thereby morally sanction it. Hosting entails sponsorship. Facility use by itself does not. By refraining from reading too much into the situation, each side remains true to their own values.

Does the inclusion of these groups mean anything goes? No, not all values are acceptable even according to civic virtue. In the final category, the other semicircle, were groups/events that Faith has never and should never host or allow to use the facility: Planned Parenthood, Ku Klux Klan, Islam (and all other non-Christian religions), Satanic groups,

other Christian church groups who wish to have regular services, marijuana industry and gambling. What an association and how odd to have Christians in the mix! As far as having other Christian groups meet at Faith, I explained my reasoning was not one of doctrinal differences. If we allow one group to take up space consistently, then that prevents us from using the facility to meet other people who presumably have yet to know Jesus. So I would permit occasional use by outside Christian groups for special, but not weekly, events. Secondly, from a state or legal point of view, once an outside religious group (here understood to be anything besides Faith Lutheran activities) is allowed to use the facility as a public accommodation, there may be a legal claim to allow other religious groups, Christian or not. It may unlikely that a satanic group would ever choose to seek to meet at Faith, but the scenario is at least legally plausible. Many people did not think satanic after-school clubs would be allowed in public schools, but that specific strategy is being executed.

I placed Planned Parenthood in this category as a group that should be excluded from Faith because they usher in death, not life. They undo creation. I do not want to help further its cause in any way. The use of recreational marijuana was legalized in 2016. If something is legal, does it make it appropriate? I maintain it is not appropriate for our particular setting as a school and childcare and in addition, marijuana does not strengthen communities, families or individuals. As far as gambling goes, the laws that regulate this activity are tightly written for certain places of business only and it seems suspect to carry on this function apart from such oversight.

### **Eight Questions for Consideration**

In the center of my Prezi presentation, on the fulcrum, I included a series of questions that would help evaluate the propriety of groups/events who seek to use the Faith Community



Center. Without these questions, I found it likely to favor one group over another and it led me to a point on inconsistency in practice. I did not want to encourage a cherry picking of certain groups or issues. Bringing these questions to the fore made for a more honest evaluation.

1. Does it go against the Gospel?
2. Does it compromise our witness?
3. Does it violate our faith in God?
4. Does it create a legal or fiscal liability or potential for harm?
5. Does it extend or aid creation?
6. Does it strengthen the family and/or the community?
7. Does it demonstrate civic virtue?
8. Does it lead to relationships?

If any of the first four questions are answered positively, then the group/event should not be permitted. There are activities in which we cannot take part because of the bounds that God gives us in the Word. The fourth question is not spiritual in nature; it only seeks to not create troubles for ourselves.

The latter four questions explore the potential good that may occur by permitting the event. Goodness is an admittedly subjective term, but what I am attempting to do here is provide a category that is not only spiritually determined, but is civic in nature and more widely recognized and desired. For example, we all want to live in a strong community. Civic virtue seeks the peace, order, safety and health of the public. Civic virtue holds a society together by rule of law and by upholding tradition and affirming customs. The final

question seeks to quantify the relational capacity of the event/group. Opportunity to interact with the group and build relationships over time lead us into missional opportunity.

Consideration of these eight questions takes into account the purpose of the community center, underlying theology, legal concerns and financial considerations. These are the questions I asked the people to use when they took the survey a second time. Together, the questions serve as an informed matrix and guide that honors the ethics of each field. Asking the right questions provides a way forward for the church as it seeks to engage the community and do so with an informed integrity.

### **Applying the Questions**

Two issues—same-sex weddings and open bathrooms—are difficult for the church to address because they both go against natural law but are protected by civic law. I would suggest same-sex marriage still carries with it some element of civic virtue. In light of the eight questions, it does not yield a perfect score. And yet, to deny such a request (presuming other wedding receptions are permitted) would trigger a lawsuit and litigation. Perhaps this example demonstrates that the eight questions are not all equally weighted, or that one concern can trump another. It may also be that not all eight questions apply.

In the instance of open bathrooms, it is current law to allow men to use the women's restroom, locker rooms or showers based upon their gender identity and not their biological sex. I believe that this law should not be enforced because complying with it creates a public safety hazard and a violation of privacy. Not having open bathrooms potentially opens the church to lawsuits as stated above. But the risk of immediate and physical harm needs to be taken into account and prevention of such crimes as voyeurism, sexual assault and rape is

paramount, even if it may be politically incorrect. It is not virtuous to put the desires of the individual over and above the safety or privacy of another.

### **Presentation Day**

Fifty-one of those 52 people attended the presentation on Sunday, February 19. I chose the gym (the heart of the community center) as the proper venue and setting for my presentation. I permitted other people to attend the presentation but I made clear that only those who had completed the first survey would receive a link to complete the second survey. Seventy people were in attendance and I was pleased with the show of support and interest. The room was set with 5' round tables, with eight chairs at each to allow some small group interaction. At each table were pens, handouts and a Bible as reference. The handout contained the content of my presentation which was entitled, "Community Center Ministry: A Balancing Act" (see Appendix D, 140).

I utilized a laptop, projector, screen and handheld microphone. I made sure each person signed their attendance and verified their completion of the informed consent form and the first survey. The presentation was also video recorded. I said a prayer at the opening just to calm myself down and center the group on what God wanted said, heard and applied. The most obvious sign of God's favor and blessing had already been made evident by the timing of this event. Without any intention on my part, the appointed Gospel from the three-year lectionary for February 19 was Matthew 5:38–48. When I realized this alignment, I of course chose to preach on it as a way of amplifying the message of my presentation. As a worship planner, I was amazed as were others when I told them.

The second proof of amazing timing came from the Washington State Supreme Court. On Thursday, February 16, 2017, a mere three days before my presentation, the Court

published their long-awaited decision in *State v. Arlene's Flowers*. The case had been before the Supreme Court for more than a year after being litigated in lower courts for two years. The decision provided contemporary proof of a furthering legal trend when it came to determining the application of anti-discrimination laws. I used the summary conclusion page of the judgment as part of my handout. Referring to the florist Stutzman, the Court found, "The WLAD does not violate her right to religious free exercise under the First Amendment or article 1, section 11 because it is a neutral, generally applicable law that serves our state government's compelling interest in eradicating discrimination in public accommodations."<sup>4</sup> The congregation would be able to read this finding for themselves and hopefully see the connection to the community center.

I asked the people to discuss the finding of the Washington State Supreme Court in small groups. This allowed people a place to process, react and share their responses to what was being presented. At the conclusion of the presentation, I thanked the people for their time and thoughtful reflection. I sent the second survey the following day and gave them three days to complete it. Fifty one people completed the second survey, all of whom completed the first survey and attended the presentation. Because I had set the responses for total anonymity, I was unable to pull out the first survey of the one person who did not attend the presentation, nor complete a second survey. While this introduces some margin of error, it is still small. With the presentation complete, I was greatly relieved that it went well and I was very eager to see the results. Did I move the needle? Would they change their responses or reasoning?

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<sup>4</sup> J. Gordon McCloud, *Washington State v. Arlene's Flowers, Inc.*, No. 91615-2, 58 (February 16, 2017).

Survey Monkey compiled the results easily and computed the averages. I made a table of results so I could see which questions stayed the same and which demonstrated the largest movement.

Upon completion of the research, I will work with and direct the campus manager to present to the Church Council any necessary changes to Faith's guiding principles, facility use policy contracts based upon the research of this project. Finally, I plan to inform congregations within the Northwest District of the availability of this research for possible use in their own context of ministry, specifically that it be available through Mission Training Center and the Center for Applied Lutheran Leadership at Concordia University–Portland.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE PROJECT EVALUATED**

#### **Findings of the Study**

The full data of the responses to the surveys are provided in Appendix G (146–49) “First Survey Responses” and in Appendix H (150–62) “Second Survey Responses.” In addition, I discovered an unexpected and unsought piece of information. Although I did not plan on measuring this data, the time necessary for completion was provided as part of the Survey Monkey header for each respondent. The average time it took to complete the survey increased substantially, from 18 minutes to 31 minutes! Given that the second survey was completely the same as the first, this lengthening of survey response time likely indicates more thought and a deeper engagement with the issues. Most respondents seem to have given this survey critical thought and few breezed through it. They took it seriously.

Analysis of the study identifies the five questions that shifted the most and the five questions that shifted the least. Since each of the “agree-disagree” questions was weighted from –10 to +10, the variations were automatically calculated by the Survey Monkey software. The size of the shifts ranged in size from a miniscule 0.11 points to a whopping 7.27 points.

Large shifts indicate a significant change in opinion. Positive shifts show greater agreement; negative shifts show greater disagreement. Since the first and second surveys were exactly the same, respondents perceived something in the presentation that caused them to reconsider their previous answers. Knowingly or unknowingly, when they reevaluated the

statement in light of new information, they were most likely to have arrived at a different answers on these five statements given in table 1.

Table 1. Five Greatest Shifts

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>First Survey</b>	<b>Second Survey</b>	<b>Change</b>
17) Other Christian churches should be welcome to use the Faith Community Center on a weekly basis for worship and education.	+4.33	-2.94	-7.27
15) I think Washington State's anti-discrimination laws apply to Faith Community Center.	+1.35	+5.78	+4.43
24) The example of Jesus should motivate us to welcome people with a different set of moral values.	+4.71	+7.35	+2.64
20) The mission of Faith would be better served if the Faith Community Center were used for existing needs of church, school and childcare.	-1.06	-3.53	-2.47
8) The Faith Community Center should be legally understood as a place of public accommodation.	+1.73	+3.73	+2.00

In contrast, table 2 shows small shifts indicate little movement or change in opinion of the given statements. Reasons for this stationary result may be the opinion is already strongly felt and has no more room to move in that particular direction. In this instance, the information contained in the presentation affirmed existing opinion. Or it may be that information which was presented did not apply, was not clear or convincing or for whatever reason was not received by the respondent. It did not factor into their answer and the opinion is largely unchanged. In some instances (statements 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 18, 25) the second survey yielded results that were not reflective of the content of the presentation. With the exception of statement 4 and 10, they represent small negative shifts, averaging 0.35 points. Both statements 4 and 10 will be handled in a later section that examines the top five statements with the greatest distribution of answers.

Table 2. Five Smallest Shifts

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>First Survey</b>	<b>Second Survey</b>	<b>Change</b>
19) I am concerned the Faith Community Center will be forced to allow groups or activities that go against our faith and moral values.	+4.33	+4.22	-0.11
16) I believe the Faith Community Center strengthens the community and enriches people's lives.	+7.98	+8.10	+0.12
18) I believe the First Article of the Creed (the fact that all people are God's creation) gives the church the freedom to open the Faith Community Center to all people.	+4.04	+3.92	-0.12
3) I am interested in knowing who uses the Faith Community Center.	+6.70	+6.86	+0.16
12) Allowing non-member use of the Faith Community Center is one way to show love for our neighbor.	+7.98	+8.14	+0.16

The project also gave respondents the opportunity to affirm or reject opinion statements to varying degrees, including a neutral stance. Many of the statements were related and restated in slightly different ways. The top five most affirmed reflect consistently from the first survey to the second. Only one statement was replaced with another statement (in the fifth position). On average, the answers slightly became more pronounced by +0.41 points.

Table 3. Top Five Most Affirmed Statements (First Survey)

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Response</b>
5) I believe God loves, provides and cares about all people in creation, regardless of whether they know Him or not.	+9.23
16) I believe the Faith Community Center strengthens the community and enriches people's lives.	+7.98
12) Allowing non-member use of the Faith Community Center is one way to show love for our neighbor.	+7.98
22) There are some groups or activities that are legal but should still never be allowed in the Faith Community Center.	+7.50
3) I am interested in knowing who uses the Faith Community Center.	+6.70



Table 4. Top Five Most Affirmed Statements (Second Survey)

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Response</b>
5) I believe God loves, provides and cares about all people in creation, regardless of whether they know Him or not.	+9.00
22) There are some groups or activities that are legal but should still never be allowed in the Faith Community Center.	+8.63
12) Allowing non–member use of the Faith Community Center is one way to show love for our neighbor.	+8.14
16) I believe the Faith Community Center strengthens the community and enriches people’s lives.	+8.10
26) There is a significant difference between hosting a group and permitting facility use by a group.	+7.55

Equally important are the statements which respondents were most likely to reject.

These are not quite as pronounced as the affirmative statements, however, as in the preceding category, there is continuity between surveys. Only one statement (in the 4<sup>th</sup> position) was replaced. On average, the answers became more pronounced by about –0.54 points.

Table 5. Top Five Most Rejected Statements (First Survey)

<b>Survey Statement</b>	<b>Response</b>
21) I believe people who use the Faith Community Center should first agree to abide by LCMS doctrine.	–6.25
13) I would favor the facility being used by non–members without charging rent.	–5.87
11) I think the Faith Community Center should be used primarily for LCMS functions and members.	–5.67
4) I believe the church may compromise its witness to the Gospel in order to comply with state laws.	–3.27
23) Practicing hospitality involves having a shared set of values with someone.	–1.83

Table 6. Top Five Most Rejected Statements (Second Survey)

Survey Statement	Response
21) I believe people who use the Faith Community Center should first agree to abide by LCMS doctrine.	-7.65
11) I think the Faith Community Center should be used primarily for LCMS functions and members.	-5.90
13) I would favor the facility being used by non-members without charging rent.	-5.39
20) The mission of Faith would be better served if the Faith Community Center were used for existing needs of church, school and childcare.	-3.53
23) Practicing hospitality involves having a shared set of values with someone.	-3.14

The assigned weight for “neither agree nor disagree” answers was zero. Answers which began, ended or remained in the -2.50 to + 2.50 point range meet the criteria for the “muddled middle” as shown in table 7.

Table 7. Muddled Middle

Survey Statement	First Survey	Second Survey	Change
4) I believe the church may compromise its witness to the Gospel in order to comply with state laws.	-3.27	-2.25	+1.02
10) I am glad to see the Faith Community Center used by as many outside groups as possible, even if they have a different set of moral values.	+3.27	+2.50	-0.77
9) I am concerned about what message is sent when people with a different set of moral values use the Faith Community Center.	+1.44	+1.08	-0.36
23) Practicing hospitality involves having a shared set of values with someone.	-1.83	-3.14	-1.31
6) Allowing groups with a different set of moral values to use the Faith Community Center is a compromise of our witness and faith.	-0.87	-2.55	-1.68

I received a written comment during the presentation that statement #4 was not entirely clear. Did the use of the word “may” indicate “permission” (as it was intended) or “might happen”? For this reason, I suggest tossing this statement and its result, or at least not reading more into this one specific question.

Significantly, four of the five statements that mentioned “a different set of moral values” are included in the above “muddled middle” chart. Does identifying “a different set of moral values” prompt many different answers that are strongly felt on opposite sides? Or are people indifferent or uncertain? Answers to these questions require a different presentation of the data where responses are categorized on the agree-disagree spectrum (see Appendix F, 142-45). For the most part, respondents are not camping out in the middle. Rather, there is a clear division of opinion about how to best handle groups/people that do not share the same set of moral values as we do. It is tricky at times but we know we have an example in Jesus. He was not afraid to make such association with the receptive outcast despite what people thought and said. When respondents were asked to consider statement #24, “The example of Jesus should motivate us to welcome people with a different set of moral values,” they responded very positively as shown in table 8.

Table 8. Statement #24 with Responses

<b>24) The example of Jesus should motivate us to welcome people with a different set of moral values.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	1	7	4	22	18	4.71	52
Survey #2	1	1	1	18	30	7.35	51

To me, even though it is not the largest statistical shift (although +2.64 is still good!), this response is the most spiritually encouraging result in the entire study. It gives me hope.

## Pick and Choose

The next section of the survey asked respondents to choose groups or activities that would not be suitable for meeting, playing, learning and celebrating at the Faith Community Center.

### Meeting

Not surprisingly, satanic groups received the highest amount of disapproval. Of the groups that could meet, Planned Parenthood, Christian groups, and Muslim groups all received higher marks of disapproval on the second survey. An atheist group was seen as less of a problem, but still received a significant share of skepticism. Bingo and politics were two other events that raised concern.

Table 9. Change in Suitability for Meeting

<b>Meeting Group/Event: Not Suitable?</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Survey</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Survey</b>	<b>Change (% of Whole)</b>
Trail Life (a Christian version of Boy Scouts)	3	1	-3.81%
Boy Scouts	12	10	-3.47%
Chamber of Commerce	5	2	-5.70%
Care Net Pregnancy Center	2	1	-1.89%
Planned Parenthood	34	42	+16.97%
Mental health support groups	2	1	-1.89%
Alcoholics Anonymous	2	1	-1.89%
Christian (non-Lutheran) group	2	9	+13.80%
Muslim group	25	34	+18.59%
Atheist group	28	28	+1.05%
Satanic group	48	49	+3.77%
Voting/election center	6	3	-5.66%
Political party function	19	10	-16.93%
For-profit business meeting	8	5	-5.78%
Christmas bazaar (organized by outside group)	2	0	-3.85%
Bingo groups (pay to play)	15	14	-1.40%
Neighborhood association	4	1	-5.73%
Comments	11	30	—
Respondents	52	51	—
Skipped	0	0	—

## Playing

Among the recreational groups, resistance to cage-fighting, while still evident, dropped a significant amount and disapproval of gambling heightened to be almost unanimous. The majority of people apparently approve of boxing, just not betting on it.

Table 10. Change in Suitability for Playing

<b>Playing Group/Event: Not Suitable?</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Survey</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Survey</b>	<b>Change (% of Whole)</b>
Gambling	35	45	+8.09%
Boxing	17	8	-26.20%
City of Lacey Parks & Rec site	3	2	-3.34%
Upward Basketball	1	0	-2.56%
Competitive volleyball league	1	0	-2.56%
Cage-fighting tournament	27	22	-21.40%
Comments	8	22	—
Respondents	39	46	—
Skipped	13	5	—

## Learning

Of the four categories, this category changed the least. The high resistance to Black Lives Matter and marijuana related activities remained unchanged. A LGBT support group (such as PFLAG) was not deemed suitable as an event for Faith Community Center, although resistance to the idea dropped somewhat.

Table 11. Change in Suitability for Learning

<b>Learning Group/Event: Not Suitable?</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Survey</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Survey</b>	<b>Change (% of Whole)</b>
Parenting workshops	1	0	-2.17%
Gardening group	1	2	-2.18%
Black Lives Matter	25	25	0.00%
Marijuana grower's association	43	43	0.00%
Art exhibit	5	1	-8.70%
Interfaith seminar	5	4	-2.17%
LGBT support group	34	31	-6.52%
Homeschooling association	1	0	-2.17%
Health expo/preventative care	2	0	-4.35%
Comments	11	30	—
Respondents	46	46	—
Skipped	6	5	—

### Celebrating

It is interesting to note a portion of respondents said a wedding/reception of any kind was not a suitable event. I speculate this prohibition is suggested as a way of circumventing the legal requirement of also hosting same-sex a wedding/reception. Disapproval of such a function remains high, but it did decrease by a sizeable amount.

Table 12. Change in Suitability of Celebrating

<b>Celebrating Group/Event: Not Suitable?</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Survey</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Survey</b>	<b>Change (% of Whole)</b>
Baby shower	2	0	-4.76%
Birthday/adoption party	2	0	-4.76%
Memorial/reception	1	0	-2.38%
Ethnic celebration	5	1	-9.20%
Wedding/reception for opposite-sex couple	7	7	+2.25%
Wedding/reception for same-sex couple	36	23	-23.55%
Community block party	3	1	-4.44%
Divorce party	41	35	-3.03%
Anniversary celebration	1	0	-2.38%
Comments	11	30	—
Respondents	42	37	—
Skipped	0	0	—

The final question sought to determine the appropriateness and necessity of a disclaimer. Eight of ten people agreed with it on the first survey and that margin increased to nine of ten with the second survey. The disclaimer was seen as helpful in providing clarity of the nature between Faith and other groups who have a different set of moral values.

When asked what other groups not listed might pose a problem, respondents included any group that promoted hate or violence, adult entertainment, swinger lifestyle, obscenity and anarchy. There was a general concern of not wanting to cause someone to sin and it was evident that these activities did not promote civic virtue.

### **What They Really Think**

The text boxes in the survey provided a valuable window into the reasoning underlying respondents' answers. I was under no illusion that there was consensus at the presentation, but I still felt it was constructive in that it made people think more deeply. The struggle with welcoming other groups and remaining faithful to our beliefs that would seem to preclude such activity was apparent.

This is hard. Want to be open but not be a party to things that go against our values and beliefs.

Having an opportunity to build a relationship and share your faith with those who obviously don't know Jesus is precious. It's hard to exclude people from that possibility.

As a Christian, I know I need to love all people, but when you fear certain groups by their actions and beliefs, it is so very hard. I pray God will strengthen me in this situation. Other areas, I just flat can't accept.

Other comments revealed a traditionalist or protectionist position.

I believe any group that is completely in opposition to moral values should not be welcome to use the community center. I believe it would send the wrong message to the community. The congregation prayed about the building and we should uphold the mission of God's Word.

Groups whose views are hostile to Christians and to life should not be allowed to use Faith's facilities.

FCC is part of our church and should not be used by ANY group who denies God and/or Jesus Christ. Jesus said the temple (church) is a house of prayer, not a business. We should not put income ahead of our Christian values and beliefs.

In the eye of public opinion, you can absolutely be guilty by association. We need to be very careful about this.

Involvement would indicate support!

Of this genre, I found the following comment to be most charitable because it took into account the benefit (or lack thereof) to the community as well as the church. "Activities which have no value to the community or are detrimental to those involved, or do nothing to further the mission or outreach of the church should not be allowed." This comment actually identifies the two kinds of righteousness, horizontal and vertical. I found many hopeful comments that showed a change in perspective. Here are a few:

Survey made us think and how we view others!

My opinion changed when I thought about hosting versus allowing groups to use our facility. In this way we are welcoming people from our community without the expectation that they have the same beliefs and values as we do.

There was also obvious concern about the types of people that certain events or activities would bring on campus. Sharing a campus with a school and childcare was an understandable concern. Moreover, some people viewed events that condone behavior we do not support as a way of welcoming the enemy.

Boxing and cage-fighting—again what kind of people does it bring on campus. It is sad that we must have these types of concerns—but in this day and age?

There is a difference in "loving all people" and upholding our faith and values. I don't see how allowing evil in our building will "raise up families and followers of Jesus."

The old adage: 'Don't let the devil into your house.'

One person took a more engaging approach that invited more participation, not less.



If we are aiming to have some sort of influence on people of the community, have a point of conversation, demonstrate God's love (He shines on the good and the evil) then we need to be open to groups such as these. At any function for which we have a concern, we need to have sufficient church members as helpers/staff so that conversations can be encouraged.

Some people appreciated learning more about community center policy. This awareness was one of the project's intended outcomes.

I was surprised to learn that a guideline regarding appropriate rentals was more stringent than I knew. I applaud the values and intentions that were disclosed...when making decisions regarding use of building.

This study you are doing has been a big eye opener for me. Lots of things I never realized before. Thank you for letting me a part of it.

Very challenging and provocative questionnaire. Would like to take again in a year and be able to compare answers in this survey. Would the results show growth or remission as a Christian?

Some respondents were extremely helpful in their replies. One respondent researched WLAD and even wrote a pertinent portion of facility use policy! This same individual raised a very good question:

Is it possible that public accommodation characterization...is not location-specific but is specific to an organization? Another way of putting it is can we decide not to use the public accommodation religious exemption in one building and preserve it in another location—or is it once FLC, Inc. opts into public accommodation for one facility, it throws off its exemption for all facilities?

I asked my attorney this question since Faith is one legal entity, but he did not answer it directly. The same individual offered this excellent observation about the complicated nature of corporate hospitality in a morally confused world.

I would argue that individuals are more effective in serving the community than an institution. It is easier for an individual to communicate their position than it is for a large organization. Individuals are subject to less scrutiny as well. This allows them more freedom in what they do or don't do...the goal of "better serving the community" is more effectively accomplished when we as individual Christians show true love of neighbor towards our families, friends, and enemies in all areas of life and society.

One person sought to find a middle way by privatizing the Center while still retaining some community presence through member-sponsored activities.

If we hold the Center as a club and require church members to sponsor outside groups as club events. This works for VFW and Elks Clubs. That may give us more control over the potential legal conflicts.

For at least one person, there was no convincing of the merit or opportunity of community center ministry.

I firmly believe that most 'community' users of the community center have no interest in our church or our faith. Many of these groups appear to be like the cousin that comes to crash at your house when he's in town because he's too cheap to get a hotel or buy his own food. He doesn't really care about you. Nor is he interested in reconnecting or building a meaningful relationship with you. He just wants to use you.

Another person sounded a note of concern for me and way what was discussed could be processed further and eventually implemented by involving the appropriate leaders.

The Community Center use question is potentially highly divisive. On Sunday, there was an undercurrent of both positive and negative comments. I think it is important that people realize this present conversation is a part of Pastor's DMin project. It does need to become a part of Faith's Management Policy for the Center, which will require much more conversation. We will need legal advice regarding some areas. Pastor will also need to have Council 'watch his back.' Church leadership needs to be 100% in favor of whatever policy is decided for the Community Center. Let's not be in a hurry, but let's not drag our feet either. Let's be thorough and loving.

These comments are selected as bring representative of how people engaged the issue.

All of the responses are located in the Appendices G (146-49) and H (150-162).

## **Conclusion**

My hypothesis was at least partially right in that the needle moved where I hoped it would. With the right leadership, patient conversation and an open implementation, the community center can continue to function with a wide appeal to the community. But there is

a smaller, countering force that is aligned with meeting internal needs and foregoing community presence in exchange for what is familiar and known. This sentiment will need to be carefully addressed as we come to a common understanding of how the community center was originally dedicated “for the community, in Jesus’ name.”

The above comments and results show strong and divergent opinion. The confluence of what is sacred in the context of what is secular is always certain to generate responses that are deeply felt. It should move us; if it did not, something is wrong. In most instances, the movement was in the direction of the presentation. More patient and honest conversation is needed before implementation of any policy, but it has begun. The attitude of the congregation is now discernible and has been quantified. As the church’s conversation is best framed around the example of Jesus, I hope we are drawn to welcome and love people who are not like us because in these relationships we are called to be perfect in love like the Father. In instances of moral difference and shared space, the strength of love and faithfulness are tested.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The answers sought in this study belong to questions of which Faith could not conceive eight years ago, but have arisen over time. At the beginning of 2010, the main concern was getting the facility up and running. We had no staff, no program and no clue. Some people worried about how we were going to afford such a facility. Others were overly optimistic about the attractive potential of a new building, truly clinging to the expression, “If you build it, they will come.” Both viewpoints were skewed.

The questions and struggles we are experiencing today have less to do with facility logistics and more to do with the moral dimension. It is an indication of further cultural shift where the church no longer gets to make the rules or be exempt from the ones that make it uncomfortable. The project is very timely in consideration of the past. It has served as an opportunity for the pastor and congregation to reflect on God’s faithfulness over the years and determine whether we have realized or deviated from the initial purpose and vision for the facility. The project is also very timely in consideration of the present need. We are at a point now where we can understand the parameters in which we operate and reaffirm the purpose and opportunity of having a community center. Now we can implement a facility policy that incorporates sound theology and practice. The construct and merits of such policy are sure to be tested by both internal and external forces. I expect the greatest pressure to be exerted by club mentality.

## **Contributions to Ministry**

In the specific context of Faith, this MAP will impact community center in a number of ways. Support was expressed in the survey to display Christian artwork and verses as a way of giving witness to the faith. Years ago, we decided on the names for each room and chose the motif of trees (mentioned in Isaiah) as a way of bridging the gap between the culture of Northwest and the church. Each of the meeting rooms (Cedar, Cypress, Poplar, Oak) will have a different verse from Isaiah displayed on the sign. At the entrance, we already have a mural of a mountain and trees. I will suggest adding the verse of Isaiah 55:12, “You shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” Perhaps we will even rename Rainier Court to something more spiritually descriptive, instead of the geographical reference to nearby Mt. Rainier.

Another contribution of this MAP to the specific context of ministry is the welcome letter for FCC guests (see Appendix I, 163). On behalf of the church, I drafted this letter of introduction for several reasons. I want people to make that association with ministry from the beginning. The letter states the purpose for the community center within the context of the church’s mission. It identifies our ministry as LCMS and our core values while at the same time, it acknowledges different moral values and viewpoints people bring with them. There is no expectation for guests to suddenly change who they are or what they believe. Activities of a group are a reflection of that group’s values, not Faith’s. Having a different set of moral values does not preclude us from loving all people. Allowing community use of the facility is one expression of love for our neighbor.

Admittedly, it seems confusing for a church to allow facility use of an event/group of which their values may be different from or in opposition to. I do not regard a disclaimer as a perfect solution, but by having one, some distinction of moral values is afforded. The final question of the survey received large support for this disclaimer. “Granting permission for facility use by outside groups should not be viewed as an endorsement or agreement on behalf of Faith Community Center with any group’s values, beliefs, practices or objectives.” Critics may see a disclaimer as a way of sluffing off moral responsibility or as permission to allow activities that contradict the faith and practice of the church. In this view, it is important to be consistent; otherwise it invites confusion. The point of consistency I am calling attention to in how we interact with people of different moral values is the law of love.

This project has also shown the importance of sharing community center usage with the congregation. By sharing stories, or by keeping tally of the kinds of groups and the number of events that occur in our midst, the congregation is able to appreciate what has transpired between Sundays. Tracking facility use also helps the community center hold its own. It makes the case to respect the interaction it creates with people who are not already connected to church, school or childcare ministries. Entering into the building puts Faith on their map and gives context and possibility for the Gospel to be received. It is enjoyable and significant to meet people whom we would otherwise would have never met!

There is no reason Faith has to suffer moral handwringing, nor does Faith have to retreat into a club-like mentality. Even though, in general, the more public activity a church permits, the more people it comes into contact with, the more likely it is to be designated as a place of public accommodation. So be it. We are in the world, but not of the world. It is an

intentional arrangement sometimes creating tension, mess, relationships and surprising situations.

I believe the theological, legal, moral and financial boundaries I have explored in this dissertation will be helpful for Faith's future. On one hand, I want Faith to avoid unnecessary and expensive litigation in the courts and suffer in reputation. There are certainly enemies of the church who are willing to confound ministry efforts. The opposition has deep pockets, corporate funding and the heavy hand of the state is largely doing its will. Even if it could be afforded financially, the distraction from ministry and demonstration of the Gospel would be so great. Even if we won the case, it would be a loss in terms of energy and resources.

This study shows that while it may be easier to do so, we should not cede the public square. The Gospel is meant to be lived out individually and corporately, not contained to a particular time or place. Opponents of religious freedom seek to contain faith to a particular place or function. We resist these efforts. Freedom of religion is more than freedom of worship. The public square is where we are needed most and our desire to engage it does not dilute or confuse the Gospel we bear. It simply puts us in a position to demonstrate love and compassion for all people. We understand the term "neighbor" to include people who are and who are not like us. It is not enough to love people in theory; at some point, we actually have to do it. If people want to read into the situation, let them see a love for one another instead of alleged immoral complicity. Wherever possible, the values and beliefs of the church should be clearly stated so people on either side do not arrive at the wrong idea.

But I am more concerned about the resistance within the church. Club mentality is a real force in part because of the desire to be among like-minded people who share the same values. This tendency is dangerous and most unlike Christ if it inhibits welcoming people

who are not already like us. When it comes to standards of expectations, we would do well to recognize the morals and standards apply to the church internally and make demands on our behavior. The law of love makes no conditions and it is this law that guides us primarily as we welcome people.

Perhaps it is helpful to address objections by clarifying what I did not say. I am not advocating for any change of our doctrine or our stance on social issues. I am not for the sanctioning of sin. I am not for hiding our denominational affiliation. I am not predicting that the church will or will not get sued. I am not saying simply entering into the building accomplishes the mission of discipling. I am not saying there are no moral standards that can be enforced.

I am saying if we want to engage the community, we must do so on their level and not impose church morals on people who do not share them. I am saying there is no loophole to “love thy neighbor.” In Matthew 5, loving indiscriminately is what it means to be perfect and like the Father. Community center ministry enriches people’s lives and is a way of blessing the community at large, not just people like us. Community center ministry will come into contact with the evil and the good, just and unjust. A distinction remains in their character and set of moral values, but not in how they are treated or what they receive. This seems to be very essence of non-discrimination.

Finally, we do not own the blessing. The blessing of people is not something that is earned but is given indiscriminately and generously. It is not right to attempt to keep God’s sun from shining or the rain God sends from falling on anyone with a different set of moral values. It also seems like a very impossible, selfish and negative endeavor. Instead, we



simply acknowledge God's unconditional gift to us and all people as we share in it and love without qualification.

I hope this study convinces leaders in the Synod to consider a different approach than what is outlined in the ADF/LCMS legal guide, *Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation and Gender Lawsuits*. I understand the desire to be consistent in doctrine and practice. It seems to me this manual elevates the church's view, discards the view of the world and worst of all, it overlooks the example of Jesus' actions in the context of moral diversity.

### **Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth**

As a pastor, the congregation is my primary realm of influence and my responsibility is to lead and inform the conversation. Because of the sensitive nature of this study as it pertains to issues where people even within the church often disagree, I would not advocate a project like this one unless the pastor had the respect and trust of the congregation. Not all resistance is bad. At least it shows engagement with the issue. It is the hidden resistance which is most dangerous.

The joyful part of this dissertation was documenting and exploring the stories of Faith. The project deepened my love for the congregation and my appreciation for their past and ongoing sacrifice. God's "showing up" in so many times and ways was reassuring and reminded me He really is Lord of the church, as well as Lord of the community center. This community center has rewritten Faith's future and it gave me a unique venue to explore and test the values we profess.

The MAP gave me reason to converse with others. I spoke with my predecessor Rev. Charles Keogh for the first time. His story reminded of something I learned in Pastoral

Ministry 101: “God was at work long before you arrived and He’ll be at work long after you leave.” Conversing with an attorney, growing in my understanding of the law and reading actual statute were all fascinating endeavors. Even learning about something as complex as tax law was illuminating.

As the husband to the former campus manager, I personally became acquainted with the activity, challenge and fruit of community center ministry. Often times, my family was the set-up and clean-up crew, most of the time willingly. My wife and I taught our children the virtue of hospitality and how to best make people feel welcome. We were privy to so many activities that were never seen by the congregation.

My determination on what events are suitable for the community center has changed over time. I have questioned my own positions on issues. There have been times when I went in the complete opposite direction or gave up hope on trying to resolve the issues at hand. This MAP prompted conversations with the present campus manager that clarified how the values and beliefs of the church should be properly expressed and articulated. I am appreciative of her experience in events and allowing me the space to process externally in conversation. In terms of criteria for booking events, I hope the eight questions I listed in the presentation are sage guidance and helpful input.

### **Recommendations**

Faithfully dealing with moral diversity can be daunting but it can be done! Community center ministry is broad in scope and sometimes shallow in depth. Yet it accomplishes an introduction and requires taking a long view as a relationship is built over time. As means of encouragement, here is a list of attitudes and actions to take.

1. Remain hopeful and encouraged to do good as the kingdom of God comes in our midst to both the church and the community.
2. Clarify the organization's status of public accommodation under applicable local, state and federal laws. There is no one set answer and the law varies by jurisdiction across the nation.
3. Determine if public accommodation can be location, purpose or ministry specific or does it apply to the whole organization and property?
4. Ask what forms of discrimination are prohibited by places of public accommodation. Are sexual orientation and gender identity included?
5. Review facility use policies and property agreements. Is it designed to keep people out or let people in?
6. Make the statement of faith, mission and values clear! What would a fair-minded person think is the organization's purpose and motivation? It should not be left for them to draw their own uninformed conclusions.
7. Determine a code of conduct that shows respect for people, possessions and property and apply it evenly to all groups.
8. If necessary, draft a facility use policy and seek leader input. Does it reflect a heart for people? Are there any gaps or inconsistencies? How it could be exploited by those who may want to cause the church trouble?
9. If it has not been done, present the revised facility use policy and any other value statements to the voters for approval.
10. Whenever possible, share stories with the congregation about how the community center is enriching the lives of people. Every now and then, a note of encouragement

can serve as a nice reminder that your actions are noticed and appreciated. Here is a note that we received recently.

I just wanted to drop you a note to say thank you. You don't know me personally, but I wanted to thank you and your staff for your service, commitment and love for this community. It is making an impact. Your work is bearing fruit. So thank you! Be encouraged :) You are making a difference. Keep it up :)

Future study and research will be needed as courts weigh in and strike balance between religious freedom and anti-discrimination laws. There were enough legal developments over the course of this research to indicate the situation is still fluid. But the trend is not moving in the church's direction. Fortunately, the church is designed to be adaptive in certain aspects. It has always found a way to live out the faith as a cultural insider or outsider. In the twenty-first century, we have transitioned back to being a cultural outsider. This influence from the edges is actually our niche as we are chosen by God for a greater purpose than friendship with the world.

### **Conclusion**

When we do not know what to do or how to show both love and truth, we can look to Jesus who models what it looks like to acknowledge, be with, welcome and love people who have a different set of moral values. The same Jesus who challenged the Pharisees and cleared out the Temple in moral indignation is the same Jesus who openly associated with sinful people. He never sanctioned sin, but His actions were always for the cause of the world, not just for the saved. He wanted people to know and receive righteousness by being present among them. A community center can adopt that same posture. A community center is one aspect of creation that furthers and improves life. Even as a place of public accommodation, there is a way to be faithful to what we believe.

Instead of reinforcing the barrier between church and society, it is more helpful to find ways of transcending it. It begins by loving the person and seeing them for they are as a fellow human being in creation. It is odd that the state, by enforcing anti-discrimination law, is reminding the church to return to the fundamental commands of Jesus to “love your neighbor” and even “love your enemies.” The cherished right of religious freedom is not an excuse to practice discrimination nor does it permit ignoring clear teachings of scripture. By loving people who are not like us, we are showing fidelity to the teaching of Jesus.

In creation, the provision and blessings necessary for life are given apart from any consideration of merit. “For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust” (Matt. 5:45b). May we, as God’s children, share in the blessing of Faith Community Center and be perfect like our Father in this regard by responding to shared grace with shared space.

APPENDIX A

FACILITY USE CONTRACT



RENTAL AGREEMENT

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Name of User or Individual (the "User"): \_\_\_\_\_

Does this organization qualify for property-tax exemption?  yes  no  unsure

B. Date of Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Date(s) of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Event End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Room(s) Reserved:  Rainier Court  Cedar  Other  FCC Kitchen

D. Event Information

Name and purpose of event: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Event website: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Will this event generate revenue of any kind? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain:  yes (provide vendor list one week prior to event)  no

Will event include vendors other than User?  yes  no

Is this event open to the public?  food only  both  neither

Will food and/or alcohol be served?

E. Estimated Venue Charges: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (due in full 30 days prior to event)  
Security Deposit Required: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (due at time of reservation)

	Rental Deposit Required:	\$ (due at time of reservation)
	Certificate of Insurance:	(due 10 days prior to event)
F.	User's point of contact: (name, title, phone number and email address):	_____
		_____
		_____

THIS RENTAL AGREEMENT (“Agreement”), dated as of the date shown in Section I, Basic Information, is by and between Faith Lutheran Church, a Washington non-profit corporation (the “Faith Community Center (FCC)” or “Church”) and the User named in Section I, Basic Information, item A, above.

**RECITALS**

The FCC makes available for use by third parties certain facilities and event space located on the Church campus. The User wishes to use the FCC’s event space, and the FCC agrees to allow the User to use its facilities and event space, all subject to the terms and conditions contained in this Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the covenants contained herein and for other valuable consideration, the parties agree as follows:

**GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**Additional Users:** The User understands and agrees that during the term of this Agreement other events may be held in other parts of the described facilities not included in this Agreement, and the User shall conduct its activities so as to not interfere with these events.

**Non-Assignment:** The User shall not assign or transfer this Agreement or sublet any portion thereof without the prior written consent of the Community Center Manager.

**Time Limit:** This Agreement is not binding until signed by the Community Center Manager. The FCC will honor this offer for ten (10) working days from the date of mailing this Agreement to the User. If the Agreement is not received back from the User within those ten (10) working days, it will be subject to change and the rental space will be available to new requests.

**Reservation of Rights/Revocation of Use Permit:** The FCC has the right to remove the User or any of its employees, agents, contractors, vendors, invitees, guests, or anyone whose conduct may be detrimental, injurious, offensive to, or inconsistent with the property, personnel and mission of Faith Lutheran Church.

**Non-discrimination:** The FCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, creed, color, gender, marital/parental status, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, age, or disability. Users that discriminate on such basis are unwelcome on Church property.

**Addendum:** The attached “Rules, Regulations, and General Provisions” and “Event Decoration Guidelines” are part of this Agreement. The User is responsible for reading and complying with all provisions contained in this Agreement.

## **INSURANCE AND HOLD-HARMLESS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT**

**Insurance:** This Agreement is contingent on the User naming the FCC and its affiliates as additional insureds under the User's liability insurance as stated in Section IV.3 below, and providing, no later than ten (10) days prior to the date of the event, an Accord or other form of certificate of insurance acceptable to the FCC. A sample of the Certificate of Insurance is attached to this Agreement, and must show evidence of the types and minimum amounts of insurance coverage shown on the attached sample, with the following endorsement: "Faith Lutheran Church and their Officers, Directors, agents, employees and volunteers are added as Primary Non-Contributory Additional Insured." **Please note:** The FCC reserves the right to require greater coverage amounts or types of coverage, including Liquor Liability limits where alcohol is consumed or served, based on levels of risk.

**Hold-Harmless and Indemnity Agreement:** User agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Faith Lutheran Church and their Officers, Directors, agents, employees and volunteers from and against any and all demands, claims, and damages to persons or property, losses and liabilities, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of or caused in whole or in part by User, its employees, agents, contractors, invitees, guests, or others within the control of User while using the facilities, walkways, parking, grounds or event space. Such obligation to indemnify on the part of User shall not extend to the sole negligence of the FCC or its indemnitees.

**Failure to Provide Insurance Coverage:** Failure to provide the insurance required in this Agreement on a Primary-Non Contributory basis insuring against the liability exposure on the part of the additional insured parties herein does not relieve the User of its legal obligations. The intent is for the event to be insured or self-insured in full by the User. Failure to obtain or maintain the insurance required herein is a breach of this Agreement and the FCC may be, at its option, relieved from all remaining obligations under this Agreement.

## **RENTAL RATES AND PAYMENT**

1. **Rates and Increases:** Booking of the event space a year or more in advance does not entitle the User to the same rate that is in effect at the time of booking the reservation. Invoicing will be structured on the current FCC's rates at the time of the event. Annual rate increases are determined based on the FCC's cost to do business.

**Payment:** All charges shall be paid in cash or check made payable to Faith Community Center.

**Reservation Deposit and Rental Fees:** To reserve the facility, the User will pay \$.00 or fifty percent (50%) of the rental fee of \$.00 to the FCC upon signing this Agreement. All remaining site rental fees must be paid in full 30 days prior to the event. A \$35 fee shall be charged for all checks returned for insufficient funds.

**Security Deposit:** To reserve the facility, the User will pay \$.00 or fifty percent (50%) of the rental fee of \$.00 to the FCC upon signing this Agreement (if deemed applicable). After the conclusion of the event, if there is no damage or extra charges, and the event space has been left clean, 100% of the security deposit shall be refunded within 21 days following the event. **Security deposit refunds will be sent in the form of a check made payable to the name and address named in Section I, Basic Information, item F, unless otherwise noted below. Security Deposit Refund to be sent to:**



Name:

Address:

**Liquidated Damages/Cancellation Policy:** Liquidated damages are used to compensate the FCC for damage incurred by the FCC resulting from the User's use of the FCC's facilities and event space and are based on a reasonable estimation of the cost to compensate such damage. Replacement costs are charged when those items cannot be reused again. However, the FCC will make every effort to repair damaged goods. Costs of damage will be invoiced at event completion. **Cancellation:** If the User fails to hold such event or events as covered in this Agreement at the agreed time and under the agreed terms, the User shall pay the FCC the following as liquidated damages, based upon the timeliness of the cancellation (cancellation of the event must be given to the FCC in writing):

60 days' notice and over: \$50.00 Administrative Fee (per date)

30–60 days' notice–50% of rental fee: \$ plus Administrative Fee

Less than 30 days' notice–100% of rental fee: \$ plus Administrative Fee

**Priority:** Faith Lutheran Church and School events shall have priority over external events. The FCC reserves the right to cancel the User's reservation in support of the FCC mission, objectives and goals with due notice. The User's reservation may also be denied or cancelled if arrears are delinquent or in collection.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** If inclement weather causes the closure of the Church campus, the User may choose to cancel the event, provided that the User must reschedule the event at the FCC's facilities or event space, or pay a 100% cancellation fee.

**Force Majeure:** In the event that FCC buildings, property or facilities shall be destroyed or substantially damaged by fire, acts of God, or other casualty, or in the event other circumstances render fulfillment of this Agreement impractical or impossible, User shall be obligated to pay the fees hereinabove stipulated only for the services, activities and events which shall have occurred prior to said casualty or circumstance. User hereby waives any claim for damages or compensation from the FCC or any of its employees or agents resulting from fire, flood, casualty or other circumstances preventing the performance of this Agreement.

**Rental Balance/Collection:** For any balances due or past due at the conclusion of the event, the User shall pay within ten (10) working days after receipt of an invoice or other demand for payment by the FCC. In any case, all amounts owing to the FCC hereunder which are more than sixty (60) days past due shall be subject to a service charge equivalent to the highest interest rate allowed by law. The User shall reimburse the FCC for all costs incurred to collect any amounts owed under this Agreement, including professional fees, reasonable attorney fees, and any and all amounts owing hereunder, whether or not legal action is instituted.

## **PECUNIARY GAIN — FUNDRAISING EVENTS AND PROMOTION OF BUSINESS ACTIVITIES**

Faith Lutheran Church is a tax-exempt property and must abide by the Washington State Department of Revenue's pecuniary gain laws. In accordance with Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 458-16-190(8) Fund-raising events: "The use of exempt property for fund-raising events

sponsored by an exempt organization, association, or corporation does not subject the property to taxation if the fund-raising events are consistent with the purposes for which the exemption was granted. The term "fund-raising" means any revenue-raising event limited to less than five days in length, that disburses fifty-one percent or more of the profits realized from the event to the exempt nonprofit organization, association, or corporation that is holding the fund-raising, and that takes place on exempt property." By executing this Agreement, the User represents and acknowledges that it (i) shall comply with the terms of WAC 458-16-190(8), (ii) has read and understands the requirement described herein, and (iii) warrants that it shall comply with the same at all times during the term of this Agreement.

## **CATERING, ALCOHOL SERVICE AND CONCESSIONS**

**Catering and Food Service Information:** All food service and catering must be approved by the Community Center Manager and meet Thurston County's current food safety guidelines. Use of the kitchen and associated equipment or utensils require an additional rental fee.

**Alcohol:** Alcohol may be served in the facilities after securing approval from the Community Center Manager and a State permit or license, and subject to the Rules and Regulations. **All alcohol must be poured and served by licensed bartenders.** The alcohol license or permit must be posted during the event and a copy must be provided to the Community Center Manager. No alcohol may be stored in the facilities after the event. Injuries to any person, damage to any property or any occurrence on or off of FCC property caused because of alcoholic beverages being available, served or consumed on the FCC's property shall be the sole responsibility of the User. The User is solely responsible for anyone leaving the event under the influence of alcohol. **Initial here:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Concessions:** Faith Lutheran Church has exclusive rights to provide concessions at the concession stand. User shall not sell or cause to be sold concessions, programs and/or novelties without prior written approval from the Community Center Manager.

## **PARKING AND SECURITY**

**Parking:** Parking lots may be available for event traffic use on a first-come, first-served basis. The FCC does not hold these parking lots for the exclusive use of event traffic. The FCC reserves the right to have the vehicle towed when the User, its employees, agents, contractors, invitees, and guests are in violation of parking regulations or improperly parked. Payment for towing will be at the vehicle owner's expense.

**Additional Personnel:** The FCC reserves the right to assign additional personnel if, in the FCC's sole discretion, the nature of the event requires such additional personnel. In such instance, the User shall pay the reasonable fees associated with additional personnel.

**Law Enforcement:** Should any activity at an event, or action of the User or User's guests necessitate contacting a law enforcement agency, the event may be terminated by FCC staff without any liability to Faith Lutheran Church. In such instances, the User will be ineligible for any refund and agrees to forfeit all deposits and payments.

## **MARKETING**

**Use of the FCC's Name and Symbols:** Neither the names, markers, symbols, logos, mottoes, or any indication of the Faith Lutheran Church, Faith Lutheran School or Faith Community Center shall be used to suggest sponsorship or endorsement of any activity without prior written

approval by the Community Center Manager. The FCC may allow use of its name for purposes of identifying location. The FCC requires that the User state in such advertising and elsewhere that the venue for the event is being conducted “*at Faith Community Center.*”

**Posting and Distributing Announcements:** The User may not post or otherwise distribute any announcements, signs, posters, pamphlets, cards or information on Church property without the prior written consent of the Community Center Manager. All such announcements must be provided to the Community Center Manager for in advance for review and approval. Distribution of announcements upon vehicles in any Church parking area is not allowed.

**APPLICABLE LAWS AND RULES**

The User shall comply with all laws, ordinances, and rules of the FCC, including those stated in the Rules, Regulations, and General Provisions Addendum, and those of any municipality or agency with jurisdiction including but not limited to the City of Lacey, Lacey Fire District, Thurston County, the State of Washington, and the United States, which are applicable to the use of the facilities and event space, and shall pay all sales, use, and other related taxes imposed by the law in connection with its use and occupancy thereof. Failure to comply with this Agreement or any applicable laws, ordinances and rules may result in forfeiture of the privilege of using the FCC facilities, equipment and services, and/or termination of this Agreement.

**SIGNATURE AGREEMENT**

The execution of this Agreement by the User signifies agreement, understanding of, and compliance with all terms contained herein. This Agreement constitutes the full and complete understanding and agreement of the parties and supersedes all prior understandings and agreements, oral or written, regarding use of the FCC’s services, facilities, and equipment. This Agreement shall not be modified except in writing signed by both parties.

**Faith Community Center:**

**User:**

By: Sarah Holdener, Faith Community Center Manager  
(Printed Name and Title)

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name and Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*To secure event date, please sign and return this agreement within ten days accompanied by your rental and security deposit(s) to 7075 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA 98503. The remaining rental fee is due in full 30 days prior to your event. A certificate of insurance, if applicable, is due 10 days in advance of your event. Please contact Sarah Holdener, the Faith Community Center Manager, with questions at 360-491-3868 or s.holdener@faithcampus.org.*

## ADDENDUM

### **Rules, Regulations, and General Provisions**

These rules, regulations, and general provisions are incorporated and made a part of the FCC Rental Agreement and are so referred to as the “Rules, Regulations and General Provisions Addendum.” As such they are enforceable as part of the terms and conditions granted to the “User”. The FCC reserves the right in its sole discretion to waive or modify the requirements contained in these Rules, Regulations and General Provisions Addendum.

1. The FCC shall provide personnel for set-up and removal of FCC equipment and normal custodial service. The FCC shall further provide one staff member to be in the facility during the rental term.
2. Rental rates include a one-time set-up and removal of tables and chairs and normal custodial service. Additional charges will apply for additional set-up or revisions, and for audio-visual equipment.
3. The FCC’s staff may enter any room, at any time, for purpose of inspection, repair or emergency.
4. Wedding receptions will pay a \$100.00 non-refundable cleaning fee. An extraordinary cleaning fee may be charged to any other groups if, in the FCC’s sole discretion, extensive cleaning is required to restore the facilities or event space to its original condition.
5. If additional equipment is requested beyond what the FCC can provide, User will be responsible to make such arrangements. User agrees that it will not use FCC equipment, tools or furnishings, located in or about the described facilities, without prior approval of the Community Center Manager.
6. If the Community Center Manager deems, in its sole discretion, that the event will generate enough garbage to overwhelm the FCC’s dumpsters (i.e., large and/or multi-day events), the User will be responsible to bring in outside dumpsters.
7. User and its employees, agents, contractors, invitees, and guests are responsible for all items left in the rooms. Valuables should not be left unattended. Neither the FCC, nor its employees, officers nor agents are responsible or liable for the theft or loss of any items or property in or from the facility. Items found will be turned in to Lost and Found located in the Church Office. Items too large for Lost and Found will be discarded if not picked up within one week following the event.
8. Events must end no later than midnight, with all guests off Faith Lutheran property by the end of the event time. All music and entertainment must end by 11:30 p.m. Access to the facility prior to 7:00 a.m. and departure after midnight on weekdays/weekends must be approved in advance by the Community Center Manager and permitted only when a designated FCC employee is present. Should special scheduling be required, the client will be billed at the rate of \$50.00 per hour.
9. User agrees to include event staff and any additional personnel (entertainment, photographer, etc.) that may be present at the event in the guest count so as not to exceed the maximum occupancy limit. If more than the legally allowable number of persons in attendance, the User will be required to reduce the number of attendees. Failure to do so will result in the termination of the event without any liability to Faith Lutheran.

10. No outside vendors may connect to the FCC's sound system without prior approval of the Community Center Manager.
11. No ingress or egress of the facility may be covered or obstructed for any purpose.
12. User is responsible for accepting delivery of any additional event supplies and services and ensuring pick-up immediately following the event.
13. Faith Lutheran's facilities and grounds are non-smoking. Use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, is strictly prohibited.
14. Possession and/or use of illegal drugs is forbidden as well as weapons of any kind on Faith Lutheran property (except for law enforcement officials). FCC staff will report illegal drugs and weapon possession to the authorities, and will immediately terminate any event in which they are found. In such instances, the User will be ineligible for any refund and agrees to forfeiture of all deposits and payments.
15. Firearms, weapons, ammunition, fireworks, explosives, volatile or toxic chemicals, controlled biological materials, and highly flammable materials are not allowed within FCC facilities or on the grounds.
16. No animals, including dogs, are allowed on the Faith Lutheran campus. Service animals only.
17. The Community Center Manager must approve all RV parking and overnight stays.
18. Tampering with the fire system or firefighting equipment in any FCC building or on FCC property is strictly prohibited. This includes blocking exit doors or tampering with any alarm system.
19. Gambling or solicitation in any form is not permitted unless authorized by the Washington State Gambling Commission and the Community Center Manager.
20. The User is prohibited from proselytizing (defined as actively trying to gain new converts to a religion, doctrine, party or belief) on FCC property beyond the rented facilities described within this Agreement.

## ADDENDUM

### Event Decoration Guidelines

It is mandatory that these guidelines be given to event coordinator(s) or decorator(s) for your event. These rules, regulations, and general provisions are part of the FCC Rental Agreement and are so referred to as the “Event Decoration Guidelines Addendum.” As such they are enforceable as part of the terms and conditions granted to the “User.”

1. The rental term includes one hour for decorating or set-up. If decorating or set-up time other than the times stated in this Agreement is needed, the User may request additional time at the billing rate of 50% of the hourly rental rate per hour.
2. All decorations and /or special production effects must be approved by the Community Center Manager.
3. It is extremely difficult to clean up confetti, cranberries, decorative sprinkles, glitter, rice, birdseed, silly string or similar materials. These items **are strictly prohibited**. Cleaning fees will be assessed.
4. The User shall not permit FCC premises to be altered, defaced, marred, or otherwise injured. The User shall not drive or permit to be driven nails, hooks, tacks, and screws into any part of the premises. Generally, all decorating must be freestanding.
5. No tape, glue, or other adhesives as well as pins or staples can be used on any surface without permission. The Community Center Manager must approve installing or hanging of any signs or banners. If approved, the User must remove all tape at the end of the rental term.
6. The Community Center Manager must approve use of weighted or anchored helium balloons in advance. The User must remove all balloons at the end of the rental term. A fee to remove escaped balloons will be assessed per balloon.
7. All decorating material must be flame proofed.
8. Any and all usage of fireworks, and pyrotechnics, open flames, candles, or centerpieces with candles is prohibited unless approved, in advance by the Community Center Manager.
9. Water displays are prohibited inside the facilities.
10. Smoke machines of any type are not permissible.
11. The User must remove all items and decorations by the end of the rental term. No items may be left overnight.
12. Unauthorized decoration of the facility will result in the forfeiture of the security deposit and may result in additional cost if the security deposit does not satisfy damages. The FCC reserves the right to invoice the User for actual costs incurred including but not limited to labor, cleaning supplies and if needed, subcontractors.

## APPENDIX B

### VOTER PAMPHLET DESCRIPTION OF R-74 EFFECT

Office of the Secretary of State, November 2012 Election

#### **The Effect of the Proposed Measure, if Approved**

If approved, this measure would allow same-sex couples to marry. Other prohibitions on marriage, such as those based on age, being closely related, and already being married to somebody else would continue to apply. Marriage laws would apply without regard to gender. This measure specifies that gender-specific terms like husband and wife will be construed to be gender-neutral and will apply to spouses of the same sex.

This measure provides that clergy are not required to perform or recognize any marriage ceremony. No religious organization, or religiously-affiliated educational institution, would be required to provide accommodations, facilities, advantages, privileges, services, or goods related to the performance of a marriage. Clergy, religious organizations, and religiously-affiliated educational institutions would be immune from any civil claim or cause of action, including a claim or cause of action based on the Washington Law Against Discrimination, based on a refusal to perform or recognize any marriage, or to provide facilities, advantages, privileges, services, or goods related to the performance of a marriage.

State and local governments would be prohibited from basing actions relating to penalties, benefits, licenses, or contracts on the refusal of a religious organization to provide such accommodations, facilities, advantages, privileges, services, or goods. State and local governments would be prohibited from basing actions relating to penalties, benefits, or contracts on the refusal of a person associated with a religious organization to solemnize or recognize a marriage. The measure does not change or affect existing law regarding the manner in which a religious or nonprofit organization may be licensed to provide adoption, foster care, or other child-placing services.

## APPENDIX C

### DISTRICT PRESIDENT LINNEMANN LETTER

1700 N.E. Knott Street, Portland, OR 97212 503.288.8383 503.284.2785 (fax)

June 30, 2015

To the Congregations and Ministers of the Northwest District

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Much has already been written and said regarding the Supreme Court's decision about same sex marriage. The speed at which these responses were posted indicated the result many were expecting. At this point, I would encourage you, as leaders of the Lord's church, to be careful and thoughtful in your response to this situation. I would also encourage you to be as intentional and as proactive as you can be as you seek to be a blessing to the people of your community.

As you do so, keep in mind a few things...

- Jesus came into this world to save people from their sin and its consequence, death. His purpose is to be our purpose, too. I appreciated President Harrison's thought in his pastoral letter that "the life-giving sacrifice of Christ on the cross is for all." This is true for every person regardless of their position on this issue.
- The heart of the Gospel message is God's unconditional love of all people – even when He knows them better than they know themselves. The justification of a sinner happens first, then comes sanctification. If we reverse this order, placing priority on the person's behavior, then unconditional love becomes conditional, which speaks contrary to the Gospel.
- I'd encourage you to speak forthrightly with one another as leaders of the church about how you can be God's ambassadors for the Gospel in this situation. It may take on different expressions from congregation to congregation, but the heart must be the same. As we respond to challenges in the culture, we need leaders who are not just looking to fortify existing barriers. We need people who have the ability to take the Gospel message across those barriers without sacrificing their identity as God's people.
- The enemy of the Gospel has succeeded in creating a climate that those who seek to point to God's loving design for life are themselves targeted as "intolerant" or "haters." It's on us to respond with loving patience in the absence of defensiveness or animosity, providing an opportunity for dialogue about the real issue.
- Congregational leaders should anticipate their response to being asked to participate in the wedding of a same sex couple. They should consider formulating a congregational policy. A document on the LCMS website, "Information on Marriage Policies for Member Congregations," could be helpful here.  
(<https://www.lcms.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=726&DocID=2640>)
- LCMS leadership is working on formulating a recommendation on whether LCMS pastors should serve as agents of the state in performing marriages with legal implications. As of the writing of this letter, they have not issued a recommendation. I would encourage



congregations to consider this option. In effect, couples would be legally married by another agent of the state (justice of the peace, judge, etc.) and then have their marriage blessed in a worship setting in the congregation.

- Congregations and pastors should cease publicizing fees associated with weddings. Donations may be given, but fees should not be charged. Continuing this practice may identify the congregation and pastor as being in the “marriage business” and may require equal access.

Three years ago when the state of Washington made same sex marriages legal, I wrote the following: “The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod’s Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) published a report on the subject of human sexuality in September 1981. While CTCR reports are not doctrinal statements that are binding on the congregations of the Synod, they are intended to provide instruction and input on various issues such as this one. The report points out the Biblical prohibitions against homosexual behavior, but at the same time highlights the concern the church must have for those who are confronted with this issue.

As a part of the Lord’s church in the world, we are primarily called upon to witness to His love in Jesus Christ. As congregations and church workers wrestle with this issue, it is important to keep this focus in mind. When we deal with the issue as an abstraction, apart from the effect on the people in the community around us, we place the ministry of the Gospel at risk. Congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have the right and responsibility of self-governance, and it is my counsel as District President that each one takes this role seriously, determining how best to be a blessing to the people God has given them to love and care for in their particular community.

When I served in the parish and a couple I didn’t know would ask if I could perform their wedding, my standard response was, “My church doesn’t do weddings. We want to help make marriages.” This was lived out in our not having fees set for weddings. We would accept donations, but did not require a fee. It would be my counsel that congregations of the Northwest District (in the state of Washington) would examine their present policy regarding performing weddings for those outside the congregational membership in the light of this new legislation. As you do so, think carefully about the ministry aspect of performing weddings and its effect upon your overall ministry in the community. Perhaps the elimination of required fees for weddings in favor of accepting donations would be a wise decision.”

I believe these words still speak to the situation today. Above all, remember that we represent the Lord and His mission of bringing His love into the world. As we seek to do so, Paul’s words to the Ephesians directly apply – “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15–16) May it be said of us that we seek to be that kind of blessing to one another and to the world.

In Jesus,

Paul Linnemann, President, Northwest District President

## APPENDIX D

### PRESENTATION HANDOUT

#### **Community Center Ministry: A Balancing Act**

**2/19/17**

Prezi visual available at <https://prezi.com/hka6anmodmmi/community-center-ministry/>

#### **Purpose**

Dedicated on October 11, 2009, "for the community, in Jesus' name"

Unique incarnational ministry

Provide a venue for people within the community to meet, learn, play and celebrate

Enhance Faith's existing ministries of church, school and childcare

Expand community presence through a welcoming environment & Christian hospitality

#### **Theological Aspects**

Jesus, sinners and the Pharisees

Hospitality & Association

"You shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48)

Left-Hand & Right-Hand Kingdoms

Creation (First Article): God creates and sustains the world.

View of our neighbor

#### **Finances**

We are a tax-exempt, non-profit

Rental income offsets mortgage

Adjustable rates depending on group

Laws on pecuniary gains limit number of for-profit events (12/year)

We pay B&O Tax, storm water; we do not pay UBIT.

Legal claims are expensive to fight even if we win.

#### **Legal Concerns**

Anti-discrimination laws

Consumer protection laws

Is Faith Community Center a place of public accommodation?

WA State Supreme Court & Arlene's Flowers

*Love God. Love one another. Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*

*End discrimination. Don't judge. Hate is not a family value. Equal rights. Love all.*

## **APPENDIX E**

### **EIGHT QUESTIONS**

#### **For Consideration: Eight Guiding Questions for Community Centers**

- 1) Does it go against the Gospel?
- 2) Does it compromise our witness?
- 3) Does it violate our faith in God?
- 4) Does it create a legal or fiscal liability or potential for harm?
- 5) Does it extend or aid creation?
- 6) Does it strengthen the family and/or the community?
- 7) Does it demonstrate civic virtue?
- 8) Does it lead to relationships?

## APPENDIX F

### SURVEY RESULTS

<b>3) I am interested in knowing who uses Faith Community Center.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	0	0	2	29	19	+6.70	50
Survey #2	1	0	1	26	23	+6.86	51
<b>4) I believe the church may compromise its witness to the Gospel in order to comply with state laws.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	19	12	8	10	3	-3.27	52
Survey #2	15	15	3	14	4	-2.25	51
<b>5) I believe God loves, provides and cares about all people in creation, regardless of whether they know Him or not.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	1	0	0	4	47	+9.23	52
Survey #2	2	0	0	2	46	+9.00	50
<b>6) Allowing groups with a different set of moral values to use Faith Community Center is a compromise of our witness and faith.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	11	16	6	9	10	-0.87	52
Survey #2	12	20	3	14	2	-2.55	51
<b>7) I think Faith Community Center establishes relationships with people who are not likely to attend worship service/classes on Sunday morning.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	0	4	3	18	27	+6.54	52
Survey #2	2	4	2	17	26	+5.98	51
<b>8) Faith Community Center should be legally understood as a place of public accommodation.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	4	11	10	17	10	+1.73	52
Survey #2	2	6	6	22	13	+3.73	51
<b>9) I am concerned about what message is sent when people with a different set of moral values use Faith Community Center.</b>							
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Rating Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Survey #1	4	12	9	19	8	+1.44	52
Survey #2	4	13	7	22	5	+1.08	51
<b>10) I am glad to see Faith Community Center used by as many groups as possible, even if they have a different set of moral values.</b>							

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	3	9	6	19	15	+3.27	52
Survey #2	4	9	7	18	12	+2.50	50
<b>11) I think Faith Community Center should be used primarily for LCMs functions and members.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	24	17	5	6	0	-5.67	52
Survey #2	25	15	4	6	0	-5.90	50
<b>12) Allowing non-member use of the Faith Community Center is one way to show love for our neighbor.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	0	2	17	33	+7.98	52
Survey #2	1	1	0	12	37	+8.14	51
<b>13) I would favor the facility being used by non-members without charging rent.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	23	19	6	4	0	-5.87	52
Survey #2	24	14	6	7	0	-5.39	51
<b>14) I understand the purpose of Faith Community Center and its role in Faith's mission.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	3	4	26	19	+5.87	52
Survey #2	0	2	3	17	29	+7.16	51
<b>15) I think Washington State's anti-discrimination laws apply to Faith Community Center.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	4	12	9	20	7	+1.35	52
Survey #2	0	5	5	18	23	+5.78	51
<b>16) I believe Faith Community Center strengthens the community and enriches people's lives.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	0	2	17	33	+7.98	52
Survey #2	0	1	1	14	34	+8.10	50
<b>17) Other Christian churches should be welcome to use Faith Community Center on a weekly basis for worship and education.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	1	7	6	22	16	+4.33	52
Survey #2	16	14	7	12	2	-2.94	51
<b>18) I believe the First Article of the Creed (the fact that all people are God's creation) gives the church the freedom to open Faith Community Center to all people.</b>							

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	3	5	5	25	14	+4.04	52
Survey #2	3	6	3	26	13	+3.92	51
<b>19) I am concerned Faith Community Center will be forced to allow groups or activities that go against our faith and moral values.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	1	3	10	26	12	+4.33	52
Survey #2	2	7	6	18	18	+4.22	51
<b>20) The mission of Faith would be better served if Faith Community Center were used for existing needs of church, school and childcare.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	10	13	10	16	3	-1.06	52
Survey #2	20	14	6	4	7	-3.53	51
<b>21) I believe the people who use Faith Community Center should first agree to abide by LCMS doctrine.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	28	13	7	4	0	-6.25	52
Survey #2	34	14	0	2	1	-7.65	51
<b>22) There are some groups or activities that are legal but should never be allowed in Faith Community Center.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	2	4	12	34	+7.50	52
Survey #2	1	0	1	8	41	+8.63	51
<b>23) Practicing hospitality involves having a shared set of values with someone.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	7	21	10	12	2	-1.83	52
Survey #2	18	13	5	13	2	-3.14	51
<b>24) The example of Jesus should motivate us to welcome people with a different set of moral values.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	1	7	4	22	18	+4.71	52
Survey #2	1	1	1	18	30	+7.35	51
<b>25) I would like to see Christian artwork/verses displayed in Faith Community Center as a way of giving witness to our faith.</b>							
Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	3	4	20	25	+6.44	52
Survey #2	3	1	7	11	29	+6.08	51
<b>26) There is a significant difference between hosting a group and permitting facility use by a group.</b>							

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Survey #1	0	1	6	20	25	+6.63	52
Survey #2	1	2	3	9	36	+7.55	51

**32) Do you agree with this disclaimer if it were included in a facility use contract? “Granting permission for facility use by outside groups should not be viewed as an endorsement or agreement on behalf of Faith Community Center with any group’s values, beliefs, practices or objectives.”**

Answer Options	Yes	No	Undecided	Percentage	Response Count
Survey #1	38	4	5	80.85% agreement	47
Survey #2	43	3	2	89.58% agreement	48

## APPENDIX G

### FIRST SURVEY RESPONSES

#### Question #27

This is very difficult.

While we want to connect with people who need to hear the Gospel, there is also a concern to be enabling an unrepentant sin. In renting out to a political party function, I would be concerned about the appearance of losing our tax exempt status.

I really don't see a satanic group asking to use our facility since there is a HUGE cross on our beautiful building!

We have to limit for profit activities or risk our tax status

Hard choices without knowing the type or real purpose of the group or for the event. Boy scouts or any non church youth group or activity is a subject to be debated as well as any type of mental health group. It is just not a black or white decision without more information and understanding of the situation.

What is considered to be a place of public accommodation? Generally, any place that sells goods, offers food or drink for charge, is a place of entertainment, recreation or assembly, or is for the lodging of guests is included in the definition of place of public accommodation, as are schools, government buildings, libraries, museums, medical offices, public conveyances, and theaters. Are there exclusions to what is considered to be a place of public accommodation? Groups that are distinctly private are not included in the definition of place of public accommodation. Examples would be some fraternal organizations with limited outside activity and groups such as book clubs that meet in members' homes. In addition, a church or other religious entity in the activity of conducting worship services is not a place of public accommodation, and neither are religious educational institutions. However, other church sponsored activities, such as a soup kitchen or public bake sale, might be considered a place of public accommodation. See WHRC WLAD guide. Does public accommodation religious exception become inapplicable (FCC becomes covered entity – then back again) according to activities occurring at the FCC? FCC is a location at Faith – is it possible for characterization at the FCC to have an umbrella-effect over other parts of campus?

I strongly believe in the Triune God. Keep Jesus first. Don't allow groups to promote transgenderism and homosexuality. I believe God created Adam and Eve not Adam and Steve. Jesus says in Matthew that marriage is between one Man and one Woman. Romans 1 tells us to behave appropriately in regard to sexual relations. I believe if we say OK to the groups I checked marked we are indirectly condoning behavior we do not believe in as Christians. The old adage don't invite the Devil into your house.

My answers are based on my understanding of the liberal laws in this state.



Any group or organization promoting an anti-Christian agenda.

Any hate-group. Depends on purpose of meeting, as well. Wouldn't want Planned Parenthood auctioning off baby parts, for example.

See clubs

### **Question #28**

Permitting gambling may cause our brothers to sin. I would not want to enable my brother to sin.

If the crowd were limited to minimize damage I would be okay with the cage fighting. I think the one time we allowed that there was a lot of damage because the crowd was so big.

I think all should be allowed as long as they respect our building and clean up after themselves.

My choices are all associated with gambling; keep that in the casinos

All groups need proper vetting.

Any group or activity that features or promotes violence of any form

Boxing and cage fighting probably bring gambling with them. I would only want to see gambling to raise funds for charity.

"Adult" entertainment

### **Question #29**

Marijuana still violates the Federal Controlled Substances Act. The church would do well to steer clear of those legal issues. While it is important to offer support to sinners, it is important to consider how we do it and do we cause others to sin while doing it.

It is a community center to benefit the community.....

Depends on who is sponsoring the event. It should be judged on an individual basis.

Art exhibits that do not include lewd, obscene or anti-Christian objects would be ok.

Would also include LGBT support group if its focus were on encouraging and expanding its lifestyle.

Don't know enough about BLM and what kind of learning would be involved. Marijuana growers like alcohol purveyors – not a positive life group. Art – what kind. We don't want nasty stuff that we can't tell what it is.

### **Question #30**

Something like this violates natural law, and more importantly Holy Scripture. When we enable someone to sin, we disrespect our Savior and the forgiveness He earned for us on the Cross.

God's way of working in people's hearts..... welcome them all to enhance our community.

Again they should be judged on an individual basis.

Can religious officiates refuse to marry same sex couples, and can churches refuse to rent equipment or space for weddings? Yes, Referendum 74, the 2012 law related to marriage, allows clergy to refrain from marrying same sex couples, and allows churches to refrain from providing marriage related services to same sex couples. This would not be a violation of the Law Against Discrimination. (See: WLAD)

Anything that is against Christian values and faith such as holidays or events celebrating an antichristian religion or political group.

I assume the block party would not involve alcohol. As far as divorce and same-sex wedding, neither seems like something to celebrate. It would look as if we support it.

### **Question #31**

Anarchist groups

Political activists, extremist, anarchy

Extremist groups like Aryan Nation

White power,

Any group that would undermine Christian values.

KKK, Hate Groups,

Nudists.

### **Question #33**

I think some controversial groups could be allowed to use the facilities if they agreed to abide by certain guidelines. We could also post signage that states that these groups are renting our facility and are not necessarily endorsed by Faith Lutheran.

If it is literally a community center like the Lacey community center than no groups should be prohibited from using it unless their platform violates Natural Law and deprives others of their liberty. For example Planned Parenthood endorses abortion which takes the liberty away from the unborn and in my opinion is an illegitimate institution. If you want to bar certain groups from using the community center then it should not be called a community center and should be treated as a building that is part of the church, on church property. If this was the case then the groups using the facility would need to be in agreement with the major tenets of the Christian faith.

We probably need a formal use and practices document for governing the FCC if we do not already have one.

Disclaimer does not go far enough.

WAC 162-32-060 Gender-segregated facilities. (1) Facility use. All covered entities shall allow individuals the use of gender – segregated facilities, such as restrooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms, and homeless or emergency shelters, that are consistent with that individual's gender expression or gender identity. In such facilities where undressing in the presence of others occurs, covered entities shall allow access to and use of a facility consistent with that individual's gender expression or gender identity. For covered entities and basis for religious exception see RCW 49.60.040(11). If FCC is used such as it becomes a covered entity IAW WLAD public accommodation then I believe this WAC section would apply.

As a church we should always put Christ first, and remember we are an example to the school children and parents

It would not serve Faith Lutheran well if groups whose beliefs and actions are contrary to the Christian Faith were allowed to use the Community Center.

My response to Item 32 [disclaimer] would be "Strongly Agree" if the use of the FCC is opened to organizations with different and none/anti-Christian moral values.

My values have crept into my responses. Thus they may not be "politically correct".

Survey made us think about our beliefs and how we view others!

This is hard. Want to be open but not be a party to things that go against our values and beliefs.

We are so lucky to have the community center for our use and to share with the community.

## APPENDIX H

### SECOND SURVEY RESPONSES

#### Question #27

Planned Parenthood performs (or supports) abortions. Children die. The other groups/events allow us to witness to God's grace in different ways.

Public accommodation? Faith Lutheran Church Community Center Rental Policy and Guidelines: The Faith Lutheran Church Community Center seats 160 and is the site of numerous community events. It is available on a rental basis and is an ideal location for indoor athletics (to include locker/shower facilities), banquets, weddings, receptions, meetings and conferences. The Faith Lutheran Church Community Center will not be made available to any group or organization that promotes discrimination, or has a record of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability. The Faith Lutheran Church Community Center's purpose is to serve everyone, regardless of financial circumstance, faith, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. As our community changes, we often find ourselves in the unfamiliar, but remain committed to creating a culture focused on safety and inclusivity. We acknowledge Washington State law has expanded to recognize transgender rights, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. We want to make clear that, in accordance with Washington State law, our community center is a "place of public accommodation" and must abide by laws related to this status. We understand transgender individuals often face a dilemma on where to change and shower, and we strive to be a community center safe and inclusive of everyone in our care. Faith Community Center leadership is always available to meet with members who request special accommodations. Permission to use Faith Community Center does not constitute an endorsement of a group's philosophies, policies or beliefs.

After the presentation, I agree with denying/limiting other religious activities in the FCC. We must limit for profit to reduce risk to our non-profit status.

Muslim group meaning Islam not being allowed.

Jesus knew what was in people's minds and who had potential to change and we do not.

I do not think that Planned Parenthood is an organization that promotes life. And I do not want Satan invited into our area with a Satanic group.

Having an opportunity to build a relationship and share your faith with those who obviously don't know Jesus is precious. It's hard to exclude people from that possibility

I believe groups that go strongly against beliefs and values should not be able to. We has a church should not put ourselves in that position.

I agree with what was shared on different religious groups using the facilities for worship. Opening that up to much "state" input is not nor would it be good for our facility.

Planned Parenthood is an illegitimate institution because of their current platform. They embrace the killing of the unborn. This violates natural law and human rights and has no place in our society. Therefore barring them from using the community center would be justified. I would also refuse racist organizations as well by the same argument of violating natural law and human rights. In regards to the various religious groups (i.e. Muslims, Satanists, etc.) using the community center I see no problem with them using the facility even though I don't agree with their beliefs just as I would have no problem with them using a city built community center. This raises the complications of a church sponsored "community center". Complications such as the appearance that the church agrees with and embraces the beliefs and practices of the groups using the facility. This puts the church in a tough position and sends conflicting messages to the community. Let's say a gay couple wants to celebrate their marriage in the church's community center. The church says, "That's fine but just know we don't believe gay marriage is right or good for society." Isn't that a confusing message? How would the church make that position known to the greater community? This also could put the church into a legally complicated situation. I would argue that individuals are more effective in serving the community than an institution. It is easier for an individual to communicate their position than it is for a large organization. Individuals are subject to less public scrutiny as well. This allows them more freedom in what they do or don't do. In conclusion. On the surface a church sponsored community center seems like a great way to serve the community but it puts the church in a position that could lead to unintended consequences. The goal of "better serving the community" is more effectively accomplished when we as individual Christians show true love of neighbor towards our families, friends, and enemies in all areas of life and society.

It is important to ask if allowing a group to use the space (1) helps promote the Gospel, (2) helps to promote the sanctity of life and God's creation, (3) does not jeopardize our tax exempt status (i.e. Hatch Act), and (4) does not detract or send a mixed message from our sharing of the Gospel. A code of conduct that governs use could help mitigate many of these concerns. The groups that are checked violate one or more of these conditions.

Any activity where participants are incentivized by money or organizational philosophy/purpose openly encourages/promotes anti-Christian principles.

Planned Parenthood is not prolife. The church should avoid satanic involvement.

The groups I indicated are so far from the Church's moral standards that I don't think we should be willing to compromise for them.

My opinion changed when I thought about hosting versus allowing groups to use our facility. In this way we are welcoming people from our community without the expectation that they have the same beliefs and values as we do.

I would pray that sometime in the future our congregation would be financially able to support the Community Center without needing outside help.

Bingo is fine as long as the money is going to a good cause. After hearing you speak, I think that we should generally keep out other Christian organizations as well as other faiths. I am prefer not have organizations that promote a way of life that I am against like Boy Scouts and Planned Parenthood. I am against Abortions except to save the Mother's Life and I cannot support the ideals surrounding the LGBTQ community. I believe marriage is between one man and one woman as Jesus states in the bible. I do not want to indirectly condone behaviors that I object too.

Considering that we also have a school on the campus—I feel we need to take that into our decision making process. Would it some way affect the students or put them in harm's way? This could be either during school hours or after. As stated before I think boy or girl scout troops would be acceptable if they were church sponsored and/or supervised by church members. Mental health groups/alcoholic related meetings could potentially bring a wrong type of individual on campus that could present a danger. All it takes is one bad apple. But then who are we to judge? Also best not to get involved into the political arena. Still adequate vetting is needed on everything because of the climate. There can always be exception to the rule if deemed acceptable.

There are some groups that I would not like to see using the Community Center. Planned Parenthood would be at the top.

The indicated groups using the Center would send the wrong message by using our building.

These groups do not respect the values of the Lutheran Church.

I believe any group that is completely in opposition to moral values should not be welcome to use the community Center. I believe it would send the wrong message to the community. The congregation prayed about the building and we should uphold the mission of God's Word.

If a religious group (Christian or non-Christian) loses its facility from some sort of disaster, I think it would be neighborly/Christian to let them use the facility once or twice, making sure we have a vigorous dialog with them. If an atheist or satanic group wants to use the facility to spite us, let them use it once, but we will fill the halls with members praying for their enlightenment while they are in the building!

I believe that the selected do not contribute or promote the values of either the church or State and exist only to take or devalue the individual who participates in the event.

As a Christian, I know I need to love all people, but when you fear certain groups by their actions and beliefs, it is so very hard. I pray God will strengthen me in this situation. Other areas, I just flat can't accept

These do not promote loving one's neighbor, and, in fact, are just the opposite. There is some concern that allowing Christian groups would make allowing other religions' groups necessary, so I probably should check "Christian group" though I have no objection to it.

FCC is part of our church and should not be used by ANY group who denies God and/or Jesus Christ. Jesus said the temple (church) is a house of prayer, not a business. We should not put income ahead of our Christian values and beliefs.

Groups whose views are hostile to Christians and to life should not be allowed to use Faith's facilities.

Planned Parenthood could be possible only as a larger outreach to mothers in crisis where other groups were there like Care Net with the intent to bring as many people in as possible and to open their eyes to options other than Planned Parenthood. (Maybe if Planned Parenthood only talks about the 90% of their operations other than abortion)

I think Bingo is just a game (not gambling) — just like buying a raffle ticket, or tickets to participate in games at harvest festival.

### **Question #28**

No gambling related events

I am fine with all of the above. A casino night for a fundraiser would be fun!

Our neighbors down the highway have a great place for gambling. :) Even though the community center is not our church's sanctuary, it is still a holy place in my eyes.

I think anything that has gambling should not be allowed. Again, this would open Faith up to too much "state" input.

While we allowed cage fighting in the past, in hind sight, it probably wasn't the best decision and raised several concerns among the congregation. Other than the disciples casting lots to choose a successor for Judas, gambling, while recorded in Scripture in other instances, is not condoned or encouraged. It leads many people to idolatry, specifically money becomes their idol. Our conduct should not encourage or enable our neighbor to sin.

Any activity where participation is incentivized by money.

With Cage fighting, I'm more concerned about the size of the crowds and the damage that would be done to the facility. Those crowds do tend to be a little rowdy.

This may be a personal preference, but I don't think encouraging people to gamble with their money or promote violence furthers the mission of Faith.

Gambling is ok with me as long as the money raised goes to an appropriate Charity. Cage-fighting is too far over-the-top. People get hurt and we don't want that. It would be bad for our image and just plain wrong. We should love our neighbors and not allow them to get hurt on our facilities.

Gambling – legal issues. Boxing and cage-fighting — again what kind of people does it bring on the campus. It is sad that we must have these types of concerns — but in this day and age???

Gambling is not a sporting activity and it carries addictive possibilities.

Any activity that is degrading. Cage-fighting reminds me of the gladiators. Certainly not an uplifting event.

Bingo may be considered by some as gambling. But it is more a social event. Cage-fighting is really borderline because of its brutal nature. Boxing comes close, but with precautions for youth is a valid sport.

Same as the previous statement

I would not want to see high stakes gambling. Bingo, card games for fun would be ok. Set a bid limit?

Even though I understand that cage-fighting has occurred in our facility, I think it promotes violence. Have never been interested in boxing or cage fighting. Football?? YES

Any sport/activity designed to devalue or humiliate God's creatures, or the sole purpose of which is to hurt someone. Competitors do get injured in sports, but that is not the intent of the sport.

Fighting of any kind, activities involving drugs or sexual implications.

Activities which have no value to the community or are detrimental to those involved, or do nothing to further the mission or outreach of the church should not be allowed.

The city doesn't need our facility. They have plenty of underutilized facilities. Except for emergency response purposes, the government (city, county, state, or federal) should have NO use of our church facility.

Well, I don't like cage fighting; but don't know enough about it. I do not go to casinos. There are plenty of casinos around; they don't need our facility.

## **Question #29**



Marijuana is still a Schedule 1 drug to the Feds and thus illegal to grow and use. The state of Washington considers it a legal drug. Keep the growers out until the state – Federal cat fight is resolved.. If the Feds legalize it deny its use because we are a non-smoking campus.

According to Matthew 5:43–48, should the sanctuary/fellowship hall be considered places of public accommodation suitable for all meeting, learning and celebrating activities?

I think our exclusion could be challenged under state law.

I feel that marijuana does not promote God's creation. Black Lives Matter is a tough one. I didn't check the box but I feel like they have become a group with the message of "we hate cops". This message has become one of hate and destruction, thus not promoting life.

Marijuana is federally illegal. Enough said...

Against our church and ours members relationship with God.

I believe that any group that is "learning" should be allowed. Since marijuana is still illegal on the federal level, I believe they or any group that would be breaking a federal law should not be able to use the facility.

Marijuana still violates Federal Law. Accepting funds that are the fruits of a crime could jeopardize our tax exempt status. Also, this provides no benefit to the community, nor does anything to advance the Gospel. Allowing such a group could also compromise our witness. As for the health expo, it would have to be reviewed to determine if it advances life or detracts from it.

Any organization whose purpose/philosophy promotes anti-Christian principles.

Involvement would indicate support!!

I want to protect my child. I do not want him to witness either of these groups.

Marijuana is illegal for people under 21. We have a school campus here and our youth meet in the building. I don't think the two match, so we should not allow marijuana growers.

The groups that I checked promote either violence or drug use which does not further the mission of Faith.

LGBT support group for parents, families, etc. that advocates a Christian perspective could be suitable.

I believe all lives matter equally. Blue, Police officers, lives matter. We don't want to promote gateway drug use. I cannot support LGBTQ use of our community center. I believe deeply that LGBTQ do not promote Christian values. Romans 1 supports that position. That does not mean I do not love my neighbor.

The marked ones are obvious. The others — I can't stress enough that it depends on the people involved and the situation. Something could look or seem innocent enough and not turn out that way at all. It all comes down to what is more important. Surely, God understands that; but do we?

Groups need to profess a healthy wholesome content and not malign family, health, and political values.

All lives Matter not just Black Lives. Marijuana degrades life.

If the Marijuana group is focused on Medical Marijuana, OK. There are Christian parents whose children have chosen that orientation and are in LGBT support groups. One needs to carefully assess the situation. How else can the Church be in conversation with these folks?

Same concerns

Not sure about BLM. "Art " means very different things to different people.

I doubt that any "Black Lives Matter" group would seek a Lutheran Community Center to meet in anyway. They seem to like the streets and only places they can destroy, but I don't say it never would happen. Just pray it doesn't.

Interfaith sounds like it could include Islam, Wiccan, etc. Marijuana, LGBT are sin — not something to encourage by providing space to propagate it.

I would like to see more youth and family activities open to the community that offer positive Christian values.

Black Lives Matter has become a dangerous, hostile organization. Groups which push the acceptance of sexual lifestyles which are against scripture and the way God created us should not use Faith's facilities. Marijuana use is harmful to those involved and against federal law.

Political movements have NO place in our church facility. The church should be a refuge from that media pumped garbage (Right Wing, Left Wing or otherwise). LGBT groups are not furthering God's creation and therefore should not be allowed. I would rather see a group of legitimate business owners learning how to farm a plant (that God created, by the way) so they can support their families than have us support the LGBT agenda and providing a place for them to meet.

Not a racist here; but all lives matter — Jesus loves all (not just the blacks); if they wanted to come to understand that concept — it would look differently. But not for their agenda solely.

**Question #30**

All are suitable for celebrating. In all cases we will again be witnessing to God's grace.

Is it possible that public accommodation characterization from activities occurring at the FCC is not location-specific but is specific to an organization? Another way of putting it is can we decide not to use the public accommodation religious exemption in one building and preserve it in another location – or is it once FLC, Inc. opts into public accommodation for one facility, it throws off its exemption for all facilities. Faith Lutheran Church Rental Policy and Guidelines: The Faith Lutheran Church sanctuary seats 140 and Community Center seats 160 – both are sites of numerous community events. The facilities are available on a rental basis and are ideal locations for indoor athletics, banquets, weddings, receptions, meetings and conferences. Faith Lutheran Church will not be made available to any group or organization that promotes discrimination, or has a record of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability. Faith Lutheran Church facilities are intended to serve everyone, regardless of financial circumstance, faith, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. (and so on as above . . . )

I think our exclusion could be challenged under state law.

All groups should be allowed to celebrate even if they are different beliefs than what the Faith family believes.

Allowing a divorce party goes against the design God had for man. This goes squarely against our values. It does not provide a good witness for the Gospel, nor benefit the community. A support group to help those coping with divorce should be allowed as showing forgiveness is something Jesus wants us to do. Same-sex marriages/receptions is a concern for many and allowing use could be interpreted by some as compromising our witness to the Gospel. It is also a battle that would be difficult and expensive to win in court. I think a code of conduct agreement for all guests and some signage stating that this group is renting our facility and is not endorsed or approved by Faith Lutheran Church could mitigate some of the concerns. I think it is important to differentiate use of the Sanctuary and use of the Faith Community Center. Even in the time of the 2nd Jewish Temple, Gentiles were allowed in the outer, Gentile Court. The closer you got to the Most Holy Place, access was further restricted. A similar approach to Faith could be used.

Some "gray area" on divorce (It may have been a terrible or dangerous marriage.) but not a cause for celebration in God's sight.

Same reason as above.

I feel that a divorce party is celebrating the end of a union that God does not want to see ended.

I don't believe in same-sex marriage. Divorce is something that the church should not be celebrating. Divorce is a sad event.

Discrimination comes into play here — if restricting some events to Faith members only; you could avoid that issue. Some comments I heard at the meeting indicated that some did not agree totally with the choices made by the group leader. Granted these were probably some of the older members; but there were quite a few no votes along with the yes votes. I know, love all, don't judge. But also we must be aware of the devil among us; in whatever form.

These are not activities endorsed in the teachings of the church. Ethnic might be questionable.

If we are aiming to have some sort of influence on people of the community, have a point of conversation, demonstrate God's love (He shines on the good and evil!) then we need to be open to groups such as these. At any function for which we have a concern, we need to have sufficient church members as helpers/staff so that conversations can be encouraged.

Depending on the focus of this "party" it could provide growth and support or celebrate, I responded based on the celebration of divorce and feel it does not support our values or the States.

I am assuming all of these events – and the ones above as well – take place outside of school time

I know if a same couple wanted to rent out the facility for their marriage, legally, we would have to or face a lawsuit. Like you instructed. They can use the facility but we certainly don't need to approve of their actions. A divorce celebration is inappropriate as for our beliefs. Except for infidelity a divorce is wrong. I am divorced because of an unfaithful partner. Sure didn't feel like celebrating.

Celebration of sin is wrong; we should not participate by allowing it on our premises.

Holidays of non Christian religions. Rallies and or protests by anti Christian groups. There is a difference in "loving all people" and upholding our faith values. I don't see how allowing evil in our building will "raise up families and followers of Jesus"

Don't think we should condone same-sex marriage celebration

### **Question #31**

Extremist

Communist or socialist party functions (under political parties)

ISIS

I am concerned about the restroom issue.

Mormons (many in the area)

KKK

Swinger's clubs

I was surprised nothing was addressed about the use of alcohol.

KKK

Only the KKK :>)

"Adult" entertainment — strippers, exotic dance, porn movies

No government and no political groups of any kind.

None

Political protests/rallies; Wiccan, cults, white supremacists, anarchists

### **Question #33**

Same comment as last survey. We need to develop a guide so we understand the rules and risks of using the FCC. I am pretty close to the nature of operations at the FCC so my answers come from a higher level of information.

The presentation was excellent in educating church members about the legal / political aspects of the Community Center. Very interesting and informative.

Pastor, keep in mind that the ADF document was written by Lawyers. Lawyers write advice from a legal perspective, not a Gospel centered one. The goal of an attorney in drafting a document such as this is for policies and facility use to be used in a manner that gives the attorney the strongest legal case. That does not mean that it is the best option, just the "safest" one. If we do allow one same-sex couple to rent the FCC, it will be more difficult to refuse another. It is also only a matter of time that we are confronted on this issue.

Very challenging and provocative questionnaire. Would like to take again in a year and be able to compare to answers in this survey. Would the results show growth or remission as a Christian?

Reference the comment on "public accommodation" earlier in the survey: if the Community Center is considered public accommodation, does that also then imply that the Community Center would have to abide by the so-called "bathroom bill" that would allow transgenders and/or gender-confused individuals to use restroom facilities for whichever gender with

which they "identify" on any given day? If so, I could not support the Community Center being legally considered as a public accommodation.

I was surprised to learn that a guideline regarding appropriate rentals was more stringent than I knew. I applaud the values and intentions that were disclosed as being used when making decisions re usage of building.

Yes, at least indirectly. If we allow groups to promote sin in our facility, we are not totally innocent.

Very interesting presentation. I particularly appreciated the last section "For Consideration." The questions are thought provoking and applicable for many situations in life.

I am a little confused about our obligations as a "public accommodation". I am assuming we can define the types of activity we permit. However, if we allow a certain type of activity (worship, wedding, etc) we must allow it for all groups even if we disagree with their principles.

The disclaimer does not go far enough. How to change it I have no idea. Including a disclaimer in a contract does not mean it will be taken to heart by the person signing the contract.

I am so happy that we have the Community Center. I will be holding a Vintage Fashion show/Luncheon for PEO in May As a fundraiser for girls/women education. The sound system in the gym needs to be improved. Last Sunday's presentation was almost impossible to hear. . Marilyn and others with hearing aids could not!!! I had a hard time.

Desensitization can occur so gradually that some do not even recognize that their values have been altered.

Whether this endorsement or agreement is used or not, groups who's moral values that are in complete opposition to Gods teachings would still sent an adverse message of watered down Christian message the community.

The Community Center use question is potentially highly divisive. On Sunday there was an undercurrent of both positive and negative comments. I think it is important that people realize this present conversation is a part of Pastor's D.Min project. It does need to become a part of Faith's Management Policy for the Center, which will require much more conversation. We will need Legal advice regarding some areas. Pastor will also need to have Council "watch his back." Church leadership needs to be 100% in favor of whatever policy is decided for the Community Center. Let's not be in a hurry, but let's not drag our feet either. Let's be thorough and loving.

So glad to have a chance to get updated on how the FCC is being used.

This study you are doing has been a big eye opener for me. Lots of things I never realized before. Thank you for letting me be a part of it.

Any group or activity that promotes, or at least does not denigrate, the dignity of human beings and does not encourage sin should be allowed.

Use by some groups will, undoubtedly, will be viewed by some members of the church and the community as an endorsement the activities/views of the group using our facility. This can never be taken lightly. In the eye of public opinion, you can absolutely be guilty by association. We need to be very careful about this. I was also highly disturbed to see Satanism, Planned Parenthood and cannabis put in the same category in your presentation. We are witnessing the will of the people in action to repeal prohibition of cannabis in this country. State by state it is becoming legal and should be now part of the same conversation as alcohol. Children shouldn't be allowed to consume either drug (alcohol is a drug whether we want to admit it or not) until they are of legal age. Adults should enjoy these drugs responsibly (not driving, etc.) While I don't think cannabis consumption should be allowed on church grounds, I also don't think the consumption of alcohol for purposes other than religious ceremonies should be allowed on church grounds. Lastly, I think we should be prioritizing the uses of the community center to maximize Faith's ministries. I firmly believe that most "community" users of the community center have no interest in our church or our faith. Many of these groups appear to be like the cousin that comes to crash at your house when he's in town because he's too cheap to get a hotel or buy his own food. He doesn't really care about you. Nor is he interested in reconnecting or building a meaningful relationship with you. He just wants to use you. I would bet that if we compared the number of new members that have resulted from contact from the community center to the number of new members that have come from the school, the data would tell a clear story about which ministries are working and which ministries are not. The uses of the community center should be ranked based on our church priorities...1) Church functions, 2) School activities, 3) Childcare 4) Community events/groups/activities that are appropriate for a church setting. It is a pipe dream to think that the community center will ever "break even" in terms of generating enough rental income to offset its costs. As such, it should be used as a way to support our ministries with priority given to our Church/School/Childcare operations. We should be using the space for those ministries first and foremost since they are growing.

I think it would be difficult to be disciples to most of the groups using our building for their own activities. It seems like it is used more to make money than to serve others for making new disciples. Community meals would be one way to serve others and be Christian witnesses.

If we believe that God loves all people the same and our goal is to show God's love then potentially we shouldn't keep any group out of the community center. The criteria should be they pay their rent and clean up after themselves. Option B we should only open our doors to groups who are not opposed to the Christian church and its message (not required to endorse the church, just not be actively working against it like the Reactionary Muslim/satanic /Wiccan/ Radical LGBT groups). The Rec Center is just a building– the Church sanctuary is something different. Option C is that we hold the Rec Center as a club and require church

members to sponsor outside groups as club events. This works for the VFW and Elks clubs. That may give us more control over the potential legal conflicts.

Very thought-provoking and interesting study for all of us.



## APPENDIX I

### WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to Faith Lutheran! We are delighted to have you as our guest and we hope the venue of Faith Community Center makes for a successful and enjoyable event.

It is our sincere desire that guests who use Faith Community Center feel welcomed and valued. By being open to the community, we hope to connect with many people, build relationships and over time, make the community a stronger and better place.

The facility was opened in 2009 and dedicated in Jesus' name as a way of giving people in the community a place to meet, play and celebrate. As a church, school, childcare and community center, Faith Lutheran is a 4-in-1 ministry that has a common mission: "Raising Up Families and Followers of Jesus Christ."

As a congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), thank you for supporting our ministry. We recognize many people have other viewpoints, but in order to provide clear witness to our belief and practice, here are brief statements that will help give a sense of our values. To learn more, please visit [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org).

- We are a church that believes all people are made in God's image, loved and redeemed by God and are reconciled to Him through the cross of Jesus Christ. The call we are given is to follow Jesus and help others do the same.
- We are a church that believes in loving our neighbor by practicing hospitality, serving people in need, engaging the community and living out our faith in the public realm by doing good works.
- We are a church that believes the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God which has authority, forms our worldview and gives guidance in life. The chief teachings of the faith, as drawn from Scripture, are contained in *The Book of Concord* (1580).
- We are a church that believes in the sanctity of life, marriage and family. We cherish life as God's sacred gift from conception to grave. We affirm God's design of male and female as honorable and natural marriage as the union of one man and one woman. We value the family by equipping parents and nurturing growth in children.

Whatever purpose your group has in meeting—be it an athletic event, business meeting or a celebration in life—we were made for life together. May Faith Community Center be a welcoming place where people connect, celebrate and care for one another.

God's blessings to you,

Pastor Matt Henry

## APPENDIX J

### INFORMED CONSENT COVER LETTER

#### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**Study Title: Congregational Study of Faith Community Center**

**Researcher: Rev. Matthew R. Henry**

**Email Address and Telephone Number: [m.henry@faithcampus.org](mailto:m.henry@faithcampus.org) 360-489-4554**

**Research Supervisor: Dr. Mark Rockenbach, PhD**

**Email Address: [rockenbach@csl.edu](mailto:rockenbach@csl.edu)**

You are invited to be part of a research study. The researcher is a student at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri, as part of the Doctor of Ministry program (D.Min.). The information in this form is provided to help you decide if you want to participate in the research study. This form describes what you will have to do during the study and the risks and benefits of the study.

If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the researcher. Do not sign this form unless the researcher has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.

#### **WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?**

The purpose of this study is to gather and examine congregational opinion regarding the nature of events held at Faith Community Center, Lacey, WA. Of particular interest is the determination of the criteria from different perspectives as to which groups/events are appropriate and suitable or not.

#### **WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THE STUDY?**

You are invited to be in the study because you are:

- A member of Faith Lutheran Church, Lacey, WA.
- 18 years of age or older.
- Able to access an on-line survey and provide a valid e-mail address.

If you do not meet the description above, you are not able to be in the study.

#### **HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THIS STUDY?**

About 50 participants will be in this study, including the Church Council.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The researcher is a pastor at Faith Lutheran Church. He is married to the former campus manager who oversaw FCC operations from 2010-2016.

#### **WILL IT COST ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

You do not have to pay to be in the study.

#### **HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?**

If you decide to be in this study, your participation will last about two hours. You will need to attend a presentation in Rainier Court, Faith Community Center, on Sunday, Feb. 19, 10–11 am. to take part in this study.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?**

If you decide to be in this study and if you sign this form, you will do the following things:

- give personal information about yourself, such as your age, gender, occupation, and education level.
- twice complete an on–line survey about the suitability of outside groups and events held at Faith Community Center.
- attend a one–hour presentation on Sunday, February 19, 10–11 am
- answer questions during an interview that explains the rationale for determining which groups are appropriate (or inappropriate) for having their event on Faith’s campus
- allow a researcher to look at your survey results and compare answers to the legal opinion, noting any shift in answers or trends among the congregation

While you are in the study, you will be expected to:

- Follow the instructions you are given.
- Tell the researcher if you want to stop being in the study at any time.

### **WILL I BE RECORDED?**

The researcher will audiotape any interviews that are conducted in relation to this survey, as well as interviews conducted for gathering a historical account of the construction of the multi–purpose building (2005–2009). The researcher will use the audiotape in order to create written transcripts for data interpretation.

The researcher will only use the recordings of you for the purposes you read about in this form. They will not use the recordings for any other reasons without your permission unless you sign another consent form. The recordings will be kept for seven years and they will be kept confidential. The recordings will be destroyed after seven years.

### **WILL BEING IN THIS STUDY HELP ME?**

Being in this study will not help you. Information from this study might help researchers help others in the future.

### **ARE THERE RISKS TO ME IF I AM IN THIS STUDY?**

No study is completely risk–free. However, we don’t anticipate that you will be harmed or distressed during this study. You may stop being in the study at any time if you become uncomfortable.

### **WILL I GET PAID?**

You will not receive anything for being in the study.

### **DO I HAVE TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can decide not to be in the study and you can change your mind about being in the study at any time. There will be no penalty to you. If you want to stop being in the study, tell the researcher.

The researcher can remove you from the study at any time. This could happen if:

- The researcher believes it is best for you to stop being in the study.
- You do not follow directions about the study.
- You no longer meet the inclusion criteria to participate.

### **WHO WILL USE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT MY BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

Any information you provide in this study that could identify you such as your name, age, or other personal information will be kept confidential. The on–line survey is secure and will be made available to you by a link e–mailed to you. In any written reports or publications, no one will be able to identify you.

The researcher will keep the information you provide in a password protected computer and a locked file cabinet and only the researcher and research supervisor will be able to review this information. Transcripts of interviews will also be kept secure along with their digital form.

Even if you leave the study early, the researcher may still be able to use your data. However the purpose of this research is to compare results between two different surveys. Therefore, in order to achieve optimal research results, the completion of both surveys is desired.

### **Limits of Privacy (Confidentiality)**

Generally speaking, the researcher can assure you that he will keep everything you tell him or do for the study private. Yet there are times where the researcher cannot keep things private (confidential). The researcher cannot keep things private (confidential) when:

- The researcher finds out that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused
- The researcher finds out that that a person plans to hurt him or herself, such as commit suicide,
- The researcher finds out that a person plans to hurt someone else,

There are laws that require many professionals to take action if they think a person might harm themselves or another, or if a child or adult is being abused. In addition, there are guidelines that researchers must follow to make sure all people are treated with respect and kept safe. In most states, there is a government agency that must be told if someone is being abused or plans to hurt themselves or another person. Please ask any questions you may have about this issue before agreeing to be in the study. It is important that you do not feel betrayed if it turns out that the researcher cannot keep some things private.

### **WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT THIS STUDY?**

You can ask questions about the study at any time. You can call the researcher if you have any concerns or complaints. You should call the researcher at the phone number listed on page 1 of this form if you have questions about anything related to this study.

### **DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

I have read this form, and I have been able to ask questions about this study. The researcher has talked with me about this study. The researcher has answered all my questions. I voluntarily agree to be in this study. I agree to allow the use and sharing of my study–related records as described above.

By signing this form, I have not given up any of my legal rights as a research participant. I will get a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

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Printed Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

E-mail address (please print clearly)

**DO YOU WISH TO BE AUDIOTAPED IN THIS STUDY?**

I voluntarily agree to let the researcher audiotape me for this study. I agree to allow the use of my recordings as described in this form.

---

Printed Name of Participant

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

**FOR RESEARCHER ONLY:**

I attest that the participant named above had enough time to consider this information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

---

Printed Name of Researcher

---

Signature of Researcher

---

Date

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