

**Faith Lutheran Church - Grand Blanc, MI**  
**Congregational Annual Forum**  
**January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 - 10:00am-Noon**  
**ZOOM - hosted by Congregational Chairman, Bruce Trevithick**

**Some assumptions:**

- It's time to dream a bit.
- Everyone now knows that "Back to Normal" won't be "Back to Normal."
- Some churches choose to change for the sake of God's mission. Most let change happen to them.
- Our collective imagination is mostly untapped.
- We can better support what we help create.

**Here's our agenda (90 to 120 minutes):**

- Welcome - Bruce Trevithick, Congregational Chairman (2 min)
- Opening Scripture and Prayer - Pastor Biermann (5 min)
- Purpose: Fun! Listen! Build on Past. Imagine What's Next - Bruce (3 min)
- Stories of Our Church at its Best (15 min)
- Moving beyond COVID19... Biblical Perspective - Pastor Biermann (15 min)
- Make a List: "Things we want to keep and not lose in our church as we move through and beyond COVID19." - Bruce & Pastor Biermann (15 min)
- Make a List: "Things you would like to start or change." - Bruce & Pastor Biermann (15 min)
- Vote - Select "to save" AND "to start/change." Review Results. Discuss. - Bruce (15 min)
- Closing questions or comments from the group. - Bruce Facilitate (5 min)
- Closing Prayer - Pastor Scott

## **BLESS Approach to Witnessing**

Here's a great model to turn un-lived aspiration into action...for everyone. It builds on the key importance of RELATIONSHIPS in our Christian life and witness.

For simplicity, it refers to "neighbors," but this can apply in any context.

### **B- Begin with prayer.**

Pray for your neighbors. As you get to know them, pray for them by name (we frequently write down the names of new people we meet so we don't quickly forget).

### **L- Listen.**

Stop and listen. If you're out for a walk, stop. Introduce yourself. Learn about them. You'll learn where they're from. Family. Career. History. But, over time, as you listen, you'll learn their joys but also what hurts...what's broken. The inventor of the stethoscope said: "Listen to your patients; they'll tell you what's wrong."

## **E- Eat.**

Share a meal. Drop it at their door & talk a bit. Bring/share a cup of Coffee. Jesus ate meals with people. If you've never invited a neighbor or another for a meal—in your home or out for lunch/dinner—it might seem strange. You'll be surprised. Food makes everything easier.

Relationships get better. We're a country filled with isolated, lonely people. Seriously!

*“Zaccheus, I'm coming to your house today!” –Jesus*

## **S- Serve.**

At this point you'll know how to serve them. Because you've listened. (Oftentimes, they'll want to serve you, too. Let them!) Because you Begin to Pray...Listen...Eat...you'll know how to serve them. Many times it's simple, easy, in the middle of busy... Serve. Big ways. Small ways.

## **S- Share.**

OK... you've already been doing this...while you listened and ate. Sharing your story. Your story includes faith. Jesus. Forgiveness. Restoration. Comfort. Hard times. High Points. It came naturally. Not all at once. But... let's be clear: It includes words. We're a story culture. The better you know your story and how God's story has changed your story, the better equipped you are. After we had BLESSed one of our neighbors for several years, she called my wife: “The whole family is together. Can you come right now and share the hope that you've shared with me?”

*How can they hear about Jesus unless someone tells them? ... How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news. –Romans 10:14-15*

FROM Rev. Jock Ficken – Director of the Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI)