

Bridgebuilders

“Conflict is normal. Living systems utilize the tension between components to create ever more adaptable forms of vitality, relevance, inclusivity and integrity. Living systems evolve.”

- Pete Steinke

“The effort is not to change others, but to change self in relationship to others.”

- Michael Kerr

“In the twenty-first century we are going to learn a great deal more about ... the human healing system and how to tend it, nurture it, and evoke it, rather than just try to repair it.”

- Norman Cousins



Central States Synod, ELCA

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Bridgebuilders

A Resource for
the Central
States Synod

A Resource for the Central States Synod, ELCA

Every congregation experiences challenges and change. It is natural and it is inevitable. Sometimes, though, congregations get stuck in unhelpful patterns of dealing with their challenges, and they need help to discover new ways of living and working together.

Bridgebuilders is a six-step process to help congregations make necessary decisions for healthy functioning and carrying out their ministry and mission. Our trained Bridgebuilders teach, listen, ask questions, and help the leaders hear and face what is happening in the congregation. They do not give answers or recommendations, but are trained to equip the congregation look at their future in new ways, and to encourage them in facing their challenges. The Bridgebuilders process takes place over several months to promote change that will last.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor... Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly, do not claim to be wiser than you are... If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

- Romans 12:9-18



THE SYNOD AND BRIDGEBUILDERS

While the Central States Synod provides for the training of the Bridgebuilders, the Bridgebuilders do not work for the Synod. They are pastors and lay people of good faith and character who have the gifts of insight and a love for the Church. They do not report to the Bishop, but will encourage the congregation to share their report with the Bishop.

COST

A fee of \$1 200 covers expenses, a modest stipend for the Bridgebuilders, and a contribution to provide training for others.

To find out more about Bridgebuilders, contact Pr. Janice Kibler in the synod office. She will help you contact the Bridgebuilders who are available to come to your congregation.

Bridgebuilder Intervention Process Design

ENTRY

1. Initial contact
2. Exploratory Meeting
 - a. Determining readiness
 - b. Clarifying expectations
 - c. Outlining processes, assigning tasks
 - d. Forming a contract

EDUCATION

1. Workshop (teaching)
 - a. Conceptualizing emotional processes
 - b. Case studies illuminating theory
2. Workshop (dialoguing)
 - a. Small group discussion with set of questions
 - b. Open forum

INTERVIEWS

1. Preparation: Interview schedule
2. Interviews
 - a. 10 leaders, 10 members
 - b. Staff members
3. Data collection
 - a. History
 - b. Change, loss stressor instrument

ACTION REPORT

1. Feedback meeting (report distributed, discussed)
2. Use of Report for Action Planning Process

ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

1. Meet with strategic planning group
 - a. Planning Process: Mission, Goals, Tasks
 - b. Plan follow-up meetings
2. Presentation to congregation through focus groups
3. Receive focus group feedback; finalized plan; communicate to congregation

AFTERCARE

1. Consultation
2. Check-up sessions
3. Rituals
4. Evaluations completed