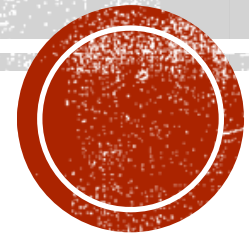


# **DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS**

The Church Wrestling with Disagreement



**“WE NEVER ARGUE HERE...”**



# PART I: ACTS 15 AND THE FIRST CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

## Questions for Discussion

- Acts 15 is the story of the first church council meeting. What is being debated?
- What do you think the arguments against Peter, Paul, and Barnabas' testimony might have been about?
- What are the steps that the church council in Acts 15 takes in order to make a decision?
- The decision the church council takes is a difficult and radical change. What opposition do you think followed this decision? If you're not sure, consult Paul's argument with the church in Galatia in Galatians chapter 1 and 2.
- What lessons from these stories in Scripture can you as a council member take with you to your own home congregation?



# ANALYZING DISAGREEMENTS

- Interpersonal Conflict
- Local current events/issues
- Disagreement in Discernment
- Moral/Ethical/Cultural Quandaries
- Other?



# WHAT IS OUR FIRST REACTION?

- How do you feel when a controversial topic arises unexpectedly?
- What is your first impulse when someone tells you someone in church is upset?
- Are you the kind of person who enjoys a good debate or finds them stressful?
- If you asked your congregation if they would like to have a debate at church, what would their first reaction be?



# NEGATIVE PEACE



# POSITIVE PEACE

- Constructive Conversation
- Reconciliation
- Consensus
- Many voices are given the space to speak
- Healthy Conflict



# EXERCISE AND TRAINING

- Doing difficult conversations well is a skill that requires practice





# PRACTICUM

■ Healthy VS. Unhealthy



# FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

- Write a Covenant
- Gifted people lead the way(and youth!)
- Change the location
- ELCA Social Statements and Study Guides
- Find more resources ([Difficult Conversations](#) by Katie Day; The Lombard Institute)



# CASE STUDIES

- Local Argument
- Disagreement in Ministry
- Social Issue



# PRAY AND LISTEN FOR THE SPIRIT!

- **1 Corinthians 1:10**
- Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

