

Prayer Triad #4

Scripture: Romans 12: 1-2

Scripture Question: Think about how the matter of being transformed and discerning the will of God are linked? What do you think the “renewing of our minds” means?

Discussion of triads:

- *Being transformed in your mind opens us up more to the will of God. Renewing our minds means we need to open our minds and be more receptive to what God is trying to tell us.*
- *Put behind you what you want and, instead, try to think about what God wants. Don't conform to the world. Be in prayer about what you think God wants from you. When we carry things into the service, such as the audio-visual equipment, does it mean we are conforming to the world? Does this mean we shouldn't have that equipment? Of course, this is an example and is meant to be generalized to other things as well. Isn't like the many translations of the Bible. Aren't we trying to reach people in a way that is understandable and meaningful to them? Same message – different way of relaying it.*
- *We can only discern the will of God when we have been transformed to the point that we can talk with God.*

Question 1: Describe our community and the context in which our community is located.

- *Our community is rural, diverse, mostly retirement age of median to low income.*
- *Our community is rural and small. We are a very friendly and welcoming group but cautious when embracing new relationships. You could, however, describe our community as being insular. We are also mainly Christians.*
- *Rural community*
- *We think we've answered that in previous questions. We're rural and in the south. We're small and are bounded by the rivers. Culturally, moving to Arapahoe and Pamlico can be challenging to some.*
- *Small, rural, poor, middle to older age. Couples who have grown children with families of their own. The community at Arapahoe is grouped by where you go to church. Baptist, Methodist – generally Christian. There are also black and Hispanic communities.*
- *Rural, small town, low income. Fishing town, agricultural community – it was more so this in the past, but it still kind of is because those are the strongest economic parts of the community. Most people work in New Bern, Cherry Point or PCS. We also employ people in the educational field and have a few small businesses. At one point in the history of Pamlico County we were actually more of a thriving community than now. We had a movie theater, bus, train and other businesses that have been lost. We don't have a lot going on that attracts industry or very many young people. We have some retirees.*

Question 2: Do you think our ministries and programs are compatible with the needs and character of our community?

- *We don't have outreach to other races.*
- *Yes, we think they are pretty adequate.*
- *Yes*

- *Yes, but we could always do more. Hope Mills has a program for kids where they cook for them once a week. They have 65 or so children who come regularly. An adult sits at each table and has discussions with the students like “how was school today? Or, how did you play in your baseball game today?” The task of the work, however, falls on only 4 or 5 people – a daunting job.*
- *The ministries and programs are compatible to our needs. As far as the needs of the community outside our church we don't do a very good job.*
- *Are we meeting the needs of our community?*
- *We discussed the need for our church to improve the relevance of our worship services to the community, particularly young people – such as a need for services at another time besides Sunday morning, structured in a different way and with a more upbeat and musical theme. We need more activities that will attract people from the community, but we must take advantage of their attendance at activities by getting to know them well.*

Question 3: What do we do now that you think is really good and helpful for those outside our congregation?

- *Fishes and Loaves, Christmas families and other forms of outreach. Lots of benevolent activities, but not sure that they bring new members.*
- *Fishes and Loaves, Christmas families, Hurricane and other disaster relief, Camp Caroline and other outreach programs.*
- *The many outreach programs.*
- *By having the quilting group's task of creating a member quilt for Bethany, one of our current attendees became interested in the church and is a regular fixture now, adding a great set of talents to the congregation. The Gospel group has added an avenue for young families to bring children to participate in a different format of worship.*
- *We do several things that are good and helpful to the community such as Fishes and Loaves, card ministry, Christmas families and Swap shops, but none of these are done with the intention of bringing them into the church.*
- *The card ministry and outreach (particularly Fishes and Loaves ministry) are our most effective and compatible ministries relative to the community.*

Question 4: Can you think of new ministries needed to reach people outside our church?

- *Help to sponsor Special Needs Children's Activities, more respite care (helping to provide transportation as needed in conjunction with other churches in this community), Bible study to inform the Bible Illiterate and maybe have an after school program once per week using the Bible school format.*
- *Expand the card ministry. Have special classes on Wednesday evenings with different interest topics like poetry or creative writing. Contact new members of the community to welcome them either by card or by phone call and possibly stop by with bread or soup.*
- *Word of mouth to ask friends to come to church.*
- *We'd love to see our Hispanic interaction increase. Right now our church is used for English/Spanish lessons once a week for a couple of our Hispanic ladies in the community. There needs to be more accessibility to that population. We could repair relations with some who have left the church and ask them to come back and worship with us – we need to tell them that we miss them with kindness. There are widows and widowers in our community*

who could use some help with little projects around their homes that many of our able-bodied folks could do. Changing light bulbs can become a challenge when one shouldn't get up on a stepladder, so the CMF could offer a home work task group (Bethany's Handy Men). It would be neat to have a church garden. A lot of us do not have the background knowledge on how to grow a healthy and prosperous garden. Some of our Builder generation do and this could be a great learning and practical project. The produce could be distributed to those in need and/or sold to those who would just like to have fresh vegetables.

- *It was noted that a couple of Facebook was looking for a church with contemporary music and we could not respond. Some suggestions were invite the public to the church during events such as the watermelon social and Sundae Sunday. We could possibly have a Children's Fun Day, Movie Night for Children and a Mother's Day Out where mother's could leave there children at the church for a few hours (like 9 – 12) one morning a week.*
- *Could we provide a skateboard ramp for those skateboarders? Sports for the youth? Perhaps we should advertise on a billboard. A weekly newsletter (similar to the Beacon) that could be emailed out to people. (Yes, we know it's on the website.)*
- *Use the facility for the benefit of the community. Open family game night to the community and advertise our activities as open to the community. Sponsor trips and excursions to reach people from the community who don't attend church. Use the Activities Committee to plan trips to church members as well as those outside the church. We need for Bethany to be the place people know to go if they need help. Cooperate with all the other Christian churches in the county.*