

Dear Friends,

I attended the UCC Summit: The Emerging Church in a Post-Pandemic World. Of course, there wasn't a lot of answers to be had as no one really knows what is next. One thing I came away with was in this time and in the future, we have to focus on values and not models. This means that we focus what is most important to God and to our mission, not what technology, outreach programs, or church governances is best or we have to hold on to. The church has been changing in the last 20 years and will continue to change at a rapid pace, so we can and should try new things, but only if they serve whom we are serving, and it's ok to fail, to try again, or try something else when it isn't working.

Another thing that was shared is we, as the church (global, national, local) have to unravel our links to put the Western theology as the gold standard of what it means to be a Christian. For me, this means any theology and practice that proclaims that individualistic salvation at the expense of the world, the poor, and God's children who aren't Christians have to be cast aside. Any theology and practice that proclaims that men are somehow better than women, that American families of Mom, Dad, and two children are somehow better than other families from LGBTQA or other cultures. Any theology or practice (white nationalism) that separates and discriminates between children of God based on skin color that or supports racism that through culture, laws, and Biblical interpretation must be cast aside.

The summit was ended by a Rev. Laura Everett who talked about knitting and unravelling a sweater so the yarn can be used to create other things. It takes time, patience, and skill to undo something so that it can be used to create something else. The church is unraveling at the moment (as it does about every 500 years), but it is our job to help it with time, patience, and skill so that we have good material to create something else, maybe something better for the future of the world and the church.

We cannot go back to normal, most don't want to go back to 'normal'. We have a God who has created and is still creating. We have a God who heals and who mends. We have a God who calls us forward to the kingdom of God in which justice, compassion, and diversity are the materials woven together by love.

Peace,

Pastor Enno