

## A Contemplative Chapter...

- is made up of many parts but all the parts are connected to create a seamless whole
- can be a spiritual experience that is contemplative and transformative
- perceives the group as having its own intrinsic wisdom
- has a theme, and hoped-for outcomes which serve as a foundation for chapter preparation and the chapter itself
- reveals and impact the “spirit” of a community or congregation
- focuses on possibilities, not problem-solving
- addresses that which you most want to create together as you look to the future
- invites the conversations that matter most in the life of the congregation and beyond



## Why Contemplation?

- Centers all that we are, and all we desire to be on the movement of God’s spirit
- Supports a “flexible shaping” and integration of prayer, reflection, dialogue in addressing any variety of topics, concerns, questions
- Enables any conversation to become a spiritual experience rather than being about mere “business” or problem-solving
- Engages our minds and hearts in movement toward a new consciousness – a new way of seeing, a new way of being
- Assists a group in moving from “I” to “We”
- Invites silence which supports slowing down, reflection, and deeper conversation
- Allows for creative possibilities, emerging options, and peaceful resolution

## How do we engage in Contemplative Dialogue?

- Slow down...be present to the moment.
- Listen, listen, listen!!!
- Practice “economy of words”
- Focus on what is being said rather than on what you will say.
- Add to what is being shared with a comment, question or related insight.
- Be aware of what you are feeling, sensing.
- What is being asked of you as an individual/group?
- How are you experiencing the movement of the Spirit?

***Contemplative Dialogue allows us to listen from the fullness of who we are, and to speak to one another with humility, candor, trust, and vulnerability, and to open ourselves to being transformed.***

### Three Movements:

- **Observe, observe, observe** - What are you noticing in yourself, in others, in what is happening around you?
- **Reflect** - What meaning/understanding/conclusions do you draw from what you are observing?
- **Act** - What response will be made in light of observation and reflection?

### Three Dispositions

- Open Mind (commitment to truth) - see with fresh eyes
- Open Heart (commitment to love) - walk in the shoes of another
- Open Will (commitment to courage) - let go of fear, new will come

### Three Voices

- Voice of Judgment - stifles creativity
- Voice of Cynicism - only my way of thinking, doing
- Voice of Fear - cannot let go so new can come

### Levels of Listening

- Downloading: confirms what you already know
- Factual Listening: you notice something new
- Empathic listening: changes your perspective when you see through the eyes of another
- Generative listening: you are changed as a person

### Levels of Conversation

- Downloading: talking nice, "same old"
- Debate: talking tough, "my way" or no way
- Dialogue: reflective inquiry, seeing myself as part of the whole
- Deep Conversation: collective creativity, shifting from "I" to "we"

***To come from a contemplative place means TO LIVE OUT of a "cleared space" in which God's spirit dwells. Be present to the present...***

