

# Forward Together as Networks Discussion Guide

## Open with Prayer

**Scripture Reading** - Ephesians 4:1-7; 11-13 – The gifts of Christ distributed among us.

## Share These Points on Networking:

Networking is an important part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and two words stand out when you think of networking - people and social. God made us to be social people and in relationship with others. How do we do that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? We network. How do you begin and form networks?

- Ask questions
- Listen
- Find out what makes people tick
- Find out people's interests and gifts
- Find commonalities

Forward Together as Networks will help the synod and congregations create and expand networks and link congregations according to shared passions and challenges.

Theologian Frederick Buechner says that God's work happens at the intersection of our gifts and the world's needs. We can do so much more together than we can do apart.

How can we network in new and different ways? One way is to know what is important to us, what our passions are and what our gifts are in our congregation and then finding others with those same passions and then networking together in ministry.

"Networking will help like-minded faith communities find one another and share resources and share stories and share training and to be able to do more efficiently what they are called to do." - Cheryl Lafferty of Rhawnhurst Turning Point.

"My vision for networking would be that we realize our need for one another and that we each have something to give and something to receive." – Violet Little, pastor, The Welcome Church

### Video Examples of networking:

- Walking the road together <https://youtu.be/IQEnSITlcGw>
- We can all give and receive <https://youtu.be/RpFz2W7NNN8>
- Deepening our connections <https://youtu.be/a5JhYRk1xJs>

Networking through Welcome Church's Welcome Threads project - both a funding stream and a network that includes artisans among people experiencing homelessness, a local artist and studio, and business students from Johns Hopkins. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzLHN5UOyZ8>

Resurrection Food Pantry – Resurrection, Yardley, pioneered the Lower Bucks Food Insecurity Alliance with other congregations, civic group and businesses. They do advocacy, prepare 500 breakfast boxes a week for hungry school children, and are committed to being a group of study and prayer. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cewr\\_gjA-Aw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cewr_gjA-Aw)

## **Reflection/Discussion Time**

How are the gifts listed in the Ephesians reading present in the congregation?

How does the scripture connect with the synod's campaign vision of networking as well as your congregation's ministry?

What is your congregation passionate about? Is your congregation networking/partnering with others in your community and beyond to strengthen and grow the ministries you are passionate about? Who are those partners? Are there others you could reach out to?

What might a new network look like in the SEPA synod?

**Notes – Share With the Synod Helpful Discussion Information**