

## Bishop Ministry Site Intros

**Question 1: Briefly introduce your congregation/ministry to the new Bishop. Suggestions: One thing that you would want the new Bishop to know about your congregation or non-congregational ministry. What gives your congregation/ministry the most life? You may also wish to add something your congregation/ministry needs from the new bishop or the synod.**

In May 2024, Holy Love celebrated its 50th anniversary of ministry, and our preschool simultaneously celebrated its 40th anniversary. The ministry of early childhood Christian Education remains important to this congregation. We are one of the first congregations in the synod to participate in the Vital, Right-Shaped Ministry program (VRSM), and through it, we determined our core values and congregational mission. We are now living into those. My call was initially a term, set to expire when the VRSM contract was over in July 2024; in January 2024, the congregation voted to extend an open call to me.

The congregation gets most energized to work with one another and to provide opportunities for youth of all ages (not only preschool). Holy Love's members respond generously and well to drives for specific causes. They also like to partner with other congregations to further impact.

**Question 2: What is the most challenging for your congregation/ministry? Describe stressors or issues your congregation or non-congregational ministry is facing.**

Holy Love struggles to develop a mentality of discipleship to Christ as opposed to membership. There is reluctance to address problems creatively instead of maintaining "the old ways," or how things have been historically run. Further in regards to the discipleship mentality, we are working on building a mindset of generosity as opposed to scarcity. Internally, the congregation struggles with open, respectful communication with one another.

**Question 3: Choose a Bible story or verse that you feel is representative of your congregation/ministry. Create a short statement/tag line that explains your congregation's connection to the story or verse.**

Luke 17:11-19: Jesus heals 10 lepers, but only one returns to thank him. The other 9 go on their presumably pre-leprosy ways. The VRSM process has been really healing for the congregation. Whether induced by Covid-times or general life, the congregation was in need of healing within both its organizational structures and its membership body. Through VRSM and congregational leadership, we've really come far in faithful positivity and inclusion. We've got some clear directions, ideas, and life. Now that we're "healed" (so to speak), the question remains on if we'll come back to Jesus with thanksgiving and praise, maintaining relationship with God and being perpetually changed, or if we will go back to business as usual.

**Question 4: In the past 10 years attendance in youth programming at your church/ministry - Sunday school, confirmation, youth group, summer camp etc. has: *Grown*.**

**Question 5: Provide some detail about your response to the youth programming question.**

At least since 2021, our youth group membership has grown and our Sunday School program has expanded to include preschool ages again. We currently have a shared youth group with All Saints (Aurora). Our biggest youth events are Rainbow Trail's Day Camp, our annual Trunk or Treat, and our annual Easter Egg Hunt.

**Question 6: If your church/ministry disappeared, what would be the impact to your community?**

Our direct, immediate neighborhood might not have much of a reaction (besides presumably the land being sold for housing development). However, many groups of people would be impacted. The families of our preschool would be without schooling, and for many of our families, we are their only congregational connection. The groups who use our facilities (NA, All-Star Club, and Halo/Kickstart Tae Kwon Do) would be without a safe meeting space. Most acutely, the folks who call Holy Love home would be without a place to worship together and expand their impact through mutual, cooperative efforts. The members of our growing youth program would lose a Christian place to be appreciated for who they are, and presumably miss out on learning about God's unending love.

Submitted by PBK June 2024