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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA
OCTOBER 2, 2005
PASTORS MARK & WENDA FRY

1 PASTOR WENDA FRY: As we mentioned at the
2 beginning of our time together, Pastor Mark and I are
3 excited about sharing a new vision that we believe God has
4 entrusted to us to here at Bethany, sharing lives shaped by
5 Christ.

6 A couple weeks ago the bishop's office here in
7 Omaha invited Pastor Mark to go out to Aurora to the
8 leadership center and speak to pastors and church leaders
9 who had been in a church for one to three years.

10 And Pastor Mark received the invitation and decided
11 that he was going to share the first two shapes of the
12 LifeShapes way of discipleship.

13 We have been talking about that here at Bethany and
14 if you haven't heard about that before, stay today because
15 we are going to be talking about that and Mark is going to
16 explain a little bit more carefully.

17 But he invited me to go and reminded me that we are
18 a team and he asked me to go along.

19 He was going to present me, asked if I would pray
20 during the time of his presentation.

21 He also said let's go play some golf before the
22 presentation.

23 I said, "What time is the presentation?"

24 He said, "I have to be there at noon. It's in
25 Aurora."

1 I said, "What time does that mean I would have to
2 get up?"

3 And he said, "We would need to leave the house by
4 7:30."

5 I said, "In the middle of the night."

6 (Laughter)

7 But I managed it and we went out and played some
8 golf in Aurora before the presentation.

9 On our way, if you have traveled I-80 west, you
10 know that on the drive up comes York, that kaleidoscopic
11 water tower that signals only one thing.

12 And what is that? Fast food, right?

13 And since I had gotten up in the middle of the
14 night I suddenly got a hankering for an egg McMuffin.

15 I said to Mark, "Let's turn off."

16 He said, "I most certainly don't have a hankering
17 for an egg McMuffin, but we'll get some coffee."

18 I went in McDonald's and used the restroom and I
19 sat down and closed the door and right in front of me, I
20 don't know if you guys do this, you look around a little bit
21 when you are in there, and right in front of me was a
22 varnished door and just in the middle a part was sanded off.

23 And I saw some words there and I thought, I'm just
24 not going to look at that, because I don't want to get
25 burned, I've gotten burned on graffiti before.

1 have been asking God, show us, God, how to deepen
2 discipleship here at Bethany.

3 Worship and discipleship were the two things that
4 we were praying about and we asked you to pray about.

5 And so in April we weren't very surprised when we
6 get a call from an old college friend of mine down in
7 Phoenix who said, "Wenda, bring Mark, come to Phoenix and
8 learn the LifeShapes way of doing church."

9 And we said, "What? What is it? Is it a new
10 evangelism program? Is it a church growth thing? What is
11 it?"

12 "No, it's just simply a way of understanding
13 relationships, relationships to God and relationships to the
14 world.

15 I thought that sounds interesting, so Rick and
16 Martha Kennebeck went with us and we learned the eight
17 shapes.

18 While we were there our leader, a pastor from
19 England, a church in England, came by and we told her that
20 we were going to go to Europe for a sabbatical time.

21 And she invited us to come to England and stay at
22 her house, which we thought was really amazing.

23 So we received the invitation, we went there, this
24 is St. Thomas church in England.

25 It's an ancient Anglican church built maybe in the

1 1400s, I'm not sure, but they are a LifeShapes congregation.

2 It doesn't look like it from the outside. It looks
3 like they're an old Anglican church with not much life in
4 it.

5 But when you go inside there's a lot of life and
6 that's what we witnessed there in England.

7 We witnessed authentic community. We witnessed
8 deep faith.

9 And we said to ourselves this is discipleship at
10 its best.

11 We invited the team from England to come over here.
12 We invited Ann, that's Ann in the blue pants, and those are
13 three people that are not on the church staff, they're just
14 three leaders in the church, 20-something, eighty percent of
15 their congregation is 20 to 35 years old, and it is alive
16 and on fire with these young people. They lead the church.

17 And we invited them to come over. They came in
18 August and we toasted their safe travel in our kitchen,
19 Pastor Mark and I.

20 And Ann said, "This is amazing. God must want you
21 to you get this."

22 I said, "What do you mean?"

23 "Well, April, Phoenix in April, England in June,
24 and now Omaha, August. What are you doing in October? I
25 think the Lord really wants you guys to get this."

1 So we do believe that God has entrusted a new
2 vision to us and I will let Pastor Mark speak to you about
3 LifeShapes a bit.

4 PASTOR MARK FRY: It was an amazing experience of
5 going over to see this in this action.

6 We have kind of a statement, I need to read it, I
7 don't have it committed to memory yet, but we are committed
8 to transitioning.

9 That does not mean changing everything, but it is
10 transitioning Bethany into a LifeShapes congregation and the
11 philosophy that that brings.

12 We have seen the profound authentic faith of those
13 that do this in England.

14 And we've seen it also, it's being started in the
15 church in Phoenix, and we think that God has given this to
16 Wenda and I in our marriage, and in our family raising, but
17 we think God has given it to Bethany and the kingdom really
18 demands it.

19 The challenge that we are facing is kind of
20 evidenced in the stewardship thing we did last weekend.

21 We built up for three weeks and then had everybody
22 that was here, we had great attendance, respond and fill out
23 their estimate of giving card.

24 We got about 270 back, but we have got over 900 of
25 them still out there.

1 This is not meant to be any sort of guilt of, gee,
2 I should have got mine done last week or anything, but we
3 won't get 500 of those 900 back, but those are members of
4 our church.

5 It's not acceptable to build a church that has a
6 lot of members, but not a bunch of disciples.

7 And I am not going to go to my death bed and the
8 pearly gates when God says, "You had a church with a whole
9 lot of members."

10 He's going to say, "How many disciples were raised
11 up from your church?"

12 And so the kingdom demands this and we are honored
13 to have the gift of this way of doing life.

14 So a couple of questions that are being asked.
15 What is LifeShapes?

16 It's a discipline. It's a way to understand
17 ourselves, our relationships to Christ and one another.

18 It encourages church growth because it focuses on
19 disciples making disciples; not churches making members.

20 That is totally different than the way we are
21 raised in our culture.

22 So I just want to say that's what it is. It's
23 being the Acts of the Apostles in the 21st Century; not just
24 the 1st Century. So it's disciples making disciples.

25 How long will this program last? It's not a

1 program.

2 Probably the most helpful sound bite for me is this
3 is not Turbo Tax; this is Windows. It's an operating system
4 of doing life together for the 21st Century and far beyond.

5 It's not Turbo Tax. So it's not a program. It's
6 an operating system designed to make disciples, to equip
7 believers for fuller richer lives and to grow together in
8 authentic community, not just wider, but deeper.

9 PASTOR WENDA FRY: You may have remembered,
10 speaking of authentic community, you may have remembered
11 that we talked a lot about this in January of 2005 with our
12 "Making Room For Life" series.

13 "Trading Chaotic Lifestyles For Connected
14 Relationships."

15 And we looked at this book and this worship series
16 was one of the most powerful worship series that we have
17 ever done here at Bethany.

18 So many of you had your world rocked. You were
19 shaken.

20 Especially, remember, those of you who were here,
21 Pastor Mark asked us to make a circle of all our different
22 relationships that we had.

23 And I remember seeing a lot of messy papers,
24 different circles of people, work, extended family, family
25 of origin, soccer club, all the different areas that we

1 stretch ourselves over.

2 And a lot of your papers just looked like messes,
3 and I remember ours did too, definitely.

4 And so I remember one of you came up to me and
5 said, "I just feel like I've been punched in the stomach.
6 I'm just really convicted that my life is going in too many
7 different directions."

8 And so it's very important for you to hear that
9 this is not our vision. This is not Mark and Wenda's
10 vision.

11 We believe that God gives a vision to a particular
12 people at a particular time and place and answers that
13 because of the particular challenges or needs that that
14 people have.

15 And we live in suburban America. We live in a very
16 fast-paced part of the world.

17 And many of you were saying, "I think it's too
18 fast. I'm coming and going and we don't have time as a
19 family to eat together."

20 This was the one worship series that rocked our
21 world in this place, really shook us to the core.

22 And so it's important to realize that God answers
23 the prayers of God's people.

24 We say my life is nuts, crazy, I go too many
25 different directions.

1 And we pray as the people of God and God answers
2 those prayers.

3 At the back to the book, which we didn't get to in
4 the worship series, there is an appendix, "A Word To Church
5 Leaders."

6 I am going to read this. "The key for the 21st
7 Century church will not be in buildings, programs, or great
8 sermon series, and not even in small groups, as we have
9 known them. Church leaders must address the severe
10 fragmentation and discontinuity of the American lifestyle as
11 they design future plans to meet the needs of the
12 congregation. No longer can we add an isolated program,
13 even with a Grade A quality, to address one aspect of the
14 Christian life. While we may have good intentions for doing
15 such a thing, it may only make matters worse for the already
16 harried and worn out parishioner."

17 We understand that, because you have said to us,
18 "We really want to serve, but it's just like one more thing.
19 How do we do it? How do we serve the Lord and then do
20 everything else?"

21 So, we know what that is about. Randy Frazee says,
22 "Our thinking must be more holistic. The church's relevance
23 and growth will largely depend on her ability to
24 authentically connect people to the experience of doing life
25 together deeply."

1 Randy Frazee named the problem and many of us here
2 agreed, yes, I would like to trade my chaotic lifestyle for
3 connected relationships.

4 I would like to deepen my relationship with Christ
5 and with other people. Yes, I would like that.

6 He named the chaos, and Mark and I believe that the
7 LifeShapes way of doing church is the form God has given to
8 us to form that chaos, to help that chaos, to order that
9 chaos, if you will.

10 We want to be a part of the new apostolic
11 reformation that is sweeping the world in God's church.

12 We don't have to be. We could continue doing
13 church as we have it with programs, and new ideas, and
14 wonderful music, and coffee ministry, and always thinking
15 about coming here and serving, we could continue to do
16 church like that, but it's not making disciples, and we want
17 to be found faithful.

18 I'm with Mark on that. I don't want to get to the
19 pearly gates, "Wenda, how many disciples? Sure, members,
20 but how many disciples".

21 We could continue, but we really want to
22 participate in the new apostolic reformation that is
23 sweeping the church and the world like fire.

24 But before we do that we have to take a look in the
25 rear view, we have to look at the Reformation.

1 Pastor Mark is going to share some sabbatical
2 learnings on that.

3 PASTOR MARK FRY: In the middle of my sabbatical
4 time this year, as Wenda shared, in April we went to
5 Phoenix.

6 And then I had the blessing in May of going to
7 Nashville, Tennessee.

8 And I confess to you, the reason I went to
9 Nashville, I had never been there, I thought it was a cool
10 place to go.

11 I took my son. He was graduating from high school
12 on Sunday and he was done with classes so Adrian and I went
13 to Nashville for a few days.

14 I went to all the workshops and brought him to the
15 music and then we went out to dinner and stuff at night.

16 But I met a woman there, her name is Phyllis
17 Tickle, this is a picture of here, she's a theologian, she's
18 in her mid 70s.

19 She looks good in that picture. She didn't look
20 that good in person. She actually looked better. Her hair
21 was standing on end and her eyes were on fire.

22 She calls herself a charismatic Episcopalian.
23 That's not an oxymoron, she said, but she taught us in a
24 ninety minute session how the last people in the world who
25 understand this are the church people, that the

1 Reformation is over.

2 The Reformation is over, and by the Reformation she
3 means what Martin Luther did in the 1500s, which was huge,
4 it split the Christian church from Protestants to Roman
5 Catholics and the rest is history.

6 But her premise is God does something about every
7 five hundred years that is seismic as far as changing the
8 church paradigms.

9 And she believes that's happening now and I have
10 come to believe that as well.

11 So we are going to go back to Phyllis in a moment,
12 but the way we get there is through Barbie.

13 I don't know if you saw this article in the World
14 Herald last week about Barbie dolls in the Middle East.
15 This is Damascus, Syria, and it is 2005.

16 "In the last year or so Barbie dolls have all but
17 disappeared from the shelves of Mid East toy stores.

18 "In their place is Fulla, a dark-haired, dark-eyed
19 beauty who has, as her creator puts it, Muslim values.

20 "Girls here are obsessed with Fulla. On Arab
21 satellite channels they watch the doll's incessant
22 commercials.

23 "She glides across the screen. She says her
24 prayers as the sun rises. She bakes a cake to surprise her
25 friend Yasmeen. She reads a book at bedtime, scenes that

1 are designed to convey Fulla's values, said Abidin, the
2 Fulla brand manager.

3 "This isn't just about putting the kibosh to the
4 Barbie doll," he said.

5 "You have to create a character that parents and
6 children will want to relate to. Our advertising is full of
7 positive messages about Fulla's character. She's honest,
8 she's loving, she's caring, she respects her father and her
9 mother."

10 My question to you is, the Muslim values doll is
11 obvious in what Fulla does.

12 She prays. She honors her father and mother. She
13 is caring. She's kind. She's compassionate.

14 I don't know that we look at Barbie in those same
15 way in our western civilization.

16 The Barbie doll that I know drives a pink Corvette,
17 she chases Ken, has a friend named Mitch, or Skipper, which
18 one is it? Maybe both.

19 She multi-tasks everything. She can be a doctor, a
20 lawyer, a pastor, a housewife, a mom, a student, all at the
21 same time.

22 But nowhere in the Barbie doll do I see Christian
23 values of honoring your father and mother, praying, being
24 loving, caring, and compassionate.

25 And I think that's God's way of saying, you know,

1 the Muslim community maybe is ahead of game with us.

2 Because as Phyllis Tickle says, "Christians do a
3 real good job of knowing who they aren't, but they don't
4 really know who they are."

5 We know we aren't fundamentalists, and we know we
6 aren't Roman Catholics, and we know we are aren't
7 Episcopalians, we know we're not Bible thumpers, but who are
8 we?

9 Her solution is understanding that the Reformation
10 is over.

11 The Reformation is over and now it's just like it
12 was in early 1st Century times.

13 And here are some of the bullet points. She
14 defines the church in this way.

15 She says the church throughout time, this is before
16 the time of Christ, was made of these three components:

17 Spirituality, corporality, and morality.

18 They have something to say about how to live life.
19 They are in essence a body of people that are together that
20 are on the same page.

21 There is a corporal nature to it. They are
22 spiritually connected to their maker and creator. That's
23 what makes up the church.

24 But what Dr. Tickle proved to us is that we aren't
25 in Kansas anymore.

1 Because we don't really know what we are, but we
2 know what we aren't.

3 She says for about the last hundred or so years
4 there have been signs that the Reformation was
5 disintegrating, and she lists a lot of these. I'll give you
6 few.

7 When Charles Darwin came around and wrote his
8 "Origin of the Species" about how there is an intelligent
9 design in the way God has created this universe, the
10 Christian community ran him out of town, and he was an
11 ardent, faithful, Christian man.

12 What they heard was, we are relatives of monkeys,
13 and so they banished Darwin.

14 Along comes Einstein who discovers four dimensions
15 of reality in the 1920s.

16 I don't know if you knew this, I did not know this,
17 but we now know as scientists we have between 11 and 27
18 different dimensions of reality.

19 Virtually everything that Einstein thought about
20 the universe has been disproven or taken to another level.

21 And along comes Henry Ford who changed the whole
22 world by the industrial revolution.

23 And along comes Albert Schweitzer, who was a
24 theologian and a medical doctor at the same time, and
25 America couldn't deal with him.

1 So he gave his life to Christ, went over to Africa
2 to serve in the mission field.

3 Pentecostalism was born in the United States on a
4 place called Azusa Street and that was a reaction to the
5 scientific medical community.

6 Pentecostalism. It grew by 805 percent in less
7 than forty years.

8 Something was happening out of mainstream, mainline
9 denominations that the Spirit was doing amazingly miraculous
10 things and the church didn't even see it for large part.

11 In the 1930s a guy by the name of Bill Smith came
12 along. A lot of you are friends of his.

13 He was the guy who invented the 12 Step program.
14 The AA movement was born.

15 A wonderful, life-saving, life-giving, small group
16 movement, never embraced by the church until only recently.

17 Because what that proved to those people, who are
18 living, breathing examples of it, is that God doesn't just
19 work in the church.

20 I can be spiritual and not religious, for whatever
21 that means.

22 Along comes World War II and World War II forces
23 our country and the whole world to come to grips with not
24 only nuclear energy, and nuclear warfare, but also the fact
25 that up until that time pneumonia was fatal for everybody

1 who got it.

2 With the invention of sulfa drugs and penicillin,
3 all of a sudden when grandma got pneumonia you didn't have
4 to call the pastor; you called the pharmacist or the doctor.

5 Because the clergy stood between life and death
6 until penicillin and sulfa drugs were invented.

7 That is where we get our whole notion of, "Better
8 get the priest, she's getting ready to die."

9 But notice the role of clergy. Now all a sudden
10 people are being responsible and accountable for their own
11 spirituality, 12 Step programs.

12 All of a sudden medicine has taken the place of God
13 in some very dramatic ways.

14 The preacher doesn't stand between life and death;
15 a bottle of medicine does.

16 The consequences of all of this was that human
17 vulnerability was lessened significantly, and it continues
18 to be to this very day. We keep coming up with new
19 medicines.

20 But what does the church have to say and to do and
21 to be about that?

22 Let's return to World War II. Johnny the GI goes
23 off to defeat communism in the Japanese front as well as the
24 Nazi front and Rosie the Riveter was born.

25 For the first time women were working outside the

1 home and getting paid for it. Not a bad thing; a great
2 thing.

3 But when Johnny came marching home it seems after
4 World War II he thought life had not changed and he would
5 then hit around Rosie the Riveter and abuse her verbally,
6 mentally, and physically, and she didn't put up with it
7 anymore because she had seen that she is now an independent
8 person, and there is the birth of the non-nuclear family.
9 Fragmentation went to a whole different level.

10 The war was ended of course with the dropping of
11 the bomb and we were asked then, and we ask to this very
12 day, who is allowed to play God and for what cause?

13 What is the role of the church? I'm spiritual, but
14 not religious, has taken on a whole different meaning. The
15 Reformation is over.

16 At the end of World War II Jews were welcomed to
17 the United States for the first time and throughout the
18 world, which was not a bad thing, it was a great thing.

19 But all a sudden they brought with them their own
20 understandings of the Scriptures.

21 And all of a sudden now we have Jewish brothers and
22 sisters and neighbors.

23 And all of a sudden we are trying to figure out,
24 and they didn't find out until 1980, that Jesus was Jewish.
25 It took two centuries for us to figure that out.

1 Of course Vietnam, the 60s come along, again,
2 medicine went to the forefront.

3 The drug culture. People were having religious
4 experiences far, far from the church.

5 They were having them by taking drugs, or smoking
6 drugs, and people were having out of body experiences as
7 never before because of the chemists among us.

8 All the time asking what is the relevance of the
9 Gospel of Jesus Christ?

10 And the priesthood of all believers that Martin
11 Luther talked about had been replaced by going to the
12 doctor, or going to the pharmacist, or going now on line and
13 getting happiness in a pill or a bottle. It has all changed
14 the world.

15 Also one of the neat things that happened after
16 Vietnam is all of a sudden now we have people from the Far
17 East coming to the United States.

18 Buddhism has come to the states, and that's not a
19 bad thing either.

20 But what they brought with them was incense and
21 smells and bells and a lot of Christians are like I kind of
22 like parts of what they do. It's not boring like what I
23 experience at church.

24 So now for the first time we see people who have
25 Buddhist practices amongst their Christianity, Muslim

1 attributes amongst, all of this has become fragmented and
2 now it's all coming back in this amazing thing.

3 So those are just a few of them. We all know about
4 9-11, we all know about how these are religious people that
5 have perpetrated such crimes, and what do we say as a church
6 in response to that?

7 Then the clergy sex scandal. All the different
8 things that have happened.

9 The implications and the conclusions? Well, the
10 jury is still out, but the Reformation is over.

11 One of the things that has become clear to me is
12 that clericalism needs to be eradicated.

13 My prayers are no more valid or efficacious than
14 yours. Luther said that in the 1500s.

15 But we have gone back to some of that, of access of
16 God has to go through the clergy, or through the church.

17 It's no longer, it never was true, the Book of Acts
18 basically says that.

19 It's about accountability, it's about experience,
20 it's about spirituality, it's about returning to a New
21 Testament lifestyle, and to a New Testament way of doing
22 life.

23 It's about being the church instead of going to the
24 God box and getting my card punched, or my bucket filled,
25 and I'm good for another week, or another month, or another

1 six months, or from Christmas to Easter. That's the
2 challenge we face.

3 PASTOR WENDA FRY: Pastor Mark said that to be a
4 part of the new Apostolic Reformation versus the Reformation
5 is to return to the mindset and lifestyle of the New
6 Testament church.

7 And just a reminder from Acts 2, we want to return
8 to the power and the passion and the perspective of the New
9 Testament church, because it seems to us that they were
10 doing community authentically well.

11 They were sharing things in common. They were
12 eating together a lot.

13 There was power to do and be the disciples that God
14 called them to be. I want to remind you of the power.

15 "Without warning there was a sound like a strong
16 wind. No one could tell where it came from and it filled
17 the whole building".

18 This is after Jesus went up to heaven and he said,
19 now, I have to go, and so that you guys can do what you need
20 to do, and I will give you the power, so stay in the city
21 and I will give you the power from on high. This is that
22 power.

23 "So they didn't know where it came from and like a
24 wild fire the Holy Spirit spread through the whole building
25 and through their ranks. Their heads were spinning and they

1 couldn't make head or tail of it."

2 I'm reading from "The Message Bible".

3 "That's when Peter stood up and he said, "Wait a
4 minute. This is what the prophet Joel announced would
5 happen I will pour out my Spirit."

6 That's the power that was promised by Jesus to the
7 apostles.

8 That same power is promised to us as apostles in
9 the 21st Century.

10 And then the passion, Peter preached about that,
11 wind coming and they listened, about forty minutes later,
12 this is what the Bible says about that, cut to the quick,
13 "Those who were listening asked Peter and the other
14 apostles, "Brothers, brothers, so now what do we do?"

15 Peter said, "Change. Be baptized. Receive the
16 Holy Spirit, because the promise is targeted to you and your
17 children, but also to all who are far away, whomever in fact
18 our Master God invites."

19 And then the perspective. What was their life
20 together like?

21 It was great. They followed a daily discipline of
22 worship in the temple, followed by meals at home.

23 I love this part. "Every meal a celebration,
24 exuberant and joyful as they praised God."

25 We like to eat. We can do this, can't we? We love

1 to eat.

2 We need to invite people over to our houses to eat
3 and we need to invite ourselves over to other people's
4 houses to eat.

5 Jesus did that. He was always doing that. "I am
6 coming to your house today."

7 Oh, wow, I have to go clean up the kitchen. No,
8 you don't. Just have them over. Just let them come.

9 Let Jesus come and let your friends and neighbors
10 come and eat and do it praising God.

11 "People in general liked what they saw and every
12 day their number grew as God added those who were being
13 saved."

14 The new Apostolic Reformation, we don't have to
15 participate in it, but we believe that God would like us to
16 participate in this new Apostolic Reformation.

17 Those of you who have been a part of small groups
18 where you have prayed together and eaten together, you have
19 told me what a huge difference it has made in your life.

20 You're doing church when you get together and pray,
21 you gather in his name. That's one of the ways that you do
22 church.

23 So having said all that, we want to present to you
24 our new vision.

25 That picture is not it. Actually, a friend of ours

1 came to detail our cars as a gift and he told Mark and I,
2 really amazed us, he told us, "I would really like to detail
3 your cars. I'll leave you my truck while I'm gone."

4 And I said, "How about that Corvette?"

5 And he said, "All right. Do you know how to drive
6 a stick?"

7 I said, "Are you kidding? I learned on a stick
8 shift."

9 So Dave Ferguson brought that Corvette over and
10 Pastor Mark asked me for a hot date to the Sonic.

11 (Laughter)

12 So we went to Sonic and back and we were parked at
13 156th and Dodge and a black Firebird was right next to us,
14 we had our windows down, this was Friday, a really nice day.

15 And the guy looked over at us, and we looked at
16 him, and I said, "What do you think?"

17 He said, "Nice."

18 I said, "Your car is nice. I like it. It looks
19 like you just got it detailed. Did you."

20 "I just got it washed, yes."

21 He looks over at us again and I said, "We are
22 having a midlife crisis."

23 (Laughter)

24 And then we drove off and, of course, Mark
25 wouldn't race him.

1 Anyway, this is not our new vision. It is a vision
2 of the two of us sharing life together.

3 And this is the new vision. This is what you will
4 see on the web site. This is what you will see on
5 stationery in the future.

6 It's a picture of Jesus, Mary, Martha and Lazarus
7 doing life together. That is a symbol that is familiar
8 around here.

9 And along with the jar, which is another symbol we
10 like, because our body odor does matter to God. We want to
11 be fragrant.

12 And then it's real life. That's what it is. It is
13 about you and me sharing a meal with someone else.

14 People we work with. People that live across the
15 street from us. People that we want to get to know.

16 So sharing lives shaped by Christ. I think it's
17 something that you can say even.

18 Can you try it? Sharing lives shaped by Christ.
19 So when someone says to you what is Bethany all about?

20 Well, sharing lives shaped by Christ. That's what
21 it's about.

22 Because we want to do life together deeply. That's
23 what Jesus asked us to do and we have fun doing that.

24 We are excited about this. Mark and I are really
25 excited and we hope that you'll be excited in this new

1 vision.

2 Let's do just a moment, let's apply the triangle
3 practically to this vision of sharing lives shaped by Christ
4 as we begin to transition Bethany into a LifeShapes
5 congregation.

6 The shape of the triangle, and thank you, Jan, for
7 the beautiful artwork of the circle and triangle, it reminds
8 us that we can be shaped by Christ and we can do this and
9 God will get it done through us actually. That's where the
10 power comes from.

11 But the triangle is the shape, if you have not
12 learned this yet, it's the shape that is applied to our
13 relationships as married people, as friends, as people of
14 God, and it has three parts, and it's out of balance if one
15 of those sections is not in there, and churches had been
16 flatlining for years.

17 They have been doing up and in really well. They
18 worship together and they hang out with other believers and
19 they never get out to the world and we don't want to be like
20 that.

21 We want to balance here at Bethany with up. Pastor
22 Mark, what does that mean?

23 PASTOR MARK FRY: A concrete example of that is,
24 some of you will notice, we've slightly changed our worship
25 style here.

1 We want the worship experience not to be watching
2 the gifted musicians that God has given us, but
3 participating and engaging and seeking the presence of God
4 as we come together.

5 And that will be an intentional up part of that and
6 so at the end of service we always invite people, if they
7 want ministry, we're here to pray for you.

8 And so it is going to great to have it as an
9 operating system that I can just say, "Tony, how is your
10 up?"

11 Any Tony can say to me, "I had some great time with
12 God yesterday morning. I got up and that was awesome."

13 That's what we need. We need to get it in the
14 language.

15 So it's time with God and it's a time of listening
16 more than it is time of doing stuff.

17 PASTOR WENDA FRY: Maybe you'll see, just because
18 Pastor Mark and I stand doesn't necessarily mean you have to
19 stand when we are worshipping, but if you feel like
20 standing, if you feel like clapping out of beat, you go
21 right ahead, really, because it's about accessing God in
22 this place; it's not about watching performers.

23 PASTOR MARK FRY: And it's working with five
24 hundred years of Reformation history that says we are quiet
25 in God's presence.

1 There's nowhere in the Bible that says that. Be
2 still and know that I am God, we do that at home.

3 When we come together, part of that up is giving
4 the craft that we've got back to God and accepting again the
5 good stuff that he has for us. So it's working that
6 triangle.

7 PASTOR WENDA FRY: So practically as we begin the
8 transition worship we will see some changes there and we
9 invite you to experience and just try some new things, just
10 try opening your hands to God.

11 We are to going challenge practically now applying
12 lives shaped by Christ to Bethany.

13 We are going to challenge new and existing groups
14 to learn the language of LifeShapes.

15 I've told you many times in this place that when we
16 ask you to do so something you don't have to do it until
17 Christ comes again, but this is the one thing that we are
18 going to do until Christ comes again.

19 We are going to talk about LifeShapes. We are
20 going to have two courses a year.

21 We're doing one right now on Wednesday nights in
22 the chapel.

23 Pastor Mark is teaching that and I'll teach one on
24 Tuesday nights in the winter.

25 We'll have it so you can learn the operating

1 system, so that you can learn the language, and that's what
2 we'll do.

3 PASTOR MARK FRY: We have started to implement it
4 in our staff and our directors' meetings and then we are
5 also going to be implementing this in our church council,
6 they will be living LifeShapes, they will be learning what
7 they are, it's an option, but that is something we have to
8 get in the DNA of our church.

9 So those existing groups of people, I know Gene is
10 doing some with the musicians, it's being very intentionally
11 disciplined into people, because it's going to spread
12 organically through all of us in intentional ways.

13 PASTOR WENDA: So if you come to me and you have
14 been in a group and you go, "Pastor Wenda, I need a new
15 study."

16 I'm going to say, "Do up, in, and out. Learn the
17 LifeShapes, get the book, study it together, and get started
18 on it," so that is how we are going to apply that.

19 And then, Pastor Mark, the out.

20 PASTOR MARK FRY: Wenda said, sometimes we get out
21 of balance, and I know a whole lot of people that do a whole
22 lot of Bible study but they don't do a whole lot of
23 outreach.

24 So it's about balance and we have to be intentional
25 about our up and our in with those that are around us, our

1 marriages, our kids, our grandkids, our neighbors, the
2 people we work with.

3 But we also talk about the out, and that was one of
4 the reasons I went to Aurora when asked is because I didn't
5 know anybody there and I knew God wanted me to be balanced.

6 I could have just stayed here and hunkered in the
7 bunker, but we are also called in Matthew 28 to go and make
8 disciples.

9 I was at a school meeting this week with
10 Superintendent Roger Breed.

11 He was sharing with us the demographics of the
12 explosive growth that we are going to have in our area and
13 those are people a lot of whom do not know the name of
14 Jesus, a lot of whom are going to be needing the refreshing
15 life-quenching gift of God.

16 So we need to be reaching out; not just in and not
17 just up.

18 PASTOR WENDA RY: We are excited about this new
19 vision and we believe that God has given it to this people
20 for this time and place in history.

21 I invite you to stand at this point, if you would,
22 and together we are going to pray a prayer as we begin to
23 transition Bethany and as we begin to use that power that
24 was given to the first church and to gain that passion and
25 that perspective. Let's pray this together and then we'll

1 sing it.

2 God of the church, burn your word into my mind,

3 make a temple of this body, let your spirit move inside

4 Bethany. Amen.

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