

ELC Adult Study: “Knowing our Neighbors: Unsettling History, Hopeful Future”

Session 2 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

(Note: We may use the “Talking Circle” as our model for discussion. We will pass an object (stone) throughout the process. You may choose to speak or not – completely up to you. All are equal in the circle and respect for all views/ideas is paramount).

1. Reflecting on the Focus Scripture:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

What hinders us from seeing either our present circumstances or the past clearly? As Christians, how should we respond to that lack of clarity?

2. From what you have learned, WHY has the story of First Nations Peoples been largely absent from history that we teach in our schools? What was your own experience in that regard?
3. Australian historian and anthropologist Greg Denning (1931-2008) made the following observation:

Giving the dead a voice, letting their signatures on life be witnessed, is reason enough for my history . . . Such a history takes much inquiry, even more imagination, and a deep sense of humility about what an historian can know and has the right to say. The living need history, too. Not to be made to feel guilty for a past they are not responsible for or cannot change. The living need a history disturbing enough to change the present.

What stands out to you from what Denning is saying here?

4. In Session 2, I shared Joseph Ellis’ analysis of the Founding Fathers – their 5 core achievements and their 2 great failures. In your opinion, is that a good approach to utilize with young people as they are learning our history as a nation? Why or why not? (Note: Realize that in 2022, we are having great debates in the US, as we have for many years, over WHAT history we should be including with our students!)
5. What is the most challenging thing you learned in session 2 regarding the topic of our study?
6. The three goals for this study experience are:
 - To build greater awareness of ELCA initiatives in the realm of diversity
 - To reimagine Ho-Chunk history in light of recent ELCA initiatives
 - To reflect on our role as “purveyors of hope” within our community

How do you see our role as Christians in 2022 in being “purveyors of hope” within our communities? How do we do that?