**Introduction**

*approximately 5 minutes*

Our values form the bedrock of our lives together. Throughout the surveys, listening sessions, and holy huddles, you lifted up many values that are important to our work in growth and vitality. However, there were six that seemed to rise to the top as foundational values for being a Courageous Church: Loving like Jesus, Acting for Justice, United in Hope. These are six values we aspire to live into; deep yearnings that have been identified as ways we desire to live together; and new ways of living into which God is molding our various ministry settings to bring about growth and vitality with and beyond our communities.

As a connection of courageous lay and clergy leaders, we share the responsibility of determining how these values are and can be embodied in our various contexts. Therefore, we invite you to take a few minutes to reflect on each of these values. As each value is read, an image will come up on the screen. Take 20 seconds to write down an image or thought or emotion that comes to you as the value is spoken.

**Trust**

**Compassion**

**Relationship**

**Authenticity**

**Boldness**

**Collaboration**

**Trust - Part One**

*approximately 18-20 minutes*

While all of these values are important, the focus of our remaining time together will be on the value of trust. Why trust? Developing a culture of trust within our ministry setting and within the conference is the foundation upon which growth and vitality are built. Trust enables the other values to emerge and grow—to be bold and collaborate with others, to develop authentic relationships, to have compassion for all. Trust enables us to be a courageous church with a firm foundation in God.

As a way to engage an understanding of our trust in God, we invite you to lift up your voices courageously and sing verses 1 and 2 of the hymn, “How Firm a Foundation.”

How firm a foundation you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent Word. What more can he say than to you he has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed, for I am your God, and will still give you aid; I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

As the words of this hymn remind us, our firm foundation is our confident reliance on God.

The two components of trust you helped us to identify in our work together over this last year are:

One - We confidently rely on God; that our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer is working in the world around us and in each of us. This is trust in God.

Two - We confidently rely on one another because God is working through all people, meaning we trust one another.

Trusting God means we believe God is actively leading, calling, and equipping us for ministry in every aspect of our lives. What does this look like? It might look like investing in a new ministry or mission project, even if the finances seem challenging. Or, maybe, focusing on the strengths of the people who are present in our current ministries rather than talking about the people we wish would come. Perhaps it looks like stepping aside from a ministry we have done for many years in order to cultivate new leadership and make way for new ideas. It could also look like stepping into a new ministry.

This deep trust in God will look different across our ministry settings, so we would like for you to spend the next 12 minutes answering this question with those around your table.

In your unique ministry setting, what would it look like to believe, to expect, that the awesome wonder of God will show up in all you do? How might your ministry change with that kind of trust and expectation?

**Part Two – Trust and Broken Trust**

*approximately 15-17 minutes*

The second part of trust is confidently relying on one another. This is trust of one another. We believe each and every person is uniquely and wonderfully made and equipped with strengths different from and complementary to our own. We also believe each and every person is called by God to serve in unique ways, equipped with our unique strengths. Engaging in ministry with one another in a culture of trust requires us to build relationships with one another, confidently relying on each other’s God-given strengths and God-inspired callings. It also requires us to lead those in our ministry settings in a way that builds and practices this trust. This type of servant leadership allows people to serve as they are called and resists the structures and temptations that say “no” to pursuing that calling.

This trust in one another does not come without its barriers—broken trust, lack of trust, fear, and more. It is important for us to identify and work to remove or reconcile with these barriers that keep us from trusting one another. We will hear more about this on Saturday during our Day of Learning with Bishop Schnase.

Broken trust - We know there is a lack of trust in our congregations, in our conference, and in some of our relationships with each other because. In the surveys, listening sessions, and holy huddles, we heard your personal stories of broken trust, even betrayal. We know barriers exist to building trust but as a people of confession and accountability, we believe naming these barriers and places of brokenness gives God the power to move us from hearing to healing.

We invite you to practice some boldness and authenticity in this next opportunity to share around your tables. In this time of conversation, reflect on where you have found or experienced broken trust. But don’t stop there. We ask that you also reflect on a practice or action that could bring healing in that situation. Recorders, please take brief notes of the barriers and practices that are named, being cautious not to include any personal information. You will have about 12 minutes for this discussion.

Name some barriers to trust, or examples of broken trust/lack of trust, in your ministry setting or personal ministry experience. Then, name a practice or action you can do to help mend that place of broken or lacking trust.

**Closing**

*approximately 5 minutes*

Thank you all for your diligent and courageous work, engaging the value of trust today. Please take a moment to thank each person around your table for this gift of time and sharing you have given us and each other?

We will be posting some of the responses you have shared with us to the guidebook app so that we can all see and share this work with one another.

Finally, you will find river stones on the tables along with several sharpie markers. We invite you to choose a rock and write the word, “trust,” on it. As a symbol of the trust we must now place in each other, take your rock and find someone around the room with whom to partner for this final activity.

*(Allow 1 minute for people to find partners)*

Facing your partner, let us take a moment to pray and prayer of trust—trust in God and trust in each other.

**God of Grace, our trust in you is the foundation of our work together as a Courageous Church: Loving like Jesus, Acting for Justice, United in Hope. Lead us into new ways of placing our trust in each other and in you, so that we might build your kingdom together in Christ, our Living Stone, our Redeemer, the Rock of Ages. Let our trust become the corner stone of this new work in you, so that our church might be a place of redemption and refuge for the world. Amen.**