

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Mike Barker, Claire Edgecomb and Ron Krause

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
People of Faith – Blended Congregation Oral History project

Interview # PFP-A-L-2019-059

Mike Barker, Claire Edgecomb and Ron Krause, all members of a committee that led to the blending of three ELCA Lutheran congregations into one, were interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *People of Faith – A Blended Congregation* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Aug 23, Aug 26, Aug 30 & Sep 1, 2019

Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois & Peace Lutheran Church

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer:

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:56 + 2:14 + 2:04 / 1.93 + 2.22 + 2.07 = 6.22 hrs

Session 1: Early discussions on blending three ELCA Lutheran congregations into one

Session 2: Detailed discussions on blending congregations, and working groups

Session 3: Closing the deal and early days of the new Peace Lutheran Church

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 23, 2019.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Barker, Edgecomb & Krause, *Blended Congregation*, PFP-A-L-2019-058

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: This interview is a three-way conversation with three Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) members from three different ELCA congregations in Springfield, Illinois who served on a committee studying the possibility of combining those three congregations into one. Mike Barker (born in 1949 in Quincy, IL) was a member of Atonement Lutheran, Claire Edgecomb (born in 1951 in Springfield, IL) was a member of Faith Lutheran, and Ron Krause (born in 1939 in Sheboygan Falls, WI) was a member of Luther Memorial. The main issues that led to the churches entering into discussions were the facts that each congregation was facing the retirement of their pastors and the maturing of each congregation, coupled with declining memberships.

The committee was formed in 2014 consisting of three to four members from each congregation. The entire process was lay led, and the group concluded its work with the blending of the three congregations into one in September 2015. Each of the interviewees gave an overview of their original congregation, including the challenges that led to that congregation considering blending as an option. The process of blending the three congregations into one was discussed in depth, addressing the many aspects of blending, from the creation of a new church constitution, to the disposition of property, the selecting of a new church staff, education, the worship services, finances and several others. After many months of work and discussions, the members of each congregation voted on a Blending Resolution, specifically, on whether that congregation was willing to join the new, blended congregation in August 2015. In separate votes, all three congregations voted overwhelmingly to do so. The first service of the new congregation occurred on September 20, 2015 at the former Atonement's location. By the spring of the following year the new congregation was renamed Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; blending (merging) of ELCA Lutheran congregations; Atonement Lutheran Church of Springfield, IL; Faith Lutheran Church of Springfield, IL; Luther Memorial Lutheran Church of Springfield, IL; Peace Lutheran Church of Springfield, IL; Bishop John Roth; Pastor Jon Berg; Pastor Glen VanderKloot; Pastor Bill Zanton; Pastor Paul Schwartzkopf; Pastor Larry Quanbeck; Pastor Paul Park;

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