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# EREMOS CONSULTING GROUP

*Facilitating Transformation for  
Clergy, Congregations, Nonprofits  
and their Leaders*

Serving Colorado and the Rocky  
Mountain Region

## In This Issue

[Kitchen Remodeling &  
Congregational Consultation](#)

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## Ever remodeled your kitchen? Yep, it feels a lot like Congregational Consulting!

Recently we renovated our kitchen and the steps in the process felt very familiar to me as a congregational consultant. I experienced similar joys, frustrations, dreaming, unforeseen alterations, and serendipitous opportunities in order to ultimately achieve a better, more productive space. So what are these steps?

### Step One: Why Now?

*There is usually some trigger that sends you moving in this direction.* Something isn't working quite right, or is completely broken. Or maybe you've been thinking about this for awhile but other priorities took your time and money. Now you have the bandwidth of energy and finances to really look into making things better.

*For us, the stove that came with the house had been slowly falling apart and finally was dying.* We had to do something and the time was now. However I had also been dreaming for years about what I'd like to do "when we're ready". So although the stove was the trigger, it was embedded in dreams for a new kitchen that would be better for us and attractive for a future owner.

*For you, there may also be something happening in the*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- [October 2014 - Clergy Appreciation Month](#)
- [November 2014 - Who is Our Neighbor? conference](#)
- [March 2015 - New Visions Workshop](#)

## Who Is Our Neighbor?

**From Clinic to Context**

**November 7-8, 2014**

A spiritual care conference for  
Clergy, Spiritual Caregivers,  
Chaplains & Pastoral Counselors,  
Mental Health Practitioners



*congregation that has been slowly falling apart over the years* – staff tensions, lay leadership issues, building concerns, changing neighborhood or lagging vision. Or it could be that you have been dreaming about how to "upgrade" and are exploring an expanded mission and ministry, desiring to create a congregation that is more attractive, spiritually & community focused, and responsive to current as well as future generations.

### Step Two: Research and Exploration

*Either way, the trigger initiates a search for information and resources to help move us forward.* If it is a crisis, this may be a shorter period of time. Sometimes there are alternate ways to handle things in the short-term

driven by money, time, or other priorities. No matter the time period, this is the time to figure out what's out there now, new options, consumer reports findings, and to discern how little or how much to take on.

*As I explored stoves, I began researching online, reading reviews, and going into stores to see what would fit my needs.* Some resources focused only on selling me what was in stock. While others listened to my needs, my situation, and worked with me to think through what would be most helpful for me. I ended up returning to these when it came time to buy. The research re-ignited my dreaming about gutting and start over, so I expanded my research from buying a new stove to a complete kitchen re-do.

*Similarly, once there is a trigger event with a congregation, it is important to do some research and talk to other people and congregations who have gone through this before.* Although every situation is unique, find out who is out there now, what they offer, and whether they are selling you a stock package, or whether they are listening to your particular situation and assisting you in thinking through what will really be most helpful. As you research, you may even broaden the scope of what you'd like to accomplish and the conversation may shift from responding to a particular issue to working with a complete updating of the mission and vision of the congregation.

### Step Three: Sticker Shock and Discernment

*Because the kitchen conversations often were far-ranging, we realized that there was a domino effect.* Thus questions arose about re-doing the floors, reworking the wiring and plumbing, retiling the entire backsplash, new countertops, in addition to the purchase of a stove. *When we began adding all of those things up ... sticker shock!* It was way beyond the budget that we had tentatively planned. So the grand scheme had to be shaved off



## Friday, Nov. 7th

Social Gathering 6-8pm  
home near Iliff & DU campus, Denver

## Saturday, Nov 8th

Conference 8am-5pm  
at Denver Seminary Chapel  
6399 S. Santa Fe Drive  
Littleton, CO

### 8:30 - Opening Keynote

Dr. Larry Graham,  
Iliff School of Theology

### 10:45 - workshops

12 pm - lunch included

### 1pm - workshops

### 2:30pm - Plenary Panel

Dr. Nancy Ramsay,  
Brite Divinity  
Dr. Archie Smith, ret'd  
Pacific School of Religion  
Dr. Elisabeth Suarez,  
Denver Seminary

*"The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are the same people."*

G.K. Chesterton

This conference is focused on exploring various groups who are our "neighbors" but who may be different from "us". We will discover ways in which we can reach across the lines that potentially divide us in order to provide healing and connection.

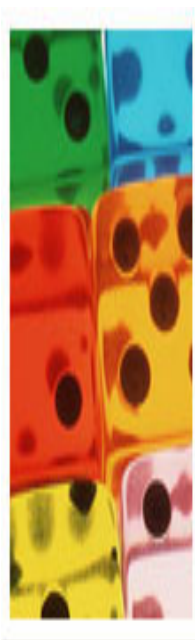
## [Click here](#)

for the full conference & workshop descriptions and brochure.

Or to

into more manageable options. *A prioritization and discernment process ensued.* What was critical and had to be done? What was important and should be done? What would we regret if we didn't do it now? How much could we really afford? What could we do ourselves that would reduce costs? What did we definitely need a professional to do so that it was done correctly, efficiently and safely?

*The same is true with hiring a congregational consultant.* The initial estimate on the amount of time and money that will be needed to accomplish all that the committee is asking for will likely raise some eyebrows and there may be some sticker shock. However, some of the same questions fit here ... What is critical and has to be done? What is important and should be done? What will you regret you didn't do if it is not done now? What can the congregation afford, and what are the alternate resources for funding the work? What can be done internally and what do you need a professional to do? The professional's time and expertise should facilitate a more efficient and effective process to meet your goal.



**REGISTER  
ONLINE**  
[www.AAPC.org](http://www.AAPC.org)

  
**Save the Date!**

**March 6-7, 2015**

**NEW VISIONS  
WORKSHOP**  
*in Littleton, CO*  
featuring - in person  
**Dr. Peter Steinke**



#### **Step 4: Revising the plan & Implementing it**

*Slowly the revised plan emerged.* We decided to keep the same cabinets and we would paint them ourselves, but we would hire a professional to install custom rollout shelves. We would spend the money to hire an electrician and plumber so there would be no gas leaks, water leaks or electrical issues. We expanded the lighting since the electrician "was already there". We decided to wait on new countertops. We would definitely replace the stove but I would do the backsplash tile work myself. The scaled back plan meant we would get some real benefits and it would be attractive for future owners. We would invest more time and sweat equity than anticipated but it was within budget.

*Again, the same holds true for a consultation plan. Asking questions provides information to revise the consultation process. If the consultant is flexible and listens to your needs, then s/he will be able to assist you in determining how to customize the activities so they are most beneficial.*

You may still have an expanded process that is broader than simply fixing one element but, if needed, there are ways to trim down the broad scope of the work so that it is within the capacity of the congregation. The consultant should work with you to determine what needs to be done by a professional and what expertise you have within the congregation that can be tapped. You may end up investing more time and sweat equity than

New Visions is a training program designed for leaders to raise mission consciousness, to plan mission activity, and to implement mission efforts in their congregations. Recognizing that change will be resisted less if associated with mission, the training includes effective ways to process change.

The curriculum for the mission school has been developed by Dr. Pete Steinke, author of several best selling books. His book - A DOOR SET OPEN - is the center of the learning.

Complimentary material includes several DVDs and study guides. Each trainee also receives a Training Manual.

anticipated, but hopefully your congregation is healthier, is creating space for the next generation, and has new energy for moving forward.



**Step 5: "The best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry." Robert Burns**

*Flexibility, patience, and lowered anxiety are key commodities needed to get through the actual implementation of the project because plans change – they always change!*

Once we revised the scope of the kitchen project we started the work, but delays and unforeseen problems arose. We had underestimated the amount of time needed to paint the cabinets, and the time frame tripled. I forgot about new handles for the cabinets but they were needed, at an additional expense. The rollout shelves didn't come in, so the installation was delayed. The electrician accidentally broke the glass on the ceiling fixture being installed, and no replacement was available. *At one point I told people that it*

*looked as though my kitchen had thrown up all over my house!* Pots and pans in the living room, cereal on the entryway table, spices in tubs in the dining room, baking sheets and cake pans in the basement, and a never ending search for the flatware. Finally, once the rest of the work was finished we realized the old laminate really looked worn and needed to be replaced. So even though it stretched our budget and added time to the project, we decided to go ahead and add new countertops, along with a new sink and faucet to "complete" the look and functionality of the kitchen.

*In consultation, there will also be unforeseen issues that arise.* It takes longer to put together the events. Something else breaks in the system and has to be fixed as well. There is a transition in leadership – lay or staff. You realize that it is better to deal with additional items "as long as you're here". After creating healthier, better functioning parts in the system, you will uncover dysfunctional parts and move to address those after all. This requires creativity, flexibility and a "non-anxious presence" on the part of the consultant and on the congregational leadership so that all the changes, questioning, and stress on finances and displaced routines, are understood as being part of the process.

**Step 6: The process comes to a conclusion**

*Things begin to coalesce and finally we begin to see the benefits from the work being done.*

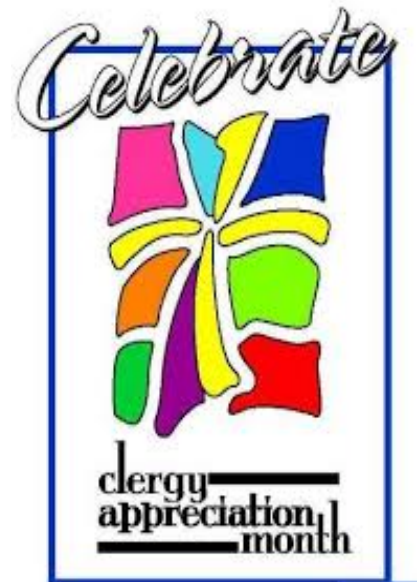
Even before the remodeling was completed, I took delight in switching on new lights. It was fun to play with various colors of tile in order to create a visually interesting backsplash. The rollout shelves gave me access and created storage space that didn't exist before. The process made me sort through all the stuff I'd collected over the years – purging and reorganizing for more

Registration information will be coming. For more information on the workshop and New Visions, visit

[New Visions](#)



Hope you will join us at these special events!



OCTOBER 2014

**CLERGY  
APPRECIATION  
MONTH**

Here are some ideas for showing gratitude for the clergy in your life ... including yourself.

efficient use. I now have knowledge in painting and tiling that I didn't have before but can use in the future. I enlarged a countertop to create more space. And of course, I now have a stove that works! We are enjoying the fruits of our labor while at the same time shifting our attention back to the normal routine of life.



*Consultation will have the same feeling.*

There will be relief that it is over and that the disruption it caused has settled down. Delight that some new ways of operating, energy for the future, and new capacities have been created. The congregation has acquired new skills and knowledge to better respond to issues in the future. The trigger issue will have been addressed and hopefully, is now working. You will uncover creativity and enjoy the new life moving through the congregation, feeling better prepared for the next generation to come. You will enjoy the fruits of your labor, even as you return to the congregation's normal routine.

**Step 7: Evaluation and living into the change**

*Unfortunately, even while enjoying the new and improved space, I now find the flaws in some of the work that was done.*

I see the spots where the old paint bleeds through. At times I wish we could have "done it all" but do appreciate what we accomplished. I still reach for something, only to remember that we moved it or even purged it, so I have to use something else.

*This, too, will happen with consultation. Over time you will find that there were aspects that could have been done better,* flaws in the finished project, some items that you wish you could have included but there wasn't the time, money, interest, energy, etc. to take them on. You will instinctively reach for something – the old committee structure, the previous staff member, the default volunteer – and realize they aren't there anymore or have a new location. And you will try something else.



***Working together there are aspects of any kitchen remodeling experience that can guide a congregational consultation.***

1. **We need a professional to do things that are beyond our capacities.** They are more efficient, skilled, and worth the expense.
2. **There are some things we can do ourselves and do well.** We will have fun (most of the time) learning them and can be proud of our work. Critically, we now have new knowledge and skills for the future.
3. **Each kitchen remodel and each consultation I've done has**

\* Send a note of gratitude to a clergy person who has been significant in your life

\* Remember clergy and judicatory leaders in your prayers, asking for strength, wisdom, and joy as they move through their days

\* Take a moment to ask a minister friend how they are doing, and thank them for their work

\* Jot down key aspects of your call into ministry. Make notes of where you still see evidence of these in your daily work

\* Ministry can be lonely. If you are struggling, reach out to talk with someone - a friend, a professional, a colleague.

\* Remember that clergy serve in diverse places of ministry, not only in congregations. Seek out and thank those who are serving as chaplains, ministers, and counselors in diverse places such as -

- hospitals
- prisons
- mental health centers
- homeless shelters
- resort communities
- retreat centers,
- military at home and abroad,
- businesses and corporations
- schools, colleges, and universities
- pastoral counseling centers
- recovery facilities
- missionary settings
- transitional housing communities
- hospices
- denominational offices
- nonprofit organizations
- and a myriad of other places!

\* Take time to appreciate yourself as a clergy person - do something for you! After all, you know most what you enjoy and what would be renewing and centering.

We hope that you hear our gratitude for the work that so many of you clergy offer in so many ways across the states, the country, and the world. We have seen and heard your stories.

We appreciate the way your

been unique and required a customized vision & plan based on those unique qualities. At the same time there were basic core elements. Working together we went through the same questions and steps in determining the scope of the project and living through the changes to enjoy the end results.

If something is happening and you are thinking about initiating some consultation for your congregation, *I look forward to talking with you more about your needs and exploring the scope of the work that needs to be done to fulfill your vision for the future.*

Who knows, I might even hire out for some tile work.

Blessings,  
Elizabeth



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heart breaks open when caring for people, even when there are times that it breaks apart with the difficulties and conflicts. We know that you deal with personal issues alongside the ministry of hope to others.

Our prayer is that you will experience the grace, peace, joy, abundance, health, and wisdom of God in all you do.

With gratitude,

*Elizabeth, Phil, & Jane Anne*

Consultants  
Eremos Consulting Group

