

DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

MODULE 3

EXPLORING OUR SACRED SPACE

BACKGROUND

The spaces and places we gather as congregations and ministries are often referred to as “sacred spaces”. These spaces are set apart as places we gather to be in communion with God and with one another. Our sacred spaces often hold deep meaning because of the significant life events, memories created, relationships built, and faith formed within those walls. Our buildings and surrounding property hold our memories and stories, and the stories of those saints who have gone before us. But our land was sacred and has histories and stories from well before it was designated to be a Christian worshipping community.

We as the Rocky Mountain Synod have committed to continuing our learning about and deepening our repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. One way of continuing this learning and reflection is to learn the history and stories of the peoples who lived on this land throughout the centuries.

CREATING A VISUAL HISTORY OF YOUR LAND

Learning the beginning story

All land that is now the Rocky Mountain Synod was once home to Native peoples. Also, keep in mind that much of the land of our synod was colonized by Spain, and then belonged to Mexico, from the time of the conquistadors until 1848. Begin by learning the early history of your land. Which tribes are first known to have lived in this area? Were they nomadic or rooted in one place? What significant events (wars, expansion, droughts) changed the land and who lived there?

Development and White Settlement

How did this land come to be settled by non-native peoples? How did your community come to be a settled community? What fueled the economy? What significant events influenced the development of this area? In addition to digital research, consider a visit to a city, county, or state history museum or local library.

The story of the congregation

What is the history of your ministry on this land? In addition to formal records you may have, consider an adult forum or community conversation with members who have been part of your community the longest. What stories and significant events do they remember from your earlier days?

Putting it all together

Consider ways to invite your entire community to participate in the creating of your history. Create a timeline by hanging newsprint along a large wall; add dates and events as you discover them. Members of your ministry can be adding to the recent past as other members are researching the past centuries. Share stories and updates in worship or written communications. Add maps, deeds, and pictures to your timeline or display area. And of course, be sure to add this compiled history to your ministry's formal records.

RESOURCES

The main resources are legal documents (collectively referred to as land records) including original grants, deeds, mortgages, leases and tax records. Because these documents were the legal proof of ownership and inheritance, all relevant facts were recorded, and archives were kept in standardized locations.

Using these land records and related sources, a property search can produce several types of historical evidence, including: biographical details about the owners, from first to last; construction information such as the building date, architect and builder, and sometimes the original plans and cost of construction.

Supporting data may be found in probate, tax and insurance records, building permits, old maps and atlases, census files, and other period materials. (Source: www.pbs.org)

- <http://landedhistories.org/project-overview/trace-the-history-of-your-land/>
- http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research
- <https://www.archives.gov/research/land>
- <https://www.wikipedia.org/> (a good place to get a broad history of your area)
- County history sites: <http://www.adcogov.org/adams-county-history>
- State history archives: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/archives/History>
- County and State History Museums

THE STORY OF THE LAND

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD LUTHERAN CENTER

7375 Samuel Drive is more than just the buildings that currently reside there. This land holds history and stories long before it became the ministry site of the Office of the Bishop.

- EARLY 1800S**
Present-day Adams county was home to Arapaho and Cheyenne
- 1820S**
European fur traders and trappers were active in the area
- 1854**
Territory of Kansas was created by the Kansas--Nebraska Act
- 1855**
Arapaho County was created to govern the western portion of the Kansas Territory (Present-day Colorado)
- 1858**
Gold was discovered in the area, precipitating the Pikes Peak Gold Rush
- 1859**
The first white settlers moved into the area of present-day Brighton
- 1861**
Colorado Territory was formed resulting in conflict from the invasion of people and animals to the area.. This conflict led to the formation of reservations in Southeastern Colorado
- 1900**
Both Arapaho and Cheyenne peoples were basically cleared out of present-day Adams County by the end of the 19th century
- 1901**
The Colorado General Assembly voted to divide Arapaho County into 3 parts, creating the new Adams County
- EARLY 1900S**
Water from the South Platte River allowed agriculture to become a mainstay of the economy. With the explosion of sugar beet farming along the northern Front Range around the turn of the century, the county experienced an influx of Hispanic farm laborers, many of whom were fleeing revolutionary turmoil in Mexico
- 1955**
Perl-Mack began work on a new development in Westminster, to be named Perl-Mack Manor
- 1958**
Advertisement shows homes being completed in Perl-Mack Manor Filings 1 through 5, between 68th Avenue and U.S. Highway 36 and between Zuni Street and Pecos Street
- JUNE 15, 1958**
Ground breaking for first church building of Valley Lutheran Church
- FEBRUARY 15, 1959**
Dedication of first church building of Valley Lutheran Church
- JULY 19, 1964**
Ground breaking for second church building of Valley Lutheran Church
- JANUARY 24, 1965**
Dedication of second church building of Valley Lutheran Church
- SEPTEMBER 1983**
Impact on Wellness Adult Day Care begins on site, the only adult day care in Adams County
- APRIL 25, 2010**
Closing Service for Valley Lutheran Church
- JULY 31, 2013**
Ground breaking for Lutheran Center addition
- MAY 8, 2014**
Dedication service for Rocky Mountain Center Lutheran Center/Office of the Bishop