

An Interview with Pastor Tim Brown Lead Curator of Anam Cara Online Community

www.anamcaracommunity.org

By Holly Shipley, Christian Education Network of the ELCA, Member-at-Large

Pastor Tim Brown lives in Raleigh, NC and works for ELCA Churchwide as the Director of Congregational Stewardship, as well as Lead Curator of Anam Cara Online Community. You may also know him for his [blog](#) and has written articles in Living Lutheran magazine

Pastor Brown was interviewed to discuss his ministry with Anam Cara Online Community which began in September of 2021. He is one of three curators of the ministry, along with Jason Chesnut (Lead Curator) and Matt Hansen (Curator).

Anam Cara is a community that is meant to be a place for the placeless. “Anam” is the Gaelic word for soul and “cara” is the word for friend. So literally it means “soul friend.”

During the pandemic, the NC Synod approached Tim about exploring an online Christian community. They proceeded to bring together a team of three people who are working bi-vocationally to develop a community for those who have left the church for one reason or another. They also want to provide a place for church leaders looking for inspiration. Pastor Brown is responsible for curating the theological language presented.

What is the goal of Anam Cara?

The goal is to cultivate a community through digital means that otherwise wouldn't be reached. There is no intention to replace brick-and-mortar churches, but rather to offer a place for the placeless. We are an online community. We are aware that church leaders are exhausted from the pandemic, and we want to provide a place for inspiration for them, as well. This online community is designed for adults. Children and youth are not part of this online community.

What does this online community look like?

We want to provide a space for shared experience as an online community. We need to constantly pay attention to the medium. The medium is the message. We don't ever intend to be a brick-and-mortar church. We are an online community only.

How do you “meet”?

We began in September and have been rolling it out very slowly. We started with short podcasts—15 minutes in length. We added a website, blog posts and now are starting worship



on Facebook (this interview was in March 2022). (Interviewer note: Currently there are 160 followers on Facebook).

What has been the response to what you are doing?

We have a following on Facebook and on our website, and people listen to the podcast.

Have you done any type of formal evaluation? If so, what?

Not yet, but we are constantly experimenting and learning.

What has been the most positive outcome of this? What was the most unexpected outcome?

We have received positive feedback about our podcasts-- specifically that they are shorter—15 minutes. Our worship will be 24 minutes. Less is more on social media and maybe generally, too.

What are your next steps?

Adding worship. Offering a constellation of resources. We want to be a place to provide church leaders with inspiration, as well.

What advice would you give someone hoping to start something similar in their congregation?

Pay attention to the medium you are using. There is no competition for churches already in existence with their own community and relationships. We are here for those who don't have a place or are looking for refreshment.

For more information about Anam Cara Community:

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bz_GOaWdgbM

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100074796609442>

ANAM CARA
community

