

Season of Discernment October-November 2020

Sanctuary UCC by-laws call for annual period of discernment to “Review and assess the congregation’s mission, ministries, objectives, and goals; and make adjustments as called for from dialogues and discernment.” Church leadership, in response to the stresses and burdens of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, recommended adjustments to the meeting schedule and means of gathering. In addition, meeting content was recommended by the discernment planning team and adopted for this 2020 season of discernment.

The resulting plan included an initial [Annual Visioning Meeting on September 27, 2020](#), followed by formation of three groups for weekly study/prayer gatherings for the purpose of seeking clarity (i.e., discerning) God’s presence with and among us as a people of faith. The weekly gathering was guided by a model which included reading a psalm passage, reflection on its meaning, and consideration of the question “From what I’ve heard and shared, what do I believe God wants our church to do or be?”

Midway through the meeting/study/prayer process, the Annual Visioning Meeting was reconvened on October 25, 2020, with [updates regarding Sanctuary’s mission and ministry](#). That was followed by four more weeks of prayerful study and discernment.

Hopes for the overall process was to produce faithful communication that would reveal new insights into how we are church together, what we do best as church, and how to turn toward generating even more faith-based service and action for one another and the community in which we are located.

This initial period of discernment concludes with this Annual Congregational Meeting 2020 (Sunday, December 6), where we will share some of what we experienced in small groups with the entire church.

The Discernment Team recommends to the congregation and the Leadership Circle has affirmed--that we continue listening to the Holy Spirit for direction about Sanctuary’s vision, mission, and ministry model through further discernment processes to be developed by this team (following the Christmas Season through Spring 2021); with the goal of clarity and action about the future of Sanctuary to be presented to the congregation at the 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting (expected to be held in June).

Respectfully submitted by the discernment team:

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