

May 15, 2022

12:00pm - 1:30pm

Attendees: Paul, Branwen, Liz, Joanna, Joanna O., Julie, Charmaine, Terry, Wendy, Erin, John, Charlene,

Agenda

1. Opening Circle - Wendy
2. The Facts from the LC - Joanna
3. Discussion - John
4. Next Steps - Joanna

Discussion

Prompting question for all - what is your vision for the future of Sanctuary?

- Sense of community
- Live congregation
- Things to do to feel together
- Continue to experiment with ways that will bring people in? Many people in surrounding towns are yearning for spirituality through the arts. This could be a way to bring more people in who aren't already associated with us. Consider a poet series. We have poets in Medford and other nearby areas who have a spoken word/poetry series.
 - What works?
 - What doesn't work?
 - Have this freedom to experiment to determine what Sanctuary is all about
- The LC has been trying to decide what is uniquely Sanctuary. We want to really know where to put our energies as a congregation.

What is uniquely Sanctuary and what deserves more resources, time, effort, and how do we get there?

- Part of the issue - not knowing what we define as success. Given the challenges of the last 2 years, it's as simple as we survived and continued to worship. There is so much uncertainty about tomorrow and the future in regard to the pandemic. We may be overreaching for what success is because we're delivering success in small packages. What can we continue to do and do new innovatively with what we have?
- From the beginning the benchmarks was the total assets of the congregation not just the benefits of the sale. We are at \$3.4M in actuality. Our assets have grown and appreciated, and we've been able to benefit from that.
- In our polity, the members own this choice. We get to decide what to do with the assets. Part of our responsibility is considering the past, but our discernment is looking to the best ways to spend the money that we have.
- The LC has been feeling guilt about what to do about the future decision making of the church, considering the past.

- Doesn't want the LC to feel tied to anything. We are developing. We can respect the past and also act in the moment. The congregation supports the LC and wants to be sure the members can say what they're feeling inside.
- The people who developed the benchmarks didn't know what Sanctuary would become. There is something really beautiful about Sanctuary, and it's important to identify what we see as success. Even just a few people being impacted is huge and powerful.
- Initial vision for the new space was to be something physically for the community - the movie night and the gallery. People really seem to enjoy the movie night. The feeling of opening things up to the public and bringing them in is important. If covid gets works, perhaps we can be flexible with Hillside who has more space. The arts is uniquely Sanctuary.
- The benchmarks and any documentation that we have from before the move should be treated much like the Bible and/or Constitution. We can interpret the bylaws in different ways as we reflect on it. They are dynamic. The ground of our history is being Congregationalists. We are reformed and reforming in theology. We are constantly looking for what it is that God is calling us to do. It is what unfolds now.
- This meeting is too soon. We need to open up and then see what's going on.

Next Steps

Keep the ministries we currently have - food pantries, Wednesday nights, the arts (faith and film and galleries) and Sundays with Hillside.

We can also open up our space to the community.

Can we just be on the LC? We are down to 16 people. Or the sustainability and stewardship meetings could be our LC meetings. This would help take the burden off of the LC which is dwindling in membership.

- In the past, every committee submitted a monthly report which was then to be spread out to everyone else in the congregation. This purpose no longer needs to be filled this way.
- Lean into the fact that we have grown smaller. Leaner and more efficient body.

We propose:

- Suspension of the bylaws. In difference to the congregational perspective that we all will take part, we have a monthly gathering of the congregation to do the business and visioning of the future of the church.
- Be careful that if everyone is going to be a part of a new vision of leadership, side conversations/emails should be kept to a minimum - no exclusions. How do we manage that? This would be for all those actively participating.
- The LC would be a committee of the whole instead of completely suspending the bylaws.

An email will be sent regarding the date for the Annual Meeting.