

## 2024.06.03 Sanctuary UCC Annual Visioning Meeting

- Minutes from previous meetings. [Ministry Meeting Minutes Archive](#)
- [Join Zoom Meeting](#) Meeting ID: 868 5752 1822; Passcode: 402181; By phone: 309.205.3325

### Call to the 2024 Annual Visioning Meeting (Virtual)

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ  
dba Sanctuary UCC  
Monday, June 3 (7:00 – 8:30 pm)

The Officers and Leadership Circle of the Congregational Church of West Medford | Sanctuary UCC issue this call to the Annual Congregational Visioning Meeting as defined by our by-laws. The purpose of the Annual Visioning Meeting is to: a) Review and assess the congregation's mission, ministries, objectives, and goals; and b) Make adjustments as called for from the dialogue and discernment. (Article IV. Section B).

The Agenda will include:

1. Reflection on the outcomes of the partnership and the ongoing discussion about an institutional merger with Hillside Community Church.

Committee of the Whole and Merger Joint Discussion Team feedback (through 5/30/2024) is summarized [here](#).

2. Discernment and Goal setting for Sanctuary UCC's Mission and Ministry Plan and Budget for 2024/25 which will be prepared and presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting\*.

Signed,  
Christy Miller, Moderator on behalf of the Leadership Circle

**\*Sanctuary UCC Annual Congregational Meeting (Virtual) will be held on Sunday, June 23, 1:00 – 2:30 pm. [Join Zoom Meeting](#): Meeting ID: 814 5463 1504, Passcode: 700509**

**In attendance:** Wendy Miller Olapade, Christy Miller, Brawnen Cook, Liz Douglass, Susan D'Arcy, Terri Bracy, Paul Roberts, Charlene Carle, Ginny Berthaiume, Fraelean Curtis, Ben Jacques, Becky Jacques

***Recruit Meeting Clerk - Wendy***

***Opening Prayer - It doesn't take much...Joyce Rupp***

*It doesn't take much to hold the tiny weight of a song sparrow, any little twig will do, or a sturdy weed in a field.*

*Why do I think my fledgling ideas have to wait for a thick branch or a secure landing place before I set them down?*

*The wisp of a fleeting dream can rest for a while on a small extension in my soul.*

*If I never let these dreams land, they will not gain strength for the long flight into fullness.*

*All it takes is a little twig to rest a great dream on.*

**Meeting Minutes**

# 1. Reflection on the outcomes of the partnership and the ongoing discussion about an institutional merger with Hillside Community Church.

- a. For reference: [Highlights of Sanctuary's Experience, Feedback, and Decisions @ LC May Meeting re: Joint Process with Don Remick re: the Hillside Partnership](#)
- b. Christy Presents Overview -
  - i. from Don's perspective – nothing that seems to be a hindrance to a vision to becoming purple, what we have experienced as resistance/fear is typical early process response and we were invited to see it as that and not a rejection of the journey, Don was the one who asked for private meeting,
  - ii. We wondered/speculated if they are really interested in becoming purple or just want to absorb us
  - iii. Also aware they are not interested in Sanctuary program participation
  - iv. How are opinions molded, led, and influenced by Tom and Wendy - why are the pastor's hands off? In this process?
  - v. Our last meeting we agreed we needed to recommit to what is uniquely Sanctuary and cut back on spending, be Sanctuary, and allow the merger to happen next to us, no desperation, more let's see with openness how it develops but we keep doing Sanctuary, by being less precious and committed to the outcome we can open space and be less anxious - and ease the way
  - vi. Further Feedback from the group
    - Susan: glad to hear not Hillside who encouraged the [private meeting, and glad to hear Don's affirmation of the journey
    - Christy: notes a challenge to Don's resumption that the Hillside energy is fear (only) but wonders if Hillside just isn't really into them. When we have been living together for four years, what are they still wondering? The breaks coming on when we are talking about marriage - this is a really concern.
    - Terri: behind the smiles resonates with me (had a personal experience of it)' name gain, really important to acknowledge the experience of the combined community. We need to understand what draws them - it is the purple.
    - Branwen: liturgical bits (ie: Lord's prayer non-inclusive language) feels shocking to me
    - Christy: expectation that what happens in worship is Tom's domain; way back in the beginning, from Better Together - Tom proposed that this was an adopting model
    - Becky - Paul's comment last week - maybe we are really needed to make the Hillside congregation more vibrant and growing because of what we add. This should give us confidence.

- Ben - when we have had events together they have been positive, the arts have been a hard place for us to draw us together, but Open Mic was so good and we learned so much from each other
- Hillside Annual Meeting - Tom shared his experience of At Circle, heard very positive response about the future and merger
- Terri - we need to share some of the things that we are doing in the community; civic work, stories of justice efforts.
- Wendy - See new newsletter section - Arts, Action, Advocacy
- Wendy - healing services

**2. Discernment (Vision) and Goal setting (Actions) for Sanctuary UCC's Mission and Ministry Plan and Budget for 2024/25** which will be prepared and presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting\*.

**a. Share one goal or vision you have for the next year:**

- i. Christy: up the number of faith and film events, have them be virtual!! Compact and highly powerful; Cost benefit of OWL and am2pm Youth 9 cut back to one)
- ii. Susan: Arts reach out to people in hillside who might be able to recommend wrists they would recommend doing something with
- iii. Christy: Let art be the conduit in purple making in our joint conversations
- iv. Ben: Art survey
- v. Liz: Like the idea of doing art together! Even though I am not artistic. Breakfast Church/Dinner Church to get to know each other;
- vi. Liz: Harriet - 8 year old wants to do community service; something with kids!!
- vii. Jackie - outdoor events, going for walks; using the good weather
- viii. Sue: leading a Photo Walks, can we take a walk
- ix. Terri - can we facilitate making sure we are sitting in mixed groups? Even in coffee hour? Maybe do a "question"
- x. Branwen: offer a reading and discussion group about Gaza; people feel overwhelmed - maybe
- xi. Paul: I agree with most everything; artchurch - have the artists speaking, people reveal a lot about themselves in commenting on the art question, and then if they see how the artist is affected, deeply moved. Communication happening that doesn't happen at "reception"
- xii. Fraelean - couple ideas - something artsy with children (work I have done with children) pick a cloud and draw what they see, their imagery and share with each other; group poetry writing, pass the tablet, laptop - group poem (collaborate and ice breaking)!
- xiii. Becky - noting the awkwardness of sharing (some are more comfortable with this).
- xiv. Keep our connection with the Immigrant community - rich in arts, storytelling music, etc. ie: Medford ESOL and Medford for Palestine

**b. What about the things that need to be released?**

- i. Susan - ?? concerned about taking sides with support for Palestine, always wants to separate politics from spiritual practice. Hard to think about us being a place where we have a joint or common political perspective. Some sort of discussion group based in various literary pieces that people could learn.
  - ii. Participation and Costs of OWL and AM2PM - revisit the programs that seem are a big effort - take a hard look at it.
  - iii. Christy: Right sizing where we put our energies
  - iv. Liz: What about other places where we might consider costs?
  - v. Wendy: 50% of worship and SS expenses; 0% of the revenue that comes into worship, and new members
  - vi. Fraelean - reminded of Haitian community coming for Thanksgiving Pop Up Pantry and disturbed by the experience of mistrust of volunteers (are they taking more than their share - Felt caught in the bias herself.
  - vii. Jackie wants to join after the merger. Why are we doing this now?
- c. Christy - four big questions to consider for the Mission and Ministry Plan and Budget**
- i. 458 High Steet Space - We are ready to release -with Hillside and other partnerships
  - ii. Children and Youth
    - am2pm and OWL - either commit or find new ways to support;
    - Messy Church - new children's stuff??
  - iii. Staffing and staff costs - are there places to reduce?
  - iv. Sunday Morning Agreements
    - Sanctuary's Financial Investment
      - a. Wendy's time and energy (including sermon prep)
      - b. 50% of music, tech, Sunday School
    - Are we paying more than our fair share?
    - Contributions at Hillside go to Hillside
  - v. Is the space at Hillside - Hillside only?? Yes
- d. Next Steps:**
- i. WMO will do a draft of 2024/2025 Ministry Plan and Budget o present to the LC Meeting Tuesday, June 11 - 7:00 - 8:00 pm (Virtual)
    - Join Zoom Meeting;  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82581670394?pwd=dGx6VE83dFhtaThJYVhEeTVzeG9BZz09>
    - Meeting ID: 825 8167 0394; Passcode: 487224
  - ii. Annual Meeting - Sunday, June 23, 2024, 1 - 2:30 PM, Virtual
    - Join Zoom Meeting:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81454631504?pwd=SVptdTRjdkpBeEtsY3JrUm00K0JYQT09>
    - Meeting ID: 814 5463 1504; Passcode: 700509