

Energizing Participation

MAJOR THEMES:

- Those not already involved do not know about the many existing opportunities for engagement .
- Virtual activities are working to engage people, so how can virtual be continued as additive once f2f, and also made more accessible to those not already engaged.
- Intentional communication, personal invitations, and generating new opportunities are all important to engaging existing and new participants.

What is working?

- Outdoor walks organized to connect outside of church building during pandemic
- Groups that continue to meet (SJAM, committees, commissions, women's groups (sit 'n stitch, mageon online), **Primetime**, music programs, **children's choir**, Praise band)
- 60 touch points, many existing opportunities for engagement
- Pandemic reimagination from scratch of a completely online presence for worship and many other activities
- Personal calls across the congregation have helped keep in touch with people during the pandemic

What is missing, which if added would make a difference?

- Intentional and personal communication of engagement opportunities - Don't assume someone will ask!
 - Have some of the small groups submit an article to the Spire naming what they are doing
 - Spin-offs of small groups so new members don't feel they must enter a clique
 - Reminders of our personal responsibility for inviting someone in (ambassadorship)
 - Use REALM to promote what is happening in groups
 - Personal phone calls as a systemic process; a better list
 - Routine surveys set out to update calling list
 - Training more in the use of REALM
 - Fellowship hour as a communication tool, rotation of ministries
 - Membership Committee shifting emphasis to outreach or connecting people to involvement
 - New participant in the church gets assigned a shepherd
 - Calls, sit down, with these people take advantage of asking "is there a mission for you, what might the church do to facilitate that?"
 - Share what is going on at the church
 - Bring energy about the fun or impact vs just reporting
 - Building relationships
- Virtual opportunities:
 - How to keep what's working when returning to f2f?
 - Are virtual offerings accessible to newcomers?
 - Making virtual additive rather than substitute for f2f
- New offerings for differing issues and generational interests
 - Events (like for "Earth Day" was promoted for families vs for intergenerational event)
 - Women's peer group meetings
 - Fireside chat
 - Shared life experiences build stronger connections- Holy Land travel, South Africa, Nicaragua missions, work camps, retreats.
 - Attract activities for families to connect; how is this done without exclusion
 - Intergenerational game night (with childcare for the littlest)
 - Parent Nights Out activity where we provide fun for kids while groups of parents at church go out and refresh (spiritual cafes)
 - Progressive dinners at the church, providing childcare at the church for parent activities
 - Circle of Suppers: 8 people met monthly (Linda Z) to meet and share our journey
 - Don't neglect those who are unmarried or those without children

Community Engagement

MAJOR THEMES:

- Existing partnerships exist (civic, between churches, interfaith), but could be expanded. Additional new partnerships are needed.
- Donation efforts for local agencies are successful, but need to invite larger community to participate
- Youth and music programs do reach some of the community, but other small group and team programming could use more “front doors” for the community to participate.
- We need to increase awareness through traditional/social media, direct invitations to neighbors, and participation in neighborhood/civic groups.

What is working?

- Substantive partnerships with local civic groups supporting such things as social justice, environmental protection, the arts, voting rights, gun control, etc.
- Cooperative vigils across faith communities
- Our treasured partnership with Mt Zion UCC
- Cross cultural dinners and educational exchanges with Muslim and Jewish congregations. This includes the important connection with ‘Daughters of Abraham’.
- Community “give backs”: electronics recycling, collections of food, cleaning supplies, warm coats and boots, hygiene kits, disposable diapers, underwear and socks...all of these designed to equip community agencies to give help as needed. This includes the long-standing Parish Nursing Program and Loaves and Fishes program.
- Widening our circle through programs offered to youth: Joy, Colorado Kids, Group, Children’s Choir, scouting
- Holiday and other Special music programs offered to the community

What is missing that, with its addition, would make a difference?

- Expansion of interfaith connections including building and growing more partnerships
- Reconsider membership in Greater Cleveland Congregations
- Development of our relationship Community Life Collaborative (CLC)
- Increased engagement with Chagrin Arts, Braver Angels, AA (re-establish at the Fed), environmental agencies, Lake Erie Watershed.
- Develop more “front doors” to our Fed community with the many small groups that are part of our Social and Environmental Justice Ministry, Primetime, among others. .
- Better publicity in Chagrin Valley Times and other local papers and media.
- Expand our partnerships between our Joy / Group kids and other community youth activities (e.g. in other church youth groups, active service clubs in the local schools, such as Environmental clubs, Interact Clubs, etc.)
- Develop a stronger presence on Instagram, where youth are more likely to visit than they are on Facebook
- Create and publicize internships (Seniors in HS) that have special appeal
- Outdoor social events for the community...held either in the Bell Street parking lot (walking distance for many from the village) or at CLC. Events could include an Ice Cream social, musical performances, plays, movies, lectures of interest to the wider community, etc.)
- Invigorate our Welcoming to new residents in greater Chagrin Falls (e.g. personal phone calls, invitations to events, Congregants in their neighborhoods meeting and taking them a baked good, etc.)
- Host community events at Bell Street or FLC to bring the community in village into contact with church, outdoor worship, concerts, plays, youth events, ice cream social, rally day with fire and police departments, so community hears and sees what the church is up to, walkable if in village, could park at school on weekend
- Connecting with student groups at local schools to do things together on common values and efforts.
- Expanding collections in parking lot to include the community.
- More personal invites to community members attending non-church groups in the building.
- Making sure building conveys what the church represents and welcomes people well
- Adult spiritual retreats, like Colorado, or intergenerational for families.
- Activities for the community that are “cause focused”. Find the social justice causes that youth and young families will engage with. And connect it to our spirituality.

Spiritual Deepening

MAJOR THEMES:

- Combining justice and spirituality has been successful through SJAM/Spiritual Formation partnership, and could be expanded by combining spirituality and environmental, arts, movement activities.
- Schedules and lack of knowledge could be limiting participation, expanding to evenings and communicating intentionally to increase awareness.
- Considering incorporation of spirituality into activities for all segments and generations will expand and deepen this engagement.

What is working?

- Activities in the intersection between Spiritual Formation and SJAM
- Book and Bible Studies – more volunteer led than ever
- Partnership with Mt. Zion
- Weekly Centering Prayer group – expanding to broader community; not just Federated people
- Spirituality 101 Class
- Inter-faith vigils
- Contemplative Prayer Group
 - expand to offer at different times
 - promote to broader community
 - name them to focus on specific needs (i.e. Prayer group for the “Overworked”)

What could be added that would make a difference?

- Ways to love the earth through spirituality, spirituality being attached to loving the Earth and the Earth loving me
- More opportunities to learn about different religions – what we share in common
- Focus on spirituality/body & breath - expand yoga offerings, contemplative prayer for the overworked, etc.
- Make sure spiritual and contemplative activities can be hybrid for greater access
- Partnering/engaging with local arts organizations - Art is incredibly rich territory for spirituality
- Partnering with local movement organizations
- Small groups and “Topic Cafes”
 - Book studies that are not biblical but spirituality-based
 - small groups meet over coffee/food to discuss certain topics
 - model from hospice care “Death Cafes”/“Death Over Dinner”
 - could be connected to Inter-faith groups
 - Spiritual Cafes for youth – they guide topics
- Need to promote all activities more than just Thursday email. Need to utilize social media.
- Mysticism – difficult to develop the language for this; could offer courses. As Protestants we tend to be very left-brain focused but the body/spirituality connection needs to be nurtured - To be Native to a place you have to understand the language; to be Native to your soul you have to understand its language
- Our Labyrinth is a treasure that needs to be promoted in our community
- Worship
 - We will be longing for a connection of senses through worship
 - Zoom is reaching more people – those not interested in coming to church
- Future generations – passing the faith to youth and children
 - Spirituality language difficult for children to understand without becoming dualistic
 - Biblical story is important
 - Kids understand nature; teach through nature
 - Late teens/early 20’s – growing group looking for spiritual connections

Congregational Care

MAJOR THEMES:

- Some groups are very connected, while one-to-one relationships could be improved by pairing up members or families and being intentional about calls and contacts.
- We need new ways to connect with and care for newcomers.
- Adding opportunities to gather and/or serve together while building relationships could improve care and connection.
- Success would mean that every church participant could identify at least one group, project or person who they would say “knows” and cares about them.

What is working?

- Individual relationships are strong and make you feel connected., some groups are very connected
- Outreach to St. Paul’s and Chagrin Falls Park
- Baking for Loaves and Fishes
- In the past, couples retreat was very good for engagement
- Church group service and travel opportunities
- Koinonia groups that are continue after >5 years and are self-sustaining, example AHA (Appreciating His Abundance)
- Adult work camp, Colorado or study travel ,mission and retreat work builds stronger connections due to shared life experiences and extended time together but benefits from ongoing tending of those relationships.
- During COVID: Prayer, Angel Telephone Tree and Congregational Contact ministries
- Prior to COVID: Stephen Ministries, Communion to the Confined and Angel Flower, Memorial Bakers, Memorial Host

What could be improved or Federated once offered?

- Considering staff positions for pastoral care
- Adding opportunities to support multigenerational families “sandwich generation”
- Adding new ways of building connection and relationships such as a dinner group, “Dining Disciples,’ agape groups, simple suppers
- How can we connect with those who have visited an event or program to bring them into connection and care?
- Supporting new members by assigning a partner family to worship with or to ask questions. Reconsidering and communicating the prayer list: is it limited distribution?, how to add someone to the prayer list?, how does someone know who to pray for?
- Making mid-hour more welcoming to new folks and visitors, friends seem to gather with friends. Some places have a special blue coffee cup for new members to use so you know who they are.
- *Congregational care* indicates the traditional terminology for serving others where the server-> serves one in need. Maybe it’s really strengthening congregation relationships?
- Activities that welcome and celebrate children such as carnivals, FOSP horse show, egg hunt.
- Making individual calls to people who have not been in church for a while. No agenda, just a friendly call.
- Renewing opportunities for helping with Wedding Hosts, Angel Food and Angel Rides ministries

What is missing that would make a difference?

- Facilitating connection through support groups or pairing people around a common issue: examples - a child with a health issue, recently widowed, etc.
- Gathering people for a special need- i.e., make sandwiches or cookies for St Pauls together, instead of feeding ourselves at mid hour
- Spiritual listening- an online zoom forum scheduled periodically during the week for church members to gather online with the focus on listening to each other.
- Creating something for our kids in college, for example: assembling “College Care Packages” and sending around exam time

Financial Sustainability

MAJOR THEMES:

- We are known in the community for our Christmas Eve offering, and traditional stewardship and endowment among members exists, but could be improved through year-round generosity and engaging the non-giving members in giving.
- We should think outside the box in fundraising in the community, particularly in online giving and making the “ask.”
- Outward facing activities like Pub Theology and the CLC could be used as an outreach arm to leverage support in community partnerships.
- We need to incorporate digital-only participants into stewardship and generosity campaigns.

What is working?

- Traditional Church mechanisms,
- Endowment,
- Regular events;
- Being a leader in diversity – known throughout the community
- Moving to year-round generosity, teaching the congregation
- Awareness of special events,
- Utilizing the community/larger impact – funneling donations to community based on need;
- Visiting summer pastor engages some level of donations
- Our identity is our Christmas Eve offering, community is in awe of our ability to fundraise
- Shift to year-long generosity is huge – theme around financial stability
- Renewed energy from Leadership

What is missing?

- Fundraisers, thinking outside of the box;
- Include community services – council, fire, police, superintendents, mayors, etc.;
- reach out more into the community – cannot get more money from current membership – those in the community are benefiting and supporting
- How can we continue to offer opportunities that will give us a larger impact/footprint in the community
- Year-round giving; our low tide is June-August much to do with Pastoral leadership being out of town, looking for outside people to fill the void, disassociation with church;
- Create another fundraiser unique to Federated that generates a place in the community – another revenue stream;
- Mega-churches are going ‘electronic’ – electronic presence on the web – how they sell themselves (NOTE to Mel: Jim will support hiring of proper person);
- Ask for the order – do not forget to close the deal
- Re-look at employment contract re. summer vacation;
- Community engagement;
- All industries are moving toward a digital presence – Federated needs to be in a consumer-centric engagement, spiritual deepening;
- Today we are raising for X – specify and raise funds
- Time to embrace the CLC and use it for our outreach arm – to the community and as a means of extending our outreach; proper networking with community partners – including but not limited to other religious orgs, UCC, police, fire, care facilities, restaurant community;
- Embrace who we are – older, diverse interest congregation