

## **Town Hall notes and recommendations March 17, 2019**

### **THINGS WE LOVE AND APPRECIATE**

#### **Group 1:**

- variety of people, beliefs,, and personalities
- Puppets!
- Vitality of young adults with youth of various ages, constantly changing cycle of ages; older leaving, younger coming in
- Youth are encouraged to be active participants
- Love seeing teens active in story time, YRUU, services, puppets,etc.
- H4H
- coffee hours and greeters; the chance to mingle with all

#### **Group 2:**

- WE know so many people
- We are accepting, tolerant
- Circle Suppers
- High volunteerism; participation
- Relationships with people
- Sunday Services are inspiring,Nicely organized, have Beautiful music
- People you can talk to
- Talented youth, willing to share
- People are inviting; most of my friends are here
- We have great history, like windows and pews
- People are willing to help when needed-WOW IS A WOW!
- OWL, YOUTH programs connect our younger level members like adults
- Powerful sermons
- We like this place
- Nice LRE
- We learn about different religions
- Liberal religious outlook
- non-creedal
- bell ringing
- Being there when other churches are in need
- Community outreach, Habitat and BOW
- People accept lgbtq
- People's minds open to what they would not otherwise know
- WE agree to disagree
- We have the ability to start new p rograms; women's retreat, women's circle
- We see no cumbersome governance; we propose and go!

- WOW
- Memorial Services are meaningful
- COA Service
- Holiday celebrations
- Some God language

### **Grp. 3**

- Physical Structure
- History of our church and the covenant'
- LRE
- The music, people, and being part of a diverse community
- Lack of dogma and lack of narrow traditional thinkingn
- Feeling of family due to our connectedness
- Acceptance
- An intelligent community
- Diversity of thought
- Social justice work
- Feeding of our spiritual needs
- It is aplace to learn, supporting our search for meaning
- Lots of interesting people

### **GRP 4**

- Community and people are committed to social justice, not because they're going to hell;
- very positive relationships
- world view
- embrace diversity
- love this physical space
- this is a place to come when you want to be surrounded by love;
- love the childrens' programs
- people are respectful of each other

#### **Things going well:**

- Music program
- intellectual vitality
- feeling of acceptance/welcoming

### **GRP. 5**

- PERMISSIVENESS - do your own thing,
- Connection and lots of opportunity for this

- Activities outside of services and easy to join; ie: Circle suppers, Women's circle, choir, women's retreat, Social justice activism, music (exceptional!) is non-traditional, religious education for all ages

- Warm and diverse

- Acceptance of opinions

- Connection to childhood--feels very familiar and eccentric interesting people

- Close friends; can reach out to anyone for help or social network, kindred spirits, adult education ideas

- Sense of community (\*\*\*) Came for a welcoming open-minded beliefs. Think with same perspective of the world, similar perspectives in life

- Acceptance; able to be me; Celebrating

- Thoughtful sermons; special sermons like Veteran's Day

## **THINGS WE'D LIKE TO SEE OR SEE INCREASE**

### **Grp. 1**

- youth and adult programming (could grow);open group ministerial lead adult programming

- being a teaching church; having interns

- more attention generated regarding our work in the community, ie Lazarus house or Food depository==more publicity or partnering with other church groups to both 'get credit' and to encourage new visitors and members to attend our services

### **Grp. 4**

- Be more well known in the community

- More 'worship' in the service, meaning introspection, quiet music, affirmation

- Expand Interweave and have more 'radical inclusion'

- Expansion of the earth-centered spirituality

- More diversity in adult education

- Bring in more families

## **CONCERNS OR ISSUES WE DISCUSSED; SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS (Deltas)**

### **Grp. 1**

- Congregation size--should we grow? How much?

- We need better publicity, social media presence, toot our own horn a bit, improve website

- We don't really investigate why people come to visit? Is child care important? Who is assigned to collect and share this information?

- We need to great people coming in and leaving Front Door and Common Room Door

- Retention issue; we need to reach out to people who have fallen away and investigate and learn; then act on that learning!
- we'd like a newsletter-type digital source to share what people are involved in, learn more about each other
- We'd appreciate less 'bulletins' and more ritual, prayers, readings, quiet time in services, a shorter For All Ages/Sacred Story time
- We suggest a laminated sheet for visitors that includes the info about child care, social hour, etc.
- More announcement written, less spoken (some but not all of us)
- enhanced music program? (no detail on what that is)
- Puppets for service, as we did for Earth Day one year..
- share our budget and our last 5 years or so pledge drive results and average donations; ask people to raise their pledges significantly as they can...

### **GRP. 2--called this area “Where do we want to go”?**

- Gather information from successful churches (Boston?) to help us define direction**
  - a) **Strategic planning** to help us as a congregation when we are calling a minister. We need a road map.

- We need more communication for the congregation:
  - a) Website
  - b) Better structured communication, strong force in the community
- Less fear of conflict; discuss differences; welcome change and new processes to be accepted.
- Openness to suggestions that may reflect change; move away from 'we've always done it like that'
- More adult education
- more small groups, convenient groups
- Better organized education program, both adult and 'kids'
- More volunteers-Find someone(s) to spearhead this
- Solutions will require not being stuck in the past
- need pastoral care and/or lay pastoral care (whatever happened to those lay folks..?)
- A more Evangelistic effort to share our church
- A committee on Lay Worship (mentoring, leading services)
- Clarity about the search process still needed
- Ongoing process, structure for voicing opinion (this may be about search as above)
- Follow up with those who leave or drift away--find out why?
- Start a mentorship program for/with new members

### **GRP. 3**

- add activities outside of LRE every other month (K-5)
- help build community for Kids
- help them mix outside LRE (as above?)
- Get reports from LRE!!! What are they doing? What are their concerns and issues? What immediate help could they use to improve?
- Adults are missing out by having to leave to go to LRE
- Reduce demand on Staff (?)
- Increase engagement with current members
- Reach out to fringe people
- Better greeting and follow through
- List of volunteers (RR--we had this in the past?)
- We are too comfortable with ourselves
- We need to be more actively engaged with the community
- and Pushed to grow out of our comfort zones
- Grow membership

#### **Grp. 4**

- Increase membership
- add more religious education
- reduce material spoken by Worship Associate

#### **IDEAS**

- Go to having one service and have conversation and programs during the time of the second service
- On months with five Sundays, don't have a service on the 5th Sunday, offer other things
- We need a bulletin board showing 10 things we need to do in preparation for calling a minister-so we can check things off and see progress

#### **Grp. 5**

- Acceptance of beliefs but no diversity of race, no Latinos, etc. Capacity to draw from wider community
- Action Point: establish more outreach, increase awareness of UUSG within the community, marketing efforts to promote us, blurb in newspaper, last 2 weeks (?)
- Develop an outreach committee, communication team to do all this
- Ministers who do more outreach and get involved in community
- Tee Shirts to wear when we go to rallies etc, marketing tool
- Attract younger people and families.
- Strengthen LRE to attract more young members
- IE: Lisa Brennon, Board of HOusing, Hosted here at MLK, an awesome event
- Lack of communications on important events, like above
- Involve children more in program and services
- Need a younger minister to bring in following, need a younger group
- Need greeters on way in and on way out!

