

FUTURE CHURCH "ASSETS" ZOOM WITH PAUL NIXON – 02/07/2021

Cynthia gave an intro about gifts and assets. Paul indicated that we were mining for assets – what are we good at, blessed with and what do we bring to the future. He also stated that it is easier to identify deficits than assets. We need to identify our human treasure.

Question #1 – What is our inhouse expertise; our collective wisdom and expertise?

- Educators; people interested in promoting children's education
- Musicians
- People who love learning
- Environmental expertise/responsibility; doing what we should do to save the planet before it was trendy – solar panels. We are responsible on our grounds and in our homes. We assess the environmental impact and then make decisions.
- Strong sense of fellowship; we work together to include everybody
- Social justice participation; we step out against injustice...march, write letters
- Medicine/social justice; we are reminded that the medical field has an interest in justice.
- We have a mix of old and new members...Long term member rooted in the UCC and with knowledge of church history, newer members bring fresh ideas
- Professionals with leadership skills
- Ability/willingness to do research
- Willingness to engage secular community
- Safe place
- Forum for education

Question #2 – What is our collective experience? We need grounding in where we have been to move forward; continuity is important

- Roots in UCC
- Welcoming
- Give opportunity to belong, be part of the church and contribute to it.
- Ability to listen and change direction

Question #3 – What is our untapped talent? (What do we leave great gifts unopened under the tree?)

- Possibilities of engaging members who are not very active
- Study groups – invite others
- Survey of spiritual gifts showed us what we don't know about each other
- Don't know what we don't know (e.g., specific knowledges like ESL)
- Member burnout; it is unsettling to lose that talent – e.g., moderators (which is not so true anymore)
- Relational recruiting; one-on-one engagement
- Youth – ours and community
- Spouses not participants – but could be engaged otherwise with the right challenge
- Communication – how to do better
- Host for community – SOS, Ferndale Pride – more support?
- Not getting new members

- Relationships with ministry partners – e.g., concerts
- Young families reacting to outside changes

Question #4 – Any other assets than human assets?

- Relevance; CCB many times rises to what is relevant at that point in time – O&A, race relationships, etc.
- Curiosity
- Engagement in issues of the day
- Green Ministry - awareness
- Untapped community around us – we open our church as an environmental center
- We engage with the secular community; no pressure to join CCB, but could support our ministries in a different way. Are we a host for the community?
- Property – do more with it; under-utilized; have not mined the possibilities; right now obligations exceed asset; historical gift;
- Facilities – sanctuary with wonderful acoustics
- Concern with nature; deep appreciation for stewarding nature
- Endowment Fund – celebrate Sowers including church in final plans; cushion; not really used in meager years
- Denomination
- Value our talented staff; CCB invests in staff
- Partnerships for important projects – Central Woodward Disciples Church (SOS and Stephen’s Ministry), Racial Justice Task Force, Pontiac School District (tutoring)
- Kids do not have to be quiet after Sunday School, parents can relax and enjoy fellowship; we embrace the children’s energy
- Are open to change

Estimate 40 participants. Paul asked everyone to send an email to Cynthia about anything that did not get said, who to engage, what to take into account – by the end of the day.

Emails:

#1: “It is fair to say being a "Learning Organization" is an important asset/characteristic of CCB. This concept focuses on sensing who we are and what is going on around us. More importantly, through tolerant questioning, we come to understand others, open ourselves to alternatives and exercise our freedom to pursue positive change.”

#2: “In listening to all that was shared, I picked out a common asset which we perhaps overlooked – our Children’s ministry, and by extension, family ministry. We mentioned all the pieces we have in place, but not putting them together: Our current Christian Ed director, the MANY educators in our congregation, our commitment to MANY values we want to pass on to young people – our green ministry, our commitment to justice, our compassion and love for each other, and so many more.

We often overlook our unique asset – our property. In the past, a site for intergenerational picnics, bonfires, vacation bible school, even kite flying! And a great place for safe social distancing, which probably will become our new norm.

Our country is at a turning point as many of us share a huge sigh of relief and look forward to a kinder future. Thoughtful parents are no doubt looking for help in raising and teaching their children. We are in a unique position to build on this.

When we voted to become an open and affirming congregation, we committed to sharing that goal with the community. I would hope that we could do the same with our family ministry.

Tom and I came to CCB many many years ago, looking for reinforcement of our values for our school age sons. While we did find that, what we did find was a church home for ourselves which has long outlasted their childhood. And while they have grown up and moved on, I see in both of them living out the lessons they learned at CCB. It is a gift I wish we could share with other families.

And on another note, or perhaps a continuation of our strengths, I would like to see us build on our start during the sabbatical of interacting with and understanding the many other faiths who share this country and world with us."

#3: "We should also emphasize our internal music talent that extends beyond traditional hymns. I think that we could further tap into this asset.

In the past, we have considered inviting outside groups onto our church grounds, local community or otherwise. We could probably be more flexible than what Cranbrook can offer which would give us a one-up. In 2019, we had a near opportunity for a Dream Cruise event, but for a number of reasons that did not go through. Other outdoor corporate events could be considered, but we would need to define criteria such as alcohol policy and restroom access, etc. We way need to create a task force to focus on how we would approach this, market opportunities, set guidelines, etc. But I'm getting ahead of myself."