

## Responses to Open-Ended Questions on Readiness360 Assessment

September 2020

### What must we retain if CCB is to remain relevant?

#### Mission and Outreach (22):

- Community consciousness
- Community outreach/social activism - we have seen this can have a mobilizing effect on young people who are desperately needed to keep the church going.
- Involvement in community support programs.
- Involvement in social action.....Senior minister very involved with projects in greater community.....continued spiritual sermons...our senior pastor is very relevant and strong with members, visitors, and activities in the community.
- We must be welcoming, relationship oriented, and focused on social justice.
- Outreach, activism, and social justice work.
- Social Justice - in various forms - has been core / central to the Ministry of CCB for 5 decades or more. Without 'doing the work', making it part of our lives, the church has no purpose.
- We need the relevant sermons pastor Louise gives:) And we need children's ministry.
- Our social justice ministries.
- Social justice study and awareness
- Our ongoing commitment to the Detroit/Pontiac area. This includes the work we do to help those less fortunate who may have struggled with poverty and institutionalized discrimination. Our support of individuals and communities who have been underserved by both government systems/agencies and some faith-based organizations.
- Passion for serving in the community, especially for civil justice and the environment.
- Commitment to social justice.
- Our outreach and activism in the community/state, country/world.
- We are Called by God to advocate for social and environmental justice. (though in this 2020 crazy world we may need to find different words than social and justice to describe what we do).
- Enthusiasm for advocacy.
- Our commitment to outreach and activism
- Social Justice initiatives Progressive ideals Community Spirit
- ministries that focus on outreach and social justice
- Our focus on social justice and peace. That's vital to our form of Christianity.
- Relationships with inner city churches and organizations.
- A place for support groups to meet

#### Relationships (14):

- Our open and affirming ideals
- Our values and love for one another.

- Openness
- An open and affirming community
- Openness to and strength from LGBTQ community
- Our openness to all of God's people
- Our sense of community
- Fellowship (brunch bash, coffee hour, fun activities and educational/informative programs)
- Our friendliness
- Welcoming environment that is non-judgmental, seeking to learn from others.
- In my experience CCB folk do their best to love and support each other regardless of where one might be on their journey. This community has seen me at my best and my worst and has always been loving, respectful, and kind. Keep that commitment to loving and supporting each other. Also, there is a willingness to change and grow remaining open to what God might be calling us to do. All this fosters a sense of truly belonging to a Loving community and one that is committed to doing good [in] the world. Keep that.
- Our current active members - - Recognize well educated base of members, but welcome members from a broader range
- Welcoming environment that is non-judgmental, seeking to learn from others.
- Community/fellowship is such an important part of what makes this church special.

### **Youth/Intergenerational (8):**

- Youth ministries
- a strong Christian Ed program
- Desire to reach out for new members from younger age/family groups
- our program of Christian love, education and support for young children through to college-bound young adults.
- Young families and young adults
- Opportunities for inter-generational fellowship.
- Young families with children that spend time together & have an opportunity to serve god together.
- Commitment to young families and their children.

### **Spirituality (7):**

- We must retain our connection to the teachings of Jesus.
- Focus on God's role in our lives.
- We must retain our commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ. And we have to go a little further...This commitment comes from a Calling from God, and the language we use every day needs to reflect that... God is what sets us apart and makes us relevant. And we need to remind ourselves about that.
- Our attempts at walking a more Jesus-like life.
- A focus on doing God's will rather than just pressing our own wills even if we believe that they were at least, in part, inspired by God.
- God providing a community of love and support to our members

- CCB's progressive Christian theology must be retained. Our use of inclusive language, our extravagant welcome and social justice stance for all God's people and the environment are foundational to any ministry we undertake and must remain so.

#### **CCB/UCC roots (5):**

- we must keep our foundational roots in the UCC. We are not the typical Christian denomination; we are forerunners who live the gospel of Jesus. Sharing why we are unique and how that fits with the words of Christ is very important to gather new members.
- Our core values as a Congregational UCC Church.
- Our roots to our history and traditions.
- Retain our connection with UCC.
- UCC values

#### **Worship (5):**

- A worship style that changes but can still maintain some traditional aspects so that all are comfortable.
- Informality in the Worship experience, online worship and educational programs. A redesigned website Meaningful music to complement the worship time.
- Online and in person worship services. Musical opportunities to worship.
- Music (style and performance), congregational participation in the service.
- Revive joy in service

#### **Other Comments (5):**

- Most of our land
- I think it's important that we have a place to come together every week.
- Our willingness to change with the times, technologically.
- Our openness to new ideas
- The exception of the church community itself -- In the absence of a new vision and mission for the church, answering the question is putting the cart before the horse. It depends what fits inside the vision and mission.

## What can we let go of and still remain relevant?

### Property and Facility (12):

- If feasible, we could go forward with a smaller area of our current land, but still need 70% or so -
- Much smaller grounds
- 7 acres of property - repurpose it to community sharing.
- In the current state of our resources - human and capital – plus pandemic/recession challenges, we need to consider letting go of the Bloomfield Hills property; otherwise we may not be able to afford to be relevant.
- We have tied the well-being of the congregation to maintaining the current building and property. We should be open to selling the property and renting space elsewhere.
- Although it is important for us to have a "home base," do we need to retain our current physical location/property to support our missions? A significant amount of resources, both human and monetary, are required to maintain our current church property.
- These are resources that may better serve God's vision if reallocated to build our programming from a smaller venue.
- Our property. Part of it or all of it. Wish we could stay here forever but I don't see how it's possible. (However, if we were to ever move we would have to somehow take our peeps in the Memorial Garden with us.) Perhaps I'm wrong here. I just don't know
- We could sell some of our property.
- I am not convinced that we need all the acreage we currently own. The cost of maintenance alone is money that might be better spent on programming and outreach. I also think we could share our facility with another group...perhaps ever a congregational merger should be considered.
- Building & Acreage we can't take care of/Bloomfield Hills address
- It breaks my heart, but our property is now a burden financially

### Worship and music (11):

- Our traditional service, music etc.
- Outdated way of doing things and the boring service.
- Some of our traditional practices.
- I think we can let go of some of the constraints of our worship service, and welcome new ways of worshipping.
- Our 'Traditional' Worship Service feels 'dead' - predictable, lacking authenticity, like we are on 'auto-pilot, perhaps comfortable in a 1950's fashion - but... tell me why a 'digital native' would bother getting up, in their car on a Sunday morning and coming out to 1000 Cranbrook Road? (after the pandemonium has passed).
- Our formal, traditional service.
- Even though it is something I enjoy, I think a formal structured service is probably the way of past - a more participatory service or service involving more laypeople with different voices is the way forward.
- Traditional Worship; Live music - choir, organ/piano accompaniment
- Organ music every Sunday.

- We have got to introduce more Contemporary Christian music. I have been saying this for at least 8 years. We need to have themed Pop music Sundays. What we are doing now is too stuffy for be relevant.
- Despite the fact that I love traditional music for the worship service; the hymns, organ and piano and choir, and detest contemporary music; I would be willing to accept more contemporary music with instrumentalists for some, but not all of our services.

#### **Mission (4):**

- We can let go of some of the events and projects that we keep doing for the sake of doing them.
- All of the many outreach items. I wish we could find 1 or 2 outreach activities to be a part of & do really well with them. Have CCB's name tied to something significant & well known.
- Do not solely focus on the work of being a Christian.
- Continue what we have and grow more service projects....

#### **General (8):**

- The Draft
- Modify some of governance structure that makes ad-hoc teams the main way things happen and define areas where small teams are nominated to meet regularly.
- First, the pastor, in that this long-term plan needs to be based on a clear understanding of the pastor's departure schedule; otherwise, this effort may be less than relevant.
- The pastor has served the congregation for almost 10 years. I believe that the congregation would not only survive the departure of the current pastor, but thrive under new leadership.
- We need to be inclusive of all but we seem to overemphasize LGBTQ issues.
- Our confusing complicated name (Congregational Church of Birmingham, United Church of Christ...in Bloomfield Hills!) IKR?!
- Let go of thinking that we always have to do things the way that we always have.
- Our political agendas.

#### **Non-answers (9):**

- Not sure what we could let go of. There is so much we have let go of already.
- NA
- When I figure that out I'll let the whole world know!
- I don't have any ideas on this. Sorry.
- Not sure
- I'm not sure. I like everything!
- We could let go of anything but our people
- NOTHING
- I'm really not attached to any of it.