

Congregational Conversation Highlights

From February 2021 Groups



What did we hear?

In preparation for our March meeting, Session read through the notes from all the groups. We discussed what we had heard and how that would shape our work going forward.

This document provides a summary of the conversations. A copy of the full set of notes is available to anyone who wants to dig in further. Please contact

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- or Elizabeth Guman (ecguman@gmail.com, 610.308.4017).

The Conversations

- Ten sessions were held from February 14th to the 24th
- Hosted by 21 Elders
- With 55 participants

The transition: What excites you about the interim period?

Some appreciate the opportunity to pause, take stock, learn and create clarity for the future.

- “The opportunity to talk and listen to each other--we are a large congregation with different perspectives”
- “Seeing what is working well and to build on the strengths and to be in anticipation of what could be”
- “To come out the other side the best version of ourselves”

The transition: What is your fear or concern about the interim period?

Many are concerned about how long it's taking.

- “Members might get discouraged during this process and leave the church”
- “Concerned about the lack of information flowing down”
- “That the interim period will be too long, but also that it will be rushed and the issues that need to be addressed will be left to the new pastor”
- “I fear that things won't change”

About how the church looks different post-pandemic

Time of learning

- “Like the creativity of staff in continuing our ministries”
- “Technology should continue to be utilized”
- “How to combine in person worship with digital”

Concern that people won't come back

- “Everyone will get too complacent/lazy being home not going to service”

Concern that we are overly cautious and members will go to other churches

- “Fear of losing people during the pandemic, church very overly conservative in reopening”

Other concerns

- Desire for unity
- Concern about divide/tension
- Challenging to have the hard conversations we need to have: how do we encourage people to reflect and to address issues from the past that are coming up again
- Not enough attention given to where we are financially given the current membership

Hope

- Interest in doing more to delve into inclusion
- Appreciate the conversations - conversations can bring us back together
- Can we do a big reconnect?
- Take advantage of the real estate that we have next door
- Maybe this is a time to remodel the kitchen and Social Hall, better technology

What's next?

We understand we need to do a better job communicating about our decisions and the reasons behind those decisions.

- **Transition Study** (steps to prepare for Pastoral Nominating Committee's search):
 - Congregational Survey (April)
- **Transition Objectives** (specific areas for improvement to help attract strong candidates)
 - Deacon reorganization
 - Comprehensive communication plan
- **Congregational Conversations** (quarterly - next series in May)
 - We'll share progress on the Transition Study and Transition Objectives
 - "Ask us anything"