

First Congregational Conversations 11-12-23

Summary

Qualities of Our Congregational Life

- Welcoming, friendly and open
- Tolerant and accommodating of differences — inclusive of gender, politics and socio-economic class
- No judgement/guilt from others
- Informal
- Sense of community
- Supportive — Willing to help and take care of each other and others
- Courageous (in the face of change)
- Compassionate (seeing the needs of the community and doing something about it)
- We like each other and have fun together
- Fellowship is strong
- Faithful — we hang in there together
- We laugh together — especially during worship
- Imaginative

Governance

- More freedom — No hierarchies, no top-down direction
- Democratically select our leaders — The congregation decides how God is leading our church
- Free to form individual faith journey — Interpret Bible in own way, We have no dogma or creed one has to sign on to.
- We listen to each other — Accommodate differences of theology and perspective
- Willing to interact with other churches
- Minister is guide – but we take part in running church
- We are not a structured denomination but an association
- Requires more of a personal commitment to figure out what to believe – no right answers
- We have an open table at communion
- We don't exclude people from other religions from participating
- We look to our surrounding community to see where we can help – Outreach

Who Is in Our Fellowship

- Many (Disproportionate) members in helping professions (healthcare, teaching, social work, etc)
- Geographically spread out
- Many with technical career backgrounds

Motivators

- Fulfil our commitments
- Sermons
- Contagious enthusiasm
- Sharing Joys & Concerns
- Positive message. After service – go home feeling good
- Relationships. Seeing friends and family. We have great relationships.
- Reinforce our beliefs
- God accepts us how we are
- Gives us room to grow. We do not feel pushed. Not going to be judged
- Feels like home

Improvements We Can Make / Have Made

- Really glad we have the breakfasts for Men and Women.
- Joint activities with All Saints
- Like the weekly emails and monthly newsletter
- Could do more with social media
- More informal, social events to socialize
- Hikes/Walks
- “Where can we improve?”
 - We don’t pay much attention when people stop coming
 - Need to create better visibility for FCC in the community
- Civility Training?
- Encourage more expression of differences?
- Event on Shrove Tuesday and Maundy Thursday at a set time (Bob Baird will make pancakes)
- Do better at extending personal invitations to people who haven’t been participating
- Better visibility in the community