

Who are we? Or “Coming to Terms with Church History”

What did people talk about during the “Who are we?” phase of interim ministry?

The Big Comments: These comments were made at every gathering, sometimes more than once–

- Mission / Outreach / Giving people an opportunity to serve
- Fellowship with others / feeling like this church is a family
- The Music Program including Choir, and the Concerts
- Celebrations, Parties, Events (50-year members, weddings, etc.)
- Celebration of Diversity, acceptance of others, open communion

Widespread Remarks: These comments were made at nearly every gathering–

- Involvement and importance of youth, children, and babies
- Persistence
- Worship services, regular and special, (many named Christmas Eve specifically)
- Specific named members (you appreciate one another)

Regularly Mentioned: These comments were made frequently–

- Hospitality, Greeting, Friendliness, sense of welcoming others
- Christian Muslim Dialogue
- Sunday School
- Christmas Pageants

Everything Else: 1 or more mentions

Feeding People

Flowers

Earth Care

Burnamwood

Library

B.U.I.L.D.

Connection to Presbytery

Football Parking

Women Pastors/ Leaders

Positive aura

Humor

Open Mindedness

ESL

Unity Garden

Courtyard

Faith Formation/Spirituality/God stuff

A summary of discussion held to explore Hunter's identity – by J.T. Silence

As a church, you have a good sense of self awareness. You know who you are, and what you do well. I didn't perceive any disconnect, any moments of "that isn't what I perceive about this church." There is a strong sense of appreciation for what is done on behalf of this congregation. Even when people don't involve themselves in one aspect or another of this congregation's ministry, they appreciate that it is being done. (CMD for example) You appreciate one another and recognize that many people in this congregation share their talents. Worship is central to the identity here; mission is a result of the worship spirituality. Fellowship, friendship, togetherness feed worship as well.

I didn't detect any need to heal old wounds, or do massive group congregational therapy. I don't notice any festering disagreement or controversy. There is widespread agreement that growth is needed. Growth is wanted too, it isn't simply survival that people seek, but an increase in the diversity of witness.

This has been the work of asking ourselves: "Who are we?" Now we look to the next question of Who God is Calling us to be. There were times during the Coming to terms with history phase, that people wanted to skip ahead to this part of the process. The session had some good conversation about fulfilling this task in a relevant but creative way, rather than the old school form a commission way. Now is the time for the New ideas, or perhaps, the "I have a dream for Hunter" speeches. Over the next couple of months existing groups will have opportunities to look at "Who is God Calling us to be?" We will have at least one worship service dedicated to creatively responding to this question. There will be interactive Posters scattered about the church, homebound members who are not able to wander around the church and write on them will receive letters with an opportunity to respond. We will host a "go to meeting" (or perhaps other online) roundtable discussion. These are the next steps that will help us formulate a statement of Who God is Calling us to be. It doesn't mean we are re-creating the whole identity of this congregation. The story of Hunter is what it is. What we do now, is to outline what the next chapter will be like.