

BLESSING OUR CHILDREN & FUTURE GENERATIONS



Intergenerational Workshop * Portland, Oregon * September 26-28, 2008

More than a hundred and twenty people of all ages gathered in Portland last September for a weekend of sharing in small groups and as a body. The focus was on enabling our children and future generations to grow in the experience of spiritual community. We shared wonderful expressions of our best experiences as members of communities of committed believers. We shared our heartfelt hopes and wishes for the future of community in the body of Christ. And we made public and private commitments to continue deep dialogue between young and old as we returned to our homes and church communities. What follows is a synopsis of those stories, hopes and wishes, and commitments to the future.

STORIES

Thanksgiving at church, not home. Took surplus to homeless on street at night, Pike Place. Those who received and those who gave shared "God Bless." Dad's example led her to serve/teach the unloved, rejected. Where's their "church?"

At first Camp Kimtah, led by God to go. Accepted and welcomed as who he is. Drawn out by new friend, encouraged to work in community, which can lead to a scholarship. Now more active at Puyallup. Camp is like things are supposed to be.

Portland a source of authentic hugs; gifting flowers in worship. Acceptance of young at Puyallup; environment as a concern.

Connected to a small congregation. Parents wanted to help build up church. As a small boy (11 years) a drawing of a church his father had designed, he envisioned during Easter service at site.

Experienced Jimmy Munsen's church planting effort in Chattanooga; helped while at Graceland, but learning herself, drawing on memories of her own childhood in a church family - allowed sharing in Chattanooga.

Facing challenge with prayer. Witnessing leads others and frees others. Risking frees the Spirit. Church identity and fellowship of love is recognized everywhere.

Mother/daughter. Spiritual insight into relationships. Learning from one with experience. Gratitude for support and learning to become one who can pass on mother's wisdom.

Witnessing in neighborhood. Needs of a daughter, leadings of a child. Welcoming social, sharing, informal group. Meets needs and wants to share and invite others.

Camp – supportive listeners and example of ministry. Nourishing model for her ministry. Vehicle for healing in another individual. An instrument for God.

Welcoming; inviting; loving; service; acceptance
Challenging role models, molding. Refining her own calling to ministry.

Comfort as acceptance. Fulfilled through participation. Comfortable enough to request to participate in decision making.

Needed to return for help. Welcomed, supported, accepted, loved. Learning/teaching opportunity. Helping her in her own home. Help dealing with anger/healing.

Singles group drawn from Canada and Northwest. Drew her in after 20 years outside Church. Group did "roving" ministry to other congregations. Group gave each other energy, led to husband's baptism, others. The group of ten still shares. Single does not equal irresponsible!!

Power of invitation – to 2000 World Conference. From church as "obligation" – conference experience as excitement about spiritual journey.

Thomas mentioned Taylor Naten as a friend, one who was support, listener. They keep in touch via internet.

HOPES AND WISHES

Group #1

Pass down good experiences
Love; acceptance
Safe place for those with needs
Christ-centered
Sharing in small groups for intimacy, testimony
Compassionate
Peace place
Witness and invite
Learn and teach
Intentional re: Christ, teaching manifest
Learn good from other faiths and other faithful people

Group #2

Communication between generations
Community projects as alternative to church
Peace and justice work
Involve youth/young adults, variety
Large group activities – camps/reunions
Combine some churches
Create “child peace day”
Learn from other faiths, speakers

Group #3

Not bound by demographics
Diversity/not bound by “faith”
Push personal and community growth
Cooperation between generations
Serve larger community – outreach
Take ownership of problem and agenda
LAUGHTER AND JOY
Small group discovery/worship
Multi-media info sources during services
Find, develop and use gifts
Text message prayer for peace
Quality Christian education
Honoring use of the sacraments

Group #4

Perfect Community
Diverse – all accepted (including other religions)
Focus on peace and joy – all respected
Focus on reconciliation and healing
Balance of life
Rich music life
Positive energy
Beach volleyball

Group #5

Inviting church, atmosphere like camps at church
Live the life of Christ
Handprints, not butt prints
Where no one is left out
Everyone is equal and their gifts
Let the Spirit work among us

Each congregation define/discern their individual mission (like Cowlitz County, seeking out those addicted to meth)
Susceptible to change but look back on the way the church was formed
Many gifts and talents, use them all

Group #6

All ages present and relevant, all involved in worship
Families and personal relationships
Camps, etc.
Sacraments/weddings
Other faiths celebrated
Building reflects mission, sharing with others
Rethink ministry – not restrictive or judgmental
Education that upholds opinions and based on wide view to make up own minds
Other communications tools
Working in community and mentoring young adults/together – Needs based ministry

Group #7

Walk the talk, do something new
Consistent spiritual worship

- Activity
- Music – lively
- Not sterile
- Improve worship environment (symbols)
- Good preaching

Open mindedness, not only proselytizing
Concerned with environment
Peace on earth (hunger, etc.)
Sunday school
Dream/visualize/share
Do something purposeful together

Group #8

Incorporate/involve all generations, all learning from each other
Tradition and contemporary ideas, services
Faith community center, seems safe/inviting/welcoming – not “church”
Go out and see what people need and do something – walk the talk
Be more confident about sharing/inviting
Transform worship to be more uplifting for invitees
DO IT!

Group #9

Our community
Welcoming, nonjudgmental, inclusive
Listen; needs of community
Open more than one day a week
Accept other baptisms

All gifts accepted
Do something about peace and justice
We embrace the office of member
Use all sense in our worship
Support groups – reach out to community
Summed up in 3 words – Relationships, Relationships,
Relationships

Full text of Group 9 Hopes & Dreams:

- Our Community is a welcoming community where no one is judgmental. We have inclusiveness, and no one is left out because God sees them as worthy, and we have no right to see them any other way. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community feels the needs of the neighborhood and tries to fill that need; Our Community does not give up - even if no one shows up in the neighborhood, we try it again, and again and again. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community is open more than one day a week. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community accepts other people's baptisms. WE LISTEN.
- All the people in the Community have gifts, and we let you explore your own path of service. Our Community does not have to invent the wheel. Lots of people come together that are excited to share their gifts, and we use everyone's gifts, not just a few. WE LISTEN.
- Acceptance and love are the keys to our Community, and we don't just talk about peace and justice, we are doing something for peace and justice. We are Jesus' heart, eyes, and ears. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community has Children's Ministry, and we embrace the office of Member. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community has a variety in our worship services because we use all of our senses. We celebrate each other, and work side by side, making opportunities to develop relationships. WE LISTEN.
- We have a Ministry of Presence; and we also have the Ministry of a Smile. WE LISTEN.
- Our Community creates support groups that reach out to the neighborhood; and we also connect with other churches in our neighborhood and have a common theme week. WE LISTEN.

- And finally, our Community can be summed up in three little words: Relationships; Relationships; Relationships.

Group #10

Inclusive community – involve all social, church, family
Partner with community organizations
The building would be less important, available 24/7
Blog, internet – Be out of our comfort zone
Let go of the trappings of church
Develop intimacy
Value all input
Seek God among us
Spiritual communion without sense of obligation
It would be our desire

Group #11

Listen to all ages
Seek input from young families
Involve youth and young adults in worship services
Yo Buddy! Attention getter – “cardboard ministry”
Step out of comfort zone – reach out to community
Munson, bouncing ball down street to church
Need full time youth/young adult minister
Welcoming ministry, give candy bar; teaching and learning from children
Upbeat worship
Balance of old and new
Need to hear what young adults/youth have to say

Group #12

Unconditional love
Equality, inclusive, living like Christ
Good stewards
Activities – how they affect the environment
Youth/children in ministry
Universal truths in all religions – know more about them

Group #13

Acceptance, love; no exclusivity – not hate, “Don't teach hate”
Open place in “storefront” where entire neighborhood can be involved in implementation of Jesus Christ's life
All accepted. Individual gifts

Group #14

Loving Support
Active involvement outside the church
Changing government
Outdoor activities that bridge worship
Supportive of each other
Challenge the systems that marginalize
Value all religions

WE ARE COMMITTED: Where We Go From Here

Planning Committee Commitments

- Compile and distribute the content from our work, as resources for continued intergenerational conversation (BH, DW)
- Carry the conversation back to our own congregations (All)
- Be available to share with pastors, priesthood groups about speaking and listening from the heart across generations (All)

- Pastoral breakfast talk at MC conference (KS, DW)
- Expand young adult involvement in decision-making bodies (KS)
- Job-shadowing by young adults (SS, KS)
- Current opening – APPLY! (KS)
- Plan a “mock” Leadership Council (SS)
- Advance young adult priesthood calls (KS)

Mission Center Commitments

- Congregational education curriculum planned for 2009 (KS)
- Call groups of pastors together to discuss what occurred here (KS)
- Budget for young adult participation in international church events (KS)

Your Commitments?

- Be in relationship with and mentor young adults (then know when to get out of the way!) (EN)
- Prayerfully call attention to young adult priesthood calls (KS)
- Partner with your pastor to continue the conversation: MISSION! WORSHIP! FUN! (LR, CB)
- “I commit to_____.”

YO BUDDY!