

Sabbatical brainstorming from Congregational meeting 1/31/16

At our congregational meeting on January 31, 2016, we spent time brainstorming our hopes and dreams for our congregation during the upcoming sabbatical in 2017. People were divided into 10 groups, and 3 questions were asked:

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC?
2. What would make your heart sing?
3. What questions or concerns do you have about the sabbatical?

Below are the results of the brainstorm, divided by small groups. The answers to the second question "What would make your heart sing?" are bolded for each group.

GROUP 1

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Communication and interplay between congregation.. Creative worship. Good sermons .Good music. Opportunities to connect in and out of worship. Access to the pastor. Remembering we are the church. Having clear expectations.

2. Heart sings? Mission work. Opening up to new things. Reach out to community that doesn't get services Work with the refugees. Connecting to other parts of Portland. Joint activities Community garden. Something neat for Jennie when she comes back. Having some kind of church wide art project. New furniture and making space more beautiful and updated. Expand use of library. Children + adult service (inter generational) responsive eBook study group for children and adults. Outdoor worship and service together

3. Concerns: Lower attendance. Summer time Newcomers won't be impressed. How to welcome them. Jennie will be changed.

GROUP 2

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Fostering Community Feeling that we are still going to the same church. Being spiritually challenged in order to keep growing.

2. Making our hearts sing: Try things like "praise music." Maybe connect with LOUCC downtown PDX about incorporating jazz. Draw on the gifts of the interim pastor. Drawing on right side of our own brains. Maybe even doing some drawing.

3. Concerns: Visitors may not get a clear sense of what we are like. Will the interim be able to meet our needs? Can we learn to be a little less dependent on Jennie.

GROUP 3

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Continue to inspire spiritual growth and involvement in church activities. Continue sense of spirit and community. Strong sermons and worship. Warm and welcoming. Inclusiveness and activities tied to reach out -- extravagant hospitality.

2. Events that draw folks into our church Grow membership - introduce Jennie to new members when she returns. Expand family and child-focused activities Continued investment in faith development Need to bring young families into the church Space to find something new to make your heart sing. Deepen our commitment to diversity Play area for kids. Identification and growth of new church leadership. Expansion of technology abilities at church. Integrate more technologies into worship. Art classes Consider sponsoring a refugee family. Discuss discrimination toward Muslims

3. LOUCC history Concerns about sabbatical. That the interim minister will not be as dynamic as Jennie. That participation and revenue will dip during Jennie's absence. Address participation through special events during sabbatical Lily grant –

GROUP 4

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Variety in services, intellectually and spiritually challenging sermon content. Maintaining the same level of service and giving to partner organizations (mission) Stay connected and caring for one another. Try new things, take the opportunity to bring people from the congregation into Continuity of theme, tone and goals of each service brought into all of the different aspects of each service.

2. What do you want to see the congregation doing that would make your heart sing? Haul the pews out. Chairs Paint in the sanctuary Redo the library Create an art piece together . Multimedia if possible. A representation of our experience of God. Experiences for kids during the summer like Bible school. "Contemplative outreach" (an organization) give a class on centering prayer. Something that would absorb sound for the fellowship hall.

3. Concerns: Disagreement within congregation about what to do during Jennies sabbatical. Retention of pastor after Continuity of leadership, Inspiration, and attendance. Interim pastor - hard to match Jennie

GROUP 5

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Sharing joys and concerns Keep up choir Children - nice to see range of kids and their class time Want JO to come back in good form, renewed, but not radically changed from the good pastor (I/we) enjoy now Want same energy from our leave pastor as we have now from JO Sense of community draws people in here; want that community to be present and continue to step forward

2. Heart Sing: What do WE do in this time? Take time to be creative (as an individual) Shorten the announcement time; plenty is in bulletin, so limit announcements more - what's not in print. Would like joys and concerns shortened, but recognize that is stickier to tackle. Try some kind of work/ project with disabled kids. Social justice - outreach into greater community by more of our congregation. Do education around other social justice issues such as homelessness. Create some short-term work or social teams that work for those living further way, and may need daytime offerings of activities.

3. Concerns...Loss of Jennie after her 1 year obligation following sabbatical; loss of her by vital change within her, or relocation to a different church Loss of energy within congregation

GROUP 6

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Strong worship leaders. Keeping connectivity of the congregation- open loving accepting and caring

2. What makes our heart sing? Organize some areas/ storage areas. Work on racial diversity- maybe share a service with Ainsworth Activities or projects with both young and old members interacting together. Hear more about the transitional shelter and the occupants Bring back dinners for 7 in some form.

3. Questions and concerns: What is the process of getting an interim minister? Making sure we keep the congregation invested. Continuing to have activities that bring us together. Having an interim that helps us with opportunities for growth not just hold things together

GROUP 7

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Friendship, community, caring for people in need, honoring diversity, beyond racism, cares of the people, library, connection with Beit Haverim, building bridges, Sojourners, garden space (possible project), youth involvement, maintain worship routine.

2. Dreams: Garden project, acoustics in fellowship hall, refugee resettlement, church hikes, creative music collaboration,

3. Questions and concerns. New people/people who come to just hear Jennie will stop coming, revenue decrease, is 30 Hours enough time for Interim, how will those things get done? Need for detailed instructions.

GROUP 8

1. What do you want to continuing nurturing at LOUCC? Coffee hour, church picnics, friendships, new relationships. Music! Nice to have special music Outdoor activities- a walk in Tryon Creek, worship in the park. Meaningful services, creative services bring teenagers into this.

2. Thinking of space to try something new, old, different, what would make your heart sing? Irish music, someone singing in Gaelic. A jam for music, people bring their instruments. Explore a different order of service. Do something like an international service, service for the countries that get denigrated in the media, like Syria Youth. Choir- kids singing? Changing the shape of the worship space? Worship in the round? Worshipping outside, i.e. Blessing of the animals

3. Questions/concerns? Decreasing attendance. Decreasing contributions. Concerns about Jennie and Hilary traveling with little kids how to be relaxed? Try not to plan too much (for Jennie). Hope

the planning team doesn't burn out. Had some previous bad experiences with pastors- hope we get a compatible interim. Transition back- hope that goes well.

GROUP 9

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Sense of community, Continue focus of mission outreach. Engaging challenging worship services that draw people. Staying true to our mission statement. Maintaining adequate income during sabbatical time remember that the church is the people not just the pastor Maintain welcoming environment.

2. Heart Sing: Create viable small groups dinners for seven Dinners out, golf, family nights. More Hands on mission Interactive services

3. Concerns Drop off in attendance. Continuity of membership during summer. What happens if we don't get the grant? What if Jennie chooses not to return?

GROUP 10

1. What do you want to continue nurturing at LOUCC? Recognition of non-members ...making them feel welcomed. HOW CAN MUSIC BE NOURISHED DURING THIS TIME?, Summer means people may be gone more...how can we keep people connected and nourished. Intergenerational programming. ...connecting people who may not always group together.

2. WHAT WOULD MAKE YOUR HEART SING? The DREAM church trip? Doing something new creatively ... Individually and as a community. Different places for worship. Worshipping with another church A retreat...Menuca. Make our building more green...a play space for our children.

3. WHAT QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT SABBATICAL TIME? Choosing an interim who has good people skills. Make it not just same old same old but new things.