

VISIONING 2020 SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Please note that the large unedited document is available to anyone (just ask Lynn Miller for a copy or a link.)

This document is a best faith effort to capture the items in each category that arose multiple times.

Items pertaining directly to some individual teams have been/will be passed along to them.

Every group leader reported that these were positive discussions, that people are grateful for what is already going on in the life of the church and don't feel that God is calling us to any major changes. These suggestions are along the lines of "how can we continue to make a good church better..."

GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING OUR PHILOSOPHY/CULTURE:

God is calling us to continue searching and growing. Take care of the people who are here and welcome more in. Stay relevant; don't get stagnant (remain open to new ideas.)

We love our mission focus/identity/DNA and also are aware that no church can be everything to all people.

Let's continue to do what we do well (community, outreach, youth ministry, Stephen Ministry, for example) and not spread ourselves too thin.

We like our casual style, helps us feel at home no matter what age we are.

How do we maintain our sense of community as we grow?

Do people know about our open, progressive theology?

IDEAS HAVING TO DO WITH TECHNOLOGY

Podcast the sermons

Very user-friendly website, for members as well as guests: easy access to info about events

Online book discussions

Online study group

Online promos of upcoming events/sermons

**WE WANT TO BE MORE INTENTIONALLY INCLUSIVE
AND WELCOMING OF DIVERSITY**

Activities and groups for all ages, needs, including divorced/separated persons and LGBT persons

What about the ONA (Open and Affirming) Process? What are the pros and cons of entering this process...or do we want to create our own process resulting in a Statement of Inclusion and Welcome?

Consider designating the Buoy an official "Safe Space" for the LGBTQ community.

Help people understand the concept of "white privilege" (educational effort)

More interfaith relationships; strengthen our current relationship with the Turkish community.

What programming do we want to offer to children with different learning styles?

MISSION

(note that we didn't ask many questions about mission because we already do so much in this area. Many people commented that they love our mission focus.)

But these ideas did emerge:
Intergenerational/Adult Mission Trip

Tutoring/Mentoring for Lorain/Elyria schools

Programs for our own seniors who need help around their homes and yards

Do we have a way to find out if any members have a need if there is a power outage?

BUILDING/FACILITY WISH LIST

Expanded gym to allow for open gym nights, basketball outreach to community, etc.

Inspirational scriptures/pictures/signage in Fellowship Hall and Lobby

More space for adult classes and small group sessions

Larger adult classroom

Larger nursery

More parking

Can we set up the chapel for Sundays when we have overflow from the sanctuary?

Complete the kitchen remodel. Do we need a full kitchen? Or just a prep area?

What do we do about large gatherings like the Annual Meeting when we don't have enough space in Fellowship Hall?

What do we do about the fact that we are already maxed out for VBS?

We need dedicated Sunday School space for our 5th - 7th graders

Coffee bar on Sunday mornings

Meeting room with couches (no tables)

Classroom/meeting space for older elementary children

Don't overdo decorating; keep it subtle. Have one team in charge of all aesthetics (unified design)

Total remodel of bathrooms between Ed wing and chapel. Bathrooms need to be family-friendly and gender-neutral.

Bring in architect to look at all of our space - are we using our space most efficiently? Do a space utilization study.

What about office space/work room? Fellowship Hall is not inviting, stage is wasted space...could we reconfigure front entrance

areas to make for some small conversation nooks? Where could we have a coffee bar?

Is anyone using the Band room at the Buoy? Could anyone use it?

Better signage throughout the building; some current signage is confusing

Updated Ed Wing

Happy that we're paying attention to security issues

Better ways to enjoy the woods and back property in general.

More picnic tables. Walking trails? Outdoor chapel? Pavilion?
Time to upgrade/expand the playground?

Anything we do to the building: make it as environmentally-friendly as possible...roofs, consider solar panels, etc.

Water fountain upgrades where you can refill water bottles.

Roof repair

Sidewalk for those who have to park across the street

ITEMS RELATED TO CHURCH GROWTH (AND/OR "BIG IDEAS")

Coffee shop off-site

Satellite churches in other locations

ITEMS RELATED TO YOUTH MINISTRY

Have church members do a field trip to see the Senior High Mission trip - let them be a part of the work (if possible) and the worship

More training for adult chaperones on mission trip (perhaps Stephen Ministry-type training); listening skills and what to do/say when certain topics are raised

What to do about the fact that youth mission trips fill? Do we allow members to sign up first?

Are we tracking attendance at all youth events?

Focus on programs that build resiliency and grit in youth.

ITEMS RELATED TO PERSONNEL

The following concerns were raised:

Are we right-sized?

Does our current personnel have the support they need?

In particular, what about the staffing needed to provide visits for our homebound and elderly?

ITEMS RELATED TO ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION/COMMUNICATION

There is a lot going on in our church but it's not always easy to know what's going on - what the teams do, what services are available, what small groups meet when, etc.

Looking forward to a new church directory.

Emphasize how many volunteer hours are needed to keep worship, Sunday School and Coffee Hour going - set expectations for help and involvement.

How about TV monitors near both entrances that would scroll with information about the day's and week's events

Centralized place for all sign-ups? Easy way to sign up for multiple volunteer opportunities at once?

Like having all sermons available online.

Would like a Team job fair/ministry fair in the fall - each team/ministry have a table at Coffee Hour with information about what that team does.

ITEMS RELATED TO MEMBERSHIP/SMALL GROUPS/SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

(Note - there are dozens of ideas listed in the larger document about small groups and social gatherings.)

Mentors for new members so they can feel more a part of the congregation

Follow-up plan as people begin to slip away from church

Follow up with new members at their one year and two year anniversary dates to see if they're getting involved

We have a sense that we "drop the ball" in terms of programming for youth between 18 and 30. What can we do to maintain relationships during college and in the years after? Are we still doing the care packages?

Specific mission opportunities for young adults?

Social gatherings off-site for young adults?

Are we doing enough for our seniors? Do we have adequate transportation help for them? Could the city van be helpful? Could we provide more social events for seniors?

How do we get to know each other? Do we keep using nametags?

People don't mingle well at Coffee Hour.

COMMENTS RELATED TO THE UCC DENOMINATION

Are we providing enough education regarding what it means to be a member of a UCC congregation?

COMMENTS RELATED TO CHILDREN/FAITH FORMATION

(In general, much appreciation expressed for our current programming, Beau's leadership...and much concern for the need for better educational space)

Take advantage of the time when children and youth are involved to offer something to parents (i.e. during Mid-High Mayhem, Primary Pandemonium, Junior High Youth Group)

Concern about maxing out on VBS - offer two weeks? Offer evening session?

Would like to see children involved in music - children's choir? crystal bells?

COMMENTS RELATED TO WORSHIP AND MUSIC

(In general, appreciation that we have two different worship services and that people have a choice in worship style.)

Would like to see a greater diversity of music - jazz, gospel, etc.

Wish we could have more worship options (love the Cross Training worship, would love to see two services all year round, etc.) but realize the challenges and obstacles.

Would love a Blessing of the Pets service

COMMENTS RELATED TO CHURCH FINANCES

Offer more financial education in general, and specifically education on how to give, how much to give.

Would love to see the mortgage paid off.

More information easily available about how much people give (in general; ranges etc.) and what different programs cost.

MISC.

We asked the question, "There are children and youth in our programs whose parents are not involved in any church. How can we reach out to them?" There were many ideas given, including having Beau and Nate provide church information "welcome bags" to new families and specifically inviting families to things like Weekend of Service, Christmas/Easter worship, Fall Fest...

A hope that the church could be more environmentally-conscious in everything we do from new purchases of appliances and lights bulbs to how many bulletins we print to the use of disposable paper products.