

# RE SHAPE

TRANSFORMING CHURCH INITIATIVE

## Small Group Summary Log

**Small Group Number: All**

**Small Group Date: August 3- October 8,2021**

**Small Group Leader: various**

**Number Present:**

**Primary Insights Generated This Session:**

**Summarizing Insights:**

- A lot had to do with community – ensuring it stayed together and even expanding it some
- Theme of embracing change and not going back to old ways

### **QUESTION #1**

The author has talked about the “Key Practices” of the local Church (34-35). As you have thought about your relationship with the Church, what are some of those “Key Practices” that have been, or should now be, essential practices that our Church must build its future on?

- The church must be welcoming, warm, inclusive, and friendly.
- The church must be worship centered – drawing us into the presence of God.
- The church must never forget the importance of scripture, prayer, and sacred music.
- The church must be willing to preach the whole gospel to bring salvation to all.

- We must not compromise on the historical traditions/teachings of the Church.
- We must not lose the importance of pastoral/congregational care for our members, especially our seniors and sick. Stephen Ministry worked well when we had it.
- Professionalism in all that we do, and all that we are.
- Emphasis on evangelism, witnessing, and faith-sharing to others.

## **QUESTION #2**

As you think about your relationships with your family members, friends, neighbors, or club/association members, what are some of the primary spiritual/faith-centered questions, concerns, or needs you have heard them express?

- There is so much disagreement and division among peoples in our world today. It is hard to talk to and connect with others. Many people I know have nowhere to go to have a safe, honest, respectable place to talk through the issues of our day. If our relationship with God is strong, and the church's connection with God is strong, then we can meet the divisions/disagreements in the church and in our culture with grace and love. We need to get back to the basics as a church that fosters relationships with ourselves and others. Having a strong foundation on faith will help with that.
  - Many I know are on the fringe of the church. With the overhanging question about the future of the Methodist Church, folks aren't interested in connecting until they can be assured of where we are going. The pastoral and lay leadership of our church needs to be clear in the direction this congregation will travel and be strong enough to lead us through the questions/divisions that may be coming.
  - We must create the environment where it is OK to agree to disagree in order to maintain our relationships. Must be shown how to give each other grace and acceptance.
  - We need to emphasize more of what we have in common than focusing on our differences/disagreements. We must model for others that we can be united in our faith, hope and love for God, each other, and the world. A broken world will see and stream to an authentic community of love.
  - People I know are caught in the spin-cycle of uncertainty these days. The insanity in our times, culture, and politics is driving us insane. The church must answer these challenges in the context of Christian love, kindness, fairness, compassion, and humility. The preaching of the gospel must be the compass that points a clear path to God.

- People, especially the younger people, want to go to a church that is not embroiled in politics, both in-house and national.
- We need more pastoral communication to keep us encouraged, motivated, focused and informed. This should not be done in the sermons.
- People we know are looking for a strong Bible-focused church that provides practical thoughts for everyday life applications.
- I monitor social media sites for residents and newcomers where people ask the group for church recommendations. In the last 5 queries, St. Mark was not mentioned.

## **CONTINUE BUCKET**

### **WORSHIP**

Continue to Live Stream Worship (7)

use FB live and other options that are more accessible; need better close ups  
improvement in the viewing experience and use of videos etc.

would like to know # from congregation and # not from our church

improve technology/streaming for Celebration service live. It has been exciting and intimidating when initiated.

improve it (2)

reaching persons by live stream and recorded worship

The ability to hear the sermon when you're not there in person

Two services (3)

In person worship

45-minute worship services

Announcements in Videos (2) - continue exploring new ways to use video/media to capture the spirit of the church and the outreach of the congregation.

More use of screens, less of bulletins

Continue to refine Celebrate. Music is the heart of a Contemporary Service. First and last songs should be up-tempo, toe-tapping, singable songs, that are a little more current. There is little life/joy in that Service.....Songs should not be dirges. Service sounds like a funeral....Music should focus on congregation participation not band performance.

Excellence in the music ministry (3), including instrumentalists, orchestra

Live Gathering Music for 10-15 minutes

Look for opportunities to blend praise music in traditional worship services – Gospel Choir

Greeters, worship guides

Morning prayer

Offering baskets in lieu of passing plates

Prayer time in the Celebrate Service

Reading the Gospel in the services

Singing Benediction (traditional)

Continue to gather on the lawn once in a while for special occasions.

Environmental Sunday in April

Celebrate Service

have more cohesive band, doesn't necessarily seem to flow together. Whether this would be to pay some singers or other band members to make more cohesive.

the new format

The times of the services as they currently are

Hand sanitizing stations. Especially when/after pandemic ends and especially flu season

Masking and social distancing- If someone has cold, cough, runny nose ,sneezing for any reason, but especially during flu season.

More safety and more healthy awareness, which turned out better than expected for the good of all.

## **DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT**

“Kids with sticks”

All SS Classes

Bible studies: in person and ZOOM option during the meeting for those who cannot come

Children/youth ministries under new leadership but look at different times of meetings

Continue to promote and expand the Sunday School for all ages.

Discipleship is our core, including being good disciples & making other disciples

Elderberries

Gospel choir

New approaches to the library

On-line Bible Study

Small group experiences

Sunday school between the two services

Youth choir (2)

Youth mission trips

Youth Prayer Partners (infancy)

Zoom for groups (5)

even if you're out of town you can be in meetings

not have to drive to Seneca. While hybrid isn't ideal it's very helpful to have the option to zoom when you work all day.

Church communications

Weekly Pastor videos for communication

Church directory, Ministry guidebook

Continue safe health practices/protocols – but not too rigid to lose contact.

Hospital/hospice/shut-in visitation

Visitations for new members, sick and elderly

In person meetings

Small groups for music

Socialization on Sundays in the Narthex & Atrium

Saint Mark does a good job in providing ministry to retired/older adults.

We like the adaptations that have been instituted.

We like the old stuff too since we did not have much in our stop list.

We want to be together either in person or on line.

Continue to value children. Continue to plan inter generational activities (also something to explore...how to do this untraditionally...ex: replacing a youth choir tour with an inter generational trip to explore different cultures and serve different communities)

## **SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS**

Outreach ministries (4),

with continued openness to new ideas

Marvin's Kids, Anne Hope feeding, Rise Against Hunger, etc

local missions are so important but we need more members to engage and to get the youth more involved (youth involvement should NOT be separate)

Develop 5-year plans, including succession planning

Continue sharing our facilities with "outside" groups and organizations.

Donation Wednesdays (5) – valuable way to help others (could be a signature ministry of Saint Mark)

Ministries, especially Music for all ages, Seasonal devotional events, Quilting, Elderberries, Marvin's Kids, specific "circles", mission auctions & projects, prayer groups, many others

More work with UMCOR after seeing them here – having people from Saint Mark trained and/or finding other ways to support them rather than just donating after a disaster

Partner Saint Mark disciples with persons in the community who are in need (Like Faith and Action kind of adopting Robert and Nick Price. The Tornado task force did something like this). Don't want to duplicate a service already being provided in community.

Potato Drop (2)

Rise Against Hunger

The two-three weeks after the tornado we took meals to Saint Mark members without power (the meals being made at Clemson UMC by Saint Mark members when UMCOR was around). Maybe there's a way to do this moving forward – if we have Wednesday night meals or when we cook for Ann Hope that we intentionally package some meals to take to some of our members who need a meal that week (can't get out/need to be uplifted)

Working with Habitat in the Community

Missions:

The once a month activities done by our special friends ministry.

### **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Continue online giving (2)

On-line pledging

Alms offerings online

Adjusting staffing/personnel needs to best meet our new goals and ministries as a result of this study.

Legacy giving (in its infancy)

### **OTHER**

Wednesday night program – youth and adults – with 30-45 min program/entertainment

Wednesday Night Supper (2)

Continue being flexible and adaptable in all areas of the church.

### **STOP BUCKET**

#### **WORSHIP**

Is Live Stream worship really necessary? Is recorded worship enough? Pandemic could get worse, so may need to.

Being expected to read out of the hymnal – please keep the words on the screen in traditional. I have dyslexia and it's really difficult to follow along in a hymnal, especially since I didn't grow up with them. I think this is probably less intimidating for visitors too.

Passing offering plates (4 or more)

Bulletins

Crinkle cups for communion (4)

Being afraid to say the word justice or social justice from the pulpit and stop being fearful to preach about the subject – our young people need to hear about these issues

Changing worship times.

Passing of the Peace.

Worship guides collecting offering – use the baskets at the door to worship for collecting offerings

Children's story (until we have a regular core of children to come up) especially now that we are streaming. This may have an impact on church image.

Stop the pandemic hysteria. If we can go to the grocery, Walmart, Lowes, restaurants, etc. without masks, we should be able to do so at church. Masks should be optional.

Stop being one-sided on major Social Justice issues. This church seems to be evenly split with progressives and conservatives. Communications and activities of the church should reflect that....I don't like being scolded for my stances....UMW has gone completely progressive. It is not for me anymore.

Stop Celebration Service-“It dilutes the congregation”.

Kids singing at multiple services in one day.

(or at all while we are still in a pandemic and they are not old enough to be vaccinated)  
pretending St Mark isn't polarized and address the different "theologies" that members have

(there is no way we will survive what is coming without having these

Sermons that compare Jesus to an atomic bomb (and other sermons that have driven us from services that the kids aren't participating in. I don't feel like the Methodism I grew up with is reflected at times in the message given

## **DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT**

Figure out how to better support ministries for children and youth.

We have too many committee and ministries with overlapping roles and responsibilities. We need to consolidate and redefine clearer mission statements and objectives.

Reduce number of meetings through consolidation

Some committee work/teams responsibilities/activities overlap. Can consolidate looking at Ministry Guide.

If an effort doesn't get the support it needs then stop sponsoring it

Stop Wednesday night dinners (3), not healthy. Offer programs of educational value.

Children's Choir with masks and low attendance – "the way it now is, it is not fun" for the kids

Forming and having all these committees for everything!

## **DISCIPLE CARE**

If we want young families to participate, we need to accommodate best times for children, youth and young adults/working parents to participate. May need to consider providing child care for parents to participate.

The Heartbeat needs a major overhaul. It is boring, the same redundant messages every week, too long. We suggest links in the Heartbeat to our SM website. Can we benchmark other church newsletters?

Redundant service announcements. They are defined in our bulletins and heartbeat and do not need to be reviewed in Sunday service.

Church being locked and closed

Snacks in the atrium

Pet Blessing

CDC: We need to determine if the CDC is a ministry of our church or a breakeven enterprise for our community. What is the value of the CDC? There is no interaction between the CDC and the church. The children and parents are not involved in our church ministry. Maintaining & upgrading the facilities is costly for minimal benefit. It is an untapped opportunity that needs investigation. If little opportunity for improvement is identified, we should stop the CDC activity or outsource.

Stop CDC at the level it is now operating, inefficient director and staff not prepared, an embarrassment to the community, not supported by but one family from St. Mark

CDC- if it seems to be working inefficiently, dated, etc there are better options to use space or have a different program come in altogether. Or bring up to current standards and run it like it should be.

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Sell the Parsonage when Todd gets a new assignment. We should update the recent Trustee proposal. Not only is the financial opportunity to the church significant, it also would provide a pastor's housing stipend and the opportunity to build his personal equity.

Less financial requests on a weekly frequency. We have too many "special" requests, while we are giving and pledging annually.

Mission fundraisers since that is now included in the budget.

Stop selling items in the atrium on Sundays-Jesus ran money changers from the temple.

## **OTHER**

The members of our congregation reacting in a negative way to different viewpoints

So many people choosing to leave our church

## **EXPLORE**

### **WORSHIP**

Completely different way to do online church, with interactive components, not just watching church from home

I want "real" communion! I will not miss the little cups and am dreaming of the day we can have real bread. I appreciate attempts to make communion special even now, but it's not the same. I hope we'll continue exploring ways to move toward this.

Integrating scripture into middle of message

May need a technically trained PAID person to help with sound in both worship services.

Midnight Christmas Eve service, Easter sunrise service, and other specialty services.

More attractive service to children and youth

More kinds of music experiences – orchestra? And opportunities for all music groups to be together

More laity participation in the worship services as has been done in the past e.g. lay readers

Open church for worship

Other Comments: At Easter, we noticed that being outdoors was well received – we found a way to be together when the advice being given for gathering was “no”. Let’s continue to be creative and “find a way”.

Pastors should react to circumstances in the community and world—not just preach a sermon prepared months earlier. (Ex-tornado, Black lives matter)

Prayer requests

Professional videos for inclusion in worship (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer used on World Communion Sunday)

Recognize the online congregation in the Welcome in both traditional and celebration worship services.

Sharing our pulpit with Ann Hope, Friendship, etc

Speak out on Social Issues from the Pulpit

social justice topics and messages that are goal oriented on how to be a better human.

Use an Order of Worship in the Methodist Hymnal for the traditional service.

Change our worship to one Blended Worship Service—we are all the Body of Christ

Mix great hymns and contemporary music in worship

All music should be able to be sung by congregation, limit Celebration vocalists from impromptu renditions

Announcements should be after the organ prelude once the service has started and does not need to be exclusively from pastors—we need other faces of St. Mark sharing with congregation.

collaborating with other churches on service days and social justice awareness and education days

New contemporary songs for our celebration service

Different singers for the celebration service

Include Lord's Prayer in every worship service.

Prayers during worship for world events/tragedies/people suffering, our Armed Forces in harms way.

## **DISCIPLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Youth and children**

More activities for children, youth, and families in our neighborhood. Why hide Trunk or Treat out of sight in the lower parking lot? More visibility.

Strengthen and create youth programs, including choirs, project ministries and more. We are hopeful that Maria, Minister of Family Outreach, ( and Laura with the new youth choir), will significantly improve all our youth programs.

How do we reach the young families in the CDC and help them to feel welcomed and wanted in the life of the church? Do we need to invest in higher salaries for CDC workers to get a more highly qualified person to help the children to grow?

Youth work trips (not just choir)

New ways of having children participate in Worship

New ways to make church more fun and meaningful to children:

New ways to make music part of the children's Christian education (Sunday School)?

Youth handbell choir

Redeveloping strong programs for children, youth, and families.

Youth area- possibly add a coffee bar, no strict Sunday school hours, more outside events

### **Bible studies**

Alternate between Bible study and other lessons/ programs for families (parents separate from kids but talking about the same topics) on an evening during the week or month.

Men's Bible Study

More pastor-led Bible studies.

Offer more options for Faith Formation (in person/zoom) – bible studies, topical studies

### **Small groups**

Building more small groups (like this one) where we can get to know each other better – especially those that go to the service we don't attend.

Mid-week small groups in homes

More Small Group Study

Recreate an active men's group.

Neighborhood meeting groups – KIT (keep in touch?)

Explore Saturday evening programming or Sunday afternoon children activities

### **Sunday School**

Consider starting a new adult Sunday school class each fall.

Create an online Sunday school group.

Virtual SS

Rebrand Sunday School – variety of days/times? (2)

Adjust church Sunday School time—choir members miss the full class-very disruptive and choir members cannot fully participate

Lynn rekindling her involvement with the Misfits in some way or other

### **Other**

Consider another effort to increase volunteerism

Consider programs for singles or for people age 35-55 in general. Zoom meetings may be one way to get together, so babysitters aren't needed. Even if it's a social media network for support, that is a good start. Family retreats and church social events could be the foundation (post-Covid of course).

Create more intergenerational interaction – formal and informal.

Domestic violence/addiction etc issues – e.g. “Soap and Hope”

Encourage belief, love and action among members

Figure out what young families do want in a church – what is attractive and will help them to grow in their faith. How do we help them experience God?

Getting young families to our worship services

Greater emphasis on evangelism

Have SMUMC be an active participant in all “Newcomers” monthly meetings.

More special music/arts opportunities such as dance

More visibility at Newcomers meetings

Partner with other churches (Destiny church, New Harmony) to reach more people.

Reaching different cultures

Revitalizing the Walk to Emmaus community.

Revive efforts to identify then follow up with new residents

See if the Fellowship of Christian Athletes could engage with our church

Welcome bag—NO MUGS- for visitors

Saint Mark disciples need to get involved with young families in the community to establish relationships that may help a family adopt Saint Mark as a church family.

Teach doctrine of discovery

Theologic growth from scripture knowledge

Acknowledge we live on the land of Native Americans

Using Zoom for meetings for those who cannot attend

We need to make this church younger.

What are we doing to reach the unchurched?

Where do the college aged and young adult disciples fit in?

Difficult for families to come mid-week

Pulpit

Study social principles

Provide profile of new members to help members identify common interests

Maybe collaborate with another churches youth group?

doing something targeted toward young people/ young families (we are very few and unengaged)

how to get more younger people involved. I personally haven't felt pulled to attend St Mark in the recent years besides being a familiar place with family. Don't have many friends that go anymore and don't feel the kids program is great right now either. Not sure what the solution for this is currently though.

## **DISCIPLE CARE**

### **Communication**

Communication so that those who volunteer for something get a call back

Staying in touch with SM disciples via phone and visits

Modify our church communication processes. The COS has 41 members! That is 25% of our weekly congregation attendance. It is not a leadership decision making group...it is a communication meeting. Our Pastor has excellent weekly staff meetings, He needs a core group of 8-10 leaders who meet with the Pastor frequently to discuss issues, make decisions and move the church initiatives.

Improve and change the way that we communicate. Modify the Heartbeat and upgrade the website so that we use it as a tool to inform others about our wonderful St. Mark church and family. Consider a message board in the Narthex, Atrium and Gym publicizing next week's events, activities and key messages.

Rebrand Heartbeat – it's too long! Bullet points

More youth to 20s-40s year olds voices and viewpoints being heard as part of the church

Call every member of St. Mark and ask when was the last service they attended, if not attending ask why

### **Other**

Bereavement support group

Expand Caring Ministry-this is huge to involve the church in daily phone calls, checking on home bound, etc. Everyone is a caring minister

Provide regular home communion-not just occasionally, should be every time congregation

receives communion

Bringing back social time between services.

Initiate a “Bring them Back” campaign to all current St. Mark people who are not now participating in church activities or worship. Give them a call or take them to lunch and understand their issues... covid or other

May need stronger ministry to adults in 40-50's (still working, possibly taking care of children at home and/or aging parents)

More outreach to shut-ins (phone calls, zoom, special newsletter, birthday calls, etc.).

Restart Stephen's Ministry to assist with pastoral visitations to the sick and elderly.

We have a security plan that was developed before the pandemic. It is time to revisit this plan and consider an on-site Sunday resource officer now.

New ways to minister to the elderly/shut-ins

“SMURFs” (providing help with home repairs)

Listening to the needs of our older disciples

Resume coffee, refreshments and fellowship in the atrium—if someone does not want to participate they may go to the respective classes

Have the new Family Minister contact all families and have a meeting to share her vision/ideas- with excitement

Establish church contact team to visit/partner with shut-ins, hospital patients.

New member recognition/mentoring/First Friends. Along with photograph board and identification information for current members to view and welcome

Displaced family "adoption" program. Relocating into our community. Welcome foreign displaced families, also.

Phone call-a -week program to folks from St Mark not having live, in home communication- single, widow, widower, shut-in.

## **SERVE OUR NEIGHBORS**

### **CDC**

Figure out how to make the CDC more of a ministry of the church

Improve the CDC situation or eliminate. Get involved with the CDC to better communicate and participate in events. Meet with the children & parents to determine their needs to have them participate with our St. Mark family.

Reaching out to CDC families – pastor involvement – pastor and staff more visible in CDC - family outreach minister involved with activities – music involvement

doing something different with the CDC (or help/ have more control over what they are doing since the community associates it as a part of St Mark), it's embarrassing

### **Facilities**

Making our facilities more available to the community

A place for after school activities

A place for outside community activities (like AA)

Showers for those in need (2)

Ways to use our church campus and facilities to reach out to the community

May need more rooms capable of audio/visual than just Common's, Acts, Conference

Turn on the water fountains-shouldn't have to fill a water bottle in the bathroom

American Flag at front of the church

### **Other**

Bring Salkehaticie back to St. Mark. Could also work with Habitat and ReBuild Upstate organizations

Adopt a Missionary Family

Awareness programs for community agencies

Begin a signature ministry that helps Saint Mark impact the community (Marvin's kids does this, but it is seasonal)

Develop and train a church community response team to help with emergencies.

Hold Rise Against Hunger, or other community service projects that bring Christians from different churches together for a common cause.

Develop ministries with other congregations

Ministry for Homeless – offer places to sleep one night “ecumenically” in the community with coffee in the A.M.

Revitalize SMUMC Outreach. We should build relationships with area leaders, police, specific area agencies to identify opportunities for us to participate. Opposed to helping all in some piecemeal manner, we should prioritize our effort/resources on the needs of the most critical where our outreach can be most helpful. “Define the needs & Focus our Outreach”. Identify needs for Ann Hope, Food Pantry, Family Promise, Ripple of One, Rosa Clark, Chaplin Fund, Safe Harbor, Epworth Children’s Home, Utica area, Our Daily Bread, our Daily Rest, Ride to Work, Wilderness Way, Oconee United ministries

Revitalizing SMURF’s or something similar.

Volunteer opportunities-coordination with local community services

Serving disadvantaged

Start ERT to respond to natural disasters

Substance abuse programs

We want to be the hands & feet of Christ in our community.

What is our church known for? What is our community image? What will Seneca miss if we are not here? Begin a strong PR presence with social media.

I really enjoyed the potato drop contributing to the community and working with another church. I'd like to see more community service opportunities.

5th Friday program where a group from St Mark in months with 5 Fridays helps feed the hungry. But within our community- Our Daily Bread.

Ways to involve Utica families in some of our programs.

## **ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Building use policy

Establishment of endowments

Increase pastor discretionary funds

Landscaping. Three eyesore areas that need to be taken care of.

On-line access to individual giving

Regular updates on financial position

Appropriate time to raise money for ministries at the church-Wednesday night suppers

Use current available resources through the UMC to grow our congregation without purchasing programs

Encourage our staff and other church leaders to utilize the resources of the United Methodist Church. They are well-researched, free except for a few online classes, and designed to help navigate churches through our times.

<https://www.r2hub.org/library> \*\*\*<https://www.umc.org/en/content/peace-with-justice-sundar-ministry-article>

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/about-resourceumc>

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/>

<https://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories>

<https://www.umnews.org/>

## **OTHER**

I miss potlucks and church meals a lot – and I wasn't expecting to miss these! I think God is leading us to create ways to connecting in old and new ways.

I think we are being led to build a more inclusive community. Including more than the people within our four walls – the technology we now have and are using helps us to reach more people with what we are already doing in worship (x 2 people)

One pastor

Restart Wednesday night dinners and interesting program topics/classes. (2) Identify good outside teachers and speakers for Wednesday night dinners programs and Sunday school.

Saint Mark used to be more intentional about being mindful of environmental issues and climate justice. Revisit?

We desperately need a "Growth Plan". Either we grow or downsize. Our membership is declining, our campus is one large city block, and we have many needs for outreach in our community. A comprehensive plan with proactive marketing, is needed to increase our church family. If we are unsuccessful, we should consider downsizing our church facilities: Gym, kitchen, Boy Scout building, Parsonage. Consider benchmarking other area churches who are successful in growing membership. Hold classes for new member and assign a

church mentor to each.

Rebrand Wednesday night dinners

Healthier meals

Monthly or quarterly with focus on social justice?

Programming

More opportunities to Worship/serve/fellowship w/ New Harmony

### **Summarizing Insights:**

#### **For the Continue Bucket:**

What do you observe about this bucket?

- All seem positive
- They all are part of core elements of the church
- All the new actions (on-line worship and giving, Zoom meetings) relate to technology

What is the direction suggested thru this list? (no responses)

What is exciting or intimidating?

- How to improve the technology – financial commitment

#### **For the Stop Bucket:**

What do you observe about this bucket?

- Not much in it
- We are doing a lot of things right already

What is the direction suggested thru this list?

- Keep doing what we're doing with a few tweaks

What is exciting or intimidating? (no responses)

#### **For the Explore Bucket:**

What do you observe about this bucket?

- Full – lots of ideas
- Lots of energy/excitement to move forward

- Lots of variety – different ideas for different people to explore

What is the direction suggested thru this list?

- Lots of opportunities for growth

What is exciting or intimidating?

- Not intimidating

#### **QUESTION #4**

What is your primary takeaway from our group time today? What should be the direction of our church suggested by these buckets?

- Revitalizing children, youth, and families.
- Ensure the “pioneers” are taken care of.
- More pastoral/congregational care.
- Energizing and engaging worship to help us face the uncertainties of the new week.
- More connection time with each other to build relationships and share our lives.

#### **Additional Observations by Small Group Leader:**

- We really needed more than one hour to share our thoughts on buckets comprehensively.
- The group took the field work very seriously which generated a lot of discussion about ways we can make our church more involved in the lives of our congregation and those in our community.
- As the rain poured throughout the day, so the ideas and thoughts of the group members poured into our discussion questions for the night. It didn't take long to get some rather full buckets. Their ideas/comments are listed as they were shared and are not in any order/sequence of priority. Most of our group is 15+ year members of the church and have a firm memory of our history and the programs/practices that we have had in the past. You will sense some of that collective memory here. Everyone participated and shared. Everyone listened to the thoughts of others without offense or challenge. Our discussion as we clarified our responses to post in this log was cordial and clear. This is a great group. I have enjoyed being with them. Though, as a pastor, some of these thoughts hit at the core of my calling/ordination, I included them as presented, as instructed. Just be assured that everything said was done so with the best intentions and hopes for the church's long-term future and ministry.
- This really became a “brainstorming session” where people shared ideas and fed off each other's comments. It was great discussion!
- There was some confusion about the “stop” bucket – whether it meant stopping things that are currently taking place (including things we started

during the last 18 months) or was limited simply to things that stopped when the pandemic struck and should not be restarted at this point. I captured all the thoughts regardless of which view people were taking.

- There were no reservations noted as to whether it would be possible to do all of these things. Not much thought was given to prioritizing these – people seemed to believe that all these things were necessary and could be done, and all were important for the future of the church.
- It will be very helpful to group these ideas into the five functional areas of the church as outlined in Chapter 2 of the ReShape book: Worship, Disciple Development, Disciple Care, Serving Neighbors, Managing Assets.
- Clearly, the discussions in the first three weeks of meetings has stimulated consideration in all of these areas. I made no effort to steer the conversation in this direction – I felt it was more important to capture ideas and include everyone in the conversation, and there was a lot of energy in the group to just “dream” in this meeting.
- A very vocal, interactive meeting with many comments.  
We are ready to move forward  
Everyone is responsible for their own health—stop with mask mandates, closing the church, etc
- Excitement for new growth.

### **Small Group Leader Needs or Questions:**