

TAPESTRY COTTAGE MEETINGS

FEB 10-20, 2008

9 meetings, (A-I in Responses below)

69 people

Question 1: What do you need or hope to have in your church community?

A. Hymns, New formats, blend of world religious practices, soup kitchen, volunteer coordinator, Paid Bookkeeper, community presence and outreach, No joys and concerns, concert hall/multi purpose room, playground

B. Kitchen, janitor service, great sermons are key, programs, large space, permanent building makes a big diff.

C. Physical Building: Not commercial looking, Green, Office space together – not spread out as now, Kitchen, Playground, Central courtyard, Classrooms, Dedicated sanctuary and social hall, Adequate parking, Good sound system, Drop down screen in sanctuary, Nursery, Nice façade/marquee, Central air conditioning, No bathrooms in sanctuary

Outreach: More members from universities/young adults, More music, Publicize adult forums more widely, Internet/MySpace/Facebook, Ads in college newsletters

Inreach: Circle suppers important, During the merge process have special activities with two churches,

Music: Choir more often, Alternative music – guitar, drums, etc.

Social Events: Do events together rather than stay in separate congregation groups, Multiple book groups, etc.

General: Cleaning service, No more renters to deal with, Potential cost savings in building/buying new building: Tax deductions available to contractors/suppliers who provide goods and services below cost (charitable contributions)

D. More music; Keep Joys and Concerns; Two ministers; Quality Sermons; Building that nourishes worship (meditational, inspirational feel); Location in area of a University (outreach to younger generation); Paid cleaning crew; Fully equipped kitchen; Cohesive community outreach; Council for representatives of each specific interest group; Easier way to buy Scrip (quiet, separate place for purchase, rather than in social setting.....online?)

E. Minister in the pulpit each Service, More adult education and groups, Spiritual service (not so much music as joint service), New England style building, Grounds/greenery around the building, Real kitchen with hot water, All on one level, if possible

F. Inspiring Minister (all agreed); Outreach to community, Strong RE program, Singles program, Aesthetically pleasing building, Fully equipped kitchen, multi-purpose rooms, Outdoor area for children's play, Adult Education classes.

G. Would expect joys & concerns disappear b/c too many people. Maybe write it down. Need to look at it. How could we get caring committee involved, maybe?

Note that other UU congregations (even larger ones) have something.

One of the draws is the “small family atmosphere” – and one of the ways you achieve that is joys & concerns. Gives a way to get to know people more / better. Worry that if larger, people may become anonymous. Likes rituals that are participatory. How to keep togetherness & ways to learn about one another. Need way to have small group activities AND ways to ‘cross-pollinate’ so it maintains some way to stay integrated into the larger organization. How large would a combined congregation be? About 350-400 How would we be welcoming with a larger congregation? Maybe “pair up” with a mentor/’big brother/sister’? Get asked to participate in committees / groups. Make sure that everyone (members & friends) gets a call regularly – maybe 1x/quarter or semi-annually. As we get larger, this gets harder and more important. More: Would love to have a choir every Sunday.

Natural inclination of people ‘down south’ not to socialize with people ‘up north’, Geography bothers some the ‘most’. E.g., Book Groups – would there be 2, both at congregation building? Or 2, one north and one south? Need ways to balance geographic convenience with ‘segregation’.

Concern – block out time (e.g., rentals to others); would like to either have no renters, or avail space for us during rental times, Need a kitchen, Would like to use green standards for building selection & remodeling, Parking! More of it!, Like having the kids in the early part of the service. People like to see them. Story for all ages is good; gives thing to discuss w/ parents. May need to be more cognizant of time w/ them sometimes, Curious about the differences between OCUUCs 2 services, Likes the ‘eclectic’ nature of our services. Good mix of ‘guest speakers’ at Tapestry, and want to have that external view a bit, Assuming 2 ministers, want ministers in the pulpit most of the time, Take best of guests and use them, This I Believe service is always enjoyed, Want to be fair compensation (“absolutely want”), Likes Women’s Wisdom, Circle Suppers, Book Club, Travel group, Social Action, Nursing outreach – work w/ local hospital, Preschool would be great. Good income, Arts, concerts, Maybe provide / prepare food for seniors, shut-ins, Meals on Wheels, Note: the joint Social Action meetings have been interesting – they’ve got lots of interests, but seem a little scattered, Would like to have Parents group, maybe. Maybe a young adult group. Singles group. Teens,

Concerns about failures of mergers, Feel this is a matter of survival – too many budget issues, never get a building,, Membership committee is going to need to be very strong, organized to be welcoming and intimate for newcomers; greeters should ‘hand off’ new people to someone in the congregation/service. Use Jan Meslin / Bev Huff example, Like the ‘introduce yourself’ of the visitors, Keep the background introduction for new members in ceremony; put it in newsletter, Discussion about ‘prefer 1 service’ vs ‘prefer 2 services’ – both viewpoints were represented. Most could see pluses both ways, AV concerns. Need better setup for AV so that groups can use it w/out having to get volunteers in to set up (like Gary & Sal have to do today)

H. Small community church – afraid to lose the close feeling we now have, Close location – do not want to drive too far, No more “preaching to the choir,” meaning we are on board with gay rights, vegetarianism, etc. don’t need so many services on them, Choir and good music
More active in PSWD

I. Dynamic minister, great people, opportunity to have deeper relationships, opportunity for new experiences, more people and opportunities, Good Services. More of what we have.

Question: 2 What is your "sacred cow"...the one thing that is essential to you in a church home?

- A.** Great minister, tolerance and acceptance, great RECY, Pastoral Care, democratically determined services, caring environment
- B.** Great minister (many felt Rev. John is their main reason for coming and wondered if Tapestry was just a stepping stone for him to move on to larger endeavours), variety in terms of topics for sermons/programs, strong RECY, the compassion of congregants, This I Believe Services, rituals (same songs, etc.)
- C.** ****Ministers**** – good one(s) very important, Location/travel time, Try to be close to freeway, CRE great program, Two CRE staff, one each for youth/young adults, Diversity in programs
- D.** Meaningful sermons (several people chose this); Good music program; Aesthetically pleasing worship space; Inclusion of youth in worship services; Worship committee active in promoting quality worship.
- E.** Children’s time & Children’s participation in the service, More “sacred” familiar hymns, Choir! Would like more active, larger choir, “Talk Back” at one service
- F.** Inspiring Minister, More Pastoral Care, Facility that can be expanded for future growth.
- G.** Joys & concerns / way to get to know each other. Personal touch / intimacy – felt part of the congregation from day one, Social action is critical. Like our name “Tapestry”. (Not really a ‘sacred cow’.) Not worth keeping the name IF their congregants don’t want it, but could be cool if we kept it.
- H.** Want small friendly congregation, not so sure growth is good

I. Quality Services and minister, home of our own, sense of community of like-minded people, small groups like covenant groups, Good Minister (2), intellectual stimulation.

Question: 3 What is your biggest concern about a possible OCUUC/Tapestry merger?

- A. Proximity (not too far), bad acoustics, loss of volunteerism, five no concerns
- B. Too far, congregation getting too big and lose the nurturing feeling of a small church. More minister time in pulpit. Some feel John is away too much, especially the summer when he was on sabbatical, people really didn't like 2 months of guests in the pulpit.
- C. Lose intimate atmosphere, Too far to drive, Since they are so much bigger, can we blend into their activities? (will Tapestry be overwhelmed?), Must welcome each other!
 - One or two services? One best for children, Joys and concerns,
 - a. Make sure children participate
 - b. More difficult with larger group
- D. Ability to find a building which is aesthetically pleasing and includes full kitchen facilities.
- E. Working out compromises in service – seems all will lose something, Visiting between congregations prior to actual joining, Can we NOT rent out to others? It creates problems, Location is important – not too far
- F. Location/distance, loss of volunteerism and meeting attendance due to increased distance.
- G. Losing the personal touch, intimacy, Geography / location.
- H. Too big, Too far, Personnel issues – who goes, who stays on the staff?
- I. not enough true mingling of members, loss of members, not able to find suitable site, loss of intimacy, too much singing

Question: 4 What would you see as an advantage of joining forces and creating a larger church community?

- A. More community visibility, more people to do the work, our own building, more bang for buck, more opportunity, good facilities
- B. More programs, more visibility, less money problem
- C. Become legitimate, Visibility in the community Sense of “home” church, Diversity of programs/activities, Bigger potlucks/vegan choices, Better music, Meet more like-minded people
- D. More pastoral visits; Support for individual members; Opportunity to create satellite groups; more community visibility; more people to do the work..
- E. More visible in the community, we will grow, More groups for members to join, More volunteers to manage the workload, Can more easily afford to own our own building, Meeting more new people (more bridge players!)
- F. Opportunity to expand programs, our own building, more community visibility.
- G. Programs Building – have our own bldg (not throwing \$ away in rent; but concern expressed that we NOT end up with a building and lose the spirit of the congregation.) Economies of scale - \$\$, volunteers, staff, presence, social outreach, county impact, Quality minister, Financial Volunteers could go towards programs, activities, etc., instead of cleaning, maintenance (NOTE: group wants paid maintenance & cleaning). Currently a lot of volunteer efforts are aimed at ‘running the place’.
- H. Recognize and utilize PSWD resources, Music will be better, More visible in the community, Bigger Young adult program, More volunteers.
- I. Our own building, closer, more resources, more people, greater variety of activity, association, interest groups, feasibility, a home of our own, efficiencies of scale, more synergy, more visibility, more significance in OC, larger congregation.

Question 5 Would you come to the new congregation?

- A. 8 yes, 0 noes
- B. 8 yes, 0 noes but might attend less.
- C. 12 Yes, 0 noes
- D. 7 Yes, 0 noes

- E. 6 Yes, 0 Noes
- F. 6 Yes, 2 Maybes
- G. 7 Yes, 0 Noes
- H. 8 Yes, 0 Noes, Some might come less often
- I. 6 Yes, 0 Noes

Other

Concern over whether or not a merged community would be called "congregation" or "church".....definitely prefer to be called a "congregation."

Input from youth:

- Good chance to grow
- Like bigger programs
- More friends
- Like visiting other religions
- More kids own age would be good
- 3 for 3 positive

Potential cost savings in building/buying new building:

- Tax deductions available to contractors/suppliers who provide goods and services below cost (charitable contributions)

One word reaction to merger:

- Excited (2)
- Change
- Energized
- Fortunate
- Fun
- Good
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- Other comments – several felt in the joint service, the kids part was way too long, even those who had kids agreed. All felt we quickly need SMALL group activities betw Tapestry and OC to get buy in and get folks to make friends quickly at OC. Ideas were circle suppers, retreats with OC rather than other congregations, Contra dancing, Habitat for Humanity, Corazon, Adult RE, Evensong, social actions, etc.
- What sorts of fears / concerns were raised by OCUUC in their meetings?