

Churubusco UMC Community Listening Team's White Paper

APPROVED by the Administrative Board 8.13.2018

Churubusco UMC exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the World by providing H.O.P.E. (Hospitality; Offering Christ; Purpose; Engagement).

Background

A Church-wide call was issued by Rev. Lundy in the Fall of 2017 for any interested congregant to join the Community Listening Team. The purpose was simple: to find out what the community's needs are and how best we might address some or all of them. We can't truly be the "Community's Church" without deep listening to those beyond the Church's walls. Six individuals answered the call to join Rev. Lundy: Bill Anders, Patrick Carpenter Ashton Ford, Cynthia Miller, Sean Motter and Suzi Weible. They had actively met from January to August, 2018.

Methodology

- Demographic information
- Online surveying
- Person to person surveys
- Community leader surveys
- Nursery School surveys
- Informal conversations
- Rev. Lundy's 171 visits
- Town Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Whitley Co. Community Foundation
- Bible study
- Prayer/discernment

Insights

1. Surrounding 5 miles around CUMC is younger and wealthier than the team assumed (www.missioninsight.com):
 - a. 2017 numbers (5 miles)—pop.: 8,274; avg. age: 38; avg. household income: \$73,468
 - b. CUMC average worshipper age: 58 (20 years older than avg. age of community)
 - c. Food pantry age—40% under 40
 - d. Tuesday food giveaway average age—64
 - e. Married-couple households will decrease by 2.9% before 2022
 - i. Cohabiting for 50 years old and older—fastest growing demographic
 - f. Singles living alone: 42% of total US population (www.pewresearch.org)
 - i. Single parent household 25% of 5 mile population
 - g. First time in recorded history: more US adults who are single (www.pri.org)
2. There are over 4,000 unchurched individuals in the Smith and Green Townships
3. People are longing for healthy and productive connections to others
4. There is a deep desire to "serve" (in many different expressions)
5. Area residents are eager for the right continuing educational opportunities
6. 90% of United Methodists ("Get Their Name") grew up and/or related to other UM
7. We are out of touch w/young people
 - a. "Millennials" [born: 1980s-1990s] are the largest current generation
8. We can't continue to do old things and expect new results
9. Who will follow us here and what kind of Church will they need?
10. We live in a post-Christian culture
11. We are not reaching our Kingdom potential
12. We have the greatest motivation to do the most good: the Love of Jesus Christ!

Opportunities

1. To position ourselves as THE 1st choice as a vibrant community partner
2. Continue to discern where the Spirit is already at work and join in
3. Increase online presence (worship; learning resources, meaningful connections, etc.)
4. Maximize marketing/community's awareness we are here
5. Expand nursery school offerings (to potentially add more days/hours/weeks)
6. Enlarge children and youth ministry offerings
7. Engage food pantry & food giveaway clients at systemic points of need
8. Align with Smith-Green Schools to offer tutoring and/or after school programming
9. Add physical fitness components for all ages
10. Develop additional offerings of "community" time (low-key/simple times of connections)
11. Partner with parents to offer "date night" childcare
12. Institute senior adult "day care" options (healthy fellowship/growth opportunities)
13. Locate and/or build indoor facilities for #s 4-12
14. Produce energetic discipleship opportunities, especially for under 35 demographic
15. We must realize that we are called to make the greatest impact beyond the walls of the Church
 - a. Do we care as much for those outside the Church as inside the Church?

First Step Recommendations

1. Create by 10.1.2018 a 6-10 person Outreach team to engage the entire Church in our outreach roles
2. Receive a White Paper by the Outreach team at the 1.28.2019 Administrative Board meeting
3. Create by 10.1.2018 a Young Adult team, so that: they engage the entire Church in our needed roles
4. Receive a White Paper by the Young Adult team at the 1.28.2019 Administrative Board meeting
5. Consider aligning some 2019 budget related to this White Paper
6. Re-engage remainder of items at the 1.28.2019 Administrative Board meeting for further study/action
7. To prayerfully make more commitments than excuses to be a missional Church