

## 2021 Mid-Year Meeting Breakout Groups Summary

**Participants:** Kathryn Vonderharr, Liz Kipp, Denny & Nancy Cramblit, Karen & John Knox, Treselia Stein-Greiner, Diane Dobitz, Deb Fitzloff, Penny Herickhoff, Bob and Gail Findley, Faye Mattison, Sue Chambers, Henry Panowitsch, Barbara Keating, Ted Downey, DeeAnn Nelson, Cathi Fouchi, Ken Davey, Jason Toupence, Tony Filipovitch, Kathy Brynaert, Becky Rossow, Anika Strasser, Nancy Blethen, Mike Ferguson, Todd Schweim, Lee Ganske

### **Question: What adaptations have we been making that you have found valuable?**

#### **Technology:**

- Worship technology has been great
- We like that many fewer vehicle miles are driven to meetings and gatherings (ii)
- We've been able to share our services with friends both near and far who might not otherwise participate (ii)
- We don't have to miss on snow days.
- Mobility challenged and families with kids are able to fully attend/participate without arranging transport or a sitter
- Exposure in services to the world with choices of music and speakers
- Zoom is good for outreach to newcomers to test us out at their own comfort level.
- Miss seeing the children
- Miss seeing people in-person (ii)
  - Report of staying away from Zoom Worship, because attending just makes her miss the congregation and church all the more
- The mute, un-mute issues sometimes get tricky for some.
- Having a weekly structure has been very helpful, it is helping to make this world feel normal.
- The technology is fantastic, however, it is like drinking skim milk as compared to the real thing.
- There was a dislike that people can block their video feeds and no picture is present.
- It is sometimes difficult to read the captions during service.
- People are very impressed with the rate of improvement that has taken place in UUFM Zoom services.

#### **Worship**

- **Rituals and Special Ceremonies** (Water Communion, Bread Communion, Holiday celebration bags etc.)
  - "I loved receiving these small gifts as expressions of love from my church family. These visual and edible gifts created memories that had lasting impact."
  - "I loved the chance to bake the cookies, make the bread, assemble or deliver the bags to friends and members as an act of love. This is something I could do and feel more connected, less separated from those I love."

- The special services and the gift bags have been fun and have a special meaning during these difficult times.

### **Music:**

- We like the musical variety and all the audio - video enhancements
- Choral group singing has encountered a huge historical and technical challenge because of being one of the riskiest activities from the public health standpoint and one of the most difficult to manage from the standpoint of electronic sound quality. The deprivation and separation from the experience will not be forgotten, nor should it be. (ii)
- Online choir singing doesn't work.
- Online video of singing has been working with everyone muted.

### **Child Faith Development**

- Youth group has been more fun. Better with more consistency and a good flow over Zoom (from a youth group attendee)
- I struggle with youth group meetings in the current format. "Let's do something outdoors. I worry that attendance will suffer once we come out of social distancing."

### **Community**

- We like the interactional breakout rooms and getting to spend time with a variety of folks. Breakout room randomness adds more contacts outside our usual table at the fellowship hall.
- A little harder to have quick conversations where you might just say hi in fellowship hall. Now you need to make it a bit more formal and reach out.
- Happy about transition to Zoom but what about those that did not come with us? How are we reaching them? It seems like a comfort/exposure thing.
- Ease with which members and friends to could gather virtually and safely to share (via Zoom and Facebook Live)
  - Book Group
  - Soul Matters Small Groups
  - Worship and Rituals celebrating life events
  - Special speakers, movies and Webinars (such as Think Resilience) - often asynchronous - at a time convenient to me
  - Impromptu gatherings to respond/react to community/world events such as the recent gathering to grieve the sacking of the US Capitol.
- The breakout rooms really work, it's great to see everyone in these rooms after worship.
- I love to see everyone's face!

### **Communications**

- **Weekly Update:**
  - I'm proud of the things my church is doing and saying that express my values too - It gives me hope and a sense of connection
  - I'm kept abreast of events and happenings in advance so I can participate if I wish. It helps me realize I should and can participate.

- The minister's message and other news regularly sparks personal thought, reflection or helps deepen my appreciation of the spiritual
- **FB Connect**
  - Easy and welcoming way to engage with, share and learn with others, make new friends & organize impromptu outings
  - Safe easy way to step inside and check us out without being button-holed for any purpose.
- **Web page**
  - Up-to-date info source (calendar etc.)
  - Important public face of UUFM in the larger community; shares who we are, what we believe, events and projects in progress,
  - Links to ways to get involved.
  - Some members don't realize that the Weekly links are tied to the UUFM Web.
- **Sermon Archive:** Appreciate anytime access to sermons I have missed in worship or I want to access again, on my own time
- **Web Use Data:** Impressed that we collect data on Web use etc.
- **Breakfast Group** has turned into dynamic group on Friday mornings.

#### **Stewardship**

- Silent auction and other fundraising might be adaptable to an electronic platform

#### **Serving the Larger Faith**

- We like the interaction with other UU congregations (iii)