



PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

**GROWTH TASK FORCE**

MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

ATTENDANCE:

Yes	No	
X		Chris Bonhoff
	X	Carol Brandenburg
X		John Cairns
X		Beverly Gores
X		Kelly Hugunin
X		Jay Matre

Yes	No	
X		Lynn Moline
X		Bill Read
X		Mariana Shulstad
X		Theresa Voss
X		Steve Wellvang
	X	Nicki Zeidner

**STAFF LIAISONS:** PAULA NORTHWOOD, DAN WOLPERT

**GUESTS:** NONE

**Meditation (Lynn)**

**What's on our minds? (Around the room)**

- Kelly - Rally Sunday Facebook post – #how we church, friend engaged in learning more – now what?
- Kelly - Academia Elze – how do we bridge families from the school to the church?
- Bill – Rally Sunday welcome table – the nametags were a hit – particularly with kids
- Note from Joan Smalley – new directory with people's names (email from 9/10) – paper printed booklet
- Beverly – what is new visitor protocol at Plymouth?
  - Paula - Plymouth postcard sent within 2 days of attending, signed by pastor
  - Theresa – Cookies to visitors at Mayflower
- Jon - Noted the energy on Sunday (well-publicized, events everyone could connect to, people mingling – different from normal coffee hour – set up properly, a good formula for events) (Sundays, Wednesday nights, etc.)
  - Thoughts on discernment – self-discernment, also the need to move towards more specific ways to move activate growth and enthusiasm

**On Brainstorming (Lynn)**

- Not quite ready for it yet
- Still understanding culture shift that's impacting religion
- Discernment process
  - Is growing membership our goal? Not yet stated.
- How do we define growth? – topic for future discussion
- Mariana - First need to address question, do we need to change? – Before we decide how/what direction before we grow.
- Reference: ["Canoeing the Mountains" book Tod Bolsinger](#)
  - Book Blurb from Amazon.com: *Explorers Lewis and Clark had to adapt. While they had prepared to find a waterway to the Pacific Ocean, instead they found themselves in the Rocky Mountains. You too may feel that you are leading in a cultural context you were not expecting. You may even feel that your training holds you back more often than it carries you along. Drawing from his extensive experience as a pastor and consultant, Tod Bolsinger brings decades of expertise in guiding churches and organizations through uncharted territory.*
- Paula - Can't just keep doing the same things harder, faster, again. Have to discern.

### Follow-up from last meeting (Lynn)

- Task force noted Top 3 common themes from “why I stay at Plymouth”???? following review of previous meeting input.
  1. Social justice/outreach
    - How church founded – small group of people doing
    - New exhibit – on outreach has always been part of the church
  2. Friendship/Belonging/Fellowship
  3. Experience for Kids
- Interesting observation – music and arts were not in group’s top 3 themes.

### Discernment (Dan)

- As it relates to the “Let’s get going and do something” inclination
- Movie recommendation: Of God’s and Men
- Discernment is paying very close attention to what is already going on and what has gone on in the past.
  - Spiritual practice = deceptively simple
  - Dan referenced an economist who has predicted much of what’s happened in Christendom in last 50 years
    - About his theories, sound so simple they almost sound dumb, but also deceptively *not* obvious
    - Looking for something incredibly simple, but also incredibly hard for us to see
    - Needle in a haystack idea - find the needle – paint it bright red so it’s easy to find
    - Look for the experience that is a different color
    - Choosing between “the good” (which is why brainstorming fails – could come up with 1000 good things to do in 30 minutes)
    - “The good” is the haystack
    - The assumption is God is already doing something here
    - Moral arc of the universe tends toward justice – there is already a ‘plan happening’ – an energy at work that is lifegiving, intelligent, caring – we simply need to begin to follow what that looks like
    - Spiritual thread running through us and our communities and we start to tend to that
    - Create an environment of “yes” (mind spiritual indifference)
      - Create a place where we are willing to engage and embrace different ways to do things –
      - Many of the things people try will fizzle out. SOME might take off – only way we’ll get to these is by paying attention to the ideas you are excited about
        - Each board was given \$1000 towards growth (leadership council should/could gather data and share)
      - “Yes, and...” (NOT “yes, but” because “yes, but” = NO)
        - Common “yes, but” = no budget, tried before, etc.
        - Not free if listening to a lot of ‘shoulds’
      - Paula - Example of “Yes, and” is that we’re finally able to change the Sunday morning schedule after trying to do this for 10 years
        - Looking backward and our initial experience in the present
  - Lot of opinions and ideas – not clear what of those are coming from God – allow us to listen very deeply so those we have deeply are able to rise up
  - From the movie clip – what did they do in the interim, period of discernment:
    - Pray together
    - Go to market all the time – plugged into community
    - Rich relationship with their neighbors
    - Personal reflection
    - Writing

### **Social Discernment Cycle Process (Dan)**

- Activating on the 5 phases of social discernment cycle:
  - Phase 1 - Understanding the structure/organization (Plymouth in general and growth)
  - Phase 2 - Describe the current situation (What is your experience in the org right now)
  - Phase 3 – Historical analysis (Looking backwards, history, some things that have happened, etc)
  - Phase 4 – Theological reflection (Take data/inputs from first couple of phases and asks theological question about what's happening)
  - Phase 5 – Taking all this and creating action plan

### **Next Steps:**

- Challenge – participate in something new. (IE, Wednesday night, participate 100 Hands or dishwasher needed for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – see Bill for this ☺)
- Social Discernment Cycle Homework (coming from Dan)

---

### ***Next Meetings***

Monday, Sept 24, 2018, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Monday, Oct 8, 2018, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Monday, Oct 22, 2018, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

---

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kelly Hugunin*