

Colonial Church Feedback Following the TAG Discovery Report

Never Change

- **Our welcoming spirit**
 - Accepting, warm, friendly, family feeling
 - Openness to everyone: all are welcome here, where ever they are in their faith journey
 - Non-dogmatic, safe from criticism/judgment
 - Don't have "rules" people must to follow
 - Inclusiveness
 - Relationships, family of faith, connectedness and community
- **Our deep spiritual foundation**
 - Abiding love for God
 - Commitment to Word of God, Biblical foundation
 - Biblical preaching and teaching
 - Centrality of Christ
- **Our appetite for learning and open-minded approach**
 - Openness to questions and different theological understandings, diversity of opinion
 - Appreciation for depth of understanding and education
 - Focus on teaching and learning
 - Openness to change; embracing new things, new partners and approaches (e.g., UR, African/French church)
- **Our vibrant worship experience**
 - Great music ministry: choir, music that is worshipful (not a concert), Mark Stover
 - Vibrancy of worship service, intentional call to worship, centering, listening, praying
 - Preaching strength, strong message

Also:

- Drawing from a variety of communities, not just Edina
- Making children/youth a priority
- Generosity
- Leadership focused on skill/gifting, not gender bias
- Distinctive Colonial traditions create a sense of community; keep so people can count on them (e.g., Thanksgiving Day service, MLK service, Service of Lessons and Carols)
- Beautiful building—should be attracting, not just attractive
- Quality and type of leadership
- Innové process
- Serving outside the church
- Congregational structure/governance
- Don't change name—unless a really good reason to change
- Continue to examine and question our focus and who God is calling us to be

Hopes for Future/How Different in 5 Years

- **Clear and Meaningful Mission and Vision—congregational and individual**
 - More missional yet grounded in personal transformation in Christ
 - Clear sense of mission/vision that gives focus and engages the whole congregation
 - More cohesive, integrated community that draws people in
 - Each understands how he/she fits into Colonial's vision—what each one's part is in helping Colonial achieve its mission
 - Helping each find his/her own purpose/mission (the 5% only you can do)
 - Innové-like mission to get members' skills involved
- **More Effective in Building Community/Engaging and Mobilizing the Congregation**
 - More sense of engagement and ownership in what's happening in the church
 - Better means to mobilize the members so they feel ownership
 - More small groups: intentional growth/covenant groups, ad hoc groups, singles group, family support groups
 - Reaching out and inviting people (not just generic requests) to serve, participate, volunteer; involve the uninvolved; now it's hard to know how to volunteer!
 - More intergenerational connections
 - More relational, connectedness, more face-to-face, more active facilitation of connections
 - Variety of adult ed and other opportunities to interact with people we don't know
 - Connecting folks with other Colonial members to meet/gather outside the church building according to their needs (e.g., nutrition coach and someone with health issues)
 - Previous ways to engage and connect (Sunday morning Gathering and Learning Groups, committees/boards, Circles, etc.) have been dropped; need new ones suited to the times
 - Ease of participation/connection; reaching out to and inviting those not involved;
 - More cross-congregational conversation and connections
 - Intentional multi-generational connections
 - More opportunities to hear and know each other's stories
 - Use technology to facilitate connections, community building (e.g., Colonial Next Door site)
 - Better process for dealing with church conflict—turn conflict into opportunity
 - Ministering to our aging population; re-energize, re-engage aging congregation
- **More Focus on Spiritual Formation/Development**
 - Life changing experiences that bring people to Christ and understand what that means
 - People will know what it means to be a Christian
 - Facilitate individual transformation in Christ—to provide the basis for our transformation as a church
 - Create Cursillo-type experience that instills new life/expand to new members
 - Ways to go deeper in our faith and spirituality
 - Facilitate spiritual growth; “sticky” faith is nurtured through spiritual growth offerings
 - Bringing the Gospel to new believers, the unchurched
 - Some kind of “inward mission” to reach a generation that doesn't know God
 - Continuing commitment to Biblical preaching and teaching
 - Helping people know Jesus as savior
 - Increased scriptural knowledge and praying
 - More dependence on the Holy Spirit

- **Attracting Families and Children/Youth**
 - Families make church a priority
 - “Go to” place for young people
 - More young kids, teenagers, young adults, families
 - Focus on families that want to keep church 1st
 - A full Meetinghouse for worship with a younger demographic
 - Build a recruiting initiative to encourage current kids and young adults to bring friends in
 - Children are a priority; display kids artwork, put it back on the walls at church
 - Don’t lose kids after confirmation; find ways to bring young adults back when home
 - Youth ministry that excites and attracts kids and facilitates their spiritual growth in face of school and sports.
- **Adult Education/Learning**
 - Culture of programs/growth that leads us “out” to bring people in
 - Equipping people, training people to reach out, pursue mission
 - More/better adult educational and spiritual growth opportunities, more chances for adults to study scripture
 - Alternative opportunities for adult education or choir rehearsal, so Wed night classes are more accessible
- **More Outreach to Greater Community**
 - Share our resources, blessings to address the needs of our community (Ephesians 3:20)
 - Continue to serve the world; work toward the good of all of God’s people
 - Extend contact to areas where there is need, more normal cross-section of humanity
 - Using our talents for a community-based mission in Minneapolis, more local mission work (even in Edina), minister to those in need on the margins (e.g., homeless teenagers)
 - Ministering on the margins, living in the fringes, dwelling in the brokenness in our world
 - Sacrificial in our outreach to needs of our community
 - Energetic social mission
 - Stronger social justice, social mission (e.g., Sanctuary church)
 - More diversity through connection and outreach
 - Congregation is more diverse, more ethnically diverse, more inclusive
 - Choral group involvement across cultural, socio-economic groups
- **More Relevant to the Community**
 - Relevant to our community; be the living room in this community; external people feel like this is a community; be the church kids drag their parents to
 - A community-based congregation—those living close by knowing who we are and what resources we have; participate in local projects/issues (e.g., discrimination in Edina, Veterans Day)
 - Find out what the surrounding community would look for in a church—understand our CONTEXT
 - Neighborhood expression of warmth and love to the unchurched
 - Change the name from “Colonial” and make doing so an opportunity to send a message about who we are to the community
 - It looks more like my neighborhood—more diverse and inclusive

- **Better Communication/Information about:**
 - What's going on and who is leading what and how
 - Opportunities for involvement and volunteering
 - Needs of the community
 - The many ministries people are involved in (e.g., Refugee Team)
 - Available pastoral care resources (e.g., Stephen Ministry, grief support, divorce support)
 - Next Door site for Colonial?
 - No advertising of what's going on at the church—inside or outside
- **Leverage the Building More Fully and Effectively**
 - Make whole front entrance an area where people want to sit and hang out together; have a big communications area
 - Start intercity preschool here, providing door-to-door transportation or a full-day, 5-day/week school
 - Building is more of a resource to our community (e.g., like using our gym, a K-12 school that expands Berry Patch experience, open Wed nights to the neighborhood, summer concerts)
 - Use building assets, like fireplaces and patio settings, more effectively

What Surprises/Stands Out?

- People really care about Colonial, cared enough to respond, they want to be involved
- Hopeful, positive about our future because of this process; looking forward to the Visioning process
- Good basis to start from
- Refreshing approach—answer in this room; didn't come in with the answers
- Presentation too superficial, too much fluff, cheerleading
- What is the "Westminister" model—opportunity we might have?
- What is a "real place" we can provide, to which people can belong? Not more social media, frenetic activity
- We have all been long-term members and are surprised that we didn't know each other
- Results not surprising, especially low Connectedness (relates to low involvement)--needs work
- Our Sunday worship is a real strength—why is national average higher?
- Congregation members have such disparate views
- Didn't consider the Congregational form of governance, it's distinctive approach to member involvement and congregational decision-making—do we need to re-evaluate use of committees, boards
- Glossed over true facts: our aging congregation, need to reach out to younger people/families
- A 30-something young man (visitor) was wondering why we weren't talking about Philando Castile, etc. in sermon or in adult ed. on MLK Sunday/weekend
- Want to recapture the vibrancy and energy of the past while looking forward to our new mission
- May need a mix of missional and attractational
- Need to figure out how to connect with millennials, especially those who don't know God
- Thank you for doing this. This is a wonderful church community. We can make good and growing changes.

Thoughts on What's Working Well

- **Our strengths—Building and Finances—do not appear to be in the areas that matter most**
- What is the significance of being so high in terms of the Building
- How can we use building more effectively; open church up, encourage other groups to use; host big Bible Studies
- What will happen if we make changes to the building
- Where/how may the building be a liability
- Although children's programs may be high quality, they are not yet significant draws
- We need to promote our assets (e.g., children's program), but there seems to be a gap for 5th to 9th grade (e.g., Hope in Richfield has *Breakfast Club* for them)
- The heart of Colonial is its people—talented, accomplished, devoted
- Music, worship, and sermons (deep understanding of the Bible translated into today's context) are great assets
- Think out of the box to attract new people to worship—not just Sunday, maybe Friday night; have 10:45 in Hearth room by fireplace—more intimate; make Praise service earlier and Traditional service later
- We have a great church, staff, and members—we need to use all more actively and creatively to grow inward and outward

Thoughts on What Needs Attention

- **Areas we are weak in--Vision and Connectedness--are areas that matter most**
- Need renewed focus on mobilizing and engaging people; helping them make new connections and participate more actively in the life of the church and in ministries
- Need to mobilize new members, need more opportunities for small groups
- Single people in the congregation can be lonely, hard to find their place
- Reach out more, get more members involved (e.g., bring back things like *Dine for 9* and fill with 3 different age groups in each)
- No boards/committees make it hard to connect; did away with the old forms, but haven't replaced them with a new way to create connectivity, build community and instill a sense of ownership and accountability
- Adult Education/Teaching ministry is a weak link
- Need to let others know who we are and what we're about
- Consider recruiting people who have left
- Need to get out of our 4 walls—into downtown, into business, out of Edina
- **Stop talking about "glory days" of the past—our "glory days" are in the future!!**

Questions

- What is the charter of the Visioning Team? What are we trying to achieve through this effort?
- What is the timeframe for the Vision?
- If there are concerns about Colonial staff, how can the Visioning Team speak candidly when the staff is in the room?