

Combined Congregational Input on Underlying Themes

Congregational Debrief and Input Gathering on Wednesday, March 7

- Deep, intimate, long-standing relationships
- Devotion of pastors to caring for the flock at critical times
- The experience of being known and loved
- Long-term, multi-generational commitments
- Welcoming, warm, non-dogmatic, embracing all
- Appreciation for differences—even eccentric figures—and all who serve
- Strong teaching, strong biblical foundation; strong, seminary-trained pastoral staff
- Theological diversity with core of faithful commitment to Jesus Christ
- Appreciation for beauty; refined, aesthetic sensibility/taste—fine music, architecture, décor, food
- Appreciation of meaningful traditions and rituals
- High quality, reverent worship, worshipful music
- Creative, fun-loving spirit
- We do “community” well when we work together on it
- We have to know where we’ve been before determining where we’re going—appreciate connections with long-standing traditions and long-serving families.

Notes prepared by Jim Silburn from small group discussion Wed night, March 7

- LOVE
- SUPPORT
- CONNECTION
- KNOW MY NAME
- SERVING / MISSIONS
- MUSIC
- RESILIENCE/STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

Congregational Debrief and Input Gathering on Sunday, March 11

- Strong head and heart combination
- Open-minded, non-judgmental, willing to question, encourages candid conversation
- Feels like home
- A safe place to be yourself, to share doubts, sorrows, and deep feelings
- Thoughtful, judicious approach when making ministry choices and commitments
- Parallel, simultaneous support for parents’ and children’s, husbands’ and wives’ spiritual growth
- Surrounding in love, praying and caring for families and individuals in need, dealing with serious illness

Input from the Women's Renewal Fellowship on Thursday, March 15

- Caring, loving, deep, personal relationships; safe place to be vulnerable, real
- Small groups—churches within church
- Worshipful, touching music
- Meaningful traditions—unique, creative, inspiring
- Welcoming spirit; open, non-denominational, tolerant
- High quality of people, programs
- Teaching and learning; eager to grow in faith
- Outreach—missions, generosity

Input from the Deacons

Key Themes from Most Meaningful Memory

Three clusters of themes- personal family, life experiences where someone (often staff) reached out; traditional worship where the music touched the emotions and senses; welcoming spirit--felt like coming home; community gatherings (Country Market etc.) and small groups

Key Themes from Heroes from the Past

Those mentioned all expressed love, caring, acceptance, a lot of one to one contact and care

Persons who built the connection between people - provided the "glue"

Input from the Church Council

- One on one connection; intimate connection/experience
- Multi-generational gatherings
- Impact that one person can make in good and stressful life situations

Input from the Chorale

- Participating in things like FMSC and wreath making helped you meet people who wouldn't ordinarily cross your path – important for building community
- Having venues to share our gifts and talents is important
- Community is key
- We need to have a place in a smaller group within the larger congregation – the Chorale, a grow and serve group etc.
- Shared experiences build connections between participants
- Jesus is central
- Impactful worship is important
- Innovation is important—Innove, Upper room etc.
- Maintaining at least some traditions is important too
- We need to be able to engage both head and heart
- Having and sharing the message of Christ is critical – we can't stop at meeting physical needs

Input from 1:1 Caregivers

- We support people in times of crisis
- We long for community, and are at our best when we support and facilitate it
- We're willing to stretch and move outside our comfort zones
- We're willing to be the hands and feet of Christ for others – in our church and around the world
- Shared experiences form the basis of relationships

Input from Sunday Supper at the Moen's on March 25 (Powells, Westgates, Lathams, Martis)

- Fostering/forging meaningful personal relationships with pastors, with each other, across generations
- Courageous, creative pastors, led by the Spirit to touch our lives with healing, hope, and celebration
- Welcoming, open, accepting, appreciation for wherever we are on our faith journey
- **Special concerns/ hopes:**
 - Being open and accepting of different journeys can be healthy; but being all things to all people can mean not standing for anything—theologically or socially
 - Excited to have Sara and a full staff; each bring different gifts and connections with the community
 - Need to cultivate inter-generational relationships, so each has opportunity to be “hero” to the other
 - Need to focus on equipping members for DISCIPLING, outreach, deeper life in Christ, Individual transformation
 - Praying for the church to be open to the working and power of the Holy Spirit

Input from Sunday Supper at the Fisher's

- Facilitating community and connectedness
- We recognize that faith is a matter of the mind, not just a heart-thing
- Our staff help us live the life of faith

Input from Waters and Friendship Village

- Learning/ Intellectual Stimulation
- “We are welcoming and loving, even to the ‘characters’ in our midst.”
- “Deep connections between people are made.”
- “We don't have to march to the same orders.”
- “There are things Colonial isn't afraid to do.”
- “A congregational church is all about having the congregation involved.”

Input from Grow & Serve Group (Johnsons, Eides, Christiansens, Fosters, Moens)

- Welcoming, open, accepting, non-judgmental, but with deep wisdom and discernment while providing lots of opportunity to learn and grow deeper in faith
- Diversity of viewpoints and faith experience (theological, political). but common desire to grow in faith and to follow Jesus
- **Our challenges:**
 - Determine what we need to hold onto and let go of in our culture/DNA
 - Create new traditions that celebrate our life together and appeal to younger generations
 - Strengthen and sustain connections across the congregation and between generations
 - Clarify and affirm our core beliefs while respecting and appreciating our diversity.

From Angie Pederson

- The biggest theme I see is older members ministering and providing support to younger members. And also people in the same stage of life supporting each other. I see friendships being formed and lives being lived out together for Christ. Love this place so much!!!

From Dawn Harrell

- You don't have to be family to be loved like you are family (Ps 68:6; Matt 25:35).
- Christ-like service is precious to God, whether or not fellow humans see it, much less celebrate it, whether or not it's part of something big/important in human estimation (Ps 131; Matt 6:3-4).

From Tom Carrier

I think it all starts with an unwavering faith in and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. From there it involves the living-out of the gospel as stated in Matthew 22:36-40. Were we to stay focused on these two themes, what follows would flow like a river of hope, joy and love. I believe that, as a company of believers, we are on a never-ending quest to make this happen.

From Sue Stanek

Taking initiative to love and care for others ON THEIR own – absent of any formal responsibility

From Wendy Senior

You feel and see God's love in Colonial because of its leaders.

From the Brown Sheets on the Windows

- Commitment to spiritual formation/discipleship/wholeness
- Conversion and Renewal
- Missions to Africa/Peru/Inner City
- Valuing music's role in the worship experience and its transformative power

- Commitment to the body of believers
- Valuing change/transformation
- All Genders Lead Here
- Colonial Church: Affirming All people

Miscellaneous Notes

Historical decisions that have defined us in a positive way:

- I am not sure if this has ever been a conscious decision, but continuing to have a traditional service is important.
- Moving the church to the current location
- Missionary work (home and abroad)
- Move from Wooddale to Colonial Way
- Sale of the Waters Land
- Discernment step triggered by sale of land
- Innove Program
- Initiation of many Bible and related studies
- Ability to continue a financial campaign while having an interim minister (Dick Nye) and weathering the difficult change of a senior minister under the guidance of caring and committed committees

What else makes Colonial different from other churches, in a positive way?

- Our music ministry
- Colonial's corporate message has always been constant – "God is alive and the risen Christ is our Savior and Redeemer." While many churches water down that message, we have remained constant and true to this belief.

Parents of Younger Children

- Welcoming
- Accepting, nonjudgmental
- Being acknowledged and recognized
- Intergenerational - "the way to move church forward"
- A place for important milestones – weddings, baptisms, funerals
- "A good place where I want my family and me to be"
- Long history
- Spiritual Direction
- Nurturing, "being mothered"
- Connecting
- "Intense genuineness"
- Relational
- Pastoral presence
- "Taking over" when you feel stretched thin & vulnerable (e.g., with your kiddos)
- Breathing room
- "They really love me!"

From our Snowbirds

- Encouragement training and empowerment to have a ministry—to go and to do—they were all faith growing and faith sharing and my experience was that as I gave I received so much more—grace upon grace!
- Excitement, energy about what God has done here in the past