

Revitalization Workshop results for
First Congregational Church, Anchorage, Alaska

These are the ideas generated for the ministries of First Congregational Church of Anchorage at the Revitalization Workshop on April 24-26, 2015. They include the suggested outcomes from our discussions that we trust will move our church forward into the future.

For Worship:

- To continue to offer an Inspiring Worship experience which reflects our faith and reverence for God and at the same time creates a joyful, welcoming spirit.
- To use more variety in music including both contemporary and traditional hymns; invite guest musicians or choirs (might be from our High Schools or College groups) and musical selections by our Youth.
- To use more variety in sharing the message including drama, storytelling, testimonies and sermons that are geared to encouraging our faith development and helping with life's challenges.
- To explore other times and ways to worship like a Taize Service, outdoor services, Youth services, and perhaps even celebrate Communion in different ways.
- To encourage the use of testimonials from our members with inspiring stories and witness.
- To have the Youth more involved in all parts of worship.
- To encourage quiet time during the Prelude for individual prayer and meditation.
- To explore use of new technologies when appropriate (ie screens, video clips).
- To develop a "Worship Team" which would include Deacons and Music Committee with the Pastor in planning worship.
- To add times of teaching on Prayer and print out the Lord's Prayer for those new to church life.
- To continue to incorporate inclusive language including in our Covenant and share this more often.
- To continue to work on the Sound system.
- To put our focus on God's presence and glorifying God.

For Discipleship (Life-time learning to be followers of Jesus Christ):

- To offer more variety in study groups adding a Syllabus for Adult Educational opportunities including Topical studies as well as Bible Studies. For the Tuesday night group perhaps adding “stone soup” to be enjoyed.
- To offer classes/forums on contemporary issues such as Environmental Issues, Aging, and other ideas inviting speakers from the community (ie. Mind and Dine Program)
- To encourage Youth to share with Adults in mission opportunities or learning opportunities attached to mission projects. (ie. Have someone from Akeela House come and talk to Youth group.
- To develop more Intergenerational activities. Get to know our students by name and let them get to know the Adults.
- To reach out to all families through Family Camps or Weekend retreats sharing their interests.
- To invite kids from Wendler or Lake Otis schools to be part of a tutoring or mentoring program.
- To develop a program to help us discover our gifts and how they can be used in all types of ministries.
- To develop a Vacation Bible School perhaps for next year including other church groups.

For Fellowship:

- To offer different opportunities to get to know each other and share our stories including dinner groups, movie nights, outings in the community, teen hikes, trips together, summer slide show, game nights, and the development of a “Profile Booklet” of the membership (see Lynn Barber).
- To develop a volunteer list of those who will visit people in hospital or shut-ins, and also those who can help seniors with needed projects or rides, etc
- To start Care circles again, to be sure all our members are being helped when needed.
- To offer a “discovering our gifts” workshop so that we find our gifts to be used for our ministries.

- Keep people connected with social media, technology like Skype or Go2 meetings, and a well-developed website that is kept up to date and reflects our ministries.
- To develop a plan to use the Little Free Library.
- To make dinners together that can be frozen and then available for homebound, sick, elderly or families in need.

For Missions and Outreach:

- To continue to support programs in the community that we have developed through C.A.W.S. but to add others where we can volunteer to serve.(ie. at FISH as callers, packers, drivers, or to serve at a Homeless shelter or soup Kitchen. Include Youth in serving a mission
- To reach out to other groups such as AA or Recovery Groups, LGBT groups, Samoan population, Homeless, Seniors, Families in crisis, etc.
- To continue to work with the Grandparents program perhaps finding ways to invite children to participate in church programs and getting to know the families better.
- To reach out to College students perhaps to offer a place to study, or bring “finals” treats to them, or bring our Bells to the College center at Christmas. Find ways to interact with them.
- To encourage more Mission involvement, perhaps sponsoring a missionary or planning a mission trip.
- To reach out to the School District to see how we might help with tutoring or mentoring or after school needs.
- To offer parents a safe place for their children to be cared for while they Christmas shop.
- To adopt a nursing home and visit the people bringing children, music, friends to visit.

For Stewardship:

- To discover our gifts and talents and help find their place in our ministries. (See Dave Barber for program)
- To assess ways to utilize the Church Building as one of our resources to share. Look into community groups who may need a safe place to meet, develop more activities where our members are using the building (concerts, etc.)

- To reach out to other non-profits or groups as a fund-raiser.
- To sponsor more community groups like Scouts, AA groups to use our facility.
- To continue to improve our building and grounds to be attractive to others and useful as with our Youth.
- To encourage members to take care of the church at a work day or other ways to help our Sexton..
- To find ways to become a “green” church, learning how to care for our Environment, bringing in experts to teach us of the issues; perhaps taking on a road clean-up area or trail maintenance or helping with City-wide cleanup.
- To learn more about the use of our monetary donations and what needs we have for the future to be fiscally responsible.

For Partnerships:

- To find out the needs in our community and which groups are working with them so they can be referred and not duplicated.
- To meet with other churches and discover ways to share ministries. (i.e. Revive Crop Walk, share Thanksgiving Services, develop more ecumenical opportunities, share pulpit)
- To partner with UAA, APU, Wendler Middle School and/or Lake Otis Elementary School. (Find out how we can offer services, space, etc. to our “neighbors”)
- To develop a Community Handbell Choir for Youth
- To partner with Habitat for Humanity, not just for space and meals but working with them on projects.
- To develop more ties with the NACCC and Pacific Northwest Association and International Congregational Fellowship.
- To strengthen our partnership with Hospice.
- To discover ways to partner with the School District, especially with budget cuts, etc.
- To advertise more regularly our Worship services and church activities in the community.