

## Rooted and Reaching: Congregational Conversations

As a community of faith, we are in an exciting time of listening for where God is leading us and discerning our ministries in our future. We are describing ourselves as “Rooted and Reaching.” A timeline has been created to help us visualize how we are moving through this process. God is doing a new thing!

In 2017, our Session recognized that we had assets which could be more fully used to faithfully serve God, our congregation, and our community. Specifically, we have 41,000 square feet of underutilized space in our building and, as of April 2018, we have a 20-year lease on the St. Andrew’s property to our west with the proceeds supporting our ministries.

In October 2018, sixty church members attended one of three Geography of Grace workshops to do some of the heart and soul work of learning who we are now. The highlights of our rootedness are: welcome, community commitments, relationships with one another, our history, theology, and music, and the ways we are growing. The highlights of our reaching are: our growth, leadership, love and justice, transformation and healing. We also learned that we have additional resources in our members and staff, plus our qualities of creativity, vision, compassion, open-mindedness, and grit. We heard that we are ready to get moving now!

In January 2019, we hosted a Community Asset Mapping Event with a grant from the National Park Service and staffed by the Partners for Sacred Places. Forty community leaders (business owners, elected officials, non-profit staff, charitable organizations, educators, health care providers) toured our church and brain-stormed assets of our congregation, facility, and community. They dreamed of possible partnerships that would help us better use our space for the sake of our community. Some suggestions included: education and youth development, fine and performing arts, heritage tourism, rental space for meetings, and social services. Some of these are already beginning to happen, such as the Joy of Movement dance class for those with Parkinson’s, theater rehearsals, music recitals, and summer art and yoga programs for kids.

We have commissioned an architectural engineering analysis of the 1920s section of the building (the Samaritan Ministries hallway) due to significant costs necessary for current repair needs. Our staff have estimated that repairs to stabilize that section of the building, but with no further improvements, will cost \$250,000. These costs include a new roof, a new chiller for the sanctuary, tuckpointing to stop water migrating through the walls, and replacement windows. The facility will not allow us to dawdle on making decisions and moving forward.

In April and May 2019, I began hosting Rooted and Reaching review sessions to help us get up to speed on the details of this process as we move toward the bigger conversations this summer about our purpose as a congregation. When we have identified where we believe we need to focus, our purpose will then need to drive our conversations about renovating our facility to make it accessible, beautiful, and functional.

By fall 2019, we plan to begin conversations about adapting our program ministries to fulfill our purposes and begin conversations with architects about how we can adapt our building to better fit our needs. Our need for an elevator to make the building accessible is obvious. Other visions and needs will be discussed as well.

When we have clearer ideas about our facility needs, then we will launch a capital campaign and invite members to help fund our efforts to grow faithfully as disciples of Jesus rooted in our rich history and traditions and reaching out to serve as the Spirit leads us. We offer our gifts as expressions of thanksgiving for all God has done for us.

Blessings,



Pastor Susan Phillips

# Rooted and Reaching

## Recognize Resources

- under used building
- St. Andrews funds
- \_\_\_\_\_
- How do we use these resources faithfully?
- Recognize our history, nurturing new projects and programs and celebrate our community connections.

## Geography of Grace Workshops

- 60 church members share reflection of who we are, how we feel called, what blesses us, where we may be headed.

## Community Asset Mapping

- 40 community leaders work with Partners for Sacred Places to identify assets of this church building, congregation, neighborhood and city. Began thinking creatively about how these assets could be combined in new partnerships, programs or projects to serve the well-being of the community.

## Review Reports

- Geography of Grace and the Community Asset Mapping
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Both reports are shared and discussed.
- What are we learning about ourselves in relationship with our community? Where do we see the Spirit moving us?

## Discernment & Decisions

- What new things is God doing here?
- What are the primary ways we are inspired to work with God?
- Which ministries will be our priorities?
- What is our purpose as a community of faith right now?

## Purpose & Fulfillment

- What building renovations are necessary to fulfill our purposes?
- Develop architectural plans.
- What program changes do we need to fulfill our purposes?
- Develop program plans to align with our purposes.

## Capital Campaign

- Inviting financial participation of friends and members in God's new plan for Lincoln's church.