

NOTES FROM SAILBOAT CHURCH GATHERING – April 23, 2023

Participants:

Bonnie Bell, Clair Blank, Rita Brown, Carol Carty, Rachel Davis, Vani Elgart, Owen Edmonston, Tina Edmondston, Joan Fiorella, Kae Fretz, Lorraine Gormley-Devine, Lisa Hurd, Lesley Kirsch, Quint Lerch, Marvin Lindsay, Bob Loweth, Glenn Manochi, Peg Manochi, Margaret O'Neil, Liz Olson, Mark Oswald, Sofia Oswald, Ginny Ritchie, Maggie Sell, Barb Sewall, Janet Shoemaker, David Stedman, Joyce Stout, Paul Urian, Nancy Ruth Wainwright (facilitator), Betsy Westermaier

Scripture from Sailboat Church introduction, p. xiii: Exodus 3:20 – “It is still true that God ‘by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we could ever ask or imagine.’”

Opening Prayer: *God, without you, we can do nothing. With you, all things are possible. Open our hearts and minds to what you want to do in us. What are you saying to us, today?* (NRW)

REFLECTIONS:

- Stop looking to the pastors to lead everything; WE make it happen with God
- As we look to discern Spirit's leading, we can reenergize what we are already doing, not just start new ministries
- PRAYER is a central theme – BE SATURATED IN PRAYER
- DISCERNMENT of Spirit's leading – through prayer, small groups, caring for our community
- Share how God has impacted our lives
- Share more joys and express gratitude. Change can be good and joyful!
- Maybe we are more like a Viking boat – sailing AND rowing?
- The intimacy of a small group for faith sharing and prayer is vital
- “I found the Holy Spirit” because of small group experience; put Spirit in your life all the time
- “This book is like a primer for how to be a Christian.”
- “In our group we each had prayer partners.” Powerful experience.
- “I received a card in the mail from a church member, saying s/he was praying for me.” What a profound difference it made.

- The Lenten devotional was so appreciated – getting to know something about the person who wrote each one. I prayed for them.

ACTIONS:

PRAY:

Restart the Prayer Chain	Include Prayers of the People in worship
Pray before worship service (in Chapel)	Pray for our church
Pray for small group partner, church members	Start/end all meetings with prayer
Pray DURING meetings	Provide time for silent prayer at meetings
Provide/attend classes on prayer	Practice prayer (in and out of class)
Find/provide mentors for prayer	Provide/find prayer partner(s)
Pray for more small groups meeting regularly throughout the year. (1x/month? One group is.)	
Pray for including more people in small groups	Send a note, “I’m praying for you.”
In worship: include more silence for prayer; provide time to pray with a pastor or other leader one-on-one	
Combine Deacons and Session members for time of devotions and prayer prior to their meetings (on the same night)	
Outside the church, offer to pray for the person who is having a hard time.	

CREATE AND CONTINUE SMALL GROUPS:

Share how God has impacted our lives	Assign people to small groups
Invite newer members to join a small group	Continue meeting in same group 1x/month

CARE FOR OUR MEMBERS

Rename Hospitality Committee to “Hospitality Ministry,” interact with others after church

Focus on needs of our congregation following COVID, changes, challenges

Invite new members to groups, classes, committees; they need a personal invitation. Be more intentional about including new members. Provide sponsors for folks joining the church, as we do with Confirmation students.

Invite “old” members back if they have not attended for a while or since COVID

Share our personal experiences through devotionals, stewardship moments

Share our personal passions and invite others to join us

List committee chairs in the bulletin and in an easy-to-find location on the website

Provide instruction on using Realm; it can be hard to use (Mark Oswald commented the Session is discussing alternatives to Realm)

Share the ideas from this gathering on the website, link in weekly news

CARE FOR THOSE OUTSIDE OUR CHURCH

Talk about our faith/God to folks outside our church – some of us want help learning to do that; share a simple assurance, “God’s got your back.”

Provide class/instruction/practice opportunities to become more comfortable talking to others about faith.

Offer to pray for someone who has a need (“Can I pray for you? Can I pray with you?”)

Provide water and/or snacks to those on the playground on Sunday mornings, interact and invite

Invite former members of Collingswood Presbyterian Church to our church (Marvin commented that Haddon Heights Presbyterian Church has “officially” invited them to combine congregations)

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you for the beauty of this day. We are so grateful for this gathering of people concerned about moving our church in a new way, the way that you want it to go. Help us find the Holy Spirit in all we do and engage us in prayer while we do it. Lord, fill our sails with your Holy Spirit. Help us recognize that without you we can do nothing.

Help us focus not on our own resources or limitations. Instead turn our focus on discerning your unfolding will. Become our chief guide and power source and help us move the unthinkable into the realm of the possible. Remind us over and over again Lord that there is no precise map for the adventure we are embarking on. You will be our guide. In your name we pray. Amen. (Paul Urian)