

Multigenerational Community Task Force Report

The Multigenerational Community (MGC) Task Force was convened on February 5 and includes Twinks Hastings, John Meyers, Lee Pierce, Phoenix Stroh and Deb Selkow (chair). We met on February 5 and February 26 and communicated between meetings to arrive at this report.

Review of Task Force Mandate from Board and CYM

We see ourselves as a short-term task force/team. Our work is to define MGC, to assess what exists now at FPB and to make recommendations for future implementation by others. We also will plan a Spring Multigenerational event.

Task Force definition of MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY (MGC)

In Multigenerational community people of every age and stage of life come together to know each other through worship, serving, playing, celebrating, and marking the important rituals of our lives.

- To feel and to be “Whole” this congregation needs every age group to participate fully and regularly
- Every age group has specific needs and things to offer
- MGC requires us to be intentional in designing programs, governance, worship, and fellowship events for different age groups to worship, serve, and play together in order to build relationships across ages

Key Points of Report

1. The first step in developing MGC is growing relationships, and that takes time and considerable will, energy, and investment on the part of the minister, leadership, and congregation
2. To be successful, FPB will need to support, nurture, and inspire different age groups to accept their role and responsibility to participate in creating multigenerational community
3. We recommend that MGC at FPB should include opportunities for both (1) similar age group programs (small group) AND (2) multiage group programs (large group). The latter should be frequent.

What are current barriers and challenges to MGC at FPB?

1. Communication
 - Difficulty of publicizing programs and events so that all ages get the message, know they are welcome, and that it will be WORTH WHILE to attend
 - Announcements? Angle? Blogs?
 - Hard to know what actually works or what combination is needed
 - Difficulty of communicating within committees and groups when different ages use different methods of technology
 - Resistance to use of Skype or FaceTime for meetings
 - Resistance to use of email for communication and difficulty finding another common tool
 - Discomfort with technology in older generations which might allow “easier” sharing of documents and ideas
 - Resistance to email by younger generations

- Spotty internet in 2 of the 3 FPB buildings makes it difficult to rely on internet as a tool
2. Safe space/safe congregation considerations
 - Anyone planning MG events including children and families needs to know that they must abide by FPB policies and consult with deer
 - Policies need to be easily accessible
 - deer is our paid professional responsible for children and families and as such, she needs to be consulted as MG plans unfold
 3. Childcare
 - The need to provide childcare should not rest on deer alone, but what are alternatives?
 - FPB budget process needs to include childcare for events that we don't know about yet... who does this? What line item does it come from?
 - Need to consider ways to subsidize childcare for parents who want to attend events and need childcare
 4. SPACE—where can we be together as a MGC comfortably and conveniently?
 - Fellowship Hall can hold a large group but there are problems
 - To use following service, must disrupt CYM
 - Not easily accessible
 - Very poor kitchen facilities limit food events
 - Need to be sure electrical outlets support plug-in alternative cooking methods in both Parish Room and Fellowship Hall
 - Field and outside is great when weather and season are right, but people often slip away instead of joining in
 5. We must not forget that the first step is growing relationships and that takes time
 - Need to develop relationships to enable us to reach across age groups and invite others to join in
 - Committees or groups looking for young family or young adult members can not just call deer or Twinks and ask them to “find someone”
 - We all need to get to know each other better in order to know who has the interest and skills and talent we need; recruitment needs to be personal
 6. Over time, FPB needs to support, nurture, and inspire different age groups to accept their role and responsibility to participate in creating multigenerational community
 - How to nurture eagerness and willingness and sense of responsibility in all populations
 - What are we willing to give? To give up? What do we want to get?
 - How to get all ages excited enough about a fuller MGC to take action, to give in order to get
 - A hope is that new minister will take a lead on this
 7. New minister and worship experience need to meet many different needs

Steps that FPB might pursue to further FPB's commitment to multigenerational community

1. Programs and Committees
 - a. Create annual inventory of programs, events, and committees and make sure every generation has opportunities to participate
 - i. Consider different generational needs and limitations when choosing event or meeting times
 - ii. Consider use of technology (Skype, Facetime) to allow distance participation on committees
 - iii. Think of ways to inspire MG involvement---everyone has to believe we have something to gain from spending time together; nurture the idea that we all have to invest in something in order to gain something
 - b. Identify groups that are likely to have multi-generational possibilities
 - i. Can kids and teens be involved in some Building and Grounds/ Landscaping projects?
 - ii. How can Helping Hands become more multigenerational?
 - iii. What social justice activities can offer a hands-on special event that allows all ages to do some service project together?
 - iv. Music—consider additional programs that bring different ages together for a specific production
 - c. Consider an “All-church Read” of a book with a theme interesting and important to all ages and accessible for readers as young as grades 5-6
 - d. Develop a Technology Event that allows teens and young adults to teach skills to elders
 - i. Particularly exciting as it flips the paradigm of which age group has the expertise
 - ii. Can be kept simple and fun
 - iii. Might start as a one-time event that could be extended to others if there is interest
2. Worship and Beyond
 - a. Identify a theme for the year that is relevant to all ages
 - i. Identify regular moments across the year when all generations will engage that theme together (Monthly? Quarterly? Connected to holidays?)
 - ii. Choose different ways to engage the theme that will appeal to different ages and learning styles
 1. Storytelling
 2. Singing together—songfest? Musical production?
 3. Mural-making
 4. Hands-on service opportunity
 5. Movement—inside or out
 - iii. How can technology be used to explore the theme and what generation can take the lead on that?
 - iv. Weave the theme into both same-generation settings (CYM classes, adult learning opportunities like Women’s Alliance or Social Justice meetings) and also into MGC gatherings
 - v. Keep the theme present across the year with reminders—
 1. Bulletin board with photos
 2. Articles in the Angle or CYM message
 3. Banners, Signs

4. Theme song
 - vi. Wrap up the year with a big MG celebration of the theme and all you have grown together across the year
 - b. Consider more ways for all generations to play a recurring role in weekly worship
 - i. Weekly collection by children of “Change for Change” early in service
 - ii. Could chalice lighting become a mixed generational moment?—consider how to share responsibility for that between CYM and worship committee and minister
 - iii. Could families greet and usher once a month? Again, how can recruitment responsibility go beyond deer and CYM?
 - iv. Rather than inviting adults to join CYM following the service, consider designing the worship hour for everyone to participate together
 - c. Consider use of multigenerational storytelling as worship—find ways for congregation to share life stories and wisdom on topics that are interesting and important to everyone
3. Fellowship Ideas
 - a. Reminder that we hope for opportunities for different generations to be together; some events should be designed to include all of us, and others might include mixed generations but not necessarily all generations
 - b. Offsite, pub/coffeehouse meetings to discuss important questions
 - c. Chowder House gatherings—pub and “early” dinners were very popular last year
 - d. Breakfast—possible but see kitchen and space constraints above
 - e. Multigenerational Birthday Party
 - f. Special Friends/Buddies—designed to keep in mind safe congregation policies
 - g. Build on the model of the existing end of summer Camp Out
 - i. Structure--shared responsibilities for designing program
 - ii. agree on safety and rules in advance
4. Governance
 - a. Take into account the needs and wishes of ALL generations whenever making a decision about congregational life or building/campus use
 - b. Consider moving toward team-led/task-focused/short duration groups to get things done instead of always relying on committees
 - c. Someone, preferably many, from each committee needs to get to know folks from different generations in order to be able to recruit new energy to governance—can not rely on deer to find needed young representation
5. Childcare
 - a. For BIG events (ie Gayla Ball), suggest hosting organization offers to provide support for parents to hire childcare at home
 - b. Identify those big events in advance
 - c. Keep childcare in budget so that providers can be paid to care for children while parents are at meetings, etc.
 - d. Brainstorm ways that the burden of finding childcare does not fall on deer alone but the screening of appropriate childcare measures remains in her professional purview

6. Communication
 - a. In order to generate enthusiasm for MGC it must be kept in the forefront of people's attention
 - b. When planning and publicizing all community events, planners must keep MGC in mind—be intentional
 - c. Consider how different generations learn what is going on at FPB and be sure to share the message in many different ways across many different platforms
 - d. Possibilities include
 - i. Large bulletin board in the hallway where it is visible as folks leave service---include photos with names and change regularly
 - ii. Regular updates in Angle, CYM message, all email outlets
 - iii. Facebook, Instagram, where else do our young adults get their information?
 - e. Within groups, remind all generations of the need to step slightly outside their comfort zone in order to best communicate with each other
 - f. Remember to honor the way all generations communicate—one way usually isn't "better" than another, though it may better serve certain skill sets and ideas

The MGC task force and CYM see MGC as a vision that we will continue moving toward for many years to come. FPB has already begun the process and this report intends to articulate the vision by both assessing where we are now and by making recommendations for the future.

Respectfully submitted,
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