

A Recap of the Town Hall

On Wednesday, November 16, a good number of our church family gathered in the church parlors for our first “Town Hall” meeting. We are very grateful for all those who came to participate in the discussion. Special thanks to Herb Hedstrom and Bill Werner for their leadership in the conversation as well. What follows is a little overview of what was discussed. These are ongoing conversations to be had as we live into what it means to be North Park Covenant Church in this time and in this place; as we work together to live out what it means to Christ’s church.

*Part I: **Let’s Dream!** What will be happening at North Park Covenant Church in five years if it is really flourishing?*

- The congregation will be more representative of the neighborhood (ethnicity, age, and socioeconomics)
- Our members will feel well equipped to care for their neighbor (with an expanded view of ‘who is our neighbor’)
- Our mission and our ministries will be in alignment
- There will be intergenerational growth (and lots of kids)
- We will be sharing the story of Jesus
- The tower will be rebuilt and our physical church building will be in good repair
- People will be empowered to serve and minister in the ways they feel called to do
- There will be accomplishments to celebrate:
 - pastoral stability
 - lots of kids that are thriving and staying
 - the mortgage will be paid off
- People will come because it is a welcoming community and they meet God here
- We will have a strong Christian Formation program, with strong youth groups
- We will be out an about as a church—“The church has left the building”
- There will be more people in the pews and those people will arrive with a passion and sense of anticipation for worship
- There will be regular mission trips for kids and adults alike.
- There will be many activities for service, growth for members and the community – there will be a full week of opportunities and use of building (with religious content and not)
- There will be a shared sense of mutual ministry between the pastoral staff and members of the congregation
- We will be a magnet for the community, attracting people to our ministry and mission

*Part II: **Our mission statement.***

- The structure task force and the Executive Council agree that the place to start is in looking at our mission and values, connect our programs and activities to these, and only then look at the church structure.
- This is our current mission statement:

The mission of North Park Covenant Church is:

- To unite people for Christian worship of God so that we may enable all of life to be given to the glory of God;
- To build community as the body of Christ and encourage spiritual development through Christian education and discipleship;

- Through proclamation in word and deed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to call people to personal faith and to minister in our neighborhood, our city, and our world.
- The current mission statement is too long and complex to be easily remembered and recited. Therefore, it doesn't really help shape our church culture and activity.
- Proposed Mission Statement:

North Park Covenant Church is a Christian community dedicated to
***God's Glory and
 Neighbor's Good.***

- This statement comes from the Pietistic movement which deeply shaped our Covenant roots.

Part III: Our values flow from our mission statement.

- Small groups were then asked to take just a few minutes to reflect on the four areas that we have identified as our core values: Worship, Outreach and Evangelism, Christian Formation, and Hospitality/Fellowship.
- Below is a summary of those reflections:

Worship

- New ideas: liturgical dance, diversity of music, dramatic presentation of the scripture
- Good balance: inclusion of contemporary songs and good liturgy
- We are becoming warmer and more welcoming in our service. We are adding new aspects that involve more people. How do we do this while respecting an allotted time?
- We incorporate the children a lot. How can we incorporate the youth?

Outreach and Evangelism

- Can we offer events and activities to our neighbors that don't have a religious component?
- We likely need to do a better job of advertising (new venues, etc.)
- We are doing good things: hot chocolate stand, Friendship Center, tutoring, Little Town of Bethlehem, VBS, Hibbard volunteers, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Block Party, clothing and shoe collections,
- How do we get more congregational members to participate?
- Include NEIU in our outreach

Christian Formation

- Inform + form + transform
- Can we do more mission trips and prison ministry sorts of things?
- How do we retain those kids from middle school through college?
- In need of a healthier adult formation re-framed for the 21st century

Hospitality/Fellowship

- We want NPCC to be a place where people feel easily welcomed and free to be themselves
- Our young adults seem to be falling through the cracks

- how about helping young adults set up housekeeping (young adult showers?_
- We need some groups (50+ ?) for the older individuals in our congregation
- A return to nametags?
- Teacher appreciation Sunday – recognizing the teachers at Peterson and Hibbard schools (and/or medical professionals)
- Welcoming those (especially new attenders) sitting near you
- Could we have lay members available in the narthex after worship to greet newcomers? (reactivate bridge builders)
- The development of more partnerships?
- We currently are experiencing hospitality in shared meals and in study
- We can celebrate how well the church cares for its members

Part IV: The last ½ hour of the evening was spent in a Q & A time with Pastors Libby and Jeff.

- We gave sort of a ‘State of the Co-Pastorate’ address and then worked through some questions and comments
- We are feeling really hopeful and energetic; this is a wonderful church full of wonderful people.
- We have felt the impact of the election and feel strongly that:
 1. It is our job to pastor the WHOLE congregation
 2. It is our job to preach the Gospel
 3. We are open to conversation any time! We welcome your visits!
- The Trustees and the Budget Committee are doing excellent work as we finish 2016 and look towards 2017
- We are working, generally, 6 days a week. However, Monday-Friday, we are working from about 9-3 in order to accommodate our children’s school schedules. This way, when we need to come back in the evening for meetings, etc., we still have a chance to have a little family time.
- Please stop in and see us! There is usually fresh coffee ready and hot water for tea! Pop in whenever you’d like! Also, you can reach both of us at copastors@npcovenant.org. If you leave us a voice mail message, we get an email letting us know that and we can listen to your message from home!
- There is a lot going at church right now! We’d like some feedback from all of you as to how you are feeling! Don’t hesitate to contact us!