

## Notes from St. John's D Downtown Dayton

Ohio Conference Restructuring Meeting on Sunday March 18, 2018 3pm at St. John's UCC in Dayton, OH

Meeting began at 3:01pm

In an ideal world, what would a judicatory do?-

Credential, church and ministry

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Our covenant is with the national church and with each other; it can facilitate identity. We don't do a lot together as individual congregations.

Building a connection with one another is important. A judicatory could facilitate the connections.

Would be a resource for local churches. It would help with search and call. It would offer support and development for ministers. Lay education and not just for lay leaders but for clergy.

Offer up opportunities for clergy development (Professional and Spiritual Development)

Other areas have more opportunities for connection (ex. Chicago and St. Louis) Perhaps built around the seminaries

More opportunities for youth development. Judicatory could address and have more opportunities for youth gatherings and events.

What factors have contributed to the lack of connection?

Lack of communication

Our own autonomy might get in our way at times; there is that sense of Lone Ranger. We need each other.

Building connection is not linear necessarily; let the Spirit go where the Spirit goes.

We have roadblocks to our communication.

What are our roadblocks?

We tend to cling to certain things; and perhaps some of the things we have clung to has caused this lack of communication.

Have we become too corporate? We worry too much about process and sometimes we worry about that more than we worry about the Gospel; sending God's love everywhere. Not many emails about spiritual things from the UCC. UCC is more focused on organization than spiritual matters. We worry more about money and numbers.

We have a problem with a definition. We like to say that we are in covenant with each other but we have never defined what that really means.

We have a nebulous identity.

Many times the National goes ahead with initiatives without informing local churches.

One thing a Judicatory could do is help shape spiritual identity within the UCC.

How have we done this well and how have we not done this well?

We are technologically behind- we are not utilizing all that is available to us when it comes to communication. We need to make use of technology more.

People wonder if the judicatories know who the churches are and where they are.

Sense of being out of touch with local churches.

In our Association meetings- people need to be engaged. People are always in receive mode. People don't want to drive somewhere just for a business meeting.

Let's talk about Where are we at in the process of restructuring.

There are three working groups on the visioning team.

-What do you want to tell to the committee on structure?

Do we have a vision for what we want to accomplish first? It seems like we are not accomplishing much at the moment. What is the focus, what is the driving mission? There is a need for clear focus and goal.

Some wonder why we can't just have three conferences? Do we need more conferences?

If we will have one judicatory; then we need to utilize social media. We need to figure out how to use technology.

There is a need for a media team.

Talk with other conferences and find out how they are building connections.

We have never done it that way before; fear of new things. We do need to bring our congregations along with us. Is there a need to teach people how to use basic technology?

We don't know how to do this? Question that we can answer in the church.

Offer up Webinars for churches. Build connections through this.

We are in an age of electronic shift. We just don't know how to do all these kinds of things. We do need to get ahead so we don't fall behind or disappear.

What do you want to tell the committee on stewardship and finance?

Good luck.

We can't afford to continue what we are doing. We have to figure out how to take with what we have and do faithful ministry. There is a lot of geography to cover.

Explanation of where the money is going. Show me the money; show me where the money is going. What is it supporting and how does it support us?

"I don't care about the money; I care about the ministry." Ministry comes first. People will give to causes and not budgets.

There is a need for simplification.

Graphics are worth more than words. KISS- Keep it simple stupid.

The importance of sharing what is going on in the National Setting with our local congregations.

What are the long term plans for finance? What are we doing to establish long projected assets?

Current financial instability has us in crisis mode.

What do we want to tell the committee on best practices?

-Focus on the truth that we are disciples making disciples.

-We have lost our identity; we are disciples of Jesus Christ and we are called to make other disciples.

- We all have a call. We need best practices around that. We need to be thinking about this.
- We need a theological shift from member entitlement to member empowerment.
- Focus on helping with communication practices; helping with discipleship practices.
- How to get people excited about being in ministry?
- Three Great loves is a great way to think about our calling and disciples.
- Giving God the Glory

What do we want to tell the visioning team that guides the development of this one judicatory?

Let us see what is coming way before you hit us with it. Transparency. Provide advance information.

Can't go back to the way it was; we need to move forward.

We have to rethink the course.

A House divided against itself will not stand.

Be aware that this is an ongoing process; there is no final answer

Be the UCC at every level and in all settings.

What would be a fitting name for this one Judicatory?

Discovery

Nimble Conference

The Great Rivers

Is there a Bible story that we claim? We could center it around that.

"For such a time as this" Esther

Resurrection Conference

Wonka Conference