

Notes from Listening Session at Park UCC Toledo - Tom Kagy facilitating February 24, 2018

7 people attended (mostly clergy) including John Gantt and me. Ed Heilman, the local pastor provided devotions.

Names and email addresses were collected. No live streaming.

What would you like to tell the Visioning Team and/or what questions do you have for us?

- Would like seasonally adjusted curriculums for adult study in faith formation. Materials should be formed around themes. Desire for some uniformity of teaching throughout the denomination. Especially wanted materials relevant to youth. Used an example from another church in the community that formed groups composed of young families to discuss how to talk to children about the faith life.
- What is the mission of the Ohio Conference? John Gantt fielded this question adeptly
- Some reference to job description for the Transitional Conference Minister. Wants to make sure that whatever we do with our restructuring and the calling of that position, we need to be responsive to and a visionary for the local churches. Also, allow local churches to generate more ideas and leadership. Do not see local churches as an entity to be manipulated into supporting the wider church.
- Job description is wonderful.
- Are we currently employing redundant levels of church organization? (Response noted that we are endeavoring to move to *one* judicatory.)
- Be aware of the power issues between the conferences and the associations.
- New setting must be easily described to local churches.
- We can't hold hostage a new vision out of the worry that it might cost some people their jobs. That's not good stewardship.
- Glad that we are looking at this existentially. Looking at the real purpose for the existence of any entity.
- Exciting to be a part of the new reformation in the wider church.
- College campus ministries is a good example of some things we can better together than we can do alone. Better forums to advance notions of love, justice, mercy, forgiveness.
- What if we let things go with no change? What if we let things die a natural death? Not advocating; just asking.
- We have had multiple attempts at restructuring and all have failed.
- Recommended a four pronged process. Establish a Vision. Build Relationships. Pray. Form a Management structure to serve the first three.
- Maybe having one place to go for service is the way to go. Willing to try that.
- Find constitutions and by-laws of churches and organizations of similar size and scope that are really working and steal them. Look at Lilly Foundation for help.
- Think about including other denomination. Link up and join together with other like-minded churches. Think outside the denominational box.

What suggestions do you have for names for this new entity?

- No specific names offered but some generic thoughts given.
- Leave old names behind, maybe rename the camp, too.
- What are our natural boundaries and are the right people in it?
- What is the proper and optimal size for each entity?