

Beyond Welcome discussion summary July 23

**Multi-generational ministry: How do your personal experiences of attending a religious community (either as a child yourself or with your own children, if you have children) influence your thoughts on multigenerational community at UUC?**

**What is one action each person at UUC could take to strengthen multigenerational community? Please keep in mind that multigenerational means a range of ages, from very young children to older children and teens to young adults to parents to grandparents to retirees**

Group 1

The Tuesday night meditation group are gonna talk about how to include younger people because right now it's mainly older people. We'd like to see some, meditation, specifically for young adults or at least include them on Tuesday nights.

Children were together with adults throughout someone's Catholic experience and we don't see that so much here We need to make the social hall more inclusive of children and get away from separation of adults and children during that time.

One person said she'd like to do a chalice tea with the children and they can choose who they sit with.

Someone suggested there was a mentoring program. And could we do that between?

Maybe child to child or assign an adult to a child and then that adult would make sure they sent them a card and looked out for them.

I said I would volunteer with the children on Sunday and I hope more will do that.

I'd like to see each member take a turn at the welcome table to give us practice in welcoming in a make it a custom.

And just have more involvement of children during the service, like the play that was done. Or have music or some other activity going on.

Group 2

We did a little reflection on our childhoods but mostly end up morphing into a lot of suggestions.

Some of the conversation around ourselves as youth were about the topic of inclusion during an adult activity. It reminded me of pancake breakfasts, for example, and singing in the adult choir as a youth.

One person remembers separation a lot in his church, as a youth, but it morphed into a smaller church as an adult where he was forced to be more with the kids because it was a smaller congregation.

Another recalled really just calling herself a church girl because all of it was part of a bigger community of participation and having a voice and activities where, was multi-generational, it sounded like.

And it's kind of summed up. We have a lot of good ideas too, which I'll bring up. Proud moments of things we've been doing and have done in the past. So, there's some good stuff that's happened already.

But summed up with a lot of the idea that we are most inclusive if we don't patronize kids and separate them and make them feel that we have to do for them. Like the woman said in the video that if they participate in adult like activities then they're going to feel valued and engaged.

I really love that one person mentioned the blanket collection, which is one activity I have not participated in and how multi-generational it has been over the years, kind of a big party where lots of kids show up as well and there's kids playing with other kids and the youth come and bring food and so it's a wonderful example of what we have done in the past and could continue to do.

The other thing that came up multiple times was the chalice camp that we had a couple of years ago before COVID and how beautiful that was and the spirit of community was so strong there and it was so inclusive of adults and children and even some of the events leading up to it. That the children did to raise money were, well received and involved.

A lot of adults that enjoyed interactions with the youth. We talked about being more available from the sidewalks. When we do activities on the new electronic sign, we do post them. We could maybe be even more mindful of it or try to draw people in.

As someone said, we're behind a wall, so we have to maybe reach out and someone mentioned the recent banned book event and the Pride event and how a couple of new people have become involved since that and so maybe we need to bring some of our activities out to the front a little bit more.

But we do have the Beacon Food Forest and we do have refugees from down the street gardening in the back and Jay is struggling a little bit because of his health. There every fourth Friday now and we would love to have more participation from our UUC congregants. And it has been fairly well attended. And did I miss, I'm sure I missed something, but I think we covered most of it.

### Group 3

We had a very wide range of backgrounds ranging from I had an extremely negative experience, to a fairly good experience being involved. Or having a very vital youth group but it was very segregated from the rest of the congregation.

People came specifically for two things. To have a place for their children – religiously, spiritually but also for themselves to give a sense of belonging. So the sense of belonging is a prime motivator.

Also, this is heartbreaking that when someone who is 5 years old is dropped off at church with her 3 year old sister and goes to a mass that's in Latin.

So I think that lack of, to me that was like the extreme lack of communication. A positive experience with the message group, really focused on the kids being real people having real feelings, real needs, etc. and I thought that was really a key idea.

Another idea was identity the resistance that we have of having an identity thrust upon us. That we are free to be more amorphous in our sense of religious identity.

One person said that they had a very good youth group, but there was no intermingling and the one Sunday when they did an intermingle, they used Sunday when the youth participated with them to maybe do a skit or whatever they did at the music, that there was grumbling in the congregation. Some people complained about that. And I've had that experience at UUC as well and that's sad to say.

The second question. I think the main theme was we need to have more integration. What we're doing is fine, you know, we've building this up again, but how do we integrate. Again, the main idea seemed to be we want to have them participate.

One great idea was invite kids to come to the open issues. And perhaps if they're willing to ask them to actually present an open issue.

Another excellent idea that came up in another group is the mentoring idea to pair an older person with a younger person that they kind of look forward to Sunday. Hi, how are you? How you doing? That's an excellent idea.

Having a kids table at the social hall but not just for kids but a chance for kids and adults to sit at a table, a table where kids know they're welcome to sit with the adults.

Social events like our Halloween trunk retreat. More of that, food forest participation. Invite kids to provide music. Some kids have been teenagers invited to be in the choir.

Also transportation is sometimes a problem. If you've got older people who can't drive, they are excluded in some sense at least from physical participation. Of families who have maybe extended families that like to bring, need transportation.

The idea that we need to overcome is that kids are disruptive and that's why we have to keep them apart. To find ways to help kids to fit in, to help adjust our feelings about how we handle kids. What is exactly is disruptive? What's disruptive to us might not be disruptive from a child's point of view, that their normal behavior.