

LEADERSHIP RETREAT MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2024

Participants: 50 participants, total

1. Welcome/Overview of 2023

a. Welcome/Introduction – John Szabo

b. Icebreaker – Paul Bonner – Rousing game of Plates

c. 2023 Overview – John Szabo

- i. Priorities from 2023 Leadership Retreat: Enhancing Welcoming Experience; Stronger Congregational Connections and Meeting Needs of Families and Children. In 2023, CUMC did fairly good in priorities 1 and 2, but needs to address priority 3 more.
- ii. Finance Committee established a \$30,000 fund for programs addressing the 2023 priorities. In 2023, \$9,700 was used to fund Welcoming Committee activities and the A. J. Levine Speaking Engagement. \$20,300 remaining in fund for use in 2024 and beyond.
- iii. Average In-person Worship Attendance: 211 in 2022, 254 in 2023 (20.3% increase). 162 visitors in 2023.

d. Financial Summary – Janice Boyko

- i. Ended 2023 with Surplus
- ii. 2024 budget approved December 7, 2023. Finance committee reviewing pledges and revenue assumptions in order to balance the budget. Will continue monitoring budget (revenue vs. expenses) throughout 2024 and adjust, as necessary.
- iii. Priorities for 2024: Consider appropriate ways to utilize Memorial and Endowment gifts; review 2022 audit findings and update finance policies and procedures, as necessary.

e. Administrative/Coordination Matters – Chris Haynes (See attached handout)

2. Enhancing Welcoming Experience

a. Welcome Committee Report – Pauline Rogers

- i. Impression – we have 7 minutes to make an impression on a visitor
- ii. Greeting – we need more volunteers
- iii. Organize – we need to organize a process for contacting and retaining visitors
- iv. Connect – need to help visitors make a deeper connection sooner.

b. Discussion/Ideas on Enhancing Welcoming Experience:

- i. Improving entrances, both south (including handicap) and children's
- ii. Better signage in church
- iii. Visit other churches to experience their welcoming experience
- iv. Look to other resources (Sharechurch.com, UMC Communications)
- v. Presence at community events (Pumpkinfest, Main Street Fair)
- vi. Update Website. Make it more user friendly.

3. Deepening/Strengthening Congregational Connections

a. Congregational Care Committee Report – Stephen Middlebrooks

- i. Accomplished in 2023: Introduction of Coffee Mugs, Caring Cards and Homebound Ministry
- ii. Working on in 2024: A. J. Levine speaking event, church history

b. Outreach Committee Report – Ethel Detch

- i. 2023 Highlights: Potato Drop (Yam Jam), Meals-on-Wheels, Workday at Center for Living and Learning, Monthly Fuel Bags for Graceworks, Relationship with Glencliff UMC, Habitat for Humanity Build, Gentry Foundation Volunteers, Distributed \$25,000 from Evans Fund to 6 organizations, Financially supported 14 ministry partner organizations (2 internationally).
- ii. 2024 Priorities: Continue to improve community connections, provide opportunities for members to serve, increase awareness of social justice issues.

c. Other Connection Opportunities – Mark Price

- i. Listed all the Sunday & Weekday Groups, Special/Seasonal Groups, Fellowship Groups and Retreats (Men's and Fall Family) available for congregational participation.
- ii. Announced new retreat opportunity – Women's Retreat, September 13 – 15

d. Discussion/Ideas on Deepening/Strengthening Congregational Connections

- i. Increase use of Realm by Members: Need members to sign up and use. Need to provide sign up opportunities and training for use of Realm.
- ii. Form geographic groups where congregation members know who lives close by. This can be done through Realm. Opportunity for social events, assistance when needed, and checking in with fellow members. Will deepen connections.
- iii. Look at providing transportation for members in need. Elizabeth Wanczak volunteered to contact Franklin Transit.

4. Meeting the Needs of Families and Children

a. Children's Ministry – Aimee Cox

- i. The Children's Ministry Team put together a power point presentation that gives an overview of national trends, what parents are looking for in a church experience and concerns parents have with church experience. Power point presentation from Children's Ministry Team is attached. This is useful information that helps guide our ministry to Children and Families.
- ii. Children's Ministry Team is planning to meet with parents and take a survey to identify needs, concerns, etc. to assist in planning family ministry.
- iii. How the church can support Children and Families: **VOLUNTEER!!** We need consistent presence in Sunday School teachers, nursery volunteers and children's club leaders; Support causes parents find important (Social justice, mental health resources, Mom's Demand Action, etc.); Know what is going on in Children's Ministry (Ask Aimee to include you on weekly e-mail summarizing what Children's Ministry is doing); Live out Welcoming Statement; Introduce and Welcome Families Visiting (show them to children's area, share your experiences raising children in a loving church environment).

b. Youth Ministry – Paul Bonner (10 min.)

- i. Reviewed mission trips/retreats planned, youth banquet and continued outreach opportunities in 2024.
- ii. Needs for 2024 – consistent Sunday morning presence (75% attendance by youth leaders), invite families to be part of community along with their youth, and continued giving to church.

c. Discussion/Ideas on Children & Families

- i. Add Safe Sanctuary Certification to Church's Website

- ii. Provide Welcome Bag for Children at Welcome Desk
- iii. Headphones for Children with Noise sensitivities and other services to children with challenges.
- iv. Include Committee heads on Children's Ministry weekly e-mail to coordinate with leadership.

5. Moving Forward - John Szabo

a. Summary of Actionable Ideas – John Szabo (15 min.)

- i. After considering the ideas presented during discussion/input time for each of the three priority areas (Welcoming, Congregational Connection and Children and Families), the following actionable ideas were agreed to. These are ideas we seek to implement in 2024.
 - a. **Address South (Main) and Children's Entrances to Church.** This will be a coordinated effort between Trustees, Welcome Committee and Finance to conceive, plan, design and finance. This would include providing a handicap entrance to South (Main) Entrance.
 - b. **Establish a Communication/Media Committee.** This committee would be responsible for determining best ways to communicate with the congregation and our surrounding community. This will include getting our message and uniqueness to a wider audience. Updating/improving the website is one consideration. The United Methodist Board of Communication is a potential resource.
 - c. **Participating in Community Activities.** Along with the Pride Festival, look for other opportunities where CUMC's presence can be on display (Main Street Fair, Pumpkinfest).

Leadership Retreat was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Christ UMC Office "How To" Guide for office-related requests

1. Office/Building Items:

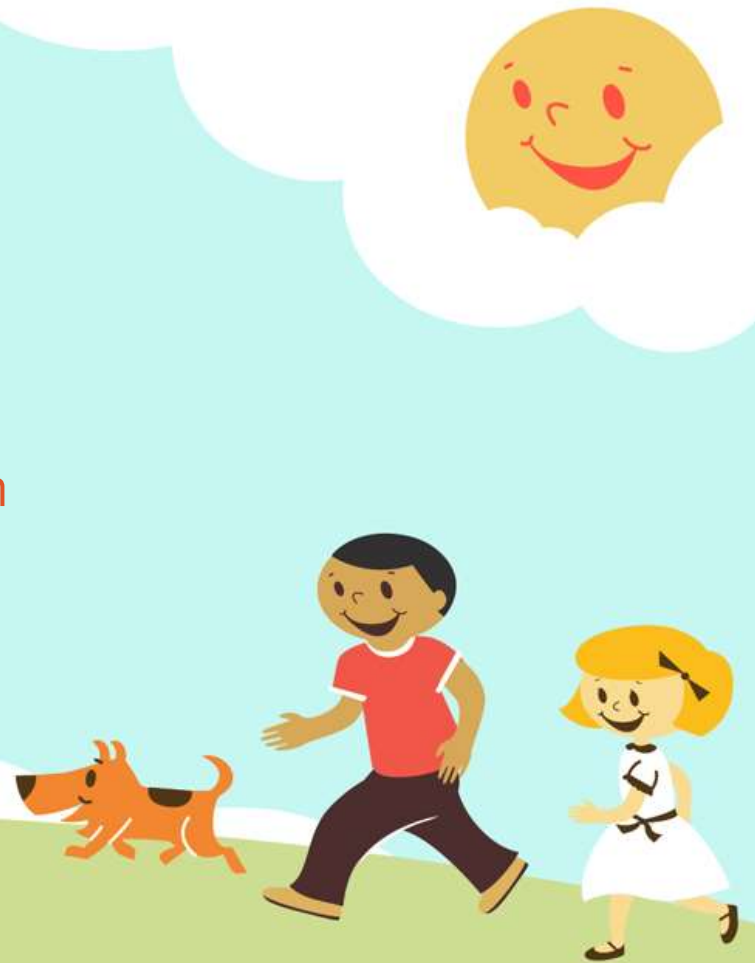
- Building Access Code
 - i. Reach out to Alexandra in the church office to receive your unique building access code – please do not share!
- Meeting time/location
 - i. Schedule your monthly committee meeting date/time with Alexandra so she can be sure to program the door to be unlocked during your meeting time (typically 15 minutes before meeting starts until 15 minutes into meeting start time) and can be sure to program the HVAC system so you have heat or air conditioning!
 - ii. If meeting at night, please be sure you turn off any lights on your way out of the building
 - iii. If you've activated the handicap button by turning the key at the top of the door, be sure you've set it back to be locked again when you leave
- Newsletter submissions/Event posters/Bulletin inserts/Sign-up sheets/etc.
 - i. Please send anything that needs to be included in the newsletter or posted on social media to Alexandra **one week prior** to when you'd like it to run
 - ii. Please send as much specific information as possible
 - 1. Dates/Times/Event location/Contact person/Doors unlocked/Special items needed/Costs associated with event/etc.
- Questions? Reach out to Alexandra in the church office
(alexandra@christumcfranklin.org)

2. Check requests/Expense reimbursement information:

- Check requests must be submitted 2 weeks prior to when check is needed
- Expense reimbursement requests must be submitted within 30 days of purchases
 - i. Please complete the official Check Request/Expense reimbursement form (located in a folder outside Michelle's office or can be emailed to you)
 - ii. Original receipts or invoice or other official documentation must be submitted along with request form
 - iii. Items needing to be ordered for an event (BBQ for example) should be submitted to the office to be ordered using our account and tax-exempt certificate
 - 1. Tax exempt certificate is meant to be used only by authorized church accounts, not by private members accounts
- Signature of approval from committee chair or leadership team member (in case of chair person making purchase and/or request) must be submitted along with form
- ***Expense must be part of an approved budget line item!***
- Questions? Reach out to Michelle in the business office
(michelle@christumcfranklin.org)

Children's Ministry

Meeting the Needs of Families and Children



The State of Things: A Nationwide View

- As of 2024
 - Religious “Nones” are now the largest single group in the US
 - 23% identify as Catholic & 24% as Evangelical Protestants
- As of 2023
 - Only 1/3 of US parents believe it is important for their children to have religious beliefs



Why are families leaving the Church?

- 37% affirmed that their church did not “genuinely demonstrate how to follow Jesus”
- 34% affirmed that their church was not a “welcoming environment for people” in their stage of life
- 36% affirmed they were “discouraged from asking pressing questions in the church environment
- 23% affirmed that their church discouraged them from expressing doubts about faith



Who are our parents? A Generational Look

Millennials

- Born between 1981-1996
- Major events in their life:
 - Internet from childhood
 - Cell phones
 - Social media
 - Great Recession
 - Covid Pandemic

Gen Z

- Born 1997-Present
- Major events in their life:
 - Never without internet, cell phones, or digital media
 - Young people as activists
 - Covid Pandemic



What is their Parenting Style?

- Have fewer children
- Less likely to be married
- Technology is a major influence
- Open-minded generation: parenting with styles that were not common before
- Are children of “helicopter parents” and find themselves to be naturally freer in their approach to parenting



What are Millennials and Gen Z parents finding at church?

Even with the goal to find God, the parents claim they find...

- Spiritual abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Racism
- Judgmental attitudes
- Indifference to their needs

“Our willingness to acknowledge their pain is, understandably, a stumbling block for those who remain spiritually curious.”



What are the parenting concerns for Millennial and Gen Z parents?

- Mental health of their children
 - Rising anxiety and depression
- Support for their family
 - Financial concerns
 - Lack of health care/insurance
- Gun violence in schools and elsewhere
- Violence and bullying in schools



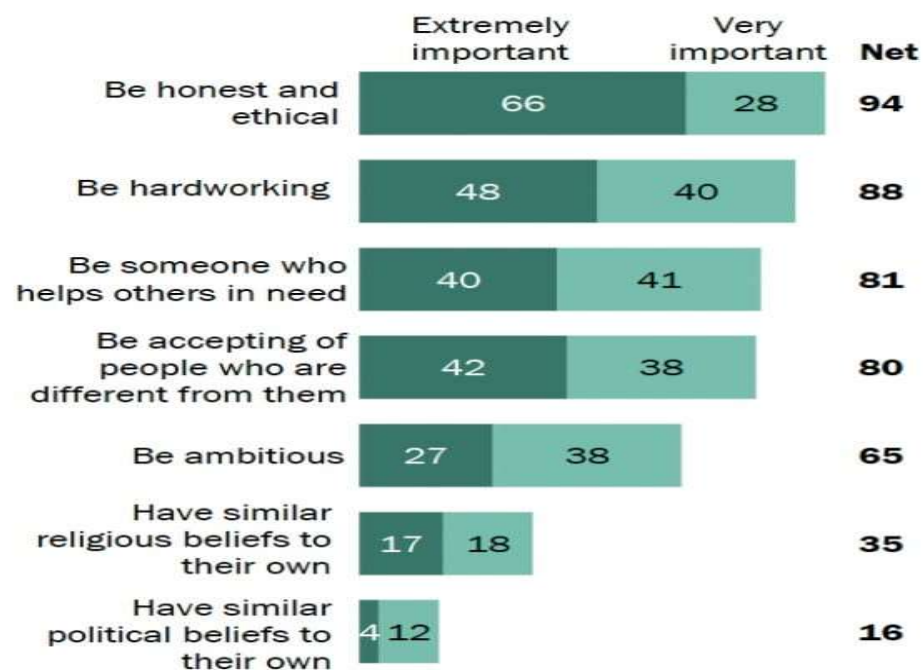
What are the parenting aspirations of Millennial and Gen Z parents?

- 94% feel its important for their kids to be “honest and ethical”
- 88% hope their children are hardworking
- 81% hope they help others in need
- 80% hope they accept others who are different
- Only 35% feel that if is important for their kids to have religious beliefs



Fewer than half of parents place a lot of importance on their children sharing their religious and political beliefs

% of parents saying it is extremely or very important to them that their children ____ as adults



Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
"Parenting in America Today"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

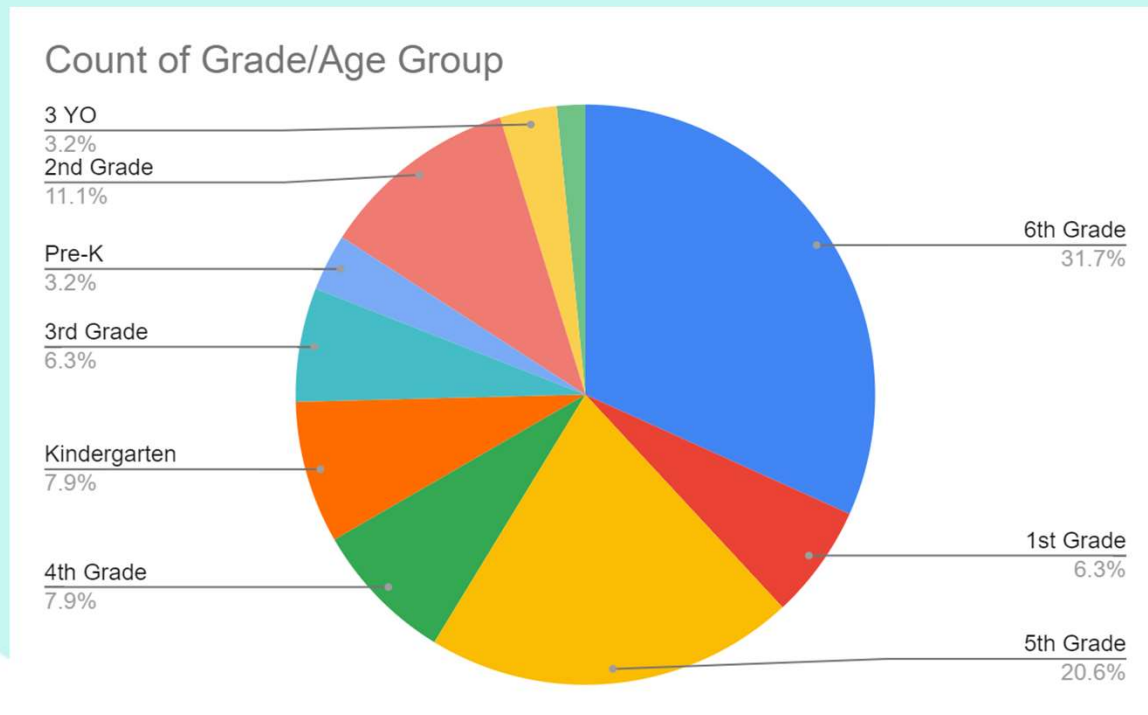


Where are we at Christ UMC?

- We have approximately 60 active families
 - What makes a family active?
 - Attending church at least 2 times per month
- 30% of our active families have become regular visitors or members within the last calendar year



Make up of children and families:



How is our Children's Ministry Team meeting the needs of our families?

- Sunday school for both children and parents
- Welcoming worship space where families can worship together, and children feel that they are included
- Fellowship opportunities such as Grape, Apple, Banana Club (Fruit Salad)
- Robust programming that provides a foundational approach to teaching faith at home, such as:
 - Family Bible Adventure
 - New Unit on Prayer
 - Advent/Lenten programming for at church and home
 - Confirmation
- Survey: to be rolled out February 25th



How can the leadership of this church support Children's Ministry?

- Listen to and trust the creativity and expertise of children's ministry staff and Children's Ministry Team
 - Sometimes we just need a volunteer
- Learn from our heroes
- Know what's going on
 - Email to committee chairs
 - Participate in our events, especially those that are intergenerational
- Share your own expertise and support causes that parents find important
 - Mental health resources
 - Mom's Demand Action
 - Conference-wide initiatives on social justice
 - Read UMC Social Principles for 2024



How can the leadership of this church support Children's Ministry?

- Help
 - Confirmation reception
 - Meal for Fruit Salad events
 - Support families
 - Engage/Ask/Respond
- Recognize that what you and your family needed 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago, might not be what a family needs today



How can the leadership of this church support Children's Ministry?

- Be Ambassadors
 - Live into our welcome statement
 - “We strive to show the hospitality of Jesus Christ to persons of **all ages, genders, races, sexual orientations, economic situations, and abilities.**”
 - Introduce yourself
 - Talk about your Christ UMC why
 - Talk about how Christ UMC was and is a safe place for your own children as they were growing up
 - Share what you know
 - Where is the nursery? What ages do we serve?
 - When and where is Sunday school?
 - Fidget station/Quiet area at front of sanctuary
 - What events are happening for children but also parents?
 - Let me show you...



How can the leadership of this church support Children's Ministry?

- Be Ambassadors (cont'd)
 - Ask questions
 - Have you met Aimee?
 - Have you met our staff?
 - Have you met members of CMT?
 - Talk about our church and what makes us different
 - Social media

