

Memorandum for: Session, Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies
From: Visioning Committee
Date: August 19, 2019

Last year, the Session convened a visioning committee to inquire into the future vision for our church. We initially focused on how the church would continue the excellent music program when the current principals – choir director, bell director and organist – are likely to retire in the next several years. To assist in this endeavor, the committee secured the help of Sally Park, an Estes resident and career facilitator and advisor to organizations who had similar desires to look ahead. With her coaching, we turned from this specific question to a broader study of how the congregation views the church today and how they see the church in the future. The change in scope and focus came about when we recognized that the original question presumes we see ourselves in the future exactly as we are today, and to plan for cloning our outstanding music leaders necessarily limits thinking about the broader vision for the church.

With Sally's guidance, we reframed the question as, "how do we see Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies 5 to 10 years from today?" We developed a series of congregational workshops to gather input on (1) the history of PCCR in the context of the community and broader society influences, (2) what our church does, and (3) what is important to us and how do we see the church in the future. Between the second and third workshops, we did one-on-one interviews of 105 members of the congregation to get personal impressions of what we appreciate about the church. These interviews explicitly asked about the positive side of the church, but left open the opportunity to express concerns and needs for change.

The first workshop, on August 5, 2018, looked at the history of the church and the trends that influenced where we are today. The second workshop, on October 31, 2018, focused on what our church does in music, study and education, fellowship, hospitality, worship, service and community outreach, mission and caring.

Interviews took place over several months in late 2018 and early 2019. The interviewers boiled down the discussions to short statements capturing the essence of what was said. We published these snippets in a special edition of the church newsletter.

We invited the congregation to a concluding workshop on June 9th to review the snippets and to discern what they meant for the church. About 70 people took part in table discussions around major categories of church activities: music, caring, fellowship and hospitality, mission, operations, service and outreach, worship, and study and education. In the first section of the workshop, the participants digested and summarized what they saw as important for the church. Time to do this was intentionally limited, with the objective of discerning the key aspects of the church today, without delving into the details or attempting to plan for the future. The second section of the workshop jumped ahead to envision the church a decade out. The intent was to draw an aspirational picture of the church in the future, and to provide congregational ideas and recommendations to the church leadership to help them develop goals and strategies to meet them.

Conclusions of the workshop are attached in the outline entitled “Observations at June 9 event.” The outline condenses and organizes the congregation’s recommendations for how we envision our church in the future and the actions we can take to achieve that vision. There is a lot of material here. The specific ideas deserve attention. With some trepidation that any summary can detract from the details, we offer the following.

Overall, the workshop discerned appreciation and love of the church and its programs, a sincere appreciation of Pastor Moore, a desire to keep and strengthen much of what we do, along with a wish to broaden and vary our thinking and actions.

The emphasis in improving and expanding can be seen in three broad categories: community, diversity and welcoming. Community includes expanding the church’s presence and role in the community – in identity, activities and service. Diversity includes recognition and acceptance of diverse views, with interest in having greater variety in our music, worship and education activities. Welcoming includes all of the things we do, and should do, to make the community, visitors and members comfortable, informed and happy about what the church provides.

The congregation’s vision for the future is a church that:

- Is open, warm, welcoming, inclusive, responsive, serving and caring.
- Provides a varied, but principally traditional worship program.
- Maintains excellence and widespread interest in its music programs.
- Values and demonstrates diversity in participation, programs and service.
- Offers a range of Christian education programs for different interest groups.
- Offers an assortment of services for individuals and the community.
- Communicates effectively and comprehensively.
- Shows meaningful outreach to its members and to the community.

Our church does much to meet this vision today. Clearly, the congregation knows that our culture and community have evolved rapidly in the past few decades, will likely continue to do so, and that PCCR needs to preserve our considerable strengths while we also evolve to remain most relevant and useful to our congregation and our community.

The workshops and interviews indicate that we can decide how we evolve and improve, and we have been given a wealth of ideas how to do so. We have an opportunity and an obligation to move forward to fulfill the vision stated by the congregation. We do not need to invent something new or to scrap what we have achieved. We have a long history and a strong foundation. The June 9th workshop gives us specific things we need to consider. All of us – individually, the Pastor, the Session and its committees, Deacons, Stephen Ministers and music groups – need to study the observations from the June 9th event and ask: what applies to me, and what can I do to make these ideas happen?

Observations at June 9 event

1. Table discussions, before lunch
 - a. Music table
 - i. Unanimous appreciation of current music staff and excellence of the contributions of the organist, choir, and handbells
 - ii. Most want more variety in musical styles and performers
 1. Would like wider range of styles
 2. Musical styles not currently used in the service could be acceptable if sincere, contribute to worship, of high quality, and not provided just for entertainment
 3. Would like to hear other instruments used for worship services
 4. Suggested inviting musicians in town for other organizations to perform for PCCR worship services, when available and when could provide music appropriate to the liturgical season and sermon topics
 5. Include music from other cultures
 6. Provide music that would be familiar to younger people, since current musical styles are often foreign and not attractive to them
 7. Music is constantly evolving, and worship service music should evolve with it if appropriate to the services
 - iii. When using unfamiliar hymns, ask the choir to sing the first stanza to introduce the tune to the congregation
 - iv. Would be good to combine older, more familiar hymns with new, less familiar hymns in the same service
 - v. A good practice to sponsor concerts in the sanctuary, if they are appropriate to a church setting and of high quality
 - vi. The sanctuary sound system should be improved. It is hard for people to hear if they are hearing impaired and the assisted-listening equipment isn't helpful for them.
 - b. Caring table
 - i. These were identified as positive groups and activities; positive indicators that demonstrate the caring nature of our congregation:
 - a. Stephen ministry
 - b. Deacons as a whole and the sunshine committee
 - c. Grace and grub
 - d. Melodrama
 - e. Presbyterian women
 - f. Fellowship hour and fellowship activities
 - g. Journeys class
 - h. PCCR welcomes outside community organizations to use the church Bldg. We are a welcoming comfortable space for other groups in the community.
 - i. Mission committee
 - j. Support of Crossroads
 - k. Pastoral care is very meaningful

- 1. Pastor and his wife are caring and comforting
 - m. Strong bonds have been formed within our demographic.
 - i. Most snippets seem to indicate that we are a welcoming church, but a couple snippets said no one had spoken to them and one other said they felt ignored. Are we a welcoming church?? An example of many snippets: “The church feels like family”, “PCCR feels like home”; “Fellowship, friendship and mutual support are all present and important”, “PCCR is friendly and welcoming.”
 - ii. There were some ideas of what we could be doing more of, ie: hands on community outreach and service to the community.
 - iii. New comments that came from the table:
 - iv. We need to make known to the congregation as a whole what is going on within our church, ie: Some did not know about the sunshine committee within the deacons. Congregation needs to know about what so many members of this church are doing in and outside the church.
 - v. There was also discussion re: the need for better ways of informing members about those who are ill or have special needs, maybe a phone tree. The needs of members should be shared in a timely manner; sometimes we hear after the fact of illness, needs, etc. The current emailing of the prayer chain has helped and this is good.
 - vi. A comment for the committee from Dona that did not come up at the meeting, – a Peace of Mind committee is being formed to hopefully assist with meeting some needs of members.
- c. Fellowship / hospitality table
 - i. For both fellowship and hospitality,
 - 1. Generally, thoughts from the interviews and the table were positive, and both areas are good foundations upon which to build.
 - 2. Although interview comments helped guide the conversation, most of the comments in this report are “from the table”.
 - ii. Fellowship comments:
 - 1. Programs like picnics and Grace and Grub need to be maintained, and become better known.
 - 2. Our social and small groups bring people together and would be more effective if they were better known.
 - iii. Hospitality comments:
 - 1. We need to maintain our acceptance of diversity.
 - 2. How can we reach out to new residents?
 - 3. Be more welcoming to groups using our facility; let them know that their presence is beneficial to us.
 - 4. Reaffirm that we are a Christian facility but welcoming to all faiths.
 - 5. Each of us can try to speak to someone we don’t know.
- d. Mission table
 - i. Thoughts from interviews
 - 1. Hands on service to the Estes Park Community

2. Are there things outside our community we need to be involved in (one thought mentioned immigration)?
 3. Outreach –Music committee, Journey’s class, Stephen Ministry, “All” organizations
 4. Want church to stay relevant in today’s world and in the community
 5. Also need study of the Bible to help us
- ii. Thoughts from the table
1. Provide to the community without restrictions!
 2. Presbyterians accept all people
 3. Communion to all
 4. How to include Hispanic community
 - a. Provide resources
 - b. Use of building
 5. Mission is more than money to the rest of the world
 6. Tension between local and world
 7. Building use by various organizations
 8. Definition of “Mission” recognizes and acknowledges many ways of “doing Mission” –use of building for community, classes thought out week, etc.
- e. Operations table
- i. Thoughts from the interviews
1. Detected weakness in how we greet visitors
 2. Should think about expanding the ways we communicate to members
 3. Should look for additional means of communicating about the church to the community, visitors, non-members
 4. We have more space than we use
 5. We could develop more ways to offer education
 6. Do we have adequate emergency plans?
- ii. Thoughts from the table
1. We should strengthen the process for greeting visitors
 - a. More people with job to seek out new faces
 - b. Better process to provide nametags equivalent to established members
 2. Recognized while we have a variety of methods used to communicate with members of the church, people tend to ignore many of these and pay attention to only some of the messages
 - a. Need to be redundant in how we communicate
 - b. Explore additional vehicles to disseminate same information
 3. Within limits of what codes allow, we should come up with more ways to use church facilities to expand our community outreach
 4. Sense that our scriptural education offerings are either limited or not well publicized
 - a. Need a better way of developing education offerings

- b. Need more information as to what is on the calendar
 - 5. Sense we do not have publicized and effective procedures for responding to emergencies, such as a fire, a medical emergency, a security issue (i.e., active shooter), etc.
 - f. Service and outreach table
 - i. Service within the church includes many events such as:
 - 1. Small groups
 - a. Grace and grub
 - b. Presbyterian women
 - c. Journeys class
 - d. Stephen ministry
 - e. Souper bowl
 - f. Blue Christmas, etc.
 - ii. Service from church members involved in the community
 - a. Crossroads
 - b. Highlands Camp
 - c. Partners, etc.
 - iii. Outreach
 - a. Hosting Community organizations/activities
 - b. Welcoming persons new to PCCR
 - c. Accepting the LGBT community
 - d. Reaching out to Newcomers
 - e. Picking up persons to bring to church services and Journeys
 - g. Worship table
 - i. Generally “traditional” service is preferred, but...
 - 1. Encourage variety within the traditional service
 - 2. Adapt to attract younger worshippers
 - 3. Inform members of special prayer concerns
 - ii. Consider different services offering different styles
 - iii. Sustain our music program
 - iv. Additional Worship Comments:
 - 1. Stress “community”
 - 2. We didn’t talk to those that aren’t here
 - 3. Really worship during the worship services
 - 4. Consider additional worship services
- 2. Future thinking presentations
 - a. Chart A (Music table)
 - i. Church is central to wide range of participants
 - ii. Participants will continue to be mutually supportive
 - 1. Support comes from many others
 - 2. Support comes from individuals
 - 3. They are a welcoming, caring, loving family in fact and by reputation.
 - iii. There will be more young families in the congregation
 - 1. Worshipping together
 - 2. Parent-focused educational programs

3. Children singing and playing in the yard
4. Young families will interact with older adults in the church, with multi-generational activities and worship
5. When there are more younger families in the church, the older adults will continue to be active and present
- iv. The church will be increasingly diverse and more active in area educational programs, sports events, and other community activities
- v. Church door will be wide open to any interested person
 1. Many small groups with diverse participants in each
 2. Lots of interaction between participants
 3. Church participants have a strong fellowship together, and it spills over into the wider community and the region
- vi. There will be ongoing Bible study fellowships for both adults and children
- b. Chart B (Mission table)
 - i. The church is open (24/7) for the community
 - ii. Music of all types continues – organ, bells included
 - iii. Stephen ministry
 - iv. Small groups during the week including community groups of all ages and types
 - v. Variety of service types
 - vi. Good preaching, Bible based
 - vii. No dress code so all feel welcome
 - viii. No discrimination and no requirements placed on attendees
 - ix. Thriving education program for all ages but also discussing varying spiritual practices
- c. Chart C (Caring table)
 - i. Our picture:
 1. Open church, called the Community Church (not identified as Presbyterian). A church with many diverse individuals, race, ethnicity, sexual identities; music; classes including Bible study as well as an evolving ecumenical class for living the questions; an active use of the meditation trail; a parish nurse; and a community day care building on the campus.
 - ii. From sticky notes:
 1. More interest in Bible study
 2. PCCR known thru out EP as actively involved in the community, strong music program
 3. Warm church with people at fellowship – I'm 78 and valued
 4. Outreach programs, Bible based social justice sermons
 5. Small groups
 6. Diverse body of members, engaged in Community service
 7. Outreach program with mixed cultures to learn and accept new things about each other
 8. Be creative spiritually
 9. Strong music program

10. Now CCR, not PCCR – more welcoming and inclusive to all beliefs and faiths
11. Welcoming to all ages – not focused on just one
12. Strong outreach program to the community
13. Active in social justice
14. Inclusive of all people regardless of race, sexual identity, or ethnicity
15. Responsive to need in EP – i.e.: day care ctr. built on property
16. An evolving ecumenical studies class
17. Expansive thinking re: our relationship with God, Jesus and the Bible

d. Chart D (Service and Outreach)

- i. Expect to see and feel much joy in and among the congregation
- ii. See forward thinking/new awakenings re: progressive Christian ideas that are more meaningful in the 21st century
- iii. Open doors to a “larger church”
- iv. Intellectual topics forums
- v. Working with affordable housing and migrant needs
- vi. A new major outreach sponsored and run by PCCR – example, with migrant/immigrant families
- vii. Housing and day care for low income families

e. Chart E (Operations table)

- i. The church building and facilities are present, but in the background
- ii. Key vision and focus is a large circle of diverse people with joined hands
- iii. Within the circle are numerous small groups engaged in different activities

f. Chart F (Worship table)

- i. The church will be filled with Joy and laughter, including children on a new playground
- ii. There will be families of all ages
- iii. Our sanctuary will be full
- iv. We will offer special services, including in Spanish
- v. We will host a variety of community events
 1. Music events, organ and choral recitals
 2. Non-profits
- vi. The Church will be constantly busy
- vii. We will be reaching out to the local community and the world

g. Chart G (Study and Education table)

- i. Stephen Ministry “piece of mind”, caring for community, close knit community
- ii. worship service that is dynamic and Christ centered
- iii. Church is an active member in serving those in need in the community
- iv. Congregation is lively and friendly.
- v. A church that is busy with work in the community, less focus on the church itself.
- vi. People coming and going and the TABLE IS SET FOR ALL.
- vii. Active Christian Ed. Program with an associate pastor for C.E.

- viii. People are growing in their faith
- ix. They are excited about how the church has equipped them to share their faith.
- x. The church is reaching out into the community reaching every need.
- xi. Everyone in EP knows this is the church that makes Jesus Christ Relevant to the community.
- xii. Lives are changing.
- xiii. Two gifted organists
- xiv. A children's choir
- xv. A youth group meeting on a school day and/ or Sunday evening
- xvi. Pastor and an associate pastor
- xvii. Small groups day/evening
- xviii. Sunday school for young and old every week.
- h. Chart H (Fellowship and Hospitality Table)
 - i. The church facility will host many and diverse groups, both faith and community
 - 1. Worship, study, music, social, 501C3's, ...
 - ii. Many families of all ages will be involved.
 - iii. Seen at the church: playground, coffee house, meditation trail/rooms, people singing, shaking hands, smiling
- 3. Intangibles
 - a. The event attracted a large number of members.
 - b. June 9 event, plus interviews, have created interest in the present and future church
 - c. Will promote conversations, discussion
 - d. Have created energy within the congregation. Considerable enthusiasm in evidence.
 - e. No negative observations by this time. Comments all positive.
 - f. Several new people were involved in the event and may be more interested in active participation in the future
 - g. May not have addressed core values specifically, but all are implicit in the description of a future church
- 4. What are the important directions in which the church should evolve?