

Fairmount Presbyterian Church
Working Group: Re-Engaging the Church
Proposal: Leading The Conversation

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Mission Statement - Our group's mission, to purposely engage all members by reaching out to those recently inactive, active members through small groups of Christian education and community activity involvement.

Fairmount will enliven the religious life of its congregants and friends by responding to their spiritual needs through worship services that combine word from the pulpit with biblical base having situational relevance, liturgy and music expressing forms creatively developed through the history of the Church and the denomination, and educational programs designed with appropriate forms and contents for different generations. The church will invite and involve its congregants and friends in networks of care stressing mutual respect, openness, inclusiveness, trust, for confidentiality, autonomy and responsibility, all understood to be aspects of Christian love and discipleship. Fairmount will encourage its congregation to keep aware of and discoursing about social, political and global ethical issues. While urging its members to engage in programs of activity for causes to which they have special commitment, Fairmount will exercise care not to take hasty corporate positions on controversial current issues to publicize.

Proposal - We propose to re-engage the church through renewed conversation, using four strategies: arranged one-to-one requested conversations called, "Guess Who's Calling?"; Shepherds, a structured communications program engaging every member in periodic conversation; education topics for both virtual and in-person groups; and rebuilding Fairmount's Stephen Ministry support team.

Re-Engaging the Church through Conversations

“Guess Who’s Calling?”

“Guess Who’s Calling” – A safe socially-distanced activity for members, friends, and any others who wish, to stay connected. Inspired by a similar activity at a neighboring PCUSA parish, “Guess Who’s Calling” is the perfect activity for those who wish to connect with others with a simple phone call.

Why - Give people a way to connect outside of their COVID bubbles in a low tech setting with a low time commitment but a high social impact.

The idea for this stemmed from a conversation between two people talking about their voting plans. Neither really knew each other beyond the casual, passing conversation. But their conversation quickly veered off-topic, and after 45 minutes, both felt energized and more connected to each other.

When - Every third Sunday after worship between eleven and Noon as though you were in the Fellowship Hall after service.

Who - Anyone, long time member or curious about Fairmount, wanting to make a personal connection with another FPCer.

How - Participants will indicate their interest by submitting a Google form survey or calling the church office (216-321-5800). Participants must join before the second Sunday, when Deacons will pair people together and then contact each participant to indicate who they are to call on Third Sunday and provide some conversation starters. Everyone who signs up will be paired with another person for conversations to take place on Third Sunday. The conversation can be as short or as long as you wish.

Budget - \$0 - Time is the only expense.

That said, staff time may be required to develop the process, and orchestrate and arrange volunteer coordinators.

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Shepherds

Those involved in Caring for Fairmount today:

- Staff
 - Peter Horvath does Pastoral Care approximately 10 hours/week
 - Pastor Lindsay has a focus on caring for the congregation
 - Chris Fader has a focus on caring for Families with Children
- Session
 - 12 members represent the congregation in decision-making. Presumably they have a pulse of the congregation at any given moment
- Deacons
 - 14 Deacons responsible for caring ministries – if we move forward with this, overseeing the Shepherd ministry could be a leadership role 1-2 Deacons take on as part of their service

What is missing?

A sustained effort to ensure every member or friend of the congregation *feels* connected to the church and cared for by the church.

Proposal:

Create a role – Shepherds – whose primary responsibility is to connect with a “flock” on a quarterly basis to “check-in” and see how people are doing, whether there is anything the church could be doing for them, etc.

This role is meant to be a conduit for information – not the provider of the services. For example, if the Shepherd hears the individual is struggling with issues of faith, the Shepherd would pass that information on to one of the Pastors. If they hear, they would like their children to feel more connected to the church, they would pass that information on to Chris Fader, etc.

To implement the Shepherds program, we create the following:

- An introductory class to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities and answer questions
- A “cheat sheet” to help Shepherds know the current activities of the church, who to connect individuals with depending on need
- Ensure staff is aware of the new role and ask for their input on an ideal process for keeping Shepherds aware of membership changes, process for Shepherds to notify staff of needs, etc.

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- Develop a list of individuals to include and develop processes (with staff) to keep the list updated.
- Share the role and the thinking behind it with the congregation

Role Description:

- A two-year commitment to care for/connect with 20 people in your flock.
 - 20 person flocks in an 800-person congregation means 40 shepherds
- Make contact with the individuals in your flock on a quarterly basis.
 - Can be a phone call, an email, a card in the mail, meet for a cup of coffee, etc.
- Ideally develop a connection with them such that you are aware of what is happening in their lives and over time can perhaps make suggestions for ways the church can support them in their current journey.
- When you are notified of a new member joining your flock, make contact within a week of being notified of the new member.

Budget - \$0. However considerable staff time, especially that of Pastor Lindsay will be required to develop the structure, Shepherd training, and investigating care requests.

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Education Topics

Theoacademy

- Twelve topics for different stages of Presbyterian life:
 - a. Being Presbyterian: Foundations - New Members
 - b. Being Presbyterian: Ordination Prep - Elders & Deacons
 - c. Teoacademy: Ser Presbiteriano - En Español
 - d. Intro to the Old Testament in 5 Lessons
 - e. Intro to the New Testament in 5 Lessons
 - f. Biblical Interpretation for Teaching & Preaching
 - g. Intro to Reformed Theology in 5 Lessons
 - h. Intro to Reformed Worship in 5 Lessons
 - i. Theoacademy Confirmation for Youth
 - j. Love One Another in 5 Lessons
 - k. Women & Reformation in 6 parts
 - l. Strange Books: Bible vs. Other Cultures' Stories
- Online videos
- <http://www.theoacademy.com/>
- Implementation: Start with Reformed Theology & Reformed Worship
- Budget - \$0 - Donations to PCUSA Synod of Mid America

Testimony: Vocabulary of Faith

- Six topics
 - a. Who is God? - Almighty
 - b. Who are we? - Imago Dei
 - c. God in Relationship - Covenant
 - d. God who saves - Grace
 - e. God of action - Love
 - f. God of belonging - Christian Community
- <https://pres-outlook.org/2020/09/vof/>
- Budget - \$45 for everything

Covenant Bible Study

- 24 week in 3 8-wk modules
 - a. Creating
 - b. Living
 - c. Trusting
- includes DVDs

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- <https://www.covenantbiblestudy.com/>
- Budget - Various - Bible Study Kit \$104

Book Led Bible Study

- **Being Reformed: Theology for Presbyterians**
- Budget - \$7 per Leader book

- **Engage Mission**
- Budget - \$9 per Participant book

Other considerations are the staff time that will be required to develop the training structure, identify and assign lay facilitators, and coordinate online technology.

Re-Engaging the Church through Conversations

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers are trained lay counselors who supplement pastoral care. The Stephen Minister provides one-to-one Christian care to people who are hurting, grieving, or experiencing a health crisis. The implementation of Stephen Ministry is long and involved, but many FPC members have had very positive and life-changing interactions with Fairmount's Stephen Ministers in the past, and so it is deemed well worth the effort.

Stephen Ministry at Fairmount was discontinued at some time in the recent past.

www.Stephenministry.org

Fairmount would need three or four Stephen Minister Leaders, who commit to at least 2 year term.

We have three existing SM leaders and seven Stephen Ministers, all over 65. Our SM Leaders are Rev Jessie; Rev Lindsay and Jean Sylak.

However, Rev. Jessie cannot be a SM leader in FPC due to her duties as Interim Pastor / Head of Staff.

The Leader attends a seven day in-person intensive training class at predetermined locations around the USA. Not clear how this occurs in time of Covid-19.

Stephen Minister Leaders lead in Stephen Minister administration:

- Supervision
- Training
- Matching
- Publicity

SM Leaders train at least 5 new Stephen Ministers

- Start SM recruiting when we have Three SM Leaders
 - Proposed: recruit 30s, 40s, and 50s;
 - Must be both men & women.
 - Perhaps start with the "Parents Night Out" group.

Budget -

- Existing SM Leader update to May 2020: \$187
- New SM Leader \$1500 ea, \$120 ea materials; travel / lodging expenses
 - Seven day training seminar
- SM Leader then trains Stephen Ministers; \$50 training material each.
 - 2.5 hr / wk @ 20 wks

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Vision - We foresee that through these structured communication activities, Fairmount members, as well as members of the community at large, will be energized to speak with each other freely, a freedom robbed of us through forbidden access to our church, social distancing, mask wearing, and fear of infection.

Impact - The impact will start gradually. “Guess Who’s Calling” will initiate the process. Presenting education topics as an addition to current online worship etc, and prayer meetings, will encourage members to make Fairmount part of their daily or weekly routine. Shepherding will start with developing the structure, identifying shepherds, training the shepherds and assigning them flocks, and then implementing the communications. Finally Stephen Ministry, starting concurrently with these other activities, will bring a lay led pastoral care component that will complement and augment care by the Pastors.

Partners - Guess Who’s Calling and Shepherds will be seek to be coordinated through Deacons. Discussion / prayer group facilitators and Stephen Ministers will draw from the congregation.

Resources - The principle resource needed is volunteers. While presumably, Deacons might lead the “Guess Who’s Calling” and Shepherds programs, it’s possible current Deacons are oversubscribed, and other volunteer assistance would be required.

Financial resources:

- Education
 - Testimony: Vocabulary of Faith = \$45
 - Covenant Bible Study = \$104
 - Total = \$149
- Stephen Ministry
 - Stephen Minister Leader: Existing update training - \$187.00
 - Stephen Minister Leader - New: \$1500 + \$120 = \$1620.00
 - Stephen Minister training at \$50 ea x 5 = \$250.00
 - Total = \$2,057.00
- Total = \$2206.00

A major resource will be the time of staff to coordinate the various programs: “Guess Who’s Calling,” Shepherds, Education, and Stephen Ministers. A pastor (likely Pastor Lindsay) would oversee SM Leader training, and then identify, train and assign Stephen Ministers. At any one time, there can only be as many care assignments as there are Stephen Ministers, and Stephen Ministers may only assist one person.

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Implementation Timetable -

Guess Who's Calling and online Discussion / Prayer Groups can start immediately.

The Shepherd program requires coordination, shepherd selection, training, and flock assignment. This process may take one to three months.

Stephen Ministry requires training at least one more Leader in a seven-day in-person intensive course. This may have moved to on-line. Once we have three Leaders, selection and training of Stephen Ministers from the congregation begins.