

Notes from April 17, 2011 Re-Envisioning Town Hall Meeting

Key things learned from Beacon Hill case study

There were members and diversity to work with at Beacon Hill.

We don't have the same kind of neighborhood.

The ministry of facilities is a double edged sword. Tent may "mask" your inability to support yourself. We are not that far along the road.

Beacon Hill leased to other churches. We rent to groups that don't use our sanctuary.

Renting does not translate into membership in the church for us. It is a good will and maintenance factor.

We are operating like a "junior" Community Center. All are worthy organizations. Some have a very tangential relationship to our church.

If you look around our church on Sunday mornings, it may appear that we will be in that place in 10 years.

It was interesting that the people went from door to door, talking about a new Church.

What does our community want? What do we have to offer that they want?

When the group was ready to act, they had a sense of who they were and what their vision was for the future. They had a container of identity, though – i.e. a Mission Statement, though broad. It fit their neighborhood; we have coasted on our identity. We are no longer just Orinda.

We are on the liberal end of the spectrum, though Orinda is not as conservative as people think.

People may not have a clue who we are. They think we are like every other church they have thought negatively about.

Why don't we have "drop in" pot lucks?

It's not going to help because we need to say exactly what this is.

We don't have to limit ourselves geographically.

We need to identify ourselves as having something very special to offer.

Are there other churches are offering what we are offering?

First we need to define who/what we are and why do people come here from other communities?

We church shopped. I liked the friendliness here.

Some are looking for a place that is not so insistent but still connected with Jesus and his teachings.

I don't think people are looking for churches. Their perceived needs are spiritual rather than religious.

This is a huge point. How to address people's spiritual hunger. People having kids today were not raised in a church.

If they were raised in a church, their culture is oblivious.

People coming from larger geographical areas are looking for spirituality, community, music, thoughtful, intelligent worship; environmental work, human justice.

Has the city of Orinda ever come up with a Youth Center? There are not enough places for young people to gather.

In Seattle "Yelp" is being used to evaluate churches. All of a sudden we have become a part of the evaluating community. They use the "Star" system.

This is our experience. Our visitors have looked us up on the web site. It's a different \world.

We need to have more for young people.

172 churches are evaluated in "Yelp".