

**For the April 23, 2017 Congregational Conversation
Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship**

A. Focus Groups on Berkey's Mission and Building Space

On January 19, 2017, the Spiritual Leadership Team (SLT) met with 4 focus groups to talk about Berkey's mission and building space, using an appreciative inquiry process. Each group had 6-8 people chosen randomly from the congregation. One SLT member led each group while another took notes. The groups responded to six questions.

- A. What do you value most about Berkey?
- B. Recall a recent time in congregational life when you experienced intimacy/connectedness at Berkey. How did that experience create the feeling of intimacy/connectedness?
- C. Given your knowledge of our congregation, where do you think Berkey should focus its energies over the next two years?
- D. In light of cultural and religious trends, name one mission you believe God is calling Berkey to participate in.
- E. Imagine we had the space to accommodate more people. How could we offer experiences of intimacy/connectedness for each other?
- F. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

B. Summary of the Groups' Responses

After the groups met, the SLT asked Elizabeth Miller, a former member of the SLT, to summarize the responses. Here is her summary.

1. Most of the responses to the first question (what do you value most?) can be put in one of two categories: worship (sharing time, music, sermon, worship style) or community (accepting, sense of community, welcoming, etc.). Some of the "atmosphere" comments could probably also be understood as descriptions of the type of community at Berkey.
2. It seems like intimacy and connectedness (2nd question) for most people happen in planned/ structured/mediated spaces at Berkey. Although a few people mentioned coffee time or receiving spontaneous cards/messages as examples of intimacy, the majority cited something that was planned or structured in a way that would promote intimacy/connectedness: small groups, Sunday School, receiving pastoral care, or receiving meals. One exception to this were the responses related to worship (sharing time, spontaneity in worship). Worship is, of course, planned, but the worship examples given to illustrate intimacy were unplanned.
3. As far as where Berkey should focus its energies, the two most common responses were some kind of mission focus or that we need more space. Hopefully, both of these imply a willingness to be changed and experience transformation. True mission cannot happen without a willingness to be changed as a result of that mission. Neither can physical growth and adding space to Berkey's physical building happen without a willingness to experience change and transformation as a community.

[over]

C. What Do You Think?

1. Do you think the themes in this summary give us an accurate snapshot of Berkeley?
2. What's new or surprising here?
3. Given the new pastoral reality in front of us, what do you think we should be moving toward in the life of the congregation?