

House Group Leader Report

House Group Leaders: Claire Foster, Kathy Herigstad, Jane Gunwaldsen, Sandy Johnson, Shannon Peterson, and Laura Petrie

#1 - What we learned from this process about our congregation

We learned that a majority of our congregation are strongly committed to our church with their participation in six house groups over four sessions.

From this process all six house groups unanimously agree that we want our church to stay open. We agree that we have viable resources in leadership, time, talents, and monetary options. The groups agree that our relationship with KHN is important and that Alki UCC and KHN's relationship sends a powerful message of unity in our community.

In examining our "Why" the groups were in consensus that Alki UCC's "Why" is "Providing an inclusive, compassionate place living our faith by supporting our community and each other through progressive activism."

The house groups also came to the same conclusion about our building needs. Our building needs a radical redevelopment. The house leaders concluded that many options need to be explored and that there are many viable ideas circulating amongst the congregation.

Each house group fully supports our music ministry and identified our music program as the main unifier throughout this transitional process.

We learned through this process that our congregation has and continues to whole heartily support progressive activism. Such activism should support social justice, environmental/Puget Sound restoration, and compassion for our extended community.

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#2 - What we learned from this process about our community.

The neighborhood community surrounding Alki UCC is relatively unknown to our congregation. The house groups noted strength in our church community and weakness in our neighborhood community.

There is missional interest in social justice and environmental issues that are at the forefront of our local community. Our neighborhood community and the beach need Alki UCC and we can offer value in staying.

#3 - What consensus came from our Group Leaders Meeting (Future Story)

The house group leader meeting came to the consensus that although our house groups had varying positions there was common unity in remaining a church, supporting our music ministry, and our Why. The leaders shared their group's conversations which were similar in story and core values across all houses.

The leader meeting came to the final decision of radical redevelopment of the physical structure of our church. Exploring the many options of redevelopment; property, building structure, location, and different partnerships will be critical in setting the trajectory. The leader meeting did not focus on which option, but simply the decision to utilize our financial resources (net worth) and minimize our financial burdens (building maintenance).

Redefining mission was a secondary parallel decision. The house group leaders expressed the need to redefine our mission and get back to "Why" we are a church. The house group leaders agree that our building maintenance is getting in the way of our "Why".

#4 - Next Steps

It is recommended to keep our momentum and pursuit the following next steps:

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1. Report to the congregation ASAP in order to keep our momentum with the discernment process.
2. Immediately recruit a talented congregational team, with a variety of talents, to conduct an options analysis. Identifying options pertaining to the property, building, costs and market analysis, and exploring interested parties to partner in a pursuit to radical redevelopment.
3. Continue to redefine our missional work and maintain our music ministry.
4. Build leadership and talent within our ministry teams.

The house group leaders recommend not continuing with additional services from Hope Partnerships. The leaders did acknowledge that there may be a need in the future to solicit help from other experts depending on the results of the options analysis. The house group leaders did discuss the feedback from their respective groups pertaining to this process and will complete the recommended evaluation of the New Beginnings Process by February months end.

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