

## Overview of February 2023 All-Church Meetings

---

In February 2023, the effort to collect information from the FUMC community to inform decisions about facilities investments continued with two more all-church meetings: one in person at the Downtown location on the 26th and one via Zoom on the 28th. In total, more than 150 people participated in these meetings.

FUMC has contracted with Brittany Galisdorfer, of local firm Bridgeport Consulting, to serve as a neutral third party in designing an inclusive process. Ms. Galisdorfer began the meeting with a recap of the themes heard across both the in-person and virtual all-church meetings in January:

1. The summary documenting Bridgeport's early conversations resonated, nearly in its entirety, with most attendees.
2. Growing FUMC participation requires a multifaceted approach.
3. More work is needed to communicate the problems to be solved via this facilities strategic planning process, the process for resolving those problems, and the opportunities that exist.

In response to these themes, especially theme #3, Pastor Nancy provided an overview of the current state of FUMC and what she has seen other successful churches do to transition from declining participation to growing participation. Highlights of her remarks include:

- FUMC's worship attendance and giving has gone down steadily in recent years.
- The cost of FUMC's needed building maintenance and repairs has grown to over \$2 million.
- FUMC cannot continue forward as it is today, or it will no longer exist.
- Successful churches are reaching out to their communities through events and service projects; they find ways to utilize their buildings for multiple purposes and as a source of income.

Meeting attendees worked individually, in pairs, and then in small groups to respond to the following discussion prompts:

- What is most important to you when it comes to FUMC's current facilities?
- What is important to you as we think about the future of FUMC facilities?

## Summary of Responses

---

Below are the high-level themes of the responses provided. Only those themes articulated multiple times are shown below. They are ordered by frequency of mention.

### What Is Most Important? - FUMC's Current Facilities

- Downtown sanctuary
- Downtown location
- Activities for youth and children
- A gathering spot for the congregation and community
- Organ
- FUMCN
- A home for worship, prayer, and music
- Memorial Garden
- The welcoming atmosphere of Green Wood
- Music programs
- A variety of building spaces in terms of size and configurations
- Free and available parking
- Diversity of music and worship
- Stained glass windows and natural light
- Livestream worship

### What Is Most Important? - FUMC's Future Facilities

- Create programming and spaces that invite the community into the building and that are used to serve the community
- Maintain the Downtown location
- Sell Green Wood, and create a new intimate worship space Downtown
- Provide spaces that meet the needs and preferences of a diversity of ages, especially youth and families
- Match building expenses to revenues in an ongoing, sustainable way
- Use our assets to generate revenue
- Cultivate virtual participation, and better integrate it with in-person programming
- Transform the building entry, exterior, and landscaping to encourage the community to enter



- Ensure FUMC participants access to free and available parking throughout the week
- Leverage and build on FUMCN's success
- Provide for environmental sustainability and energy efficiency
- Preserve Green Wood for uses other than worship
- Provide for accessibility and universal design
- Put in place sufficient staff resources to support programming and building maintenance
- Create flexible spaces that can be rearranged for a variety of uses
- Make better use of FUMC's green spaces
- Have stained glass windows and natural light
- Provide for the safety of those inside the building
- Establish a fund to maintain facilities in an ongoing way
- Develop adequate and accessible storage space