



Heartland District Congregational Conversation Results

This fact sheet includes basic information and some of the issues, problems and solutions, which **Heartland District** congregations discussed in their congregational conversations.

Do these results match what you would expect from other congregations in your district? What would you expect to be different?

The Basics

- Three (3) congregations in the **Heartland District** returned report forms.
- Two (2) conversations were held in **Mid-Size** congregations; another conversation was held by a **cluster** of nearby congregations.
- All the congregations who participated in these conversations are **Welcoming Congregations**.

Intergenerational Community Relations

- **Mentoring** was important for one congregation: “[We] have reservoir of potential buddies for youth—many adults willing and interested in being mentors. **More mentoring of youth would help** youth connect with church committees, church board. Having **older youth mentor younger youth**—makes for stronger child/youth program.”
- Two congregations celebrated their “**strong church community** (little conflict, good reputation in the [city’s] community)” and support that comes from their church’s “**money, policies and ideology**.”
- One congregation said they lacked “**activities that develop relationships** (social, social justice and youth/adult).”
- Two congregations decided to “support **community building**” and “**communicate with congregation** more.”

Mission, Vision and Priorities

- One congregation mentioned that “**youth’s voice was valued**.”
- Another congregation mentioned that there was a “lack of congregation/group investment.” As a result of their conversation, they decided to “increase group and congregation’s investment in youth” by “**regular visioning and follow-up**.”



Heartland District

Congregational Conversation Results

Curriculum, Resources and Transitional Age Youth

- One congregation said that “**working cons are giving youth skills,**” listing “spirituality, leadership and social action” as examples.
- Two congregations mentioned that **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** was a strong part of their youth ministry and one congregation celebrated the success of their **Coming of Age (COA)** program. One congregation decided not to split up their OWL and COA groups if they have good group dynamics. Another decided to collaborate with other congregations for OWL programming.

Heartland congregations developed new ideas for curricula and programming:

- “develop a **virtual youth group**” or “**home ministry**”
- find “other learning opportunities to get clarity on UU identity: develop **relationship component** in growing UU identity”
- “shared facilitation” and “get more facilitators”
- “**self-directed curriculum**” that would include “panel discussions” and “bringing in ‘experts’”
- “plan in collaboration with other communities”

Leadership Development and Opportunities for Practice

- One congregation said **leadership development conferences** were successful for their youth ministry.
- Before their conversation, none of the congregations had youth represented on their Board, but as a result of one congregation’s discussion, they decided to have “**youth reps on committees and Board.**”

Serving the Spiritual Needs of Youth

- One congregation said there was a “**lack of cohesive force of UU identity** for teens.”
- Another congregation said “Sunday services take place at the same time as their senior high RE” program. They decided to have youth “choose once per month to attend service or volunteer in some other way in the church” and continue to communicate with youth about that issue throughout the year.
- One congregation decided to create “**worship opportunities** in congregation, which are **meaningful to youth.**”