

## Douglas UCC Listening Sessions: Who Is Our Neighbor?

Sunday, 1/21/24: 19 attendees

Monday, 1/22/24: 2 attendees

- How would you describe the work of DUCC? What is our calling?

- Caring for God's earth
- To live and be present (as members of UCC) to the world
- To be 'more than talk'. To put the Bible into action/practice
- To be 'THAT' church. The one that takes all in, welcomed in love
- Encourage asking the questions
- Non-conservative theology
- To be a non-judgmental church
- DUCC is the 'religion of choice' for most of us. We were not 'born' into it, but have chosen it as thinking adults
- To fix the damage done by other churches
- We do not proselytize, show who we are by our actions
- We are a refuge
- Humility

- To be a comfortable place without judgement
- To help our community and world get beyond 'us and them'
- Accepting others as they are
- To 'walk the walk', being out in the community
- We are the hands of God
- Our outreach – being involved – displays the love of God and our congregation to the community and world
- We lead by example as a representation of kindness and welcome
- We are recognized because we are 'out there' in the community
- The scriptural foundation of the 'Good Samaritan' is that we love the most unlikely people; be outside of our 'comfort' zone

## What communities or causes should be the focus of our ministry and outreach?

### CARE FOR OTHERS:

- Financial support through the Isabel Graham Fund and our Grant Proposal Committee shows that we already try to support those in need within our surrounding community
- Active in social justice, but more activity by the social justice committee could help us identify other areas needing support
- More advocacy at the policy level. Make change happen, instead of just responding to issues/problems
- Our area is not affordable, so we are older/whiter.
- We could do more to support underserved communities, i.e. Lifeline Ministries for homeless in Holland
- We should strategize how to attract families. ("Do we want/need this?" came up at this time.)
- We should restart the tutoring program to invite young people
- AV team could invite high school students to get hands-on experience
- Creation Justice could invite students to beach clean-ups, etc.
- Community is open to our social activism (Marches for BLM, women, gun laws)
- More advocacy at the local or state level to create better policy, instead of only responding to problems
- More collaboration with other churches

### CARE FOR OUR MEMBERS:

- Several suggested a better 'outreach' to new members regarding gift-assessment, and getting finding a place to serve in the church. Some suggestions:
  - Another 'Info Fair', as was held a few years ago
  - New member 'shepherd'
  - New member welcome team
  - Better pew cards with follow up
- More opportunities to socialize together
- Getting to know each other as we grow, including Dine with Nine, or similar small group experience
- Classes on how to discover our spiritual gifts
- Our church is our family. This family is our community, so care for our members, i.e., ministry to lonely people

- Do you see our work/calling as pastor-driven or congregation-driven?

- We are member-driven for justice, but our pastor needs to be engaged
- Pastor should help direct us to new areas, but the congregation decides