

DISCERNMENT
SUMMARY FOR COUNCIL

DECEMBER 20, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- LESLIE ZAGAROLA
- WENDELL SMITH
- STEVE SILVER, *ex officio*
 - JON SCOTT
- BARRY SCHUSTER
 - SUSAN READE
 - SHELLY MOSES
- TODD MILLER, *chair*
 - LINDA JACOBS

MISSION/PURPOSE

- ✓ TO PRAYERFULLY ASK WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO BECOME
- ✓ TO TAKE A DEEP DIVE IN TO THE CHURCH TO CAPTURE WHO WE ARE AND UNCOVER OR DISCOVER WHO WE WANT TO BECOME
- ✓ MAKE THE PROCESS HIGHLY INCLUSIVE BY REACHING OUT TO ALL MEMBERS, ACTIVE AND INACTIVE

METHODOLOGY

- ✓ PRESENT DISCERNMENT IDEA TO COUNCIL
- ✓ CREATE A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE MAY 18, 2010
- ✓ CONDUCT A KICKOFF RETREAT JUNE 19, 2010
- ✓ BEGIN CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS 60+
- ✓ CONDUCT ALL CHURCH FORUM OCTOBER 24, 2010
- ✓ CONDUCT A SECOND OFFSITE NOVEMBER 13, 2010
- ✓ PRESENT TO CONGREGATION FEBRUARY 13, 2011
- ✓ SUMMARY TO COUNCIL DECEMBER 20, 2011

THEMES

➤ GROWING YOUNGER

➤ GROWING OTWARD

➤ GROWING DEEPER

GROWING YOUNGER

- *Serving our church family, our Upper Valley community and the wider world*
- *“People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.” Mark 13-16*

Growing Younger

- We are a multi-generational church family that is especially welcoming for the young families, children, teens and young adults who are our future.
- Our worship, fellowship, Christian education and mission opportunities offer spiritual nurture, learning, leadership opportunities and support for all, with an emphasis on engaging families, children, teens and young adults.
- Elements of our worship services and sanctuary, as well as other spaces used for fellowship, education and meetings are expressly designed to appeal to and to serve these high priority groups within our congregation and the broader community.
- We must invest to preserve and maintain our church building's historic integrity, while also adapting interior spaces to improve service to our congregation and community. Similarly, we must learn how to offer more vibrant and diverse worship opportunities while maintaining traditional formats and music valued by many.
- Our role in the community, our outreach and our mission programs and activities all need to reflect the same welcoming vision and values and offer opportunities for young families, teens and youth.

Growing Outward

- *Serving our church family, our Upper Valley community and the wider world*
- *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you visited me ... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:35-36, 40*

Growing Outward

- We provide nurture and support to members of our church family, offering opportunities for spiritual growth and development, and building our capacity as volunteers and leaders in service to each other and to others.
- We build personal connections with the people and organizations we serve and support, in our local community and around the world.
- We do not limit our mission engagement only to the local or to the familiar.
- We actively work with our members, our UCC denomination and others to help us discern the needs to which we will respond.
- Our mission programs and activities are grounded in stewardship principles: we utilize our time, our talents, and our financial resources to serve and care for others and to help others realize their own potential.
- Where possible we augment our financial support with volunteer engagement. We do this as servants and followers of Jesus Christ, after his example and his instruction.

GROWING DEEPER

- *Welcoming, engaging, transforming both long-termers and newcomers into our community*
- *“Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46-47*

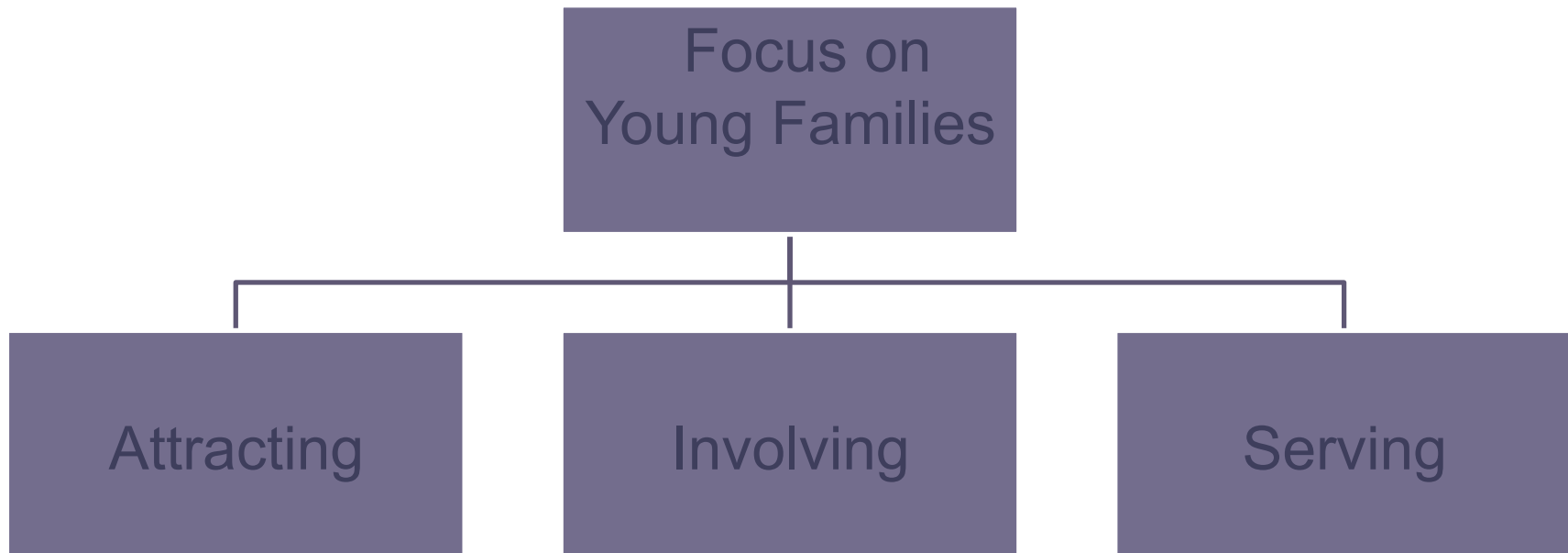
Growing Deeper

- Our members and visitors alike feel welcome and excited to be a part of our church family, and eagerly participate in worship, Christian education and mission/service opportunities. This is where we belong.
- People in the community know our members, our historic building, and our active presence in service to the people of the Upper Valley.
- We are known as friendly, unpretentious and welcoming.
- People have heard good things, are curious and want to learn more.
- We provide an open invitation and many opportunities for newcomers and long-term area residents to know and join with us, through meals, service/mission projects, music, worship and other community activities, both in our church building and beyond.
- Visitors and volunteers make connections with church members and each other, know their presence is valued, and are eager to repeat the experience.

Pre-Annual Meeting Recommendation

- ✓ Expand the Music Committee
 - ✓ Get Youth Involved
- ✓ Your Vote Today, Put in to Action

Growing Younger

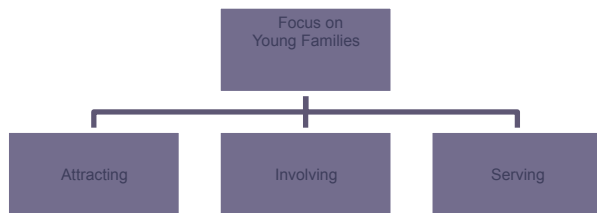


Growing Younger Challenges

- Families Shop Churches
 - Welcome without Pressure
 - Parents Must feel Young Children are comfortable
 - Teens must feel engaged and empowered
- Balance Fun with Learning
 - Little Kids need to feel church is FUN
 - Older Kids need to feel church is FUN
 - Church needs to Support Parents in Teaching Bible Lessons and Rearing Good Christians
- Young Families are Unique
 - Activities Added to the Schedule Create Work for Parents
 - Generation Y expects Tech-Savvy approach to Learning

Traits of Generation Y

1. Tech-Savvy
2. Family-Centric
3. Achievement Oriented
4. Team Oriented
5. Attention Craving



Attracting

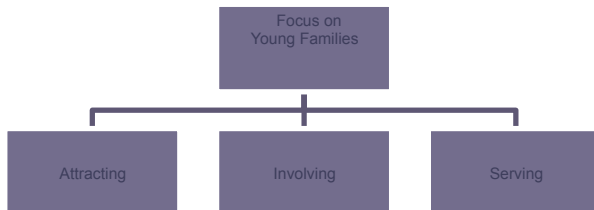
- **Short Term**

- Facility Update
 - Welcoming Nursery and Classroom Atmosphere
 - Exterior Needs Painting
- Communication
 - List Church information
 - Join the Chamber
- Visit other Churches
 - BoG with Christian Ed to assemble and dedicate physical space layout recommendations for youth programs
- WEB Based Activities
 - Facebook
 - Blog
 - YouTube
 - Twitter
 - LinkedIn
- Video Worship Service or Just the Sermon and Post on our Web Site (e-preach?)
- Host Community Get Acquainted Night for New Families to Upper Valley
- Create a Welcome Package for Church Visitors
- Assign Point Person(mentor) to New Attendee Matching Demographics if Possible

- **Long Term**

- Incorporate an Emphasis of Attracting Young Families in a Communication Plan
- Incorporate an Emphasis on Families with Space Utilization
- Develop a List of Priorities that will Require Significant Funds(>50k) , Publicize the List and Then Let's Tackle Them One at a Time or as Part of Comprehensive Campaign

Involving



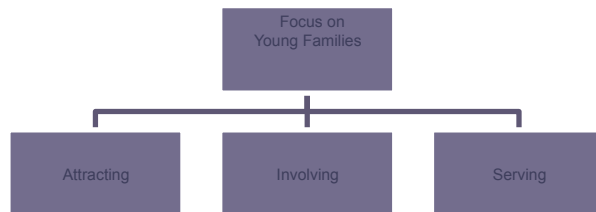
- **Short Term**

- Youth Choir
 - Continue Practice During Church School
- 2011 Christian Ed. Guide
 - Teaching goals
 - Lesson Plans
 - Co-op Teaching Program Expectations
- Conduct the Last Service of the Month/Quarter with a totally different approach for Gen Y
- Have Instrumental Music at Worship Service and Ask Young Musicians to Play

- **Long Term**

- Select Mission Programs with Youth Participation in Mind
- Explore Youth Retreats
- Create Periodic Family Night Activity
- Explore Opportunities for Children in Sanctuary
- Open Teaching and Mentoring Opportunities to all Church Members
- Consider Sanctuary Redesign

Serving



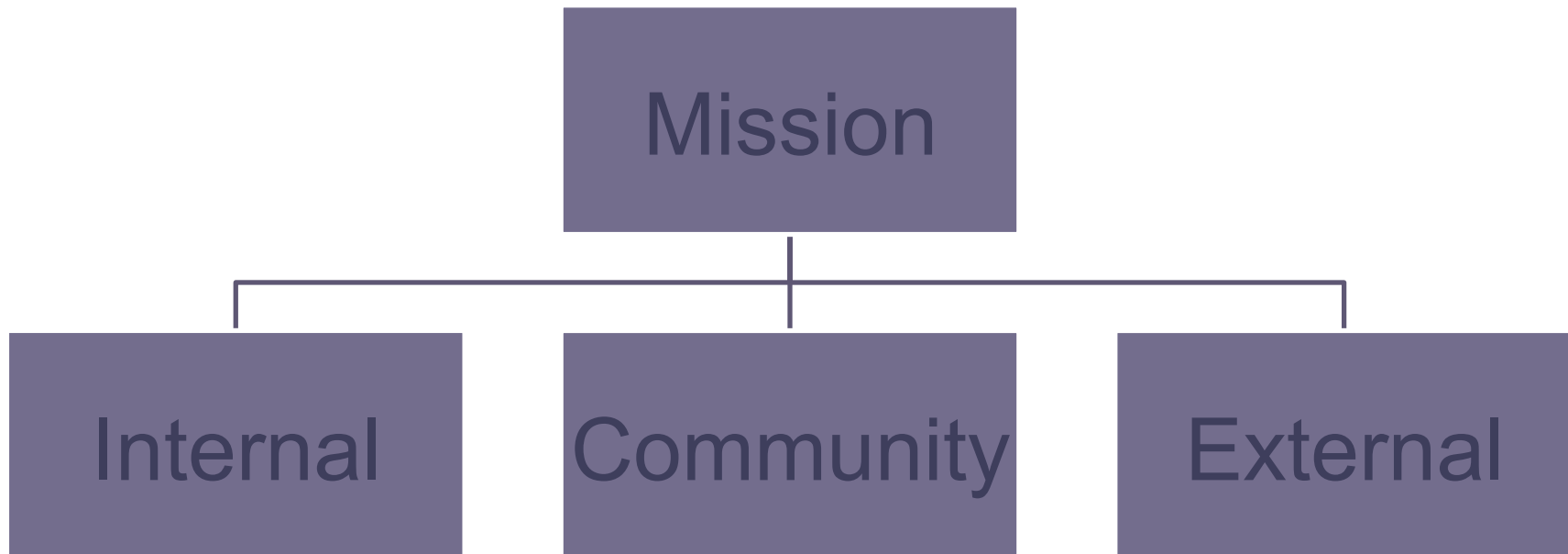
- **Short Term**

- Adult Hire for Nursery Care
- Christian Ed. to survey parents of Existing Church School Youth
 - Timing of Church School
 - Choir
 - Parent Goals and Suggestions for Change
 - Equip the Youth Space with Electronics

- **Long Term**

- Christian Ed to Create Annual Church School Feed Back Mechanism
- Explore Support Services for Young Families
 - Counseling, Parent Night Out Babysitting, etc.
- Formally Build Links with College Students from our Church and from our Community
- Fund a Youth Minister

Growing Outward



Growing Outward

- Internal

- Publicize all of the activities that we are doing internally, externally
 - C2C
 - Prayer Groups
 - Women/Men Fellowship
 - Coffee Hour
 - Dinners
 - Lecture Series
 - Sunday School Program
- Weekly Feature
- Redesign Tithing(non \$\$)
- New Member Orientation

- Community

- Local

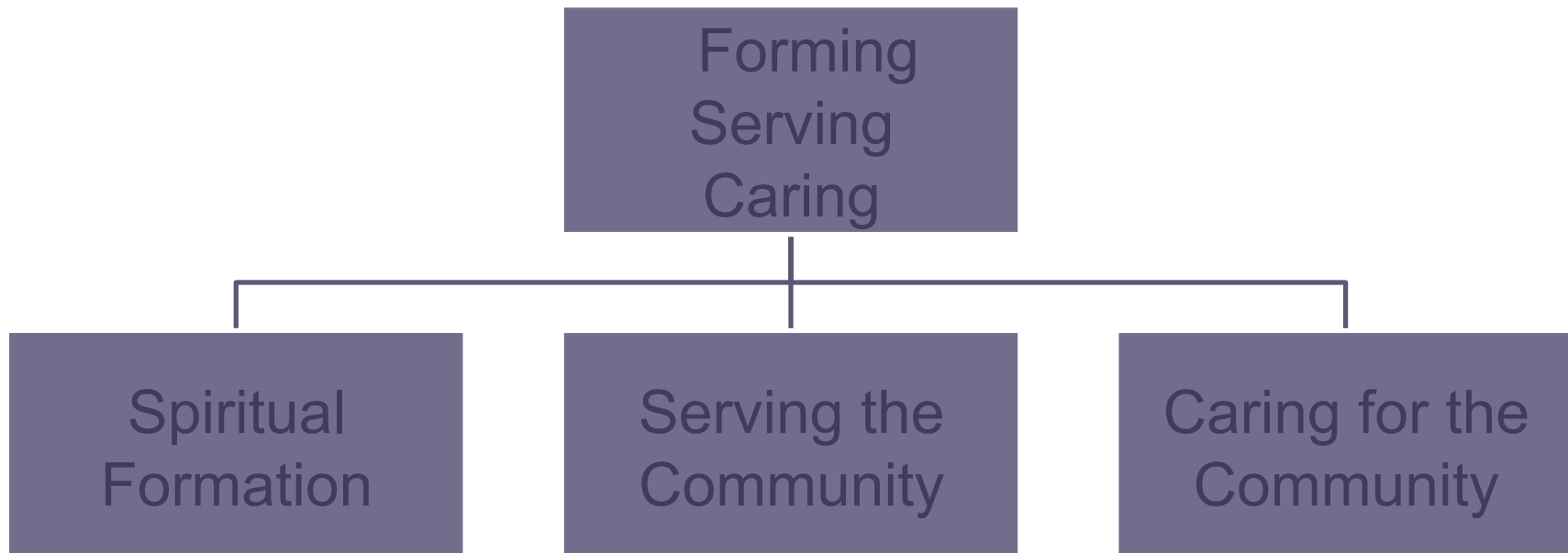
- Focus/Adopt one or two community groups to support
- Community Dinners
- More events in our facility

- External

- Support a mission afar

- Domestic
- International

Growing Deeper



Growing Deeper

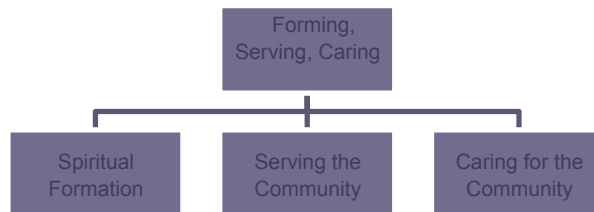
- **Internal**

- Spiritual formation through retreats, additional worship opportunities, adult education, service
- Learning how to talk about and share our faith
- Opportunities to develop deeper relationships between pastor and congregation
- Enhance pastoral care model involving pastor, congregation (minister-C2C-prayer team-diaconate)
- Small Groups (books, worship, faith journey focus)
- Enhance communications (bulletin, web, mail)

- **External**

- Parish/Neighborhood Nursing Initiative
- Participation in community discussions/programs around care of elders
- Community Dinner program
- Enhance communications (web, mail, media)

Deeper



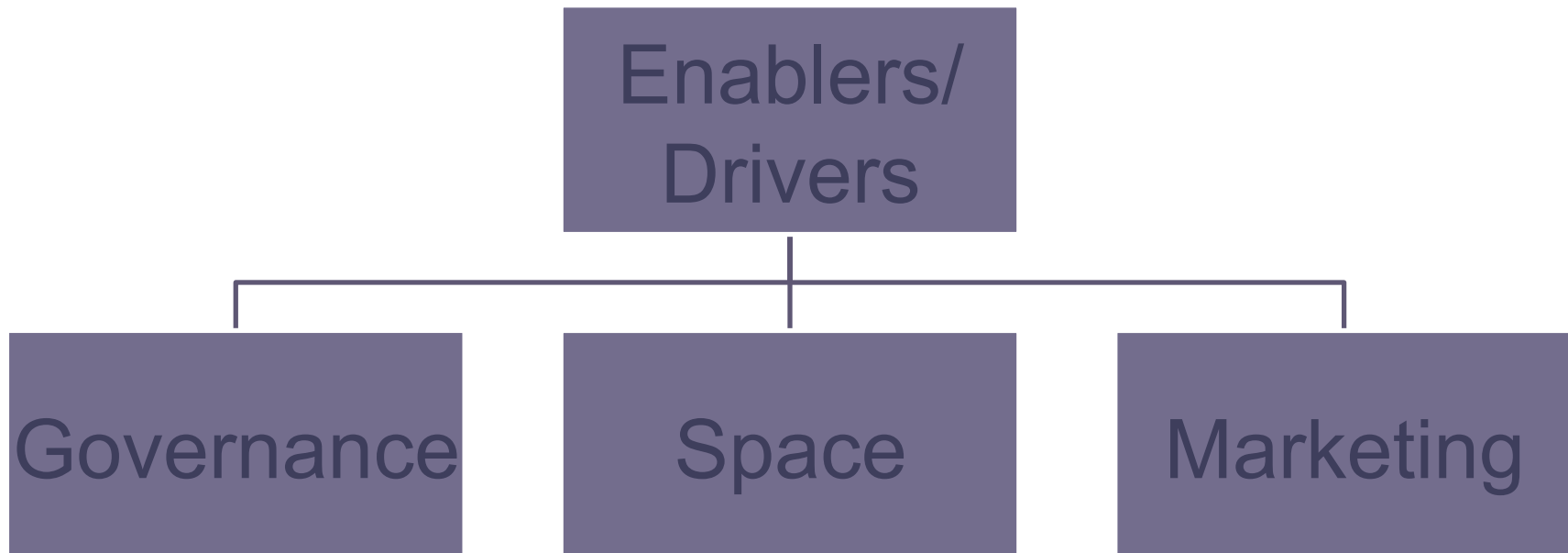
- **Short Term**

- New model for pastoral visitations
- Recruit more C2C participants
- Schedule mini-retreat for Lent
- Pastor to continue meeting with area care givers

- **Long Term**

- Identify areas of faith formation that excite congregation
- Develop and implement long-term, ongoing faith formation programs
- Integrate reflection and prayer into church meetings
- Engage services of a parish nurse
- Enhanced internal communications

Sustaining Discernment



Drivers and Enablers

- Drivers

- Structure Council Agenda around Growing Younger, Outward and Deeper
- Request Committee Reports reflect Growing Younger, Outward and Deeper

- Enablers

- Space Utilization Study
- Develop a Marketing Plan that is renewed annually with the objective of letting the community know who we are
- Review Church Governance Structure and Each Committee's Mission

Some Final Thoughts

- Since the “active” process was completed:
 - Things are happening
 - Music in the Meeting House
 - Building Spruce Up
 - Blog and Facebook Active
 - Survey by M&SA on Who to “Adopt”
 - Guitar During Service
 - Community Dinners at FCC
 - Change Occurred Merely From Asking the Question(s)
 - Planted seeds
 - Some Concerns
 - Growing Younger does not mean discount the Seniors
 - Real Change Takes Time, But Needs Constant Attention (Who?)