

Metropolitan Community Church of Richmond

Strategic Plan

2019 – 2021

Reaffirmed by the MCC Richmond Board of Directors on April 16, 2023

YOU are welcome here!

People of all backgrounds come together at MCC Richmond, to create a safe and welcoming environment for ALL people to be who they are, to reveal the relevance of God in our lives, to be empowered to serve and care for one another while working toward justice and equity.

We Believe

Inclusion: *Everyone is welcome, we mean everyone. We value and celebrate everyone's presence, voice and ideas.*

Community: *We learn, care for, and serve one another, and our neighbor, through opening up and listening to each other.*

Engagement: *MCC Richmond gets involved and takes action to feed others, to work for social justice, to pray for the needs of others, and serve where and when a need arises.*

Spiritual Discovery: *We believe that God meets us where we are, and we encourage people to discover God in meaningful, relevant, and loving ways.*

Transformation: *We believe in helping people discover that a loving God can transform their lives.*

Our Vision

Loving God by caring for and serving others.

I. Survey and Brainstorming Sessions

The Strategic Planning Team of Metropolitan Community Church of Richmond conducted a survey in February 2018 (Appendix A) in order to get feedback on the church's strengths and weaknesses, as well as collect demographic data (Appendix B). From that survey, the team identified four major areas of opportunity to concentrate its planning efforts:

Worship, Outreach, Social Justice and Service

Eight brainstorming workshops were then conducted during the months of September, October and November 2018 to identify the church community's ideas and priorities concerning each topic. The four areas of opportunity were explored separately during two sessions-- once during a Living Wednesday Dinner Church evening and again on a Saturday morning.

During each brainstorming session, participants were asked to write down anything that came to mind regarding the topic at hand on a series of Post-It Notes. For example, they could write what they wanted the church to start doing or stop doing. They could praise what the church is currently doing. Or they could throw in something unrelated – whatever came to mind when brainstorming.

To help participants wrap their heads around each topic, the team broke the topic down into three subtopics.

Worship

Music, Message and Program

Outreach

Community Care, Diversity and Partnerships

Social Justice

Direct Action, Awareness and Social Causes

Service

Ministries, Leadership and Hospitality

All ideas that participants wrote down on Post-It Notes were shared on a series of idea boards. Then participants were given three colored dots and asked to vote on the top three ideas on the boards. (Photos of the idea boards and a ranking of votes per workshop can be found in Appendix C.)

II. Feedback Analysis & Themes

The Strategic Planning Team met on several Saturdays to discuss ways to address feedback and recommendations for church planning over the next five years. Only the ideas with *one or more votes* generated by the brainstorming sessions were used to formulate the recommendations of this report. (The remaining ideas from each brainstorming session are labeled “Other Ideas” in Appendix C.)

Ideas with votes were then labeled with a theme. In some cases, ideas were labeled with more than one theme. Themes were awarded the same number of votes that their corresponding ideas received.

The list below is a ranking of themes according to the number of votes awarded.

1. Enable our community for social action (32 votes)
2. Develop our programs (32 votes)
3. Educate our people for ministry (31 votes)
4. Feed our community (24 votes)
5. Care for our community (23 votes)
6. Partner with local churches and orgs (15 votes)
7. Show awareness and respect for others (14 votes)
8. Implement new technology (13 votes)
9. Reach out to youth (13 votes)
10. Vary our worship experience (12 votes)
11. Connect with the LGBTQAI community (11 votes)
12. Elevate our music ministry (8 votes)
13. Protect the accessibility of our facilities (7 votes)

The body of this report contains detailed explanations of each theme with an eye toward taking action.

III. Discussion of Themes and Recommendations

1. Enable Our Community for Social Action

With 32 votes on ideas that range from “Healthcare for all” to “Get out the vote - register people at the church,” our community is passionate about taking social action and enabling others to do so. We found three areas in which the church could help create awareness, shape the discussion and take direct action.

- A. **Invite advocates to speak, conduct workshops or provide information on key issues that affect the poor, marginalized or disenfranchised parts of our population.** Issues include universal healthcare, equality, LGBTQ rights and protests, worker rights, affordable housing, renewable energy, living wage, economic justice and equality, Alt-Right counter arguments, disability reform, voter suppression and other relevant legislation.
- B. **Work with local voter registration offices** to encourage citizens to vote, get involved in the process or registered to vote.
- C. **Continue to combat social bias and injustices in all our communications** - during worship and other church gatherings, in printed materials and on our website and social media.

While survey responses to the church’s strengths and weaknesses mentioned social justice, little to none named the above causes. This shows the strength of our brainstorming sessions.

In one comment, a survey taker offered criticism that the church had become too “alt-left” - a sign that the church also needs to respect diverse political views when inviting advocates and encouraging voter registration.

2. Develop Our Programs

Equally as important as social action is development of our church programs. With 32 votes, participants expressed a strong desire to try something new ideas or implement a more formal leadership and organizational structure to existing or past ministry efforts.

- A. **Think of new ways to grow Worship to a second service** with new and innovative programs, such as a “Bring a friend day.”
- B. **Organize Community Outreach and New Member efforts** with a community outreach committee, church flyers that can be distributed to the community, and an annual events calendar accessible to the public.
- C. **Develop more Small Group ministries/activities** such as book study, Bible study, book clubs and workshops on spiritual concerns. It is well known that small groups help participants get to know each other on a deeper level, which results in a more cohesive church community.
- D. **Formalize Hospitality as an active ministry** with meal teams, themed potlucks and possibly more frequent potlucks so that no person is burdened with the weekly responsibility.
- E. **Create specialty ministries to enrich the culture of the church** such as an arts team, prison ministry, coming out resource, social media team and exercise/health/personal care ministry.

3. Educate Our People for Ministry

Training and education in many aspects of our ministries, and the development of new ministries, is needed in order to assure the effectiveness of all that we do with our limited resources. It is important to note that the training needed is both inward and outward looking. This was suggested by the survey results and the brainstorming sessions. It is clear that there is a desire to serve and with good leadership we can help channel that desire into great work in our communities.

- A. **Train our Ministry and Worship Leaders** to focus on establishing realistic goals and to lead teams.
- B. **Conduct Spiritual Gift Classes** to create an awareness of how people may serve.
- C. **Offer Language training** (2nd language) in both English and Spanish (both directions). This is identified to help us reach out to Latinx communities as well as a desire to offer “English as a 2nd Language” to those same communities.
- D. **Issue a Call to Ministry for people on the margins.** To develop our ministries we must learn the needs and societal pressures of the people we wish to serve. Classes and discussions that have been held during our Living Wednesday activity serve as a good model for moving forward. These discussions should be heavily promoted within the Church. Training would naturally follow a “call to ministry”.

4. Feed our Community

Our food ministries continue to be a priority and a source of pride for our members. The need is best expressed as “Feed the Hungry” which leads us to the question who needs this help and what is the best and most effective way to deliver it.

- A. **Expand the Food Pantry and Lounge to occur weekly** (we have already expanded it as of this writing).
- B. **Offer SNAP (supplemental nutrition assistance program) education.** What is it, how does a person obtain it and what assistance may be needed to obtain it.
- C. **Feed the homeless** is a very broad action that is only partially met by our weekly Lounge. We should consider additional activities to bring more people in, expand our ministry and consider alternate locations and means of delivery.
- D. **Identify where Food Deserts and Food Insecurity occur** and consider what may be required to provide assistance. This may be an opportunity to partner with other organizations with similar missions in order to expand our geographic coverage.

5. Care for Our Community

This category represents many ideas for ministry across a very broad spectrum of life events. We should take care not to assume what may be needed until we have engaged with the various sub-sections of our community. There were many responses to our survey about the need to bring in young adults, host support groups and be more visible in the greater Richmond community.

- A. **Provide support services** through direct leadership or indirectly through sponsorship and resource sharing (ie facilities) with community organizations.
 - a. Marriage Support
 - b. Senior Needs
 - c. Domestic Violence Victim Support
 - d. Coming Out Support
 - e. Immigrant Community
 - f. Homeless Support
 - g. Counseling Services
 - h. PFLAG Support
- B. **Continue Shoe Ministry and Gift Bag Stuffing & Distribution**
- C. **Partner with Habitat for Humanity** to provide teams members for construction projects

- D. Provide a welcoming church experience** by engaging with new congregants during their first year to encourage each to participate, in any extent or capacity, with the life and ministry of the church.
- E. Update the Church Directory** and (with permission) post pictures of church members in the Fellowship Hall.
- F. Donate to a local charity** each month to help advance their mission and ministry.
- G. Pay a fair salary or wage to the church leadership and staff** based upon the local market. Development of a recognition and rewards program may also be considered.

6 - 13. Important Themes to Consider Further

The first 5 themes of this plan represent 60% of the data collected, the last 8 themes, discussed here represent the remaining 40%. While these are important ideas, we are not making specific recommendations for each. These 8 themes include:

- a) Partner with local churches and orgs
- b) Show awareness and respect for others
- c) Implement new technology
- d) Reach out to youth
- e) Vary our worship experience
- f) Connect with LGBTQAI community
- g) Elevate our music ministry
- h) Protect the accessibility of our facilities

The underlying data supporting each of these themes is contained within the appendixes and should be used as support for any additional actions or ministries that we have not already described. This is intended as information resource to help and guide planning for continuous improvement.

Appendix A

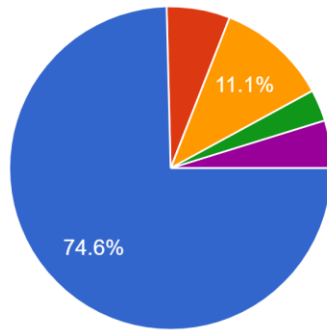
Strategic Planning Survey

February 15 - March 18, 2018

Demographic Data

I am:

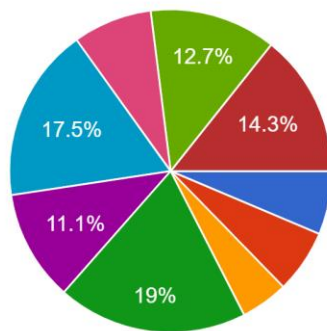
63 responses



- A member of this church
- Not a member of this church, but attend its services
- A visitor to this church
- An interested community member
- A former member or friend of this church not currently attending services
- None of the above

I have attended this church:

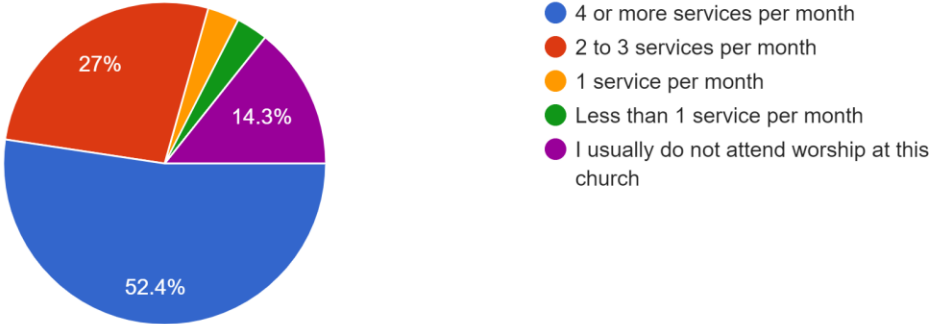
63 responses



- Less than 1 month
 - 1 to 6 months
 - 6 months to 1 year
 - 1 to 2 years
 - 3 to 5 years
 - 6 to 10 years
 - 11 to 15 years
 - 16 to 20 years
- ▲ 1/2 ▼

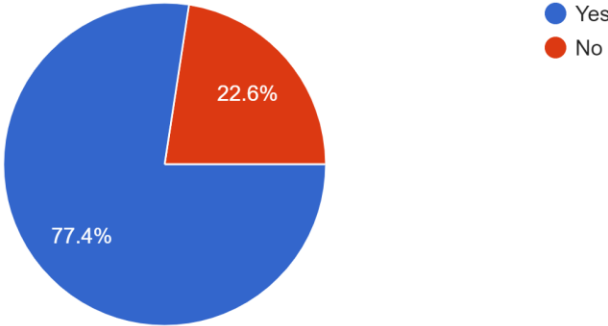
I usually attend services at this church:

63 responses



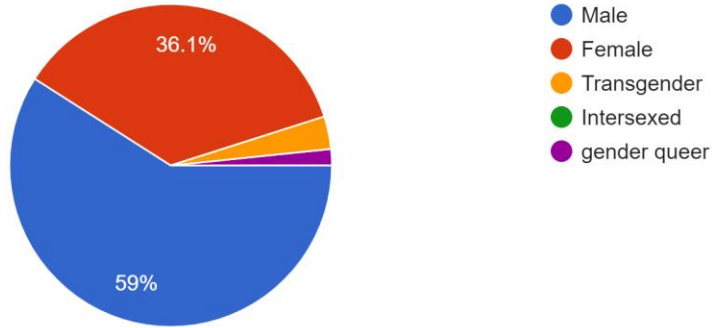
Other than Sunday worship, do you participate in any church ministries, programs, or activities?

62 responses



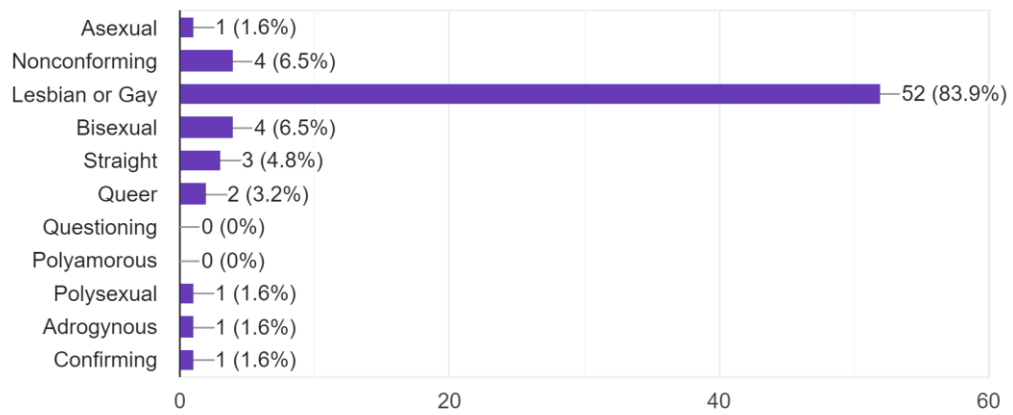
Your Gender Identity:

61 responses



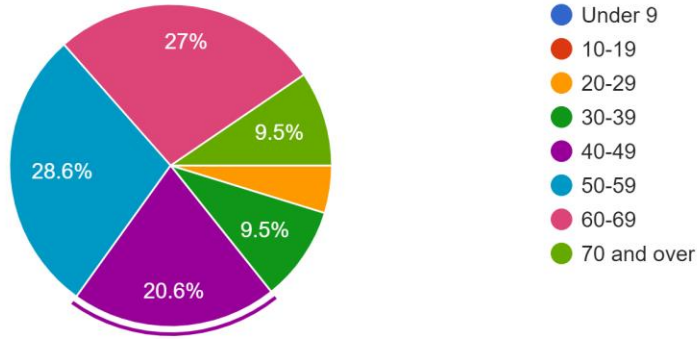
Your Sexual Identity:

62 responses



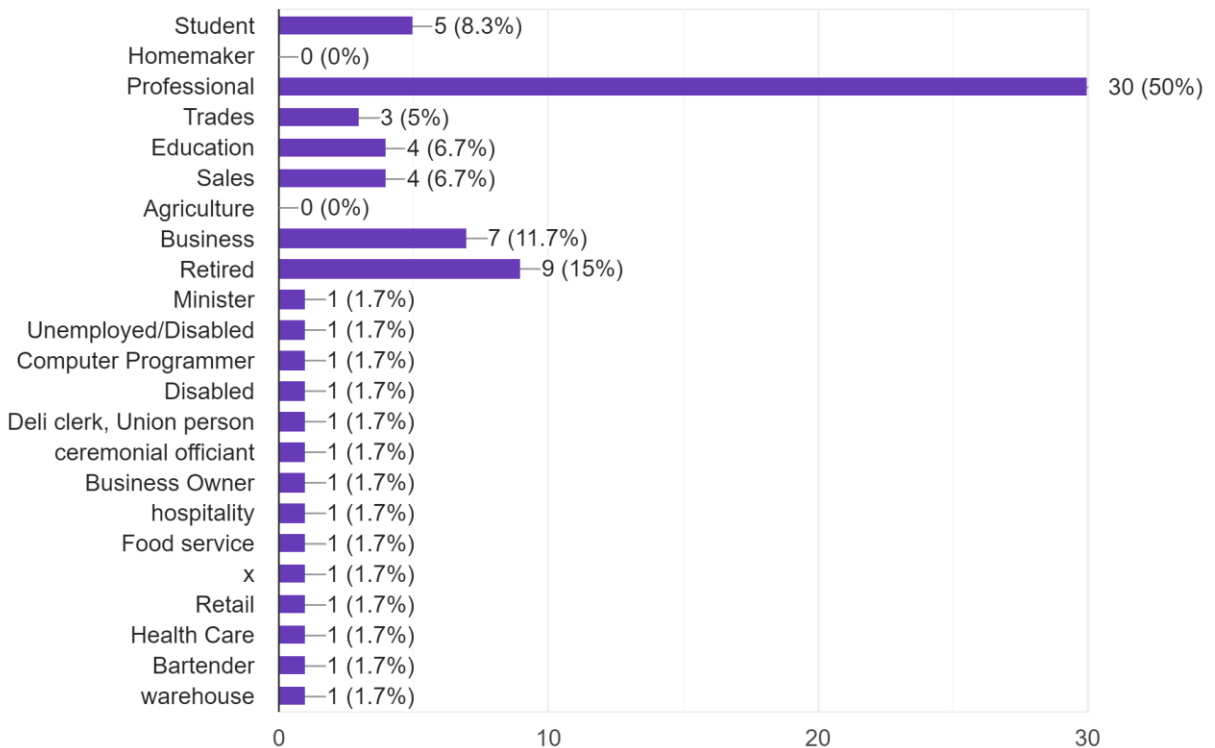
Your Age Range:

63 responses



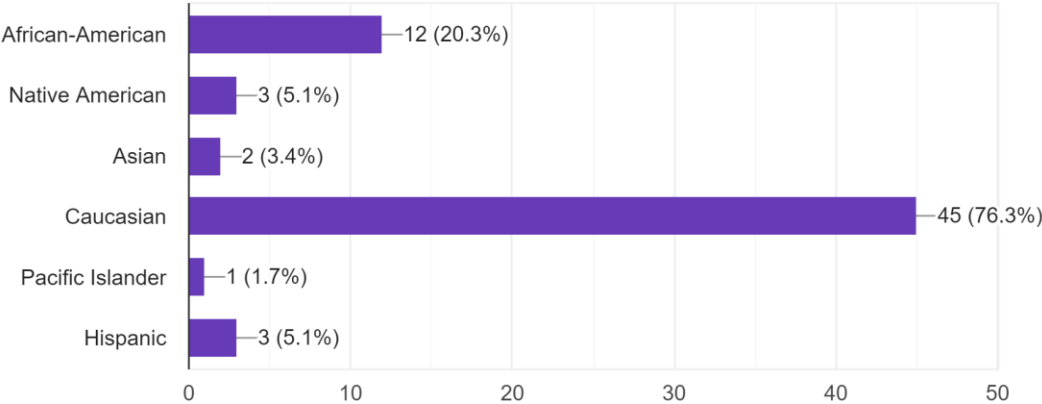
Your Occupation:

60 responses



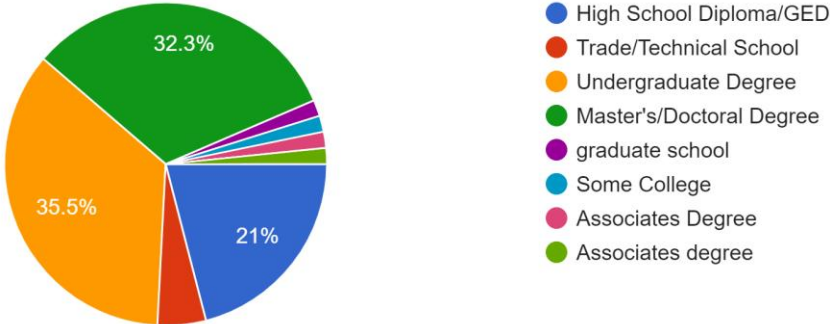
Your Cultural/Continental Origin/Racial ID or Ethnic Background:

59 responses



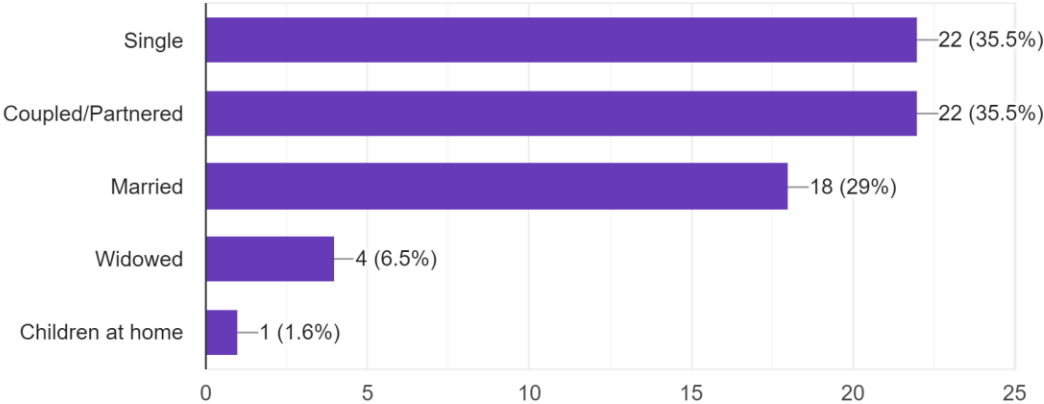
Your Highest Level of Education:

62 responses



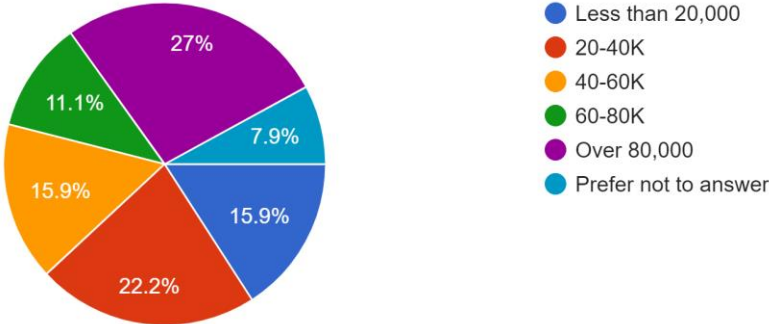
Your Relationship/Domestic Status:

62 responses



Your Annual Household Income:

63 responses



Appendix B

Strategic Planning Survey

February 15 - March 18, 2018

Strengths and Weaknesses

Note: Individual responses are separated by a line after each question.

1. What are the top three areas in which you believe MCC Richmond thrives? Please explain.

61 responses

Hospitality, Outreach, Caring

We are a welcoming & loving congregation. Also, we are becoming more diverse as a church community. Being an important part of the LGBTQ community.

- 1) Embracing Diversity and making EVERYONE feel welcome just the way they are
- 2) Following Biblical teachings
- 3) Being open to feedback and change

Loving each other
Sunday worship
Making newcomers feel welcome

Outreach through various ministries, welcoming openness, embracing differences and being open to accepting all.

The Fan, Scotts Addition, Carytown

Social justice, music

Generosity, openness, familiarity (as in relaxed and "close-knit") -- Much of the congregation gives time, talent, or treasure to sustain the church and its activities; the congregation as a whole is open to anyone regardless of their thoughts, pasts, or paths; and, the congregation maintains a generally intimate, family atmosphere where people are not just nice, but form familial relationships.

being a safe place for all, worship experiences, outreach to LGBT community and others

Programs for members (Living Wednesday, grief Support, Sunday School)

Greeters - I see the warm reactions from those being welcomed on Sunday morning.

Music - I see more people starting to participate. I feel the love coming from the instruments and voices.

Food - Wednesday Dinner, Lounge, and Sunday Lunch - Everyone gathers together to talk and share. We are able to connect in a personal way with each other.

Caring, loving, and equality

Fellowship..worship..pastor

I believe hospitality is our strongest attribute, followed by our strong music/choral/gospel ministry and also our historic capacity of being a "Teaching Church" for in-care clergy candidates. When people from across the denomination think about MCC Richmond, these are the things that get mentioned most about our gifts. Looking around UFMCC, we have had a profound impact, preparing future leaders in our movement.

Great fellowship (Lunches, Wednesday church, game nights , etc), excellent worship services, assistance to others.

welcoming, giving our money, good leaders

MCC does a wonderful job providing spiritual learning opportunities. They have small group, bible study, worship serves, living Wednesday's, e.g. MCC provides great social opportunities, like the fashion shows, pot lucks and outings. MCC is welcoming to the LGBTQ community and provides a religious experience that some may not otherwise experience.

Friendly time you walk in the door!

The ministries, we many to choice from I feel there is something for everyone to get involved with.Music, the music is varied, The warmth and welcoming spirit .

Welcoming attitude, joyful music ministry, and engaging pastor.

Ministry,The Board,and Community Activism

Welcoming and Friendly;Community Outreach;Outstanding Pastor

1) Acceptance/inclusion of all people in God's ministry, 2) Community, 3) Social Justice

Hospitality, Social Activism, Spiritual Openness

Providing a safe place for gay people to worship, warm welcome, location

Spreading the word of GOD to our community, making new people (visitors) alike feel like family, offering communion to all God's children.

worship, praise, and prayer

Community, Togetherness and love for one another

community involvement, friendly, welcoming

Inclusiveness, helping the community at large being available to everyone unconditional

OUTREACH PROGRAMS, LIVING WEDNESDAYS, SUNDAY SERVICE

Welcoming all who come in its doors; providing guidance through the minister's interpretation of God's word, and providing for connection between members and worship through its music.

Praise services, ministries, social justice

Community Outreach -- reaching community where you are located. very important to not be closed off from the community where church is physically located. Great job MCC.

longevity as MCC Richmond as persevered much over the years and is still very much present in the community. has the ability to reach folks who may very well be unattached to other LGBT groups.

Faith leadership for the LGBTQ community - providing a place of worship for members of the LGBTQ Community and supporters. 2. Diversity - providing opportunities and leadership roles for communities of color

Outreach, Inclusivity, and Community Focus

Community Outreach, Caring for the Body of Christ, Social Justice

Its relevance, outreach, and inclusivity

1. Feeding the less fortunate via food pantry, lunch after services. MCC Richmond has a full kitchen setup. Where people can eat together, grows fellowship and feeling of belonging and feeds the physical body. 2. Music - dynamic music program with special programs offered through out the year as well as

in worship feeds the soul regularly. 3. Social Justice - brings people together for a common cause and fulfills everyone's longing to make a difference in the world.

- 1) Reaching out to make sure everyone feels welcome
- 2) Hospitality (lunch after Sunday service every week)
- 3) There are a lot of different ministry opportunities if people want to get more involved

Ministry, fellowship and music

Worship services, charity to homeless and community, love and tolerance and hospitality (I know it is 4 areas)

Outreach, Music, Living We Dinner church (Others: communication newsletter, web, etc, , Worshio services)

MCC RVA thrives in being accepting of and welcoming everyone. Wonderful fellowship opportunities, and there's a place or two I'm for everyone to get involved and be part of it all.

- (1) A home church for all God's people,
- (2) Social and community activities,
- (3) dedicated members.

One aspect that I love and see here at MCC is that Every Sunday, I walk in the door and I Feel the LOVE. I feel that positivity and possibility of exciting things in the air. I see my FAMILY. We truly Connect with one Another; the worship space is abuzz with Chatter. I Love that CONNECTION with Another; Inside MCC and Out in the World. I see those relationships. I Have Quite a Number Myself. We do it Well and I Encourage it. Church is not just on Sundays, in the Space. We need that Love, Encouragement and Support All the Time and We Get That.

We also try are dammedest to Create a Wholly Positive Space for Religious and Spiritual Expression. We All come from different or no Religious upbringing or backgrounds. There is a expansive mixture. I Like that. To know that we are Encouraged to Express ourselves as We are Moved in the Spirit is Important. We Do That. Hallelu!

Finally, to know that We as a Congregation of Believers are also Encouraged to Think, to Act, to Reach out of Comfort Zones; to think of a verse or spiritual concept in a Whole New Way. You Do Not Find that Everywhere. Usually, it is Our Way of Thinking & Believing or the Highway. Spirituality is Fluid and We All Believe in or Act/React in the Different Ways. It's important to be Challenged and to Encourage Growth and Change even. If We Do Not, We Stagnate and Go Nowhere. Reaching out and Even Trying to Reach out of our Comfort Spaces is Essential. We Grow, Mature, Change. We cannot expect all aspects of church life to remain the same ALL the time either.

Unity, building a positive place for relationships/friendships outside of bars to be healthy, self seeking (spiritual) with understanding and care regardless of belief

Community

Music

Hospitality

Outreach

variety of music, welcoming pastor, feeding people

Hospitality ministry

Bread ministry

Everything

connecting and reaching out to people making everyone feel welcome and be who they are. A wonderful place to fellowship

Hospitality, Homeless ministry, Community involvement

Acceptance

Love

Giving

This is my first time attending, so far from today I felt so welcomed and happy from the love that is flowing through out the congregation. Please keep up all you do

From my experiences here, I absolutely love the services on Sundays. I haven't had the pleasure of attending/participating in any other events. I also love that I always see y'all @ pride

1. Social - the church loves to have social gatherings
2. Giving back - the church loves to help those in need
3. Prayer - the church is there for you in time of need

Vibrant welcoming worship services and multiple ministry opportunities, Pastoral care, social justice and outreach ministry!

fellowship, heartfelt sermons, new pastor

2. What are the top three areas in which you believe MCC Richmond needs improvement? Please explain.

55 responses

Transparency, Trust , Willing to try new things

We need to do better at retaining members. We need to be more visible to the community to include reaching those who don't find out about us via our website. We need to be more spiritual.

- 1) Combining our ministries with other LGBTQ organizations/activities in the Metro Richmond area.
- 2) Tying our activities/ministries to a strategic plan to accomplish the stated vision & mission.
- 3) Engaging the LGBTQ community at large beyond our church doors.

Holding on to people

Churching the churched - sometimes I worry we take better care of visitors than longtimers

Managing conflict

1. Acceptance of difference beyond sexuality, bible study offerings, assignment to activities.

The decor and shape of the building

Pastorial care,inreach

Leadership, communication, and organization -- while the environment as a family is excellent, the congregations appears to lack strong leaders (aside from a few) to move forward; with leadership is organization - many activities/ministries appear to operate on an informal or ad hoc basis with little continuity, or limited planning, which inhibits a clear delineation of responsibilities or expectations and makes it difficult for other to continue or understand the work; further, while general church activities are communicated and shared (particularly through email or Sunday Worship Service), a clear understanding of each ministry, its leader or members, its purpose or plans, is not readily available. These three areas are mainly management/business related, but they impact new or existing congregation from understanding the inner workings of the church and how to be involved beyond "going to church on Sunday." While recognizing the church as a religious/spiritual and community body of people, firm administrative practices are needed to successfully manage affairs and ultimately achieve its mission.

continue to reach out to community at large

Not sure, I once would have said social justice but Social justice events have improved tremendously over the last few years.

Talking - Too much socializing and talking out loud during times of prayer, meditation & reflection.
Ushers - Also need to be quiet. They are being overheard by people in the pews during the sermon. This is very distracting.

I don't know have not been there in 10 years

Outreach..programs..ministry of care

We need to continue to emerge from the cocoon of our building/sanctuary and engage our greater community (LGBTQAI+, Fan Area, College Campuses, Central Virginia/Capitol Region) through strategic outreach initiatives, becoming more outwardly focused, present and impactful in the lives of those who remain on the margins. We should develop a stronger relationship with our network churches and offer stronger support for the global mission and movement of MCC. We should also recognize the contributions we have made and imagine the contributions we have yet to make, to transform the world. We must find a way to free ourselves from complacency in meeting the challenges of inequality, in all its forms. We must find the courage to challenge injustice, where ever it arises and not only share God's love with all people but commit to reveal the image of God in ourselves and each other.

More effective"recruiting", more people in the choir, more concentration on social justice issues.

advertising us and our functions,

MCC needs to reach out to the non-LGBTQ community; our church should reflect all of God's children to truly be God's house. MCC needs to expand its outreach to younger people in order to continue our work into the future. I would like to see MCC more involved in community projects, such as providing for the homeless/low income, visiting and reaching out to sick and missing members, having an elder support service.

Maybe more outside Church gatherings, maybe it could be a way we can learn to understand know one another in a different light.A little exercise class to promote healthy living along with healthy spirit.Maybe doing more with visiting people that can not come to Church do to illness or things of that nature.

Music

More participation from congregation in worship services; more folks to serve on Ministry of Care; new carpet in sanctuary

1) Outreach to LGBTQ and communities of color through improved and focussed social media presence, 2) Tweak the "order of service". Our service is rushed and every minute is filled with sound. Perhaps 1 less song and more time for quiet reflection, 3) Reduce the number of greeters/ushers and keep the entrance open.

MCC Richmond needs improvement with an intentional focus on listening to others and helping them be accountable for their behavior instead of blaming others, providing various ways for people to grow spiritually, continued focus with supporting/empowering others within the greater community (and beyond) instead of focusing inward within the congregation itself.

MCC turned too alt-left for me, so I left. Politicians don't belong in the pulpit. I joined a Presbyterian Church and give almost \$16k (tithe 10% of household income) annually. There's too much drama at MCC. Members are labeled racist, bigoted if they voice concerns. When I was at MCC, the bean counters were corrupt and pocketing donations, so I didn't give as much cash. New meat is hit on quickly. Sexual harassment is rampant. Now that so many other denominations are affirming, MCC is no longer a relevant or necessary denomination.

At this time I do not feel comfortable in answering this question due to my absence for several years.

Outreach,

The choir could sing some different songs that spark more emotion, create small groups to assist in other getting to know one another and aid in sharing their gifts.

nothing comes to mind but maybe an additional sunday school class

Have evening services for those that cannot attend on Sunday have member of clergy available on holidays if possible everyone is doing a great job

MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR DIFFERENT PROGRAMS-BREAD MINISTRY, KITCHEN DUTY, SUNDAY SERVICE

Conflict resolution that allows for resolution of issues between members and members and members and the Pastor when issues arise. When there are issues that arise between the pastor and members there needs to be an objective member of the board and a professional trained church member to facilitate the issues between the member and the Pastor. The goal being to hopefully allow members of the church to feel that the pastor is equally presenting their view and looking for resolution as is the member.

The building, community service, social justice in some areas

the same area that most local groups have, raising awareness of your existence.

Advertising (can't think of another 2)

I don't really know.

I believe MCC needs more enthusiasm in her services to enhance the overall worship experience. Lively readers should be norm. Contemporary songs could be used to balance the number of hymns and songbook styles. Lastly, communion is always facilitated beautifully. May we have at least a 10-20 seconds max pause to "reflect." That part often seems to be a bit rushed.

In the past, there was a lot of focus on social events with fund raisers. A lot of work for pocket change. This can cause major burn out from volunteers who have full lives of career and homes to manage. Also, it is tiring to have somewhere you feel you need to attend every few days. Its all about balance between work and "fun". With any church fellowship it is imperative that if you support an individuals spiritual needs, then there is never no worries about the financials. In other words, a spiritually thriving church is also a financially thriving church. Teach people how to be givers of their time, talent, and resources with balance.

- 1) Ministry and outreach to the larger community
- 2) Highlighting the various ministry opportunities throughout the year (perhaps each month highlighting a different ministry and doing special activities around that ministry) - I think the ministries happen, but if people aren't involved specifically in that ministry, I think most people in the church don't realize the impact of the ministry.
- 3) Increased integration and involvement with various community partners: 1) VCU students, 2) Diversity Richmond, 3) Side by Side, 4) Health Brigade etc.

Speak louder or find away the choir can hear better please. Thank you.

Welcoming new people, outreach to Richmond metro area, getting to know people outside comfort zone. For those outside the immediate Richmond city, it is a real commitment to belong to this MCC. It would be great to have occasional small groups that meet or have intimate connections near to where these people live (like me). Often, you do not really know who people are unless they perform during the service (because their names are listed) or are recognized for service. I do feel that the congregation is a caring one; I long to belong to this church but the time commitment is daunting. I feel that I am welcomed by many people but I also feel disconnected to some of them which is why I feel the church needs improvement in this area.

Outreach to our members or friends of MCC who "drop out" or don't come often , Would like an annual retreat and more seminar type of programs and activities throughout the year . Could include things like exercise, conflict resolution, Mental Health First Aid, etc.) Would like less congestion when you enter worship, not have to hunt for the persons w the Worship program, and quieter during communion, and have someone outside before worship to assist with the elevator access. Would like more transparency of what the Board is doing, perhaps go over highlights in the newsletter. I do appreciate the printed minutes downstairs and the availability to attend meetings.

We need more young people, so possibly a way to reach out to high. schools and colleges.

(1) Need more youth and children's activities, to attract more families, (2) Need more upbeat music and more instruments, strings and brass. (3) Need to have organ music sometimes also.(A blend of all kinds of music and songs.)

The Very first thing I Can Think of that 'Needs Improving' and I hate to even call it that is MUSIC. What I'd love to see more of is a Greater Variety of Religious/Spiritual Expression during Worship. In saying this, Dance comes to mind. I know that myself and a Number of Others Would love to see it More. The other Two that I'm passionate and would LOVE to see as part of our Worship Service are Signing [to Music/Songs] and Interpretive Movements, as I've heard them Called. In Signing, as examples. THANK YOU by Ray Boltz, SHINE JESUS SHINE by Graham Kendrick, AS THE DEER by Martin J. Nystrom, WE BELIEVE IN GOD by Amy Grant, AWESOME GOD by Rich Mullins and OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART by Michael W Smith. The list is endless. I was a part of a 100-person choir for 7-yrs. Music is what Moves Me.... It's a Huge Passion in My Life that has gotten Me through many peaks and valleys. I would love to see that reflected in a wider variety of song selections used for future church services and functions. Thinking Outside the Proverbial Music box you could say.

One thing we should always do is reach out to the community at large, to let them know who we are, why we're here and that we're here, just as we say every Sunday, Just as You Are. I know and believe we

do that but there are still people that don't even know WE'RE HERE. We've taken care our own but we have to go beyond that. I believe reaching out to the TRANS community is the next place and fully embracing them and bringing them into our Community of faith can only enrich it. We always say we are a 'Church for All'. We Need to Full Embrace it. Straight Folks, People of Color, Younger Folks. If MCC, as a whole wants to continue and thrive, we need to let those Young People, esp. Gen Xers, know we're here, know what we're about, know that they are Important and, most of all, are Our Future. I Want the Full Spectrum of the Human Experience to be a part of the MCC-Richmond journey.

OUTREACH is also very important, and very important to me. We do that and we do that in some fantastic ways. The bread ministry w/ the Doorways and Ronald McDonald House, the Back to School-Backpack projects, the Lounge and Food Pantry, Stockings and Family Presents at Christmastime and Meals at Thanksgiving. I would like to see us reach out more to the homeless because they are certainly in our community and we've have personally welcomed them into our lives. Is there a Need for Outreach to At-Risk LGBT teens, battered women-families? I know we have organizations in our community that help but is anyway that we can add anything significantly to that??

One that I Feel Has Suffered in the MCC-Richmond community is the MINISTRY OF CARE. I always hear about them every Sunday and the Connection cards etc. I know, in the past, I was a part of that ministry. We did a lot and there was a lot done behind the scenes too. I, myself, sent e-cards to church members and friends as needed and requested, a quick and easy way to show someone you care and are thinking of them. I believe if we are to have an effective Ministry of Care there needs to be leadership that is available on a consistent basis. I do not even know WHO specifically is a part of that ministry, besides the lead. I know that it does takes a special kind of person to be a part of it and that every 4-months or so, we had a weekend retreat to RICHMOND HILL and regular meetings to keep us on point and make sure we were providing for ourselves, as well as our church family as well. It was a small group but we had some amazing people. The church needs change; maybe it does require more. I don't know. I know that MCC does care I Would like to see that reflected in that Ministry

Education, studies, advocacy

Diversity

Music

Board remember it represents the church - congregation

Rev has too much power

More dancing, , LESS talking by congregation during communion. More random groups...less cliquey

Be less gossipy

Be less talkative before service (be more quiet)

Hopefully have a more permanent office person/hours

Fix ceiling in sanctuary/painting

Everything

As of now I don't see anything that needs improving at this time.

Membership growth, Building improvements,

Worship can be so much richer but it feels like we just run through it

More visibility within the community

- advertise to college students/youth in the area to get them involved

Had I known about MCC earlier in life I would be more involved

1. Youth programs - we don't have spaces to offer youth classes or teachers

2. Millennial programs - we don't offer programs for our youth that is between the ages 20-30 that is centered around them

Including all (breaking the closed cliques), following up with people who drift away, fitting people with their gifts in ministry.

could use more gospel songs. more color in the sanctuary..paint.

3. What does MCC Richmond mean to you today?

58 responses

A place to worship God and to be reminded of God's love and how to share God with others.

MCC Richmond has helped me re-establish my relationship with God. Also it is a place that I can Worship God without feeling and guilt about being gay and Christian.

MCC Richmond is a place of safe worship where I can am free to be a Gay Christian without judgement

It is home. My friends and family of choice I found here.

A place where I can be myself

A place to feel good

Safe place to worship

A physical home to put spirituality into practice with and for the benefit of others.

a place for anyone who needs us

I enjoy coming to Sunday School and I participate in some of the social justice activities. I would like to do a few others things like come to the plays and other events but just can't find time and sometimes don't know whats happening in time to plan.

Involvement

A part of my past, present, and future. Fights for equality rights in Virginia.

My church family

It means a place of spiritual nurture and is a community of faithful friends. MCC Richmond has been the light from which I have been able to see my whole-self, to grow into my truth and authenticity.

The Rev. Elder Arlene Ackerman once asked, "What do you MCC Richmond want to be known for? The church that has the good fight every now and then, or the church that actually goes out into the community and does ministry?" Thankfully we have chosen the later. Once we learned to stop demonizing each other and start accepting where each of us is on our spiritual/life journey, it becomes easier to be the body of Christ.

We are now about embracing our core values and I pray are now open to hear God calling to us to be and do something unique in the world. We must find ways to tear down walls and build up hope! Imagine what the world might be if we could reveal the image of God in everyone. I believe that is God's calling to us, here and now- this moment in time, to do just that.

It is my second family where I feel God's love, and where I can learn more about my mission on earth.

a safe place to meet with like people and experiencing God

MCC is a place where I can be my complete self. It is a place where I can come to serve God.

A place to worship and be yourself.

A place I can truly be myself, and feel free to be vulnerable, A safe haven.

It is a safe place where people can be themselves. It is engaging and challenges people to reflect and be better.

Being able to be myself

It means so much to the LGBTQ community and to myself for the fact that EVERYONE feels welcomed. I am a long time member and I feel so blessed to be a part of this great congregation

MCC Richmond is a part of who I am.

MCC Richmond is a safe place for me to exploration of personal, spiritual, emotional, community connections and development.

Nothing.

MCC is family, this is my home. I have felt an emptiness by not being able to attend. I have missed my family and looking forward to many happy and complete feelings of love.

a place that has the highest level of acceptance among everyone

My first experience I felt I was in the company of misfits. Spending more time at MCC, I learned this is a special place where everyone who attend are free to be who they are from the inside out.

a welcoming non-judgemental involvement community

I feel welcome and wanted as a child of God

FAMILY

It is the support to my growth spiritually and to my feeling and experiencing a loving sense of community through my connection to the membership. It provides me various opportunities to grow and learn spiritually through hearing other people's faith journey.

Family AND LOVE

Outgoing, personable, approachable, caring.

a welcoming place, a safe place and a great choir!

MCC Richmond allows members of the LGBTQ community to celebrate their love for God and strengthen and nurture their spiritual lives

MCC brings a greater sense of diversity to RVA.

It is my church home where I can contribute and not be judged for who I am.

MCC represents itself well as "a house of prayer for all people" to come together and worship God in an environment free from social, political, and religious biases. It is a continual source of refreshment, re-education, and new fellowship.

Place to fill my spiritual cup, feed my soul for the every day blessed journey.

A wonderful community of supportive people

Family

MCC Richmond is an oasis in the desert.

A safe place to worship with like minded people who affirm me and who care about and show support for the rights of marginalized people..

MCC is my family, my support system.

I believe MCC has provided something my Husband and I do together and it adds a lot of strength to our relationship, I call MCC my church, because I feel that from the first day at church I felt pride and ownership and much support for who I am.

MCC-Richmond means many things to Me personally. It is a Home away from Home, a Place to Re-Connect with Family & Friends and Experience the Creator in whole New Ways, a Refuge when times are Difficult, a Place to Rejoice in the Little Victories of Life, a Divine space to be Challenged and Encouraged on our Life's Journey. Most importantly, for me, it is the PEOPLE that Make It What it Is. The building is nice but a Church is its body not the worship space. Words Don't Even Begin to Describe them. There are some Absolutely Amazing People of Faith that Make up the Body; that Talk the Talk and Walk the Walk and that is important – FAITH in ACTION. Living the Word when No One is Watching. Too Many people to Mention. I'm an emotional person anyway but just thinking of those of people, those small acts of kindness; the things I've experienced at MCC w/ them, I definitely tear-up, but there's nothing wrong with a good cry now and then. We are All Human. Beloved Saints that we've had in our congregation but have gone home to glory – Jacqui Brown, Ms. Traci, Clinton Gibbs.... They remind me how precious our time here on this planet is and to live it to the fullest....to live it OUT LOUD! MCC means The World to me and I want to us to make the Maximum Impact Right Here, Right Now

Direction and Connection

Everything

Family of choice

Openness

It means feeling welcome and happy to be who I am and we all worship and praise together.

A place to feel welcome and not judged.

A place of fellowship and friends

It's a safe welcoming place I know I can always come to worship. It gives me hope

A place that I can go to for love and support

My church home that I love and am very proud of. A place for worship, fellowship, caring, social justice and learning!

mcc has felt more Godly with the help of the new pastor. meaning... i get more out of the sermons now than i have in the past. I now leave church feeling more humbled with God. There were times in the past where i wondered if God was even in church with us that day. of course he was but it just didn't feel it.

4. Give an example of something MCC Richmond does currently that makes you proud to be a part of this community. Please explain why.

57 responses

I am proud of MCC Richmond's outreach to the community through the Food Pantry, The Lounge, Bread Ministry.

MCC Richmond members are there for each other when someone is in need or needs love and/or support (i.e, death of family member, illness, job loss, etc)

All the food activities we do. Some see the Sunday after service or Wednesday night meals as social activities. But I am proud because while they do provide a social activity they also tie to the Lounge and Food Pantry. All 4 of those services provide meals to those in need. Many don't understand that some of our congregation looks forward to those meals because it may be the best meal they have all week and for others it may be the most social interaction they have. To me this is an example of a ministry we can truly call "Christ Like" and meeting needs.

Community outreach, choir, bell choir, eye opening discussion on wed night

Support the community

Giving back to Community

Open community involvement -- MCC Richmond puts belief and mission into Christ-like practice through much of its ministry work by participating in social justice activities and awareness events, sharing resources to benefit everyone (i.e. food, clothing, treats, AND unconditional love), and maintaining an loving, open-door concept of God/Spirit/Universe.

reaching out to The Doorways and other organizations

Food Pantry, the Thursday meals, Christmas and Thanksgiving meals for the community. participation in protests in various capacities. During the protest on Monument being a safe space.

Outreach Programs (Bread, Christmas projects, Lounge, Food Pantry). Focusing on others needs helps us to grow. We learn more about who we are and what we can do to make a difference.

Feeds the homeless and the shut in. The nursing prayer and visitations.

Worship blended

I'm really proud of the Panera "Breaking Bread & Feeding the Hungry" programs. What a great way to give back to the community that which we have been blessedly given to us and modeling servant leadership.

The lounge and food pantry - a good example of how we can put Christ's teachings to work.

our outreach - to the 15+ different groups

I am proud of the food pantry and the PB ministry. These two ministries remind me that we are to look out for the less fortunate.

Feeding so many places an never turning people down.

community involvement, being proud of self and who we are as a Church.

We have a wonderfully welcoming attitude, not just in the standard Sunday greeting, but in the way church people greet newcomers with smiles and hugs. People are invited to share after-service meals and to participate in the community and its ministries.

Going to Rallies

Our bread ministry; our homeless ministry because we are so blessed to be able to help others in the community

1) Acceptance and a spirit of love for everyone who comes through our door. 2) I am very proud of our Pastor.

I am very proud of our diverse, inclusive, growing congregation, Living Wednesdays Dinner Church, the Food Pantry and The Lounge, the Bread Ministry and our growing on serving others.

Provides a safe place for gay people who don't know any better to worship. Invites gay people back to Christianity.

taking our mission and our message out to the community.

making everyone feel welcome. the love here is above all others

I happy me and my partner have a place where we can come worship with no need to hide our relationship.

lounge - welcoming anyone in to eat and fellowship

Everyone of all creeds or social status is welcome unconditional to sit at the table of God

OUTREACH WITH BREAD MINISTRY AND THE DOORWAYS

MCC Richmond's outreach to the larger community and sharing its outreach of love and community makes me very proud. MCC's willingness to be make our space available to the community makes me proud. MCC's offering The Lounge on Thursday's makes me proud. MCC's effort to participate in standing up for issues of social justice makes me proud.

stepping outside the box and putting a face to MCCR

Citizen's Police Academy, recognizing community leaders.

takes an active part in community activities. supports other groups.

MCC does an incredible job providing for its community, including a food pantry that is accessible for the community and church members. Annual recognition of the impact of HIV/AIDS on the Richmond community.

Outreach

The Body of Christ ministers to those hurting within and outside of the church.

I am proud that MCC is highly respected by the RPD and that our church is so visible at other social causes in town. MCC stays relevant!

Taking care of the less unfortunate through donating everyday commodities, and food.

Bread ministry: we support the VCU food bank, provide bread/pastries to two senior housing centers, and pastries to the Doorways each week, as well as provide bread to our own congregation and food pantry. We also provide space to Rainbow NA and a local AA group.

Wednesday living . making crafts for sick children and adults.the smiles this brings to the faces

Homeless outreach, love and acceptance for all that attend, connection to the larger MCC through clergy and other programs. These are models of what I believe it means to be a gay Christian and education through our Mother Church is important too.

Bread outreach because we provide to people in need and we prevent waste of food and it encourages community building among those who volunteer and with those in the community we serve.

Speak out against injustice. Also food pantry and lounge. Proud that MCC's communion is for everyone.

Diversity is very important and I believe MCC does this better than any other church I have been in.

I'm always proud to say I'm a part of the MCC-Richmond family but something that makes me especially proud is know that in times of crisis, when something is Needed to be Done or a Specific 'Need' is Required, local and city officials know to look to US and to Pastor Kenny because we are so passionate about what we do here. Kenny is an Original Hot Mess Blessing. He brings POSITIVITY, ENERGY and PASSION [PEP] into everything he says, does and is involved in and, THAT, inspires me to want to do more.....the GLITTER does not hurt either! We know that Doing the Right Thing is not Always Easy and vice-versa but we always step up to those challenges every time and strive to do our best

Brings the LGBT together as a family

Participation in marches
Social justice

Hope for a better future. Chance to talk about God during Sunday School.

Participating (as a church) in important marches (like women's, gay pride, gun control)

Everything

Great wonderful people who makes others comfortable.

Community action - marches, ministry to the homeless and disadvantaged

Just the fact that this church exists in Richmond is wonderful to me

Feeding the homeless because everyone needs a helping hand sometimes

Allowing diverse theologies to be discussed and encouraging continued learning.

things just feel more lively, more active, the energy feels more positive.

5. Name one thing that is missing from MCC Richmond now that you would like to see in the future. Why is this needed?

53 responses

MCC Richmond needs to focus more on bringing God to the community at large beyond the four walls of the church. This attitude and practice will make a significant impact on our community while also inspiring others. This will also help church members gain a deeper excitement of church ministries and personal part within the church.

MCC Richmond needs to be more appealing to younger adults (35 and under). We are diverse in ethnicity and backgrounds, but we need more diversity in age range as well.

Hosting educational/support groups for the LGBTQ community. We have the Womens Coming Out Groups.. there may be opportunities for HIV Support/Education, Partnerships with Side by Side to help LGBTQ Youth with aligning their faith with their coming out, LGBTQ AA/NA Group, etc..... Knowing they are surrounded by welcoming people who are like them goes a long way to making people feel more comfortable in seeking out & joining a group for support.

Children - to keep this church alive

More disability outreach/empathy training

Spiritual care

Young to middle-age adults -- without younger members/friends/visitors, the congregations loses its legacy to continue AND it loses touch with changing generational characteristics, priorities, and goals.

possibly more outreach to youth and college-age people

Not sure

Young people. The church cannot grow without new generations coming behind us.

Not sure.

Children..youth

I would like to see us develop a young adult coffee social/café and discussion group on Sunday morning. This would provide a peer group opportunity to gather before worship, wake-up and if a discussion of the lectionary or the hot topic of the day/week were to break out, better yet.

A larger congregation, for obvious reasons.

couldn't say

I would like to see more weekend opportunities to provide for the community. I think this is needed because it is harder for the poor to find help on the weekends. There are programs that can be used during the weekday, but it is harder on the weekend and holidays. Also, it would give MCC members and friends who work during the week an opportunity to give back on the weekend.

Youth ministry, even though we have been getting more young people, it would be nice to have more of that energy and spirit going on in the Church.

It would be nice to have more community service opportunity.

Even if there was a once a month event where volunteers could go out for 3 -6 hours and do something to help other people. It could even rotate helping and partnering with other community organizations.

More Music

I would like to see more young people in our congregation because our average congregation is older and we need the younger generation to keep us going strong

I think there is not enough identification or connection with the MCC denomination. We should add MCC global news to our newsletters and email blasts. Too few people can name our global Moderator.

I would like to see more rotating leadership within ministry teams as well as on the Board of Directors.

Accountability

an active HIV ministry

nothing at all

To find a way to connect more of the community to this church. There are so many people who find MCC home if given a way to better find us. I would suggest using YouTube, create a radio station online and produce a Blog.

an additional service during the week

Inviting different clergy from other churches come and copreach a sermon

Easier access for people with disabilities. Elevator not readily available, people have a to use key and during worship may not always have access to reach to someone to let them into worship.

Nothing I feel full filled.

building community awareness. get on the Fan Christmas tour. the building is beautiful and i bet much of the neighborhood does not even know who you are.

Just more advertising

I don't really know.

I have not attended long enough to compare.

Better live recording of the Sunday Service. Upgrade equipment. Find an organist to utilize beautiful instrument and enhance Worship Services.

Better use of the space to support additional ministries (we would need to grow the membership to support additional ministries, but I think by focusing more on ministry to the larger community we will also attract additional members).

One Saturday a month go to where homeless are and pass out food

Outreach to those that travel large distances (within reason, of course)

More Bible study/Sunday school options. I have not attended the current Sunday School class but understand it is excellent. Just think some varied options may encourage more attendance which I think helps build community and helps people start becoming more active in the church.

Young people and families with children.

I believe we should do one or two retreats each year, I think it is a great way to build relationships, have a great and fun time together for a weekend, while we learn about our faith and about each other. I believe we should do this off site and if possible out of Richmond. We should do more programs on Growth.

I believe it is called 'PACE TRAINING'. Before I joined MCC-Richmond in December 2012, I went through PACE Training with then-member Elaine German. I believe it is needed, or something like it, because it helps to point out what your spiritual gifts/strengths and that, in turn, informed as to what particular church ministries may be the best fit for you. I miss that. Here's the link: <http://visions-inc.org/who-we-serve/faith-based/>

As earlier, keeping reaching out to the Younger Generation b/c they are our Future. As an aside, I also miss the TREASURES IN THE BASEMENT sale with proceeds going to the church. I remember it being a lot of fun plus you could find some great treasures at a bargain price too!

Study classes - I grew up hating the Bible . Maybe classes to take away negative perception and positive discussion would help.

Diversity in outreach program and training

Children's ministry. We're mostly oldish...need some young people and children

Possibly a second service (maybe in later afternoon, say 5 or 6) for those who don't or can't come to morning service

See more young people take part in the church and let their gifts shine in Jesus.

More families, younger generation

Add music to the bulletin

More young people! I believe there are a lot of young LGBTQ people in Richmond that could benefit from MCC

A children ministry. We use to have youth in the church but now we don't have any programs for the youth. If a family brought their child to church we don't have ways of entertaining or teaching that child at their level of understanding. This causes some family not to attend again because they don't feel there is a place for the whole family.

Young adults coming and involved in worship. To continue MCC Richmond for another 40 years!

the ceiling looks like its going to fall on our heads... just saying.

6. What should we keep doing, and why?

53 responses

We should continue to discern what and who God is calling us to be as a church. This will help us grow personally as well as a congregation while also discovering ways to be of service to others. We should also continue to develop a team approach to ministry and serving others.

We should continue to stretch outside and keep going "outside the box" and to become relevant in the city and beyond.

Food Based ministries, unfortunately poverty and malnutrition are still a part of our society at large. This is something easy we can do to make a significant impact on people's lives.

Keep engaging with allies. The key to success of a LGBTQ focused organization is not being to niche focused on that minority. Our allies outnumber us... and they are the key to our voice being heard and our success.

Having a sparkling personality

Everything we do for social justice

Moving forward and sharing love with ALL people -- why? because that's what Christ did, that's our mission, and that's what we do really well!

continue with awesome worship (both Sunday and Wednesday), also continued outreach to community

Items I mentioned above. It is important to work as much as we can to make the world a better place for everyone.

Keep remembering who we are LGBTQ. Its important to point out all the things LGBTQ people do that make a difference.

Not sure

Food after service. Really needed

The Sunday Brunch has really become popular for building community connections and relationships. It provides an opportunity for more people to feel included rather than be left behind when a small group (click) takes off to an off site venue. A definite keeper.

So far, so good. Keep it up!

being the welcoming church and outreaching to the community and beyond

MCC should continue to reach out to the community leaders to help the community. I think it is a great way to not only get MCC's name out in the community but it can also help build our reputation.

Wednesday nights, good learning experiences an social

keep doing the lounge I feel the community need that there so many people out there that need food and a little shelter if only for a small bit of time, a smiling friendly face.

Keep doing Living Wednesday. It is so great to have a place to go midweek for community, reflection, and spiritual growth.

Outreach Ministry,Comunity Activism

I feel everything we are doing now is sufficient

Treating everyone as special, it's our ministry. I also think the block party was a fantastic day.

As a congregation we should continue to take responsibility for growing spiritually, caring for self as well as those in our community and beyond and always discovering ways to share God's love with all people - no matter what! I believe this will help us grow individually, as a congregation and make a difference in our community and our world.

Providing a safe place for gay people to worship. Inviting gay people back to Christianity.

Keep doing what you are doing.

just keep loving everyone like we are doing

I love how the Pastor breaks down the word to relate to everyday life. He makes me feel comfortable because he is at ease of being himself and not a prop.

community involvement - makes us known and gives us something to believe in

Itisagoodideaforgroth

The things I have mention above. They provide support and inclusion.

commitment to God, family and community! Great Job MCC!

being open and caring, accepting.

Outreach

Keep ministering in Jesus name because we become Jesus to this community.

Unsure. I like what I see overall so far and made suggestions earlier.

Food pantry, help less unfortunate.

Hospitality: I think this is a glue that allows people to connect outside of service that would be hard to accomplish if we only had service on Sundays.

Everything

Worship, people gatherings, and help for the homeless.

Circle after worship because it allows us to look at each other, see how many of us are here together, and joins us by including everyone in hand holding. Lunches after church, Bread ministry, Living Wed, Outreach, Music all are good as they help build community and encourage people to get involved.

Be inclusive and welcoming. Also community outreach.

I think we are doing many great things, keep doing what we are doing, I think our Pastor is doing a great job, lets keep him.

Continue to Thrive to be as Inclusive as possible, Respectful of Each Other's Spiritual Journey and Life/Story because our future lies in our diversity.... What Makes Us Unique and Different and Celebrating that Variety!

I think the church is right on track. I love what I see and experience.

Social justice for LGBT community

Living Wednesday...chance to know people better

Keep affirming that we are all (whether gay or straight) worthy of love

Keep reaching out to people because we're making a difference in so many lives.

Continue to be involved in contemporary social activities that allow others to know that there is a place for them to come and worship without feeling rejected.

Community out reach

Everything y'all do is wonderful

We should keep the social gathering going because some people this is the only place they feel safe to go and let their hair day

Loving people and accepting all. Ministering in God's name! That is what we are called to do...serve!

i like how we hold hands at the end of the service.. lets us see who we are before we leave.

7. What should we stop doing, and why?

42 responses

Nothing

We should stop being afraid to experiment and try new kinds of ministries.

We should stop having potlucks every month because it is redundant and can get expensive to members & friends who have to prepare food every month. Perhaps every other month would be better. Besides, we already have lunch every week after worship anyway.

Wow... this is a hard one.... I can't honestly say there is anything I would emphatically say STOP doing. We do many things to address the various needs of our diverse congregation (just like every church)

Repeating about connection cards

Hanging on to older ways -- change takes time, and MCC Richmond appears to have had its share, but much of the status quo appears to exist which may also hinder progress and growth to continue the mission. (Please see previous responses addressing perceived deficiencies.)

can't think of anything

Can't think of anything

No answer

Not sure

"Sharing the Peace" has become a fiasco. When people go beyond their immediate pew neighbors and start running all over the sanctuary it becomes very invasive and counter productive. Especially in cold and flu season people need to be more aware of spreading germs. The focus of worship is shifted from God to us. In every book I have studied on church growth and size theory, it is by far the number one turn-off for new comers; having strangers get all up in their space with out them knowing who all these people are. Many don't come back for that reason alone when asked. It is way over the top- too much.

Nothing

don't know

I really can't think of anything we should stop doing.

I can't think of anything we should stop doing

I can't think of anything.

We need to stop living in the past, take personal and congregational responsibility for our behavior, stop blaming others for our life experiences, learn to trust our pastor and church leadership. This will help us be more effective in sharing God's love and experiencing it personally.

Pushing political agendas onto the membership. Believe it or not, we're not all liberal and the conservatives are leaving en masse and we were the ones carrying the church and providing our liberal counterparts a place to worship too. Stop inviting politicians in and accepting sexual harassment as the norm or status quo. Encourage the silenced to participate and be heard. Work to become completely transparent, no matter how painful. The congregation can handle it, and if we can't, there's a bigger problem. We are (were) all in this together.

Nothing

Currently, I feel this church is doing a great job and should not stop doing anything.

nothing comes to mind - i am excited to be part of this group I can call family

Donotstop

Not aware of anything we should stop doing.

Nothing comes to mind

I don't really know.

Let's practice the presence of God in our services. In doing so, "grieving the Holy Spirit of God," would cease. It is important that we invoke, acknowledge, and appreciate God's presence in our midst. He will manifest Himself in greater ways (waves, healing, miracles, and prophetic messages) as a result. Also,

while inclusion is preferred over exclusion, may be we should not be so extreme (overdo it) to the point of accommodating a soul wound. I have found that those who protest God's male gender frustrate progress unnecessarily; most of their offenses and personal hurts lie with male dominance and misogyny and not with God Himself. While I am genuinely on the fence about Holy Spirit being female and know a scripture referencing female angels and biblical heroes, I find it inconvenient to have to switch pronouns because of those with specific unhealed issues. Hopefully, we can be a blessing to our angry congregants and provide them inner healing. I am experienced in that arena as well.

I don't have any suggestions here.

There is nothing that I think you should stop doing.

Stop assuming a person is dating whoever they are having communion with.

Can't think of anything

Don't stop anything at this point.

A little less songs during service and more teaching from pastor Kenny

Overly long winded prayers...start to daydream

Although affirming gay members is great (and is needed) there are straight members who need affirming also and recognition

So far I don't see anything that needs to be stopped at this time.

Setting up and down so much during the service

Bulletin is hard to follow at times. Needs more clarity. Adding music would help

NA

Can't think of anything we should stop doing

Don't know.

hhhhmmm. not sure.

Appendix C

Brainstorming Workshops

Idea Boards & Votes (with Theme)

Workshops in order of occurrence:

Worship 1 - September 19, 2018

Outreach 1 - September 26, 2018

Worship 2 - October 14, 2019

Social Justice 1 - October 17, 2018

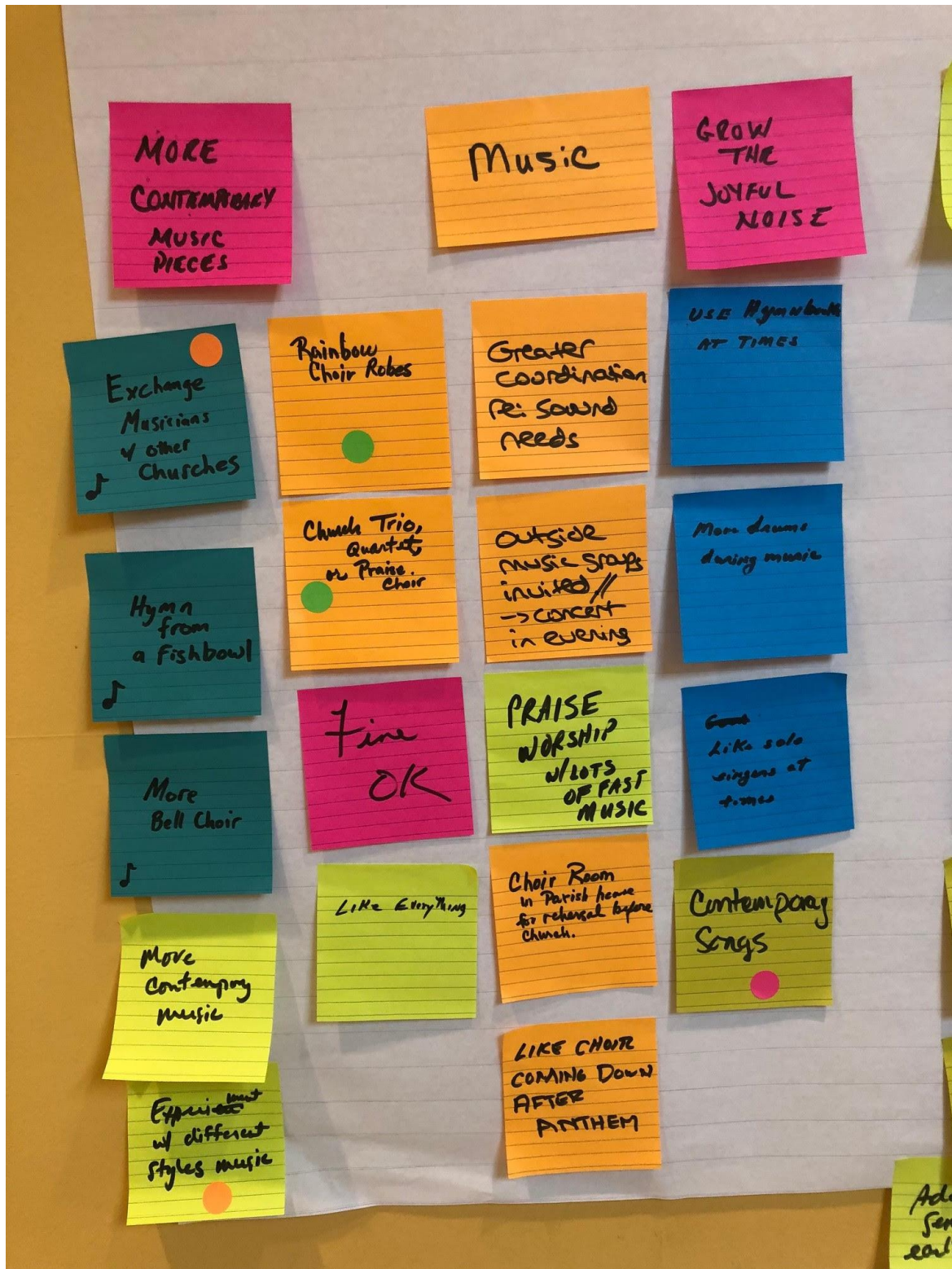
Outreach 2 - October 20, 2018

Social Justice 2 - November 4, 2018

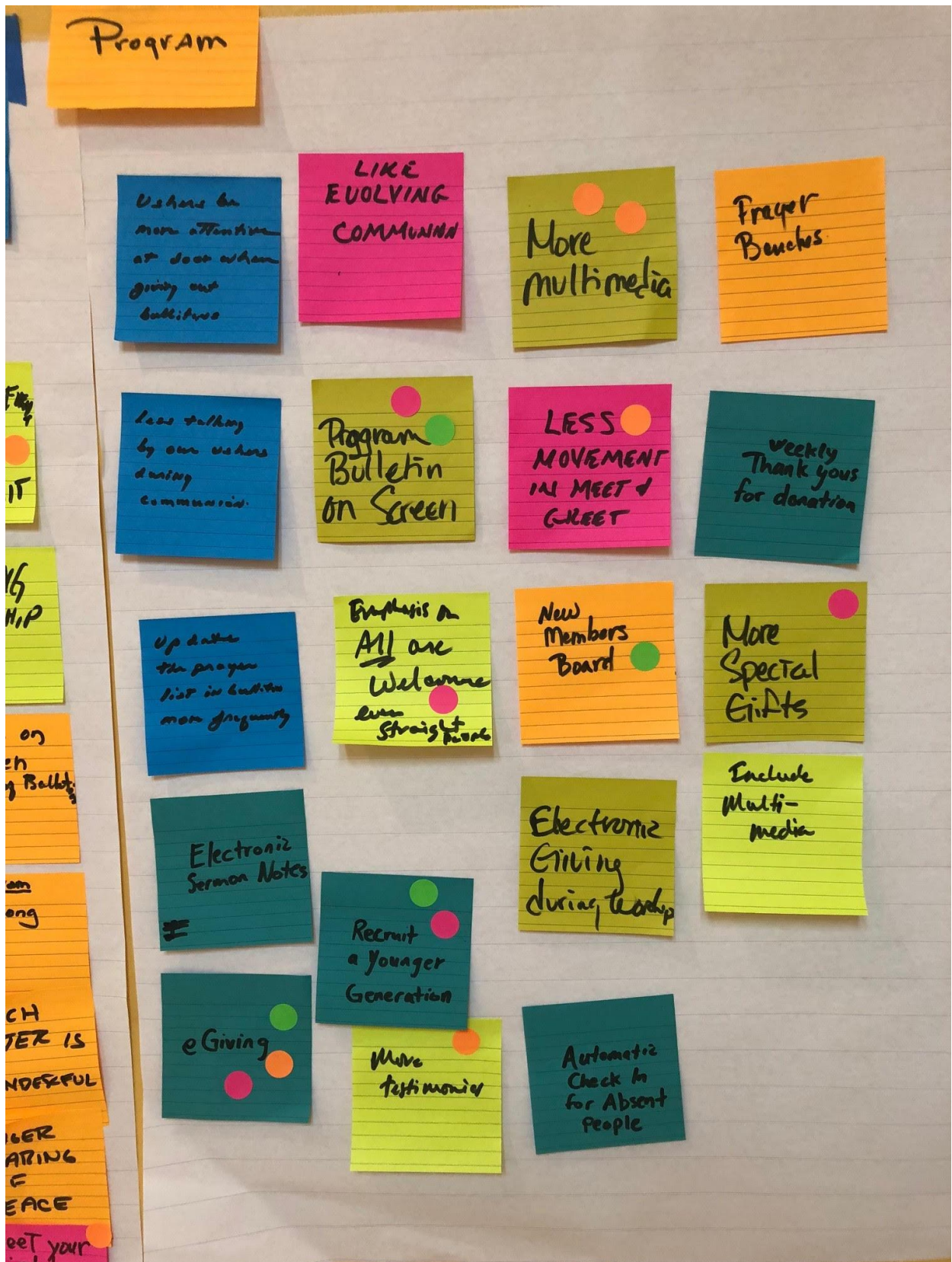
Service 1 - November 7, 2018

Service 2 - November 10, 2018

Worship Workshop 1
19 September 2018







Worship Workshop 1

19 September 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Music, Message and Program

3 Votes

- Testimonials from people impacted by ministry (**vary our worship experience**)
- eGiving (**implement new technology**)

2 Votes

- Have 2-minute testimonials again variety of worship (**vary our worship experience**)
- Worship elsewhere twice a year variety of worship (**vary our worship experience**)
- Less talking during communion (**show awareness and respect for others**)
- Better sound system (**implement new technology**)
- Program bulletin on screen (**implement new technology**)
- Recruit a younger generation (**reach out to youth**)
- More multimedia (**implement new technology**)

1 Vote

- Exchange musicians with other churches (**elevate our music ministry**)
- Rainbow choir robes (**elevate our music ministry**)
- Church trio, quartet or praise choir (**elevate our music ministry**)
- Contemporary songs/more contemporary music pieces/experiment with different styles of music (**elevate our music ministry**)
- Focus each month on a different ministry (**vary our worship experience**)
- Rather people be better dressed for worship (**show awareness and respect for others**)
- Find ways to [encourage?] children and youth attendance (**reach out to youth**)
- Emphasize all are welcome even straight people (**show awareness and respect for others**)
- More testimonials (**vary our worship experience**)
- New members board (**develop our programs**)
- Less movement in meet and greet (**show awareness and respect for others**)
- More special gifts (**elevate our music ministry**)

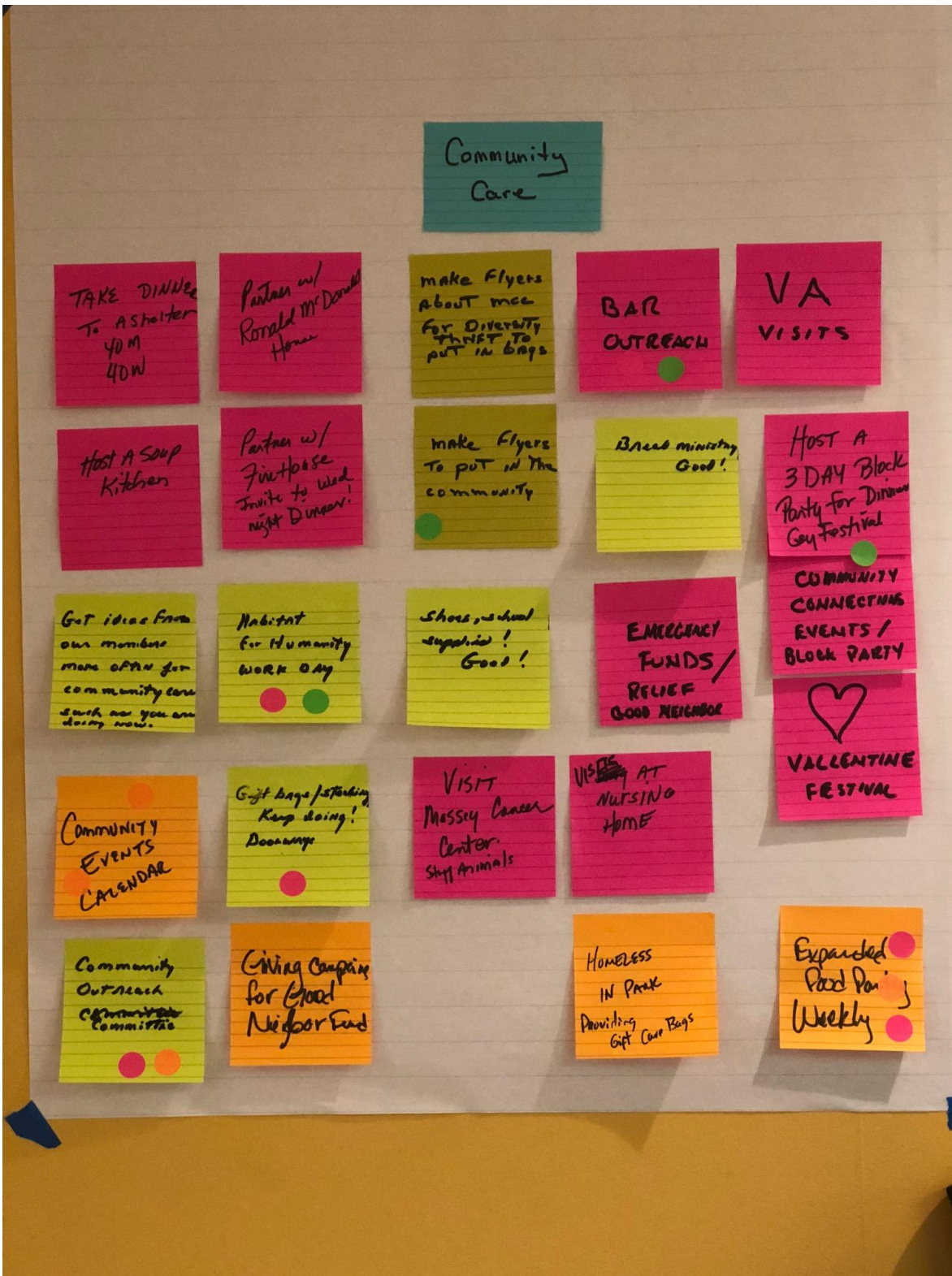
Other Ideas

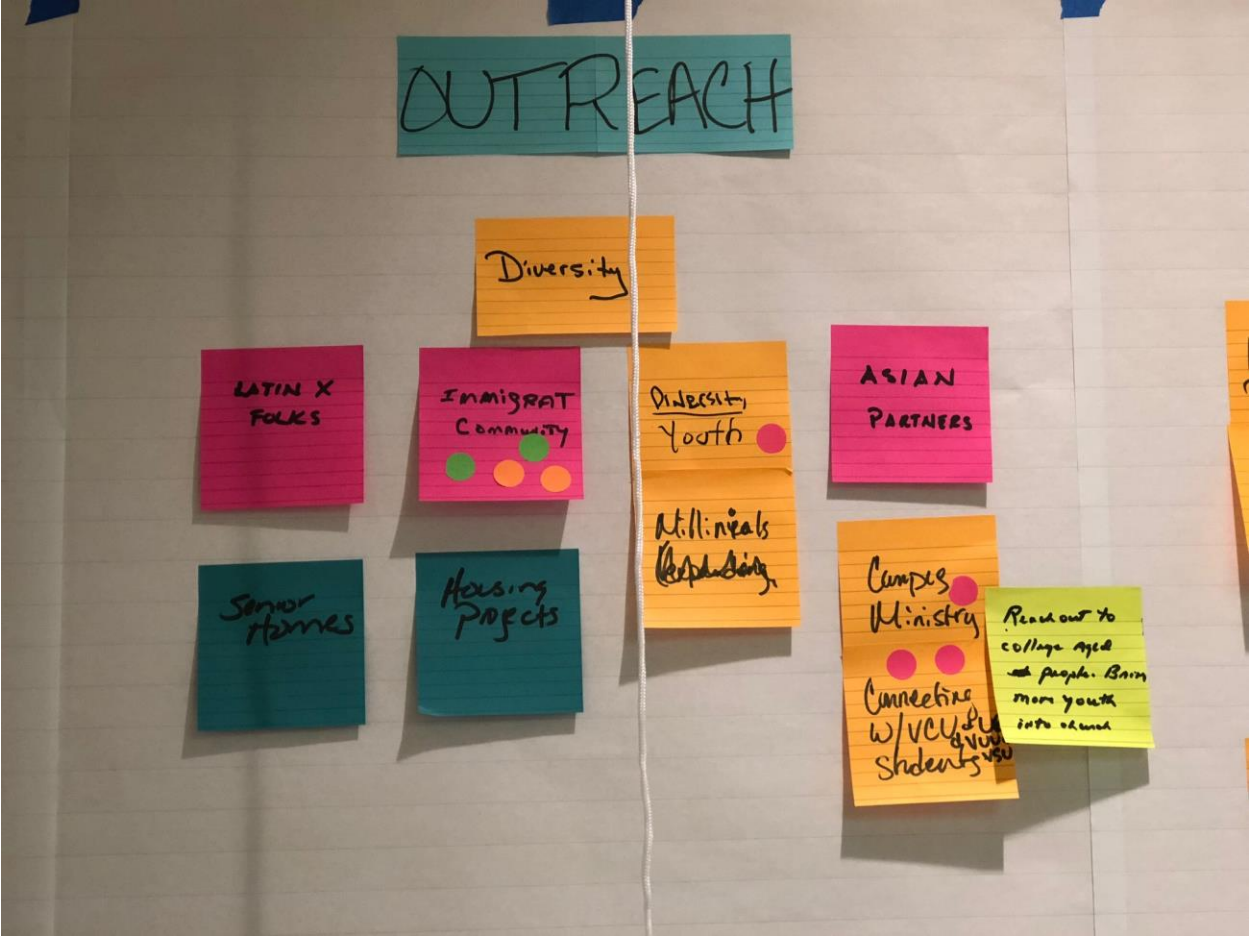
- Hymn from a fishbowl
- More bell choir
- Greater coordination of sound needs
- Outside music group invited [for a] concert in evening
- Praise worship with lots of fast music

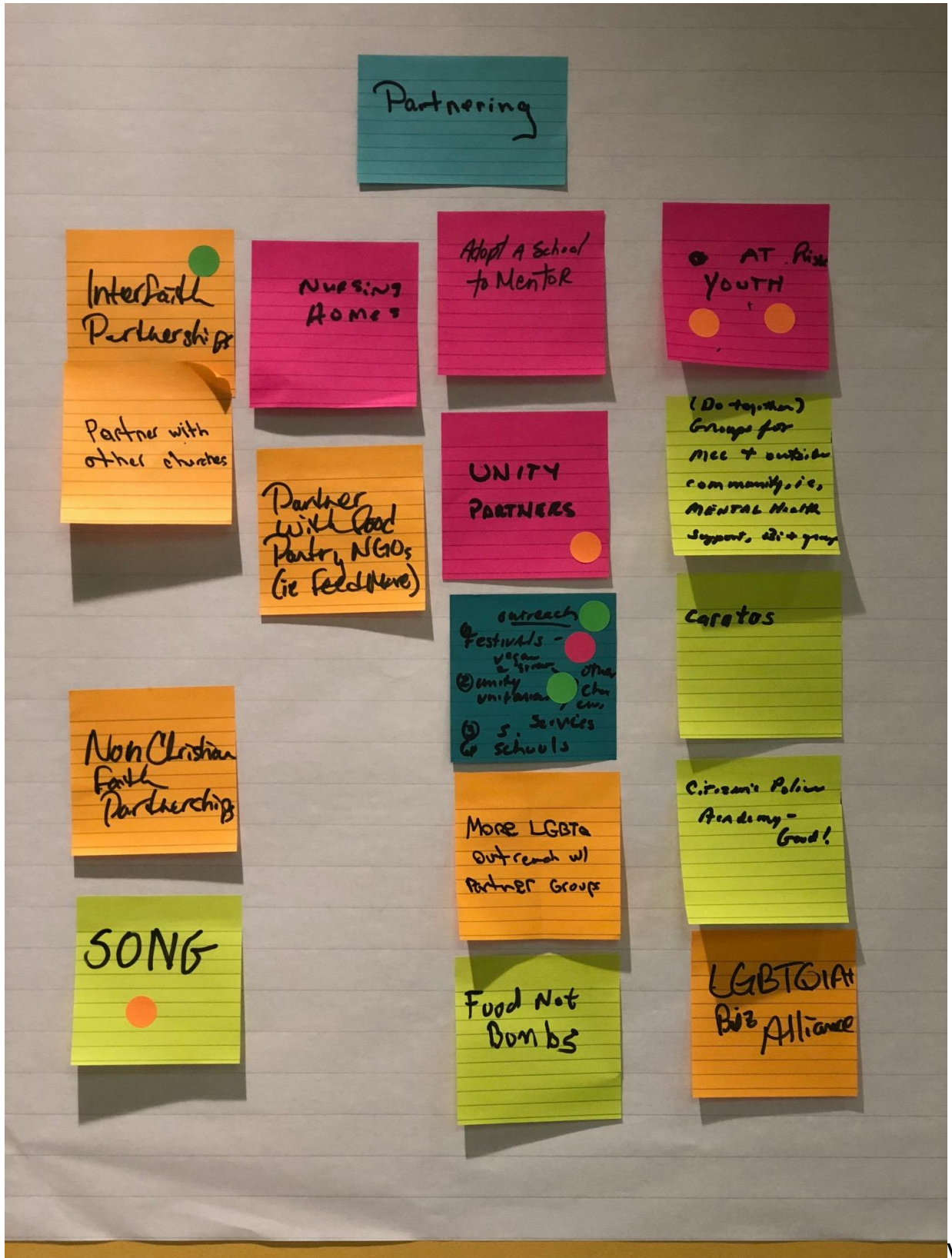
- Choir room in parish house for rehearsal before church
- Like choir coming down after anthem
- Grow the joyful noise
- Use hymn books at times
- More drums during music
- Like solo singers at times
- Worship later not just Sundays
- Later Sunday Service
- Add a service earlier
- Different worship time
- Sit down when pastor reads the scripture
- Like the sermons
- Contemporary service
- More lay donation messages
- Chanting psalms
- More care for Singletons
- Have retreats
- Don't like pagan reference
- Interactive preaching
- Sermon series on contemporary issues
- Pastor awesome
- I am happy with the message
- Fine OK
- Fine OK
- Cut length of service
- A revival
- Everything is good
- Have praise dance at times
- Wine station for communion
- Chancel dance once a quarter
- Like announcements at the beginning
- More disco dance/praise dance
- Like current communion (with wine)
- Live stream service
- Ushers be more attentive at door when giving out bulletins
- Less talking by our ushers during communion
- Live evolving communion
- Update the program list in bulletin more frequently
- Electronic sermon notes
- Electronic giving during worship
- Automatic check in for absent people
- Include multimedia

- Weekly thank yous for donation
- Prayer benches

Outreach Workshop 1
26 September 2018







Outreach Workshop 1

26 September 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Community Care, Diversity and Partnerships

4 Votes

- Immigrant community (**caring for our community**)

3 Votes

- Expanded Food Pantry Weekly (**feed our community**)
- Campus Ministry/Connecting with VCU, UR, VUU, VSU Students/Reach out to college aged people. Bring youth into church. (**reach out to youth**)
- [Information at] Festivals/Partner with Unity/Unitarians (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**) (**partner with local churches and orgs**)

2 Votes

- Habitat for Humanity Work Day (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Community Outreach Committee (**develop our programs**)
- Community Events Calendar (**develop our programs**)
- Bar outreach (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**)
- At risk youth (**reach out to youth**)

1 Vote

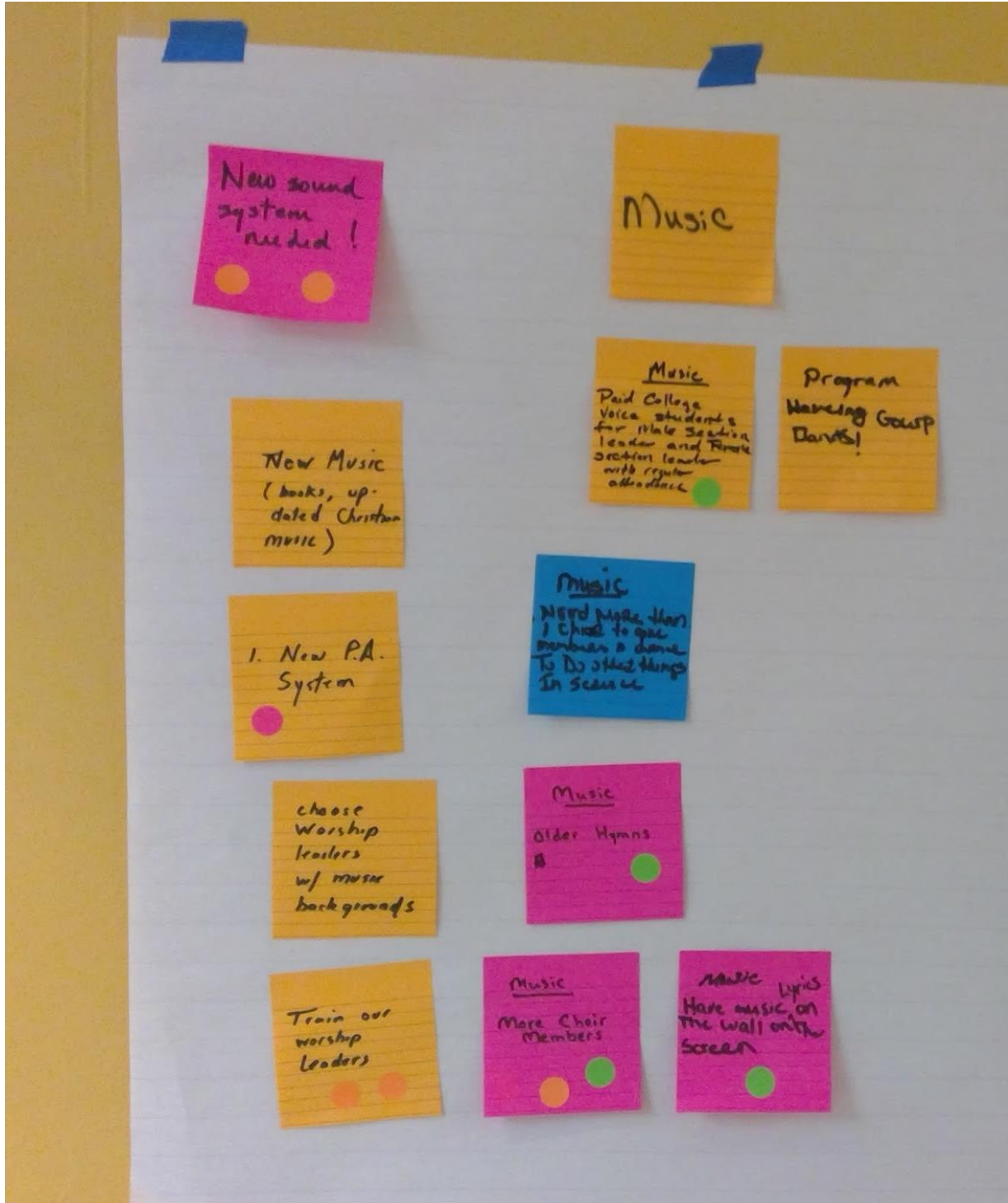
- Gift Bags/Stocking – Keep doing! Doorways (**care for our community**)
- Make flyers to put in the community (**develop our programs**)
- Host a 3-day block party for Dinner Gay Festival/Community Connections Events/Block Party/Valentine Festival (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**)
- Diversity, youth/Millennials (**reach out to youth**)
- Unity partners (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Interfaith partnerships/partner with other churches (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- SONG (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**) (**partner with local churches and orgs**)

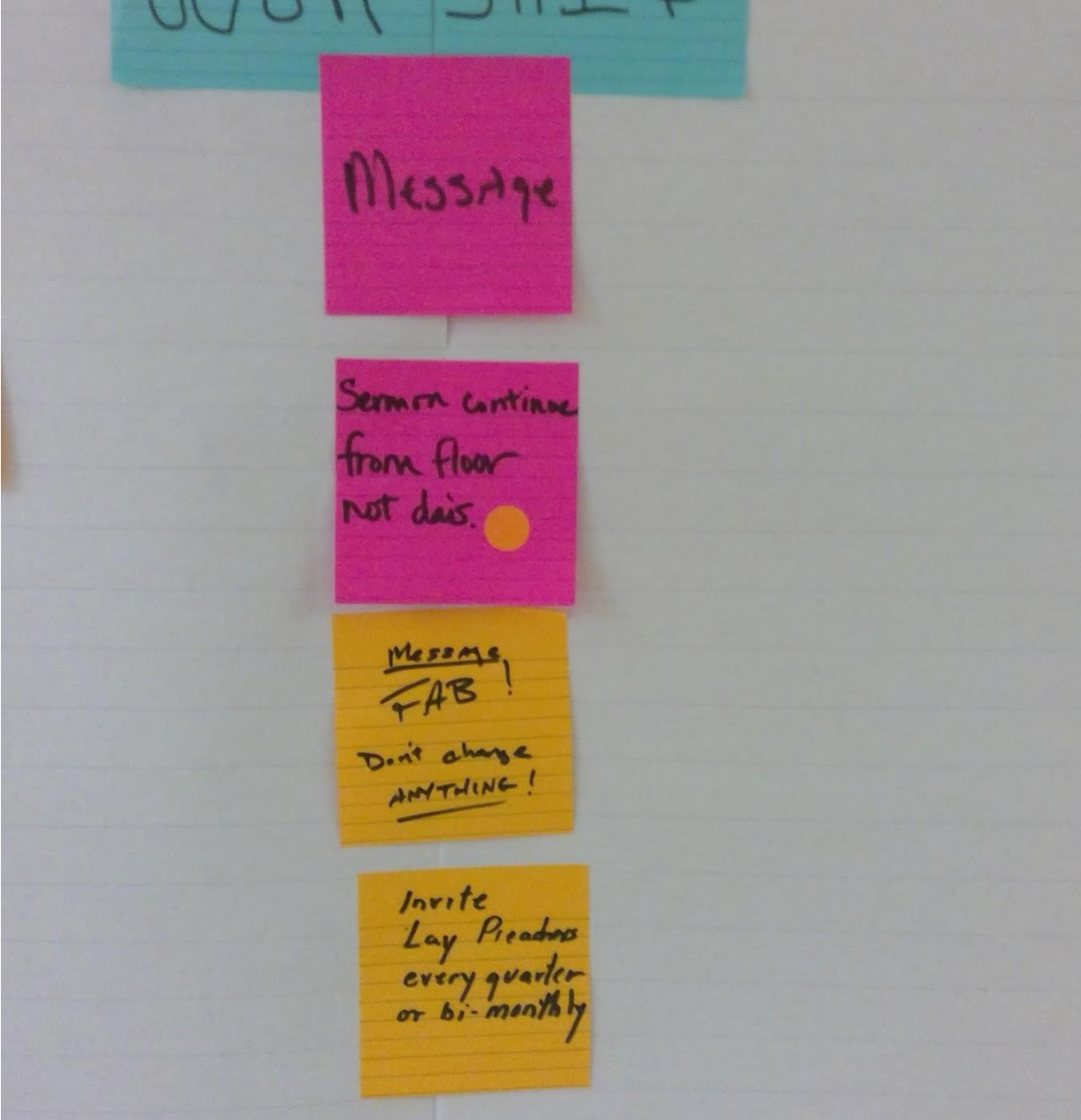
Other Ideas

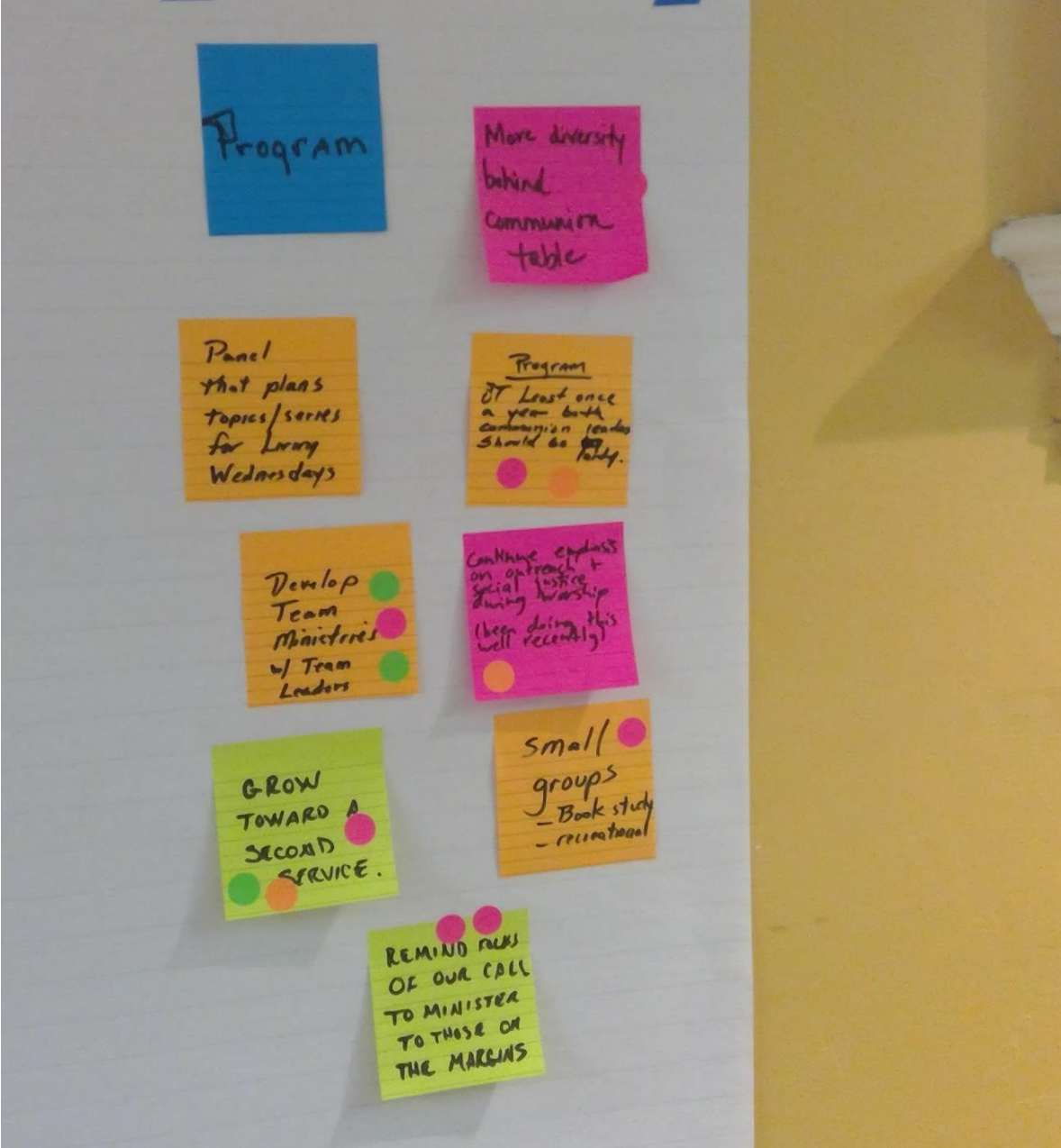
- Take dinner to a shelter 40M 40W
- Host a soup kitchen
- Partner with Ronald McDonald House
- Partner with Firehouse/Invite to Wednesday night dinner!
- Make flyers about MCC for Diversity Thrift to put in bags (LGBT)

- Get ideas from our members more often for community care which we are doing now.
- Shoes, school supplied! Good!
- Visit Massey Cancer Center. Staff animals (?)
- Homeless in park providing gift care bags
- Visits at nursing home
- Emergency funds/relief good neighbor
- Bread ministry good!
- VA visits
- Latin X Folks (Immigrant)
- Senior Homes
- Housing Projects
- Asian Partners (Immigrant)
- Non-Christian faith partnerships
- Nursing homes
- Adopt a school to mentor
- More LGBTQ outreach with partner groups (LGBT)
- Food Not Bombs
- Caritas
- Groups for MCC and outside community, i.e. mental health support, bi+ group
- Citizens Police Academy – Good!

Worship Workshop 2
14 October 2018







Worship Workshop 2

14 October 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Music, Message and Program

3 Votes

- Develop team ministries with team leaders training **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Grow toward a second service **(develop our programs)**

2 Votes

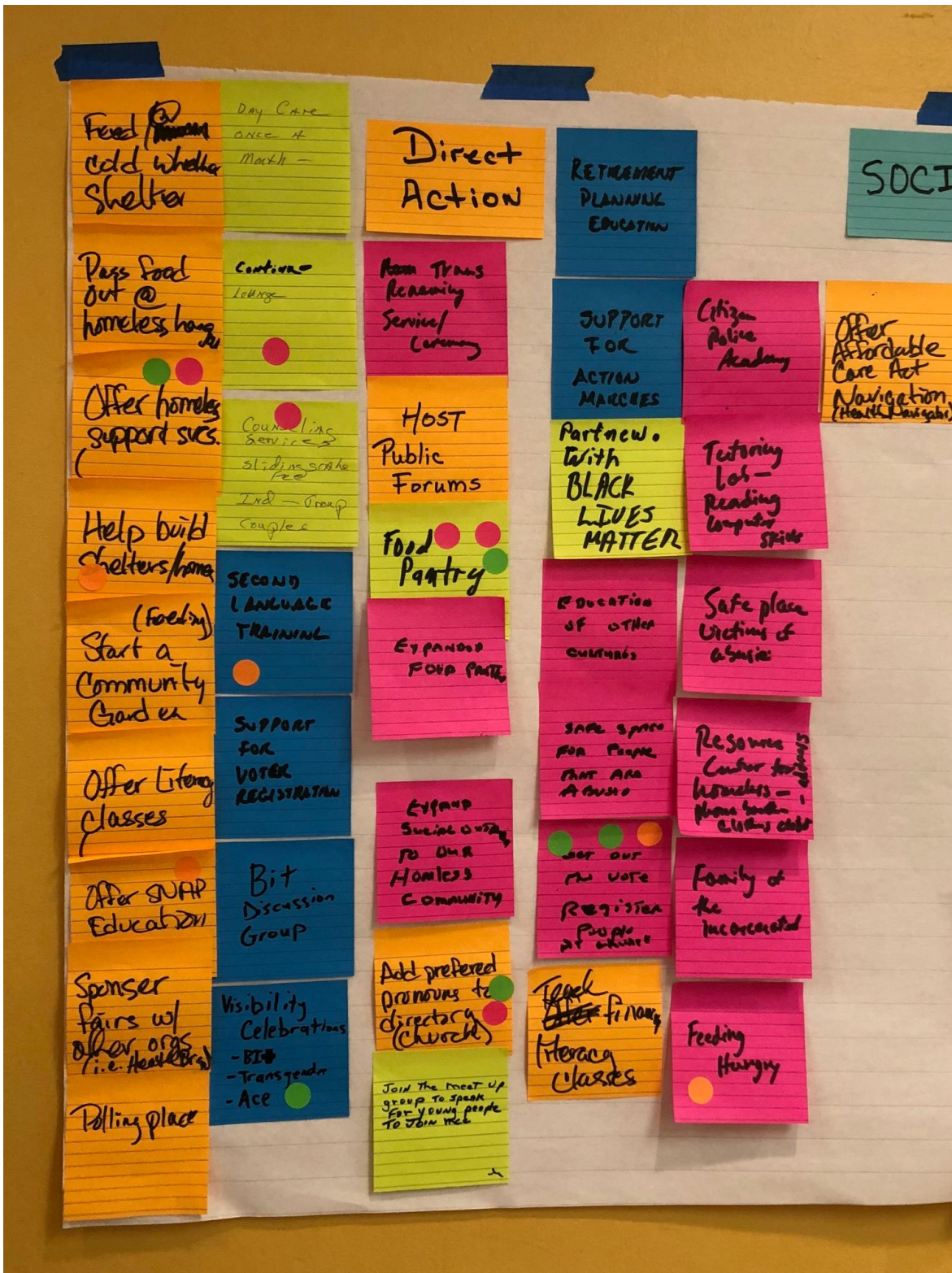
- New sound system needed! **(implement new technology)**
- More choir members **(elevate our music ministry)**
- Train our worship leaders **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Remind folks of our call to minister to those on the margins **(educate our people for ministry)**
- At least once a year both communion leaders should be laity **(vary our worship experience)**

1 Vote

- New PA system technology **(implement new technology)**
- Older Hymns **(vary our worship experience)**
- Have music lyrics on the wall or on the screen **(implement new technology)**
- Paid college voice students for male section leader and female section leader with regular attendance **(elevate our music ministry) (reach out to youth)**
- Sermon continue from floor not dais **(show awareness and respect for others)**
- Small groups: book study and recreational programming **(develop our programs)**
- Continue emphasis on outreach & social justice during worship (been doing this well recently) **(enable our community for social action)**

Other Ideas

- New music (books, updated Christian music)
- Need more than 1 choir to give members a chance to do other things in service
- Having group bands!
- Choose worship leaders with music backgrounds
- Message: FAB! Don't change anything!
- Invite lay preachers every quarter or bi-monthly
- Panel that plans topics/series for Living Wednesdays
- More diversity behind communion table



JUSTICE

Environment

SOCIAL CAUSES

Living Wage

Equality for All

Abused Child Labor

Write to Denominations that don't recognize Gay Marriage.

Police Brutality

E2 creditors

Renewable Energy
Stop fuel exploitation

Rights of People in Poorer Countries

Lobby for more \$ for AIDS research

School Loan Debt

ECONOMIC JUSTICE & EQUALITY

Women's Rights/Equality

Redistricting and Representation Issues

Renters Rights

Affordable Housing

IMMIGRANT Rights

LGBT+ Youth Homelessness

Campaign Finance Reform

Monuments on Monument Ave - Paying for them

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Voter Rights stop Voter Suppression

EDUCATION For ALL

Fair Working Wage

Healthcare for all

Strengthening Labor Unions

LGBTQ Rights

LGBTQ Rights

Issues of Stigma - LGBTQ+ Communities

Health Care EDUCATION For All

Worker Rights

Gun Safety

Marriage Equality Constitutional Amendment

Resist Movement



Awareness

History of art culture

LOBBY Among Congregation To POP & Staff.

Vote Mid Elections

Homeless Advocacy

Lobby for more Awareness to gay community about MCC

LEARNING PREFERRED PRONOUNS

Affirming Next Gen 2's

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Forums on Issues of Healthcare

Seminars on minority focus issues

SOCIAL SAFETY NET AWARENESS

Social Justice Workshop 1

17 October 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Direct Action, Awareness and Social Causes

4 Votes

- Healthcare for all **(enable our community for social action)**

3 Votes

- Food Pantry/Expand food pantry and lounge **(feed our community)**
- Get out the vote – register people at church **(enable our community for social action)**
- Equality for all **(enable our community for social action)**
- LGBTQ Rights **(enable our community for social action)**
- Vote midterm elections **(enable our community for social action)**

2 Votes

- Offer homeless support services **(care for our community)**
- Add preferred pronouns to church directory **(show awareness and respect for others)**
- Worker rights **(enable our community for social action)**
- Learning preferred pronouns **(show awareness and respect for others)**

1 Vote

- Help build shelters/homes **(care for our community)**
- Offer Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) education **(feed our community)**
- Continue lounge **(feed our community)**
- Counseling services on a sliding scale fee – individual, group, couples **(care for our community)**
- Second language training **(educate our people for ministry) (care for our community)**
- Visibility Celebrations: Bi, Transgender, ACE **(show awareness and respect for others) (connect with the LGBTQAI community)**
- Feeding the hungry **(feed the community)**
- Renewable Energy – stop fuel exploitation **(enable our community for social action)**
- Living wage **(enable our community for social action)**
- Affordable housing **(enable our community for social action)**
- Economic justice and equality **(enable our community for social action)**
- Voter rights – stop voter suppression **(enable our community for social action)**
- Lobby among congregation to Pay Our Pastor (POP) and staff **(care for our community) (show awareness and respect for others)**

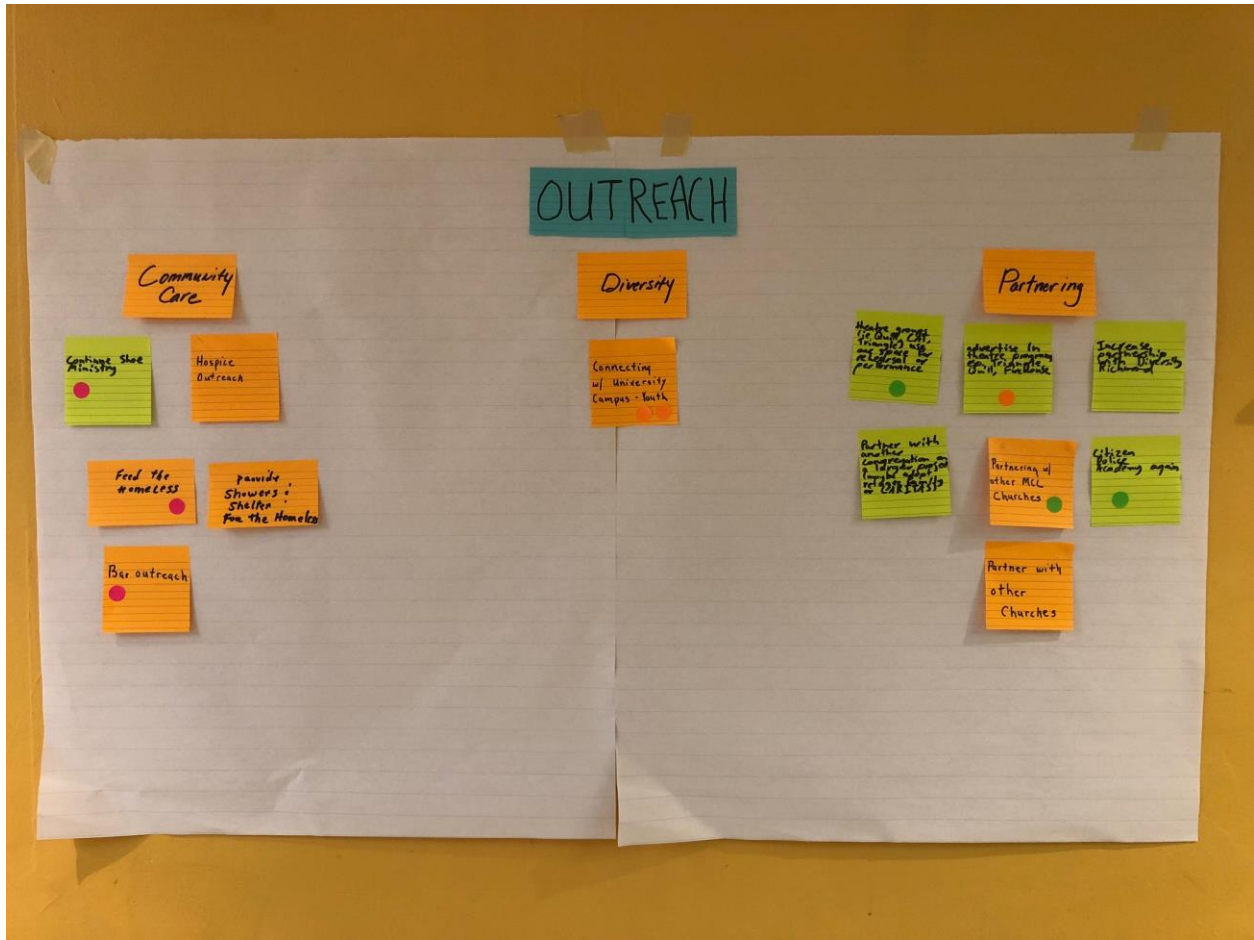
- Lobby for more awareness to gay community about MCC (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**)

Other Ideas

- Feed cold weather shelter
- Pass food out at homeless hang out
- Start a community garden (feeding)
- Offer literacy classes
- Sponsor fairs with other orgs (i.e. Health Brigade)
- Polling place
- Day care once a month
- Support for voter registration
- Bi+ discussion group
- Trans renaming service/ceremony
- Host public forums
- Expand suicide outreach to our homeless community
- Join the meetup group to speak for young people to join MCC
- Retirement planning education
- Support for action marches
- Partner with Black Lives Matter
- Education of other cultures
- Safe space for people that are abused
- Teach financial literacy classes
- Citizen police academy
- Tutoring, such as reading, computer skills
- Safe place for victims of abuse
- Resource center for homeless – clothing (and others can't read)
- Family of the incarcerated
- Offer Affordable Care Act navigation (Health Navigator)
- Women's rights/equality
- LBGT youth homelessness
- Education for all
- Environment
- Child labor
- Rights of people in poorer communities
- Redistricting and representation issues
- Campaign finance reform
- Fair working wage
- Issues of stigma (affecting) LBGTQ seniors
- Write to denominations that don't recognize gay marriage
- Lobby for more money for AIDS research
- Renters rights

- Monuments on Monument Ave – Paying for them
- Police brutality
- School loan debt
- Strengthen labor unions
- Marriage equality (Constitutional Amendment)
- EZ creditors
- Immigrant rights
- Gun safety
- Resist movement
- History of all cultures
- Homeless advocacy
- Affirming next generation – Zs
- Inclusive language
- Seminars on minority focus issues
- Forums on issues of healthcare
- Social safety net awareness

Outreach Workshop 2
20 October 2018



Outreach Workshop 2
20 October 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Community Care, Diversity and Partnering

2 Votes

- Connecting with university campus – youth (**reach out to youth**)

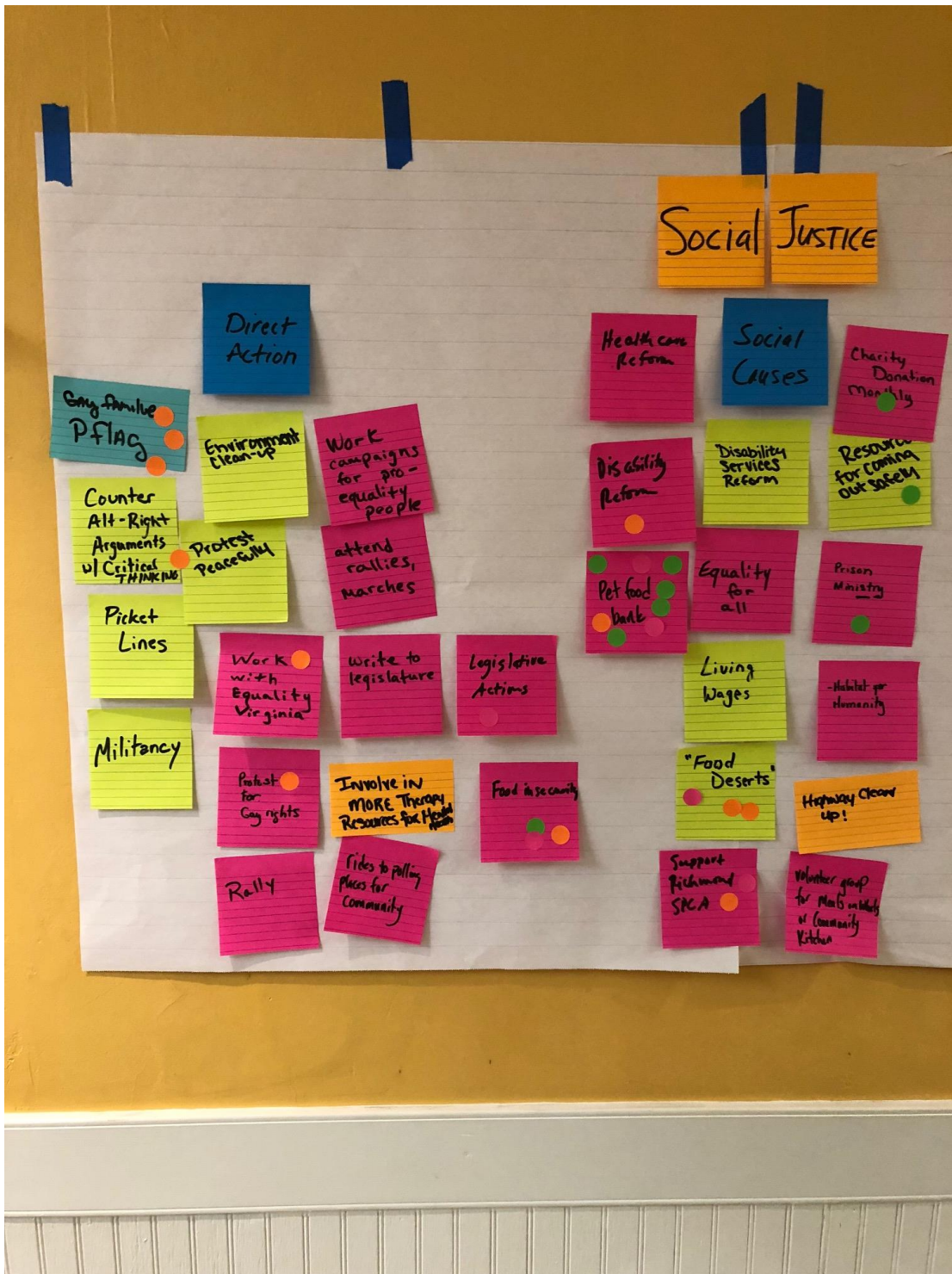
1 Vote

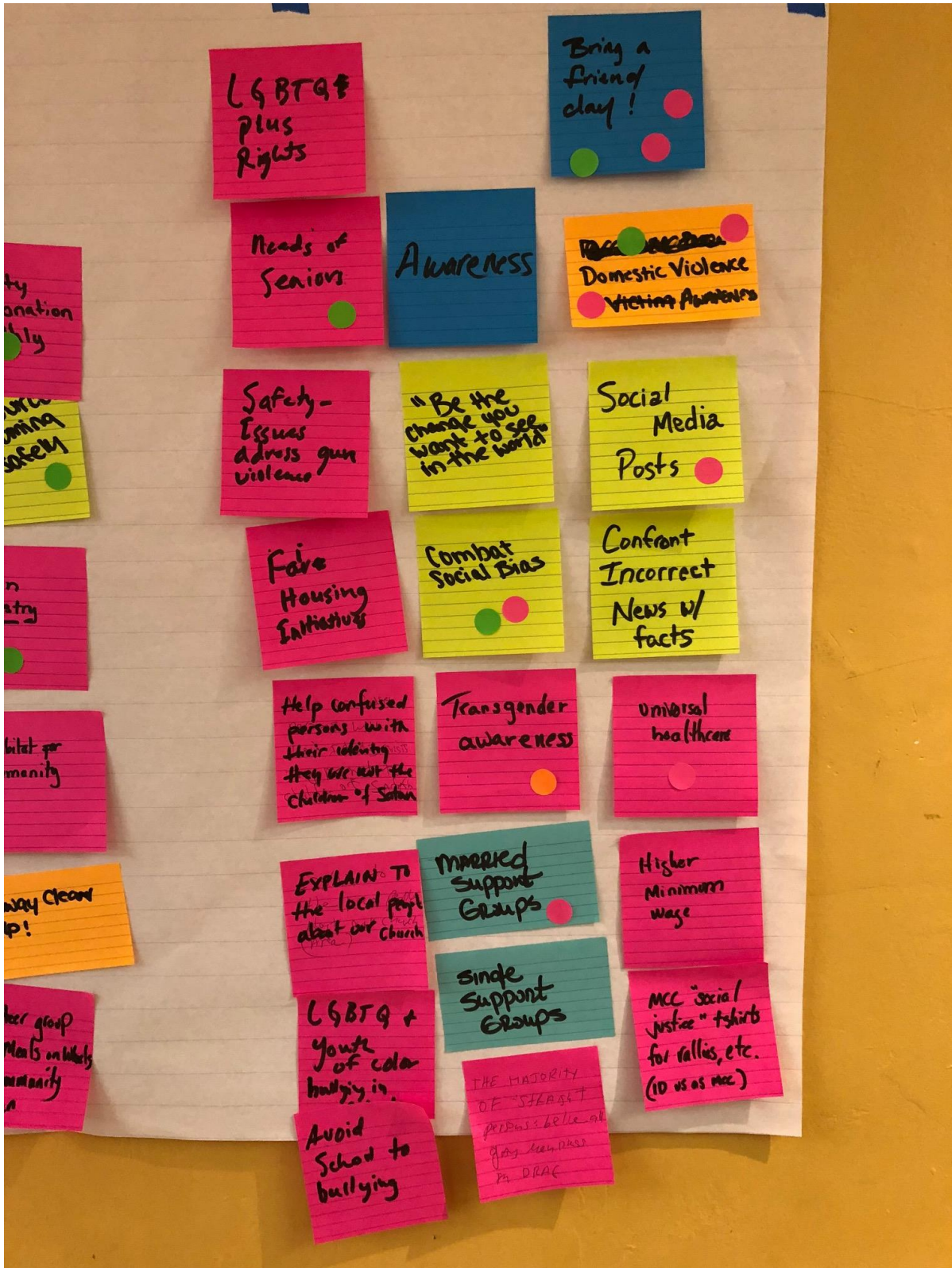
- Continue shoe ministry (**care for our community**)
- Feed the homeless (**feed our community**)
- Bar outreach (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**)
- Theatre groups (ie Quill, CAT, Triangle) use our space for rehearsal or performance (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Advertise in theatre programs (esp. Triangle, Quill, Firehouse) (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Partnering with other MCC churches (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Citizen Police Academy again (**partner with local churches and orgs**)

Other Ideas

- Increase partnerships with Diversity Richmond
- Partner with another congregation on a larger project (maybe adopt refugee family or CARITAS)
- Partner with other churches
- Hospice outreach
- Provide showers and shelter for the homeless

Social Justice Workshop 2
4 November 2018





Social Justice Workshop 2

4 November 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Direct Action, Awareness and Social Causes

8 Votes

- Pet food bank (**feed our community**)

3 Votes

- Gay families PFLAG (**care for our community**)
- Food Insecurity (**feed our community**)
- “Food Deserts” (**feed our community**)
- Bring a friend day! (**develop our programs**)
- Domestic violence (**care for our community**)

2 Votes

- Support Richmond SPCA (care for our community) (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Combat social bias (educate our people for ministry) (**enable our community for social action**)

1 Vote

- Counter Alt-Right Arguments w/Critical Thinking/Protest Peacefully (**enable our community for social action**)
- Work with Equality Virginia (**partner with local churches and orgs**)
- Disability Reform (**enable our community for social action**)
- Legislation Actions (**enable our community for social action**)
- Protest for Gay Rights (**enable our community for social action**)
- Prison Ministry (**develop our programs**)
- Resource for coming out safely (**caring for our community**) (**develop our programs**)
- Charity Donation Monthly (**care for our community**)
- Needs of seniors (**care for our community**)
- Transgender awareness (**educate our people for ministry**) (**show awareness and respect for others**)
- Married support groups (**care for our community**)
- Social media posts (**connect with the LGBTQAI community**) (**reach out to youth**) (**develop our programs**) (**enable our community for social action**)
- Universal healthcare (**enable our community of social action**)

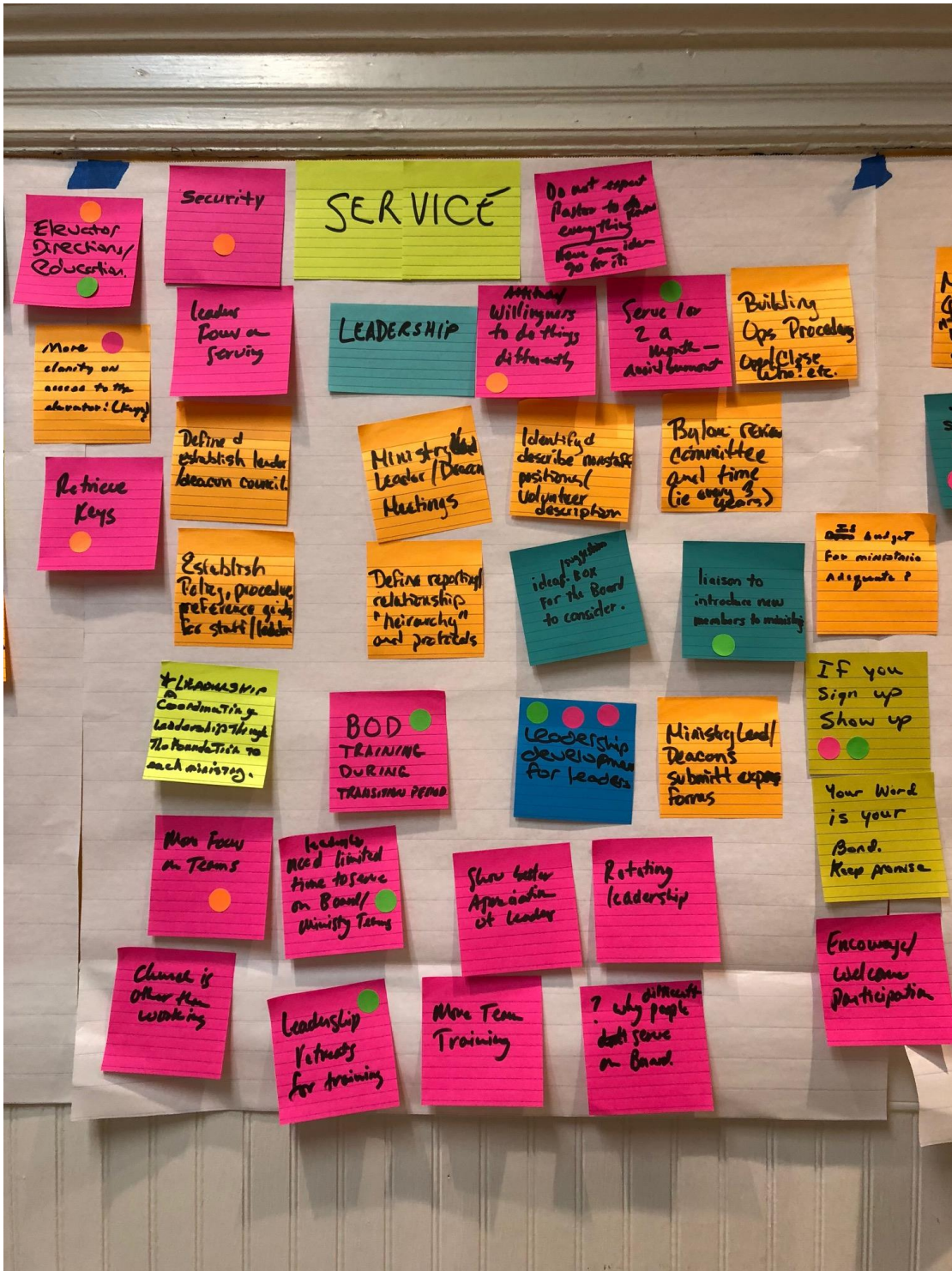
Other Ideas

- Picket Lines

- Militancy
- Environment Clean-Up
- Rally
- Work Campaigns for Pro-Equality People
- Attend rallies, marches
- Write to legislature
- Involve in more therapy resources for mental health
- Rides to polling places for community
- Health care reform
- Disability services reform
- Equality for all
- Living wages
- Habitat for Humanity
- Highway clean up!
- Volunteer group for meals on wheels with community kitchen
- LGBTQ Plus Rights
- Safety Issues Address Gun Violence
- Fair housing initiatives
- Help confused personal with their identity they are not the children of satan
- Explain to the local people about our church
- LGBT+ youth – avoiding school due to bullying
- Single support group
- The majority of “straight people” believe all gay men dress in drag
- “Be the change you want to see in the world”
- Confront incorrect news with facts
- Higher minimum wage
- MCC “social justice” t-shirts for rallies, etc. (ID us as MCC)

Service Workshop 1
7 November 2018







Service Workshop 1

7 November 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Ministries, Leadership and Hospitality

4 votes

- Ministry more formal training **(educate our people for ministry)**

3 Votes

- Leadership development for leaders **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Spiritual gift class **(educate our people for ministry)**

2 Votes

- Exercise Classes: Yoga **(develop our programs)**
- Community Safe Space Location **(protect the accessibility of our facilities)**
- Hospitality: Theme for Potlucks **(develop our programs)**
- Elevator Directions/Education **(protect the accessibility of our facilities)**
- If you sign up, show up/Your word is your bond. Keep promise. **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Ministry workshops **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Arts teams **(develop our programs)**
- Ministry Bible Studies **(develop our programs)**

1 Vote

- Pictures of new members up in celebration hall **(care for our community)**
- Define hospitality service as an “active” ministry **(develop our programs)**
- Meal team to prepare meals (excl. potlucks) **(develop our programs)**
- More clarity on access to the elevator! (Keys) **(protect the accessibility of our facilities)**
- Retrieve keys **(protect the accessibility of our facilities)**
- Security **(protect the accessibility of our facilities)**
- More focus on teams **(educate our people for ministry)**
- BOD training during transition period **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Leaders need limited time to serve on Board/Ministry teams **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Leadership retreats for training **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Actual willingness to do things differently **(educate our people for ministry)**
- Serve 1 or 2 a month – something? [potlucks?] **(develop our programs)**
- Liaison to introduce new members to ministry **(develop our programs)**
- Ministry book clubs **(develop our programs)**

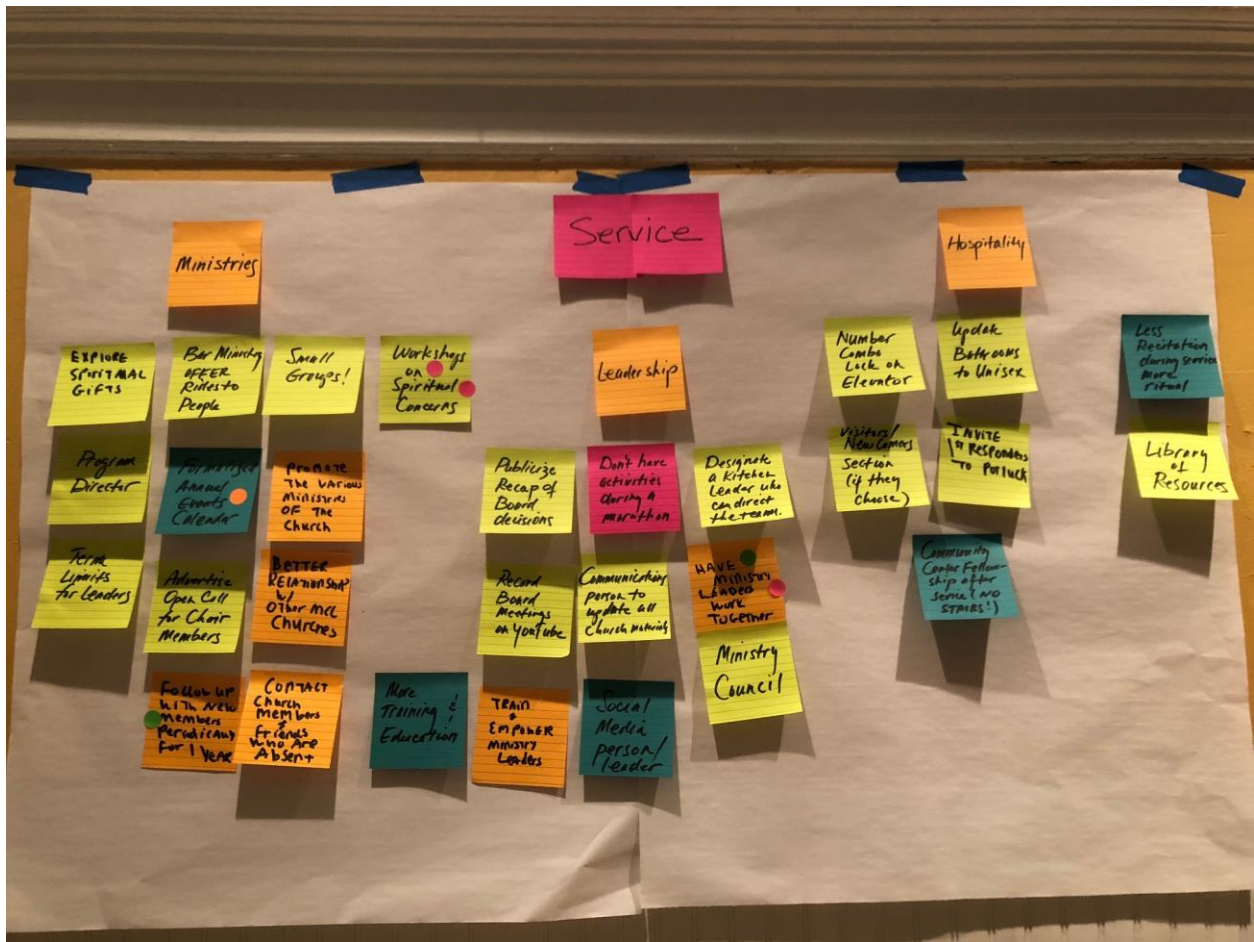
- More training for ushers, service participants, servers, etc. (**educate our people for ministry**)

Other Ideas

- Volunteer sign up for kitchen clean up
- Expand master activity calendar (expand on web)
- Have microwave at coffee/tea bar
- Updated physical communication board
- Continue Thanksgiving Christmas meals
- Parish house church opened up as sanctuary to others in need/crisis
- Continue meal after worship
- Continue food @ different activities: Worship, LWds, Xmas performances
- Small gift for those having birthdays
- Keep doing lunch after church
- Love dinner church
- Community team/cookies at?
- Add snacks to Coffee/tea bar (healthy!)
- Continue “coffee/tea” bar
- Sugar free offerings coffee/tea bar
- Confused about when to bring food for potlucks. Seems like it is already prepared.
- Meals good
- Group dinners at people’s homes.
- Hospitality assorted hospitality crews for each ministry under the Foundation
- Have different ministries do lunch from time to time
- Continue dinner church
- If – is over spiritual gifts (?)
- Leader four or serving (?)
- Define established leader/deacon council
- Establish policy, procedure, reference guide for staff/leaders
- Leadership: Coordinating leadership through the foundation to each ministry
- Church is other than working
- Ministry leader/deacon meetings
- Define reporting relationship “hierarchy” and protocols
- Do not expect pastor to do/know everything. Have an idea. Go for it!
- Identify/describe staff positions/volunteer description
- Idea/suggestion box for the board to consider
- Show better appreciation of leadership
- More team training
- Building ops procedures open/close who? Etc.
- Bylaw review committee and time frame (i.e. every 3 years)
- Is budget for ministries adequate?
- Rotating leadership

- Why difficult [for] people [to] serve on board?
- Encourage/welcome participation
- Ministry lead/deacons submit exp forms
- Ministry goals, purpose and vision, mission etc.
- More updates on work of our ministries
- Contemporary music
- Adopt clear ministries with description and leader roles
- Make people aware which ministries need more help
- Ministry: An association of ministries under one selective foundation
- Great to give choices instead of using guilt
- Provide ministry into and “form” for participation
- Advertise use Facebook, Google calendar, email
- Good integration of new members worship assist.
- Reach out to people who are absent
- Procedure for worship assist.
- Informing members of new person with different ministries
- Limited time

Service Workshop 2
10 November 2018



Service Workshop 2

10 November 2018

Top Votes in all categories of Ministries, Leadership and Hospitality

2 Votes

- Workshops on Spiritual Concerns **(develop our programs)**
- Have ministry leaders work together **(educate our people for ministry)**

1 Vote

- Formalize annual events calendar **(develop our programs)**
- Follow up with new members periodically for 1 year **(care for our community)**

Other Ideas

- Explore spiritual gifts
- Program director
- Term limits for leaders
- Bar ministry offer rides to people
- Advertise open call for choir members
- Small groups!
- Promote the various ministries of the church
- Better relationship with other MCC Churches
- Contact church members and friends who are absent
- More training & education
- Publicize recap of board decisions
- Record board meetings on YouTube
- Train and empower ministry leaders
- Don't have activities during a marathon
- Communication person to update all church materials
- Social media person/leader
- Designate a kitchen leader who can direct the team.
- Ministry council
- Number combo lock on elevator
- Visitors/newcomers section (if they choose)
- Update bathrooms to unisex
- Invite 1st responders to potluck
- Community center fellowship after service (no stairs!)
- Less recitation during service. More ritual.
- Library of resources