

What is this? We have been trying to improve the health of our church by looking at how we organize ourselves. This progress report was prepared by Sue, Mike, Keri, Dover and Julie (working as a subcommittee under the Elders).



WHAT WE DO WELL

WHF is a vibrant, healthy church! We have many reasons to celebrate. While there is always room for improvement, here is a list of what we do well together.

Advocacy for Justice. We appreciate sharing a commitment to causes like hunger, peace, and the environment.

Authenticity. We like our commitment to be authentic with each other (in good times and bad), and to seek genuine transformation in our lives.

Children are Welcome. Our children enjoy the activities planned for them. Also, adults recognize that children have unique needs and make a unique contribution to our life together.

Inclusive Community. We like the feeling of community at WHF. We like knowing that seekers are welcome and that everyone may participate.

Quaker Discernment. We appreciate our connection to Quaker spirituality and our emphasis on the practice of discernment.

Traveling Ministry. We feel enriched by our connection to Friends who travel to places like Peru, Palestine, Cuba and Burundi.

Worship. We like what happens in meeting for worship.

GAPS & FRICTION POINTS in our STRUCTURE

Here is a list of gaps in our structure (where things routinely “fall between the cracks”) and friction points (where we often seem to feel some tension). If there is a single theme to what follows, it is probably something like, “a lack of clear expectations.”

Adult Education/Discipleship Opportunities. People who want to be in small groups can't find any. Adult classes are rare.

Childcare/Children's Program/Youth. Parents can feel excluded by a lack of childcare. Recruiting Sunday school teachers and finding the right curricula are routine friction points. There's no comprehensive vision for our children/youth program.

Community-Building Activities. Lately, there have been very few “social opportunities” outside Sunday morning (e.g. Coffee House, Movie Night, Dinner Groups). It is difficult to recruit volunteers for our Sunday morning social time (e.g. snack time and potluck). We can imagine doing a more comprehensive job of incorporating new people (e.g. providing a newcomers book).

Fundraising. WHF is a very generous community, but there is no structure to coordinate fundraising efforts.

Job Evaluation/Support for Released & Volunteer Leaders. When our leaders are left to cover the gaps, they can feel untrained, overburdened and frustrated.

Music Leadership. Coordinating music leaders for Sunday morning is a perennial source of tension.

Routine Chores. There is often tension around the work of routine chores (e.g. Clean-up, general maintenance, office work).

WHAT COMES NEXT

Now we know where our structure needs improvement. This is progress! At this point, it would be tempting to start offering solutions (e.g. “We should have an adult class every month!”). However, a piecemeal approach won't address underlying, systemic questions about how we manage the limited resources of our time and money. We need a more comprehensive approach.

The Elders are evaluating a tool for addressing the gaps and friction points listed above. We hope this tool will clarify expectations and give us a way of doing something new without spreading ourselves too thin. Meanwhile, if you have comments or questions, please see Mike.