

Small Group and Church Council Next Steps

Pastor Jonathan met with a total of 91 people in 9 small groups from July 6-27. After sharing responses from small group participants with Ashland's Staff-Parish Relations Committee on July 28 and Ashland's Church Council on August 11, the following are the primary values, concern, and assets that were named among small group participants:

Ashland **values**:

- Being a warm, loving spiritual “family” or “home” in which people deepen their relationships with each other as they grow together, serve together, and care for one another through thick and thin.
- Serving others in the name of Christ, both locally and beyond, especially through Seven Oaks Elementary School, the Snack Pack Ministry, and Salkehatchie.

Ashland is **concerned** about a lack, or even a perceived absence, of children, youth, and young adults.

Ashland's **assets** include:

- A large, well-maintained facility that has space to welcome additional people and groups.
- Financial health and a history of generosity, so money does not limit the church's ministry potential.
- A number of retired members who have the time and experience to devote to younger generations, including children, youth, and young adults.
- A location near neighbors, including an elementary school, an increasingly diverse neighborhood, other churches, and

two interstates that provides opportunities to engage with and partner with a wide range of people.

After presenting possibilities to the forty people in attendance at the August 11 meeting regarding how Ashland can use its assets for further the church's values and address its concern, the church council supported the following efforts for our first year in ministry together. Those willing to take initial steps for each action are listed in parentheses.

Value #1: Caring for one another as a church family

- **Next step:** Create shepherding groups to include new people, formerly connected people, or long-time people who are not already connected to a small group (Rev. Bob Borom, Sally Lowery, Rosemary Sanders, Cindy Ward)
- **Next step:** Invite those who already visit homebound members to deliver communion elements during one of their monthly visits (Sally Lowery)

Value #2: Missions and Outreach

- **Next Step:** Serving at Seven Oaks with Reading Buddies (Marilyn Gramling), the PTO, or School Improvement Council
- **Next Step:** Creating a suicide support group (Pastor Jonathan, Jane Foster)

Concern: Increasing involvement of younger generations

- **Next Step:** Reintroduce a brief children's message in each worship service (Pastor Jonathan)
- **Next Step:** Invite children in worship to share artwork they've drawn during the service in the offering plate to share with homebound members (Pastor Jonathan)