



"An Inclusive Community Serving God's World"

Visitation Report
Summer 2018

Our visitation teams contacted about 60 congregants and we had visitations with 49. The visitations were well received and the congregants were hospitable, welcoming and very caring about Squamish United Church. We felt they were honest, caring and offered constructive criticism. They indicated to us that they felt heard and in some instances we were able to respond to questions. In many cases we recorded the concerns and promised we would follow up. A report will be presented to the SUC Board and the congregation and the appropriate committees will then deal with the information. Both the team members and the congregants enjoyed our visits!!

1. What does the church mean to you? What is important about our church and how has the church impacted your life?

Brings me peace

Helps me keep my faith (6)

A way to hear the gospel (2)

Fellowship and friendship (15)

Defines who we are (3)

Is part of my life, raised in the church, raised my children in the church, wonderful church family (14)

A chance to serve

Mission (Centrepoint)

Spirituality

Timely and meaningful sermons

I love the church

Community outreach, connection (6)

Caring, compassionate people, support in difficult times (10)

Appreciates and respects a wide range of views and beliefs

UC theology is aligned for me

2. What do you love about SUC and what are our strengths?

The music (7)

The people (12)

Inclusion, accepting of all (7)

The children, Sunday program and Messy church (11)

Men's group (6)

UCW (7)

Increasingly more positive vibes, getting used to the sanctuary

Downtown church

Coffee Hour

Accompanist

New church building

E-news

Likes chairs but misses pews

Spirit Kids (optimistic, energetic program)

Enjoyed the membership group

Overhead/PowerPoint

The Building

3. What are your dreams for SUC?

Study groups, Bible study promotes fellowship

Other groups, events quilting, walk, curling, skiing, promotes fellowship

More music incorporated into the service during offering, Lord's Prayer sung, Creed sung

Movie nights

Potluck dinners, Men's dinner

Choir again

More communication from the board and staff

Hymn sing, peppy music, and old favourites

New families

Positive reaction to the times, change and grow

4. Do you see SUC in your future?

Almost everyone said yes but in varying degrees of service, finances, time and talents.

Serving on the board, committees,

UCW

Men's Group

Shawl Ministry

PAR

Hilltop House

Music

Stewardship and Money

Sunday Worship

M & S

M & P

5. Concerns

The concerns have been grouped in 5 main categories. We felt it important to give consideration to the many concerns. They are not listed in any particular order and while some concerns were mentioned more than once, some concerns were mentioned only once or a few times. We felt it important that all comments were validated.

A. Finances

How do we maintain a level of spending to survive before we are forced to make decisions around staffing (e.g. full or part time minister)? A worry!

How do we address our finances?

Note: a significant number of responders had financial concerns.

B. Worship Experience

Difficulty relating to the sermon ... too many quotes. Need for common language to be more easily understood.

Missing the Lord's Prayer, Passing of the Peace and an offering hymn

Would like a variety of the favourite old hymns as well as More Voices songs. Would be good to have individual, or small groups introduce some of the less familiar hymns

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Our accompanist needs to be provided with coaching re the familiar tunes and tempos of hymns

Often dead time in parts of the service e.g. when the children are leaving and at offering time; lacks flow

Chaotic start and end to church. Need to be punctual. Recognize that this is partly due to adjustments to the building and coffee time location. This is improving. Greeting Karen and shaking her hand has been difficult. Often new people were unable to talk with Karen

Children at the alter can be noisy and distracting, Getting better. Suggest the children sit with their parents once the service starts. Where are the old puzzle bags?

C. Communication

Need better definition of roles and responsibilities. Who does what? Congregation/board needs to take an active role to support the staff.

Need clear lines of communication.

Board need to take some of the duties over from the staff around building responsibilities

Transportation is sometimes needed for church and other events

Would love a visit from Karen. To get to know each other.

Felt I wasn't listened to or respected when I put forward ideas to the board.

Need for transparency i.e. concerns put forward. Follow up by the board and reporting back makes for a happy environment.

D. The Building

Poor sound, won't come if I can't hear

Visibility of the screen poor. I like it but not when I can't see it.

Doesn't yet feel like a church, not "churchy"

Shared access still unclear. We don't really know the building, what is ours to share?

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Difficult to access the building, presently not user friendly

Parking protocol unclear

Coffee hour awkward, rolling chairs awful. Feel coffee hour is very important so hope that is worked out soon.

Need a cross on inside and outside

No real visible signage

E. Future

Declining numbers

Need for more programming and socializing

I require more spiritual and pastoral care from my minister in order to continue to support SUC

Can the board define the minister's job description for me?

Please don't forget the adults in the church

Concerned about the level of enthusiasm and volunteerism necessary to keep the church functioning.

No information on Stewardship and PAR

Lost folks, makes me sad ... can we do anything? I miss them. Can we resolve past hurts?

What is the churches' leadership model?

Where is the church going?

6. Questions that were posed to us. Comments that grew out of the survey.

Are we going to make it? (finances, membership) I'm positive but

Should we combine with the Anglicans?

What will be the outcome of the survey?

Are there other service options re times?

We need to show appreciation for volunteers

When we work (interact) together, that is, staff and congregants, we learn to know and care for each other on a deeper level.

"Worship and work must be one" Worship the Lord #401

Thanks, I loved the visit. Should do it more often!

The Dreams and Hopes for the future are very positive and reveal a feeling within the congregation of participation and inclusivity. Balanced beside these thoughts are comments mainly about the physical plant difficulties and straightforward logistics such as parking, signage, sound and timing. It appears to us that addressing concerns and making changes can be achieved using our positive people energy!

We are grateful for the support and openness of our congregants and the enthusiasm and hard work that has been put forward by our staff.

Respectfully submitted

Visitation Team

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