

Next Steps in the Two Service Conversation

From Pastor Chris, April 3, 2019

Last week we gathered in the sanctuary to discuss the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of moving from two services to one service. I want to share the input from that meeting—along with input a number of you have shared by e-mail or text—and talk about what next steps we will take as we continue to ask the question, “Why do we have two services?”

What encouraged me most about the meeting is what I hear almost across the board in the discussion about one or two services, namely that this is not the most important issue facing our church. The most important issue is our call to make disciples of all nations. This requires strategic, intentional engagement with our neighbors to both show Jesus’ love and share the good news of his death and resurrection for sinners. I am thankful for a church that is keeping the main thing the main thing!

With that important priority clarified, here is the input thus far on the idea of moving from two services to one service. The Strengths and Weaknesses involve our internal life as a church and the Opportunities and Threats involve our relationship to the community around us. These points are unfiltered; we simply wrote down what was shared.

Strengths (of moving to one service)

- More service time for testimonies and prayer ministry
- Need fewer volunteers for Audio/Visual, ushers, and childcare
- More vibrant spirit of community
- Lengthened opportunity for fellowship time in our Sunday morning schedule
- People are able to get to know each other more (if they are not in separate services)
- Creative worship plans
- Change is good for creating a new vision
- More energy in the service
- Greater variety and inspiration in the service
- Could activate inactive members

Weaknesses (of moving to one service)

- Some people may leave the church
- No option for people who work on Sunday
- Not everyone likes contemporary music
- No choice of music style
- Will not increase fellowship
- Change is disruptive
- Traffic is heavier in the afternoon than mid-morning
- Limited amount of handicapped parking spaces

Opportunities (of moving to one service)

- We could boost services other times of the week (like Wednesday PM)
- Visitors will be less likely to look at low attendance and ask, "What is wrong with this church?"
- Encourages recurring attendance and possibly new membership

Threats (of moving to one service)

- Lose opportunities to reach new residents

The next step in moving this conversation forward is to address a new question: "If we did move to one service, what would our new Sunday morning schedule be?" Currently our Sunday morning runs from 8:30 AM – 12:15 PM. Moving to one service would wipe the slate clean and give us multiple creative options for how we use that time. For instance, we could lengthen Sunday School and Adult Bible Fellowship to 75 minutes. Or we could create a 30-minute fellowship time in the East Hall, whether before Sunday School, before the service, or after the service. We could have a standing prayer time so we begin our morning in corporate prayer each week. We need a time to clarify what we value and how that affects a potential new Sunday schedule.

To give us time to do that, we are going to have a Church Potluck on Wednesday, April 24th from 6:30 – 8 PM. You can sign up in the foyer to indicate what dish and side you will bring.

The aim of our time is to get a rough sketch of what a new Sunday schedule would look like so we have two defined options to vote on: our current schedule or a new proposed schedule. I want to wait until we have this meeting before setting a date for a church vote. If the conversation continues on as it has thus far, we will likely vote on this on a Sunday morning in late May.

Let me acknowledge again that this would be a significant change for our church family, and I do not take that lightly. So I continue in prayer for God's wisdom and ask you to do the same. And may we all continue to keep our focus on the most important work: to Magnify God's Reputation in our worship, nurture of one another's faith, and mission to make disciples of all nations.