

Excerpt from the Sermon

Bridgeport United Church of Christ was born out of an awareness of an unfairness in our society. The unfairness said that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people do not have the right to be ordained, married, or full members of the society. That's not right. It's not fair.

But that wasn't all that Bridgeport was founded on. It was also founded on the awareness of the unfairness of poverty, of violence and war, and the diminishment of a human being because of their nation of origin.

But that wasn't all that Bridgeport was founded on. Bridgeport was also founded on the power of music, poetry, art and dance to awaken and nurture the human soul.

John McCutcheon has a quote by Leonard Bernstein on the wall of his office: "This will be our response to violence, we will play our music more beautifully and passionately than ever before."

These are the values that began Bridgeport United Church of Christ and we are indebted to those who founded Bridgeport: Susan and Diane, those who first said, Bridgeport? Yes!, and those who continue to say yes to the ministry of creating a church based on the values of prayer and integrity, community and compassion, fairness and beauty.



ReVision Café Questions & Selected Answers

What's important to you about Bridgeport UCC and why do you care?

- embraced, care for & be cared about
- music = joy & worship
- progressive
- question mainstream
- people committed to making vision happen
- Keepers of the flame
- Friends!
- Invite me to be myself. To be authentic
- Worshipping in a safe, welcoming space.
- People are open about sharing their lives.
- We live our faith through peace and justice
- We talk about Christianity in a way that fits for me now.
- Relaxed spirit
- Thinking is welcome.
- Laugh / Humor in Worship.
- Welcome – as you are; we mean it.
- Faith Arts – opened doors to things we didn't know we could do. (This is more than art.)
- BUCC is a place where people who have lived outside of social and Christian norms can find and nurture a relationship with Christ. This is a powerful gift to people who do not believe they can be a part of the Body of Christ.
- The songs/readings/rituals during worship give a feeling of change and transformation that I need.
- I care about the dynamics of BUCC that seem to invite me to be myself, as is, and interact with others.
- The creative vision of Bridgeport appeals to a lot of people.
- Church as a source of friendship, kindred spirits
- I think this last one is a typo but I wish it wasn't: peach & justice issues

What's emerging here for you? What new connections are you making?

- trust
- part of something in transition
- looking at why we do the things we do
- Being heard
- Springboard to grow ideas
- See More involvement
- We all have responsibility for the well being of the church
- New pew arrangement is more inviting and showed that something is happening. Energy
- The more we build this community, the more this community can do.
- A strong sense of connection to individuals for the higher and better outcome for BUCC.
- We worked through a challenge together.
- Susan wanting to go in a new direction gave us the opportunity to move in a new direction.
- We have moved through many changes: pastoral leadership, choir director, office administrator.
- Using a metaphor that the "Church Ladies" softball team might appreciate, we have stepped up to the plate.

What could happen that would enable you to feel fully engaged and energized about Bridgeport?

- Assessing our changing/emerging roles
- I'll be more energized when folks step up so I can be engaged in new/different ways
- We like heat!
- We like diminished anxiety
- We like having a chance to serve.
- Outreach in line with our core values and serves many purposes.
- We want to find activities that will be a unity-building for us as a church.
- We want families and kids!
- Care giving makes a personal connection between the church and its members and attendees.
- If you want to do something, invite others.
- Claiming – ownership opens up.
- BUCC might consider a focused and fully funded outreach to men.
- I think if the needs are prioritized (which is happening) for the community and then committees work on those needs in an intentional manner, the win/win of seeing small successes would help to energize the congregation.

How can we support each other in taking the next steps? What unique contribution can we each make?

- mentor/empower/encourage each other
- allow us to be ourselves
- sense of responsibility
- we are it
- respect
- continue conversation
- guide each other
- be each other's cheerleader
- open to change
- stick with it!
- finding new people to come/join
- traits in all of us that build community
- support each other in our passions
- Classes and service projects to get to grow and know each other.
- Encouraged to do that which scares us. Like the offering moment

- The grass roots will rise to the occasion, recognize our gifts, we all have things to contribute, we can stretch if we are supported
- Care giving makes a personal connection between the church and its members and attendees.
- Church is like a body continually re-creating itself, cell by cell.
- It is important to give ourselves the permission to act, speak, and feel what we feel right now.
- Applaud each other.
- Conversations like this way more often
- Let's have a book signing for Don
- I think we can support each other by being honest and honoring with each other.
- All change or transformation may seem like a positive thing, but actually it is filled with stressors and sometimes grieving for what is gone.
- Remember we are all in a transition time and need to be handled with "angel gloves". Then, we will deep breathe ourselves to our community's next steps together, appreciating all the differences in our community.
- Give generosity to each other.
- Assume the best in each other. Assume people are here in love.

What seed might we plant together today that could make the most difference to the future of Bridgeport

- I think that asking these questions is a good start.
- Time to invest in the future. 2012 will include the calling of a new Pastor.
- Offer the best we can in honor of what we have received.
- Mission projects that build and serve the community
- We need to plant the seeds of honesty, love, humor, music, childlike wonder, sharing the future without knowing the outcome, and of course, trust with ourselves, others, and the process of change.