



Storytelling

Storytelling – Tell one story about your church that gives you joy?

- Even after troubling times, pandemic and pastoral transitions, the congregation is still cohesive
- A café that brought the congregation together
- Matthew 25 Initiative- developing and growing with energy. Feels things are moving in the right direction
- Honoring a life long member with a beautiful funeral
- Mission trips
- Music ministry and A time for Young Christians
- Creative Church and worship experiences
- Pastor who sings her prayers
- Family came to visit based on a recommendation from a friend
- Interest in Ecological concerns and earth care
- New volunteers and resurgence of energy in congregation
- A recent visitor felt warmed and welcomed by the church
- More interest from “passive” participants – more interested in participating in church activities.

Storytelling – Tell one story about your church that causes you concern

- Change in pastoral leadership that led to needing help from the presbytery. There is a shift in a hopeful direction
- The church has lost people because of politics. Concerns is the church is less tolerant of those who have differing political viewpoint
- Struggling with the political environment. Lack of openness on political right members. Divided politics causing tension and division.
- Not getting strong support for a new project
- No energy or support for Christian education program
- Aging church members
- Lack of financial planning on part of the congregations
- Churches overlook what God has already placed in front of them.
- Church has no endowment and relies heavily on preschool income to make budget shortfall
- Older members are passing or moving away
- Limited “Institutional Loyalty” to denomination
- Heavily relying on endowment fund and congregation is resigned to this reality
- Longtime legacy family not sharing leadership
- Additional issues and responsibilities falling on pastor
- Church focused on community’s needs rather than its strengths

Storytelling – What is a Bible story that describes your church in this time and place

- Moses leading the people in the desert. Manna and take what you lead
- Let the children come
- Woman at the well – Meeting people where they are
- Miriam's celebration and dancing with the women after crossing the Red Sea
- Peter walking on water and Jesus telling him to grab his hand
- Joy of the resurrection
- Luke 10: 1 -12
- The disciples encountering the risen Jesus
- The fear and anxiety of the disciples in the boat amid the storm and waves before Jesus calms the storm, Peter begins to think about walking on the water “are we going to get out of the boat?”
- Jesus asks the blind man if he want Jesus to make him well – “Do we really want to be changed?”
- Acts 2:1 – When the Spirit comes, how will the church respond

Storytelling – Got into a time machine what will you see five years from now about your church

- Large property and newish building
- Expanded mission and outreach
- Multi cultural Congregation worshipping together
- More involved in the community
- Increase in membership
- A second service because the church has grown
- The church has a library for the community
- Reduced stress and anxiety
- Churches have flung open their doors with movement in and out
- A new pastor who fits the progressive mindset of the congregation
- Church helping the community navigate conflict
- Stronger “pipeline” out to the community to welcome those who once felt “outside” the church
- Laughter – Song and curiosity
- The congregation reflects the community
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- No more building – ministry is done differently
- A church revisioned – reimagined
- New kind of church that is connected to the Community
- A strong purpose and ministry outside the church building

Storytelling – Got into a time machine what will you see five years from now about your community

- Everyone is welcomed and included
- Dealing with poverty
- Bringing people together to overcome prejudices
- Rainbow flags everywhere
- Constructive communication and conversations
- Interfaith Initiatives and growth
- Manse used to support women and children
- Church supporting people in need
- The community becomes “real neighbors”



Storytelling – What is the greatest asset of your church at this time?

- Members
- Music ministry
- The choir and music program
- Cemetery
- Our people
- Our Presbytery leader
- People willing to say yes
- People – talents- imagination- music- creativity
- Building and Space
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Storytelling – tell a story about a time in worship and your felt the presence of God

- Communion
- Ordination and laying on of hands
- Singing “glory to God whose goodness shines on me” after the prayer of confession
- Prayers of the People and the Lord’s prayer
- Music program focused on the music of the Beatles



Storytelling – How has your church made an impact in your community

- Family Promise
- Presbyterian Depot
- Sheep Shearing Gathering – ecumenical gathering which included Fundraisers and mission projects
- Connecting with a non-denominational church and working together providing food and clothing
- Starting a new thing that tells the community the church is here for them
- Joyful music and central music culture
- food pantry
- AA
- Scouts



Storytelling – Tell a story about your experience of a Holy Spirit Moment

- Receiving Communion
- Visiting with a family that connected with the church
- A prayer chain moment
- A sign that making a move to a new place was the right thing to do
- Presbytery coming together during the pandemic
- Singing of the benediction by the congregation each week
- Finding our place in the Habitat for Humanity project



Storytelling – Final Thoughts

- Perseverance and hopefulness are a good theme right now
- Interest in anti-racism is more in church
- Patience and hope
- Hopeful for a revival in the world
- Technology would be great for small churches to connect with others
- Camp Johnsonburg is a great asset
- Church historical relationship with presbytery impacts connects today
- Members come from diverse denominational background – not necessarily Presbyterian
gratitude for what the team is doing
- Church is growing younger – two congregations ~young families (millennials) and older people (75+)
- What have our churches done in the past that relate to the future?
- How can we be bold, and faithful, and spirit-led, with more urgency
- More In person gatherings in the presbytery
- Tools and resources so congregations can engage their individual contexts
- Conversations about the church not being in the physical building
- Renewed sense of the spirit
- Where can we find the resources among our colleagues- are our colleagues willing or able to share their skills with others

