

Ministry Update Report September 2023

The following is an update regarding items within the Ministry Areas and Communications.

This is primarily informational in nature.

A. Upcoming Activities and Dates

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| Sept 15 | 10a | Interment service Dee Freeburn, Paxton Ma (Mother of online attendee) |
| Sept 19 | 2p | Windham Association Meeting and Committee on Ministry Training |
| Sept 24 | 10a | Juniper Webster Baptism |
| Oct 1 | 10a | World Communion Sunday; intergenerational worship (Brunch Church) |
| Oct 1 | | Beliefs conclusion and Vision Kickoff (table topics for Brunch Church) |
| Oct 7 | 10a | Pet Blessing |
| Oct 8 | 10a | SNEUCC ACM Rev. Carol Steinbrecher preaching |
| Oct 18 | 6p | Rev. Steinbrecher / GB dinner and conversation |
| Oct 21 | tbd | Family Fall Festival |
| Oct 22 | 11:15 | Pledge Campaign kickoff, Because of You Our Church Changes Lives |
| Oct 29 | 10a | All Saint's Day |
| Nov 5 | 10a | Pledges Due |
| Nov 19 | 10a | Adam Smedberg, Community Engagement Specialist from Church World Services, in worship and 2 nd hour conversation |
| tbd | | Teams and Ministry meeting |

B. Webinars and Training

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| Sept 18 | 6:30 | FIA | Cross-Pollination Gathering: Environmental Ministries |
| Sept 20 | 12-2 | Wrshp | Advent Planning WDS Retreat Replay |
| Sept 20 | 2:30- 5 | Wrshp | Advent Planning Webinar Music that Makes Community |
| Sept 25 | 6:30 | FIA | Cross-Pollination Gathering Racial Justice |
| Sept 27 | 7:30p | Stew | UCC Webinar 5 Ways to Make an Impact : Understanding the Hopes of Our Donors to Create Change |
| Sept 30 | 9:30a-4p | Wrshp | Music that Makes Community (New Bedford, \$75) |
| Oct 3 | 2p | Care | PRC Webinar Dementia Friendly Congregations |
| Oct 5 | 2p | Care | PRC Webinar Making the Best of our third 30 |
| Oct 7 | 10a | Wrshp | Pet Blessing |
| Oct 7 | 10a – 5p | FIA | Justice Summit (in person/online) |
| Oct 25 | 7:30p | Stew | UCC Webinar Donors Who don't come: Engaging Donors outside Sunday Morning |

C. Ministry Update

1. Worship

Creative Worship Meets 2nd Tuesday at 7pm

Music/Choir will meet on select Thursdays, pattern and time tdb

Overall Planning:

I spent a large portion of the time from Aug 13 – 16 in the virtual retreat offered by Worship Design Studio (WDS). This was immensely beneficial, educational, and thought provoking. All segments were recorded and are available on demand for our worship team (and anyone else who would like access).

Throughout the year, approximately two months before the start of a liturgical season, WDS will replay the retreat segment for the respective season, creating another opportunity for those unable to attend the retreat.

The WDS retreat is an annual event. In the future I plan to attend, will encourage others to do so as a team, and - whether in person or online – will block off my calendar for the entire retreat time to focus exclusively on worship planning.

- Themes Identified through Easter

Come to the Table Sept 10 – Oct 8

Because of You Our Church Changes Lives Oct 15 – Nov 26

The Gift of Being Present Dec 3 – Jan 7

Busy: reconnecting with the Unhurried Heart Feb 14 – Mar 28 (Ash Wednesday – Maundy Thursday)

Easter March 31

- Series overviews have been created and scriptures identified through Nov 26
- Orders of Worship created through Oct 1
- Leilani will be out Dec 31 – Jan 21.

The upcoming Oct 1 brunch church intergenerational experience and the Because of You series are collaborative, cross ministry team efforts. Themes for each Sunday are being explored in Sunday School, while many of the elements in the Because of You series will connect Stewardship, Faith In Action, Children's Ministry and worship. The hope is that an integrated, collaborative approach will deepen our experience and learnings.

Music:

Gretchen jumped in quickly and began to plan music for worship. She brings great joy, hope, talent, and promise. Homecoming worship was a joyful blend of familiar and new, of differing talents, and a glimpse into what our worship is becoming.

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Given the summer absences and Gretchen joining us as of September 1, the musical selections for worship are behind. We will address this in the coming week as we settle into new patterns with Gretchen and a choir on board.

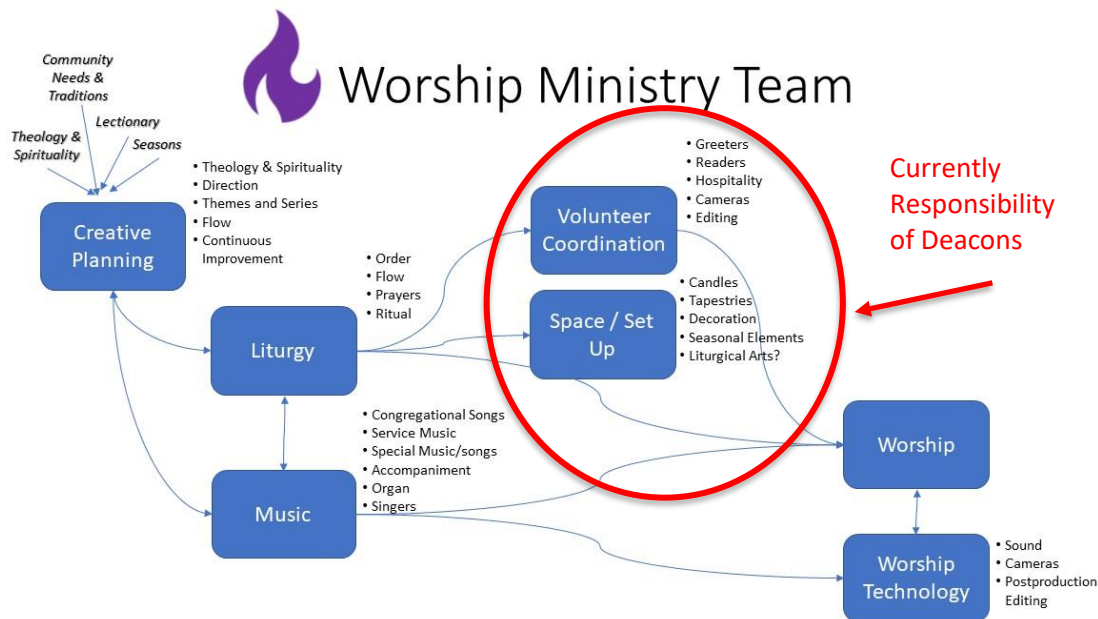
Summer Worship:

Although better than the prior two years, Summer Worship with East continues to present several opportunities for improvement and collaboration. The deacons have agreed to reflect in the coming month on what worked well and what we can do better. From there we will engage East Woodstock with an eye toward smoothing out the wrinkles and deepening the collaborative planning and worship experience through the summer season.

Transition to new Structure:

As the deacons work through their role and purpose in the revised model, three major areas of concern have been identified:

- Participation in the Creative Planning Process, as Creative Worship Planning, is meant to be a cross-team activity.
- Clarifying and/or shifting worship related responsibilities currently overseen by the deacons.



Other Worship Related:

Rick LaMarre is working on a proposal for a better, more reliable audio board and mixer in anticipation of 2024 budgeting. In addition to the mixer/sound board, questions arise regarding other technology needs in the sanctuary, the speaker system and addressing a more permanent solution for bringing video projection to the space.

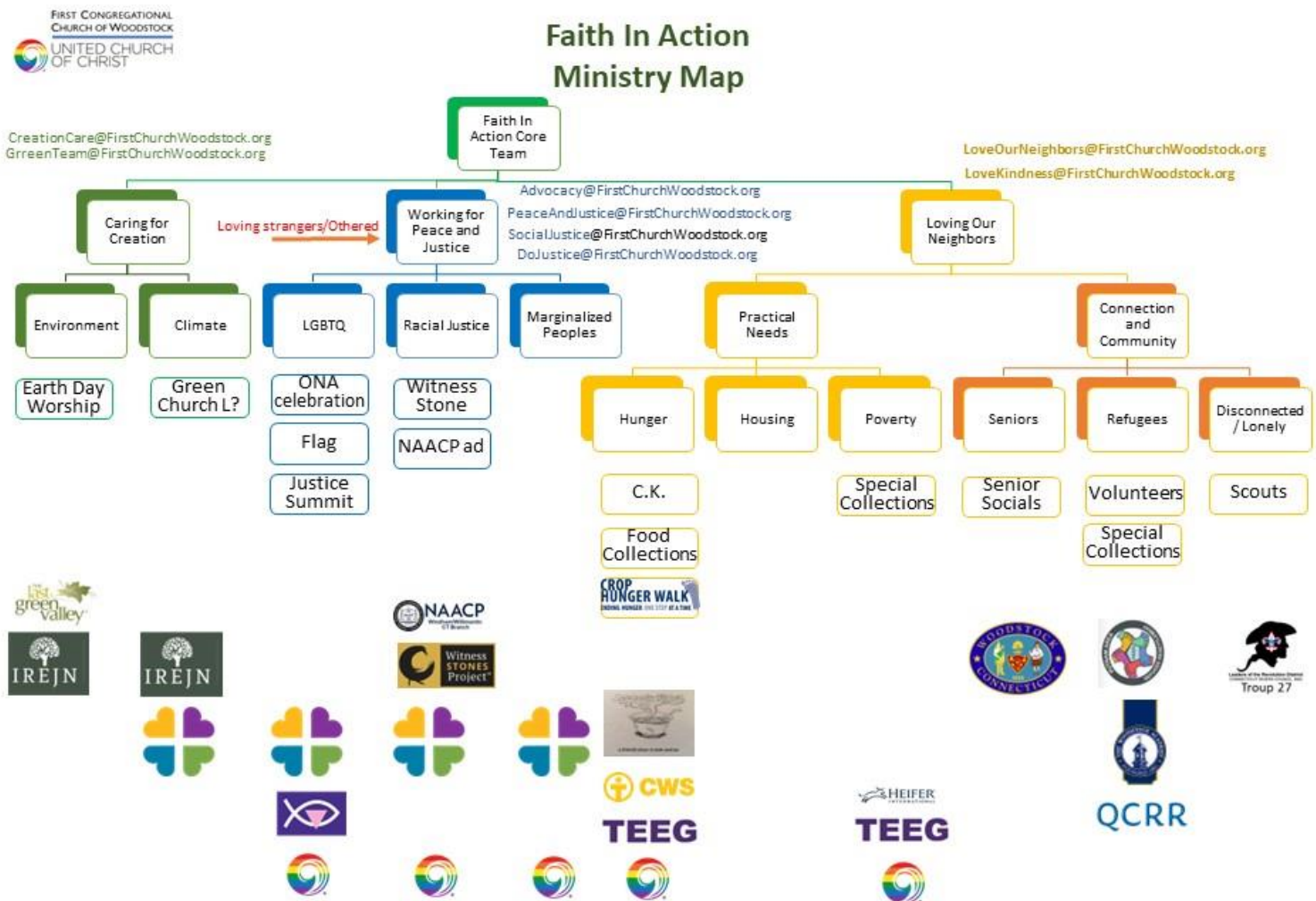
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It seems like a taskforce may be a helpful way to explore the bigger question of speakers and video projection in the sanctuary. One that will include representation from property, worship, and other congregants.

2. Faith In Action

The team is meeting later in September to explore how we allocate our annual grant monies, and to continue to refine and clarify our ministry map and explore the google groups names for each of the three major areas of concern. (See below)

We are developing a three-pronged ministry map to clarify and help organize our activities in three major areas, i.e., Caring for Creation, Loving Strangers/Othereds, and Loving Neighbors. As we clarify what to call these three groupings, we will create Google Groups to all those who are interested to sign up for one or more of the groups, share ideas, and post relevant activities, articles, etc.



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3. Learning/Faith Formation

Bible Study and Finding Meaning in the Message return this month.

Children and Family Ministry is off to a softer start than we had hoped. There are several factors that have contributed to this: including distraction of the unplanned for VBS collaboration with East and summertime schedules/communications. We are planning a Fall Festival, additional advertising, and direct calls to parents/families.

4. Care Ministry

During the summer months, we continued to connect with, visit, and pray for congregants. The Care Ministry is currently within the responsibility of the deaconate, and we are exploring what role the deacons may play in this ministry going forward.

Clarifying our contact lists will also help us focus more effectively on people who desire to have a close affinity for the congregation.

D. 2024 Ministry Planning and Budgeting

1. 2024 Ministry Planning/Budgeting Timetable

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|-----------|---|---|---|
| September | <p>Ask teams to reflect on what is working, what might we do differently – and bring ideas to October meeting (Focus on Ministry Purpose and How to further vision/mission of Congregation)</p> <p>Status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Deacons, including Care Ministry 9/5 ✓ Creative Worship 9/12 ○ Faith In Action tbd ○ Learning/Faith Formation tbd ○ Communications tbd ○ Other Administrative tbd | <p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Integrated Plan • 2023 Budget to Actuals by ministry • Values & Competing Priorities • 2024 Ministry Team Template (hard copy and Google Form) | <p>Pastor Finance</p> <p>Pastor</p> <p>Pastor / teams</p> |
| October | Gather ideas from team before/during meeting | <p>Create/update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrated plans by ministry area | Pastor |

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|----------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Facilitate conversations inviting congregation to explore and share ideas: Worship, Care, Spiritual Growth, Faith in Action | • draft ministry budget | Pastor w/ Finance |
| Early November | Integrate Ministry budget into total budget Prioritize and adjust as needed | | Finance Finance & Pastor |
| December | Refine and finalize budget | | Finance & Pastor |
| January | Present Ministry Plan / Narrative budget to congregation for approval | | Finance |

E. Communications

1. Draft 0.5 Communications Guidelines

We continue to update the draft communication guidelines, refining the newsletter due dates and content, documenting office procedures, and listing items to encourage self-review of content by content creators, including the Communications Coordinator.

The working draft is in the Communications shared google drive. You are encouraged to review and offer helpful additions, questions and suggestions.

2. Newsletters

The next big newsletter will be published at the end of October and include the period covering the holidays (see table below for dates and anticipated content).

By the end of September, we will create templates in the NEWLETTER folder on the COMMUNICATIONS shared Google Drive. For the Holiday, Winter, and Lenten Newsletters. In October we will create templates for all remaining 2024 Newsletters. (See communications guidelines for list, dates and details).

Ministry teams will be encouraged to add content to these templates when content is available. Creating templates in the shared Google Drive will make it easier for people to add comments even if they cannot find the link to the appropriate Newsletter template.

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| <p><i>Holiday</i> <i>3rd Tues of Oct</i> <i>Around Oct 25</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Governing Board Update</i> • <i>Events and Activities Oct 25 – Jan 1</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Stewardship Campaign</i> ○ <i>*All Saints Day</i> ○ <i>Christmas on the Hill</i> |
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- *Giving Tree*
 - *Christmas Caroling*
 - *Christmas Pageant*
 - *Christmas Eve*
 - *Advent Devotional*
 - *Advent Study*
 - *Newcomers Brunch*
 - *Other Ministry highlights recent activities*
 - *Poinsettia Orders*
 - *Board Nominations*
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