

Idea Sharing
**Formation of Southeast Oakland
Cooperative of United Methodist Churches
January 23, 2010**

Attendance:

Duane Miller, Detroit East DS

Berkley 1st – George Covintree, pastor, Nancy Thompson, Jen Butka

Hazel Park 1st – Debbie Frawley, Bev Hinton

Ferndale 1st – Rony Veska, pastor, Michael Cadotte

Clawson – Joan Allison, Jim Brown, Anita Brown

Beverly Hills – David Huseltine, pastor, Ken Dowell

St Johns – Jim Thompson

Embury – Margaret Buccini

St Johns/Embury – Elizabeth Hill, pastor

Oak Park and Madison Heights not able to attend

Fact sharing –

As of 2009 numbers, we represent 10 buildings, 8 pastors and approx. 1400 members. 4 of the churches have asked for less than full time charge.

Birmingham 1st, Southfield Hope, Royal Oak 1st – 3 buildings, 6 pastors, 9000 members.

Purpose of meeting is to find out what we do, how we do it and how we can share resources, buildings, missions, and purpose to best “do church”.

What we do –

St Johns – Monthly community dinner. Free to the community, serve 50 monthly/100 at holidays on last Wed. of the month. All food donated by church members and community, with help from a newspaper article that spurred others to donate. If we share resources, can give health kits, bus passes, store gift cards, etc. Could possibly do more often.

SOS – Ferndale, Clawson and Berkley 1st host SOS. Problems filling volunteer slots.

Berkley has help from Beverly Hills; Clawson has help from Guardian Angels and St. Andrews.

SOS pool? Would allow for us as a cooperative to take SOS for a month, many possibilities.

- Pool volunteers at various churches to move with guests
- Church hosts for one month; volunteers move, but guests stay

Habitat-join with Southfield 2nd Grace, 20-30 people needed for Home Rehab in spring

What we could do -

Worship Sharing - Pulpit Exchanges among the various pastors in the group; variety of worship services at different buildings and different times. "We can't expect everyone to fit into our schedule. We need to adapt our schedule to fit their times." Choices for types of worship (contemporary, traditional, youth oriented), times (Sun. am, Sun. pm or eve., Sat. eve.) Think outside the box! Carpools to different churches for different services; One example - Ferndale has big screens, basis was to draw in youth and young adults, yet paid for by older members who liked using them. Evening services including a dinner may attract working weekenders and families with kids in sports/activities on weekends.

Christian Education - share resources and purchasing (buy for the year for multiple churches), share Adult Sunday School/Bible study opportunities, **VBS: shared among churches, combined volunteers, day and/or night offerings with same curriculum or same curriculum with different weeks at shared churches. Ideas shared on VBS approach to summer programming vs. Camp approach, offering many alternatives for kids; UMC camps - carpools to get kids to summer camps, combining groups to provide stuff for kids,

KIDS - Two CE directors (Ferndale and Berkley 1st), others run by volunteer committees. Sunday School could have different look: before church, Wed. night (Ferndale cancelled this and now is on Sun. am and coincides with church), after school on weekday; discussed team teaching approach and stressed continuity with kids. **Special Needs Kids, brought up by Ferndale, possible solutions provided by combined services approach - can have others provide care that now can't be given during worship.

YOUTH - combined youth opportunities, Appalachian service project, youth friendly services; youth and young adults want to do missions, offer their gifts outside the building and worship service.

Things to Consider –

We must take baby steps. Think outside each building as to what church is. WE have to think outside the walls. Go back to church councils and discuss. Not everything has to happen at once. Need congregations to buy into this idea. Don't want to have feelings of fear or distrust with this.

Communication – can develop website for this group, electronic phone tree, voice mail system to share information. **ESSENTIAL PART OF MAKING THIS WORK**

What We Can Look Like –

There is the circuit model, currently done in England that can help us see how elders and lay speakers use their gifts in a similar situation.

Western Michigan has a large group charge – 12 churches, 3 pastors and certified lay speakers who do pulpit exchanges. Leaders meet to discuss and key people from each church are communicators to each congregation.

Michigan has Eastside Cooperative with one pastor names as director and churches meet in same fashion.

We could eventually all share pastors, members, and staff.

What We Can Do NOW!

- Get the OK/blessings from our churches to create this council.
- Create a list of mission/outreach opportunities that can be opened up for all churches
- Health Kits for Haiti – advertise for items and we'll have assembling "party" to put kits together.
- Layettees to Clawson
- Ferndale – Wall of Diapers for Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency
- Look into possibilities for sharing VBS programming
- Send newsletters from home church to each church on the council (by mail or email?)
- Keep Meeting
- Remember WE are the body of Christ and through our endeavors we are making the world bigger and better!

