

## **Session 5 – Fundraising Summary**

We gathered in Fellowship Hall on Oct 27 to reflect upon fundraising. About two dozen people attended.

The session took a deep look at the entire fundraising program at TCC. The impetus came from an idea put forth in late August to take a sabbatical during 2020 from fundraising. However, this idea didn't gain wide acceptance. Nevertheless, because fundraising comprises a significant part of TCC's congregational life, understanding its role is important.

We began by listing the various fundraisers, which we defined as requiring significant volunteer efforts. We developed a list of the following fundraisers:

- Golf Tournament
- Hollyberry Fair
- Summer Luncheon
- Tag Sale
- Love & Chocolate
- Apple Pie Sale
- Clothing Sale
- Suppers

We then began to look at each individually using the following frame:

- History
  - When did it begin?
  - What changes have occurred since it began?
- Value
  - How much money does it raise?
  - What meaning does it provide for TCC?
  - What does it do for Northfield?
- Sustainability
  - As the fundraiser is presently conducted, how much energy (scale: 1 to 6, one being lowest) does it take?
  - How much energy can we realistically provide now?
  - How much longer can this go on as it is done now?

### **Golf Tournament**

This began in 2017 and has not changed much since its inception. It provides about \$5000 in revenue.

It generates community participation and helps to publicize the church. As this event gains traction, revenue from this fundraiser could increase. We should note, however, that there are about seven to eight golf tournaments a season in Northfield.

This fundraiser takes a lot of energy to produce. People felt they will have less energy to commit to the golf tournament in 2020.

This fundraiser has three components: golf tournament, a raffle, and a chicken barbecue. A comment about changing the menu to avoid too much heat was raised.

People generally felt that it can continue for 2020. However, they were uncertain how many more years this can run. People noted that steps and procedures have been documented so someone could continue when the current leadership for this event steps away from it. However, no one indicated he or she would run this in the future.

### **Hollyberry Fair**

This event began in the early 1970s as a three-church affair. It was a Women's Guild Fundraiser. In 2017 or 2018, TCC decided to break out on its own.

The Fair generates between \$5000 and \$6000. The community looks forward to it. People get to see each other, and it provides an outlet for people who have talent when it comes to making crafts. It gets people into the church.

It takes a lot of energy to run this event. When someone noted that this year's fair will be limited to the basement, there was noticeable relief. People felt that they won't have as much energy for the fair next year.

There are five parts to this fair: Bake table, Luncheon, Raffle, Craft vendors, and Candy.

People felt that without changing it from this year, the Hollyberry Fair could probably run through 2021.

### **Summer Luncheon**

Began in the late 1960s. We used to operate three luncheons each summer, then it went to two, and then it went to one. It began with the Women's Guild.

It generates about \$900 - \$1200 annually for the church. It is a form of community outreach.

It takes a lot of energy to produce this event, but the energy is intense for a short period of time. People remain confident that they can commit the same amount of energy to this event next year. Someone observed that this event comes right after the golf tournament. The timing, however, works well for the Ridge people, coming just before their annual meeting and Ridge Sunday. Someone noted, however, that fewer people from the Ridge are attending this luncheon each year.

### **Other Comments**

We did not have time to do a similar exploration of the other fundraising events.

One suggestion was to reduce the number of fundraising events to three: spring, summer, and autumn.

Fundraising remains necessary. If we do not fundraise, then, we will have to raise \$15000 annually some other way.

From the church perspective, doing fundraising events is a way to build esprit de corps. It also is a good way to bring the community together.

If we suspend fundraising next year, we need to have a clear plan what we will do to

### **Reflection**

Periodically, the congregation should reflect upon its fundraising activities as they cannot continue indefinitely. Periodic evaluation and reflection of the overall fundraising program enables a congregation to plan and anticipate.

- Is the fundraiser sustainable as it is presently practiced?
- Does it need modification and if so, what modifications?
- Looking ahead allows the congregation to adjust for a decline in revenue should the fundraiser end. A plan will give the congregation more lead time to decide if it wants to replace the event, accept a decline in revenue, or modify it to make it more manageable.

Fundraising cannot be sustained indefinitely for internal and external reasons. Internally, they rely substantially on volunteer efforts. Volunteer efforts will diminish over time as people leave the congregation, such as move away or die, as people have less capacity, such as through aging or lack of interest. People who are of a younger generation, especially people in their 20s and 30s, may not share the same enthusiasm for fundraising as the present congregation. Externally, circumstances beyond the church change. These could be fewer vendors, tighter food safety regulations, which will depress raising money through food sales.

Fundraising draws energy and attention from a church's ministry. If the objective of the fundraiser is to connect with people in the community or be an event to gather community together, there are other ways to do this, which require less work. An example could be presenting topics of interest to the general community as part of a lecture series. If, however, a fundraiser's objective is to raise money, the congregation must think carefully about that revenue when the fundraising activity has run its course. Does the congregation create another fundraising activity or does the congregation forgo the revenue? In this case, planning becomes essential so the congregation can make an orderly transition as fundraising activities change.

Conversation and discussion about fundraising should continue. Some questions to answer:

- How much longer can TCC realistically rely upon the revenue from each fundraiser?

- Can TCC limit its fundraising activities in order to keep them from tiring out volunteers?
- Could TCC share a fundraising event with an organization in the community, and thus, split the proceeds while gaining additional labor?
- What are the prospects of TCC raising more revenue from other sources so that it can reduce fundraising activities?