

9/19/2010 Congregational Conversation Recap
"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine!"

This church has seen many changes over the last 175 years.

We began our gathering with shout-outs about positive changes over the last 3 Years: More opportunities to serve, people feel nurtured, more children coming, intellectual freedom, more friends/fun/fellowship, greater enthusiasm, spirit filled, more people, glorious music, greater community engagement, beautiful building in better shape, more downtown ministry. Good news, indeed!

Guiding documents:

Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Values Bookmark, Open & Affirming Statement. Each is meaningful on its own, but together they lack a **clear sense of purpose**. We need to clearly define our purpose, our reason for being, as a church in way that is clear and compelling.

The first step in discerning our purpose is to get a detailed, **unbiased assessment**. We are in a time of great cultural sea-change in North America. You can't gauge the size of the waves from inside the boat. We need someone who knows both the culture and the challenges of a mainline protestant church to guide us.

Why now?

We have a strong base to build on - a growing, rather than declining, congregation.

We are at that awkward stage of being too large for 1 pastor, and too small for two.

Our finances are just at the edge of being sufficient, but not strong enough to support much growth.

We have a lot of energy, and more youth and young adults broadening our intergenerational reach.

This work will take several years to take hold, and we need to start now to position ourselves for the next 175.

Toward what goal?

Offer greater opportunities for deepening our spiritual journeys individually and in community.

Provide meaningful ways for people to live out gospel values in the world.

Share our faith by demonstrating, "By their fruits you shall know them".

Why Tony Robinson?

Highly regarded writer and consultant with specific UCC knowledge and depth.

Experience with many mainline churches of many sizes and inclinations in many places.

On-point academic degrees focusing on both the secular and the religious landscapes.

What's Next?

Tony will be in town on November 12-14.

He will conduct a series of interviews with individuals and small groups on Friday and Saturday.

He would like to speak to a diverse cross-section of people and a schedule will be coordinated in the Office.

He will preach on Sunday, and lead a Congregational Conversation afterward.

What can I do?

Check out a copy of *Changing the Conversation* from our Church library; read and return quickly so others can too!

Go on-line and watch some of Tony's videos:

<http://www.ucc.org/vitality/ready-set-grow/video/anthony-robinson-on.html>

The Keys to Congregational Vitality and Most Encouraging Signs in Churches Today are especially good!

Be sure to come on Sunday, November 14 to hear Tony preach and to participate in the Conversation!

Be prepared to share YOUR vision of the church!