

A Note from the Presbytery Leader

Hello and Happy Holidays to each of you!

I hope all of you were able to enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving and are looking forward to incredible Advent and Christmas celebrations.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in the *Bridging the Gap* workshops last month, for sharing ideas and for offering several possibilities for continuing discussion. A very special thanks to the host churches as well: Trumansburg, Newark, Hornell, and Corning – for the warm hospitality extended to each of us. You've all made these workshops a wonderful success!

An incredible 57 people from 22 churches took part in the workshops – an amazing turnout offering amazing ideas! The workshops opened with a discussion around the question, “How do we get young people to come to our church?” This is a question many of our churches have struggled with for many years. Over the course of the day's activities, perspectives shifted – and by the end of the day, each group was able to come up with several alternate questions that are much more actionable than where we started. Exploring these questions in our local communities could help lead us to more effective ministries:

1. What are the needs?
2. How do we do Christ's work in the world?
3. How do we use our energy and resources to fulfill the commands of Jesus?
4. Where do teenagers find spiritual community?
5. How do we communicate with the surrounding community to identify their needs?
6. What are other ways to consider wealth?
7. How does the church address the loneliness epidemic?
8. How do we become more relevant?
9. How do we make God more relevant?
10. Where/How are the 'nones & dones' finding God?
11. Where do you find your spirituality?
12. What does it mean to share the good news?
13. How can we use this church to help people?
14. How do we connect with those outside the church? How do we talk with them to find what they're looking for?
15. Who needs the good news and how do we reach them?
16. Why not more emphasis on prayer?
17. How do we help those having a hard time with change?
18. What's the right physical size/space?
19. How do we better serve our community?
20. How do we move forward with what we have?
21. How do we strengthen the faith of our folks to be more effective in the world?
22. What can we do now that will have impact on the spiritual well-being of others?
23. How do we spend our money?
24. What are God's plans for our church?

25. How do we embrace technology without leaving people behind?
26. How do we utilize/engage current members?
27. How do we put Christ first in our church?
28. How can we learn about our community in more detail?
29. How can we be faithful with who and what we have?
30. How do we look outward into the community?

The workshops also provided many ideas for future programming – please watch the newsletter for announcements. Just a reminder, too, that the devotional booklet for these workshops is still posted under ‘Resources for Churches’ on the presbytery website [Devotional-Booklet-for-website.pdf \(presbyteryofgeneva.org\)](https://www.presbyteryofgeneva.org/Devotional-Booklet-for-website.pdf) to help guide you through the spiritual aspects of engaging in these conversations.

In this season of thanksgiving and gratitude, I’d also like to thank everyone who serves so diligently in such varied roles: committee members, elders, treasurers, pastors, clerks, Sunday School teachers, musicians, those who answer phones, type bulletins, scrub floors, order the candles, along with all of the other tasks that keep our churches functioning from one day to the next. May God continue to bless each and every one of you as we work together in the service of our Lord.

Peace and joy to you and your families this holiday season,

Marji Ackerman

Presbytery Leader