

Round Table Discussion Results

A number of ideas were generated over a three week period of Round Table Discussions about St. Stephen's future. Below are the results:

Week 1 (July 1)

"How to generate more income for ministry"

- Scrips Program - purchase gift cards or scrip at a discount from retailers & the price difference goes to the church. Examples: Target 2.5%, Starbucks 7%
- Neighborhood pot luck Bar-b-que with 50/50 raffle
- Mom to mom sale (2 per year—one summer & one winter) entry fee & table rental
- Christmas craft show - table rental
- Summer family movies - sell concessions
- Summer day camp for school aged kids—charge tuition
- Garage sale
- Auction - advertise & draw people from outside the church
- Advertise what St. Stephen offers—i.e. Praise Pals, VBS, quilting, scouts, singing, warming shelter & volunteer opportunities
- Visit all the households in the church
- Worship in a park during summer
- More adults participate in Gladstone Community Festival Parade - get the word out
- Put our Worship Team in the parade
- Go into the wedding business - advertise SSLC as a place for weddings
- Allow commercial advertising in the Quill & solicit business sponsors for events
- Estate planning presentations & wills emphasis
- donate stock (donor saves on capital gains)
- Update website weekly – promote on-line donations. Get more tech savvy

- Merge with another congregation
- Rent facility to more outside groups
- Bingo nights
- Dance nights
- Promote electronic giving
- Spare change jar in Narthex or a "tip jar"
- Email reminders to those not currently on pledge
- Sell pews – i.e. People buy a pew in memory of a loved one & name will be placed on pew
- If we can't generate more income – we must cut expenses / cut the budget

Week 2 (July 8)

"How to cut budget & reconfigure staff if necessary"

- Cut wages for staff
- Reduce hour's staff works & reduce wages accordingly
- Get more volunteers to do the work
- Email the Quill
- Eliminate separate phone line for fax
- Have one page bulletin with most everything on screen
- Go to one service year round or for summer (interestingly enough a number of people said they would leave the church if we did that)
- Cut staff – only one person in the office
- eliminate drummer, bass player at 11:15 service (suggestion made by someone who attends 9am)
- Eliminate budget support for CCC & charge singers' membership fee to participate in chorus.
- Prioritize – "in house" expenses come before "outside" expenses.
- Develop more trust in budget process – need to make all costs transparent & present with visuals, pie charts, etc. in plain English.
- Cut nursery attendant or only pay when needed – send home if no children.
- Cut all programs for which there are no

- volunteers
- Cut youth minister's hours / salary since there are fewer youth.
- Share the pastor with another church (others said keeping full time pastor is essential)
- Cut the Pastor's salary – it's too high compared to most people's salary (other's pointed out that we pay less than Synod guidelines for current pastor & that our pastor & music ministers are "top notch" & should be paid accordingly, given their skill & education.)
- Cut the budget items for the 11:15 service since fewer people attend it. (suggestion made by someone who attends 9am)
- Find ways to cut use of paper & copier
- Don't reimburse pastor for mileage travelled doing his job (this is a synod requirement & term of call). The pastor could be asked to drive less – i.e. don't make hospital visits, etc.)
- Put office heating & cooling on a timer
- Everyone be sure lights are off when leaving
- Don't use color copies for so many things
- Increase membership – more people = more money

- Family game nights
- Visitor follow-up & phone calls
- New member follow-up – email, phone calls to help them find their volunteer "slot"
- Community night / neighborhood watch
- Publicity through press coverage of events
- Use Facebook to invite people
- Have volunteer appreciation certificates
- More / better signs
- Have clipboard sign-ups via email
- More pleas for help from the pastor
- The pastor should step up & do more
- Find volunteers from the community at large & not just the church
- Recruit volunteers from the groups that meet at the church – i.e. scouts, 12-step groups, TOPS
- Advertise need in bulletin & Quill
- Be more specific about what needs to be done
- Remind people that they're signed up & need to show up
- Greeters that guide visitors
- We should ask healthier, middle aged people to volunteer to do more around the church.

Week 3 (July 15)

"How to increase attendance, get more volunteers & grow the church"

- Keep services short – attendance gets low when service is too long
- Make services more lively & entertaining
- Connect with pre-school families
- Need ideas / programs to bring more kids – they bring their parents
- Have a car wash
- Advertise
- Use more flyers
- Promote the need for volunteers
- Keep activities free of charge to participants
- Sports activities for youth on weeknights
- Provide tutoring for youth