

“Fruitfulness” (Church Growth) Strategy

To communicate how Mountain Shadows Presbyterian Church (MSPC) is a faith community whereby we are being good stewards of our God-given gifts and that all people are welcome to join and expand on our efforts, the Communications Ministry Team (CMT) proposed to Session (and Session approved on May 17, 2023) a new initiative called “Fourth is for Fruitfulness.” This initiative plays off the highly successful Sunday themes of “First is for Food” for food donations and “Third is for Threads” for clothing donations. On the “Fourth is for Fruitfulness” Sunday, Ministry Teams from each of the six Faith Priorities (i.e., Caring, Gathering, Giving, Learning, Tending, and Venturing) will display new actions they are taking to nurture care and transformation. These actions are intended to measurably grow God’s kin-dom. Through displays and communications about the Ministry Team and Faith Priority actions, the congregation and new community attendees will be encouraged to sign up to take part. The CMT will take the lead in coordinating the development of fruitfulness actions and in publicly sharing them (e.g., website, social media, Oracle Newsletter, and articles placed in retirement community newsletters and newspapers).

This cross-ministry initiative stems from an article on fruitfulness adapted from the Next Church organization. The article identified that traditional metrics on church growth (i.e., membership counts, financial totals, and worship attendance) have proved inadequate for measuring effectiveness of faith communities. Using information gleaned from the Envisioning Event of 3-15-23 on the PC(USA) Seven Marks of Congregational Vitality, guidance provided by Pastor Rachel, and direction provided by Session, the fruitfulness actions will be implemented over a five-year period.

Implementation --

- Each year, for the seven months between October and April, “Fourth is for Fruitfulness” actions will be displayed on the north two tables under the ramada during Fellowship. For each of the first six months, the actions of at least one of the six Faith Priorities (in alphabetical order) will be displayed. On the seventh month, in April, the actions developed by the collective effort of all the Faith Priorities Ministry Teams will be presented.
- The Elder-Moderator for the Communications Ministry Team, financial management of expenditures specific to the new actions will be handled by the CMT. In addition, communications to Session on implementation of the actions will be summarized in the Minutes of CMT meetings submitted to Session. Both the Communications Ministry Team and the Church Growth and Communications (CG&C) account are included.
 - To better remain informed and involved in CMT decision making, each of the Ministry Teams can appoint a liaison (“non-voting”) member to the CMT. In the alternative, each of the Ministry Teams can appoint a representative (“voting”) member to the CMT.
 - Funding requests to the CMT using the CG&C account will need to be accompanied with a justification for how the funds will enhance MSPC efforts in growing God’s kin-dom.
 - An example of the type of fruitfulness action that is highly likely to receive CG&C funding is the upcoming Ice Cream Sunday event on July 2. This event is being advertised in Saddlebag Notes via an ad and an article, on the webpage, and in social media. At this time, the event will be a collaboration between the Faith Priorities of Gathering (Christian Hospitality Team and the Worship and Music Ministry Team) and Venturing (CMT). Any other Ministry Team is welcome to join the collaboration provided the Team actively plays a role in the event. Expenses for the musicians during the worship service and Fellowship and the cost of the ice cream will be paid from the CG&C account. Success will be measured, in part, by assessing whether non-member guests attended and how the guests heard about the event.