

**Flossmoor Community Church**

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SUMMIT**

**October 1-3, 2021**

****

**WELCOME**

Welcome to our Appreciative Inquiry Summit! This year, our summit task is: ***“Tangibly Radiating Christ’s Love in Our Diverse Neighborhood.”*** We are so glad you’re here.

God has worked in Flossmoor Community Church to prepare us for this moment. Each of you was uniquely created to add your gifts and contribution to the community. We hope this excites you and fills you with hope as we purposefully gather together as the body of Christ to discern God’s leading for our collective future! This weekend, our greatest hope is that the Holy Spirit will draw you closer to Jesus to experience abundant life in new and profound ways. We also hope you will feel valued for the voice you bring and the gifts you possess. Finally, we hope our unity in diversity will be a powerful context through which the Holy Spirit directs and leads us into a new future that honors and glorifies the name above all names.

We encourage you to engage your full and best self, and to draw out the best in others around you. Be honest, candid, open to new ideas, and be ready to be surprised. Be the best learner in the room. Be the best team player. This is God’s church. This is your church. Let us give thanks and worship Jesus for the rare opportunity to come together and co-create with one another and with God!

All Praise & Glory to God,

The Appreciative Inquiry Convening Core Team

**SCHEDULE**

**DAY 1: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1**

Check-in/Dinner 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Opening Remarks 6:00pm – 6:10pm

Reflection Exercise 6:10pm – 6:30pm

AI Overview/Ground Rules 6:30pm – 7:00pm

DISCOVER: Paired Interviews 7:00pm – 8:00pm

Debrief/Look Ahead 8:00pm – 8:30pm

**DAY 2: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2**

Welcome & Opening 10:00am – 10:20am

Sharing Interview Themes 10:20am – 11:00am

Large Group Reports 11:00am – 11:50am

Lunch 11:50am – 12:35pm

DREAM 12:35pm – 2:00pm

Debrief/Look Ahead 2:00pm – 2:15pm

Convening Core: DESIGN Part 1 2:45pm – 3:30pm

**DAY 3: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3**

Welcome & Opening 1:00pm – 1:15pm

Presentation of Opportunities 1:15pm – 1:25pm

DESIGN: Part 2 - Voting Part 1 1:25pm – 1:30pm

Prototyping 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Break 2:30pm – 2:45pm

Sharing Prototypes 2:45pm – 3:30pm

DESTINY: Voting Part 2 3:30pm – 3:40pm

Closing 3:40pm – 4:00pm

**HOPED-FOR OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Participate in God’s work at FCC by collectively discerning a Spirit-led vision for our future.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Catalyze a strategic planning process at FCC that fully values the voices and gifts of the body of Christ.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Empower the people of FCC to envision new ways of working collaboratively for the common good of all.

**GROUND RULES**

* Have fun!
* Listen to understand; speak to serve
* All people are valued, all ideas are helpful
* Engage your whole self, make a contribution
* Give unconditional positive regard
* Be the best learner in the room, be curious
* Draw out the best in one another
* Challenge is ok! Seek to be constructive & creative

**REFLECTION EXERCISE**

As seek together to discover how God is leading FCC, we want to begin by interacting with Jesus to whom we belong and whom we follow. Jesus is the Almighty One whose ways we long to carry out. So, take some time now and engage the following exercise. Listen to the Spirit’s voice. What do you sense God saying to you for FCC?

**READ**

Read the passage below slowly. It is provided in two translations.

***Philippians 4:4-9***

***Holman Christian Standard***

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don’t worry about anything, but in every- thing, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honor- able, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise — dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

***New Living Translation***

Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me —everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Slowly read one of the translations again. Notice what **word, phrase, or sentence stands out and evokes a response** from you. You might underline or circle it or write it below this paragraph. Repeat it a few times quietly to yourself, letting those Words from God settle into your heart.

**MEDITATE**

Sit in God’s presence with the word, phrase, or sentence from Philippians. Meditate on the words in the context in which you are sitting right now. What might these words mean for you and the people sitting around you? What might these words call you to consider about your life and the life of FCC?

**PRAY**

Respond to what you have read and what God has shown you from the Word. Form a prayer that expresses your response and "pray it back to God" so that what you have read is woven through your prayer. You might choose to write out your prayer or just pray silently.

**LIVE**

As you consider this weekend, what might your engagement look like if you were put to the word, phrase, or sentence into practice? How might God be inviting you to live out the Word? How does this shape your perspective about the conversation we are having together as a community?

**WHAT IS AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SUMMIT?**

*This is not a typical planning meeting! It is a transformative experience that prompts our full engagement with God, ourselves, and with one another.*

**APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (“AI”):** To APPRECIATE means to value — to understand those things worth valuing. To INQUIRE means to study, to ask questions, to search. AI is, therefore, a collaborative search to identify and understand the organization’s strengths, the greatest opportunities, and people’s aspirations and hopes for the future.

**WHOLE SYSTEM:** The WHOLE SYSTEM participates in the experience — a cross-section of as many internal and external stakeholders as possible — people and groups that care about and have a stake in the future of our congregation. This means more diversity and less hierarchy than is usual in a working meeting, and a chance for each person and stakeholder group to be heard and to learn other ways of looking at the task at hand.

**TASK FOCUSED:** A summit is TASK FOCUSED, not simply an educational event or a conference. We are here to accomplish the task of building our vision and plan of action for creating a church environment that builds discipleship and generosity by leveraging all the strengths and talents that exist within our community.

**SELF-MANAGED:** People SELF-MANAGE their work and use DIALOGUE and INQUIRY — not “problem-solving” — as the main tool. That means helping each other do the tasks and taking responsibility for our perceptions and actions.

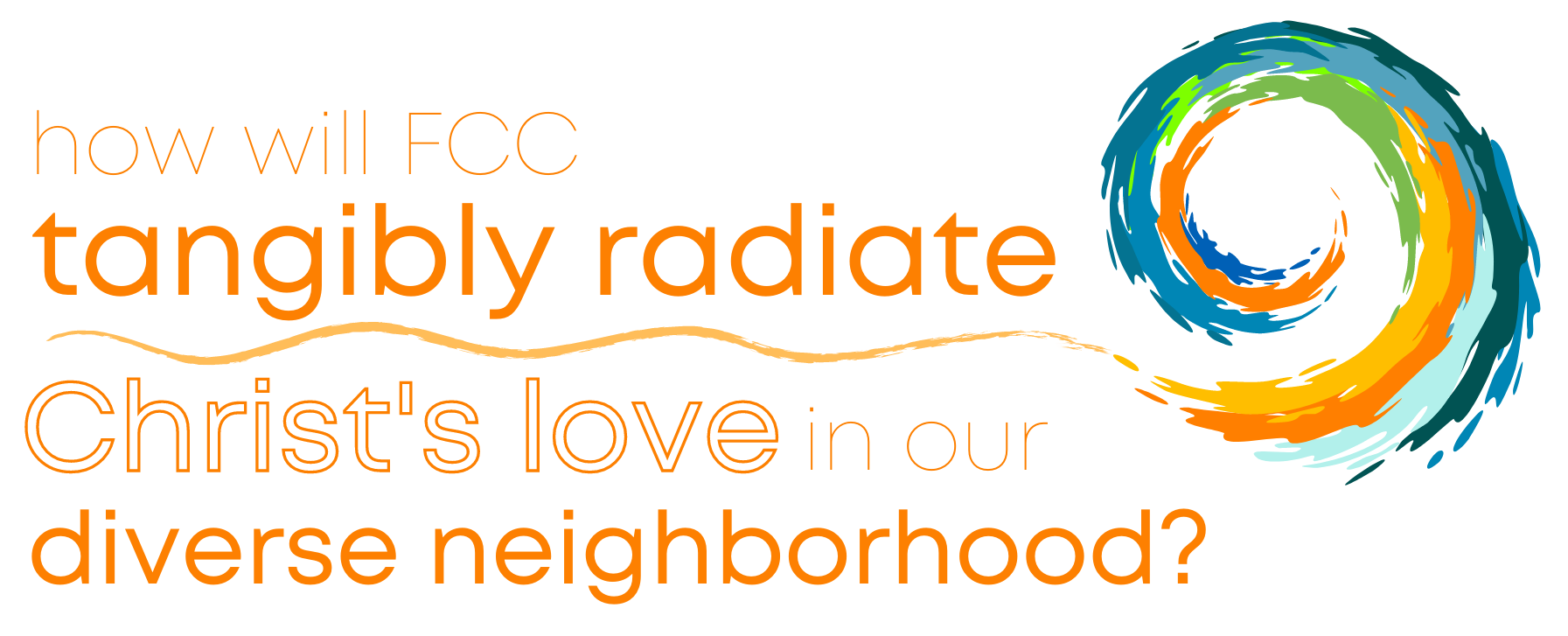
**COMMON GROUND:** We seek to find COMMON GROUNDrather than use “conflict management” as our frame of reference. That means honoring our differences and then discovering areas for action where we have strong common ground.

**COMMITMENTS TO ACTION:** Because the whole system is involved, it is easier to make more rapid decisions, and to make COMMITMENTS TO ACTION in an open way that everyone can support and help make happen.

**WHAT IS THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS?**

**WHAT IS OUR SUMMIT TASK?**

**“TANGIBLY RADIATING CHRIST’S LOVE IN OUR DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD”**



*TANGIBLY* expressing our mission and strengths to make Kingdom impact

*RADIATING* *CHRIST’S LOVE* with Spirit-filled energy and vibrancy like a beacon for all to experience

*DIVERSE,* neither the same nor individualistic, people who reflect the majestic tapestry of all human beings made in God’s image

*NEIGHBORHOOD* hub where we transform our community through embodied presence

**DISCOVER**

*How has God been working at FCC?*

**PURPOSE**

*To reflect and wonder about how God works when FCC is at its best.*

**PAIRED INTERVIEWS-GUIDELINES**

1. Sit with your assigned interview partner.
2. Interview your partner using the questions on the following pages. Each person will have 30 minutes to interview his or her partner. It is critical that you self-manage your time.
3. Encourage your partner to tell his or her story; draw him or her out with your positive energy and excitement.
4. Take good notes and be listening for great quotes and stories. Listen as if you had to retell the story yourself. You will share the results of your interview in the next session.
5. The information you collect in this interview will be used to shape the strategic future of FCC.

**PAIRED-INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

PART I: LOOKING BACK

1. Think back to when you first decided to join / get involved at FCC. What excited you about that time? What motivated you to get plugged in to the community at FCC at that time?
2. What about FCC makes you feel like you belong here? What are some specific experiences or events at FCC that God has used to increase your commitment to the church?
3. During your time at FCC, you’ve likely had some ups and downs, some peaks and valleys, some highs and lows. Reflect for a moment on a **high-point experience**, a time when you felt most alive, most engaged, and most excited to tangibly radiate Christ’s love in our diverse neighborhood with and through FCC. Tell the story. What happened? What was going on? What was it about you, others, and FCC that made your high-point experience possible?
4. Our mission is: “*Flossmoor Community Church - renewed by grace, equipped by study and nurtured by fellowship – will enter into a faithful, Christ-like relationship with others. We will welcome friend and stranger, celebrate all gifts, embrace the hurting, and labor with others to restore what is broken*.” Describe a time when you have seen FCC live out our mission. What has FCC done to boldly live out our mission?
5. Successful congregations know how to preserve the core of what they do best and how to simplify by letting go of things that are no longer helpful. Here we think about techniques and programs, not Scripture and doctrine. Knowing what to preserve and what to let go of is essential. What are the things we do best and should be preserved and strengthened as we go forward into the future? What things do you feel we should consider letting go of?

PART II: LOOKING FORWARD

1. Imagine that working together as a body of Christ flourishes across generations, cultures, perspectives, race/ethnicity, etc. What do you see happening at FCC? What would be the fruit of this new environment?
2. Assume you go into deep sleep tonight, one that lasts 4 years. But while you are asleep, powerful and positive changes takes place, real miracles happen, and FCC becomes a church that tangibly radiates Christ’s love in our diverse neighborhood. What three things would be present now? Describe the fullness of FCC’s ideal, new reality!

***\*\*Ask this question of each other once BOTH interviews are completed.\*\****

1. What’s 1 important thing you learned (or perhaps relearned) about God and/or yourself from our time of interviews?

**PERSONAL NOTES**

**LAMENT**

The spiritual practice of lament is designed to give voice to the pain of each individual who is suffering pain or loss and for the community to show solidarity with those who suffer. The book of Psalms is made up of 150 songs. Of those, nearly a third are classified as *Songs of Lament* also knows as *Songs of Disorientation*.

**Prayer of Lament**

* Settle your body and mind.
* Once you are present in the moment, identify one or more “things which you feel we should consider letting go of” that came up during the discover time last night and this morning and which you might grieve losing.
* Call out to the Spirit using whatever name best expresses your connectedness in sacred relationship with God. Invite God to be present as you allow yourself to lament that loss.
* Identify how the loss might impact you or those you care about. Notice how your body and emotions react as you contemplate the situation.
* Express any grief (sadness, anger, disorientation, etc.) as specifically and honestly as you can. Let your emotions flow. Allow yourself to use whatever words feel most appropriate.
* Hand your grief over to the Spirit, asking for an awareness of God’s care in and through this loss. Allow yourself to move toward gratitude that the Spirit is with you in your lament.
* Return to a quiet place, resting in God’s presence for as long as you desire.

**DISCOVER** (continued)

*How has God been working at FCC?*

**PURPOSE**

*To share the most powerful stories and discover the forces and factors that energize our ministry when it is at its best.*

**GUIDELINES**

1. Assign a discussion leader, timekeeper, recorder, and reporter.
2. At your tables share stories and discoveries from Paired Interviews.
3. As stories are shared, identify all the factors – root causes of success – that energize our ministry when it’s at its best. Listen for the best practices, values, commitments, leadership qualities, technologies, training, resources, structures, systems, processes, programs, relationships, and other factors that support success.
4. Create a flipchart with a line down the middle separating two headings (“stories” and “root causes of success”) to capture what you are hearing about what supports our success in terms of having a generative ministry.
5. Prepare a 5-minute presentation that includes:
   1. 2 exemplar stories that powerfully illustrate our congregation at its ministry best  
      - your top 3-5 root causes of success
   2. \**Write your 3-5 root causes of success on separate post-it notes and have them ready to contribute to the Positive Core Map*

After 45 minutes of group conversation, each group will contribute to the positive core map by telling their 1-2 exemplar stories and placing post-it notes on the map.

**DREAM**

*What would be most pleasing to God in FCC's future?*

**Purpose**

*To imagine a future you want to work toward.*

**Group Reflection-Guidelines**

1. Assign a discussion leader, timekeeper, recorder, and reporter.
2. As a group, put yourselves in 2025. Visualize FCC the way you really believe God is shaping our ministry by referring back to our Positive Core and to Interview Questions #6 & #7 under Part II. **Imagine 2025 as if it exists today in its most ideal, best form**. What is it like? As you create this image of the future, pay attention to these important aspects:

*How can FCC tangibly radiate Christ’s love in our diverse neighborhood?*

* TANGIBLY expressing our mission and strengths to make Kingdom impact
* RADIATING CHRIST’S LOVE with Spirit-filled energy and vibrancy like a beacon for all to experience
* DIVERSE, not the same nor individualistic, people who reflect the majestic tapestry of all human beings made in God’s image
* NEIGHBORHOOD hub where we transform our community through embodied presence

1. Spend enough time talking as a group to imagine fully our church of the future. This is an exercise in **bold dreaming of the kind of congregation you want to work toward**.
2. Capture your group’s dream in a 2025 dream statement written on a sheet of paper:

***In 2025 FCC is…***

Make sure that your statement is…

* Desired – does it reflect what you really want? If it became true, would you want it?
* Bold, Provocative – is it a stretch that will attract others?
* Affirmative – is it stated as if it is happening now?
* Grounded – are there examples that illustrate your dream as real possibility?
* Unconditionally positive – will it bring out the best in the members of FCC and community around FCC?

1. Prepare to share your written dream statement with the rest of the community.

**PERSONAL NOTES**

**DESIGN**

*What do FCC's systems & structures need to look like to realize our strengths?*

During the design phase, you are invited to both honor the past and still challenge the status quo as well as the common assumptions underlying the design of our church. You are encouraged to ask: “What would our church look like if it were designed in every way possible to maximize the qualities of the positive core and enable the accelerated realization of our dreams?”

You will be encouraged to choose one area of opportunity presented to you by your convening core that you would like to re-design based on our positive core + dreams for the future. You will walk around the room and vote on the opportunity you feel most led to by writing your name on a post-it note and placing your post-it note on that opportunity area.

Then, you’ll work in groups to creatively re-design what you have chosen using bullet points, diagrams, flow charts, etc. Re-design a new process, asking the Holy Spirit to use you as a wise vessel to breathe new life into the culture of FCC. Make sure your re-design is clear and easy to implement going forward.

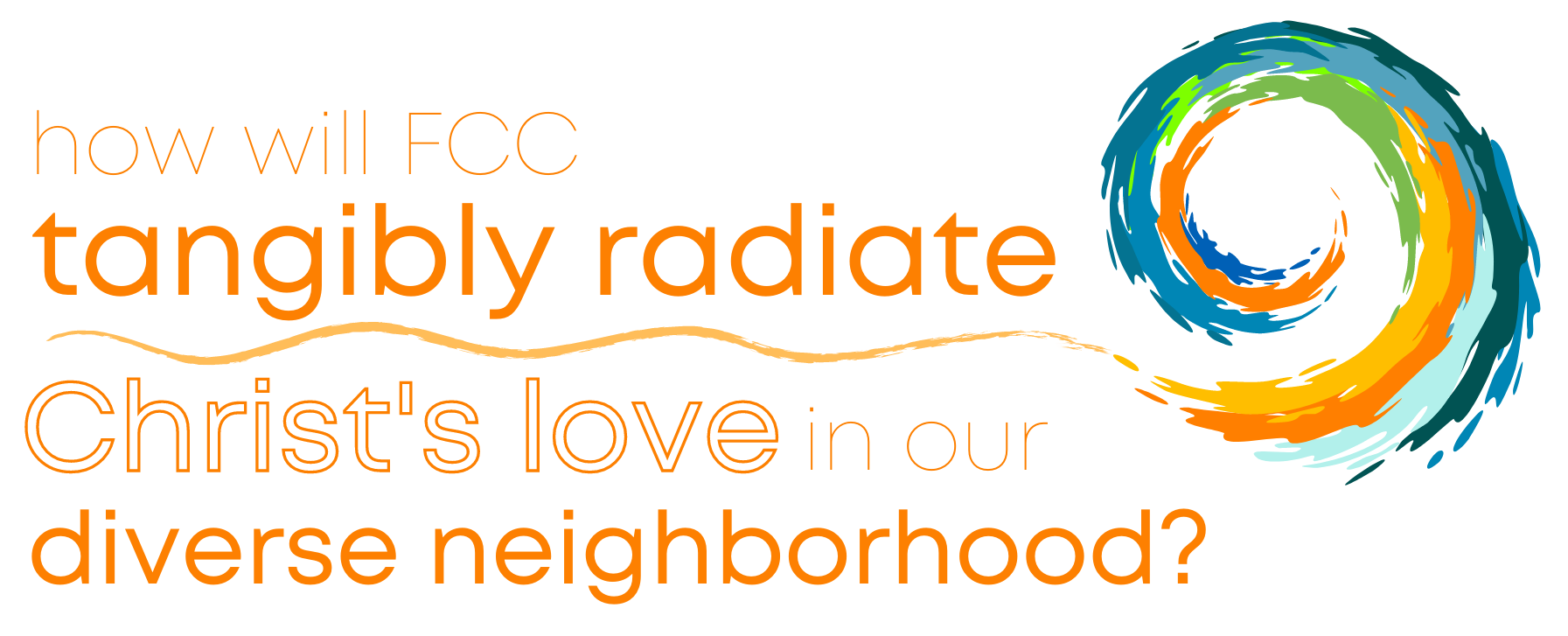
Use the poster sheets to document your re-design. After you post your designs on the walls for all to see, we will take a break. After the break, we’ll spend time sharing our prototypes.



**DESTINY**

*What does God want us (individual & body of Christ) to do now?*

Everyone will walk around to each poster that emerged from the DESIGN cycle and will choose one prototype you would be willing to pray about committing to implementing post-summit. Make your prayer commitment by placing a post-it note with your first name, last name, and e-mail address on the prototype of your choice. The convening core team will follow up with you to confirm your commitment and talk through the implementation steps.



**PERSONAL NOTES**