Deep · Bold · Daring
Toward 2035
A Hope-Filled, Bold Future

How do We Encourage a More Invitational Culture?

- **Do we emphasize sharing our faith as one of the normal parts of Christian life that is essential to our shared life of faith?**
    - Our service includes times of prayer, and times of reflecting on the scriptures. Does it also include a time to practice sharing faith?
        - You could ask someone ahead of time to share how God is moving in their life through the ministry of the church before the offering.
        - You could have a more open-ended invitation for people to share how they've noticed God's presence in their life over the last week during the prayers of the people.

- **How do we name the presence of new people each week in our service?**
    - For example, we might begin each service with something like, "If this is your first time here, thank you so much for coming. We would love to get to know you more at the end of the service. My name is _____ and you can find me at the welcome table in the main foyer when we're done."

- **Are people trained to welcome visitors?**
    - After establishing that a person is a newcomer and this is their first time, a simple question, such as "What drew you to be here today?" can open up a conversation around who the person is, what their needs are and how the community might connect with them.

- **Are we clear about what our upcoming services will be about topically?**
    - When people know what's going to be discussed, they're more likely to invite friends who might connect with that subject because they're more confident that this particular service will be life-giving for that person.
        - For example, we might make it a regular practice in the announcements to say something like, "Next week we'll be talking about _____ so if you have someone in your life who's curious about that subject, this would be a great time to invite them."

- **Do we connect with people we haven't seen in a while?**
    - Is there someone already connected to the church who hasn't come in a long time? Invite them! This isn't a blanket rule. Sometimes a person has left the church for a known reason and it would be inappropriate to invite them back. That said, think about the members and adherents you haven't seen for a couple of months or a couple of

years or even longer. If you have contact information have someone from your Board or your Invitation Team invite them back. Even if they don't come, most people will appreciate that you've thought of them.

- **Do we regularly encourage people to practice inviting others?**
    - For example, we might incorporate that practice into our offering: "Now is the time that we ask you to consider how you might be called by the Spirit to offer yourself in generosity at _____ United Church and in the community that we're called to serve. Here at _____ that usually includes giving financially to sow generosity in our hearts and help fulfill our shared mission, sharing your spiritual gifts in a way that brings you life and serves as a blessing to others, and inviting others who aren't yet part of this community of faith so that we might be transformed together by the story of Jesus and the love and grace of God."

- **Do we have greeters at the doors? If so, are those greeters clear about the basic information that will be helpful for guests?** Where is the washroom? What is the plan for children? Where is the sanctuary? What do we do when the service ends? Is there more than one greeter so that one can serve as an accompanier for someone who is new? If you have children or youth programming, how are the leaders welcoming parents and/or children and/or youth? Is the plan and options for them made clear. Perhaps noting that they are welcome to go out for programming (if that happens) or that there's an optional table or craft supplies available can be helpful.

- **Do we have a Welcome Table** so that someone new knows where to go to get more information about our church and what clear next step they should follow to learn more or get involved?

- **Are we collecting contact information, and if so, can people be confident that it is being kept confidential**? Are we making sure to follow up with each new person who has come during the week after they first attended? Having a visitors card or sign up sheet for newsletters or email list can help with this.

- **Think about how you prepare for a new person visiting your home and use that as a tool to help you think about what a welcoming church environment might be like.** Is the church clean and well-maintained? Is it set up for people to have a good first experience?

- People new to the community will often research our church online before they come**. If we search for our church online, what comes up?** If it's your church website, Facebook or Instragam page, or YouTube account, is that page clear about who you are and is the information someone new might need to attend your church easy to find?