

Community Demographics

9/8/2016

This report contains a summary of information gathered by the community demographics sub-group. It includes interviews with civic leaders as well as average people in town. Recommendations from Dan Pezet, who leads our annual conference in efforts of church revitalization, are also provided, along with a summary of the book, *Joining Jesus on the Journey* by Greg Finke.

Mayor Tim Kant

Growth is happening – increased 400 single family homes

Mixed group who is coming here – 60% retirees, 40% younger families

Current five percent growth rate

Rapidly growing area around Walmart

People from all over the world

Steady growth for next 10 years

By 2018 – 18K+

Property values up 9 percent

How to manage the growth is an issue for the city and organizations like the church

Needs

Reduction in state funding is an issue

There is a hidden homeless population – no shelter in Baldwin County

Veterans are here who have mental health issues

Police need help handling children whose parents are incarcerated

Too many people relying on the emergency room

Taking care of kids whose parents work

An increased need for respite ministry – Shepherd's Place will outgrow its current facility

Churches working together

Churches to adopt schools

John Borom – Faulkner State Community College, Fairhope Campus

1500 College students, plus GED students and virtual high school

Huntingdon College Evening Bachelor Program

Most students are from Fairhope – wanting to save before going off to college

Commuters from Mobile, Foley and Robertsdale

Very popular programs – no class ever is dropped

Community outreach from the college

Birdfest

Amphitheater

Christmas on the Coast

Potential Partnerships

Ransom Café

Participation at Birdfest

Use of Amphitheater

Local Realtor

We need to know who we are as a church and what our identity is
CLC Service – Contemporary with traditional elements? Rock, Grovy?

Housing Market is strong

- People moving from all over the world
- Relocate for jobs, retire, better way of life
- More young people are coming here than in the past
- Young people who grew up here can now come back because of better job market
- 90 percent rental rate
- Downtown the place to be
- New subdivisions 250-350K

Younger Generation does not want to be hard grinders at work

- More freedom
- More flexibility
- Less Structure

Jobs – Service, construction, hospital, hotel and aerospace. Foley booming but people living in Fairhope.

Karen Wilson – Mayor Elect

- Younger Families, lots of new people especially last five years
- Places to hang out are needed – build around an experience
- United Methodist Church is good at building partnerships
- Youth Group Cliquish (in her opinion)

Deanna – Homestead Village

- Progressive senior living
- Many of the people do not have faith
- Many have given up on God
- Trying to help people overcome their fear of death
- Need for spiritual enrichment
- Grief and loneliness a big issue
- Rides to church are needed

Sherry Sullivan – Nix Senior Center

- More People working longer in life
- 50s-60s year olds not aging like the past - more active
- Great need for home repair services
- Need for transportation

Education

Elementary School

Kids with special needs have increased
 Need volunteers to read and connect with the kids
 Assistance for special needs children
 65 percent of population does not have kids in school

Intermediate School

Nurture, empathy and respect are on the decline
 Need uniform closet
 More kids in poverty
 More kids with special needs
 Clothes closet
 Kids need to feel a connection to the school and to others
 Not a title one school, so cannot get extra education dollars
 Transportation is a need – no afterschool ministry
 Spiritual needs
 Lots of problems that we can't solve in the community
 Kids need breakfast and food for the weekend

Newton

Need a Pre-K
 Need help with printing

Daphne Elementary

Title One
 Seven Habits Books

Helping Agencies

Family Promise

They are seeing a lot of single parent homes
 Katrina brought in many persons who are still residing here and still need assistance
 There is a hidden homeless population

Ecumenical Ministries

Homeless growing and are undercounted in our area and nationally
 Homeless and transplants do not know how to find social services
 It is expensive to house people temporarily in our area - \$67 a night is the cheapest
 Five years ago - \$39.00
 Those with mental and addiction issues are underserved
 There is a growing population of the elderly seeking services
 School fees cause some families to choose between food or providing needed supplies for
 Children
 School kids go home hungry over the weekend
 Churches have a good opportunity to help the hungry through gleaning ministries

Local Long Time Business Owner

Fairhope is changing from modest, funky, diverse, tolerant to those who have come here for jobs, slower pace of life and schools

Well-off retirees

Under 50 wealthy folks

Young families looking for a great place to raise a family

Not a lot of racial or economic diversity. High cost of land and housing places

Fairhope above its neighbors in regards to cost of living

We are in danger of forgetting what makes Fairhope, Fairhope, however the town has some pretty amazing aspirations for itself

We are need of a better school system and a performing arts center

(Owner likes FUMC's ecumenical approach to offering its facilities to the community)

**Summary of Report from Dan Pezet
Director of Congregational Revitalization
Alabama West Florida Conference**

1. Good news – Fairhope United Methodist Church has been successfully ministering to the community. Our index for reaching people of all generations is in line with the community’s demographic
2. As stated in other reports, the largest percentage of growth is the people who are recently retired.
 - For these groups holistic ministry is important – healthy lifestyles, being together with friends
 - History and tradition are important
 - They need to know that the church is there for them. (Need to have a team on call that can be reached in case of an emergency. Publish that information regularly)
 - Budget conscience, but have the availability of time.
 - In a world gone contemporary, they want traditional worship
 - Sunday School is important
3. Sports Utility Families are in our church, but not to the degree that is represented in our community
 - They want innovative – like new and exciting
 - Get them as they move in – new resident mailers
 - Very important to connect to them and have them participate in a meaningful way.
4. Some suggestions for the future
 - Any successful church needs to focus on small groups
 - Buildings in the future must be multi-functioning – state of the art worship, children’s spaces.
 - Keep ministry simple – worship, small groups, service
 - Must develop a planned giving ministry with a well-funded endowment
 - We are under-reaching those who are not picture perfect people – find ways to connect through small groups
 - The church should take the lead in offering service opportunities for people to participate who in the community, but not in the church. Most effective way to reach young people
 - Keep doing what we are doing but innovate: Traditional worship that is innovative will reach younger people; modern worship that ties to the traditions. (He predicts that the Gathering will change more over the next 10 years than will the traditional services)

Comments Given from Time at the Pig and the Pier
(These are representative of the comments given and not all inclusive)

- Want a church preaching the word of God
- Welcoming
- A loving family environment
- Strong youth and children's program
- A church where elders connect with youth
- High energy, youth involved
- Women in ministry, community involvement
- Offering traditional and contemporary services
- Openness to others
- A church that is not hypocritical
- A church that is not judgmental
- A church full of grace
- Dinner on the grounds
- Breaks down the scriptures
- Friendliness
- Good messages
- Conservative, friendly
- Spiritual needs for cancer patients
- Sense of commonality
- Small Groups
- Traditional worship
- Not begging for money
- Spiritually fed
- Excellent music
- Liturgical/Ritual
- Social groups for older people
- Local outreach

Most often used key words

- Welcoming/Friendly – 19
- Excellent Children Youth Programs – 11
- Traditional/formal worship – 8
- Contemporary worship - 6
- Community outreach/local focus – 6

Joining Jesus on the Journey

Greg Finke

- The United States has become one of the largest mission fields in the world
- More people in church in China on Sundays than in U.S.
- The Church in America is not designed to meet this change
- However, Jesus is at work already – our job is to join Him!
 - Notice what is going on around us
 - See where the Spirit of God is moving
 - Build relationships with people – enjoy them!
 - People will be attracted to authentic Christian faith
 - People will be drawn to people who take time to be with them and listen
 - People want an agenda-less friendship
 - People need folks who will listen to them
 - Got to quit studying and talking and start doing the Gospel
 - Pray! For the courage to reach out, and for those around us who are not connected to God and to a church
 - Gather with others who want to reach others – support one another
 - Throw parties for our neighbors! Enjoy them!

The Five Practices

1. Seek the Kingdom – How did you see God at work this week?
2. Hearing from Jesus – What has Jesus been teaching you in his word?
3. Talk with people – What kind of conversations are you having with Pre-Christians or those disconnected from church.
4. Do Good – What good can we do around here?
5. Ministering through Prayer – How can we help you in prayer?
(Question asked of those around us.)

It is important to form missional teams that support each other in this ministry, to hold each other accountable to the five practices and to share stories.