WPC Table Talks

Discerning and Choosing Our Shared Future

Session 2 • September 20, 2026 • Congregational Findings

Executive Summary

Table Talk 2 asked participants to move from identifying WPC's strengths and hopes toward choosing the outcomes and commitments that should guide its future. This report brings together all four table discussions and three supplemental participant reflections for Session and the congregation.

Across the tables, participants described a church where people are known and accepted, grow in Christian faith, contribute their gifts, and join others in caring for neighbors. They affirmed WPC's worship, relationships, service, and welcoming spirit while identifying opportunities to make those strengths more consistent, accessible, and visible.

WPC's hoped-for future requires both stronger relationships and changes in congregational practice. Welcome needs follow-up. Care needs coordination. Participation needs accessible opportunities. Growth needs shared leadership. Community presence needs meaningful relationships beyond the congregation.

Five Findings Emerged

- Move from friendliness to dependable belonging.
- Make participation accessible and meaningful.
- Connect Christian faith with everyday life and action.
- Strengthen WPC's presence and relationships in the community.
- Pursue growth through shared leadership and sustainable practices.

These findings belong together. People who are welcomed and cared for can discover their gifts, deepen their faith, and contribute to a community whose love extends beyond itself. Encounters with neighbors can, in turn, deepen the congregation's understanding and practice of faith.

Progress and the Work Ahead

Table Talk 2 largely succeeded in identifying and selecting directions. It only partly completed the translation of those directions into focused commitments. The available reports are clearer about what WPC values than about which few actions it will sustain, who will carry them, and what must change to make room.

Table Talk 3 should test a proposed synthesis, identify observable signs of progress, and connect commitments to congregational responsibility and leadership capacities. The findings are material for discernment, not a record of decisions already adopted by WPC.

Trust Learn Welcome Live

The bull's-e gives the findings an integrated Christian frame. Trust, Learn, Welcome, and Live are continuing practices, not stages we complete. Christ sends us out in love; our neighbors help us grow in faith.

The movement is reciprocal: encounters with neighbors reshape what we learn, how we welcome, and how we understand our trust in Jesus.

How the Findings Connect

Trust in Jesus. Ground our choices in Jesus, practicing conviction with humility and openness to learning.

Learn to follow Jesus. Connect Scripture, worship, reflection, relationships, and service with everyday life. Learn across generations and develop people's gifts.

Welcome and care for one another. Make belonging dependable. Honor children, support changing needs, and invite contributions at a sustainable pace.

Live Christ's love in all we do. Express faith through daily relationships, practical care, service, justice, and partnership with neighbors.

Each commitment can touch several circles. Intergenerational service, for example, can deepen faith, build belonging, develop gifts, and help neighbors. A continuing pattern of listening, serving, reflecting, and adapting offers one way to practice this movement; it is a proposal to test, not an adopted program.

What We Heard Across the Congregation

From Friendliness to Dependable Belonging

Participants value WPC's warmth and care. They want those qualities to be experienced consistently by newcomers, longtime members, children, families, and people whose circumstances are changing. Belonging includes timely follow-up, support during difficult transitions, trusted adults for children, intergenerational relationships, and opportunities to feel needed.

A newer attendee identified nursery care as critical to her welcome. Name tags and the directory help people build relationships. Alongside these strengths, participants identified gaps in visitor follow-up and in the coordination and timeliness of congregational care. The opportunity is to make WPC's relational strengths dependable through intentional practices.

Accessible and Meaningful Participation

"WPC is a place to use your gifts" captures a desire for people to contribute without being overwhelmed. Participants called for manageable opportunities, shared responsibilities, and support for volunteers and leaders. They also questioned whether people feel they need permission—or must first "pay their dues"—before contributing.

Hospitality therefore includes room to help shape congregational life. Honoring children, connecting generations, and helping people feel needed express the same commitment. WPC can invite people into meaningful responsibility while allowing them to set a sustainable pace.

Christian Faith Connected with Life and Action

Participants connected Scripture, worship, learning, fellowship, service, and justice. "Bring in to send out" expresses the relationship between spiritual formation and active care. They envisioned faith that gives people purpose, supports them through challenges, and equips children and adults to learn and serve together.

Discussion of "witness" revealed a communication challenge. Some preferred language that more clearly conveys action; a supplemental reflection suggested "living witness." This calls for testing how WPC's language is understood. It does not establish agreement on a replacement term or a rejection of Christian identity.

A More Connected Community Presence

Participants want neighbors to know WPC better and experience its contribution directly. They discussed telling WPC's story, inviting nonmembers into activities, using the building for connection, and partnering with neighbors. The image of a "corner of help" describes a reputation grounded in practical care.

Greater visibility should accompany relationships in which neighbors help shape WPC's understanding of need. Participants questioned service impact, and a supplemental reflection proposed seeking community partners' assessment. The emphasis on nearby neighbors is not a decision to reduce existing commitments elsewhere.

Growth Through Shared Leadership and Focus

Growth appeared both as a goal and a question about readiness. Participants hoped for more people attending, volunteering, leading, and participating across generations. One reservation asked, "I'm not convinced this place wants to grow." That concern is a question to test, not an established diagnosis.

The discussions connected growth with training leaders, coordinating staff and volunteers, and distributing work carried by highly dedicated individuals. Participants also recognized limits: focus on fewer missions and adapt small groups to current needs and schedules. These proposals invite deliberate choices about what WPC can sustain.

Patterns Across the Four Tables

The map distinguishes themes explicitly included in final outcomes or commitments from themes discussed elsewhere. It shows convergence and distinctive contributions without treating comments as votes. Table numbers refer to this Session 2 report and should not be assumed to match Session 1 numbering.

Week 2: Themes Across the Four Tables

Qualitative reading of the recorded discussions and selected outcomes or commitments.

THEME	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
Welcome and belonging	●	●	○	●
Children, families, and intergenerational life	●	●	○	○
Christian formation and purpose	●	●	○	—
Community presence and outreach	●	●	●	●
Gifts, participation, and leadership	○	○	●	●
Intentional numerical growth	○	○	●	—
Sustainable participation and capacity	○	●	○	●
Acceptance across differences	●	●	○	○

● Selected priority ○ Discussed — Not explicitly recorded

Selected priority: explicit in a final outcome or commitment. Discussed: present elsewhere in the report, including facilitator comments. Symbols do not measure intensity, agreement, or importance.

SUPPLEMENTAL REFLECTIONS — TABLE 2

Reflection A: welcome and challenging justice commitments. Reflection B: integrated outcomes and a clear call to justice. Reflection C: honoring children, intergenerational connection, and feeling needed. These are not additional table votes.

Interpretive coding for review. Not explicitly recorded does not imply opposition or absence from the conversation.

Symbols describe how themes appear in the records. They do not measure agreement, intensity, or the importance of a theme.

What the Map Suggests

- Community presence and outreach appear in the selected directions of all four tables, with different emphases on gathering, practical help, membership outreach, and visibility.
- Welcome, children and families, participation, and sustainability recur broadly, but tables differ in what they formally selected.
- Explicit Christian formation is strongest in the selected outcomes and commitments of Tables 1 and 2. Its absence as an explicit theme in another report does not establish disagreement.
- Table 3 makes numerical growth and organized leadership especially explicit. Table 4 emphasizes using gifts, access to participation, and adapting to current needs.

Supplemental Reflections

Reflections A–C came from participants at Table 2. They clarify the tension between welcome and challenging justice commitments, propose integrated outcomes, and emphasize honoring children, connecting generations, and feeling needed. They inform this synthesis as individual reflections, not additional table submissions or a newly adopted consensus.

Faithful Tensions to Hold Together

The discussions surfaced important goods that WPC must pursue together. These tensions are not evidence of fixed opposing camps, nor do they all require a compromise halfway between two positions. They identify where practical and faithful choices remain necessary.

Week 2: Holding Important Priorities Together

Both priorities matter. The questions invite faithful choices about how to pursue them together.

PAIRED PRIORITIES (Tensions)	QUESTION FOR DISCERNMENT
Acceptance ↔ Conviction	How do we welcome across differences while clearly expressing Jesus' call to justice?
Growth ↔ Willingness to change	Are we ready for new people to help shape our practices, relationships, and leadership?
Meaningful participation ↔ Manageable expectations	How do people feel needed and contribute at a pace they can sustain?
Internal care ↔ Outward engagement	How do we strengthen care within WPC while building dependable relationships with neighbors?
Broad aspirations ↔ Focused commitments	Which priorities will we sustain, and what will we simplify, share, or release?
Individual dedication ↔ Shared leadership	How do we honor faithful service while developing new leaders and distributing responsibility?
Visible activity ↔ Meaningful impact	How will we recognize belonging, spiritual growth, and practical help beyond attendance and activity?

These tensions are a synthesis of the reports, not a claim that participants formed opposing camps.

The questions connect shared aspirations with the choices required to live them.

Acceptance and Conviction

This tension received the most explicit disagreement. Some comments sought greater tolerance of less-progressive perspectives and less politics in sermons. Others called for clarity about Jesus' justice commitments. The supplemental reflections show that commitment to justice and concern about how challenging messages affect welcome can coexist within one person.

The records do not settle questions about preaching or public positions. They do identify a desire for a learning community where people can disagree and support one another in love. Table Talk 3 should preserve this complexity without allowing one tension to consume the entire discernment process.

The Choices Behind the Other Tensions

Growth requires room for new people to influence congregational life. Participation requires manageable expectations and shared responsibility. Care and outreach compete for limited capacity unless WPC deliberately connects and supports them. Focus requires choices about what to simplify or release. Activity must be assessed by the difference it makes in people's lives.

How Well Table Talk 2 Met Its Objectives

Each table was asked to select two or three observable outcomes, two or three integrated commitments, a meaningful reservation or missing voice, and the commitment requiring the most courage. The assessment below concerns what the written reports document, not everything that may have occurred in discussion.

Week 2: How Well Were the Objectives Met?

A qualitative assessment of the four table reports

OBJECTIVE	ASSESSMENT	EVIDENCE AND REMAINING WORK
Two or three observable outcomes	**Largely met**	All four tables selected outcomes. Some need clearer descriptions of the difference people would experience.
Two or three integrated commitments	**Partly met**	Three tables recorded explicit commitments; the fourth offered priorities and ideas. Specific actions and costs need refinement.
A meaningful reservation or missing voice	**Largely met**	Three tables explicitly recorded one. The fourth discussed barriers but did not designate a final reservation or missing voice.
The commitment requiring the most courage	**Largely met**	Three tables explicitly addressed courage. The fourth implied cultural changes without selecting a greatest courage requirement.

Not met | Limited | Partly met | Largely met | Fully met

Week 3: Refine shared commitments, test willingness to change, and identify leadership needs.

Ratings reflect documented completion and specificity—not percentages, votes, or a judgment of discussion quality.
Supplemental participant emails inform interpretation; they are not counted as additional table submissions.

Harvey balls summarize qualitative judgments of documented completion and specificity; they are not numerical scores.

What Was Achieved

Every table narrowed its discussion to desired outcomes or priority directions. Three explicitly recorded integrated commitments, designated reservations or missing voices, and addressed courage. The fourth offered two priorities and practical ideas, with barriers and cultural changes present in the discussion but not separately completed in the requested structure.

The strongest accomplishment was giving familiar aspirations practical meaning. Welcome became follow-up and manageable expectations. Belonging included being honored and needed. Service included practical help and attention to impact. Leadership included coordination, support, and room for new contributions.

What Remains Unfinished

Clarify outcomes. Attendance, volunteers, building use, and programs are useful indicators, but do not alone establish belonging, spiritual growth, or effective care. Connect activity with the change people should experience.

Choose a sustainable focus. The reports offer many valued directions but fewer choices among competing demands. Calls for fewer missions and adaptable participation need further testing.

Specify change and ownership. Participants named institutional habits, leadership needs, and disagreement more clearly than the specific practices, resources, or relinquishments they would undertake.

The assignment was demanding for a short session. Table Talk 3 should use what was learned to finish the movement toward shared choices, rather than repeat broad brainstorming.

What Stood Out and How to Read the Findings

Findings That Challenge Easy Assumptions

Existing welcome practices matter. Nursery care, name tags, and the directory provide concrete strengths to build on. Improvement should preserve what newcomers already experience positively.

Growth and change cross age groups. An older-majority table explicitly advocated growth and leadership development. The records do not support a simple generational divide between preservation and change.

Participation involves influence. Questions about permission and “paying dues” suggest that the challenge extends beyond recruiting volunteers. People need room to exercise gifts and help shape WPC’s life.

Adaptability can mean redesigning existing practices. Refreshing small groups around changing needs and schedules offers a possible alternative to continually adding permanent programs.

Leadership is a congregational responsibility. A pastor can enable formation, coordination, and change, but members must share ownership of welcome, care, service, and leadership.

Justice is one significant issue within a broader picture. It deserves explicit attention alongside the widely recurring concerns about belonging, participation, care, and community connection.

About This Analysis

This synthesis draws on the four Session 2 table reports and three supplemental emails from participants at Table 2. Facilitator instructions and the Session 1 recap were treated as context, not participant findings. The report distinguishes recorded evidence from interpretation and proposed next steps.

The four participant lists total 24 people excluding facilitators: 12 under age 65 and 12 age 65 or older. One participant at Table 3 was present only briefly.

Tables 1–4 and Reflections A–C are identified without personal names. Differences among tables may reflect life stage, personalities, facilitation, or conversational flow. They should not be treated as demographic verdicts or as measured levels of congregational agreement.

Missing Perspectives and Reservations

Participants identified people of color and adults under 35 as missing or insufficiently represented perspectives. Diversity in worship leadership was also raised. Neighbors and community partners should have opportunities to help test claims about community needs and impact; this report does not speak on their behalf.

One facilitator described a subdued conversation while also recognizing good ideas and hope. Tone alone does not establish resistance or lack of readiness. Across the records, the content includes both hopeful proposals and candid concerns.

Draft1 is intended for review by Session and the congregation. Recurring themes indicate convergence in the records, not unanimity. Proposals in the next section remain to be tested.

Table Talk 3 Objectives and Choices

Retain the original purpose of Table Talk 3: test and connect. Bring a short proposed synthesis for participants to refine, then connect it to practical choices and the leadership capacities needed to carry it forward.

By the end of Table Talk 3, participants will have tested and refined two or three shared outcomes and corresponding commitments, identified signs of progress, and named the changes and shared responsibilities needed to pursue them, while preserving significant reservations.

From Week 2 Findings to Week 3 Choices

Proposed outcomes for discussion—not commitments already adopted by the congregation.

WHAT WE HEARD	PROPOSED SHARED OUTCOME	CHOICES TO TEST
Welcome, follow-up, timely care, intergenerational relationships, and room to use gifts.	**People across generations are known, supported, and able to contribute.**	How will we make welcome and care dependable—and participation accessible?
Scripture, worship, learning that applies to life, fellowship, service, and justice.	**People grow in Christian faith and purpose through learning, relationships, and action.**	Which practices will connect formation and action? How will we hold welcome and conviction together?
Community visibility, local relationships, practical help, and learning from neighbors.	**Neighbors know WPC as a trusted partner and source of practical help.**	Which relationships and needs will we focus on? How will neighbors help shape our response?

FOR EVERY COMMITMENT

What will change? • Who will share responsibility? • What leadership and resources are needed?
What fruit will we look for? • What will we release? • Which reservations or missing voices remain?

These proposed outcomes organize the next discussion; they are not commitments already adopted by the congregation.

Use the Bull's Eye to Test Each Commitment

- Trust: How is this grounded in Jesus? Learn: What will we learn, and from whom?
- Welcome: Who will experience belonging, care, and room to contribute?
- Live: What difference will this make in everyday life and among our neighbors?
- Reciprocity: How will those relationships change our learning, welcome, and understanding of faith?

Leave with Clear Choices and Shared Responsibility

Test agreement and willingness separately: does this describe our calling, and what are we prepared to change to make it real? Explicitly address growth, room for newcomers to influence congregational life, sustainable participation, and the leadership support required.

Record significant reservations without requiring unanimity. The goal is enough clarity to guide the Mission Study and subsequent planning; detailed program design and budgeting can follow. Table Talk 3 succeeds when shared aspirations become commitments the congregation is prepared to support and help carry.