

Fleming Road UCC

Becoming a “community engaged” church, a
“New Parish” round table.

What is the New Parish?

Parish is referenced as “all relationships (including with the land) where the local church lives out it’s faith together.

The New Parish is the imagination and possibility of the “unseen mega-church” of churches coming together in a community for authentic friendship, collaboration, and working towards faithful presence and the benefit of the larger community.

“We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems. Community exists for the sake of belonging and takes its identity from the gifts, generosity, and accountability of its citizens. It is not defined by its fears, its isolation, or its penchant for retribution. We currently have all the capacity, expertise, programs, leaders, regulations, and wealth required to end unnecessary suffering and create an alternative future.”

“The key to creating or transforming community, then, is to see the power in the small but important elements of being with others. The shift we seek needs to be embodied in each invitation we make, each relationship we encounter, and each meeting we attend. For at the most operational and practical level, after all the thinking about policy, strategy, mission, and milestones, it gets down to this: How are we going to be when we gather together?”

- Peter Block, *The Structure of Belonging*.

A New Chapter

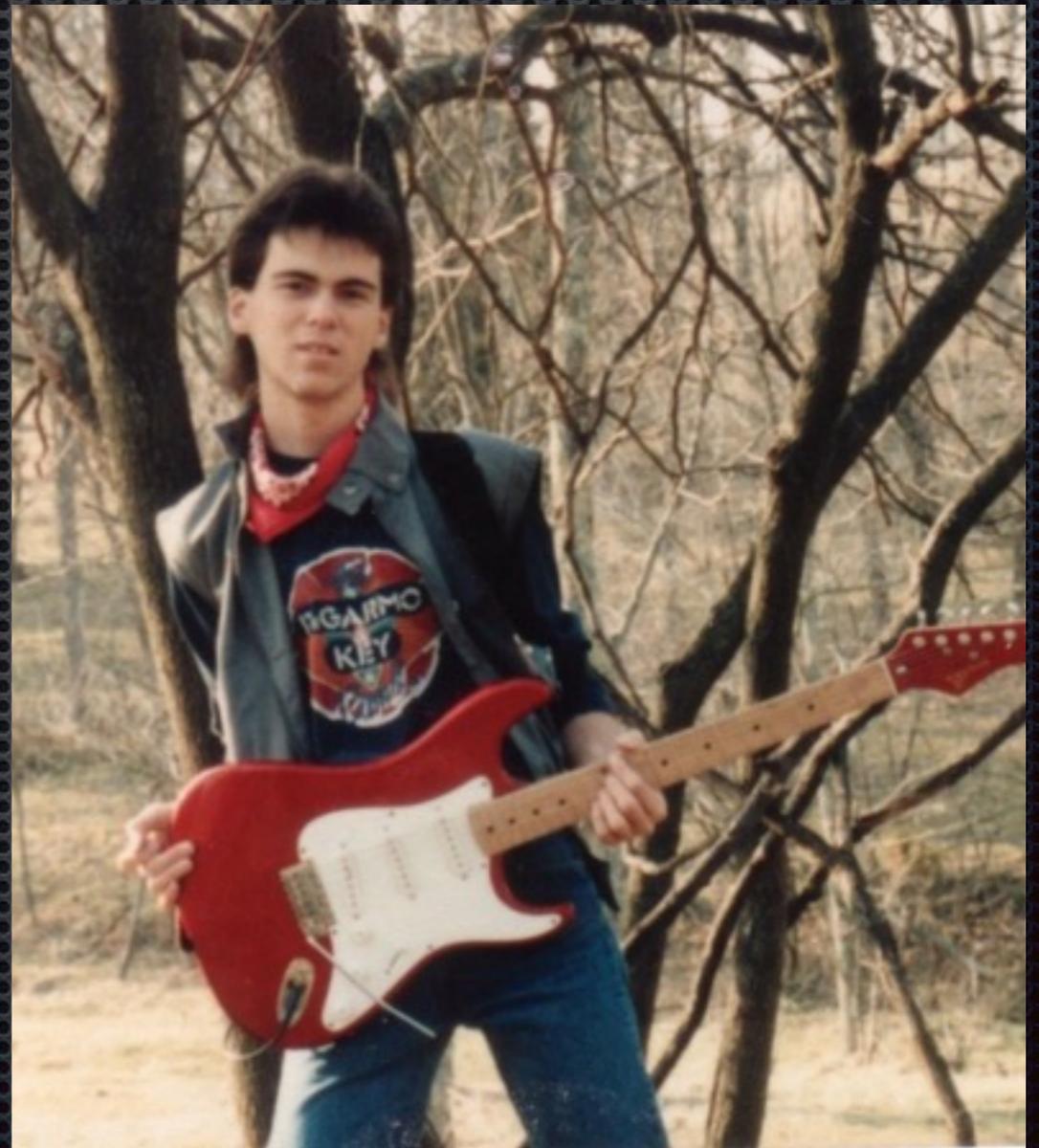
Fleming Road UCC has been on a journey to find a new pastor and to become a “community engaged” church. It has asked great questions and is understands that the church is in the midst of change.



imagination and community

Out of a creative, imaginative, collaborative process, Fleming Road UCC extended a call to Rev. Rich Jones to become their pastor.

Rich is rooted in the church's neighborhood and is committed to seeing churches become "community engaged" and rooted, and is connected to the global and local movement that is shepherding this transformation, or "re-functioning" of the church.



The Pitch...or the cutting edge for churches...

Hint: it's not rocket science...



Fleming Road UCC has been a faithful presence in Springfield Township, the neighborhoods in which we came, and throughout the UCC. Moving forward, we will strive to work with other churches, civic groups, government, and schools in order to bless our community and to grow as a church as we live in the flow of God's love by listening and loving well.

FRUCC

The issue: we know that church has to change, needs to change, and will change...or it will simply die.

FRUCC

The solution: by simply listening to one another, to our neighbors, and to our community that our church resides...as well as the neighborhoods in which we live... we will begin to hear and see where God is at work, and work with what God wants us to partner with God on.

FRUCC

Our mission: To provide a community for the purpose of personal and corporate growth and well-being through the practices of listening, loving well one another and our neighbors, and doing the simply, yet hard, work of self, others, and God awareness.

FRUCC

- As Jesus followers, we adhere to an “alternative way of living”, or “Kingdom living”, which means being faithfully present to ourselves, others, and God’s fidelity.

FRUCC

- As Jesus followers, we live in a cycle of birth, life, death, and resurrection...we have faith that our church's "best history" is ahead of us and finds meaning and purpose in our faith in God's work in our neighborhood... in which we are called to be co-collaborators...or co-conspirators!

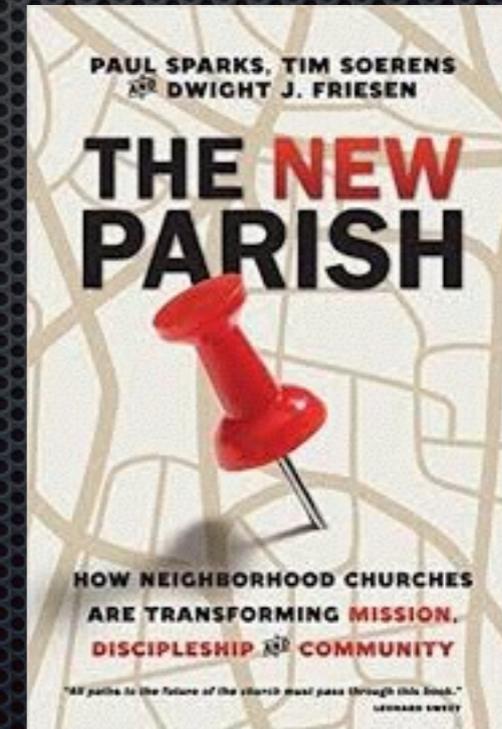
motive

- ✦ As Jesus followers, we believe that we do not live in “scarcity” but in an abundance of giftedness and relationships.

FRUCC

We will join with any who are willing to partner with us as we want to see a “new parish” emerge in our community and for relationships to flourish.

conversation partners



FRUCC

- Why was it important for you to be here tonight?

FRUCC

- What are some possibilities or creative future that you have for Fleming Road UCC?

FRUCC

- What can I do and/or be for Fleming Road UCC to be all that God intends?

“On Generosity

On our own, we conclude:
there is not enough to go around

we are going to run short
of money
of love
of grades
of publications
of sex
of beer
of members
of years
of life

we should seize the day
seize our goods
seize our neighbours goods
because there is not enough to go around

and in the midst of our perceived deficit
you come
you come giving bread in the wilderness
you come giving children at the 11th hour
you come giving homes to exiles
you come giving futures to the shut down
you come giving easter joy to the dead
you come – fleshed in Jesus.

and we watch while
the blind receive their sight
the lame walk
the lepers are cleansed
the deaf hear
the dead are raised
the poor dance and sing

we watch
and we take food we did not grow and
life we did not invent and
future that is gift and gift and gift and
families and neighbours who sustain us
when we did not deserve it.

It dawns on us – late rather than soon-
that you “give food in due season
you open your hand
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

By your giving, break our cycles of imagined scarcity
override our presumed deficits
quiet our anxieties of lack
transform our perceptual field to see
the abundance.....mercy upon mercy
blessing upon blessing.

Sink your generosity deep into our lives
that your muchness may expose our false lack
that endlessly receiving we may endlessly give
so that the world may be made Easter new,
without greedy lack, but only wonder,
without coercive need but only love,
without destructive greed but only praise
without aggression and invasiveness....
all things Easter new.....
all around us, toward us and
by us

all things Easter new.

Finish your creation, in wonder, love and praise. Amen.”

— **Walter Brueggemann**

Homework!!

- ✦ Simple Experiment!
- ✦ Our next New Parish Round Table is Thursday, March 1, 7 PM!