

2017 Vision & Strategy Two Services FAQ

1. Don't we already have enough room for people without adding an additional service?

ANSWER: “The 70% Rule”

We do have some “empty seats” on Sunday mornings, but looks can be very deceiving when it comes to seating capacity. The truth is that we’re already “full”, actually beyond capacity. Our sanctuary could hold about X people shoulder to shoulder. But in reality, any space (parking lots, auditoriums, sanctuary etc.) feels “full” at 70% of capacity. Now, our sanctuary can seat 268 people at maximum capacity. Theoretically, sure you could put more people in the pews. But every study has shown that once a space reaches 70% capacity, people (especially visitors) begin to feel like there isn’t room for more people, and are less inclined to return. The reality is that a “full sanctuary” communicates, “There is no room for you here.” And this dynamic also impacts our “regular attenders” who feel the crunch, and are less likely to invite their friends and family.

In the year that we have been in the new building, during the “high season” (when most universities are in session), we’re averaging 230 people in WEEKLY ATTENDANCE. To add an additional perspective, in the year that we have been in the new building, the 4 highest attendance numbers were. This number does not include folks who are not present in the worship service because they’re serving in other ministries. This also does not include the number of children.

*One other additional note on attendance figures. We know that a large number of folks who attend “regularly” do so only once or twice a month. We have surmised that the actual number of “regular attenders” is larger than the weekly attendance figures. More on this a bit later.

ANSWER: Parking Limitations

Another unexpected challenge of having one worship service has been the limited parking availability around the church. A new church is now holding worship service at the SDA and utilizing Logan boulevard for parking as well. This means that the capacity for parking on Logan has shrunk considerably. Although we are allowed to park on Logan boulevard, some of the neighbors have become increasingly antagonistic. There are two-fold reasons for this. One, limited parking on Logan has caused some folks to park “illegally”, those spots near intersections not allowed for parking. Some of the neighbors have taken pictures of cars parked illegally, and have sent them to us as well



as the city, so that they can bolster their case with the city to disallow parking on Logan boulevard. The other result of limited parking on Logan boulevard has meant parking on neighborhood streets, which is allowed, but a sore spot for some of the neighbors.

The result is that we have “outgrown” the parking availability with one service. We always have, and always will encourage our folks to take public transit as much as possible. And furthermore, we appreciate the fact that many are willing to walk a few city blocks to church, and not consider that an inconvenience. But the reality is that the parking lot is “full” during our 10 AM service and that has been a deterrent, especially for our visitors (and some of our regular attendees!)

The only solution to this “problem” (what a great problem to have!) is to create more parking spot availability. We can do that by offering two services. Two services will “ease” the parking issue.

ANSWER: “Feel” of a smaller church with “Benefits” of a larger church

Most people love the “feel” of a smaller church, but like the “benefits” that a larger church can provide. Most people want an “intimate” community feel, but also want to be a part of a church with excellent Small Groups, great Children’s ministry for their kids, and various opportunities to be involved in Compassion and Justice ministries, just to name a few. Adding an additional service will provide the “feel” of a smaller church, with the “benefits” of a larger church. Most studies show that it’s next to impossible to really “know” more than about 150 people in any given setting. Two smaller services will allow you to better get to know more people.

What does all this mean?

Two services will allow us to have the breathing room that we need to continue to grow! God has put us in a unique place to reach people in our city. That is our mission. He’s sending us new people every week. They’re not even waiting for us to go find them; they’re coming to us! And the last thing that we want to communicate to them is, “There is no room for you here!” Having multiple services on Sunday morning is a critical step towards fulfilling the mission that God has given His church: reaching more people with the life-transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. All this for Sunday Worship services? Is it that important?

“They met in the Temple courts...and in homes.”

It's rare, but once in a while I have engaged in conversations with folks who seem to “downplay” the Sunday worship gatherings. The rationale goes something along the lines of, “Well, the real church is what we do every day of the week.” Sure, there is some truth to that. The “real church” is not a building, an address, or even a worship gathering. The church is the people of God. However, two things can be said. *One, Scripture (both the Old and the New Testament) clearly calls us to gather together as the people of God for corporate worship.* The entire early church gathered for what could be described as “Temple Worship” in the Jerusalem Temple. This would have been a massive gathering of thousands of people who came to faith on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). In other words, the picture that we see in the New Testament is one in which people didn't decide on “either” Sunday corporate worship gathering, “or” weekly small group gathering. **THEY DID BOTH!** They gathered **BOTH** in the Temple for corporate worship **AND** in their homes for smaller groups. It's erroneous to think it's an “either-or” proposition!

A healthy church community is one in which people realize that they are part of a larger mission of God given not just to them as individuals, but to a **CORPORATE** church body, a mission so vast and grand that we **NEED** others to fulfill it! And I don't know about you, but my western, individual tendencies naturally drift towards a smaller, “me-focused” vision. And it takes a gathering of the **ENTIRE** body to remind me of what it is that I really belong to. So, I need **BOTH** this larger gathering **AND** a smaller gathering of my church family to grow in Christ.

The other thing that can be said is this. For reasons that only God knows (because I promise you, I am not that smart), God has powerfully used the Sunday worship gathering to **AWAKEN** the lost sinner to the Gospel and to **GROW** the believer towards greater depth in the Gospel. Simply put, for the last 14 years, *God has used the Sunday worship gathering to evangelize and disciple men and women to faith.* Now, let me be clear about this. The Sunday worship gathering isn't the most important thing that we do at New Community. However, the Holy Spirit has, and continues to use the Sunday worship gathering to change people's lives. It's truly a team effort in which everyone's contributions have made a difference towards someone either coming to Christ for the first time, or returning to their First Love after running away for years. We praise God for His work! Therefore, we just want to be good stewards of what God is doing. We want to stay humble and say, “God, continue to use the Sunday worship gathering to draw all people to you.”



We are totally committed to shoring up and continuing to grow ALL the ministries of New Community! Again, it's not an "either-or" but a "both-and". We want the Lord to continue to use BOTH the Sunday worship gathering AND ALL the ministries of the church to advance His kingdom for the sake of His glory. We just want to be His vessels that He puts into good use!

"Attend One, Serve One"

For starters, two services provide opportunities for people to attend a service and volunteer at a service. For example, ask any one of our amazing Kid City volunteers how much this would mean to them! Instead of someone serving once a month, they can actually serve every week and still be in service. Relationships to the kids are greater, ministry is greater, connection to the vision is greater! It is proven that moving to multiple services actually makes it easier to find volunteers. With additional services, people now have additional choices. Volunteers now have the option of attending a worship service and serving in another. Having only one service forces people to choose between attending the worship service or volunteering in a ministry.

People appreciate "options"

Studies have also shown that being able to choose between two services gives an incentive to those who might otherwise "skip" out on a Sunday. For example, I have literally had people tell me that they simply overslept and as a result missed a worship service! Had they known that there was another service available later in the day (say 11AM), they would have made the effort to come to that later service. I have also had others tell me honestly that "Bear's Season" (the football variety, that is) affects church attendance for them! For these folks, an earlier service is an incentive, since they can attend the earlier service and get ready for football festivities.

You see the point. I can list other examples of how having options would have made a difference. Some might say that this is simply giving into a mindset of rampant consumerism. And believe me, I am as sensitive and concerned about the influence of consumerism within the church in America. But when it comes to this issue, I am guided more by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9 when he says, "*I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*" By all means necessary. If we can remove barriers to a person hearing the Good News of the Gospel, then we do it. Whatever means necessary. If that means offering two services, we do it.

3. Why don't we just start a new church instead of starting a new service?

It's always a "both-and" and not an "either-or". It is still our intention to plant more churches! Church planting lies at the heart of who we are as a church. We believe in church planting. *But experience has taught us the need to do so wisely and with a good plan.* When we plant a new congregation, we want to do so in such a way that the new congregation and the existing New Community (Logan Square) both have enough members and leadership to thrive and continue to grow. It's not an "either-or" but a "both-and."

4. Can't we wait & see if it's really necessary? Maybe we won't have to do this after all.

Please see answers #1 AND #2. God is blessing us immensely in this congregation! Our history and our data tell us if we do nothing, this "problem" will eventually solve itself, but not in the way we may want it to. We will stop growing and miss out on opportunities to reach more people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. What will the schedule be?

First Service: 9:00 to 10:15 AM

Second Service: 11:00 to 12:30 PM

6. When will this new schedule start?

The new schedule will begin on Easter Sunday - April 16, 2017

7. Who will lead praise and worship for these services?

We are fortunate to have a number of capable worship leaders who will be able to lead our praise and worship. We generally anticipate using the same worship leader for each of the two services.

8. Will the services be carbon copies of each other or will they be different?

For the most part, the two services will be similar. But the biggest difference will be that the earlier 9:00 service will be shorter by about 15 minutes. To be more specific, the praise and worship time will be significantly shorter. The preacher will preach the same sermon in both services.

9. Won't this hurt the attendance at our current service?

Obviously our attendance at each service will be lower than if we just continued to have the one service because our people will be spread between the two. On the whole, though, we believe that initially the total attendance will be about the same as now. In the long term, this will actually give us the ability to continue to grow and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

10. How will you get people to attend the new service?

In a sense, they're both a "new" service. One is earlier than what we currently do and one is later. So we will ask you to indicate which service you plan to attend so that we have an estimate for planning purposes. And we would ask that, for those of you for whom the early service would work, that you seriously consider helping us make this a success by worshipping in the early service. In fact, we think an earlier service would work to the advantage of some of our members, particularly parents with children, as well as folks who want the rest of the day to enjoy!

11. But I won't get to see everyone each Sunday anymore?

That's true, but it's already true now. With some 250 people on Sunday mornings, you can't possibly talk to everyone now anyways! If anything, the smaller gatherings will better enable you to connect with people that you might not know right now. At least, that's our hope!

12. Which service will the pastors/staff attend?

There will be pastors/staff at both services.

13. What other added benefits are there?

There is one important benefit that you might not be aware of. Every Sunday, there are countless number of men and women who serve in various ministries that preclude them from worshipping with you in the service. Or, they are in the worship service, but unable to fully "engage" as they have responsibilities that keep them from doing so. Sure, a second service would increase the need for more servant leaders. But it will also mean that EVERYONE will have an opportunity to worship with their church family on a given Sunday, even if they serve in one of the services.

I know that particularly for those who serve in ministries like the "Counting Ministry", or the Kid City Ministry, if they serve more than one Sundays per month, they have had to miss being a part of the worship service. *An added service means that we ALL share in the sacrifice of building God's kingdom!* And that's the picture of the early church in Acts. EVERYONE sharing in the responsibility of the Lord's work, doing their part! Result? The Lord added to their number daily!

14. What does this mean?

This will have huge ramifications for our church family. More than anything, it means that there will need to be a dramatic INCREASE in folks serving and participating in the various ministries of the church. Let me be clear. Going to two services is not possible if those who are not currently serving, don't step up and serve! We cannot do this by



placing the burden of meeting the growing needs on the backs of those who are already serving in multiple capacities. It requires the sacrificial service of everyone! It's time for those who are merely attending to begin serving and contributing to the ministry of this church family! This may literally require everyone who calls New Community home to participate and contribute to the ministry! We have amazingly gifted and committed servants who make this church the church that it is today! There are countless numbers of men and women who serve without recognition and praise. I am constantly in awe of how committed and faithful men and women of New Community are. Well, we may need to double the number of volunteers who serve currently! That's no exaggeration! This is a defining moment for the life of our church. We have an amazing opportunity to partner with the Holy Spirit as he moves powerfully among us. The harvest is ripe but the workers are indeed few!

Will you serve? Will you give? *Will you move from being a consumer and a spectator to being a contributing ministry partner at New Community?* The opportunity to make a Kingdom impact that will last an eternity is right in front of you. What will you do about it? Will you join us?