

Belvedere Family Church Newsletter 4.14.17

Drissa Kone
April 14, 2017



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Greetings BFC Families!

What a beautiful week we had so far! We hope everyone has been able to enjoy the warm weather by engaging in some outdoor activities.

For those of you who weren't able to make it to last Sunday Service, we have some important announcements that we would like you to be aware of.

First, the BFC Council Voting is taking place right now - please cast your votes before midnight on Sunday, April 23rd (more information below).

Second, our annual BFC survey results are finally in! Thank you again to everyone who took their time to respond to our survey this year. The Survey Team has put together the response and constructed the "Community Voice" newsletter where each committee has written an article in response to the received feedback.

A prominent feedback the Survey Team received was the lack of "volunteer spirit" in our community. In order to increase more opportunities for the community to get involved, we are planning to organize a Volunteer Open House after Sunday Service on May 7th. As we get closer to the day, we will have more information but please think about how you can offer your unique skills and talents to the community!



BFC Council Voting

Please visit our webpage to view all of our candidates' photos and bios, and vote for our new council members (preferred): <http://www.belvederefamily.com/election/>

Or if you prefer to submit a paper vote, please download and print out the BFC Council Election Ballot. After you fill out a paper ballot, you can give it to Kester Wilkening, Akiko Morris, or Yuki Jones.

Please consider having a good breadth of demographics on the Council (age, gender, culture, experience, etc.) Voting ends at midnight on Sunday, April 23rd, so you have some time to think about who you would like to be on the Council.

The candidates are:

Djamel Bouachri, Dale Hoffman, Kimiyo Matthews, Matthew Learey, David Okamoto, Julia Okamoto, Renate Sato, David Wolf

BFC Council Election Ballot

Community Voice Newsletter

Please see the attached newsletter to read the BFC Committee responses to the 2017 community survey.

Community Voice

SMALL GROUP

Small Groups for Young Adults and Adults

The young adult small group for those under 35 will begin Saturday night, April 15th at the White House. The meeting will start at 6:30PM with a light dinner and end at 8PM.

Please RSVP to Noah or Kathy Ross by texting 914-275-1278, or by email

kathrynross82@gmail.com or noahross72@gmail.com.

The adult small group for adults (35+) will begin Wednesday night, April 19th at the White House from 7:30PM to 9:00PM with snacks. Please RSVP to Lynn Walsh at walshome2000@yahoo.com. Small groups members generally decide on a commitment of 7 - 8 weeks. Small groups provide an enjoyable and supportive environment for personal and spiritual growth.

Please consider joining!



Looking to do some Spring Cleaning?

Wonky Todd is offering spring cleaning discounts for All American Junk Removal. They offer free estimates and will clean and sweep after removal.

Please call [914 588 8487](tel:9145888487) for more information.

BFC COMMITTEE RESPONSES TO THE 2017 COMMUNITY SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

by Peter Reiner

Thank you so much to those who contributed to our 2017 BFC Community Survey! Especially thank you to the survey team (Jessica Sattinger, Chiaki Hagiwara, and Peter Reiner), and to all the committee chairpersons and facilitators who participated.

This years survey included a few new features, such as the ability to save and return to the survey, and a Japanese translation. We want to convey a big thank you to Justin Okamoto for his efforts in preparing the Japanese version!

We received 59 responses to our 2016 survey. This year, we received a total of 79 responses to the English version, and another 5 to the Japanese version. Only 17 responses were received from young people under 30 years old. The remaining responses were split about 50/50 between the 30 to 60 year old and the above 60 year old age groups.

The largest portion of the survey questions were directed at Sunday Service, and the performance of our leadership. The rest was addressed to committees, such as the Administration, Blessing and Marriage Committee, Up and Coming Youth Ministry, Sunday School, Finance committee, and so on. Our pastoral team and each of these committees has written a short response to the survey results in this CommunityVoice newsletter.

Some highlights from the survey:

In response to the question "What BFC activities do you like the best?" the number one choice was Sunday Service, followed by Small Groups and Youth Ministry activities.

When asked "What area do you feel needs the most improvement?" the number one response was Outreach, followed by Small Groups and Marriage and Family Care.

In response to the question "Please rate the following on average over the past year" the majority gave quite good ratings to our Head Pastor and Council leadership (!!) but low ratings to the "volunteer spirit" in our community. (So please get out there and participate more!)

This gives you an idea of the type of data we collected this year, and by reading this Community Voice newsletter you will find many more details. Our hope is that with each survey, we can learn more and more about our community members views and interests, with an eye on improvement. If you want to know more about how this survey data will be used, or if you have additional comments or suggestions, please contact our committee chairpersons. I promise they would love to hear more from you!

BLESSING AND MARRIAGE COMMITTEE

Hi everyone!

You are probably aware that we recently had a marriage seminar at Belvedere to celebrate both Valentine's Day and National Marriage Week. We had a good turn-out of both older and younger couples, and we discussed several important topics that really matter in marriage; like how to manage our expectations, how to communicate better when we are upset, why and how forgiveness heals and opens the way for continued growth and intimacy, and the importance of finding a common way to express our faith. Our youth ministry offered childcare support which allowed several couples with young children to attend, and several couples came from Manhattan and Queens to join in.

Pastor Kone and I have decided to make it an annual event in our community, possibly even bi-annual, because we understand how important it is for all of us to take time out of our busy schedules to invest in our marriages. So if you missed it, know that we will plan another one! We may also consider targeting different age groups in separate seminars, as the needs and concerns of couples just

PASTORAL TEAM

by Denthew Learey

As the Pastoral team, we have looked at your responses from the survey and it was very insightful to see all the different feedbacks. Thank you to everyone that took their time to answer all the questions with thoughtful responses. Because there were many responses, we are taking effort in trying to please all of you. It seems a lot of you like Dr. Kone's services but would like to hear more testimonies from the younger generation. This is wonderful. With that said, we are planning to have a more testimony-oriented family service each month. We would like to bring that family atmosphere where our brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles can share their testimonies to help inspire us and bring us closer.

According to the responses, there seem to be a want for more than just Sunday Service. Whether it's a special service for guests or a Divine Principle workshop during the week, there seems to be a desire for something to keep everyone more active. These were great ideas and we are planning on how to include this so that our weekly Sunday service won't be the only event that our wonderful community has to offer for its members.

Lastly, a lot of your responses included an aspect of witnessing, especially on the aspect of whether we should make our services more guest-friendly. Coincidentally, as of the beginning of this year, the Belvedere staff have started meeting to discuss this topic. We are hoping to create a more well-known community where it is open for the public, with the intent to grow our community. If you have any further ideas, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for all your efforts in our community. It's always wonderful to be able to see all of you at Sunday Service or our different events. God bless!

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

by Chiaki Hagiwara

Thank you to everybody who provided feedback to the administration committee. We're glad to hear that a lot of you are liking the current newsletter format of receiving emails! We've implemented this in order to consolidate the number of emails we send out.

We also heard some voices that you are not receiving our emails - please make sure to check your spam folder to see if they are ending up in there.

If not, please email admin@belvederefamily.com and we will check the registry. Currently, we are sending out the newsletters on a biweekly basis, depending on how many email contents accumulate within the week. From now on, we will send them out on every Friday so everyone can anticipate an end of the week report of any ongoing events or information we've sent out.

by Debby Gullery

starting out and those who are empty-nesters can be quite different.

We also want to develop them so that they are guest-friendly so we can utilize them as natural witnessing outreach programs. In order to do that, I realize I will need some help getting the word out into the larger community. So I am looking for a few volunteers to join the Marriage and Family team. Please let me know if you think you'd like to help out in some way to develop and expand what we offer our community.

Looking at the survey results, it seems there is a need and an interest in strengthening and improving parent/child relationships, so I'm planning to offer an educational series for parents of teenagers that will begin very soon. I want to make it easy for parents to attend, so I'm thinking to have it right after parents drop their kids off at Up and Coming, and then gather at White House for coffee and discussion. I'll get the date out as soon as possible so please plan on coming and we'll learn together!

SMALL GROUP COMMITTEE

by Lynn Walsh

Most of the questions regarding Community Enrichment were directed toward Small Group Ministry. According to the feedback, there is more than just small interest in small groups! Of those that responded to the questions regarding small groups, half have a small group and half do not. There was a wide range of experiences but a few have been in the same group for ten or thirteen years. Of the 19 respondents that are not currently in a small group, 12 are interested in one.

I was grateful to hear the many reasons why the small groups are valuable and "vital for spiritual growth". The majority described personal and spiritual growth, for instance, from "listening to and being heard by others in a safe, non-judgmental, confidential, intimate setting". Some reasons were more specific such as "helpful to see how very different people connect to the Principle", "support group amongst second gen young families", "the young adult small group helped me feel closer to my brothers and sisters around my age", "provides an "extended family" experience for children growing up", "the chance to check-in internally and share" and then the famous appreciation of the "awesome food".

In addition a few comments requested some improvements which pointed to the need of providing guidance on how to keep small groups vibrant and well functioning and further promotion of small groups through testimonies and a retreat. Overall the Community Enrichment/Small Group Committee would like to respond to the feedback with our plans:

- Starting young adult small group April 15 – contact Noah or Kathy Ross to sign up
- Starting an adult small group in April – Contact Lynn Walsh or Dominic Barber for information
- Hold small group facilitation trainings
- Encourage formation of Trinities
- Post on BFC Website:
- List of Existing Groups or Forming Groups open to new members with contact person
- List of days/times/location where people can sign up as interested in a form a small group
- List Focus or Activity groups such as health, yoga, witnessing, community service, sports, games etc. where people can sign up as interested
- Encourage attending DP Study and World Scripture Study Groups
- Initiate Unification Thought Seminar or Study Group

SUNDAY SERVICE COMMITTEE

by Dominic Barber

The Sunday service team would like to thank all of those who took the time and energy to give thoughtful feedback by responding to the survey. There were about 66 responses in the Sunday service section, less than half of those who regularly come to Sunday service. We are pleased that generally most members of our community are quite positive about the quality of the weekly service. There are, of course, some strong opinions about things that people would like to see changed. We would like to encourage anyone who has the passion to speak their mind to get involved. Being part of creating something new is quite rewarding and takes just as much time as you are willing and able to give.

Some of the things we are currently working on are: changing the layout of the room so the stage will be in the south end, together with improved lighting and enlarging the stage; also, we are discussing ways to implement Dr. Kone's vision of a Sunday afternoon family gathering style service once a month. Many of you responded enthusiastically to the questions about "guest friendliness", and rest assured that this is always a topic of conversation in our meetings. Thank you all once again from the Sunday Service Committee.

BELVEDERE FAMILY COUNCIL

by Chris Perkins

This year's survey produced a similar swath of responses to last year. I think this is encouraging because it not only confirms the subject matter of the topics but the growing clarity helps to focus the effort and resolve needed to address them.

You will see below that most of the topics identified are not "issues" that can be checked off a list as they are "solved" one by one. Rather they are focus areas where, through our cumulative efforts, we can experience growth together as a community.

Here is how your responses mapped out:

Of the seven topics identified, there were three topics that each got double the number of "mentions" of the other four topics. So depending on how you, the reader, would answer the question, "What are your chief concerns?" you will either be confirmed or surprised by these results.

First, here are the top three topics (the first one ranking slightly ahead of the other two)

1. Finding, caring for and raising new members, and outreach.
2. How to support 2nd Gen, help them connect, involve and grow.
3. Clarifying our identity and organizational structure and direction.

The other four issues were evenly represented. They were:

4. Caring for our families, individuals, seniors.
5. Spiritual growth and development (individual and family levels)
6. Divisions within True Family and the movement.
7. Fellowship and relationships within our own community.

Now if you have had your ear to the ground recently, you will know that work is in process on a number of the above topics with our Pastor, Council members and volunteers from the community involved.

If one of those topics catches your attention, talk to someone about it. Even if you feel you have nothing specific to offer at the moment. Having an interest is the first step. Even if you just have a suggestion, it could be the catalyst to... who knows what?

The point is, I believe that every single person in our community has something valuable to offer. Whether it be relevant to one of the above areas or not, whether it be big or small, we are all here for a reason. So thank you for being here!

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

by Peter Reiner

On this year's survey, the Outreach committee asked the community: "What kinds of outreach activities interest you the most?" The majority replied "inviting guests to community events". Second place was "community service" and third place was "inviting people to Sunday Service". This indicates that many in our community are looking for some sort of alternative outreach event that might involve service. A variety of possibilities were specified, from sports events to social action. It's clear that we are looking for all sorts of ways to make friends. This is in alignment with Dr. Kone's focus on relationships as the key to outreach.

Outreach in our community currently involves a broad spectrum connected with a number of groups, such as ACLC, UPF and Kodan. Dr. Kone is working to bring guest speakers to Belvedere that will attract not only our own members, but all sorts of people in our vicinity. These events will create new outreach opportunities in 2017 and will hopefully appeal to those in our community who are looking for alternative Outreach events. At the same time, Dr. Kone is continuing his work with the Sunday Service Committee to make our Sunday Worship Service a more guest friendly occasion, with such initiatives as our 5pm Family Service.

UP & COMING YOUTH MINISTRY

by Toyo Hagiwara

According to the survey data we received, the prominent feedback relevant to youth ministry was that a vast number of our congregation and parents of the youth ministry programs are unaware of what we actually do. This is an issue that is consistent with our continued desire to bridge our youth ministry to the rest of the community.

Based on this feedback, we are proposing an action step to use the new BFC website to update our monthly activities. We have not been able to follow through with our last year's action step to host a parent-child event but this year we have dedicated Up and Coming staff to plan this and we are looking forward to its realization.