

Cedar Ridge Plan: April-August 2021

March 2021

Introduction

As we pass the one-year mark of the closure of our facilities, we are greatly encouraged that our community remains strong. This is evidenced in so many ways, including consistently high Sunday service attendance, faithful and generous giving, active discipleship groups, and the love, prayer and practical support shown to members in need. Our vision to be the change we want to see in the world is also evidenced through collective initiatives such as monthly food donations to Greencastle Elementary school families, engagement in racial justice encounter groups, ongoing support to Ipala, and meal preparation for Sophia's House.

Nevertheless, the consequences of the pandemic are significant. Although everyone's experience has been different, many of us struggle with weariness, anxiety, and/or a deep sense of loss. The hope generated by the announcement of vaccines has been tempered by the realization that social distancing is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. We miss being together in-person without feeling the need to be guarded for our own and others' safety.

But unlike so many other faith communities, we are blessed with a beautiful and expansive property. So as the weather grows warmer, we will leverage opportunities for small in-person gatherings. Relationships and inclusivity are core to our identity: We will pay particular attention to ensuring our activities emphasize a relational approach, and as we prepare for a gradual return to in-person gatherings, we will also continue to provide live-streaming and other ways of engaging remotely for those who are unable to return.

Quarter 2 Progress

During the second part of the year (January–March), progress was made towards achieving our quarter 2 objectives:

1. Develop plans and practices to enact our commitment to social justice
 - Continued to demonstrate our commitment to local schools through food and gift card support to 20 Greencastle families each month
 - Developed and rolled out the *Becoming Anti-Racist* Cedar Ridge Kids' Lenten Adventure
 - Held a prayer vigil to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and encounter group meeting, and monthly safe space meetings for people of color
 - Funded scholarships for 58 students in Ipala, and developed an approach to deepening churchwide connection to our work in Guatemala
2. Develop a sustainable rhythm of spiritual practice that enriches our lives and empowers us for this work
 - Held pre-recorded Sunday services live over Zoom, allowing real-time community interaction, in addition to live Christmas Eve and Ash Wednesday services
 - Produced online content for children each week, and held Zoom gatherings for youth

- Discipleship groups continued to meet remotely, and one new group was established
- Provided pastoral care, including COVID financial assistance to people facing economic hardship
- Hosted bi-monthly yoga and meditation classes

Goal and Objectives

Our goal for the year is to work together for social justice, empowered by an ongoing experience of God’s unconditional love.

Objectives for the remainder of the year (April-August) build on the objectives of quarters 1 and 2, given their broad scope:

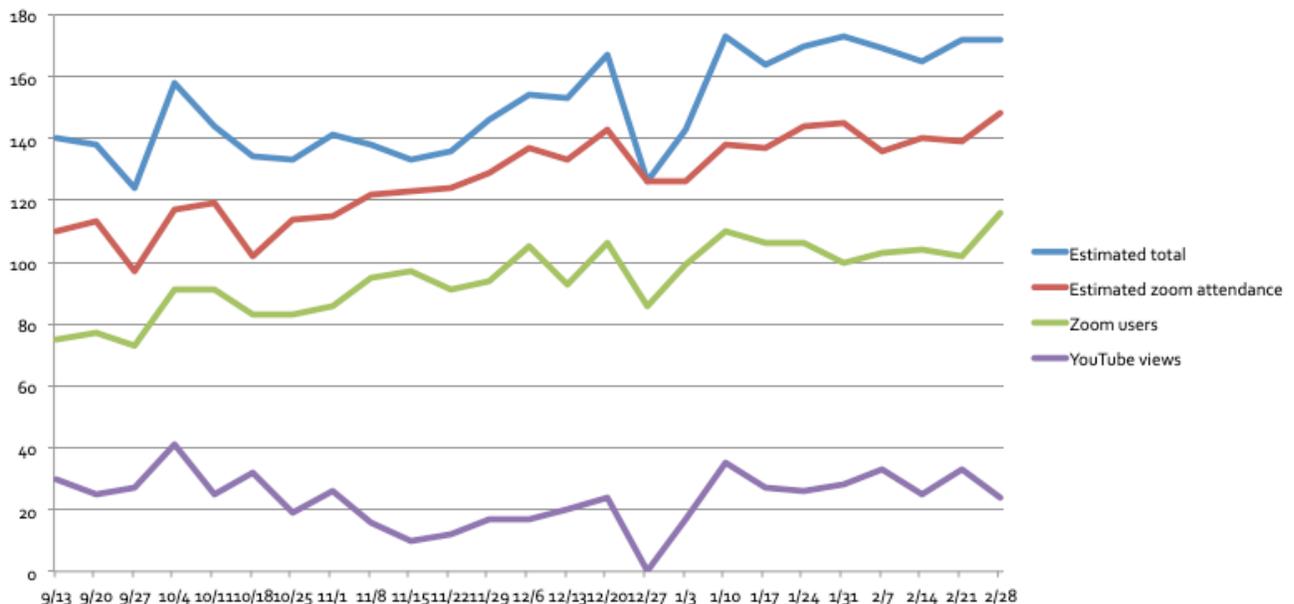
1. Continue to prioritize a relational aspect in our commitment to social justice
2. Continue a sustainable rhythm of spiritual practice that enriches our lives, and empowers us for this work

Metrics

This year, we are tracking two quantitative measures of community engagement: (i) tithes and offerings, and (ii) viewership of the Sunday worship service. In addition, we are using an evaluative monitoring approach to assess progress towards our goal and objectives in each of our ministry areas.

At the end of February, year-to-date tithes and offerings totaled \$367K, representing 95% of our giving goal.

Sunday service viewership by type (last 3 months)



We have continued to see consistently high and growing online attendance during the last 3 months.

In the graph above:

- YouTube views are the total number of views of the message since posting to date. Anecdotal evidence suggests Sunday morning service attenders sometimes go back to a message later in the week to review some aspect.
- Zoom users refers to the total number of devices connected.
- Estimated zoom attendance refers to the total number of people counted in the service (i.e., the total number of family members seen online).

Activities

Given our focus on being relational, and the importance to our emotional welfare of being together as a community, we will leverage opportunities for small, socially distanced gatherings, wherever possible. As the weather improves throughout the planning period, and as restrictions hopefully continue to ease with the roll-out of vaccinations, we will transition to larger and more frequent in-person gatherings. Nevertheless, we will also continue to provide online avenues of engagement for those who are unable to meet in person, or who feel uncomfortable with doing so.

Activities contributing to Objective 1: Continue to prioritize a relational aspect in our commitment to social justice

- Build direct relationships online between Cedar Ridge and CIDHER members and other friends in Ipala to encourage prayer and deeper understanding
- Hold farm nights that facilitate serving together and continue to emphasize ways to pursue food justice
- Maintain our monthly food donations to GES families and seek out new ways to support the school, as and when school staff have the capacity to engage
- Develop CRK leader training to strengthen our ability to promote racial justice with children
- Facilitate youth engagement in racial justice through various activities, including a documentary watch party and group discussions
- Continue to provide online gatherings to support people of color
- Develop a plan to address specific local issues in the criminal justice system
- Continue to integrate social justice into Sunday services and discipleship group materials

Activities contributing to Objective 2: Continue a sustainable rhythm of spiritual practice that enriches our lives and empowers us for this work

- Hold monthly in-person prayer practice nights on the Cedar Ridge property
- Post new, temporary reflections on the prayer walk and encourage members to use them (prior to the solar site construction)
- Return to weekly in-person youth gatherings on the property
- Hold socially distanced movie nights to tie in with Earth Day and the God in the Movies series
- Return to hosting yoga outdoors on the property, subject to weather and construction noise
- Host additional events TBD as other opportunities and ideas emerge

Upcoming Series

Spring series

We each deal with difficult circumstances in our own way. But whether we tend towards being emotionally expressive or self-restrained, we all experience emotions such as anger, grief, anxiety, and disappointment. How should we—as followers of Jesus who want to become better people—deal with such feelings? How can we respond to life’s challenges with both authenticity and self-control? How can we embrace our identity as emotional beings, while also engaging in practices that help us to change and grow? Through this series, we will explore what Scripture has to say about a range of emotions, we will look to Jesus as our example, and will hear from community members.

Late spring series

We will host our traditional God in the Movies series a little earlier this year to allow for outdoor movie nights before sunset gets too late. (Sunset is at 8:15PM on May 14 and 8:35PM on June 11.) As in past years, we will invite Cedar Ridge members to present on movies that have been meaningful to them.

Early summer and summer series

These will be determined closer to the date, and will depend on current events, social and environmental conditions, and community responses to previous series.

Draft Calendar

| Date | Event | Notes |
|------------|--|---|
| Fri Apr 2 | Online Good Friday Service | |
| Sat Apr 3 | Outdoor Easter Event | Farm preparation, self-guided Easter walk, live music, photos with the Easter Bunny |
| Sun Apr 4 | Easter Sunday | 6:30AM sunrise service and 10AM AAT Zoom service |
| Sun Apr 11 | Spring series 1 | |
| Wed Apr 14 | Prayer Practices night | |
| Sun Apr 18 | Spring series 2 | |
| Fri Apr 23 | Day after Earth Day | Farm planting followed by environment-themed family movie |
| Sun Apr 25 | Spring series 3 | |
| Sun May 2 | Spring series 4 | First Sunday |
| Sun May 9 | Spring series 5 | Mothers' Day |
| Wed May 12 | Prayer Practices night | |
| Sat May 15 | Late Spring Planting Day | |
| Sun May 16 | Late spring series 1 – God in the Movies | |
| Sun May 23 | Late spring series 2 – God in the Movies | |
| Fri May 28 | Outdoor Movie Night | |
| Sun May 30 | Late spring series 3 – God in the Movies | AAT? Memorial Day weekend |
| Fri Jun 4 | Outdoor Movie Night | |
| Sun Jun 6 | Late spring series 4 – God in the Movies | First Sunday |
| Wed Jun 9 | Prayer Practices night | |

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| Sun Jun 13 | Late spring series 5 – God in the Movies | Recognition of graduates? |
| Wed Jun 16 | Last day of school | |
| Sun Jun 20 | Early summer series 1 | Fathers' Day |
| Fri Jun 25 | Farm event | |
| Sun Jun 27 | Early summer series 2 | |
| Sun Jul 4 | Early summer series 3 | AAT? |
| Sun Jul 11 | Early summer series 4 | |
| Wed Jul 14 | Prayer Practices night | |
| Sun Jul 18 | Early summer series 5 | |
| Fri Jul 23 | Farm event | |
| Sun Jul 25 | Summer series 1 | |
| Sun Aug 1 | Summer series 2 | First Sunday |
| Sun Aug 8 | Summer series 3 | |
| Sun Aug 15 | Summer series 4 | |
| Fri Aug 20 | Farm event | |
| Sun Aug 22 | Summer series 5 | |
| Sun Aug 29 | Summer series 6 | |