

Samford University *Life is Calling*
Report for 2021 Annual Coordination Meeting

List hub activities you hosted in 2021 and hope to do in 2022, including dates if known:

2021 activities hosted by Life is Calling

- Critical Conversations: Helping Churches Talk about Race, Presented by The Rev. Eva Melton and The Rev. Dr. Joe Scrivner

Dec. 7, 2020: "Systemic Undertows, Below the Surface of Today's Racial Climate"

Feb. 5, 2021: "Housing Discrimination"

Feb. 18, 2021: "Worship Injustice"

Additional sessions were recorded by the presenters and addressed these topics: Dominant Narrative and Mass Incarceration, Environmental Justice and Racism, and Politics and Race
- March 10 and 24; and April 7, 2021: Scott Cormode, Hugh De Pree Professor of Leadership Development at Fuller Theological Seminary and author of *The Innovative Church*, facilitated 3 hour-long Zoom sessions on lament and listening as congregations begin post-Covid re-engagement.
- April 26-27, 2021: Retreat, "Questions of Calling: Exploring New Layers of Hope and Purpose"

Two Resource Strategists facilitated 3 breakout sessions with six Phase 1 pastors. The sessions, entitled "Listening and Lament" were designed by the Kelly Adams, Associate Director with CCR, and were based on the work of Scott Cormode. A final plenary session, facilitated by Kelly Adams, focused on "New Layers of Hope and Purpose"
- June 2, 2021: The launch of Phase 2 of Life is Calling. The point persons from 8 church-related organizations met with Life is Calling staff to get acquainted and for orientation about this new phase of Life is Calling. Phase 2 focuses on youth and young adults, age 16 to 26.
- September 20, 2021: "Gather" The first of four learning modules for Phase 2 of Life is Calling. The Rev. Kelley Hudlow, Communications Coordinator for the Diocese of Alabama, and the Rev. Michael Wilson, Director, CCR, gave presentations on the characteristics of Gen Z and Millennials, covering the 16-26 age range we are working with in this phase.
- Various dates: CCR Resource Strategists have facilitated sessions with two peer groups for the congregations' point persons. One peer group meets in person and one via Zoom.

2022 Activities Currently Planned

- February 26, 2022: "Word" - The second learning module for Phase 2. Guest Presenters include Rev. Jonathan Merritt, author of *Learning to Speak God From Scratch*, and Rev. Alyssa Aldape, contributing writer for Good Faith Media and *Nurturing Faith* magazine, focusing on Gen Z topics.

- July 23, 2022: “Table” - The third learning module for Phase 2. Guest Presenters will be Lisa Cole Smith; actor, director, pastor and Executive Director of convergence.org and Dr. Tripp Martin, Pastor of Auburn First Baptist Church.
- October, date TBD: “Send” - The fourth and final learning module for Phase 2. The Guest Presenter will be Dr. Gregory Ellison, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Candler School of Theology, Emory University and “Fearless Dialogues” founder and author.
- Various dates: CCR Resource Strategists will continue to facilitate sessions with two peer groups for the Phase 2 point-persons. One peer group meets in person and one via Zoom.

What is one point of discernment for your hub heading into 2022?

We often hear churches ask the question: How can we get younger people to come to our church? We think that a better question might be: *How can we become a church where younger people want to go?* We want to consider ways we might help churches explore this question.

Report on congregation activities – Imagine you are talking with a congregational leader from a church who wants to learn how a vocational lens can serve congregational life. The frameworks of calling, meaning, and purpose are new to them. Create a video, audio, or written document that:

- Tell a story of calling and discernment from one of your current congregations and / or one of their members.

We requested the Life is Calling team at First Baptist Church in Auburn, Alabama to prepare a report that addresses the topic of the frameworks of calling, focusing on their process and project. They chose to provide a video to tell their story. This church fully engaged in the Life is Calling process and the possibilities for reflection and action. The video is located at this link:

The MP4 file is [parked here](#). This is a downloadable file.