

VISION TEAM MEETING SUMMARY

Dr. Nancy Burgin Rankin

September 19, 2019

Central UMC, Shelby

WHY – The theological foundation; why we do what we do; presented through the Playbook. This serves as the basis for the action plan, which includes: **WHAT, HOW, WHO, and WHEN.**

WHOWHY – Before determining the HOW, we need to have an understanding of WHO we are reaching and WHY. This leads us to the HOW.

Why do we do what we do? “We want people to see what we have in Jesus and will want what we have and want to be a part of us.”

The basis and inspiration for “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” is firmly rooted in the Great Commission: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.* (Matthew 28:19)

Key Components:

1. Make Disciples (of all nations)
2. Baptize (bring into the family of God)
3. Teach (Jesus’ commandments)

Think about our mission statement incorporating the great commission (ref. Mission of the UMC)

We have to rethink, but continue to deliver the essentials to a changing world. Stop and re-orient. What would work to reach today’s families with schedules are so overloaded?

Our core values (prayerful, joyful, authentic, unselfish care toward others) should precede the “how” statements.

The aspirational values are our vision... the place where we want to arrive.

SAMPLE “ELEVATOR SPEECHES”:

“What are you looking for? We are centrally located to serve our community. We have a place for everyone to serve, grow in faith, and use their talents. We are open and welcoming to all. (Offerings: music program, children/youth programs, Open Table/lunch ministry, Pre-School, Boy/Girl Scouts, Counseling)”

“Where we are called to be as a church – we are a community church. We are open and friendly, come as you are, time of service is... We have cool things going on (mention Open Table). Opportunities for faith formation and learning. We are a praying church. We are happy to have any and all. Come as you are comfortable.”

Leave survival up to God. Just be faithful!

REVISITING THE CAR ILLUSTRATION (see notes for Aug. 15, 2019)

Who is in the driver’s seat... Vision? Relationships? Program? Management? Vision must remain in the driver’s seat to guide relationships, program and management if we are to be the Church God has called us to be. (See Nancy’s handout)

Group discussion identified relationships, program and management all trying to fit in the driver’s seat currently at CUMC.

Differentiating between the “ends” and the “means.” For instance, our building is a tool (means).

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY

Something to discuss in the future: How is a discipleship pathway different from a church membership pathway?

HOMEWORK FROM LAST SESSION

We divided into groups for various questions. Below are the results from group discussion and from answers submitted prior to our meeting.

1. *Experiencing Community will be successful when we build relationships (share life) with people we don't know well. What would this look like to you?*

- Combined worship services with other neighboring churches and participation in hot lunch meal programs.
- Intergenerational Ministry – fellowship meals, connecting experienced moms with new mothers, pairing empty-nesters with college students to pray for, continued work with Open Table, etc. Basically, purposefully connecting people who haven't met or have only interacted minimally. I think we would find out quickly that we all have much more in common than we have different.
- Building upon the relationships that are being built with the revamped hot lunch program. Expand to meet other needs in the community following the tradition of John Wesley and early Methodism. Get to know people for who they are as we interact with them. Be empathetic. Discern how to share the love of Christ in authentic ways. Go beyond viewing people as “potential members.” Meet them where they are; show authentic love and compassion. Church membership is not really the goal. Transforming lives and making disciples is.

2. *Experiencing Personal Transformation will be successful when people take responsibility for their own spiritual growth. What does it mean to take personal responsibility for your own spiritual growth?*

- Participate in small groups for study, fellowship. b) Listen to podcasts, sermons, read books. c) Find, be hungry. d) Be open to learn and grow in worship vs. depending on pastor/staff to do it. e) Someone to walk with you.
- Daily prayer, daily scripture reading, daily service to others and attending weekly worship services.
- For me, taking responsibility for my own spiritual growth means building habits. Habits of spiritual growth move my relationship with God from being a Sunday-only thing to a lifestyle, which is what our faith is supposed to be anyway.
- Create an environment where followers will be proactive in taking responsibility for their own growth rather than depending upon the church to do it for them. Faith development takes work and it does not become truly authentic until disciples take responsibility and initiative. The church is here to encourage, resource and engage in ways that lead to personal transformation. Small covenant accountability groups are very helpful to achieve this goal.

3. *Experiencing Social Transformation will be successful when we see our work through love and grace result in positive change in our homes, our workplaces, our community and our world. What would transformational change look like in these places?*

- Grace and forgiveness for other's mistakes, kindness to strangers, a willingness to listen to others, and a sacrifice of personal time to satisfy other's needs.
- Homes-Social transformation in the home looks like families communicating and working together as a unit towards a dynamic, life-giving faith in good times and bad. Workplace-Transformational change in the workplace would mean seeing our workplaces as mission fields, full of opportunity to share the love of God through what we do and who we are. Community – Real change will happen when we learn to see the face of God in EVERY person we encounter and act like it. World – Social transformation in the world will happen when we begin to look beyond our little “bubble” here at CUMC in Shelby, NC and find ways to become connected to the global Church and how our brothers and sisters across the world are impacting lives.
- Shifting the emphasis from what happens in the local congregation to an emphasis on being transformational agents in the world (all levels: community, region, nation, international) around us. Shifting from what’s in it for me to how can I engage in local church ministry to be a blessing to others in such a way that the world truly is transformed to be a reflection of the Kingdom of God.

4. *Experiencing Purpose Finding will be successful when we discover, claim, and practice our spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities. How do we go about doing this?*

- Thru prayer, thru listening to God, and in whatever opportunities arise perform them for God's glory, not for personal recognition or personal goals, and then God will lead you to His purpose.
- I think this will happen through education and practice. We have to first learn/teach what our abilities are before we can use them. So, people need leadership in discovering just who it is they were made to be. Then, we can begin to give opportunities for these things to be put into practice within the congregational setting and then, hopefully, in the larger community.
- A good place to start is a spiritual gifts inventory, (i.e. the Called and Gifted for Ministry workshop). Also, consider using the Frazier Memorial model (proven and timeless) to build and sustain ministry (to start a ministry begin with a core group of committed individuals to build the ministry rather than a committee to come up with ideas for others to implement.)

5. *Experiencing Creativity will be successful when we discover, claim, and practice our spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities.*

- Creativity to me is out-of-the-box, welcoming, joyful, adventurous thinking that invites the Holy Spirit into showing us new ways to connect with God and to connect with the world.
- Begin with the Called and Gifted for Ministry workshop and help participants through their discover of gifts, etc. find their place for ministry. Explore the myriad of forms in which creativity is manifest.

6. *Experiencing Accountability will be successful when we are encouraged to embrace the wholeness of who God calls us to be. What would this look like?*

- Ask the tough questions: Is this working? Is this following our mission? If not, how can we either change/adapt/or transform... or stop and try something else. Use mission for every meeting. Ask these things first! Love each other!
- When I consider in my decision making, how my decisions will affect the lives of others, rather than how they will effect "me".
- I would love to see our church move to having Accountability Groups of 2-3 people who intentionally spend time together each week to encourage and challenge each other in the places in our lives that we struggle to follow God, as well as, celebrate in the places that we are thriving.
- Focus more on discernment of God's will versus an intellectual or emotional mode of making a decision. Discernment is a result of prayer, the example of Jesus Christ, study of scripture and listening to the Spirit. Shift from a decision-making process to one of spiritual discernment through consensus. A proven vehicle is the Wesleyan concept of covenant accountability groups.

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCT. 10, 6 PM, FELLOWSHIP HALL

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT MEETING

On the handout for Sept. 19, Nancy listed three questions for us to consider before the next meeting beginning with a look at the MissionInsite report. I've attached reports for both a 3-mile radius and 5-mile radius.

- 1. What do the demographics (from MissionInsite) say about our community and how can we best respond?**
- 2. What are our immediate priorities – What is most important right now?**
- 3. Our Leadership – Who must do what?**