

2 – Year Strategic Plan

First United Methodist Church of Brighton

Adopted September 2016

Summary

The mission of First United Methodist Church of Brighton is to Know God, Love God and Serve God. We understand that this mission is accomplished through the grace of God and the ongoing, intentional effort of the congregation. By setting strategic goals that we will accomplish over the next two years, we will move the mission of our church forward.

This strategic plan does not encompass the entirety of First United Methodist Church's Mission and Ministry, but does identify specific areas that require improvement and sets priorities for the use of our church's resources over the next two years.

The three major goals of this strategic plan are informed by our mission.

Know God – Inviting and welcoming all people into the congregation

This strategic goal includes goals that will redevelop our avenues of invitation and invigorate a culture of invitation and welcome at Brighton First.

Love God – Helping people to grow as Disciples of Jesus Christ

This strategic goal includes the implementation of an intentional disciple making plan, enhancement of worship services and attention to children and youth education, and the support of persons that are being called by God.

Serve God – Sending people out into the world to serve in Christ's name

This strategic goal leads us toward intentional relationships with the community of Brighton and Livingston County.

Background

In March 2015, First United Methodist Church of Brighton adopted the recommendations of a Vital Church Initiative Consultation Team. One of the findings of the team was that the church had no specific, cohesive plan in place to move its mission forward. The recommendation, under the leadership of the Administrative Board Chairperson, was that a Strategic Plan Taskforce be established to create a plan.

The Administrative Board appointed John Phillips to lead the Task Force in May 2016 and agreed to the members who would be part of the team.

John Phillips took the model of strategic planning from the book *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy* by Richard P. Rumelt and adopted it for our use. The team identified several possible diagnoses using various resources included in the VCI bibliography, and for each of the possible diagnoses, discussed a guiding policy and set of coherent actions that would address the diagnosis. While each of the possibilities the

team considered had a certain amount of merit, the three diagnoses that are included in this document represent the culmination of this process.

According to the United Methodist Church, vital congregations set goals for the following reasons:

1. Give clarity and focus to ministry. Clarity and focus connect disciples to purpose and focuses their attention toward the purpose of the church.
2. Move the church forward. Without goals, congregations can become stuck in a rut, doing the same things over and over without making progress.
3. Create greater accountability. Goals that are prayerfully developed and discerned with God in mind keep us accountable to the ministry of Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit inspired goals that are achieved make us more like the body of Christ.
4. Make the congregation better. There is a saying, you do not have to be sick to get better. Good goals make us better. Not simply for the sake of being better alone, but make us better for serving the community.
5. The United Methodist Church believes God's love for the world is an active and engaged love, a love seeking justice and liberty. We cannot just be observers.

Process

The strategy writing team was composed of John Phillips, Chairperson of the Administrative Board, Pastor Sherry Parker-Lewis, Dan Welton, Bill Thorsen, and Ron Matkin (administrative board members), and Marsha Ikle and Vince Killewald from the congregation at large. Several other members of the congregation at large were identified by the Administrative Board and invited to participate, but their schedules did not allow them to participate in this process. The team met seven times to work on the strategy and collaborated between meetings using Google Docs, each authoring parts of the plan.

Guiding Team

This Strategic Plan is respectfully submitted to the Administrative Board, which requested this work be completed at its May 2016 meeting, and if adopted by the board, the task of monitoring and guiding the implementation of this plan will belong to the Administrative Board.

Strategic Plan

Goal 1 – Create a Culture of Invitation and Welcome

Diagnosis: A growing proportion of the population has no affiliation with any faith or church. We cannot make disciples for Jesus Christ from this part of the population by waiting for them to visit us. We must find a way to overcome their negative impressions and reach them outside of our four walls, making the church relevant to them.

Guiding Policy: The Brighton First congregation is called to make itself a *visible, positive, and relevant* part of the community of Brighton, and its members are called by God to enter into relational ministry outside the walls of the church

Coherent Actions

1. Form a Communications Team by October 1, 2016. The Team will assist Brighton First in becoming a visible part of the community of Brighton, giving the church an inviting, positive public voice.
 - a. The Communications Team will review current publications, the website, logos, tagline, and news release strategy and create a coherent Public Relations Strategy/Communications Plan. The Communications Team will consult with Mark Doyle, Detroit Annual Conference Communications Director in this assessment and plan development.
 - b. The Public Relations Strategy/Communications Plan will contain goals and metrics to measure attainment of those goals.
 - c. The Communications Team will report its strategy to the Administrative board no later than November 8, 2016.
 - d. The Communications Team will outline the strategy in a written report to the Church Conference in mid-November.
 - e. The Communications Team will help and support other groups as necessary to maintain a consistent, positive voice in church publications and public communications.
 - f. The church website, included in the strategy above, will be redesigned by March 2017 at the direction of the Communications Team and informed by the Public Relations Strategy/Communications Plan. The Finance Committee will budget for website redevelopment in 2017. (\$3,000 - \$5,000). Continuing maintenance of the website will also be fully funded.
 - g. The Communications Team, with representatives from the Hospitality Team, the Trustees, the church staff, the youth group and non-church attenders from the community, will conduct an annual audit each August, examining all church publications and church signage, with the intention of eliminating “insider” language, confusing acronyms, etc. The results and recommendations of the annual audit will be presented to the Administrative Board by the Communications Team by October each year.
2. The Board of Trustees will review all interior and exterior signage by December 2016 and adjust as needed to provide a consistent, excellent welcome for all visitors by March 2017.
3. The Hospitality Team will schedule greeter, parking lot greeter and usher positions for every worship service, every Sunday by December 2016.
4. In order to sustain its Sunday morning hospitality efforts, the Hospitality Team will develop a budget to be presented to the Finance Committee by October 1, 2016 and be funded in the 2017 budget.
5. All Children’s Ministries and Youth Ministries will include in their annual curriculum, grade level appropriate goals for practicing invitation and welcome in the life of the church. This will be in place by May 2017.
6. The Children’s Ministry Sunday school program will be relocated to one central area in the church building (nursery – 6th grade). This will provide a single welcoming space for children and their parents, increase safety for children and allow parents to drop off and pick up all children at one location. The planning for consolidation will begin by September 2016. Trustees and the Children’s Ministries Team will work together to plan the stages for the relocation, including room improvements and furnishings. The Trustees and Children’s Ministries Team will work with the Finance Committee to fund these improvements. The new designated Children’s Area will be fully renovated and equipped by August 2017.

7. The Administrative Board will appoint a task force from its membership to review small groups, boards, committees and ministry team practices of hospitality and welcome annually and the results of these practices. The first short-term task force will be established no later than December 2016. This first review will be conducted in February 2017.

8. The Hospitality Team, the Adult Faith Formation Team, and the Children's Ministry Team will each consult with the Director of First Steps Preschool on ways to invite and include preschool families in worship and church programming, leading toward preschool families choosing Brighton First as their church home. Team plans for connection with First Steps Preschool families must be in place by December 2016. Based on goals set by each group, an annual review of these ministries will be included in teams' annual reports to Church Conference (November) beginning in 2017.

9. In order to create a modern, comfortable public space for worship attenders and guests throughout the week, the Trustees will collaborate with the Hospitality Team to redesign, remodel and furnish a space within the building. The plan will be completed by December 2017. The Trustees, in partnership with the Finance Committee will determine how this project will be funded by March of 2018, and the renovated space will be ready for use by June of 2018.

10. Worship leadership will intentionally work to strengthen the church's culture of invitation in worship. Parishioners will tell stories of inviting others or being invited to church at least 6 times per year beginning in October 2016. The senior pastor will be responsible for this. There will be at least one worship series per year devoted to the practice of invitation.

Goal 2 –Create a system at Brighton First in which people of all ages have the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Diagnosis: The non-churched and nominally churched are not given a compelling reason to follow Jesus Christ by most of the Christians they know. While a life of Christian discipleship can lead to clarified purpose, sustained peace and steadfast joy, those who are seeking need a starting point and a clear path. Even within the church, the path to growing in faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ can be elusive.

Guiding Policy: It is the responsibility of the church to meet people where they are on their faith journey with excellent, relevant spiritual growth opportunities that lead to growth as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Coherent Actions:

1. Our Children's Ministry grade level curriculum goals will be evaluated for effectiveness in making disciples of Jesus Christ. This includes standardizing curriculum outcomes for preschool through 5th grade and clarifying age/grade level benchmarks for spiritual growth through all ages. This will be accomplished by our Children's Ministry Team and completed by May 2017.

2. The Children's Ministry Director (or a person assigned by the director) and the Preschool Director will review pre-school curriculum for intentional spiritual growth components by November 2016. Spiritual growth curriculum and practices used in First Steps Preschool will be reviewed by the Children's Ministry Team and included in the curriculum guide produced by May 2017.

3. Youth curriculum goals (for youth groups and classes) will be evaluated and developed to lead toward making disciples of Jesus Christ. Annual goals with metrics for measuring outcomes will be included. The development of curriculum goals will be led by the Director of Youth Ministries with assistance of the Youth Council and in place by May 2017.

4. The church will create a program for youth summer interns, giving youth an opportunity to experience working in ministry fields. This will be coordinated by the Director of Youth Ministries and in place by the summer of 2017.
5. The Adult Faith Formation Team will oversee the development, implementation and semi-annual evaluation (December and May) of an Intentional Faith Development Plan. The plan will be in place by October 2016.
6. The church will commit to being a “Culture of Call”, developing programming, training, mission opportunities and recognition for all who express an interest in serving in professional ministry. This will be overseen by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. The SPRC will submit its comprehensive “Culture of Call” plan to the Administrative Board by May 2017.
7. In worship, Brighton First will have no less than one witness per month from someone who has grown spiritually through the ministries of Brighton First and the grace of God. The age and gender of those who give witness will be diverse. The senior pastor will oversee this. This will be in place no later than January 2017.
8. Because disciples are formed and nurtured in prayer, Brighton First will increase participation in its prayer ministry. Clergy, in partnership with the Prayer Team, will assess current prayer participation and develop and bring a proposal for prayer education and participation to the Administrative Board no later than January 2017 on specific actions and/or programs to accomplish this. Programming and practices that increase the prayer life of church members and the prayer ministry of the church will be in place no later than May 2017.
9. Brighton First will offer at least one support group (for example: grief group, caretaker group, divorce group) per year. The Adult Faith Formation Team, in consultation with clergy, will seek to create support groups based on the needs/requests of community members. The support groups will be listed with other class and small group offerings.
10. A Congregational Care Team will be created by May 2017. The Team will consist of a minimum of five members. Team members will have the opportunity to grow as disciples as they expand the reach of spiritual care to congregation members and the community through one-on-one visits. A current model, such as Befrienders may be used or another model adopted. This will be lay led and overseen by the Senior Pastor.
11. Clergy, the Director of Discipleship, Children’s Ministries Director and Youth Ministries Director will coordinate curriculum annually. The Administrative Board will receive a curriculum report annually in May.

Goal 3-Send People Out into the World to Serve in Christ’s Name

Diagnosis: First United Methodist Church of Brighton has a strong history of service and its mission and outreach efforts have touched many lives by providing improved living conditions, food, gas, clothing, bedding, affordable dental care, and emergency supplies and Christmas gifts for foster care children. Unfortunately, our way of doing mission has not formed strong relationships with those who are served. We have been generous with our money and our time, but not with ourselves. Growth in God’s love happens when we connect with one another. Our out-of-town mission trips have improved living conditions, but personal connections with those we assist are short term. Our mission work in the

Brighton area is predominantly transactional, rather than relational. The congregation is not connecting to the community in a way that establishes long-term relationships.

Guiding Policy: Establishing relationships with others allows the love of Christ to grow. The church will move from transactional ways of serving to deepening relationships with neighbors.

Coherent Actions:

1. A Community Outreach Team will be established by September 1, 2016. The Team will be responsible for determining a community outreach focus by November 2016, through study of community demographic information and interviews with community leaders, and providing training and events that:

- a. Build relevant relationships between church members and the selected community members
- b. Identify actions to enhance the lives of participants of both congregants and the selected community members
- c. Demonstrate the love of Christ for all

2. The Community Outreach Team will connect the church's existing mission and outreach teams (UMW, Quilters, Men-with-Tools, etc.) to this community outreach focus through information and programming.

3. The Community Outreach Team will determine the efficacy of the community outreach focus through goals and assessment of whether or not goals were reached. The funds needed to sustain a program that has reached its goals will be presented to the Finance Committee in 2017 to be included in the 2018 budget.

4. The Community Outreach Team, after assessing results, will select a another segment of the population and repeat the process.