

2018 Strategic Plan First United Methodist Church of Brighton September 2018

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

Assist Parents and Their Children with Christian Faith Formation

We are a congregation that desires persons of all ages to know about God and to fall in love of God through the grace of Jesus Christ. It is our mission to create an environment where God's grace can work in the hearts of all people.

Assist Youth and Young Adults in Continuing Faith Formation Practices

We believe that a strong community of faithful Christians can positively influence youth and young adults. It is our mission to prepare and equip young adults, those who remain a part of our faith community and those who move to other churches, to grow in knowledge and love of God.

Connect with Residents Near Both Church Campuses to Build Trusting Relationships

It is our mission to reach beyond the present members of our faith community, informing others by our words and deeds about the grace of Jesus Christ. In intentionally seeking relationships with our neighbors our mission to know, love and serve God influences and shapes our communities.

Leadership Development

Our mission to know, love and serve God will be accomplished with the help of faithful, confident leaders, using their talents and spiritual gifts to serve God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Inform Congregation Members of Upcoming Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church And Equip Congregation Members for Gracious Conversation

While this goal does not specifically advance the mission of our church, it is important to the life of the church.

Background

In May 2018, the Administrative Board appointed John Phillips to lead the Strategic Plan Team. Team members included April Schauer, Ron Matkin, Sherry Parker-Lewis and Chris Attarian. John Phillips took the model of strategic planning from the book *Good Strategy, Bad Strategy* by Richard P. Rumelt and adapted it for our use. The team identified several possible diagnoses, 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 five 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 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 for its September 2018 meeting, and if adopted by the board, the task of monitoring and guiding the implementation of this plan will belong to the Administrative Board.

Goal One - Assist Parents and Their Children with Christian Faith Formation

Diagnosis: The goals and priorities of parents of children and youth have shifted in the last two decades. While parents work to instill values in their children, the church is not a primary place for that to happen for many. What do parents want for their children? How can the church work with parents to meet their goals for raising children? Can those aspirations be met by becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Guiding Policy: The Church will communicate with parents to learn what they want for their children, finding ways to keep Christ as a priority in the busy family life, and create innovative ministries to meet the needs of the changing family culture.

Coherent Actions:

1. The Administrative Board will appoint a team to work with the Directors of Children's Ministries and Youth Ministries to talk with parents in both communities who often miss service due to conflicting children's activities. The team will be in place by November 13, 2018.
2. The team will poll the parents to learn what they want for their children. The data collection will be complete by May 14, 2019. Questions may include the following:
 - a. What values are important to your family?
 - b. How does being a Christian influence your decisions as a family?
 - c. How do you prioritize activities for your children and the family as a whole?
 - d. What influences your decision for attending worship and faith formation classes?

- e. How has the church helped in faith formation for your family? What can the church do to help in faith formation for your family?
3. The team will consider data collected and develop a proposal and recommendations for events and creative programming at both campuses, incorporating the needs and suggestions of the families interviewed. The proposal will be made to the Administrative Board for approval at the June 2019 meeting of the Administrative Board.
4. The team will determine a metric to measure the success and sustainability of discipleship programming and include these in the report to the Administrative Board by September 14, 2019.

Goal Two - Assist Youth and Young Adults in Continuing Faith Formation Practices

Diagnosis: Each year the church experiences a decline of interest by its young people following their confirmation and this decline continues until graduation, when these young people move away from our communities and the church, in some cases never to join the congregation in worship again. Those youth and young adults joining the church are fewer in number than those leaving on an annual basis. Our church lacks a cohesive program to retain young people from their teen years on and to attract young adults that move into our Brighton and Whitmore Lake communities.

Guiding Policy: Our church will seek an active connection with young adults in the 15 to 25-year-old range and create a relationship of mutual Christian support, relevance, and prayer for young adults during these transitional years.

Coherent Actions:

1. The Administrative Board will direct the Director of Youth Ministries to select confirmation mentors who will agree to focus on this age group beyond the end of the confirmation program. The Administrative Board will appoint a leader for this mentor group that will be known as the Youth Engagement Team. The team shall be in place by Confirmation Sunday, May 5, 2019.
2. The Youth Engagement Team will reach out to our church's high school students and graduates and conduct interviews designed to explore meaningful ways to continue to interact with this age group, using tools and methods appropriate for their diverse location and interests.
3. The Youth Engagement Team will consider the input gathered through the interview process to design one or more live events for the age group convenient for their workload, study load, and travel patterns and multiple electronic or print communications during the year. The first event will occur no later than December 31, 2019.
4. The Youth Engagement Team will identify life transition points like confirmation, graduation, moving, marriage, etc., and create actions that support the young people in this age group and promote an ongoing relationship between them and the church. A plan for these actions will be in place by October 15, 2019.
5. For high school graduates that plan to leave the community, the Youth Engagement Team will actively promote worship options in the congregant's new community and seek feedback from the age group about worship options to be shared with other young adults.
6. The Youth Engagement Team will read one or more books or current research and best practices for engaging young adults in faith development, discovering ways to be more relevant to the age group by September 2019.
7. The Youth Engagement Team will present a written report to the Administrative Board's October 15, 2019 meeting with specific actionable recommendations, including if appropriate, budget requirements and leadership recommendations, to grow and improve the effort in the following two years.

Goal Three - Connect with Residents Near Both Church Campuses To Build Trusting Relationships

Diagnosis: The congregation is not connected with many residents in the immediate area surrounding both church campuses. We have not cultivated relationships with our immediate neighbors (within 20 minute walking distance) at either our Brighton or Whitmore Lake campus.

Healthy, personal relationships contribute to the health of the individual and the community as a whole. Jesus modeled being in relationship to bring the kingdom of God near. We make disciples of Jesus Christ most effectively in trusting relationships. We have had success in establishing relationships with some residents at Mill Pond Manor Apartments and additional Bridge Events can build on the success of this model.

Guiding Policy: The Church will extend its culture of care and connection into the community that immediately surrounds both church campuses. Our connection with our neighbors will be both transactional and relational.

Coherent Actions:

1. With input from Rev. Sherry Parker-Lewis and Rev. Bob Fuchs, the Administrative Board will appoint an Outreach Team and a chairperson for the team by November 15, 2018. A minimum of two members of the Missions Committee will be on this team.
2. The Outreach Team will seek input from the Mill Pond Manor Team, both for what is working in that ministry and what has not worked as hoped.
3. The Outreach Team will collect data from demographic studies and personal interviews with neighbors of both campuses. **Data will be collected by February 28, 2019.** Data collection may include interviews with nearby residents, city and township officials, school administrators and local business owners. **Questions for may data collection include:**
 - a. Demographic description of population surrounding both campuses (Mission Insite).
 - b. General survey of values
 - c. Needs according to demographic groups
4. The Outreach Team will create, organize and host a “bridge event” for a specific neighbor population on each campus between May 1 and November 1, 2019. The team will recruit members of both campuses to assist with the event as needed. These events may or may not be held on the church campus. While the bridge event may have some transactional components, **the primary goals of the events will be to:**
 - a. Create an atmosphere where neighbor may connect with neighbor and with church members. (Building relationships)
 - b. Capture contact information for future event invitations (Create opportunity for future relationships)
 - c. Offer a way for connections made at event to continue. (Sustain efforts for connection)
 - d. Include “takeaways” that give information about upcoming events on both church campuses.
5. The Outreach Team will determine a metric for measuring effectiveness of bridge events and report to the Administrative Council their conclusions within **one month** of each Bridge Event.
6. The Outreach Team will celebrate the bridge events with a report to the congregation through a video or image presentation within **one month** of each event.
7. The Outreach Team will assess whether to continue outreach to a targeted neighboring population or create an event for another neighboring population.
8. The Outreach Team will plan and host two additional bridge events for 2020.

9. The Finance Committee will budget for two bridge events hosted by our congregation in 2019 and two bridge events hosted in 2020. (A minimum of one event per year in each of the communities represented by our church campuses.)
10. The Outreach Team will enlist church members, groups, boards and committees to assist in retaining relationships established by bridge events.

Goal Four - Leadership Development

Diagnosis: The 2015 Vital Church Initiative Report specified as a primary area of concern Leadership Development. The 2016 Strategic Plan did not address this concern directly. Instead it focused on bringing ministries into alignment with the vision and mission of the church. This focus has resulted in positive change. In order to maintain this, however, we need to now focus on developing the leadership talent throughout all the ministries of the church. The church fails to recognize, organize, and fully develop its volunteer talent.

Guiding Policy: Service in the name of Jesus Christ is essential for practicing Christians. The Church will implement an intentional procedure for recruiting members into ministries of the church, evaluating the fitness of individual volunteers, and developing the gifts and effectiveness of leaders and volunteers. All to be informed by our spiritual gifts inventory.

Coherent Actions:

1. The Administrative Council will implement a formal procedure for recruiting members into ministries of the church, informed by our ongoing spiritual gifts inventory and overseen by the **Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development (CNLD)** as defined in the United Methodist Book of Discipline, paragraph 258.1.
 - a. A spiritual gifts inventory will be conducted for all members annually
 - b. The Adult Discipleship Development Team will link gifts to particular ministries and based on personal inventory results, encourage members to become involved.
2. The Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development will conduct annual reviews of leaders of all ministries in order to assess leadership and abilities in their areas of ministry and need for nurturing of appropriate gifts.
 - a. The Administrative Board will appoint a team that will include representatives from the Adult Discipleship Team and CNLD, to evaluate and determine types of spiritual gifts, skills, and other attributes that are best suited to selected ministries. An example of a tool that the team may use is a KASOs approach (Knowledge, Abilities, Skills and Other), "Personal Style" out of Willow Creek, and other similar tools may be used. (Deadline Christmas 2018)
 - b. A small group of 3-4, selected from the CNLD, will interview ministry leaders once a year. These interviews can be conducted throughout the year. The purpose of the interview is to garner the leader's evaluation of the members of his/her ministry and what developmental resources may be useful. Also, the interview is to determine the fitness, performance, and needs of the leader, identify emerging leaders, and encourage leadership from within the ministry.
3. The CNLD will find the expertise to train leaders and committed volunteers in order to maximize their effectiveness and realize their spiritual gifts in our ministries. This may involve organic resources or external consultants or workshops, as needed. (*Spiritual Kaizen* may be a good tool to aid in leadership development, progression/succession is another strategy of leadership development that may be considered)

**Goal Five - Inform Congregation Members of Upcoming Special Session of the
General Conference of the United Methodist Church
And Equip Congregation Members for Gracious Conversation**

The United Methodist Church Council of Bishops has called a Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church for February 23-26, 2019. This Special Session will consider changes to the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* concerning human sexuality and explore options to strengthen the unity of the church.

Guiding Policy: This is a potentially difficult issue that must be approached with grace and openness to information and discussion within our congregation. Our church leadership will educate and prepare the congregation by multiple means for any necessary decisions once the Special Session of the General Conference has acted.

Coherent Actions:

1. The Administrative Board will facilitate workshops and question and answer sessions prior to the Special Session. The Board will set a schedule for workshops to be conducted in the 4th Quarter of 2018 and 1st Quarter of 2019 by September 2018.
2. The Administrative Board will make the congregation aware of events including consultations by regional and Annual Conference leaders and make updated information available to the congregation monthly during 4th Quarter 2018 and 1st Quarter 2019. The Board may make use of these resources: United Methodist denominational books, website, synopsis of the Report of the Commission on the Way Forward, subscriptions to the United Methodist News Service and to Michigan Connect, the newsletter of the Michigan Annual Conference.
3. The Administrative Board will commission a special group to define Coherent Actions upon receipt of the Special Session decisions by April 2019. The list of proposed Coherent Actions will be reported to the Administrative Board by June 15, 2019.