



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Connecting to Christ – Growing in Community – Serving the World

Dear Church Family,

In 2018, our church began a visioning process called the “Next Faithful Steps” that helped us look at God’s call for our church and community. Though this effort was shorter than originally planned, I wanted to update you on the process and how it has guided us into our 2022 visioning process. This year, we have two new ministry teams formed to help us look at the future of ministry for our Community Church. In the below letter, you’ll find a recap of our Next Faithful Steps process and information on our two new teams. You can expect another in-depth letter about these teams progress this summer. Never hesitate to reach out if you’d like more information.

In Christ,

Pastor Melanie Nord

Next Faithful Steps Overview

Prepared by Jill Sherman (Church Council Chair)

Purpose: The purpose of the Next Faithful Steps Committee was to suggest a mission-focused approach to engage a significant portion of the congregation and church leadership in discerning The Next Faithful Step(s) of First United Methodist Church, Manhattan.

The committee met starting in September 2018 working with a consultant who walked the group through exercises to identify and develop a 3-year plan. The committee last met in April 2019.

As part of this process, the members of the committee compiled data by conducting interviews both inside the church and in the community that consisted of 1-1 discussions, small group discussions as well as large group discussions. Questions asked included the following:

- Community Members:
 - Tell me/us about three things that we do well from your viewpoint? How has that impacted the Manhattan Community?
 - When you hear people talk about First United Methodist Church in Manhattan, what do you hear them saying? What are we known for?
 - What are the most pressing concerns in our community?
 - How can we help you better meet your needs or needs that you see in the community?

- Is there anything else that would be helpful for us to know or think about as we move into our planning process?
- Internal Small Groups:
 - What do you see as our greatest strengths?
 - What is the most important thing we do as a church that helps you connect to Christ?
 - What more could we do as a church to increase your connection to Christ?
 - What is the most important thing we do as a church that helps you grow in community?
 - What more could we do as a church to increase your ability to grow in community?
 - What is the most important thing we do as a church that helps you serve the world?
 - What more could we do as a church to increase your ability to serve the world?
 - How important is Methodism to you? What practices or beliefs are most important to you?
 - What is the most important opportunity we are missing as a church?
 - What are the things in the church that we should stop doing?
 - Is there anything else that would be helpful for us to know?
- Large Group:
 - What is it that attracts you to FUMC Manhattan? What is one story you can share to help us understand how that has impacted your life?
 - Our strengths that are most impactful on our ministry?
 - Participants were then asked to place one dot on the part of our mission where they believe we have the biggest opportunity for growth.
 - Connecting to Christ
 - Growing in Community
 - Serving the World
 - The three most important things we need to do in the near future to fulfill our mission?

Strengths identified during the data phase are as follows:

- Connecting to Christ
 - Sense of satisfaction and pride of who we are and what we do
 - Strong pastoral leadership, specialty pastors
 - Pastor Troy's energy and leadership
 - Music ministry
 - Small groups
 - Church worship services
 - Strong, quality staff
- Growing in Community
 - Devoted members, many talents
 - Children's ministry
 - Welcoming and gracious
 - Facilities
- Serving the World
 - Community outreach
 - Missions
 - Supporting community groups

- Many opportunities to serve others

Four areas were identified as areas for focus of which the committee then created subgroups to focus on during the next three years:

- Youth – keeping more youth involved and focused on Christ.
 - Overall themes: What are the best ways to help youth develop as followers of Christ? How do we retain youth as they transition from children’s ministry to youth ministry?
 - How do we retain youth?
 - Are facilities the issue?
 - Feeling comfortable
 - Transitioning (seniors, freshman) big & small groups
 - Building up to transitions
 - Older youth welcoming younger youth
 - Get families on board with the whole journey
 - Feeling real, safe, loved
 - What are the best ways?
 - Mentoring all the way
 - High expectations from other groups
 - College students
 - Having personal connections
 - Leadership, opportunities
 - Fun
 - Others involved
 - Feeling belonged
 - Mission opportunities (local & global)
 - Active in different churches
 - Invite friends
- Technology – increase the use of technology to communicate with church members, friends and people outside the church
 - How can we use technology to improve communication with members, friends and those outside the church? Would a church app benefit our church in our communication?
 - Remember that all do not have technology – be sure to communicate with all
 - Security cameras bring info – what to do with the info – legal issue/notice of cameras
 - Policy needed – balance of welcome & safety
 - Website could be more user friendly – too many clicks
 - Good communication with newspapers – are online opportunities used?
 - More consistent radio sermon times – or communication about change in times – or consistency of signal
 - Proper application of technology is important
 - Sermons to be video as well as audio – or podcasts – or on public TV
 - Concern of copyright – with waiver for publication
 - Need technology policy
 - Currently working on audio and video in sanctuary
 - Focus videos on ministers – so no waiver needed for publication

- Patrick did great job with social media – lots of messages to congregation and community
 - Takes personnel
 - Concern with volunteer access to social media
 - What do other churches do related to an app – no need to reinvent what is already happening
- Connection – strengthen and re-calibrate how we connect people to ministries and to one another
 - How important is it to strengthen our ability to care for our members and friends? How could we improve in this area? What is the best way to help people connect their spiritual gifts, talents and passions to ministry?
 - Caring for members in facilities – health
 - Connecting link greeting
 - Linking 1-1 contact to encourage participation – welcome center
 - Prayer list
 - Senior activities – need more – UMW Meadowlark Circle
 - Spiritual gifts assessment – limited participation
 - Getting ‘inactive’ members back – contacting them
 - Restart ‘calling-care’ (Melanie)
 - Lydia ministries needs expanding – with volunteers and those needing help – how to get them to ask for help
 - Expanding support groups (leaders and attendance)
 - Sunday morning coffee – how to welcome everyone?
 - Small groups important – keeps people engaged – showing the way
 - Still a disconnect between service attendees – such a large church
 - Changing seat locations / rotational opportunities
 - Got to church service to worship – not to meet people
 - Expand radio ministry to cover full service – and stronger signal to cover more area
 - ‘Care list’ for items that might be like ‘prayer list’
 - Leadership development important part of developing and maintaining small groups
 - Strengthened ‘fellowship’ groups – diversity of activity, demographics, age
 - Expand K-State/MCC connection/mentorship
- Leadership – finding and building leadership within First UMC, leading beyond the local church
 - How do we, as First UMC, provide leadership with community groups seeking justice? What is the best way to find and build leaders for strong mercy and justice ministries?
 - Information to the congregations
 - Reps on committee – feedback to church
 - Identify relationships
 - Use monthly forums for communication and to align passions with issues
 - Examine existing resources
 - Refreshing new leaders – identify and nurture
 - Prioritizing ministries

- Are we where we should be – what is the scope of our leadership needs
- What groups are out there and what is needed?
- FUMC is the big church in all ways
- Where can we find other faith partners
- Look for partnership, shared opportunities
- K-State Wesley expand and grow – how can we help with their debt and other needs – think outside the box, financial partnership with pastoral staff

About the time we were ready to move forward with the subgroups, we learned that Troy would be leaving FUMC and we would be welcoming a new Pastor. The Youth subcommittee to my knowledge was the only committee to keep moving forward but only until Fall 2019

Youth Subcommittee Overview (2019)

- Surveys were emailed to parents of youth
 - What age will your youth be in Fall 2019? 6th -8th grade or 9th-12th grade?
 - What is the preferred day/time for youth programming?
 - If your youth currently attends youth activities, what do they like most?
 - If your youth is currently disconnected, is there a specific reason why?
 - What topics would you or your youth recommend?
 - What additional changes would you like to see for Sunday youth programmings?
 - Do you have additional thoughts or opinions on the youth programming not already shared?
 - If you are willing to have an additional conversation or clarify any of your answers, please provide your name & preferred contact information.
- Youth Mission Statement: To equip youth on their journey to follow Christ & deepen their relationship with Him; by supporting, connecting, teaching & engaging through a youth-centered environment & community’.
- Action Items were also created but then the decision was made to halt the subcommittee work in Fall 2019.

During the data collection step of our Next Faithful Steps process, we did identify some facility information (it was determined that we needed to focus on areas of ministry for the purpose of Next Faithful Steps to ensure we were focusing on the right ministry areas before moving forward with facility work.)

- Stairs to choir loft are too steep
- Scheduling conflicts prevent some groups to feel welcome, some groups are unwilling to be flexible with space.
 - Determine what we can do to better meet the tension between who uses what space (internal/external gaps)
- Youth facilities are outdated and unwelcoming
- Examine staff office locations to increase proximity, staff interaction & synergy & overall functioning of staff
- Enhance physical facilities to provide space needed for programs
- Expand our pre-school program to include/meet community childcare needs
- Safety concerns with multiple buildings
- HAC not handicap friendly

2022 Visioning in Relation to Next Faithful Steps

Prepared by Pastor Melanie Nord, Ron Harrison (Campus Planning Team Chair), Stephanie Bannister (Next Generation Co-Leader)

As we have restabilized following COVID-19, it is clear our work of creating and following a clear vision and plan is not done. Our primary goals in Pastor Melanie's new position of Executive Pastor revolve around visioning and making tangible steps forward with our Campus Planning Team and Next Generation Taskforce. You can find the goals for those two teams below.

Campus Planning Team:

Background: Our large campus includes 6 buildings (Sanctuary – East Wing – Ed Center united) most of which are older in age and high in maintenance and care needs. As we maximize our ministry potential and set FUMC up for the best future possible, we need to examine the wisest building usage and campus plan.

Team Goal: To research and assess current and future campus usage. Examination of current and future ministries will take place to consider what building plan makes the most sense for our next generation of ministry. This team will present a proposal to Church Council no later than January of 2023.

Next Generation Vision Statement:

The work of the Next-Generation Task Force is to, through a combination of methods, identify opportunities to contribute to the following growth for our church:

- Foster community for those interested in inclusive spaces at FUMC and/or innovative practices of ministry for non or nominally religious individuals or the “spiritual but not religious” groupings.
- Create alternative worship, fellowship, and spirituality options without disrupting our core Sunday morning and traditional offerings.
- Nurture engagement from demographics not fully deeply engaged in FUMC and/or their faith: for example the 14-35 age group. Explore a stronger bridge between campus ministry and FUMC.