

# Portage Chapel Hill United Methodist Church

## CONSULTATION REPORT

May 1, 2016



### Introduction

We, the VCI consultation team, thank Rev. Barry Petrucci, staff, lay leadership and the congregation of Portage Chapel Hill United Methodist Church for the invitation to consult with this Body of Christ. The following observations and prescriptions are the result of this Consultation Team's study of the following information: a) Portage Chapel Hill's self-study documents provided by its leaders, which includes the *Does Your Church Have a Prayer?* study, a MissionInsite demographic report of the area population, the April 7, 2016 'Mystery Guest' report by Faith Perceptions - the result of worship visits from 12 persons from the community - and worship videos, b) interviews with pastors, staff and ministry team leaders, c) a focus group with members of the congregation, d) a meeting with the Leadership Team, and e) input from the consultation workshop.

We are confident that God will use this assessment experience and consultation report, to help Portage Chapel Hill United Methodist Church to more effectively be and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the community and the world.

### Strengths

#### 1. Space for Ministry

The Consultation team, on our tour of the Chapel Hill United Methodist Church facility, as well as viewing the worship videos, was immediately impressed with the available space in the facility. The almost 10 acres owned by PCHUM provides well for current ministry and allows for possible ministry expansion. A visitor to your church would find attractive gathering areas and office areas that are readily available. You have classroom and open space available to provide necessary room for ministry to children, youth and adults alike. You have a worship center that provides necessary space and flexibility for various types of worship experiences. One Mystery Guest commented, "The seats were comfortable and provided a nice view, wherever you were. The congregation sat close enough, but it wasn't cramped. I felt like there was plenty of room for me as a visitor." PCHUM has a functioning space for current and future ministry.

#### 2. Location

PCHUM is located on a corner of a major artery into the city. It is in a prime area surrounded by churches, elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. At a short distance are the shopping mall and a residential area. The small group study named "location" as the second strength. A Mystery Guest simply reported, "The church sits on a prominent corner and is visible from all sides of the intersection." You are located in the center to continue and expand your ministry in any direction you choose.

#### 3. Spirit of Innovation and Change

Comments in the *Readiness 360* survey and during the Pre-Consultation Workshop pointed to a culture of innovation at Chapel Hill. The implementation of a Vision Team for creative thinking in the organizational structure almost eight years ago is impressive. Several core leaders expressed a desire for growth and change that will propel the congregation's mission forward.

#### 4. Community Ties

Within your history is a record of striving to be a voice and presence in the community around you as well as being that place in which community happens. The Self-Study document tells the story of your continued

desire to allow your building to be a place in which outside support groups can find a home. The fact that you are now offering a mid-week service for people within the autism spectrum is an incredible gift to the community. You have a core of people that are involved in ministries outside your doors, from social justice ministries to Meals on Wheels and the area Food Pantry, to name just a few. You have intentionally reached out to the LGBTQ community. You have built a base for service that can be enhanced and strengthened by the ongoing commitment of your members to do those things which can bring a message of hope to your community.

## **5. Internet Presence and Information**

The web is the church's new front door. PCHUM's website and social media presence are assets. The Mystery Guests and Consultation Team spoke positively about the valuable information on the site and the consistent use of the Facebook page. Information was one of the highest rated categories of the Mystery Guest report. One Mystery Guest stated, "The website is exemplary of what modern websites should have. All events, contact information, and pages are arranged clearly and effectively. The map of the church's location is active, and immediately syncs with Google. Links to social media are clear and distinct and obviously ready for mobile and desktop access alike." People today depend heavily on electronic media. A clean, updated website and active Facebook page are critical to connect them with the church.

## **Concerns**

### **1. Spiritual Poverty**

The Consultation Team recognizes that a core value of PCHUM is "faith – building deeper, fuller, more purposeful lives in Christ..." However, this has not come to fruition here. There is a spiritual poverty. Many staff and leaders could not articulate a faith journey. The *Readiness 360* Report noted that you have "some work to do in strengthening the personal connection between your people and God and God's mission for you in the world." The Consultation Team saw no clear path of intentional faith development for new or maturing believers. This spiritual poverty has led you to a limited view of social justice and moved the church's focus away from spreading the Gospel and leading people to Christ. Without steps for intentional faith development, people lose sight of the mission of the church and overlook the importance of growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### **2. Misdirected Focus and Lack of Alignment**

PCHUM is blessed with strong leaders who care deeply about the future of the church. Work was done a few years ago on the vision, mission, values, and welcoming statement of the congregation. Lack of buy-in around these foundational statements became evident after the day of interviews. The interviews and documentation indicate the Vision Team has neither a clear purpose nor a direct line of implementation or accountability. The present Vision Team seems to serve no purpose other than to be a sounding board for the pastor's ideas. After examination of the Self-Study documents and interviews, the Consultation Team determined that the Leadership Team has become largely a reporting body rather than providing strategic leadership to the church's overall goals. Core Team responsibilities are too numerous to have the impact desired. Finally, the Core Teams are blocked from alignment with the mission and goals by the absence of clear lines of responsibility and accountability. All of these components are necessary for effective ministry.

### **3. Leadership Development**

In your values you name "building deeper, fuller, more purposeful lives in Christ." Furthermore, in your Welcoming Statement you offer an invitation to "discover through Christ the meaning and purpose of ...living, working and loving." However, there is no focused, clear and intentional plan for development of leaders within the congregation. The lack of a clear road map creates isolated teams or ministries, operating

in “towers.” There is a lack of consistent updates of the spirituals gifts. Consequently, leadership development is done on a case by case basis rather than creating teams based on strategy to share the workload. Clear plans and paths bring clarity and provide guidelines for accountability of all leaders and believers. Faithful leaders and spiritual growth, at its core, are the result of a connection to Jesus Christ, to the church, and to each other.

#### **4. Upkeep of Facilities**

The church is an attractive brick building on a well trafficked street and stands out to all who pass by. If your desire is to reach out to those around you and continue in ministry, there is a need to make numerous improvements. In our tour of the building and in our interviews there was a repeated list of necessary repairs such as: a new roof, ceiling repairs, necessary painting, parking lot repairs, sound and projection updates and a lack of security in public areas such as the children classrooms. A well-maintained and well-functioning facility is essential for the ongoing and future ministry of PCHUM.

#### **5. Worship as Opportunity to Make Disciples**

Your values should guide you in the practice of worship as a disciple making tool. The Mystery Guests reported a lack of hospitality; one stating, “There was no recognition of visitors.” Another Mystery Guest reported, “Two greeters were at the door. The greeting was short and a bit perfunctory. It was sincere, but no more than what I get at WalMart.” Speaking about worship itself Mystery Guests pointed to a lack focus and purpose. One stating, “Some of the songs just were nice, happy music and not worship music.” Another Mystery Guest wrote “His message centered around the emotion joy. His calm, educated demeanor did not encapsulate the joy he was trying to express.” Interviewees and Mystery Guests referred to worship as “boring,” “joyless” and “forgettable.” The Consultation Team’s viewing of the videos confirms this. A planning team, with perspectives beyond those of staff, breaks open the power of God working in all of our lives. Without an intentional plan for worship and hospitality the church misses its greatest opportunity to invite people to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### **Prescriptions\***

#### **1. Intentional Faith Development and Small Groups**

There is a void within the church that can only be filled by a concerted small group ministry and a clear pathway to faith development. Intentional faith formation is the core of a healthy church. Spiritual formation is a lifelong process designed for all ages, including non-believers and those maturing in faith.

- A. The Faithful Community Team, in consultation with the pastor, will create a clear road map for intentional faith development (IFD) that will move all people –children, youth and adults-- from being non-believers to becoming maturing followers of Jesus Christ.  
The IFD will represent a lifelong process within a Wesleyan relational model that encourages all persons:
  - to connect, grow, and serve in their relationship with Jesus Christ;
  - to help them be transformed by practicing the principles of the Christian faith;
  - to provide connection opportunities with other believers for support and accountability;
  - to be in service to others for the purpose of the mission.
- B. The Faithful Community Team will coordinate a six week, church-wide small group study. A resource is *A Disciple’s Path*, by James Harnish. This small group study will coincide with a sermon series by the pastor. The study and sermon series will be completed by Advent 2016.
- C. Upon completion of this study the Faithful Community Team will develop a plan for continued short-term studies in order to provide ongoing opportunities for new people to find a new place in which to begin or continue their own journey of faith.

Suggested resources are *From Membership to Discipleship*, by Phil Maynard or *The Race to Reach Out*, by Doug Anderson.

- D. This new process will be adopted and implemented in the life of PCHUM at all ministry levels (children, youth and adults) no later than January 2017.
- E. Thereafter, the Faithful Community Team will continue an ongoing process of evaluation, improvement and implementation.

## **2. Focus and Alignment**

PCHUM will begin by using the work already done and continue to build on this foundation of what is currently written.

- A. The coach, or designee, will lead a Worship of Spiritual Renewal for healing in the congregation. This will prepare the congregation to be fully responsive to God's vision of being and making disciples. This shall be accomplished no later than July 10, 2016. A resource is the Wesley Covenant Service.
- B. The Leadership Team will transition to a policy governance board. Its official name shall be determined by the Leadership Selection and Development Team.
  - 1. During the transition period, the pastor and the Leadership Selection and Development Team will select 8-10 people to serve on a policy governance board, who "sense the call of Christ upon their lives." (p. 29, *Leadership and Organization for Fruitful Congregations*, by Stephan Ross.) Those selected will include a balance of creative and practical skill sets. This transition will follow the steps outlined in *Leadership and Organization for Fruitful Congregations*, by Stephan Ross. The transition will be completed with the new slate of officers for July 2017.
  - 2. This policy governance board will be presented for approval at the summer 2017 Church Conference. At that time, the former Leadership Team and Vision Team will be dissolved.
  - 3. The coach, or designee, will facilitate the first training, by August 1, 2017, to begin the transition.
  - 4. The board will meet four times during the next year to vision the future, set policies and boundaries, maintain alignment to goals, and determine allocation of resources.
  - 5. The pastor will assure the above alignment of each staff position.

## **3. Leadership Development**

- A. Starting in fall 2017, the pastor will meet with paid and unpaid staff, at least monthly, to build a team culture for communication, coordination and evaluation of staff effectiveness. The staff will study together Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. The goal of the staff is to exhibit the five characteristics described which include: high trust, skill in addressing conflict, a shared commitment, mutual accountability, and a focus on results (or fruitfulness). Paid and unpaid staff will demonstrate the arts of delegation, empowerment and allowing leaders to lead.
- B. To increase effectiveness of current and future PCHUM leaders, a plan is needed to: identify potential leaders, develop their spiritual gifts and passions, and equip them for ministry.
  - 1. The Leadership Selection and Development Team shall devise a procedure to match spiritual gifts and passions with areas of service. This shall begin no later than January 31, 2017.
  - 2. The Leadership Selection and Development Team shall devise a process for training, supporting and evaluating ministry leaders to be people of character, competence, chemistry, calling and commitment in their area. A resource is Brad Kalajainen, Cornerstone Church, Caledonia, MI. This will be completed by spring 2017.
  - 3. Developing leaders and leadership skills shall be ongoing.
- C. Beginning no later than fall 2016 each team meeting agenda shall:
  - 1. Incorporate a shared spiritual journey in its agenda such as an abbreviated version of a small group for discipling or spiritual growth.
  - 2. Hold each other accountable for their own spiritual growth.

#### 4. Facility

We acknowledge that PCHUM has space available for both current and expanded future ministries.

According to figures we were given, costs for interior repairs coupled with roof and parking lot repairs are estimated to be \$500,000. In addition, a balloon payment on the building due in three years is \$700,000. The above items coupled with the need to make the church more secure and updates on worship technology, i.e. sound and projection systems, will also add to the cost. Upon acceptance of this report the following shall be done to fund these necessary projects. The church will:

1. conduct a facility audit to determine all needed repairs and updates along with firm estimates of cost.
2. in consultation with David Bell, the Executive Director of The United Methodist Foundation of MI, establish a fundraising strategy to begin no later than January, 2017. The goal of this campaign shall be large enough to cover all anticipated cost.
3. review current funding to determine if worship technology updates could be accomplished outside of the fundraising campaign.

#### 5. Worship for Disciple Making

- A. A Worship Evaluation Team of 5 to 7 people will be appointed by the pastor, in consultation with the coach, no later than June 15, 2016. The purpose of this team is to evaluate current worship experiences and make recommendations to the Worship Design Team, see section B, for passionate worship. (See *The 5 Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, by Robert Schnase.) This team will:
  1. review the Mystery Guest Report and note areas of concerns related to all aspects of worship and hospitality, by September 1, 2016.
  2. review the MissionInsite Demographics 1 mile radius ExecutiveInsite Report. Note demographics of the community, by September 1, 2016.
  3. The coach, or designee, will conduct a worship workshop focusing on worship experiences that connect people with God and with each other. This workshop will be attended by the Worship Evaluation Team and the Worship Design Team plus other persons who lead or participate in the creation of worship experiences. The workshop shall be completed by August 1, 2016.
  4. develop a plan to visit at least three growing churches that have effective worship.
  5. review the worship schedule in order to optimize times and locations of worship experiences.
  6. submit recommendations by October 1, 2016.
- B. The pastor, in consultation with the coach, will form a Worship Design Team, by July 15, 2016, of no fewer than 5 people charged to plan worship experiences based on the above training and recommendations from the Worship Evaluation Team. The goal is to plan multi-sensory, passionate worship experience that connects with God and applicable to daily life, no later than Advent 2016.

Ongoing tasks are to periodically review the following:

1. Identify the desired target audiences for each worship experience.
  2. Determine the best presentation and delivery worship style for each target audience.
  3. Explore an ideal schedule of multiple worship experiences for spreading the Gospel.
- C. A Hospitality Team of 4-5 people will be named by the pastor. The Hospitality Team will create guidelines and practices for creating a culture of hospitality, to begin no later than Labor Day 2016. This culture will be extensions of your vision, mission, values and welcoming statements. Resources to study include, *Clipping In*, by Jim Ozier and *Get Their Name*, by Bob Farr, Doug Anderson and Kay Kotan. Another resource is Lake Harbor UMC in Muskegon, MI.

## **Conclusion**

We, the Consultation Team, want to thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation through this Vital Church Initiative assessment process. Our prayers and hope for your congregation are that God will use this process to help your church become more effective and fruitful. May God give you courage and strength as you move forward.

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## **Town Hall Meeting Dates**

Wednesday, May 4, 12:30 PM - Wednesday, May 11, 6 PM - Sunday, May 22, 12:30 PM - Sunday, May 22, 6 PM

## **Church Conference Date**

Thursday, June 2, 7 PM

*\*Note: Prescription deadlines may be adjusted in consultation with the assigned VCI coach.*