

Vision Planning Team (VPT) Update

This team has been working for over two months now and it is time to update you on our progress. We know there is confusion as to exactly what we are planning. You might think that it would not take long to put down a few plans for the future. However, this has been a very comprehensive process. We have learned much and are now starting to make some solid progress. Pastor Jim's recent sermons seem to have mirrored our progress so I want to use the outline from his June 3, message titled "Spiritual Leaders" to report our progress to you.

I. Spiritual Leaders Spend Time Alone with God

Stan Koster, former principal at Holland Christian, has been leading us through this process. He has done this with numerous CRC churches. he follows a proven process to allow the team to develop an individualized plan for that church. His first assignment was to turn us to scripture. Our homework was to study some 60+ different scripture passages regarding the purpose of the church. We also had several other related readings to review. We then shared our findings. This concentrated study was excellent background and framework to start our work. We have a better understanding of how the church should function. We were able to summarize God's purpose for the church into five broad Biblical categories as follows:

- Worship
- Discipleship
- Evangelism
- Fellowship
- Service

We have most recently been working on a new mission/vision statement for the church as well as developing documented core values of the church. You might wonder what benefit this will be? They are just words. However, we consider them extremely important. They will keep our purpose and mission clearly in front of all of us. In a brief summary, they provide the following benefits.

- Dictate Direction
- Formulate Function
- Focus the Future
- Provide a guide for Decision Making
- Inspire Unity
- Shape Strategy
- Enhance Effectiveness
- Ensure Enduring Organization
- Facilitate Evaluation

II. Spiritual Leaders Know the Facts

More recently, we have started to study the facts of our own church as well as the community around us. We have studied our attendance, membership make-up, giving patterns. We have also gathered demographic data on the local community. We know the community has grown and likely continue to grow. We know the average community household income is \$68,407. We learned that roughly one third of households within 4 miles of the church have no faith affiliation of any kind. We are learning the preferences of the community. All this data helps us to understand ourselves as well as the community.

We also will shortly be obtaining your input by various means. This may include:

- Focus Group Interviews with ministry leaders,
- Objective surveys or appreciative inquiry,
- A time to Remember, where we trace our history together.

III. Spiritual Leaders Face Opposition

We have challenged ourselves to avoid saying, "it cannot happen here:.". A T.S. Elliott quote provides inspiration. "Only those who will risk going too far can find out how far one can go". Change of any sort is difficult and demanding. It is not often welcome. But changing lives, even our lives, is central to Christianity and the church.

Are we suggesting radical change? I certainly think not. Heritage has done many wonderful things and served God's kingdom faithfully. However, we are expecting and praying for significant change. We desire to become more welcoming to our community. We also desire to be more focused and effective in our service to God. We trust that with God's grace and strength as we come to understand our role in God's kingdom better, He will strengthen us for the task.

IV. Spiritual Leaders Motivate God's People to Do God's Work

Central to this effort is God's Kingdom and motivating his people here at Heritage to become more effective in our service. As a team, we remain extremely excited by the potential we see for Heritage. It will be our duty in coming months to share that enthusiasm. Please free to speak to any Vision Planning Team member about this project. God indeed has a purpose for us. He has chosen to give us the privilege of being his servants. That is a most high calling.

Vision Planning Team Members

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