

INTRODUCTION

Newburgh United Methodist Church
CONSULTATION REPORT March 3, 2013

We, the consultation team, would like to thank Lead Pastor Chris Nunley, staff, lay leadership and congregation of Newburgh United Methodist Church for the invitation to consult with this Body of Christ.

The following observations and prescriptions are the result of this team studying the following information: Newburgh UMC's self-study document provided by its leaders; the Fruitful Congregations Journey on-line survey; interviews with Lead Pastor, staff and ministry team leaders; a MissionInsite demographic report of the area's population; Mystery Guest Worshipers Report; and input from the Friday evening focus group, Saturday's Church Council discussion and leadership workshop.

Our prayer is that God will use this assessment experience and consultation report to help Newburgh UMC to more effectively make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the community and the world.

STRENGTHS

Newburgh United Methodist Church's greatest strengths are as follows:

1. Lead Pastor and Staff

Rev. Chris Nunley has a deep faith in Jesus Christ, and a clear passion to bring others to the faith. The interviews confirmed that Lead Pastor Nunley is a good leader and talented speaker who is gaining support in this church. He - along with a talented and dedicated staff - provide leadership and service to this congregation. Of note is the recent addition of Emma Loane, Lead Pastor of Student Ministries, who has breathed new life into an already strong youth program at Newburgh UMC.

2. Strong Adult Sunday School and Small Groups

A healthy portion of the congregation participates in adult Sunday school classes and small groups. The consultation team heard again and again of the close relationships that have been formed in these classes/groups, as well as the nurturing care provided therein. These classes/groups are capable of fostering discipleship growth, and along with the recently established "Connect" class, can provide a point of attachment for newcomers.

3. Response to Community Need

Newburgh UMC is committed to the community they serve. This is reflected prominently through a very popular and well respected preschool, which has been serving families in Newburgh since 1980. In 2005, NUMC became a relief center for the victims of a deadly F3 tornado that ripped through Warrick county. The Consultation Team applauds the ambitious accomplishment of single-handedly sponsoring and completing a Habitat House in 2010. Additionally, the church's Food Pantry and Clothes Closet provide care and relief on a weekly basis.

4. Desire For Outward Focus

This is a caring community who can work together to bring new disciples into a relationship with Jesus Christ. The Consultation Team celebrates the congregation's intergenerational nature, the atmosphere of mutual respect, and their enthusiasm for outwardly focused service events such as Change the World Day. The church's website and connection materials are well done, and will be beneficial as this church embarks on renewed efforts to grow passionate disciples.

5. Facility and Location

There is an openness at Newburgh UMC to utilize their building as a community center for a variety of uses by local organizations. Each week, the building teems with hundreds of preschool children, numerous Boy and Girls Scout troops, as well as other special interest classes. Centered on a heavily trafficked, primary north-south route through the community, the church has the potential to be highly visible, and attract a wealth of guests. The church is well positioned to grow effective ministry.

CONCERNS

Newburgh United Methodist Church's greatest areas of concern are as follows:

1. No Clear, Shared Mission and Vision

Although the church states their vision as "Growing Passionate Disciples", the current ministries and activities seem to lack connection to an established plan for living out that vision. Furthermore, there is little evidence that the current vision extends beyond the congregation as an outward focus to the un-churched, making them disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. Plateaued Attendance

The self-study documents indicate a plateau in worship attendance over the last ten years. While upwards of five-hundred guests utilize the campus throughout the week, a very small percentage of them appear to be connecting with the church beyond a simple use of the space. Furthermore, the mystery guest worshippers and participants in the Friday evening focus group confirmed a desire for a more passionate, engaging and relevant Sunday morning experience, indicating an opportunity for growth.

3. Need For an Identifiable Discipleship Pathway

The consultation team was unable to identify an established, trackable process for how a person first connects to Jesus Christ and the church, grows in his/her knowledge of the faith, and becomes connected to other believers for support and accountability and becomes active in service to others for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

4. Need For Greater Outward Focus

Newburgh UMC actively supports a variety of activities that are fulfilling the physical needs of those in the surrounding area. However, opportunities to connect with the un-churched who presently utilize their facilities have gone unrealized. If there is a desire to grow passionate disciples, there must be an intentional effort to connect with the un-churched.

5. Limited Staff and Leadership Development

Newburgh UMC is blessed with staff and leaders who are dedicated to the church. Current leaders get involved in multiple activities and are stretched thin. There is an established pattern of hiring staff to be the primary "doers" of ministry, rather than employing a system where staff identify, develop and encourage new leaders and teams. Without such a system, the church will not be positioned for future growth.

PRESCRIPTIONS

The congregation will have a day of prayer, repentance and healing during a Sunday worship service. The purpose of this day is to embrace God breaking open the hearts of the congregation for the local unchurched, and prepare them for the Lord's vision for the future. This will be led by Paula Gast, Church Development Prayer Coordinator or someone she provides, in consultation with the Lead Lead Pastor, no later than May 19, 2013.

1. Clear, Shared Mission and Vision

- a) Newburgh UMC will embrace the mission of every United Methodist Church stated in the UM Book of Discipline: "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."
- b) The Lead Pastor and Coach will conduct a Day of Visioning workshop by June 30, 2013 to assist the congregation in clarifying, affirming the vision of **Growing Passionate Disciples** and providing a focused plan (of reaching the community) to guide Newburgh UMC into the future. This vision plan will be affirmed by the leaders that participate in this vision workshop. The days between the Day of Prayer and the Day of Visioning will be utilized by the people of the congregation as a call to prayer and fasting for this plan.

c) Upon affirming and implementing the plan, every ministry in the congregation must demonstrate how it will accomplish the mission and vision. To that end, the leaders will conduct a ministry audit aligning the church's ministries with the vision. This audit will be completed by December 1, 2013. Ministries will be evaluated by their faithfulness to the mission and vision and their fruitfulness (results). Any ministries not faithful and fruitful will be given a year to rectify. Any ministries that are not faithful to the mission and vision will be dissolved; any ministry that is faithful but still not fruitful will be modified and re-evaluated for fruitfulness. All continuing ministries will set goals and objectives in alignment with the mission and vision.

d) The Lead Pastor and Staff-Parish Relations Committee, with the help of the Coach, will conduct a staff audit which will include a review of job positions and descriptions, aligning them with the church's mission and vision by March, 2014.

2. Plateaued Attendance

1) The Lead Pastor, in conjunction with the Coach, will formulate a Worship Task Force consisting of no more than 5 people - including the Director of Music Ministries. This task force will explore opportunities for enhancing the Sunday morning worship experience to become more passionate, engaging and relevant.

This team will:

- a) Conduct three observational visits to area churches that are averaging 500 or more in worship attendance, on or before May 1, 2013,
- b) Facilitate, and participate in, a worship consult led by Greg Graham for the entire worship staff, worship team, and technology team on or before June 1, 2013,
- c) Appoint a Worship Design team who will assist the Lead Pastor and Director of Music Ministries in planning weekly worship experiences that utilize music, drama, technology and experiential elements that enhance the vitality of worship. The first team meeting will be facilitated by Greg Graham, and
- d) Host a Sunday morning hospitality worship experience and afternoon workshop to be conducted by the Coach, or designee on or before August 1, 2013. Out of this workshop, new hospitality teams will be recruited, trained and deployed by January 1, 2014.

2) A building study committee of 3-5 people will be nominated in consultation with Coach, through Charge conference action to evaluate the current facility for carrying out mission and vision including entrances, gathering spaces, interior and exterior signage, restrooms and children/youth areas. These improvements will promote the atmosphere for welcoming guests, referencing the Mystery Guest Worshipper report. This study will include visits to other churches, which have recently built cutting edge examples of these spaces. This committee will be named by July 1, 2013.

The building study committee and the trustees, in consultation with the Coach and the Lead Pastor, will develop a capital improvement plan that will identify capital needs for the next three years. This plan will be completed and ready for recommendation to the fall Charge Conference scheduled for 2014. If a capital campaign is required, it would be included in the Charge Conference. Our recommendation is that a capital campaign be initiated in 2014 to fund the improvements and reduce the debt.

3. Discipleship Pathway

The Lead Pastor, in consultation with the Coach, will create a task force of 3-5 lay leaders and appropriate staff members. A discipleship pathway workshop will be presented to this team by a Church Development team member by September, 2013.

A clear discipleship path for moving people from where they are on their spiritual journey to becoming a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ will be developed. The discipleship path will be designed for everyone, whether a non-believer or one who is maturing in their faith. This discipleship path will represent a lifelong

process. The Team will discern a faith development plan within a Wesleyan model that encourages all persons:

- to connect and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ;
- to be transformed by studying the Bible and the principles of the Christian faith;
- to plug-in with other believers for support and accountability; and
- to be in service to others for the purpose of the mission.

This will be completed by December 31, 2013.

The Stewardship Team and Finance Committee, in consultation with the Lead Pastor and the Coach, will put a plan together for a fall program to help the church practice extravagant generosity, and a year-round generosity plan. It will use the Consecration Sunday model (or equivalent) to help people understand the joy and privilege of fully resourcing the glorious work of God. This plan will conclude with a Consecration Sunday experience on or before November 1, 2013 when the congregation will be invited to indicate what they plan to give to God through Newburgh UMC in 2014.

4. Greater Outward Focus

The Lead Pastor, in consultation with the Coach, shall develop an Outreach Team of 3-5 people to:

- a) study the MissionInsite reports, and then dream of creative ways to reach out to the surrounding community,
- b) determine what percent of the mission field the Newburgh UMC will take responsibility for,
- c) measure the outward focus events effectiveness toward the mission field goal, and
- d) implement a plan to establish connections with those who are served through the Pre-School, Food Pantry and Clothes Closet (implemented by fall of 2013).

Persons on the team should have a deep commitment to the vision for growing passionate disciples. This team will be established by May 31, 2013

This Outreach Team will conduct 4 (2 will be service oriented, and 2 will be on-campus, community attraction) outwardly focused events during 2014, to connect with the community. At least 2 of these events must be new, and none will be fundraising events. These events should be strategically placed through the calendar year. Multigenerational church participation is vital. Existing events could be used, such as VBS, Change The World, Habitat Build, etc.

5. Staff and Leadership Development

In order to develop the staff and leadership, the Lead Pastor - in consultation with his staff, Lay Leadership Development Team, and Coach - will develop a leadership development system and initiate it by January 15, 2014. This system may include the following:

- Shared learning through guided study of books and teachings,
- Spiritual-gift inventories,
- The practice of spiritual disciplines—for example prayer, retreats, tithing, service and mission,
- The use of an approved goal-setting process that supports the mission and vision,
- The practice of having “apprentice” leaders.

The Coach will conduct an accountable leadership workshop with the Church Council and other interested leaders, on or before May 2014. Helpful resources in this process are “Ultimately Responsible” by Sue Nilson Kibbey, and the book “Winning on Purpose” by John Kaiser. In addition, the church council will participate in Leadership Development training by Sue Nilson Kibbey on Saturday, April 20, 2013 in New Albany, IN.

Following these trainings, we will put together a planning, goal setting and evaluation process for staff, leadership and ministry team leaders.

In order to develop the next generation of leaders, the Lead Pastor—in consultation with his staff, Church Council, and Coach—will identify at least twelve potential leaders who are under age 35 by September 1, 2013. They will be asked to commit to participating in the leadership development system.

CONCLUSION

We, the consultation team, want to thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation through this Fruitful Congregation Journey assessment process. Our prayers and hope for your congregation is 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.

Bob Farr - Lead Consultant
Sharon Washington - Coach
Greg Graham - Consultant
Catherine Turcotte - Consultant
Sue Engle - Consultant
Mark Fisher - Consultant

Town Hall Meeting Dates:

March 10, 2013 at 9:30 AM
March 13, 2013 at 6:15 PM
March 18, 2013 at 7:00 PM

Church Conference Date:

April 7, 2013 at 2:00 PM