Visions – Hopes – Dreams:
God’s Will for Rehobeth UMC

(Please Note: Original notes file from the July 22, 2014 was digitally corrupted in save / transfer process.
Below is a brief summary of the discussion.)

Opening Reflections / Devotional – presented by Paul L. McClure:

God has always communicated with His faithful followers through Word and visions, visions that
revealed what God would do in the future, and visions of what God wanted His people to do. When
people were open to God’s visions and faithful in pursuing them they were richly blessed. When people
ignored, rebelled or laughed at God’s visions, things usually did not work out so well in the long-run.
When the priest Zechariah laughed at the angel Gabriel’s news that Elizabeth would give birth to a son,
Zechariah instantly became mute. When Zechariah came out of the temple the people saw his expression
and inability to speak, and “they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary” (Luke 1:22). He was
suffering the inability to tell anyone about it because he did not take it seriously.

Peter, James and John were blessed with an awesome vision of Jesus glorified, glowing brighter than light
on top of a mountain, but on the way down that mountain Jesus told them they could not tell anyone about
the vision they saw. It was not the right time for that vision to be fulfilled (Matthew 17:9). God provides us
with visions, and God also gives us a timetable for fulfilling God’s agenda.

We gather here in the presence of God, trusting God’s good and holy will for our lives and for Rehobeth
United Methodist Church. Some of our ideas, desires and interests may have a part in God’s vision for us
and some may not; but we are here to share what dreams and hopes for Christ’s ministry may be part of
God’s vision for this place at this time, and to discern our part in that vision.

At a time of great distress and desperation the prophet Habakkuk decided all he could do was to wait on
God to reveal God’s will, God’s vision for His people at a particular point in history. Let’s read together
what Habakkuk said in that situation.

2:1 I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what
he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. 2 Then the LORD
answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.
3 For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it
seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:1-3)

So that is what we are doing here tonight – standing at our watchpost, watching and waiting to see what
God has to say to us through the ideas and Christ-centered passions the Holy Spirit is stirring within us.
We are going to take turns, listen carefully to what each person has to say, and let our “scribe” (Jenness
Willard) try to type it all down. For now our secretary is just going to take brief rough notes that we can
refer to on the projector screen. We will fill in and edit the notes later so they will be plain and clear for
any “runner,” messenger or church member to read.

There is “still a vision for [our] appointed time; it speaks of the” fulfillment of God’s will, “and it does
not lie.” If it seems to be a little slow in coming, don’t worry about it. “Wait for it,” for “it will surely
come, it will not delay” (Habakkuk 2:3).

SO – with that, I invite us to start our discussion by reading the church mission statement as posted on
your website, and then I invite you to raise a hand when you feel led to share your vision of how we might
fulfill our mission in Christ together. OK? Let’s read Rehobeth’s mission statement together.
The Mission of Rehobeth United Methodist Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to nurture people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by sharing His gospel through worship, love, and service to the church, the community, and the world.

DISCUSSION / DIALOGUE -- GENERAL NOTES:

Paul McClure suggested another moment of reflection on the church’s mission statement, asking everyone to consider what the primary focus is, the top priority and purpose stated. Several replied Jesus Christ – relationship with and life in Him, serving Him by serving others. Paul then reminded everyone of the mission statement for the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church: “Follow Jesus – Make Disciples – Transform the World . . . one life and one community at a time.” He then suggested, “Whatever passions and ideas for ministry we may come up with, we need to make sure they focus on that mission, keep that mission as the primary priority, and actually help us fulfill that mission.” Some folks suggested we might want to make church T-shirts with that mission statement printed on them with one slight word change: “Follow Jesus – Make Disciples – Change the World!”

[NOTE: Many in attendance helped lead the discussion and contributed the following ideas; but not everyone’s name was noted along with their ideas they shared. So the following notes include people’s names with ideas as they were noted. The names of everyone in attendance – who signed the attendance roster – are printed below to recognize all who contributed to this conversation.]

[Attendance Roster: Lina Brown; Janet Burgess; Anne Conover; Cam Conover; Jo Covert; Joann Danley; Karen Eanes; Jean Elkins; Susan Farkas; Wally Forrest; Janet Funderburk; John Funderburk; Shirley Gilbreath; Yvonne Gragg; Lynda Hodges; Marty Hodgin; Louise Johnson; Kaye Jones; Frankie Kallam; Joan Landreth; David Lemly; Randy Ludington; Don Masters; Gwen Masters; Paul McClure; Stephanie McClure; Brandon Miller; Robyn Miller; Vicki Miller; Jennifer Moser; Ken Moser; Phil Moser; Tracy Moser; Carolyn Nantz; John Nantz; Brian Owen; Eddy Patterson; Nancy Short; Jenness Willard; Heather Williamson; Dave Winfree; Laura Young.]

[DISCUSSION Notes – Continued:]

John Nantz began discussion by expressing his appreciation for the open and inclusive nature of this dialogue to ensure everyone can have some input. He also said this kind of approach, and being intentional in making sure members of all ages can contribute to this process and the life of the church is very important going forward.

Joan Landreth said she is excited about the new Congregational Health Nurse program and encouraged everyone to support Lynda Hodges in her new role as Congregational Health Nurse. There are several ways this program will benefit the congregation and community (additional notes: ranging from sponsoring workshops on living wills, hosting blood drives, offering guidance for individual church members regarding medical questions and medications, and sponsoring a community health fair). Exercise classes for seniors (low-impact) could be helpful in addition to activities already taking place (e.g. – the “Insanity Workout” group; weekly basketball; etc.). Other exercise and fellowship programs specifically for women may also be of great benefit, especially a group that begins its sessions with a brief devotional and mutual prayer requests (e.g. Christian “ZUMBA!”).
Joan Landreth, John Funderburk and others suggested much needed ways the church can reach out to the community is to be a host site for meetings of **Al-Anon and Alateen groups** (for individuals and / or family groups). If these particular groups are not interested in a meeting site at Rehobeth there also are recovery and support group programs that are Christian in nature.

Paul shared that Frank Norton was unable to attend the meeting but requested his similar visions and hopes be shared, and it is significant that Frank specifically mentioned the need to use the Family Life Center for more community outreach ministries like **Al-Anon and Alateen**, and possibly a “soup night” or other meal that is provided for anyone in the community and for people attending other programs the same evening. Frank feels strongly that we have to look beyond paying off the FLC and see how community use of the building can help generate funds to increase the church’s outreach ministries.

John Nantz said he would like to see a **digital marquee road sign** to announce church events to the community. The marquee could more easily be kept up to date, display multiple messages, and be controlled remotely by a computer. As a “wish-list” item he said he could look into sources and prices.

Ken Moser agreed with the idea of acquiring a digital marquee, but added there needs to be a more organized, consistent way to get information out to the community through as many means as possible. Further discussion and suggestions included using local newspaper ads, the church website, Internet social media (etc.), and even thematic church T-shirts or car magnets. All agreed there needs to be a **Media and Communications Team** that coordinates in-house and community communications to ensure all are informed of church events and kept aware that Rehobeth is here and what Rehobeth offers.

Laura Young shared her desire to see more directed, intentional prayer ministries, specifically **contemplative prayer ministries** that she is trained to help teach and lead (i.e. Celtic traditions). Further discussion raised the need to conduct **Ministry Gifts and Spiritual Gifts surveys** among the congregation to help direct people into areas of ministry service and personal spiritual growth. Paul noted that the Lay Leadership Team will want to make use of those surveys for ongoing leadership development in the church, since leadership development depends on spiritual and ministry gifts and calling.

Jennifer Moser said the church needs to continue supporting and expanding its **ministries and programs for children and youth of all ages**, and especially look for ways to include children and youth from the surrounding community. “Sports, but not just sports” can be one among several avenues for reaching out to and including kids of all ages.

Anne Conover said she would love to see a **music ministry for children** that will provide opportunities for children to participate regularly in a children’s choir, and / or a bell choir, possibly offering music lessons. A **children’s music ministry could also be a community outreach** to include children from surrounding communities.

Brian Owen followed-up on Jennifer’s and Anne’s comments by adding that the young-adult parents of those kids in our community need a reason to bring their kids and then stay themselves. The current young-adult Sunday School class is a good start and working foundation. We still need to **be more intentional about reaching out to more young adults** – single, married, with and without children – and make sure we have ministries and programs that they can relate to as likely “Unchurched” people.

Paul agreed that there needs to be **strategic evangelism and strategic discipling**, meaning we can’t just minister to and “make disciples” of our own friends and family who already speak our church language.
If current church members need certain kinds of worship music and certain kinds of sermons to help them grow in their faith, then unchurched people who don’t understand Christian ideas or language need certain kinds of worship music and sermons that can help them come to faith in Christ and get started in their journey as new disciples. So Paul asked, “Would the church support a weekly or monthly contemporary worship service designed for drawing in unchurched young adults and youth?”

Paul added that “unchurched” people need a church that has mentors in place, mentors who are ready and willing to be their discipleship partner and stick with them for the long haul. “Our mission is not to acquire more church members but to make faithful disciples of Jesus who will hopefully grow as faithful disciples through their membership here at Rehobeth. So we need to do whatever it takes to have in place the kind of fellowship and strategic discipleship ministry that helps lead someone to faith in Christ, integrates them into the life and ministry of Christ’s church, and supports, teaches, and mentors them from now on as maturing disciples.”

Cam Conover pointed out that our mission, and all of the ministries mentioned so far are all rooted in relationships – the vital importance of our relationship with Jesus and our relationships with one another and the world. We need to make sure we are not so caught up in programs and the busy-ness of ministries that we forget to strengthen and grow our relationships with God and with others in the church and out in the community.

Paul mentioned that we can pursue many of these ministry ideas strategically and get Rehobeth out into the community by partnering with fellow United Methodist churches in our “Greensboro South Missional Network.” There are numerous way and opportunities to be in service with our neighboring Methodists and also just have some fun and get to know each other. Plus, as we learn what other churches are doing, what we can help build upon, and also what does not need to be duplicated, we can fine tune and focus on the ministries that Rehobeth is best equipped to provide with great faith, love and excellence.

Many other ideas for ministry were shared, including:

- Involve more people in the ongoing Mobile Meals ministry.
- Involve more people as local school volunteers and tutors.
- Organize a drama ministry that practices regularly to be ready for worship skits and other plays.
- Provide site for art lessons.
- Provide intergenerational cooking workshops (i.e. – older cooks passing on their best recipes to younger generations with hands-on sessions instead of just publishing notes in a church cookbook).
- Provide computer classes for adults (could involve young adult or youth volunteers to help teach).
- Provide site for dance lessons (ballroom; line; shag; etc.); and see if any local children’s dance groups need a place to practice or to put on recitals.

After discussion concluded, Paul suggested that everyone do three things between the end of this session and the next dialogue (scheduled for Sept. 9th, 7:00pm). First: keep the WNCC Mission Statement and Rehobeth’s Mission Statement in mind as you pray about everything shared during this session. Second: come to the next session prepared to share something about how you are already starting or ways you can begin one ministry idea you shared at this session. And Third: email Paul a list of all that you do in the life and ministries of Rehobeth, and anything over which you exercise some form of leadership responsibility (in other words, if you don’t lead or initiate it, it will not get done). Include in that email the name or names of one or more persons in the church who – after you have prayed about them – you feel are the best candidate(s) to replace you one day in your leadership role. “A good leader knows part of good leadership is identifying and mentoring the leaders who will take their place. So please include that information in your email list of your current responsibilities before Sept. 9th.”

(Session adjourned.)