

Bergen United Methodist Church

CONSULTATION REPORT

10/30/2016

INTRODUCTION

Bergen UMC has been hospitable and gracious all weekend. We deeply appreciate the openness and honesty with which people have approached this process. We experienced a church supportive of each other and committed to being community together. We celebrate the work you have started with intentional discipleship pathway. In order to actualize intentional discipleship, the 4 Point Process: **REACH CONNECT FORM SEND** needs to be fully developed. Our hope is the process below will create the foundation necessary for future growth. Should you decide to accept this report, your continued participation is essential in the successful implementation of the recommendations within this document.

STRENGTHS

- 1. Committed Core:** It is clear there is a strong and committed core invested in the work of Christ through the congregation. This is seen in the perseverance through faithful participation in the ministries of the church over the years as well as the support of each other.
- 2. Small Groups:** Dedication to short term and long term small groups is evident. Through these small groups greater knowledge of scripture, inner personal relationships, and spiritual growth has been experienced.
- 3. Biblical Knowledge:** It is clear the level of biblical knowledge is valued and impacts the daily lives of the congregation.
- 4. Teen Ministry:** The Youth and Underground ministry have a significant impact on the community. They also provide an avenue to the community.
- 5. Little Hands Preschool:** The preschool provides a connection to young families in the community establishing a Christian foundation for the children who attend.

CONCERNS

- 1. Lack of Unifying Vision:** There is no clear, articulated, unified vision by which to guide the actions, decision making, and evaluation for the ministries of the congregation

2. Alignment with Mission and Vision: It is apparent there is little to no alignment in the ministries, goals, and activities of the congregation around the vision. As a result, a majority of the teams and committees function in isolation with little understanding about what other groups are doing and weak communication with the congregation at large.

3. Maximizing Leadership Effectiveness: Leadership is tired, entrenched, and often not utilizing their gifts to their fullest potential.

4. Leadership Development: There is no clear process in place for developing leaders, existing or new.

5. Inwardly Focused Congregation: Activities in the life of the congregation are adequate for the needs of the congregation. To become more vital, the congregation needs to build additional opportunities for people to engage in hands-on mission(s) outside the walls of the church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In becoming a healthier congregation that makes disciples of Jesus Christ that make disciples, the pastor will call the leaders and congregation to a Day of Prayer. The purpose of the day will be to become grounded in a relationship with Jesus Christ and seek God's help in becoming a healthy congregation.

The day will be led by someone other than the pastor, chosen in consultation with the Director of Vital Congregations. It will occur on or before **January 8, 2017**.

1. Lack of Unifying Vision: The congregation will conduct a day of visioning workshop to learn the process of discerning a vision. After the workshop, the pastor in consultation with the coach will develop a team of three to five people to form the vision statement. This team will follow the process outlined during the workshop. The workshop will be conducted on or before **February 4, 2017**. The vision will be presented to the whole congregation by **March 5, 2017**.

2. Alignment with Mission and Vision: The staff, church council, and key leaders of the congregation will have a one day retreat on or before **May 1, 2017**, to develop a process of bringing all of the ministry and activities of the congregation into alignment around the vision and to create a process by which goals are developed and evaluated. This retreat will be led by an outside resource person chosen in consultation with the Director of Vital Congregations.

After the retreat, the staff, church council and key leaders will develop annual goals for the entire congregation. The goals will be established and shared with the entire congregation on or before **September 1, 2017**. Additionally, each ministry area will develop a clear set of goals in alignment with the established congregational goals. The ministry area goals will be communicated to the entire congregation on or before **November 1, 2017**. All plans to accomplish the created goals will begin implementation on or before **January 1, 2018**.

3. Maximizing Leadership Effectiveness: The pastor in consultation with the Coach will form a team of three to five people on or before **March 15, 2017**, who will create a plan to maximize the effectiveness of the leadership of the congregation. The plan will include, but not be limited to:

- Developing a written job description for all leadership positions in the congregation
 - The team will consult the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* to ensure all responsibilities, qualifications and limitations are observed. Special attention will be given to term limits outlined by the *Book of Discipline*.
- A plan to discern the Spiritual Gifts and Leadership Gifts of the congregation
- An evaluation tool to ensure people are using their gifts to the highest capacity
- A clear process for evaluation and accountability to roles and responsibilities
- An intentional plan of succession of leadership (i.e. mentoring, shared leadership, leader in training process etc....)

The plan will be presented to the Council Board on or before **June 15, 2017**. After review and approval by the Council Board, the plan will begin implementation on or before **September 1, 2017**, and evaluated for effectiveness by **June 1, 2018**.

4. Leadership Development: The Pastor, in consultation with the coach, will put together a team of three to five persons on or before **June 1, 2017**, who will develop a path for developing congregational leadership. The team will be charged with researching other churches' pathways, as well as Conference recommended resources in developing their pathways. This pathway will be presented to the Council Board on or before **October 1, 2017**. Once approved, the pathway will be implemented on or before **January 1, 2018**, and evaluated for effectiveness no later than **July 1, 2019**.

The leadership development pathway will include, but not be limited to:

- Identification of new leaders.
- A class for new leaders
 - Consult with the coach on developing the curriculum for the class that will support the mission and vision of this congregation. This class will begin on or before **January 1, 2018**.
- Ongoing classes for existing leaders to continue their growth
- Training requirements for eligibility for serving in leadership
- Requirements for continuing on leadership
- Participation in ministry specific training offered by the District and Conference of the Annual Conference
- Offering ministry specific training opportunities

5. Inwardly Focused Congregation: The pastor, in consultation with the coach, will form a team of 3-5 people on or before **April 1, 2017**. The team will develop a plan to help the congregation increase their reach into and relationship with the community. First, the team will do an assessment of current outreach activities to determine where relational connection can be increased. The plan will be presented to the Council Board on or before **September 1, 2018**.

As part of creating this plan, the team will explore the use of the following books or curriculum:

- *Get Their Name* by Bob Farr, Kay Kotan, and Doug Anderson
- *Becoming a Contagious Christian* by Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel and Bill Hybels
- *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
- *Toxic Charity* by Robert D. Lupton
- *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren
- *Unbinding the Gospel* by Martha Grace Reese

The team will also consult with the Upper New York Annual Conference Resource Center to learn from the Director, Diane Miner, of other resources available at no cost. Exploration of ministries, such as *Celebrate Recovery*, will be studied in order to create a pathway of relationship(s) with people who are facing addictions of many varieties.

The plan is to include how to build a connection with the local community, in the United States, and around the world. Further, the plan will include two local outreach projects with high relational interaction on or before **July 1 2019**, one US Volunteers in Mission (VIM) trip in **2019**, and one international VIM trip before **July 1, 2020**.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation in this manner. The prayer and hope for your congregation is that God will use this process to help implement your mission effectively, live into your vision and make an eternal difference in Bergen and the surrounding communities for the Glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Dr. Aaron M. Bouwens, Director of Vital Congregations
Patty Pierleoni, Laity from Auburn UMC
Rev. Dee Finch, Deacon from Greece UMC & Seneca Street UMC
Pastor Linda Glantz, Pastor, Albion UMC and Holley Disciples UMC
Rev. Jeff Long, Pastor, Farmington UMC

Town Hall Meetings:

Wednesday, November 9 @7pm
Sunday, November 13 @12:15pm
Saturday, November 19 @10am

Church Conference:

December 1, 2016 at 6:30pm