

St. Paul United Methodist Church

INTRODUCTION

We, the consultation team, would like to thank the pastor, Dr. Ron McIntire, the lay leadership and congregation of St. Paul United Methodist Church for the invitation to consult with your church as part of the Healthy Church Initiative. We read and digested the self-study document provided by the leaders, reviewed the Faith Perceptions report, conducted interviews with staff members and led focus groups on Friday night and Saturday morning with members of the congregation. We conducted a teaching workshop on Saturday. Everyone cooperated with us and provided all the information we requested. Our prayer is that God will use this process to enhance the ministry of the Gospel in this community

Strengths

- 1. LEADER PASTOR:** Ron and Sandie McIntire have been used by God to bring healing and growth leadership to St. Paul United Methodist Church. During interviews some comments were that Ron was “the best thing that happened in the church,” “I don’t know what would have happened to St. Paul if we did not have Ron,” and Ron is a “real person, who has a great way with people.” Another added the words, “and he has a great wife.” A basic strength of St. Paul is its pastoral team.
- 2. CONGREGATION:** The people of St. Paul UMC are clearly a strength. God’s love is shown in the people through their friendliness, fellowship and self-giving. Comments like these were heard, “the people are fantastic,” “the people are caring and compassionate,” and one person said “they will give you the shirt of their backs.” There is a real sense of family in this church.
- 3. MISSIONS:** St. Paul United Methodist Church is a mission-minded church, which makes resources available for helping people in need. The love of the church reaches beyond its own walls to witness for Jesus Christ. Assembled food packs feed the hungry who enter the church doors daily. The Festival of Sharing, Care Packages, various seasonal Crosslines efforts along with donations to the Ozarks Methodist Manor are examples of the many missions projects.
- 4. BUILDING AND LOCATION:** The very spacious building located in a high density downtown area is a great strength. It has rooms available for many ministries along with a beautiful and attractive sanctuary. There is great potential for more opportunities to utilize the current facilities effectively. Surrounded by an active business and multi-cultural community, residential dwellings as well as near by colleges provides numerous opportunities for outreach. This community has tremendous evangelistic promise.
- 5. SPIRITUAL MATURITY:** St. Paul stated its first strength as being a Christ-centered and Bible-based church. Members of this church are deeply committed to Jesus Christ, which is a basic quality of a healthy church. The fact that this congregation is very accepting of all persons shows a sign of spiritual maturity. Willingness to share their knowledge and pass on leadership roles to the younger generation is a strength that will carry this church into the future.

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Concerns

1. AGE OF CONGREGATION: The average age of St. Paul congregation is 60+, which implies that without reaching new young people St. Paul UMC does not have a long future. Although there are a few very fine young families, the vast majority of the people are very elderly. The church needs to reach out and bring in more young families to provide new leadership. A new life cycle made up of energetic and capable young leaders is needed to help God give this church a bright future.

2. WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY: In order to reach younger people, current participants of the church indicate the need to add a contemporary service. Americans are attracted to instrumental sounds like guitars and drums. God is using contemporary services with these instruments drawing hundreds of thousands of Christians to churches across America. St. Paul UMC has many in its surrounding community who likely would be attracted to this type of worship.

3. FINANCES: St. Paul UMC is heavily drawing on its reserves to meet its annual budget. This cannot continue beyond a few years. In order to reverse this situation income must be increased. The number of givers must be enlarged, and the commitment of current participants must be raised. The Finance Committee would be wise to evaluate the effectiveness of some of its current spending.

4. CHILDREN/YOUTH: Participants said consistently in the interviews that the church needs more children. It was also said the church needs more programs for children both on Sundays and during the week. A healthy congregation has a good representation of both children and youth. There has been a recent increase of children and youth, but much more needs to be done in this area. Facilities need to be reconfigured for more growth.

5. HOSPITALITY & CONNECTIONS: Mystery Guests reported challenges finding their way around the church and information about connection opportunities. Signage is an issue to find entrances into the building, locating the children's classrooms and generally getting around the facility. The church website is not currently functional or helpful. All though the church is reporting seeing new weekly guests, they are not returning and becoming part of the church.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. AGE OF CONGREGATION: On the day this consultation report is accepted (should it be accepted), the congregation will take as its mission statement, "The making of new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." This means that every ministry in the congregation must demonstrate how it will accomplish the mission and that new ministries need to have as their primary purpose the "*making of new disciples.*"

The congregation will have a Day of Prayer, Repentance & Healing on or before May 29, 2011, conducted by the coach that will allow the membership to be fully prepared for the Lord's Vision for the future of St. Paul UMC.

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The coach will conduct a Day of Envisioning for the congregation. The purpose of this day is to dream of how God might want to work through the congregation both individually and collectively to reach this community. This day will occur on or before June 30, 2011. Following this day the pastor in conjunction with coach and the Church Council of the church will confirm the Vision Statement. This statement will be presented to the congregation on or before July 30, 2011 for affirmation.

The coach will lead the pastor and Church Council in a day-long goal-setting, possibly for 2012 retreat on or before October 1, 2011.

2. WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY: The church will begin a contemporary worship service by September 1, 2011. A director of contemporary music must be hired and in place by July 1, 2011 in order to recruit musicians and plan for the beginning of this service. A team of 3 people must be in place by June 1, 2011 to plan and market this new worship service to the community. The location, worship time, and other key factors will be determined by this team in conjunction with the coach, the pastor and the needs of the community. This new contemporary service will be in addition to the current traditional service the church is offering.

3. FINANCES: In order to bring the income level of the church closer to meet the budget, the finance committee will review all budgetary spending. The purpose of the review will be to determine if each and every ministry in the church is supporting the mission of bringing new disciples to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, a stewardship plan for 2012 must be in place by October 1, 2011 to increase the giving of current members.

4. CHILDREN/YOUTH: The pastor in consultation with the coach will appoint an evaluation team of four people by May 1, 2011 consisting of a minimum of one female and one male under the age of 30 to evaluate the space available and used for current and future children and youth ministries. This team will develop recommendations to reallocate existing space, update current conditions, as required to allow growth to occur. The team will visit three facilities that have excellent, modern, technologically advanced space and furnishings for both children and youth. The visiting locations will be determined in consultation with the coach and pastor. The team will present their written recommendations to the Church Council for approval on or before May 15, 2011. A Community Open House & Celebration of the completed renovations will be held on or before September 11, 2011 to celebrate this newly revitalized ministry.

To support this revitalized children and youth ministry, the pastor in consultation with the coach and PPRC will hire by August 14, 2011 a part time (20 hours per week) children and youth ministry coordinator with the future goal of having two separate part time coordinators – one for children and one for youth. The intention of this position is to extensively develop the children and youth ministry equipping lay volunteers and developing a structure and program that will be appealing and meaningful to children, youth and their families. This must include the marketing of opportunities for ministry to local community. Possible new ministries might include Mother's Day Out, Mothers of Pre-schoolers, Vacation Bible School, etc...

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5. HOSPITALITY & CONNECTIONS: A member of the church will be identified by the pastor on or before June 1st 2011 to lead the hospitality and connections ministry. This individual will partner with the pastor and the coach to train and equip others to function in the roles of greeters, ushers, and connectors. This individual will read the books “Beyond the First Visit” and “Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations” by August 1st 2011 and share the key concepts with others on this team.

The trustees in consultation with the pastor and coach will evaluate and address the need for interior and exterior signage to aid church guests in the navigation of church property and facilities by June 15th 2011. The following basic areas must be addressed beginning immediately and concluding by the end of 2011: first-time guests parking signs, new and expecting mother parking signs, handicap parking directional signing, interior directional signs, building accessibility, and overall organizational of storage space.

CONCLUSION

We, the consulting team, want to thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation in this manner. Our prayers and hope for your congregation is that God will use this process to help implement your mission effectively, create a compelling vision and make an eternal difference in Springfield for the Glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Team Members

Ken Willard

Royal Speidel

Sharlene Rieke

Laurie Looney

cc: Bart Hildreth, DS

Bob Farr, Director of Congregational Excellence

Town Halls

Thursday, March 10, 2011 6:30 pm

Sunday, March 20, 2011 9:30 am

Thursday, March 31, 2011 6:30 pm

Church Conference – Monday April 4, 2011 6:30

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