

Strategic Planning at Cedar Ridge 2016

As we approached planning for next year, we worked with two growing realizations:

1. The planning work we did last year created a scope of work greater than one year. In other words we still have work to do on all this in the coming year.
2. There are multiple areas of ministry in our church where we need a holistic review to refresh vision, clarify goals and expectations, and develop concrete plans for moving forward.

This planning document reflects both of these realizations. It contains a simple plan of action for next year and, as part of that plan, an initiative to refresh our church vision.

Most of the rest of this document outlines this plan. We have continued last year's work and have similar (but modified) objectives as we wrestled with what has already been accomplished, what work remains, what work needs to be started, and what new perspective we have now, one year later. A basic outline of activities up to Christmas is included in the calendar section.

Refreshing Our Church Vision

As we have engaged in the planning process over the past couple of years, there has also been a growing sense that we are not necessarily being as strategic as we could be. The process results in a "plan of action" for the year, but it is not really a *strategic* plan. Over the years, we have done a lot of visioning and looking ahead, but we lack an integrated strategic plan that turns our vision into agreed goals and actions (as well as prioritization and sequencing) that can motivate our church life.

In the past couple of years we have sensed God calling us strongly to social justice—especially racial and economic justice—as a distinct emphasis, and we are still working out what that means for us. A few years before that, we had a leadership discernment process that resulted in "The 8 Tasks" which have driven a lot of our activity, but many of which are as yet incomplete. Previously, we had a series of visioning processes (for our property, resulting in the farm; for global engagement, resulting in our work in Guatemala; for children and youth, etc.). In all these areas we have much to celebrate. We have made great progress. But we also sense at least some of the following:

- *A lack of clarity about where we are headed:* What are our expectations? What does "success" look like, and how will we know if get there?
- *Mission drift:* We are not necessarily on the same path on which we set out. In some cases this is due to circumstantial necessity as we encounter the unknown, and in other cases it is due to lack of momentum and energy in that direction.
- *A lack of integration:* How do all our plans, initiatives and ministries work together? Given our limited resources how do we work together efficiently and realistically?

Looking back further still, in September (the beginning of the 2016-2017 fiscal year) it will be 10 years since we began our vision process. So much has happened since then and in many ways we are now a different church. The makeup of our church community is very different and as we look ahead from this vantage point, our horizon is very different from 10 years ago because a) we are a different community from then, and b) we are in a different place (having made progress with our vision). We have lots to celebrate and lots to look forward to. We have fresh opportunities ahead that we could perhaps not even see 10 years ago, and we have new challenges that are a result of us moving forward into new territory and with which we need to wrestle.

All this to say that at the 10-year mark of our vision, it makes great strategic sense for us to take intentional time out to both celebrate and review our vision as part of our activity next year. We do not need a new vision and we do not need to go through a visioning process like the one we did 10 years ago. But we do need to work together as a leadership community to:

- Look at our vision in fresh light from the vantage point of 10 years.
- Develop an integrated, flexible and adaptable strategic plan that creates unity, clarifies priorities, and inspires action.

Ten years ago we stated a belief that our vision would lead us into the following:

1. We want to create an inviting culture of discipleship that permeates all we do; where people can get practical help and support on their journey of transformation; where people can grow and become healthier in every way.
2. We want to devote our property to our vision. We want to intentionally develop this incredible resource so that it can be used to serve the world in life changing ways. We want it to be a haven of environmental health and a place of refuge for people in need.
3. We want to develop and nurture an abundance of disciple-making communities all over this metropolitan area; small communities of people who care for one another, help each other grow and reach out to others.
4. We want to be catalysts of change where we live, in our neighborhoods and workplaces. We want to be citizens who make life better for others, who serve by leading creative initiatives to make the world in which we live a better place, without seeking credit for ourselves or our church.
5. We want to start a long-term sustainable project in a developing country where we partner with local people, develop mutually enriching relationships, and empower the poor. We want this to be a project in which we can all participate in some way, where many of us can visit, and whose people have a consistent visible presence in our church life.
6. We want to develop a ministry area specifically focused on helping people with emotional, psychological and developmental struggles. We want be a place of healing and recovery where we can offer rest, support and hope to even the most despairing.
7. We want to pursue diversity where people from all kinds of different cultures and backgrounds can come together and enjoy life together offering love and peace to our fractured and divided culture.

Clearly we have made a lot of progress in many of these intentions (and less in others). Many of the vision and discernment processes highlighted previously have been our attempts to clarify a way forward with these intentions and have resulted in some amazing ministry. Looking ahead, what have we learnt along the way? What else do we need to do in these areas? How might we reframe or clarify these intentions now we are 10 years along? Given our new horizon, what new intentions have arisen 10 years on? How does new thinking (because we are a community of different people from 10 years ago) apply to our vision?

As part of our plan for next year we are proposing that the Pastoral Team and Board go away together for a 3-day retreat in January or February 2017. This would give us adequate time to get into the following kinds of things:

- Celebrate: Look back together and thank God for the journey
- Deepen our relationships with one another (both individually as well as the two teams)
- Wrestle with some of our current main priorities (many of which were products of processes we went through after the vision)
 - Farm and Property
 - What are our long-term goals here?
 - If we are only going to farm half an acre, this does not address the vision for usage of our 63-acre property in the way we intended.
 - What is our current rationale for the property, and how are we following through on that?
 - Guatemala
 - What is the long-term vision?
 - How does our call to social justice get expressed here?
 - What does a local connection look like for us?
 - Children and Youth
 - How are we doing around the 7 Recommendations?
 - What have we learned and what does the future hold?
 - Discipleship Groups
 - After around 30 discipleship series (!) what have we learned?
 - How has our original vision for groups changed; or does it need to change?
 - How do we plan to increase participation, develop leaders, etc.?
 - To what degree do we want to open up alternatives to d-groups and how?
 - Contemplation and action
 - How can we grow as a community of prayer and worship?
 - How do we create momentum around silence and reflection amid the prevailing “frenzied pace of life”?
 - How do we create balance between contemplation and action, both as a community and individually?

- Explore other core issues that have emerged more recently
 - Social justice
 - This has been a huge emphasis and challenge for us recently, driven by our own convictions and also the crisis in our culture around racism.
 - Diversity and even racial reconciliation are implicit in our vision and even in goal 7 above, but we at a place of much greater desire and urgency. We sense this is in some way defining for us moving forward.
 - We are also feeling challenged to have a more holistic impact around issues of racial and economic justice locally. What presence do we want to have in our local community? How can we partner locally in similar ways to how we have partnered in Guatemala?
 - Finances: how to manage our property ownership, debt, income and outgoings in line with our vision, and to release more resource for our vision.
 - Our place in the Body of Christ
 - Connection locally
 - Connection to a larger movement

This is not an exhaustive list and none of the above is particularly well thought through at this point, but this is the kind of conversation we need to have.

If our intended outcomes are a renewed vision and a strategic plan, then clearly it is going to take more than a retreat to get there. This is work that will take place throughout the year with the retreat somewhere in the middle. Before the retreat, we need to work on identifying the areas/issues we need to address and assign leaders to explore and develop thinking on each one so we can have retreat discussions where everyone is already well informed. The retreat itself will generate work that will require more leadership and involvement of our community to develop it to a point where it can be integrated into a plan.

So this is a big commitment for us as leaders, but an immensely significant one for our community and represents an exciting opportunity.

Action Plan for 2016-2107

Overarching Focus: Capture our Community's Hearts

This is a similar focus to last year where the emphasis was on fostering commitment (to Jesus, to one another, and to our vision). There have been many signs of a great response to this focus—such as our financial giving this year—but we have also sensed that perhaps commitment is not the core issue. This year's focus aims closer for the core to "capture our community's hearts" with awe, passion, gratefulness and love for God, for our way of following Jesus, for our vision, and for one another. We see this as a necessary cultural shift (that will take longer than a year, of course) that we want to nurture in all areas of our church and in all we do. A big part of this will be emphasizing heart-response as well as head, creating space for celebration and gratefulness, and sharing our stories as a community.

Objectives and Associated Metrics

The desire to capture our community's hearts leads to three objectives for the year, outlined below. Metrics are also given that will be used to indicate progress towards achieving these objectives. Understanding that quantifiable measures do not tell the full story, and numerical targets may not be achieved for many reasons, these metrics will be used to inform prayerful reflection, rather than as objective performance standards.

Objective 1: Renewed sense of ownership of (updated) vision

- a. Increased integration of ministries achieved by linking activities back to the Cedar Ridge vision
 - Metric 1a: Percentage of church-sponsored activities explicitly integrating two or more ministry areas
 - Target: 60%
 - Tracked by Pastoral Team members
- b. More involvement in d-groups, other groups, workshops, etc.
 - Metric 1b: Increased active membership of d-groups
 - Target: 10% increase
 - Tracked by Colleen through CCB (list updated annually at fall quarterly d-group leaders meeting)

Objective 2: Growth in confidence in ourselves as a faith community

- a. Commitment to teach and empower next generation (Children & Youth)
 - Metric 2a: Increased number of C&Y volunteers
 - Target: 20% increase
 - Tracked by Bryan and Trish
- b. Live out faith through social justice
 - Metric 2b: Number of well-attended church-sponsored racial reconciliation or economic justice events with formal or informal evidence of positive changes in knowledge, attitudes or practices.
 - Target: 5 racial reconciliation and 5 economic justice events
 - Tracked by Racial Reconciliation Team and Economic Justice Team
- c. Reach those who want to find us
 - Metric 2c: Increase in number of newcomers registered in CCB
 - Target: 25% increase
 - Tracked by Colleen through CCB

Objective 3: Motivated and committed to prayer in all areas

- a. Greater integration of prayer into all ministry areas
 - Metric 3a: Percentage of church-sponsored events integrating significant time for different types of prayer
 - Target: 70%
 - Tracked by Pastoral Team members
- b. Clear understanding of what prayer is and how to pray
 - Metric 3b: Percentage of d-groups reporting at least some members showing an increased commitment to prayer
 - Target: 60% of groups
 - Tracked by Pastoral Team members

Actions

To achieve the above objectives, the following set of actions is proposed. Although organized by objective, the actions are mutually reinforcing and do not fully correspond to only one objective.

Actions principally contributing to Objective 1:

- 3-day vision retreat in January/February for Pastoral Team and Board to
 - Celebrate progress to date in making the vision a reality
 - Identify any gaps and needed changes to the vision
 - Wrestle with priority issues relating to applying the vision
- Activities TBD flowing from the vision retreat, including
 - A message series on the Cedar Ridge vision
 - A fresh approach to d-groups
 - A wider range of opportunities for spiritual growth (workshops, retreats, etc.)

Actions principally contributing to Objective 2:

- Fall series: *The Fruit of the Spirit* ("be good news")
 - Run from September 18 to November 20
 - Include a Day of Service on the Sunday before the election (November 6)
 - Include reflective prayer as election approaches
 - Focus on gratefulness on November 20 in lead up to Thanksgiving
 - Encourage groups to meet for the whole 9 weeks but vary content (discussion questions for 6 weeks; options for activities such as meals, service projects, etc., for remaining 3 weeks)
 - Develop content for all ages collaboratively through Content Creation workshop and lesson plan reviews, ensuring alignment with vision
 - Possibly include a prayer "workshop" (TBD)

- Winter series: *What is the Gospel?* (“what is good news?”)
 - Run from January 8 to February 5
 - Follow with vision mini-series before Lent (and after retreat)
 - End with how to share the good news, including the need to share with the next generation
 - Similar kind of series to *Mystery, Meaning and the Quest for God*, but with more stories (more of a mix of conceptual and application)
 - Refer back to *Fruit of the Spirit* series to show how we demonstrate this fruit in our approach to the gospel
 - Develop content for all ages collaboratively, ensuring alignment with vision
 - Include workshops
- Activities to support parents (TBD)
 - Elicit and analyze feedback from parents on what forms of support are needed
 - Make part of the C&Y discussion at the vision retreat
- First Sundays
 - Possibly up to 2 services a year could be youth led
 - Gather some youth, children and worship leaders to review
 - Think through first Sundays when content planning
 - Use more visual learning approaches (e.g., drama)
 - Make services more engaging of all ages in worship
 - Increase diversity (race, gender, class, age) of presenters
- Social justice activities
 - Economic Justice and Racial Reconciliation teams each have presented plans that cover some of the upcoming year, and will continue their own planning
 - Proposed upcoming events include racial reconciliation book group and fall workshop; and economic justice documentary screening in fall or winter
 - Ruth and Tinica will look for ways to ensure integration of racial reconciliation and economic justice events with each other, with other ministry areas and events (e.g., creative coffeehouse, Day of Service projects, etc.), and with local community initiatives (e.g., Burtonsville Day)
 - Integrate examples of civil rights leaders and other social justice activists into *Fruit of the Spirit* and *People of Prayer* series
- Welcoming newcomers
 - Strategic communications (TBD) to find a diversity of “people who want to find us” including review of online presence and use of local media
 - Activities and systems (TBD) to enable newcomers to quickly and easily become more engaged with Cedar Ridge
 - Publicize homes that are open on Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter so no one is alone who does not want to be

Actions principally contributing to Objective 3:

- Possible contemplative retreat in Lent
 - Determine rationale (over Quiet Days)
 - Ensure a variety of approaches to prayer to provide opportunities to a diverse group of people
 - Needs to fit with calendar
 - Consider scholarships as budget allows
- *People of Prayer* series or event
 - Could be a series later in year (Lent or after)
 - Possible event integrated with racial reconciliation
- Strengthen prayer within d-groups
 - Prayer team help with different kinds of prayer exercises in the d-series
 - Integrate prayer into training/development calendar for d-group leaders
- Prayer themes
 - Change from monthly to seasonal following series themes
 - Continue to promote on First Sundays
 - Use all other communication channels
 - Integrate Prayer Team initiatives with Economic Justice Team and Racial Reconciliation Team initiatives to ensure synergy

Draft Fall and Winter Calendar 2016-17

Sun Sept 4	AAT on Acts series	Labor Day weekend
Sun Sept 11	Acts series ends	
Tues Sept 13	Group leaders meeting	
Sun Sept 18	Fruit of the Spirit Series 1 (Love)	Re-launch and potluck. Ministry/Groups Fair (include Youth "Meet the leaders")
Fri Sept 23	Movie Night	
Sat Sept 24	Burtonsville Day	
Sun Sept 25	Fruit of the Spirit Series 2 (Joy)	RR prayer
Fri Sept 30	Movie night	
Sun Oct 2	Fruit of the Spirit Series 3 (Peace)	First Sunday
Fri Oct 7	Movie night	
Sun Oct 9	Fruit of the Spirit Series 4 (Patience)	
Sat Oct 15	Harvest Festival	

Sun Oct 16	Fruit of the Spirit Series 5 (Kindness & goodness)	
Sun Oct 23	Fruit of the Spirit Series 6 (Gentleness)	RR prayer
Sun Oct 30	Fruit of the Spirit Series 7 (Self-control)	
Sun Nov 6	Fall Day of Service	AAT. Election Day Tues.
Mon Nov 7	McLaren "Great Spiritual Migration" events	1-4:30, 7:30-8:45
Sun Nov 13	Fruit of the Spirit Series 8 (Faithfulness)	Commitment Sunday
Sun Nov 20	Fruit of the Spirit Series 9 (Gratefulness)	Thanksgiving on 11/24. Christmas decorating with lunch.
Sun Nov 27	Advent 1:	AAT. RR prayer
Fri Dec 2	Advent Party	
Sun Dec 4	Advent 2:	First Sunday
TBD	Advent Quiet Day	
Sun Dec 11	Advent 3:	
Sun Dec 18	Advent 4:	
Sat Dec 24	Christmas Eve service (5:30PM)	AAT
Sun Dec 25	No service	
Sun Jan 1	New Year service	AAT
Sun Jan 8	What is the Gospel Series 1	Epiphany? Christmas un-decorating. Lunch??
Sun Jan 15	What is the Gospel Series 2	Annual meeting? and lunch. MLK?
Sun Jan 22	What is the Gospel Series 3	RR prayer
Sat Jan 28	Creative Cup Coffeehouse	Or next weekend
Sun Jan 29	What is the Gospel Series 4	
Sun Feb 5	What is the Gospel Series 5	First Sunday
Sun Feb 12	Pre-Lent Series (Mini-series on vision?)	
Sun Feb 19	Pre-Lent Series	
Sun Feb 26	Pre-Lent Series	RR prayer
Wed March 1	Ash Wednesday	
Sun March 5	First Sunday of Lent	First Sunday

- Journey part 1 and 2 (Oct?)
- Vision Retreat (Jan/Feb)
- Christmas play?
- Possible campout in Spring 2017