

Discovering God's Call

First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

April 16, 2012

Overview

- What is visioning?
- How we got started
- The way ahead began to emerge
- What we learned
- What we concluded
- What's next?

**Purpose: Engage all members in God's
new vision for the church**

A few things are carved in stone, but not many!

What is visioning?

What is Visioning?

Together:

- Understanding where we came from...
...so we know who we want to be when we grow up
- Imagining God's better future and how we fit in
- Tapping into the unity that comes from shared mission, values, and vision
- Helping us to know what not to focus on as well as where to put our energy

Prayer, hard work, deep thought, lots of time, confronting the facts with honesty, and some conflict

Why change?

- We serve a God who makes all things new
- Unreached people in “our neighborhood”
- Needs all around us
- Church history of transformational change
- Like our ancestors, we can’t imagine Pittsburgh without a vibrant First Presbyterian Church

See, I am doing a new thing! Isaiah 43:19

How we got started

We studied past renewal efforts

- 1989 – “Futuring Committee”
 - Looking for “new life and vigor”
- 1994 – “Lyle Shaller Action Committee”
 - Nationally-known church consultant
- 2008 – Transition Study Review
 - Preparing for new Senior Pastor

We Prayed

(We had our own prayer guide. Our consultant told us we were the only church he'd ever seen have one, out of hundreds he'd helped.)

We visited vibrant downtown churches

North Avenue Presbyterian, Atlanta

Fourth Presbyterian, Chicago

We Read...and read.

We tried new things...

- Many strong, lay led projects
 - Library, painting, marathon, retreats...many more
- Hosted overnight visitors in the church
- Space for CARE Ownership; Linda Schultz' classes
- Walk-In Ministry feeding people in our cafeteria
- Lots of building projects

And more new things...

- Hired new staff members
- New section leaders for choir
- Revitalized nursery

We learned and grew together

We broke bread together

We involved more and more folks

- Formed Vision Team
- Held overnight officer retreats
- “Summer Sundays” addressed core issues
 - Identity, mission, community, engaging the world
- Sermons on line; Facebook page; new website
- Mission trips to Costa Rica and Turkey

You might say, we spruced things up

Out of all this, a way ahead started to emerge

A way ahead based on...

- Shared leadership and responsibility
- An environment where everyone can flourish
- Lots of small discoveries of what God is up to

How our visioning effort took shape

- Jan 2009 – We called Tom as Senior Pastor
- Sep 2009 – Tom met Kevin Ford at Pastors' Conference
- May 2010 – We held an Officers' Retreat, LCCC
- Nov 2010 – Kevin Ford met with Session
- Apr 2011 – Some of us attended TAG Leadership Retreat in Georgia
- Apr-Oct 2011 – Training with Partners for Sacred Places

Visioning Effort Takes Shape, cont'd

- Jul 2011 – Session hired TAG Consulting for church assessment
- Aug 2011 – Transforming Church Index
- Sep 2011 – Focus Groups with Kevin Ford; demographic study completed
- Sep 2011 – 24-hour prayer vigil
- Nov 2011 – Church leaders debriefed assessment and confirmed findings
- Dec 2011 – Session hired TAG consulting to facilitate leadership retreats
- Feb-Mar 2012 – Leadership retreats with Kevin Ford
- Mar 2012 – Drafts of Core Values, Mission Statement, Strategic Plan

Lots of you took part!

- 114 people took the survey
- Consultant interviewed 25 people
 - Long-term members, lay leaders, newcomers, and staff
- 48 people took part in 24-hour prayer vigil

What we learned

What you said

Survey, focus groups, interviews

- Our **building** is a great strength
- Our **finances** are conducted openly
- **Ownership** – members feel like they make a difference
- **Biblical focus** – we emphasize the truth of Scripture
- **Spiritual maturity** – members grow in faith
- **Atmosphere** – folks feel welcome here, no matter where they come from
- **Ligonier Camp** – our most creative and visible ministry

“Our neighborhood”

- Within a 5 mile radius of the church:
 - Population is 384,694, down 15.4% since 1990
 - 131,000 people have no church affiliation
 - Income is below the national average
 - Family structure is “extremely non-traditional”
 - Many single mothers
 - Age 8 and under is fastest growing age group
 - Many single, never married
 - Largest concentration in ages 30 to 50
 - Level of education is above national average

Compared to “our neighborhood” ...

- We mirror the decline in population
- We reflect the educational diversity of the population, but...
- We're older
- We have more traditional families
- Our income is slightly higher
- Only about 10% of our members are minorities, compared to 28% of the area around us

After all that information gathering and prayer, we sat down together to understand what it meant

20 church leaders were involved in 24 hours worth of retreats, guided by a highly experienced church consultant

What we concluded

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths

- Spiritual maturity
- Welcoming, warm, collegial
- Building
- Personal investment/ownership
- Partnership with other organizations
- Commitment to biblical orthodoxy/prayer
- Mission-minded

Weaknesses

- Finances (deficit)
- Percentage of members who participate
- Lack of visibility in the community
- Lack of focus
- Accessibility of downtown location
- Denominational infighting

Opportunities

- Membership engagement
- Kids/single parents
- Non-profit partnering
- Strengthen families
- Get to know neighbors, local businesses, volunteer organizations
- Engage young professionals and make “missionaries” out of them
- Foot traffic
- Cafeteria
- Growth of downtown

Threats

- Change aversion
- Nothing coming out of visioning efforts
- Training volunteers and staff
- Inertia
- Risks of ministering to children
- Finances
- Denominational issues
- Government regulation

Our next step was to identify our
Core Values

Core Values

- What they're not
 - Not core beliefs – you can find our theology in our faith statements
 - Not “aspired values” (things we think we need to be working on, but aren’t part of us yet)

Core Values

- Describe our personality
- Reflect our “DNA”
- Are the commitments that drive us day to day
- Tell us how we make decisions
- Determine who’s on our leadership team
- Define how we operate

Core Values

- Biblically grounded
- Mission focused
- Genuinely friendly and compassionate
- Commitment to Pittsburgh
- Being a sacred anchor/heritage

Can we say this in a better way to reach the public?

Core Values

- Confident in God's Word
- Mission focused
- Genuinely friendly and compassionate
- Commitment to Pittsburgh
- Being a sacred anchor/heritage

Core Values

- Confident in God's Word
- Going Where God Leads
- Genuinely friendly and compassionate
- Commitment to Pittsburgh
- Being a sacred anchor/heritage

Core Values

- Confident in God's Word
- Going Where God Leads
- Neighboring Through Connection and Care
- Commitment to Pittsburgh
- Being a sacred anchor/heritage

Core Values

- Confident in God's Word
- Going Where God Leads
- Neighboring Through Connection and Care
- Committed to the City
- Being a sacred anchor/heritage

Core Values

- Confident in God's Word
- Going Where God Leads
- Neighboring Through Connection and Care
- Committed to the City
- Holding God's Faithfulness in Trust

Based on all this, we reflected some more

We asked ourselves...

- Why are we here?
- Who has God entrusted us to reach?
- What is the measure of success?
- What are we collectively most passionate about?
- What can we be best at?

A Mission Statement...

- Our core purpose
- Why we exist
- Precise, memorable, short
- What we do and don't do
- Gives us focus
- Reminds us we can't be all things to all people

Our Mission

Transforming Pittsburgh by awakening
a new generation to life in Christ

“Target Audience”

- We believe that God is calling us to serve the children of Pittsburgh
- Long-term members want a new generation to experience God’s love
- As we focus on children, we’ll better serve our members

“Target Audience”

- Consistent with the great legacy of Boys and Girls Clubs
- Leverages one of our great strengths, Ligonier Camp
- Builds on success of Cellar Ministry and partnership with Youth for Christ

Finally, we drafted strategies to fulfill
our mission

Strategies

- Recreation Ministry
 - Low cost child care; retreats; field trips
- Arts Ministry
 - Art and music events, programs
- Education Ministry
 - Life skills training, GED classes
- Third Place Ministry
 - Gathering spot; coffee house; meeting space
- Gifts and Talents ministry
 - Volunteer effort to carry out the strategies

What's next?

- Develop design teams
 - Gather input on initiatives
 - Name leaders for each strategy
- Assign a “champion” for the planning process
- Communicate what we've done

Communication

- Engage everyone in the plan
- Provide information at a rate people can tolerate
- Regular communication to imbed ideas in people's heads
- Small group activities at retreat
- Summer Sundays built on Core Values and Strategic Initiatives
- Sermon series

Communication, cont'd

- Testimonies of Vision Task Force and session
 - What was most important
 - What are we most excited about?
 - What is our code?
- Website changes
- Cards with Core Values and Mission
 - Posters, bulletin, flyers for cafeteria, brochures

Nothing in the last 25 years matches the sustained, shared effort to discern God's vision for the church

Thank you!

We're just beginning...

**“Now to him who is able to
do immeasurably more than
all we ask or imagine...”**

Everyone is important!

First Presbyterian Church

Transforming Pittsburgh by
awakening a new generation to life
in Christ