



STRENGTH
FOR TODAY
BRIGHT HOPE
FOR TOMORROW

WARREN WILSON
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2016 MINISTRY PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

by Rev. Dr. Steve Runholt

Like many of the best stories, this one began when the world around us started to change.

At the time of this change, life here at the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church was humming along just fine, as pleasant and breezy as a summer day. Our Sunday morning attendance was stable; our programs were healthy and our ministries were strong.

But while life for us was good, several of our sister churches in this Presbytery had closed their doors. All smaller congregations, they simply could no longer afford to stay open. As these closings mounted, we began to ask obvious and important questions: What did this trend mean for us? And how could we, a medium-sized congregation in a relatively remote location, avoid a similar fate?

In October 2015, after prayerful consideration of these questions, and borrowing a phrase from “Great is Thy Faithfulness”, perhaps the most beloved hymn of all time, we launched the Strength for Today Bright Hope for Tomorrow campaign.

This would be a two-part campaign focused on addressing the challenge of remaining a healthy, vibrant congregation now and in the years to come.

The Strength for the Today phase of the campaign – short-term, stewardship phase –was intended to bolster our church’s vitality in the present day. And it did just that.

The Bright Hope for Tomorrow phase of the campaign – the longer-term, forward planning phase – was intended to lay the foundation for a bright, hopeful future, so that the life and ministries of WWPC might continue on for years to come.

And that’s where this story took a wonderful turn.

As our Session and Forward Planning Leadership Team pondered how to grow our congregation and how we might continue to meet our ever increasing financial obligations, we came to an important realization: there was a better way to meet these challenges, a more faithful approach to living into our future, than to focus on membership and money.

We would focus instead on developing a plan that would realize our full potential as a congregation and enable us to be the best church we could be, in this time and in this place. If we could find

a way to do this, we believed our concerns about growing our membership and increasing our pledge income would take care of themselves.

So as we launched the forward planning phase of this campaign, we set out with the goal of discerning answers two fundamental questions: Who is God calling us to be as a congregation? And what is God calling us to do?

The conversations and the ongoing process that followed this launch have taken us the better part of a year to complete.

We gathered congregants into eleven small group listening sessions, and we shared more than a thousand ideas around what we do well as a congregation and what we might do differently, or better. We looked at what we are good at, where we need to improve.

Session commissioned a small Synthesizing Team, which collected and collated all those ideas into thirteen themes. The Forward Planning Leadership team then asked congregants to rank these themes and complete commitment forms to determine where they were willing to invest their time and energy. These rankings guided the development of this ministry plan.

In the winter of early 2016 Session and the leadership team held a retreat led by Marylyn Huff. We prayed together. We reflected together on scripture and on the feedback we'd received from the congregation. And we listened to each other, our hearts and ears open to the voice of the Spirit in the voice of one another.

Invigorated and inspired by our time with Marylyn, and with ongoing input from Session, the leadership team set out to put into language what we were hearing. We drafted new mission, vision and values statements, and refined our identity statement. And from the wisdom of our retreat time together we created goals for our church.

We convened those congregants, and Session and committee representatives, who had offered specific commitments, into small groups to develop objectives in support of these goals. Then we met again to create concrete action steps that we believe will turn these goals and objectives into reality, with outcomes that we can measure and celebrate.

If this process has seemed slow and sometimes repetitive, that's by design. From the start our commitment was always to do this work carefully and well, rather than fast. And, yes, at times our conversations have been frustrating and some have born more fruit than others.

But looking back now, it's clear that this process has been a deeply energizing experience for our church. Again and again I have been amazed by the number of people who have participated in this ongoing effort, and I've been nearly overwhelmed by the enormously generous investment of time and energy our members have made in joining and supporting this work.

Through it all I believe that God's Spirit has indeed been guiding us toward answers to the questions of who we are called to be and what we are called to do. And I believe this because, time and again, I have felt God's presence in the room with us as we've done this work together, and felt it in the spaces between us and in commitments that unite us.

And now, finally, a year after we started on this shared journey, and with the approval and blessing of our Session, the Forward Planning Leadership Team is pleased to share the final product with you of this long and wonderful discernment process.

The ministry plan that follows in these pages is yours. You made it. Or rather, we made it, together.

And now we get to live in to it together, for this is not the end of this story. It is just the beginning.



IDENTITY, MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

WE ARE

mothers and fathers, single and married, gay and straight, young and old, black and white, prosperous and poor, uncertain and sure, broken and whole – and everything in between. Together we are the many faces of humanity, yet as a joyful, caring and loving community of faith, we are one in Christ!

OUR MISSION

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church is called to be a welcoming and inclusive community of faith and fellowship, and to embody God's love through ministries of compassion, reconciliation, justice, and peace.

OUR VISION

We aspire to be a vibrant, thriving community that values both head and heart, that puts love over fear, and that seeks to be the body of Christ in this time and place.

OUR VALUES

- Love above all:
 - Compassion above doctrine
 - Mercy above judgment
 - Justice above indifference
- Worship that is Christ-centered and nurturing, challenging and relevant
- Community that is inclusive, welcoming and diverse
- Engagement with our local and global neighbors that is prayerful, current and respectful.

OUR GOALS

1. Improve congregational care and hospitality
2. Deepen our engagement with, and service to the wider community
3. Enhance faith development and spiritual nurture
4. Enrich our worship and music experience
5. Strengthen the church for a sustainable future



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

Our life together is grounded in God's love. To become a stronger congregation and a more visible force for good in the wider community, we commit to the following goals and objectives built around the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church Triad: Christian fellowship, community engagement and faith development. We will be guided by these goals in deepening relationships among congregants and in cultivating new relationships with the wider community. We will invite and encourage guests and visitors to join us in all our ministries and programs.

GOAL 1: IMPROVE CONGREGATIONAL CARE AND HOSPITALITY

1. DEVELOP AN INTENTIONAL PROGRAM THAT WELCOMES VISITORS AND OFFERS THEM WAYS TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Develop a comprehensive Visitor and New Congregant welcoming program by integrating current activities (guest register and names tags) with new ideas to ensure that all new attendees, including students, are embraced. Regularly evaluate and modify program as needed.

Who: Dedicated team of 3-5 congregants; Congregational Life Committee

When: Year 1 and on-going

- b. Build on the orientation program currently presented by Steve Runholt the pastor with the objective of getting the attendees active in the church.

Who: New Team, possibly under Congregational Life Committee

When: Year 1 - Plan and initiate by year's end

- c. Develop a formal program for people interested in becoming members of the church.

Who: Congregational Life Committee

When: Year 2

2. EXPAND CONGREGATIONAL CARE PROGRAM THROUGH ENHANCED LAY MINISTRY.

- a. Formalize the current “Dinner Team” program that takes meals to the sick, caregivers and mending congregants, based on referrals from staff.

Who: Team Leader selected from current persons who manage “dinner team” plus two more interested persons. Congregational Life (Ministry Team)

When: Year 1

- b. Formalize a Recognition program.

Who: Congregational Life (or sub-committee) Sarah Anne Eller is currently working on this item.

When: Year 1- Birthday

Year 2 - Explore other life event recognitions

- c. Develop a comprehensive care program to provide appropriate pastoral services to congregants who are struggling through a difficult time in life, whether experiencing sickness, terminal illness, grief, or some other life crisis.

Who: A Ministry team of 1 or 2 interested persons to begin program, in coordination with pastoral staff

When: Year 1 - 1) Select training and 2) Identify interested congregants

Year 2 - 1) Initiate training and 2) develop program

Year 3 - Implement program

3. IMPROVE FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN.

- a. Develop outside play area with suitable equipment and ground cover.

Who: Christian Education, Church – College Relations, WWC, Building and Maintenance

When: Year 1 - Explore options

Year 2 - Develop

4. DEVELOP CARE AND FELLOWSHIP GROUPS TO BUILD COMMUNITY.

- a. Initiate a Caring Groups program to build a stronger community through getting to know individuals better. A coordinator would oversee program which would run on an 8 month cycle.

Who: Congregational Life member (coordinator) other congregants as needed

When: Fall 2016 Plan; Spring 2017 Initiate

- b. Create Community Engagement dinners, three or four times a year, where volunteer teams share with interested congregants what they’ve been doing in the greater community.

Who: Congregational Life, Social Outreach Committee

When: Now

GOAL 2: DEEPEN OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH AND SERVICE TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY.

1. INCREASE THE USE OF OHLER SPIRITUAL CENTER BY OUTSIDE GROUPS.

- a. Evaluate locations/space within the facility that could be used by outside groups. Consider upgrades and inclusion of religious and other symbols of welcome.

Who: Ministry Team, including church administrator

When: Within first year

- b. In cooperation with the college, develop policies regarding costs, insurance, scheduling, advertising, promotion and who can use our facilities. Make this information readily available.

Who: Ministry Team, including church administrator

When: Within first two years

2. EXPAND OUR INTERACTION WITH THE COLLEGE

- a. Develop communication with the college on service projects of college using e-newsletters, website, etc. Are we welcome to join them? Make church service events likewise available to college students.

Who: College Relations subgroup with interested church members

When: Within first year

- b. The church becomes involved in social justice issues, current issues, etc with the college. Need to know what is coming up by increased use of college website and ours. Possibility of joint current issues forum.

Who: College Relations subgroup with interested church members

When: Within first two years

- c. Establish a system to provide emotional support to students at college who may need it. Communicate with Brian or counselors at college. Provide “community family” not “church family” for dinner, visits, cards of support, concerts, events, etc. College Relations subgroup with interested church members.

Who: College Relations subgroup with interested church members.

When: Within first year

3. ENHANCE OUR CURRENT COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND INCREASE CONGREGATIONAL AWARENESS OF THESE ACTIVITIES

- a. Make available to congregation user-friendly listing of those groups which church supports financially and otherwise.

Who: Social outreach.

When: Within first year

- b. Feature one service opportunity each month (eg, newsletter, worship, display in Narthex, “hands on” events). Make available as yearly calendar.

Who: Social outreach.

When: Within first year

- c. Form a Ministry team to identify the needs and opportunities of the community that are not currently being met and how we might become involved. Gather information from local agencies (police, social workers, SVCM, etc.)

Who: Ministry Team

When: Within first two years

4. INCREASE OUR AWARENESS OF AND ADVOCACY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

- a. Educate and involve members in social justice issues (worship, newsletter, positions by session, letters to newspapers, governing bodies, etc)

Who: Ministry Team

When: Within first two years.



GOAL 3: ENHANCE FAITH DEVELOPMENT AND SPIRITUAL NURTURE

1. MIND: ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY, THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND INTELLECTUAL INQUIRY.

a. Big Questions series

Who: planned and implemented by a specific action team comprised of members of CCR and CE committees, and others as interested

When: rollout in year one to the wider church and college community.

b. Congregational book reading, one for adults (including Highland Farms), one for kids:

Who: oversight provided by, and book recommendation from, CE com

When: roll out in year one.

c. Discussion groups at Highland Farms

Who: Possible shared oversight (for planning and implementation) by an action team comprised of members from CE and Congregational Life and others, as interested (Women of the Church Bible Study had been suggested as a resource)

When: roll out in year two.

2. HEART: ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH ACTION, REFLECTION AND SHARING OUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES.

a. Plan and implement a multi-generational family retreat.

Who: A dedicated action team

When: Fall or spring of year two, depending on availability of retreat facilities

- b. Encourage mutually meaningful and caring relationships between children and adults

Who: A dedicated action team

When: Roll out in year one.

- c. Multi-generational service project with built-in reflection component.

Who: Planned and implemented by CE/Social Outreach action team

When: Year 2

3. SOUL: DEEPER EXPLORATION OF PRAYER, MEDITATION AND SPIRITUALITY.

- a. Enlist a local retreat leader to help us plan towards a future retreat centered on deepening spiritual practice.

Who: An action team

When: Preliminary planning and development work to start in year one, for retreat in year two.

- b. Create a bibliography of books on contemplative spiritual practices to offer to congregants interested in deepening their own spiritual life.

Who: A ministry team

When: year one.

- c. Create an initial gathering for discussion and sharing of any books individuals have read.

Who: A Ministry Team

When: Year 2

- d. Create an on-going gathering for spiritual practices: meditation, prayer, sharing, lectio divina.

Who: A Ministry Team

When: Year 2

GOAL 4: ENHANCE WORSHIP AND MUSIC EXPERIENCE

1. REVITALIZE THE WARREN WILSON CHURCH CHOIR

- a. Reach out to current choir members with an invitation to continue singing.
- b. Reach out to congregation at large with invitation to participate.
- c. Develop a plan to recruit students to participate.

Who: Vivian, with support from other worship staff, worship committee and current choir members

When: Starting immediately

2. TRANSITION FROM CURRENT “WORSHIP COMMITTEE” STRUCTURE TO “WORSHIP AND LITURGICAL ARTS TEAM”

- a. Explain value of transition to congregation, via newsletter and other means.
- b. Recruit interested members, with emphasis on creative nature of this team.

Who: Worship staff and current worship committee members

When: Year 1

3. IN CONCERT WITH OBJECTIVE 2, DEVELOP PLAN TO DIVERSIFY OUR LITURGICAL AND MUSICAL OFFERINGS.



- a. Reach out to and recruit musicians and liturgists
- b. Reach out to college musical community for possible resources

Who: Worship staff and members of Liturgical Arts Team

When: Year 1

GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

1. DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES TO SUPPORT THE WWPC TRIAD AND MINISTRY PLAN.

- a. Review the current committee structure and the new mission, vision, goals, and objectives to ascertain how best to organize the congregation using a combination of committees, ministry teams, mission groups and other groups to implement the new Ministry Plan.

Who: Each Committee chair plus a representative, Leadership Team and staff

When: Year 1

- b. Align staff responsibilities with new Ministry Plan and the congregational organization

Who: Personnel Committee, Budget and Finance Committee representative and staff

When: Year 1

- c. Have all current and new congregants complete a questionnaire regarding their willingness to participate in/support actions in the new Ministry Plan

Who: Leadership Team

When: Year 1

- d. Continue Leadership Team as Oversight Committee to advise Session on and revision of Ministry Plan.



Who: Leadership Team

When: Year 1 and ongoing, meeting twice a year

2. IMPLEMENT A SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCH.

- a. Develop a balanced Operating Fund budget based on pledges and unrestricted annual giving. The budget shall pay all bills, provide fair salaries, support needs beyond the church and maintain the facilities. Set annual targets for the number and amount of pledges. Inform the congregation of results quarterly. Adjust budget as necessary taking into account program ROI/cost analysis.

Who: Budget and Finance Committee

When: Year 1 and ongoing

- b. Investigate new funding opportunities for church programs including grants, increased member donations to community outreach programs through the church rather than directly, ads in the directory, and fundraisers.

Who: New ministry team

When: Year 2

- c. Increase member awareness of church donations to Presbytery mission organizations and community outreach programs

Who: Treasurer and Budget and Finance Committee

When: Year 1 and ongoing

- d. Include an option on the new website for online donations/offerings.

Who: Treasurer and Communications Committee

When: Year 2

3. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY OF THE CHURCH AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH, AND TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- a. Improve overall media presence in the areas of print media, church website and social media along with a direct leadership presence through articles and speaking engagements. Create ongoing dialogue with broader community through high-impact content including speaking engagements, op-eds, articles, etc.

▪ **Website**

Who: Communications Committee

When: Fall 2016

▪ **Print Media**

Who: Communications Committee

When: Within 1st Year, but on-going

▪ **Social Media**

Who: Communications Committee (or new Sub Committee)

When: Within 1st Year, but on-going

▪ **Leadership Presence**

Who: Church Ministers & Leadership

When: Within 1st Year, but on-going

- b. Promote activities and programs in which the church is engaged to help with our visibility in the local area. Target one promoted activity per quarter. Draw on church-wide activities to find the activity to highlight; create one if none exists.

Who: New Committee to develop Programs (possibly Social Outreach)

When: Start in 2016, but on-going

- c. Create a product line (online store) for inspirational and engaging content (e.g. t-shirts, calendars, coffee mugs) that can be purchased by members of the church and local community. Use local designers to create produce-on-demand stock to raise profile and funds.

Who: Communications Sub Committee

When: First designs ready to go by late 2016



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The introduction told the story of the development of the new Ministry Plan. Here we name the leaders who made it happen. We regret it if we failed to include your contribution.

The first calls for the development of a strategic plan for the church came from then treasurers Tom Eller and Bill Corbin. In April of 2015 Session appointed a Leadership Team charged with developing a process for Forward Planning, the end product being a three-year Ministry Plan to become effective in January 2017. Sally Broughton and Mike Levi, as current and former Clerks of Session and Co-chairs of the Leadership Team, have worked tirelessly to achieve this goal.

The Leadership Team, which also included Derron Daugherty, Tom Eller, Eloise Murchison, Georgena Millar, Kathy Rouse and Steve Runholt has worked many hours to craft Identity, Mission, Vision, and Values Statements and Goals, Objectives and Action Steps for refinement and approval by Session.

In the fall of 2015 almost 70 congregants participated in listening sessions to answer questions on the strengths of the church, the challenges it faces and ways to address them. Pat Levi led a small group of facilitators – Fritz Ackerman, Jamie Dale, Bill Heck, Ken Murchison, Kathy Rouse and Darrell Spencer in collecting these ideas. Kay Stockdale, Susan Laney, Babs Guardenier, Kathy Rouse and Pat Levi provided nourishment for these and future congregant meetings.

A Synthesizing Team comprising Mike Levi, Jamie Dale, Derron Daugherty, Tom Eller, and Kay Stockdale created order out of chaos by collating and then combining over one thousand ideas into a small set of themes. A second set of congregant meetings ranked these themes in order of priority and obtained commitments from congregants to help implement them.

Marylyn Huff, an outside consultant, advised the Leadership Team on process, grounded us in scripture at a 2 day retreat, helped us develop Mission, Vision and Values statements, and explained the significance of cargo and containers.

To complete the process 5 Goal Teams have reviewed all the information provided by congregants to develop a small number of objectives and action steps for each goal that will both finish the plan and start its implementation. The following contributed to each Goal Team:

Goal 1: Georgena Millar, Ned Guardenier, Brent Roberts, Donna Eagle Joslin, Jamie Dale, Sarah Anne Eller, Corise Gambrell, Robyn Castellani, Molly Hamilton, Sally Broughton

Goal 2: Kathy Rouse, Pat Levi, Sandy Brauer, Elizabeth Cook, Ann Dale, Bill Heck, Toby Ives, Fitz Legerton, Diana Sanderson, Jerry Vaneman.

Goal 3: Derron Daugherty, Sandy Brauer, Sally Broughton, Susan Daugherty, Babs Guardenier, Salyna Morgan, Beth Newman, Kay Stockdale, Kristin Williams, Susan Laney, Paulette Heck, Larry Griswold, Molly Hamilton, Steve Runholt

Goal 4: Corise Gambrell, Vivian Hare, Beth Newman, Fran Roberts, Steve Runholt, Marion Satterfield, (Goal is informed by congregation feedback from the music ministry needs assessment, conducted May 2016.)

Goal 5: Mike Levi, Fritz Ackerman, Jack Ballard, John Bishop, Sally Broughton, Robyn Castellani, Pat Hardy, Donna Eagle Joslin, Bob Gambrell, Corise Gambrell, Barbara Griswold, John Laney, Marian Sigmon, Kay Stockdale

Through this one year process, over 80 congregants (including all the aforementioned names) have provided their ideas by attended meetings or submitting written comments. This plan is intended to be a living document. You have given it form. You will help determine its success.

Approved by Session:

Sally Broughton (Clerk)

Vicki Collins

Derron Daugherty

Bob Gambrell

Ned Guardenier

Susan Laney

Kathy Rouse

Diana Sanderson

Kay Stockdale

Steve Runholt (Moderator)



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