

The Future Direction
of
LEWISBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WE ARE CALLED TO LIVE OUR MISSION AS WE:
GO MAKE DISCIPLES
GROW IN LOVE
GLORIFY GOD

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Congregational Interviews

**LEWISBURG UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GO, GROW, GLORIFY
GOD**

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I. Go Make Disciples

The purpose of the church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ. The beginning point for the vision of Lewisburg UMC is making disciples. The world needs to hear and experience God's words of love, grace, and hope. The Christian faith is meant to be active; marked by evangelism, discipleship, and mission.

1) Evangelism/New Member Assimilation

Provocative Proposal *To address the real needs of people in the community so we can lead people to Christ, bear witness to His love and see our own lives transformed.*

Biblical Witness **The Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)**

Goals

- ◆ Develop ministries for the unchurched and new believers including appropriate worship services, small groups for new believers, and a profile of the population that we want to reach with their needs identified.
- ◆ Equip our congregation to become a community where people learn to share a confident and contagious witness to their faith in Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Increase number of new Christians by 50% by 2010 (25 per year).
- ◆ Assist New Members to connect to our congregation in three ways: through worship, fellowship and service.
- ◆ Promote/develop a ministry of invitation, welcoming and offering hospitality to visitors and guests.

Evangelism is, at its heart, sharing faith with others, particularly with those who are unchurched or disconnected, and inviting them to follow Jesus Christ as Christian disciples. If we as a congregation carry out the Great Commission of Jesus we will welcome and invite others and continue through a process of relating persons to God and our congregation and equipping and sending them forth in ministry.

2) Discipleship

Provocative Proposal *For all to come alive in Jesus; to take up the cross and follow Him. Discipleship includes education, preparation, engagement, ministry, and service.*

Biblical Witness **“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.”** (John 15:8-9)

Goals

- ◆ Help individuals in our congregation identify their spiritual gifts and talents for ministry and service, and determine where God is calling them.
- ◆ Expand training in Bible Study, Spiritual Disciplines, and Spiritual Leadership.
- ◆ Increase the number of people entering full-time or part-time ministry.
- ◆ Recruit, inspire, and train new ministry leaders for service at home/work/church/community.
- ◆ Develop a transition in thinking from “volunteers” to “disciples” for all ministries by laity and staff.

One of the greatest quests for all Christians is to discover the will of God for their lives. We know that it is God’s will for us to produce fruit that glorifies the Father and affirms our discipleship. We must have a personal relationship with God through Jesus. We can’t share what we do not have.

3) Missions

Provocative Proposal *To be Christ's feet, hands and face in the community, state and world.
To extend the compassion of Christ.*

Biblical Witness **“So if I, your LORD and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”** (John 13:14-15)

Goals

- ◆ Increase personal participation (hands-on) mission.
- ◆ Expand existing mission programs and initiate new mission areas as need arises.
- ◆ Create a congregational environment that encourages individuals to initiate new ministries.
- ◆ Become a regional center for missions.

We celebrate the growth in mission through our service to our community, nation, and world during the past 10 years. Jesus' model of washing the disciples' feet calls us to not only be involved in worship, fellowship, and Bible study, but to use our gifts and talents in ministry and mission. God's gifts are richly diverse for a variety of services. We are all made for ministry, and we will strive to equip and send out our people in mission.

II. Grow In Love

The Christian life is not stagnant. It is a life of growth. God does not want us to live in isolation. God puts us in a church. It is God's plan that the church helps us grow in our understanding and experience of God's love. It is in the church that we share the life of Christ with one another, the community, and the world. God chooses the church to be the instrument that shapes the lives of Christians and expresses the love of Christ on earth. Consequently, as we share the Gospel of Christ with others, and as God forms us, we experience the blessings of being a part of the church.

4) Spiritual Formation and Faith Development

Provocative Proposal *To grow in our relationship with God in ways that bring us closer to Christ and allow Christ's life and love to form our faith.*

Biblical Witness **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2)**
Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13-14)

Goals

- ◆ Develop a comprehensive plan for spiritual formation.
- ◆ Encourage all church members to be intentional about their faith development and spiritual formation.
- ◆ Encourage our congregation to live out the Biblical principal of Tithing (10%).
- ◆ Offer a variety of classes and experiences for spiritual growth.
- ◆ Emphasize Disciple Classes and other Bible studies.
- ◆ Facilitate growth in individual, family, and corporate prayer.

Evangelism is the first step in the disciple-making process. However, God does not leave us as we are and invites us to take a second step. God molds, shapes, and forms us into mature, spiritual, Christian disciples. Spiritual formation and faith development are intended to be life-long and life-giving.

5) Fellowship

Provocative Proposal *All gatherings will promote unity within the body of Christ, which reflects the joy and oneness of heaven on earth.*

Biblical Witness **For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.**
(1 Cor. 12:12)
We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3)
... if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another... (1John 1:7)

Goals

- ◆ Build relationships within the body of Christ by increasing fellowship opportunities and participation.
- ◆ Increase fellowship across age groups as well as within.
- ◆ Tie fellowship to evangelism and reach outside of church to neighborhoods, age groups and life situations.
- ◆ Include camps, retreats, church trips and seasonal activities.

A major factor in whether people remain active in a church is if they feel loved. Creating a warmer and welcoming fellowship allows us to feel connected to each other and to God. It is hoped that the fellowship we experience in the church provides all with a glimpse of the joyful bond in heaven.

6) Children's and Youth Ministry

Provocative Proposal *To provide a nurturing and caring Christian environment that encourages our children to be formed by God, commit their lives to Jesus Christ, grow in their faith, and live out their faith.*

Biblical Witness **But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."** (Jeremiah 1:7-8)

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
(Matthew 19:14)

...what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. (Psalm 78:3,4)

Goals

- ◆ Provide a safe and nurturing environment for Christian formation for children and youth.
- ◆ Expand Children's Ministry by providing a weekday children's Christian program, daycare, and Mom's Morning Out.
- ◆ Expand Youth Ministry as follows:-
 - 1) Provide dedicated space
 - 2) Develop small group activities.
 - 3) Provide recreation.
 - 4) Develop youth worship and music experiences.
 - 5) Provide midweek ministries.
 - 6) Build healthy relationships.
 - 7) Increase professions of faith.
 - 8) Provide opportunities for spiritual formation and mission experiences.
 - 9) Help prepare for educational, vocational, and life-choices.
 - 10) Help discern God's call.
 - 11) Develop worship and ministry opportunities for our youth to invite and share their faith with their peers.

7) Age Group and Specialized Ministry

Provocative Proposal *For everyone to recognize and celebrate their sacred worth as they discover the joy of being a child of God.*

Biblical Witness **You received the Spirit of adoption. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs with Christ.**
(Romans 8:15-17)

Goals

- ◆ Develop a comprehensive caring ministry
- ◆ Design specialized ministry teams that pray, examine, and empower ministry to happen with different age groups and people with specific life needs.
- ◆ Develop Family Ministry: parenting classes , seminars, and exploration of family dynamics.
- ◆ Provide marriage preparation and enhancement teaching.
- ◆ Develop young adults, singles, and new believers’ ministries.
- ◆ Develop ministries for Osteopathic School and NRCTC students.
- ◆ Develop a Stewardship and Financial ministry.
- ◆ Develop a Health/wellness ministry.
- ◆ Develop a ministry for shut-ins.
- ◆ Expand older adult ministry in co-operation with Shepherd’s Center.

As a church we are asked to recognize that in today’s context, ministry cannot be one style and approach for everyone. Different people need to feel the touch of God in ways that are critical for their formation as Christians and disciples. Our church is large enough to offer a diversity of ministry that nurtures people to grow in their faith in ways that are appropriate for their life situations.

8) Group Life

Provocative Proposal *To expand small group ministry in order to deepen a person's faith experience and increase the church's ministry.*

Biblical Witness **They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.**
(Acts 2:42-46)

Goals

- ◆ Increase small group participation to 100% of average worship attendance by encouraging every member to become involved in at least one small group.
- ◆ Create new small groups with a goal of one small group for every 15 people in the average worship attendance by 2012.
- ◆ Make small group participation attractive by invitation, interaction, creating various types of groups and making people feel welcome and needed in the groups.
- ◆ Provide pastoral mentoring and leadership for small group leaders.

Jesus set out to change the world by choosing a small group of people to disciple. Jesus did not start with the masses, but with a small group of twelve. John Wesley did the same with the Wesleyan movement in England. They were called Wesley Class Meetings. Through small group ministry we encourage our people to build friendships based on faith. Being active in a small group is just as important as being in worship each week. These small groups could have diverse emphasis, but all incorporate worship, prayer, and fellowship.

III. Glorify God

In all of life we are called to glorify God. This is true for us as individuals and as a church. All of ministry is designed to bring glory to God. We glorify God when we lift our voices in praise and when we bow our heads in prayer. God is glorified in the preaching of the Word and the sharing of the sacraments. In addition to our worship of God, the facility needs to bring glory to God and be used for God's ministry in our community. We glorify God when we strive to develop as servant leaders who love God and our neighbors. We want all our words, signs, and communications to be to God's glory. Our lives and our church are called to reflect the glory of God.

9) Worship

Provocative Proposal *To glorify God, connect with God, and be refreshed by God.*

Biblical Witness **Worship the LORD with gladness.** (Psalm 100:2)
“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

Goals

- ◆ Increase average worship attendance to 2/3 of membership by 2010. (eg. 365 average attendance in 2006, attendance for our membership of 720 would be 480. This is an increase of 115 people.)
- ◆ Expand music/drama/dance/movement/media/multi-sensory experiences to engage both the heart and mind of the worshiper.
- ◆ Develop a service that treats unbelievers with love and respect, relates the service to their needs, and shares the message in a practical, understandable manner.
- ◆ Involve children & youth as active participants in all phases of worship.
- ◆ Strive for high quality TV worship with increased interaction of TV audience to develop a connection with our congregation.

The scripture from John's Gospel tells us that true worship has only two requirements: We must worship in spirit and in truth. Worship is a powerful witness to unbelievers when God's presence is felt. The following values were identified as integral in worship at Lewisburg United Methodist Church:

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| 1) Biblically based | 7) Innovative |
| 2) Practical and applicable | 8) Relevant - culturally and personally |
| 3) Invitational | 9) Multi-sensory |
| 4) Leads to commitment to Christ | 10) Authentic |
| 5) Multi-level, multi-generational | 11) Engaging |
| 6) Inclusive | |

10) Facility

Provocative Proposal *Create a facility that allows for the expansion of ministry and programs to enable the congregation to form disciples in the future generations.*

Biblical Witness **For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:9-11)**

Goals

- ◆ LUMC will remain at its current location and look for creative ways to expand the facility to allow for the continued growth of our seven-day-a-week ministry.
- ◆ Preserve historical presence and value of our current facility.
- ◆ Acquire suitable property as it becomes available, for future expansion.
- ◆ Expand our role as a center for the community.
- ◆ Create a large multi-purpose space that will allow for the expansion of ministry with all age groups, but with particular emphasis on the children and youth. It would need to be:-
 - 1) flexible, functional, and adaptable for future use.
 - 2) able to be used for contemporary worship, children’s ministry, youth ministry, drama, music, fellowship, recreation, and mission oriented ministry.
 - 3) handicap accessible and user friendly.
 - 4) equipped with adequate storage for future ministries.
- ◆ Create a safer parking situation
- ◆ Explore the possibility of expanding, renovating, or changing the worship space.

A church facility is a tool for ministry. We have been blessed by previous generations that have heard God’s call to expand the ministry of the church. In some eras this has led to an expansion of the facility. In 1904 the church was led to construct a brick building on the corner of Washington and Lee Streets. Ten years later the church was faithful to God’s call to expand again. In 1954, the church added the education wing and in 1995 the new addition was completed. Now a mere dozen years later, it is time to expand again. As in the past, this expansion is for the glory of God and to serve God more effectively in the present and next generation.

11) Leadership Development

Provocative Proposal *To train laity and staff to become servant leaders who follow the example of Jesus Christ.*

Biblical Witness **Love and truth form a good leader; sound leadership is founded on loving integrity.** (Proverbs 20:28 - *The Message*)
The gifts that He gave were for some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:11-12)

Goals

- ◆ Develop a ministry to equip laity to discover their spiritual gifts.
- ◆ Train and motivate the laity to be witnesses of God's love.
- ◆ Offer professional training opportunities for staff and laity.
- ◆ Become a teaching church for our region.
- ◆ Add staff to stimulate the expansion of our ministry, so more in our community can know the saving love of Jesus Christ (areas to consider as suggested by our congregational interviews: a youth pastor, pastoral counseling, family/older adult coordinator, program director, kitchen host, full-time music staff, full-time custodian, and a technology director).

Leadership is a key for the growth of the church. In a church that is faithful to God and fruitful in its ministry, effective leadership is found in the pastoral office, the program and support staff, and in the laity. God calls for our best and supplies grace for our direction. Paul reminds us that we “can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). It is important to trust God to raise up spiritual leaders. The church is then to provide the necessary training for leaders that will guide us into authentic and abundant ministry.

12) Communication/Publicity/Technology

Provocative Proposal To find ways to effectively communicate the message of God’s love using the evolving possibilities of technology and media.

Biblical Witness **I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.** (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)

Goals

- ◆ Embrace and utilize electronic media as a means of sharing the Gospel and the ministry of the church (i.e. DVD, CD, website, e-mail, blogs, chat rooms, and streaming of worship)
- ◆ Enhance our communication within the congregation (i.e. telephone ministry, newsletters, mailings, and personal contacts).
- ◆ Seek ways to effectively share the church’s ministries in the wider community, utilizing print, radio, television, and electronic means.

Communication is important for a church to be fruitful in its ministry. God spoke and the world came to be. When we turned away from God, the “Word became flesh” (John 1:1). God has used lawgivers, the prophets, priests, pastors, and lay people to share God’s Word with a world desperate to hear the language of grace and love. Throughout history the church has discovered new and appropriate ways to share God’s Word. The task before us is to find meaningful and relevant ways to share God’s Word.