

VISION PROCESS REPORT

FINAL



Members:

Debbie Claar, Chairperson

Ted Brierley

Janice Grace

Dennis Huebner

Rachel McNeil (youth representative)

Chris Silva

Rev. Angela Wells

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT	3
VISION STATEMENT	3
OUR NEW LOGO	4
2015 ANNUAL REPORT	5
2016 ANNUAL REPORT	6
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS USED DURING CONVERSATIONS	7
MINISTRY SUMMARIES	9
SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEES	18
MINUTES FROM ALL VISION TEAM MEETINGS	21
OUR NEXT STEPS	37
CHURCH GOALS FOR 2017 and 2018	38
2017 COMMITTEE UPDATES.....	39
CONCLUSION.....	42

INTRODUCTION TO THIS REPORT

Greetings! Thank you for taking an interest in the Vision Process, which began in January of 2015. This report encapsulates all that has happened throughout that process, as of today, January 2017.

Within these pages, you'll see that we did a process of data collection through a series of many living room conversations. These conversations were guided by a list of questions, which is also in this report. After the conversations were completed, the data was organized. The Vision Team analyzed that information and created the Vision Statement from that data. The data was also organized according to ministry, and that information was shared with each particular ministry. That information is in this document under "Ministry Summaries." Their feedback upon receiving the information is in this document under "Summary Feedback From Committees."

Lastly, this process is not over yet, and we invite you to read the Our Next Steps section to see where the Vision Process is headed from here.

VISION STATEMENT

At the UCC Burlington, we cultivate a thriving environment which empowers us to embody the beloved, diverse community that Jesus modeled for us, proclaiming that all are welcome, all are loved. We celebrate our colonial roots as we change, adapt and grow into who God is calling us to be. We respect the sanctity of each person's spiritual journey and we are blessed by the gifts that each person brings to the life of the church. We join together in faithful service and advocacy with the ongoing hope that we can make the world a better, more just, and peaceful place for everyone.

Stationery will simply have these two statements across the top: All are welcome. All are loved.

OUR NEW LOGO

The beautiful, new logo on the cover of this report was designed by church member Libby Samarjian and her daughter, Jo Samarjian. This version of the logo was created after many back-and-forth meetings with members of the Vision Team.

We believe that the rainbow symbolizes our inclusivity of all people, and it reminds us of our covenant with God which is visualized in the Old Testament through a rainbow.

We also wanted the logo to speak to our roots as a historical congregation, and we believe that our beautiful bell tower does just that. It is also a unique feature of our church's building.

The curved line under the building represents a hill, as our church has historically been known as "The Church on the Hill." Indeed, we hope to continue to be a beacon of love and light, up on the hill, for many years to come.

The "All Are Welcome. All are loved." tagline is drawn directly from our new Vision Statement. We believe these simple words encapsulate the fullness of what we are trying to do, and who we are trying to be in the world, as we extend God's love to *everyone*.

A lot of discussion was had over the words underneath the illustrated logo. We decided to write out the words, United Church of Christ, rather than abbreviate them, because we realize that not everyone knows what U.C.C. means. We also wanted to include the word Congregational, as it is a part of our legal name and harkens back to our denomination before we were U.C.C. We also decided to include our city and state because our physical location is integral to who we are as a church, and we realize that there are many Burlingtons around the country, which is why we specified that we are in Massachusetts. We used a more contemporary font for our church name as we believe that we are living into the future, into who God is calling us to be. We used a more traditional font for our church name, as we realize that it's our deep, historical roots which give us the strength we need to grow in to the future.

The fonts used are Helvetica Neue Condensed Bold and Garamond. We also have a black and white version of the logo. We respectfully ask that if you want to use the logo in any church materials, or publicity, that you check with the church office first. Thank you.

VISION TEAM 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all others. -Romans 12: 4-5

The Vision Team was created in late spring by Rev. Angela Wells to weigh the question “Is our church ready for the challenges the future will bring upon us?” Although our church is vibrant and flourishing, the religious landscape in our country is ever changing. Given the successes of other organizations whom have undergone a similar type of ‘self-reflection’, the Team was assembled to lead the congregation through a “visioning” process. It is our goal to develop a better understanding of our church, its strengths, and potential for the future through the collective voice of our members in order to ensure we continue the rich and wonderful history of our church to our 300th birthday and beyond.

A visioning process for a Congregational church includes listening to members’ thoughts and feelings about where the church is now and where they see the church in the future. It enables organizations to ‘see’ what the future may be and helps provide enlightenment to ensure they are doing the right things in support of this future state. It allows for organizations dependent on the effort of a large number of people to articulate what the collective goals are as opposed to merely assuming everyone instinctively knows. Spiritually, we think of it as a way to further unify us – thus our coining of the term “collective voice”.

The Team met over the summer months into early fall to develop a methodology that would ensure that all of our church members would have the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about where the church is now and where they see the church in the future. We launched the Vision Team “living room” conversations in November and we are grateful to all of you who have participated so far. The initial five sessions were held in November and December with over 30 participants, ranging from students to retirees, individual members to whole families, and active church officers/volunteers to Sunday service-goers.

We truly do want and need to hear from as many members as possible to be successful! The conversations have been rich with what matters most about our church. The passion for our church and Christian faith has never been more evident.

We are continuing the “living room” conversations through the winter into late spring and encourage anyone whom has not yet participated to be on the lookout for the schedule and be sure to join us so your voice is heard. While specific conversations will be held in confidence, the Team will develop a summary of the outcomes of our conversations, our “collective voice”, and present it to the congregation later in 2016.

Respectfully Submitted, Debbie Claar, Chairperson, on behalf of the Vision Team, including:

Ted Brierley, Janice Grace, Dennis Huebner, Rachel McNeil, Chris Silva and Rev. Angela Wells



VISION TEAM 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The Vision Team was created in the late spring 2015 by Rev. Angela Wells to weigh the question, “Is our church ready for the challenges that the future will bring upon us?” Although our church is vibrant and flourishing, the religious landscape in our country is ever changing. Given the success of other organizations that have undergone a similar type of self-reflection, the team was assembled to lead the congregation through a “visioning process.” Our goal is to develop a better understanding of our church, its strengths and potential for the future by gathering information from our members in order to insure we continue our rich history as we approach our 300th birthday in the year 2032.

In the 2015 Annual Report we documented how we would develop a plan and methodology to start to gather needed information. Over the ensuing months, we developed several open-ended questions that we used with our members during living room conversations in November and December of 2015. We captured information from over 30 participants at these initial 5 sessions.

In 2016, our efforts continued and at the time this report was submitted, we have made considerable progress and will announce our findings and recommendations at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

During the 2016 calendar year, we accomplished the following:

We continued to meet and gather information from an additional 44 members at 12 additional sessions.

We developed a short survey for those members who were unable to attend the sessions and solicited their input. A handful responded and we included this data in our reports.

We evaluated the collective responses from our conversations and prepared a 30-page report that summarizes the results of our work. This report is organized by subject matter that aligns with each of the church committees. We then met with each of the committees to present our work and solicit their feedback.

We developed a Vision Statement for our church based on the recurring themes from our conversation, it is as follows: *At the UCC Burlington, we cultivate a thriving environment which empowers us to embody the beloved, diverse community that Jesus modeled for us, proclaiming that all are welcome, all are loved. We celebrate our colonial roots as we change, adapt and grow into who God is calling us to be. We respect the sanctity of each person’s spiritual journey and we are blessed by the gifts that each person brings to the life of the church. We join together in faithful service and advocacy with the ongoing hope that we can make the world a better, more just, and peaceful place for everyone.*

We developed a logo for church use. See the logo on the front of this report.

We prepared a final report and will post significant excerpts on our web page.

We met with Parish Council to solicit their input.

We prepared a presentation for the Annual Meeting, which will contain a set of recommendations for the Congregation.

Respectfully Submitted, Debbie Claar Chairperson, On behalf of the Vision Team including: Ted Brierley, Janice Grace, Dennis Huebner, Rachel McNeil, Chris Silva and Rev. Angela Wells

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS USED DURING CONVERSATIONS

1. What do you love about our church?
 - a. What do you think are the strengths of our church?
 - b. Which aspects of the life of our church have been the most spiritually nurturing for you?
 - c. What specific church activities have provided an uplifting and spiritual benefit to you?
 - d. If all aspects of the church should encompass a spiritual component to them, do you feel we are successful in this regard?
2. Do you see any weaknesses in our church or anything you think that could be improved?
 - a. Do you think there are changes we could make to our church, worship services and music ministry that would foster faith and spiritual growth?
 - b. How could we improve our community services and missions to involve more people in the church and reach more people in the community?
 - c. What types of things do you think would stimulate Christian Education for Children, Youth and Adults?
 - d. God gave man dominion over the earth making us all stewards of the earth as well as stewards of our faith. How can we build awareness of the need for faith based Stewardship of the church and the fund raising efforts which enable us to operate and succeed in our mission?
3. Does being a part of the church help you deal with your most difficult personal issues and crises?
 - a. What keeps you up at night?
 - b. Do you turn to and count on the church to give you peace and strength to deal with the things that keep you up at night?

- c. Do you feel valued as a member of our congregation? If so, why? If not, what do you feel is missing in our ministry?
 - d. What are the things that you value most about the church?
- 4. In 2032 the church will celebrate its 300th anniversary. What do you believe is Gods call for our church at this moment in history?
 - a. How is God calling us to practice our faith in our own lives, for the life of the church and for the good of the community?
 - b. How can we best utilize our strengths to answer God's call and keep the church in an ongoing state of vitality?
 - c. What are the needs of the Burlington community and how can our church best serve them.
 - d. Are there specific organizations that you are particularly interested in or passionate about? Please give examples.
- 5. What do you think attributes to our longevity?
 - a. What do you think we should focus on as goals and priorities for the next 5 years?
 - b. What should we focus on as goals and priorities beyond 5 years?
 - c. If we succeed in our goals and mission, how would you describe the ideal end result for our church in the future beyond 2032?
 - d. If we succeed in our goals and mission, how would you describe the ideal end result for our local and broader community in the future beyond 2032?

MINISTRY SUMMARIES

CHRISTIAN ED

It was echoed during every Vision Team conversation that Christian Education is a priority and an essential and valuable ministry to the life of our church. The comments covered both adult and child/youth education.

ADULT EDUCATION

An area many find meaningful is the Bible study sessions. While some find them spiritually uplifting and nurturing, others find they aid in understanding the sermons more fully and provide a historical context for our faith. Some suggested that engaging in a chronological study of the entire Bible would be very meaningful. It was also suggested that multiple sessions be offered at different times to accommodate more people. This way, while Angela leads one section, she can provide guidelines for other members to lead other sections as well, empowering them to take a more active role in a ministry everyone feels passionate about. It was also suggested that the sessions could be videotaped or skyped so those who could not attend could be more involved.

While some requested we offer a series of targeted support groups where common issues can be discussed such as bereavement, being single, elderly, divorced or married, others vocalized they wanted speakers in specialized areas of common interest opening this up to members of the community.

CHILD, YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT EDUCATION

Many expressed gratitude on how supportive the church is towards the children, youth, Sunday school and children with special needs. Everyone also agreed that focusing on providing opportunities for children and youth to be more involved in the life of the church is essential to our growth and health. Although many believe that Sunday School for the younger children is a strength, some differed on where we should place our focus. A few felt it was important to engage children in reading the stories of the Bible which correlated directly with the theme of each service while others felt we should have more interactive activities instead of a talking/lecture format. Some suggested a combination of the two.

Some felt it is a good time for the Christian Education Committee and Sunday School Teacher/Youth Coordinator to assess the needs of each age group more thoroughly to see which approach might work best. If we can actually figure out programs/themes for each age group and focus on providing events around these themes throughout the year, families will see the evolution and value of these programs. Some examples suggested are: introducing the

Bible stories through storytelling and activities for children, intro to community service for youth through programs that already exist in missions, involvement in service – confirmands and young adults can be an integral part of service – lay leaders, candle lighters, ushers, greeters, bakers for coffee hours etc. Maybe we can even get them involved in the service at a younger age. It would be nice to try a variety of ways to engage each group more. Everyone agreed we should encourage more intergenerational activities because they are successful in getting youth involved. Some examples are: making craft or baked items for the Faire, having children and youth participate in leading roles in special services such as Children's and Confirmation Sundays, Christmas and Easter, the Christmas Pageant, the In-Gathering, preparing cards for elders and those who are ill, getting involved more in community service initiatives in Burlington and surrounding towns such as having youth sell Christmas trees for the Boosters, the Clothes Drive in Winchester during December, visiting a homeless shelter in Boston to name a few.

The young adults who attended the Vision Team conversations stated they enjoy sponsored community-based work where they can learn directly about the marginalized populations of this world by meeting them face to face and understanding more in depth how they live and the obstacles they have to face. Also, engaging youth in conversations around timely topics and the opportunity to be heard is something they greatly appreciate. They are grateful for their connection with the church and how genuinely they feel valued and loved.

Parents sometimes find it difficult to provide spiritual growth for their teenage sons and daughters and would appreciate Christian Ed taking a more active role in their spiritual development, providing programming that will engage them in opening their eyes to the world they live in. Some suggested providing programming during other days/evenings of the week besides Sunday since some are involved in outside activities on Sunday mornings. It may be valuable for the Christian Ed Ministry to engage the youth in conversation about actively developing a program together where the youth have the primary voice in how it is created and executed.

Some other general thoughts that came up were as follows:

Christian Ed should be a focus for the next 5 years and if possible, we need to prioritize bringing in younger families, adults and growing the Sunday School. Are we truly connected enough to the greater Burlington community to determine why families don't attend or how to provide something of spiritual value for them to attend? How can we better serve youth outside CE? We've tried a few small efforts to do things but it seems we are out of touch with activities that might draw someone to want to attend. Should we be reaching out to other Burlington churches to plan additional youth activities together and possibly interfaith events based on common themes? Teaching Sunday School was rewarding but a few found the lesson plans needed improvement. Should we give Sunday School a brand ie "Golden Rule Sunday School"?

Confirmation should be more organized and the NYC trip should come back. We should engage youth in programming post confirmation – invite them to be more active.

In conclusion, everyone is supportive and passionate about Christian Education and we applaud the Committee and Sunday School Teacher/Youth Coordinator for the work you do. Feel free to think outside of the box, draw people (including youth) into brainstorming about creative programming and provide opportunities for members to take a more active role in special events.

DEACONS

PASTORAL CARE

The Call to Care committee's personal touch in supporting members dealing with health issues, personal crises and loss is deeply appreciated with many comments and expressions of thankfulness and gratitude for this support. The cards, visits, prayers, assistance with daily needs and other thoughtful things the Deacons do give members a feeling of belonging to an extended family that cares about one another and prays for one another. Being among the congregation gives them peace and strength. The way they are treated makes them feel valued and validated.

People come because they feel comfortable here and accepted unconditionally. They like the positive, mind clearing focus the church gives them and feel that the church is a sanctuary from the outside world that allows for different and personal paths to God and what it is to be a Christian. Many expressed that the church helps them with their most personal issues and crises, especially the loss of a loved one or even the loss of a job. Most turn to the church to give them peace and to deal with things that keep them up at night. Even though they may not always seek support when troubled, people are comforted to know that support is here for them in the form of so many caring people that they can connect with. The consensus is that the atmosphere of interactive caring created by the Deacon's ministry including their outreach, our worship services, Angela's sermons and group prayer is spiritually nurturing and should be continued and built upon.

Constructive comments:

There were many suggestions for creating events and opportunities to experience spirituality and fellowship both as individuals and as groups. It was mentioned by several that these things would make people feel more involved and valued.

The suggestions included having a prayer meeting night, an Advent workshop night, reaching out to elderly nonmembers, recognizing Membership Milestones by thanking people for their years of participation, making Parish Council meetings less stressful by infusing more of a spiritual element, offering a separate time of meditation before the service, building an outdoor labyrinth for the congregation and the community, hosting weekday gatherings for

people with children, contacting members no longer coming to church and finding the best way to communicate about the status of people dealing with health issues.

WORSHIP

The worship service is enjoyed, valued and loved by many and is seen as one of the things they love most about the church along with the people. Some think the worship service attributes to our longevity as a church. Many people described the service as a quiet time of reflection, centering, serenity and calm that relieves stress and brings them closer to God. They said our worship traditions are familiar and comforting. The scriptures and sermons are powerful. The hymns and the music are spiritually fulfilling. The prayers of care, concern and joy give us the opportunity to pray for individuals and families having problems and share in the positive moments and milestones of their lives as well. This is valued as something that makes the service more personal.

Other parts of the service mentioned the most for being spiritually nurturing were “The Time for Children”, the quiet times for reflection and the open and inclusiveness of our worship, especially the invitation to Communion. Children offering prayers, participating in the service and speaking from the pulpit is moving.

Other uplifting aspects of our worship mentioned were the opportunity to lose yourself in the service in a safe and quiet place surrounded by people with shared values. The reading for peace is uplifting. Clapping during worship is seen as thanking God for the talent of those who share their talents during the service. It’s uplifting to hear people testify and share their stories with the congregation.

The following are direct quotes from separate individuals about our worship service:

“Many many times the truth of the word preached speaks directly to what I am facing in life and I get encouraged to press on and trust that God cares”.

“The spiritual aspect is that we are teaching the Word of God or the teachings of Jesus and trying to adapt it into today’s society, trying to maintain that story”.

“It is spiritually nurturing that the music and message of the service are always linked”

“The congregation’s participation with the choir while singing is spiritually uplifting.”

“The experience of forgiveness of our Communion adds to the spirituality of Communion.”

Many people feel that the church and the worship service helps them deal with personal issues and crises. It’s a “time to recharge” and “is the calmness of the week”.

Special services were mentioned by many to be very uplifting and spiritually nurturing.

People feel closer to God at the special services and the services provide a better understanding of our faith. One person said the Blue Christmas Service is helpful to them even if the cause of

the blues happened long ago. People love the Christmas Pageant with Shepherd's Pie. Christmas Eve singing Silent Night and lighting candles is very spiritual. The Maundy Thursday service is deeply moving and the Easter Sunrise service "beyond the four walls of the church" is uplifting. Decorating the cross during the Easter service is spiritually nurturing.

Constructive Comments:

Many people want to see less socializing and less talk on Sunday morning before worship starts to provide more quiet time. Also, people walking out on the postlude is seen as a negative point in the service. They feel the congregation should sit through the entire musical postlude. The postlude cannot be enjoyed when everyone is bustling and talking. Perhaps give the benediction after the postlude.

Several people feel that to increase stewardship, we should ask people to give testimony in church. More "testimonials" (not just at Stewardship time) help remind us why we put so much effort into the church (Colin Sears did a moving one last year.) Lent would be a good time to do more testimonials.

Everyone likes having the youth participate in the service. Could the kids light the candles? Could they ring the bell? Offer more opportunities for instrumental solos.

A suggestion was made that the lay leader be given more responsibilities for the service.

God's call for us at this moment in history is multiple worship services to better meet busy families schedules – be more "available".

Once in a while, offering more services that are more reflective, mindful to help deepen spirituality

Would like to try a service from the Book of Worship, like an Easter Vigil

Christmas Eve- lots of family obligations, impossible to come to a service with the 7pm and 11pm services. Would love to see a 4pm service. At Christmas time – meaning gets lost with all the commercialism, perhaps better/more time/focus to reflect on the spirit. Would like traditional hymns at Christmas Eve services.

Blue Christmas is not well attended (4 people). Perhaps people feel it is only for those that may have lost a loved one? It is a wonderful service, can we "advertise"/communicate it ?

There is a fear of becoming "too Catholic" – communion, Ash Weds – in the symbols and rituals that we are doing. This seems to be moving away from the traditional Protestant church. Seems we are incorporating more symbols and less of our own personal relationship with God.

Current music is great, but more modern music, even one song a week, or one service a month (or a second service?) would be refreshing. It may be helpful in bringing in younger families as well. More modern music should be a goal for the next 5 years.

Unfamiliar hymns, like familiarity in the service.

We should have a BCAT intro to services that are aired to introduce the church and pastor at the beginning of the broadcast.

We should put sermons on YouTube.

During the service, leave the congregation with a question to take away.

Team up with different houses of worship

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

Efforts in this area are led by a very able committee whose job is to encourage responsible stewardship of the church and its missions. This work is accomplished by running the annual pledge campaign, soliciting the donation of time and talent from the congregation and working with the Treasurer to insure that income and expenditures remain in the guidelines of the approved church budget

In 2015 we ended the year in a surplus and our pledge dollar amount increased thanks to the efforts of our most able committee led by Dave McNeil and all of our membership. Although a lengthy discussion did not take place during our sessions pertaining to this topic, a few people suggested we might want to focus more effort on short and long term fiscal planning. For example “We repair and replace things when they fail and it becomes an emergency/rally mode. We have always been able to come through but someday we won’t. We know the buildings are getting old, how can we better plan ahead. “

In addition while not in this part of our report, several members suggested that younger people be invited to participate in many across the board church activities. Consideration should be given to further exploring whether this is a good idea for this group.

In conclusion, we thank those who have served on this committee. Although the work is not as visible because much of it goes on “behind the scenes”, it is a vital and valuable ministry in the life of our church.

MISSIONS

During our Vision Team conversations, everyone agreed that our mission work is one of the most essential, valuable and popular services our church provides and the Missions committee does an excellent job in reaching out to the underserved populations of our community. Most people commented on the positive experiences they were having and some were looking to do more. It was also noted that this committee has recruited more volunteers and broadened its activity over the past few years to include taking a more active role with Rosie’s Place, donating time and food to People Helping People, volunteering with the Wish Tree organization during the holiday season and visiting the Heifer Farm just to name a few. One member stated that

“we were serving others not just with words but with action”, a testimony to this committee’s commitment in making a difference in the people’s lives they serve.

One member suggested that the congregation needs to know more about what Missions does on a regular basis and that they should consistently publicize their work more actively through announcements during the service, weekly emails and the Hilltop. Another member expressed they would like to see our church take the lead on reinstating the Peace Meal which is a good interfaith activity that could easily follow the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service during the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in January. Others suggested it would be nice to involve more youth in missions activities as it is an important way for youth to be involved and from that outreach, we may even find new missions to support.

Many members commented that they are proud of the work we do to support our community, our neighbors and world efforts but we should always be looking for opportunities to better identify and support the needs of the Burlington community.

Additional suggestions follow:

- Consider expanding some of our activities to surrounding towns
- Ask people in our community to participate in some of our church events
- Expand our offerings to seniors and shut ins.
- Sponsor community dinners that are open to all.
- Send gift baskets to other houses of worship to expand our interfaith connections
- Encourage congregation to get involved with the community garden
- Explore bringing together all the Burlington houses of worship to work towards a common cause
- Deepen interfaith relationships, especially with the Temple and provide interfaith educational opportunities as well
- Develop a relationship with the museum and historical society so that church is part of historical events in town
- Address some issues that involve the town such as bullying
- Develop an outdoor labyrinth which would be open to the community
- “Our UCC is the hub of community outreach in Burlington.” We should be more aware of the other organizations in town that are doing outreach work and possibly partner with them. Maybe, put together an ongoing calendar of events to promote awareness and involvement.
- It would be helpful to assess the missions’ projects we have been committed to and see if there are any new projects we would like to sponsor. For example, there are children in our congregation with special needs. Sponsoring an event open to the community during Autism month in April as a show of support for our families might be an option.
- Continue to bring in mission speakers from the organizations we support.

- Expand some of our mission activities to the evening and on weekends to include more volunteers who work full-time.

In conclusion, this is truly one of the programs that identifies us as Christians, contributes to our longevity and inspires our congregation to always be available to help. Good work, Missions Committee!

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music is a gift and blessing from God and during the Vision Team conversations, many voiced that the “music ministry is what they love about our church.” Many stated that under Joe’s leadership, the music program has vastly improved and they describe our current choir as “spiritually uplifting and impressive”. Music is used to praise God and to create an atmosphere to receive God’s spirit and it was very clear during our conversations that many believe “the choir and their beautiful music attribute to our longevity.” Also, many particularly find it powerful when the “music goes with the message of the service and echoes the sermon”.

Music involves sacrifice and everyone enthusiastically appreciates how Joe has dedicated his time and talent to improving the adult choir and starting the youth choir again, while providing outstanding musical accompaniment on the organ and piano. Many parishioners are deeply moved by the beauty of the youth choir. And everyone is in agreement: “Joe is a great Music Director.”

Although parishioners are impressed and appreciative of the choir members who have committed themselves to providing the music, members want us to try and attract younger singers as well so we may continue to sustain the quality of the music ministry we have already achieved. Also, some members want to hear more modern and contemporary songs while others prefer more traditional hymns. A few brainstormed about thinking outside of the box and here were a few suggestions made:

- Invite Burlington High School students to take part in musical events at the Church which might attract more youth. Reinstate the Battle of the Bands, for example.
- Have musicians within the church collaborate with the Historical Society when they sponsor events in town as an outreach of service and exposure in the community
- Have an acolyte play the carillon (“Ring the bells”) before and/or after our services giving youth a vital and fun way to contribute to the service.
- Have a church band

In conclusion, God’s call for the music ministry is to keep up the good work and try to continue to grow the musical talent that is within and outside of our walls, providing a variety of both contemporary and traditional repertoire.

TEAM AWESOME

It is unanimous. Team Awesome is A jewel in the crown of our church. It unites all we hold valuable: meaningful youth involvement, service learning, collaboration, intergenerational activity, social awareness and congregation involvement. It also provides a spiritual experience and bonding for those involved and those they serve. As one member put it: "It helps us get in touch with the spirituality of the church."

One observation was echoed a few times. The congregation would like to be better informed about each stage of the trip from its inception to its outcome. Brainstorming about ways members can be helpful (even if they are not going on the trip) may stimulate involvement. One observation was: "Team Awesome energy should carry out into the rest of the church" so if youth actually invited people to be more involved in their activities possibly during services (since so many love hearing from them), this might help to make the planning of the trip more visible.

Service is a major part of who we are as a church and one participant stated: "Every time we go somewhere, it brings us closer together and with everyone else in the church." Someone else shared: "Planning the trip was good too (getting to know the people together and where we could make the most difference." Another said: "The Team Awesome trip helps us be thankful for things, even little things."

In conclusion, there is only one thing left to say: "THANK YOU AND KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!"

SUMMARY FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEES

CE COMMITTEE- Meeting Nov. 4, 2016

Jan Costa, Shirley Fong, Wendy Harder, Deb Raymond, Angela Wells, Larainne Wilson in attendance

The response to the summary was positive as it allowed the committee to feel appreciated for all the work they do, an affirmation that was greatly needed and acknowledged gratefully. The committee also discovered from the summary that the congregation recognizes that some of the traditional approaches may not work anymore and we don't necessarily have to put our efforts into trying to remain within the boundaries of what we've always done in the past. Once it was clear that the committee could start "thinking outside of the box" and would be supported in this endeavor, an honest discussion ensued about some of the details that were discussed in the summary.

The committee was surprised and inspired by some of the concrete new ideas that were suggested and were open to discussing them. Here were some of the paraphrased comments that came out of the meeting.

It is hard to get people to commit long term and we should consider alternative ways to accommodate this. Reach out to parents about specific events that are already occurring and invite families to be more involved in these. Some that were mentioned:

Intergenerational Events:

Promote getting involved in the intergenerational events we already sponsor that include the Fair, Ingathering, and Pageant by spending more time highlighting the details of each event on an on-going basis. Don't assume that everyone always knows what they are and how they are instrumental in providing community service and opportunities for fellowship.

The youth truly enjoyed the Peace Meal and would like to see that be an annual event during the MLK weekend. Maybe it could be tied into the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and open to the community.

Church Service Involvement:

The CE committee sees this as a tangible way to support family involvement. First, educating families about the components of the service may promote more involvement.

One idea was to invite families to come before or remain after church one Sunday before a communion service to actually explain what it is and why it is so important to our faith.

It was suggested to have a youth member be a second greeter before the service which would allow children and youth to have a role model to relate to as they enter the church.

Also, invite youth to be lay leaders and more visible in the life of the church.

Sunday school

Everyone agreed that Sunday school should definitely continue for the younger children. Continue reading the Bible stories that correlate with the theme of the service and maybe rethink the Time with Children to give children ownership during this time of the service. The more traditional approach with Angela can still occur but maybe once or twice a month the children can do plan something to perform, read, share.

Social Justice, Cultural and Interfaith Awareness Events

The committee liked the idea of sponsoring a lecture series that focused on relevant topics to youth and adults alike. This is a good “thinking outside of the box” opportunity.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE Meeting Oct 4, 2016

Attendees: Gail Ciano, John Heald, Everett Langley, Kari Lynch, Janine Towle , Angela Wells and Dennis Huebner

Summary

Angela and Dennis met with the Committee to update them concerning our plans and revised schedule and to solicit their views concerning how to best implement our work in the future.

One thought that came out of our discussion was to cull the report for common themes, i.e. getting the children of all ages to participate more fully in the operation of the church and ask each committee what they could do to embody this theme into their plan for the year. To pursue this more fully, we would have to identify additional themes and select the ones that make sense for the church at this time. One person suggested having the church vote to identify the top 5. As for this committee, they have decided that the feedback they want to implement is having more testimonials during the church year. We agreed to have them once a month during Sunday worship, on the 3rd Sunday. They will start promoting it in December, then we will begin in January with a sign-up sheet for 11 months, excluding October. They will seek stewardship speakers for the Sundays in October. We never talked about how to tie this into the children theme.

We talked briefly about the summary report. One of the suggestions was to make this report widely available in the church through the website, and only print a few hard copies and keep them in the office.

Our meeting lasted about 15 minutes. We did not discuss other committee reports.

Music Committee meeting on Nov. 6, 2016

In attendance: Ann Stafford, Deana Tredeau, Joe Stoddard

Everyone was quite pleased with the summary and felt affirmed and appreciated for the efforts put into the music ministry.

They will continue to brainstorm about how to attract more people to the choir but since it is such a large commitment, involvement is limited because of so many other responsibilities in people's lives. This one will take thinking outside of the box and will be an on-going discussion in the months ahead.

The carillon was discussed as it came up in the summary. The (Trustees? Deacons?) should investigate the status as it appears to have been given in memory of someone (who?) but if it is broken or gone, no one knows.

Ring the bell before and after services was also discussed. Since it takes a great deal of strength to ring it, it should be a joint effort between children and adults which is another way children can get involved in the service. They can bring this up with the Deacons to see whether this is feasible.

It was also discussed to showcase local talent, especially youth from the high school and possibly offer a scholarship for a student who shows great promise musically. Another idea was to sponsor the Battle of the Bands again and invite local youth to perform. They would have to investigate who to call to extend the invitation.

Also, it was suggested they offer to co-sponsor an event with Team Awesome in the spring and make it a joint fundraiser.

They agreed that the Coffeehouse and Spring Classical concerts should remain annual events as they promote fellowship, the joy of music and talent within the church and community. These events also allow the Music Director to fund special services with guest musicians.

Pastor Parish Relations Committee- meeting on Nov. 26, 2016

Chris Silva presented the Pastor Parish Relations Summary from the Vision Team meetings, and reviewed key points with the committee.

The committee found the summary reaffirming to both their assessment/feelings, as well as well aligned with the original selection/search committee criteria utilized for the Pastor search which concluded with the hiring of Angela several years ago (many of the current committee members were also on the search committee).

Some discussion did follow regarding the time constraints of Angela's involvement/demands of her time within our parish's seemingly ever increasing activities. Angela expressed the model she is using to help to foster/encourage committee empowerment so that she does not have to be at every meeting or involved with every decision. She is encouraged by the leadership in the various ministries which embody this model and their commitment to the UCC goals. The result of this leadership will allow the church to effectively grow and carry out the church mission without Angela's expressed involvement in all that is the Burlington UCC.

MINUTES FROM VISION TEAM MEETINGS from 2015-2016

Minutes From July 20, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Reverend Wells, Ted, Debbie, Janice, Kari ,Chris, Dennis

Summary: Continued to discuss purpose of group . Effort will focus on gathering information pertaining to the well being of the church. Team will develop series of open ended questions that will be utilized to gather information from the church members as part of smaller group discussions. We hope that a vision statement can be gleaned out of this process that guides and informs everything we do but at this point, we will simply see what bubbles up and take it from there.

To Dos`

Send Deb your rec of a scripture passage to use to lead our efforts prior to the next meeting.

Note : Both Kari and Debbie have offered some suggestions. Please add your own or vote for one of them

Send Deb a list of 4-5 open ended questions that can be used to facilitate small group discussions prior to the next meeting. The questions to the extent possible should be divided into 2 headings : spirituality and faith and work and fellowship. A couple of questions we discussed to get us started were : We have many irons in the fire but we are making sure that we are united and being aligned with all God is calling us to be ? How do we give our activities a spiritual context ?

Angela will research what materials exist that lay out what efforts have already been completed recently concerning the well being of the church (need to build bridge from these past efforts to what we are doing now) and get in touch with the UCC to gather any info that might be available from other churches who are pursuing similar efforts

Consideration will be given to inviting a younger person to join the group

Next meeting : Wed Aug 5 @ 7:30

Minutes From Aug 5, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Reverend Wells, Ted, Debbie, Janice ,Chris, Dennis

Summary: Selected Romans 12 : 4-5 to guide our work however we will utilize all of the passages where appropriate

Continued to discuss how the results of our efforts will be presented to the church. We were all asked to develop a new revised proposed outcome that will be utilized to explain to the congregation what we intend to do and why . The paragraph should be sent to Deb prior to our next meeting

We discussed the schedule and agreed that this may need to be revised in the future dependent on our progress

To Do's:

Send your proposed outcome paragraph to Deb prior to the next meeting

Angela : send your open ended question attachments to the group before you go on vacation

Group the open ended questions and arrange them into tiers to deb prior to the next meeting

Next meeting : Wed Aug 19 @ 7:30

Minutes From Aug 19, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Ted, Debbie, Janice, Chris, Dennis

Summary: Continued to discuss purpose of group and reviewed Chris excellent product. Ted made some suggestions to improve it and were agreed to by the team. Chris will become the custodian of the product and all subsequent changes will be made by him. We agreed that the document is a living document that we will constantly revise as necessary. We should send any additional comments we have to Chris now.

We learned that Angela had spoken to a church that had gone through a similar process and that Angela intends to meet with a rep soon. We will ask Angela to update the team after this meeting occurs. If you would like to volunteer to accompany Angela when she meets with the other church, please see her about mutually agreeable times.

We took another stab at the open ended questions . Ted volunteered to draft the next version and distribute the new draft prior to the next meeting for our review. At this time most people feel comfortable with using a structure that asks a very general open ended question followed by a series of detailed questions that dig deeper dealing with the various aspects of the church ie church community, spiritual nourishment and church services, community service, missions, musical ministry, adult/youth/child Christian education, stewardship and fundraising activities. We will attempt to come up with 4-6 open ended questions.

Deb will talk to Angela about getting the youth to play a role in our work

The general open ended questions that we seemed to agree with so far are

- I. What do you love about our church. Give specific examples
- II. In 2032 the church will celebrate its 300th anniversary what do you believe is Gods call for our church at this moment in history ?
 - a. What do you think attributes to our longevity and what do you think our short term (3-5 years) and long term (> 5 years) goals/priorities should be for the future ?
 - b. What are our church strengths ? Give examples
 - c. What are the needs of the Burlington community and how can our church best serve them. Are there specific organizations that you are particularly interested in ? Which ones?
- III. What would you like to see improved in the church ? Give examples
- IV. We had a few suggestions about this one and here are some of the suggestions:

- a. On a personal level, does being a part of this church help you with what keeps you up at night?
- b. Do you feel valued as a member of our congregation? If so, why? If not, what do you feel is missing in our ministry?
- c. What keeps you up at night? Are these concerns addressed by the church? If not, should they be? (Debbie will touch base with Angela to explain exactly what she is looking for with these questions.

At our next meeting scheduled for Thursday Sept 17 at 7:30, we will try to finalize the open ended and detailed questions (from Ted's draft) and begin to work out some of the details for the group meetings.

To Dos`

Send your proposed outcome paragraph to Deb prior to the next meeting

Angela : send your open ended question attachments to the group before you go on vacation

Group the open ended questions and arrange them into tiers to deb prior to the next meeting

Next meeting : Wed Sept. 17th @ 7:30

Minutes From Sept 17, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Ted, Debbie, Janice, Chris ,Angela, Dennis

Summary: Continued to discuss and make changes to the invitation. Angela will forward to Chris her changes which were agreed to. Chris will fold them into the living document. Chris will also date the revised materials

Continued to discuss the questions

Angela suggested that we should provide a 30 second quiet time to give everyone the opportunity to read and focus on the question before beginning the session and insure that everyone has had the opportunity to speak

Angela will talk to Bobbie about the form the membership info is in. Chris will attempt to get the info into a spreadsheet that we can use for multiple purposes including report writing if possible

Dennis will begin to prepare a document that lays out a schedule and identifies issues that will need resolution prior to launch and continuing the effort . Present thinking is that we will try a few of the sessions and then reconvene to make adjustments as necessary

All agreed that we should coordinate our efforts with stewardship and in particular their after church meeting on Oct 25. We will meet with them on Tuesday Oct 6 at 7:30 to plan for this event

We did not set a date for our next committee meeting.

Minutes from Oct 6, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Rachel, Janice, Chris, Ted and Dennis

Summary: Continued to plan for Oct 25 Stewardship meeting and plan implementation. After some discussion, concluded that our plan will be based on the premise that we will attempt to reach everyone on our mailing lists. That means that we will invite 8 to each session (total of 30 meetings) and that the sessions will continue into 2016. We decided to meet again on December 14 after running some of the sessions to see how we are doing. We will use Chris's note taking template during the sessions to help build the database of info we are gathering.

Angela volunteered to write a skit for us to introduce the Vision Team efforts. Angela will give a little background and introduce the team at the Stewardship meeting. The total presentation time will be 10-12 minutes (or so).

We will gather that Sunday at 8:30-9 am to help with the setup and practice the skit. We are responsible for providing dessert (cup cakes and cookies for 60-80 people). We agreed to chip in to pay for this. Deb will pick up the cupcakes from Wegmans and Rachel will bake cookies. Rachel and Deb will need to inform us about their expenses and provide receipts for reimbursement. All of us will participate at the signup area. Deb will develop the signup documents. Angela will ask Bobbie to make copies (60-80) of the vision brochure. Deb will look into some clip art for the brochure. Ted will write a short heads up note for the newsletter and weekly email in which we hope to attach to the brochure.

We also scheduled the following group meetings

Thursday Nov 12 7pm- Janice's house- Ted, Janice & Chris

Saturday Nov 14 2 pm –Deb's house- Deb & Rachel

Monday Nov 16 7 pm –Janice's house- Janice, Deb

Wed Nov 18 10am- church conference room- Angela & Dennis

Monday Dec 7 7pm- Janice's house- Ted & Janice

Wed Dec 30 2 pm- Deb's house – Rachel, Ted & Deb (for youth only)

Facilitators will send a follow-up email or call a few days before with the questions to remind people

Next vision team Meeting : Monday Dec 14 2 7:30 pm

Minutes From Nov 5, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Janice, Chris, Ted and Dennis

Summary: Continued to prepare for group meetings. Angela volunteered to put together an electronic invite packet that we can send to participants in advance of the group meetings that will contain the invitation, the short list of the open ended questions in a template format for us to fill in the meeting location info and date and time. Ted needs to forward to Angela the file containing the open ended questions. Angela will also develop a prayer for our use. We have 24 signups to date and will take additional ones via signups after church. We all agreed that we needed a minimum of 3 per meeting to go forward. Each group is responsible for their beverage and food selection. The note takers will use Chris' template

A sample agenda for the session follows

Welcome

Introductions/ Ice breaker

Summarize purpose and ground rules

Opening prayer

Facilitated discussion

Closing thank you for coming . Reminder . If participants think of anything further please get in touch with the facilitator

Ted will forward Dave McNeils` spreadsheet to all of us

Next Meeting

Monday Dec 14 around 7:30 pm at a restaurant. Everyone was requested to send a restaurant name to Deb that would suit our needs ie hear one another talk. This dinner meeting would take the place of our regularly scheduled meeting on that day

Minutes from Dec 14, 2015 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Angela, Ted, Janice, Chris, Deb and Dennis

Summary: The food and company was awesome !

Upcoming Team Meeting : Monday Jan 11, 2016 @ 7:30 pm

Upcoming Conversations:

Tuesday, January 19th @ 10:00am in the church conference room – Angela and Dennis

Saturday, January 23rd @ 2:00pm at Debbie Claar's house – Deb and Chris

Wednesday, January 27th @ 7:00pm at Janice Grace's house – Janice and Angela

Tuesday, February 2nd @ 7:00pm at Janice Grace's house – Janice and Deb

Saturday, February 6th @ 2:00pm Debbie Claar's house – Deb and Ted

Tuesday, February 9th @ 7:00pm in the church conference room - Chris and Ted

Thursday, February 11th @ 7:30pm at Debbie Claar's house – Deb and Dennis

Saturday, February 20th @ 2:00pm at Debbie Claar's house – Deb and Dennis

Tuesday, February 23rd @ 7:00pm in the church conference room – Janice and Chris

Minutes From Jan 11, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Chris, Ted, Angela, and Dennis

Summary: Continued to discuss approach to getting additional sign ups. We decided to start to make personal calls to fill up the scheduled meetings for the Jan/Feb timeframe. The results of these calls will be forwarded to Ted to incorporate into his schedule spreadsheets. We decided we need a minimum of 3 attendees to go ahead with a meeting . After we all have read the meeting summaries to date we will discuss the results further at our next meeting. Chris will prepare a draft of our report for the Feb 7 Annual meeting which needs to be completed by Jan 21. Chris will forward a draft for committee review.

Next Meeting : Monday Feb 22 at 7:30

Minutes From Feb 22, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Debbie, Chris, Ted, Janice, Angela, and Dennis

Summary: Continued to plan for additional sessions which will be held on

Sunday March 6 @12 @church – Debby and Dennis

Tuesday March 8 @ 7 @ church ?? – Ted and Janice

Saturday March 19 @ 2 @ Debbys` house – Debby and Chris

Sunday April 3 @12 @ church – Ted and Janice

We developed a list of people that have yet to commit to a meeting . We will call them as well as place the info in the upcoming church news letter

Items to be discussed @ next vision team meeting :Develop plan for a mailing to non attendees . Develop an approach to review the data in Angelas document . Debby and Angela will sit down prior to our next meeting to lay out a plan to do this. The themes we gather from this review will be used to prepare a statement for church use . In addition a report will be prepared that documents our study approach and findings.

The next Vision Team Meeting will be held on Monday April 25 @ 7:30 @ the church

Minutes from April 25, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Chris, Ted, Janice, Angela and Dennis

Summary

We reconciled the spreadsheet containing data on attendees . A total of 76 people have attended

We decided after much discussion to reach out to everyone on our mailing list by email to explain our progress and solicit their opinion one last time . This includes members that attended the sessions and those that did not. Chris will draft the email within a week and finalize it after committee review . We

will send out the email by Monday May 16 and request a response by Wed June 1. The 5 general lead off questions will be attached. Angela will fold the results from this effort into the data base

Angela and Deb will meet to develop some instructions for reviewing the data. Angela will forward the raw data to us soon. One of our goals will be to produce a short and concise written vision statement for our church. In reviewing the data we will attempt to identify 3-5 overriding strengths and 3-5 weaknesses for our initial discussions

We tabled for later discussion Vision Team 2.0

We scheduled our next meeting for Monday July 11 at 7:30 pm

Minutes from July 11, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Janice, Ted, and Dennis

Summary: We had a very constructive meeting and gleaned some wonderful data from everyone. Thank you!!! Shared our strength and improvement work with one another. Agreed to use the info to develop a concise statement (motto/slogan) of our vision. After a group discussion and ranking of all of the strengths, Deb and Angela agreed to meet separately and develop a draft of the vision and guidance that we can use to summarize the findings of our efforts so that we can share our work with church committees and members

Each of us will evaluate the data for the areas listed below and summarize the findings for Angela to share with each committee. Debbie will put together her summary for Christian Ed and Team Awesome within the next week, share with Angela and then offer these as the templates for everyone else's summaries. The point is to express diplomatically and affirmatively what was shared without making suggestions. Chris, since you were not there, we assigned you the summary about our lovely pastor.

Christian Ed & Team Awesome – Deb

Missions – Dennis

Music – Janice

Pastoral Care, Worship and Deacons – Ted

Finance and Stewardship – Dennis

Pastor – Chris

Deb and Angela will put together a draft of the vision statement by Aug, 1 2016. They will also provide the guidelines for writing the summaries by August 1 as well. Summaries of the committees will be due by Aug 31 and Angela is available to help with putting this together.

Next Meeting: Monday Aug 1 2016 @ 7:30

Topics to be discussed include next steps with community leaders

Working with graphic designer to put some visuals with our presentation

Minutes from Aug 1, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Chris, Ted , Janice and Dennis

Summary

Agreed to the following : All are loved. All are welcome

Agreed to the following Vision Statement: At the UCC Burlington, we cultivate a thriving environment which empowers us to embody the beloved, diverse community that Jesus modeled for us, proclaiming that all are welcome, all are loved. We celebrate our colonial roots as we change, adapt and grow into who God is calling us to be. We respect the sanctity of each person's spiritual journey and we are blessed by the gifts that each person brings to the life of the church. We join together in faithful service and advocacy with the ongoing hope that we can make the world a better, more just, and peaceful place for everyone.

Follow up schedule

Deb prepares and distributes summary example- See Angela instructions

Friday Sept 29 Summaries due to Deb

Sunday Sept 11 @ 12 Next Meeting

Monday Sept 26 2 7:30 Meeting

Sunday Oct 23 Stewardship / Vision Team presentation

A logo discussion meeting will be scheduled shortly. Invitees : Chris, Libby, and Angela

Minutes From Sept. 11, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Chris, Ted, Libby , Janine and Dennis

Summary

Discussed progress on logo. Libby gave us a few designs to look at which combined a historical and modern theme. Committee provided feedback to Libby that she is definitely on the right track and agreed to discuss topic again during our next meeting on Monday Sept 26 at 7:30pm.

Janine shared with us the Stewardship theme this year is in summary: People have said they provide meaningful service in these areas. Now go do the same. Build on the foundation we've already begun. Discussed content for joint Stewardship Vision Team meeting on Sunday Oct 23. We may choose to devote the October 23 service to unveiling 3 elements of the Vision process so far:

- Vision Statement
- Tag Line

- Logo

and/or make a few announcements in the service and then co-run the Stewardship meeting/lunch afterwards. It was discussed that everyone could take a line of the Vision Statement and explain our reasons for including it. Will revisit topic during our Sept 26 meeting.

Next steps

Prepare for rollout of work to date on Oct 23. Will summarize for the congregation our progress to date.

Angela will begin to meet with the committees now to discuss the summary findings and send the summary write-ups to each of the vision team members. Ted and Chris, please forward your summaries to Angela asap. Thank you.

Chris will forward a revised copy of the vision statement to Dennis to incorporate into the meeting minutes.

Future goals:

Documenting the entire process by providing a summary of all the findings with short and long term goals.

Moving forward – what's next?

Minutes From Sept 26, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Chris, Libby, Janice , and Dennis

Summary: Reviewed revised logo work . Everyone was excited about Libbys excellent effort to date. We narrowed in on a couple of different designs. Libby will make some changes for our next meeting

Additional info ie examples will be added to the Missions summary

We started to plan for the meetings with the various committees. One of us will attend each of the meetings with Angela

We will meet to discuss our Oct 23 presentation following church on this Sunday Oct 2

Minutes From Oct 2, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Deb, Angela, Ted, Janice, Chris and Dennis

Summary

We continue to move forward with our plans but it was decided we need more time to develop a comprehensive strategy for the unveiling and moved the church meeting date from Sunday Oct 23 to the annual meeting in February 2017.

Chris volunteered to work with Libby on the logo and letterhead. Ted brought up the “Church on the Hill” theme and indeed, it is part of the town’s history as well as having a Christian significance.

Therefore, we will present this to Libby to see if she can incorporate this idea into the logo. Dennis will prepare the draft plan/to do list we discussed which will outline the details of all the steps we need to take before we unveil the Vision statement and report on the entire process. The one on one meetings with the committees will continue as scheduled since we deem this as a twofold process. At each of these meetings, we will solicit feedback from the committees about the summaries to see what comes to the surface. The follow-up meetings will occur after the unveiling of the Vision Statement to ensure the committees are living into where God is calling us to be.

We need to correct the vision statement and change the word adopt to adapt in the second sentence.

Our next meeting is Thursday Nov 3 at 7:30 at the church. We may change the location due to faire activities.

Minutes from Nov. 3, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees : Deb, Chris, Angela and Dennis

Summary

We continued to discuss the logo options and narrowed the options to one design with revisions. Chris will meet with Libby and discuss them.

We continued to discuss how the vision team work will evolve after the annual meeting. We tentatively decided that we would join with the Committees we are working with now and help them transition into implementing our suggestions into their planning cycles. Angela would like to start the year with a clean slate and be prepared to take a critical look at ensuring that all the goals in place are consistent with our vision statement and where God is calling us to be. We will need to cull through our work to develop some common themes that the church can rally around and select a few to focus on during the following year. The themes will be tied into the annual church goals that appear in the church bulletin. Chris volunteered to meet with PC to inform them what we are thinking and request feedback. If Chris is unavailable, Debbie will attend the meeting.

We also spent time assigning various parts of written documents we need to prepare by the annual meeting.

We made the following assignments (Note : While Deb's name is mentioned often however her role is to simply gather the completed documents the team prepares for inclusion into an electronic version of our committee's final report.)

Annual Meeting Report Writeup – Dennis

Annual Meeting presentation handouts : All

Background Summary- Dennis

Vision Statement- Deb

Minute Meetings- Dennis

Letterhead and Instructions- Angela

Discussion Questions- Deb

Vision Team Committee Data Summaries – Deb

Joint Vision Team Committee Meeting Summaries – All

Communication Message and next Steps – Chris

Next Meeting: Monday Dec 5 at 7:30 at the church

Minutes from Dec 5, 2016 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Debbie, Chris, Dennis and Angela

Summary

Continued to plan for Feb 5, 2017 Annual Meeting. Reviewed our Vision Team draft report to insure all the pieces will be included. Angela will edit the Annual Report that summarizes our work to date. Our ghost writer is anxious to see the revisions. We will attach the Vision Team report to our web site and provide a hard copy to those that request it. We will include the Vision Team 2015 report as well. We will use the new logo in the report. Yes, we finally chose one and it the hill is prominently in the one we chose! We all agreed that the contents of this report (our work) will continue to change and expand as we add to our efforts next year.

The following briefings still need to take place:

Missions- Dennis

Team Awesome – Chris

PPR- Write up only

Deacons - Debbie

After discussion we selected the logo found on page 10. Thank you Libby!

To Dos:

Chris will develop a communications piece that will explain what we have been doing, our rationale for this approach, and what our plan is for the next calendar year. Our overarching theme that will guide our efforts is CHANGE, ADAPT AND GROW. At our next meeting, we will spend time developing the important themes we want to focus on that can be culled out of our Vision Team report and from our meetings with the different committees where we solicited feedback about our conversation summaries. We will then develop a series of open ended questions to be used as a guide for our discussions with the committees. Our focus next year will be to meet with each of the committees regularly to encourage them to live into the Vision Statement and initiatives we have culled from our conversations. We want to encourage committees to think outside of the box and not be afraid to drop and revise activities that simply no longer work. Following the annual meeting we expect these new efforts will begin in 2017 following appointment of the new committee members.

Debbie found a couple of biblical passages that will help guide us through this process. We're looking to vote on them so Ted and Janice, please let us know which one you like out of these two: Proverbs 27:25: "When the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, And the herbs of the mountain are gathered in." or Isaiah 43:19: "Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert."

Angela will send out copies of the UCC constitution and develop guidelines/ instructions for their use. **Next Meeting:** Monday Jan 16, 2017 at Debbie's for dinner 5pm – 8pm *Note: this day and time/may need to change if everyone cannot attend*

Minutes from Jan 16, 2017 Vision Team Lunch Meeting

Attendees: Hungry people including Debbie, Chris, Dennis and Angela

Summary:

Thank you Debbie for the delicious home cooking.

We continued to plan for the presentation for the annual church meeting. Chris will be the presenter and the team will join him for questions. We will bring a limited number of copies of our report which will be distributed at the conclusion of the presentation and inform the members how to get access to the information on our web page. Chris' presentation will include a summary of our accomplishments, our vision statement, the logo, and our next steps in 2017.

We finalized our church goal, which Angela will present at the PC Meeting this week

We discussed who will take the lead for working with each of the ministries. We TENTATIVELY decided to divide the work as follows

Christian Ed: Debbie

Deacons: Angela

Finance and Stewardship: Chris

Missions: Dennis

Music Committee: Debbie

Team Awesome: Angela

Trustees: Dennis

Next Meeting: Thursday Feb 16 @ 7:30 PM

The agenda will focus on preparing for the individual ministry meetings beginning in March 2017. We will need to develop the process we will use to collect additional information. We will develop some general themes that we heard from our members and a set of open ended questions to collect

information for the themes. Some themes we discussed at the meeting were expanding church activities to all generations particularly the children, improving communications, and expanding church activities to make better ties to the community

Minutes from Feb. 16, 2017 Vision Team Lunch Meeting

Attendees: Debbie, Chris, Dennis and Angela

Summary

We continued to plan for the rollout of the next phase of our work.

We finalized the leads for each ministry as follows

Christian Ed: Debbie

Deacons: Chris

Finance: Chris

Missions: Dennis

Music: Debbie

Team Awesome: Angela

Trustees: Dennis

Debbie will prepare draft talking points for our meetings with the ministries. A draft will be circulated for our review

We did not get to discussing the thank you for Libby due to the late hour

Next Meeting Date: Thursday April 6 at 7:30 pm

VISION TEAM GUIDE FOR EACH MINISTRY

Background Information: Purpose of 2017 Church wide Effort

To continue to meet with each church ministry, to help them be more effective, which will strengthen our church as a whole and ensure a brighter future for our community.

To build upon our Vision Process efforts to date to develop a better understanding of our church, its strengths and potential for the future.

To empower ministries to develop plans which blend our 2017 Church Goal and Vision Statement into the very fabric of their existence.

Process that the Vision Team Member will lead:

Before embarking on this process, Vision Team Member should meet with Committee Chair, so they are on the same page and the Chair knows what to expect. The background information, above, should be shared with the Chair at this meeting.

A. Self Identification

- **Step I:** Ask everyone on the committee to answer the following question and submit it to Vision Team Rep before the first meeting: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF (SPECIFIC MINISTRY) IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH? This can be done at the meeting itself, or you can ask members to think about the question ahead of time and bring their answers to the meeting.
- **Step II:** Compile the responses, either ahead of time or at the meeting, don't share amongst the members, though.
- **Step III:** At the meeting, share with them the write-up about their ministry that's in our church's Constitution. You'll have to have copies for each person.
- **Step IV:** Share the answers they gave in Step I and compare them with what the Constitution says.
- **Step V:** Have conversation, what's the same? What's different? Are we doing what the church says we should be doing? If they are vastly different, why is that? Does the Committee feel compelled to follow where the Spirit is leading them, and do they need to suspend their responsibilities as outlined in the Constitution? Or, do they need to become more aligned with what the Constitution says?

B. Reflection on tasks/hopes and dreams

- **Step I:** Ask the group what events and tasks they plan throughout the year, have a scribe write everything down on chart paper.
- **Step II:** Give them each 3 stickers, pink, yellow and green. Have them each put green sticker next to their highest priority, yellow next to second highest and pink next to third highest.
- **Step III:** Have a conversation about where they put their stickers, is there agreement about where they should be focusing their energies? Is there anything that nobody thinks is a priority, can they suspend that activity?
- **Step IV:** Given the fact that we are blessed by the gifts each person brings, now make a new list. Have them think outside of the box and share their hopes and dreams for their specific ministry. Again, have scribe write down all their ideas.
- **Step V:** Do sticker activity again. Making the two lists is probably all you'll have time for in one meeting
- **Step VI:** Before the next meeting, send them their Ministry Summary form the Vision Report.
- **Step VII:** When you've gathered together again, create a new list of tasks for the year informed by the 2 lists they made. Hopefully it draws on the priorities in each and is informed by the congregation's suggestions in their Ministry Summary.

C. Merging ministry's goals with where God is calling the church to be: allude to the 3 priorities identified:

- **I:** Expanding intergenerational education, service and activities
- **II:** Establishing a more effective way to communicate what each ministry is facilitating and how we can better acknowledge and publicize the work
- **III:** Expanding our role in the community
- Given above priorities, how can their ministry live into these goals? But we want to be careful not to overwhelm them. As we partner with them throughout the year, we could ask them probing questions like, how could you invite a variety of ages to participate? How are you communicating this to the whole church and the town (if appropriate)? And be prepared to offer helpful suggestions. We likely won't embark on this piece until early summer.

VISION TEAM'S GOALS FOR THE YEAR

- **Step I:** Help each ministry live more fully into the vision set forth by the congregation, which means evaluating their ministry and changing it as they see appropriate (using the process outlined in Steps A & B).
- **Step II:** Help each ministry address the 3 priorities that we've identified in Step C.
- **Step III:** Ultimately, help the ministry adapt, change and grow into their potential, living into what they identify as most meaningful.

Minutes from April 6, 2017 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Debbie, Chris, Angela and Dennis

Summary:

We continued to plan for the roll out of our effort

We discussed whether the Guide would need to be adapted to each ministry and decided that it probably would and therefore the need for pre meetings with each committee chair

For Trustees for example we may want to take a different track all together and explore the following. What issues are you having? Do you have a list of priority list of projects? What are they and what do they cost? What are your budget needs for the future? Where do you plan on getting the money from? Do you need more help? Dennis will meet with Conrad and develop an agenda.

Angela will make a few small revisions to the guide per our discussions to ensure that our report gets incorporated into the discussion with each ministry

Next meeting Tuesday May 23 at 7:30

Minutes from May 23, 2017 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Chris, Debbie, Angela and Dennis

Summary

We discussed our progress with each of the ministries. We all agreed to send Kendra Griep any potential changes that come up in our discussions pertaining to the constitution.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 15, 2017 at 7:30 pm in the conference room. We will need to discuss follow up to the request from the Metropolitan Boston Association.

Minutes From June 15, 2017 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Debbie, Angela and Dennis

Summary

Each of us discussed the status of our work with the various Boards. All are making solid progress. We agreed to meet again following the summer season on Thursday Sept 28, 2017. Enjoy your summer!

Minutes from Oct 24, 2017 Vision Team Meeting

Attendees: Angela, Chris, and Dennis

Summary:

The purpose of our meeting was to develop a plan to conclude the Teams efforts by the 2018 Annual Meeting. We discussed our work to date with each of the ministries. We also developed an agenda for an upcoming meeting with the Trustees. A list of to do's follow:

Angela will speak to Debbie about remaining work with the Music and Christian Ed Ministry and Team Awesome. Dennis will set up the meeting with the Trustees. We will shoot for Monday evening Nov 6 @ 7:30. Angela and Dennis will attend. Chris will look into some maintenance software that may be of use to the Trustees.

Chris suggested that we explore coming up with a set of quick facts that could be used by each ministry to publicize their work for example "Did you realize that our Rosie's Team prepared and served a meal for 100 at Rosie's at a cost of \$100 or \$1 per meal?" Info like this could be developed and placed in various church documents. Dennis will ask Missions what they think about this at their next meeting

We decided to merge out Vision Team Priority 3 statement into next year's church goal. Dennis will prepare a draft and send to Angela and Chris. Angela will find an appropriate scripture and prepare a summary of our work for the annual report. We will meet on Wed Dec 6, 2017 to discuss further

Dennis will attend the next PC meeting to brief them on our progress this year on Tuesday Nov 21. Chris will make the Vision Team presentation at the annual meeting.

We did not conclude our discussion about whether or not we should develop guidance for church use concerning how to use the Vision Team report, which can be accessed through our web site. Next Vision Team Meeting: Wednesday Dec 6 @ 7:00 pm.

OUR NEXT STEPS

After reflection and discussion with several parish leaders and ministries, the Vision Team has agreed to move to a new phase of our efforts. In short, Vision Team members will each “adopt” a ministry. For some committees, Vision Team members will meet with them for a specified period of time (perhaps one year), during their regularly scheduled meetings. Our role is to purely provide insight into how to align the ministry goals to our overall UCC goals. Think of it as a resource to toss ideas by, challenge status quo, and ensure that our efforts reflect who we want to be. Perhaps the status quo will be fine. But perhaps, it will give some the security and reassurance to try a different method or something new, test the waters, adapt and grow as we so aptly identified was a reason for our continued success. Perhaps it will provide some with the confidence to bring up ideas that they hadn’t previously felt comfortable doing, thinking outside the box to find ways for their ministries to have a greater impact on our community. We hope that after the Vision Team member has met with the ministry on an ongoing basis, at some point the members of that ministry will feel that they are comfortable enough with the idea of changing, adapting, growing and thinking outside the box, that the Vision Team member will no longer need to be liaison to the committee.

CHURCH GOAL FOR 2017

Goal: Our church goal for 2017 is to change, adapt and grow into who God is calling us to be, realizing this will empower us to think outside the box and challenge the status quo.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19: I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

CHURCH GOAL FOR 2018

Goal: Our church pledges to pursue our goal for 2018, to partner in ministry with the wider community, so that together we might make the world a better, more just and peaceful place for everyone.

Scripture: Matthew 5: 15: No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

2017 COMMITTEE UPDATES

For 2017, members of the Vision Team worked with the specific committees in our church to implement our new Vision Statement. They partnered with their assigned committees for the year, challenging them, and encouraging them to think outside the box. Below are the reports from the groups we worked with.

Christian Ed

Debbie Claar and Rev. Angela Wells worked with CE this year to implement our new Vision Statement. Below are a few examples of what they did, but more importantly, they embraced the process and will hopefully continue to utilize it after the Visioning Process formally ends.

This year, CE transitioned to a new CE Director, with a greater focus on intergenerational activities. They abandoned the idea of a youth group, for the time being, because it seemed like after the efforts that were invested last year with very little response, a youth group isn't something our youth need right now. They seem to be more interested in plugging into all-church events, like the Fall Family Fair, the In Gathering and the Christmas Pageant, so CE focused more on reaching out to them to engage in these events.

CE is also trying new things with the younger kids like having 2 Sunday School classes and dividing them by age. The children are also singing in church more regularly and are lighting the candles before the service begins, and they're sponsoring/preparing coffee hour on occasion. CE is looking for more ways to engage the children in all-church activities, like worship, so they feel a sense of connection to our church beyond Sunday School.

Another change CE made this year was to scale back the Christmas Pageant so that it's more manageable and enjoyable for families and the church. CE has had a lot of changes with staff turnover both with our CE Director and Nursery Attendant and having a committee that's not large enough for the scale of work that they do. Despite these challenges, the members of CE are creative and are open to trying new ways of offering Christian Education experiences to everyone in our church. They have embraced our new Vision Statement and will hopefully continue to operate with this ethic of creativity and experimentation.

Missions

Dennis Huebner worked with the Mission Committee on implementing our Vision Statement. Missions believes that they are the foundation of the church, as it's their responsibility to be the branch of our church which is responsible for serving the wider community. This is a huge part of our church identity. As part of their work this year, Missions edited their part of the Constitution to make it more aligned with what they actually do. They also ranked the groups that they are involved with, and Rosie's Place came out at the top, which means that it's the most important to people. Missions agrees that they need to make more of an effort to publicize their work. One such change is that a Missions rep on the 3rd Sunday of each month will be asked to read an announcement (Missions Moment) which tells the congregation about one of the organizations that our church partners with. This will begin in 2018. They're also thinking about sponsoring an Autism Awareness-related event in April. Missions would like

to further explore how to get children involved in Missions activities, as appropriate. They also decided to move their meetings to Sundays after church so that people who work can participate in them.

Missions is very open to trying new things, re-thinking that missions means and how to engage the whole congregation in our Missions ministry. Hopefully they will continue to have this spirit of openness and innovation, long into the future.

Trustees

Dennis Huebner worked with the Trustees to live into our new Vision Statement. The Trustees identified many needs that they have, the most important of which is more people. Almost all the Trustees work full-time, and the amount of work that the church requires is taxing on the few people who are on the committee. This year's top priorities were replacing the carpeting in the choir room, and replacing the stove in Ed Building kitchen. Their new short term future priorities are to address the Sanctuary roof, paint the outside of sanctuary, replace rotting wood in the steeple and check the structural integrity of the bell. The Trustees mentioned that storage is becoming a major issue for the Ed Building and the sanctuary. They agreed that there is a need to publicize their work, which might lead to more help on cleanup day, which they need. Other committees are regularly recognized on Sunday morning, but the Trustees are not. They did not want accolades, but they did say that recognizing their work would be helpful if it brought in new members to the group. As for organization/logistics, Conrad is in the process of setting up a new email account for the Trustees, and they'd like to someone to help them keep better records of the work that's been done and the work that needs to be done. They all agreed that the Trustees should prepare a multi-year capital Improvement Plan that projects future large capital expenditures, for example, painting the outside of the sanctuary.

The Trustees are doing a fantastic job and they are open to new ideas, more help, etc. They were supportive of getting solar panels. We encouraged them to see their work as a Ministry, because it is, and we hope they'll continue to see it this way as they work together in the future to maintain our precious church property.

Deacons:

Chris Silva worked with our Deacons to help them live into the vision theme of changing/adapting/growing within the church. They reflected upon changes and identified that they should try to be: more effective in their efforts, more visible in the church community and more inclusive of all church members (looking for creative ways to involve people outside the Deacons ministry).

They are considering several initiatives to ensure members and non-members alike feel welcome, including possibly establishing a "Hospitality Committee" (Purpose and Responsibilities have been drafted), They also explored the idea of either extending Called to Care or creating a Health Ministry to more actively promote outreach, touch base with sick/shut-in members, provide more transportation options, etc. The Deacons also revamped the weekly bulletin format to provide simpler/cleaner program to follow. They also reviewed and revised the Memorial Funds. They clarified the process to better enable communication of funds and options to survivors of those who have passed and those who donated.

Finance and Stewardship

Chris Silva worked with our Finance and Stewardship Committee to help them live into the vision theme of changing/adapting/growing within the church. They did the following in order to live into that new Vision:

They instituted “Moments of Reflection” to hear from our community members what the church means to them, to bring our members closer together and share in the success of our church.

They revamped the Time & Talent Survey to better assess our community talents as well as better communicate needs of, and opportunities to grow within, the church.

The Stewardship Luncheon theme incorporated the vision of forward looking and the symbolic compass to help navigate one’s path as born out of the Vision’s theme of changing, adapting, and growing for the future.

Lastly, they initiated the “Celebrating Our Generosity” initiative this year. They published the “Generosity” results of all the various charities our community members support to provide better visibility of our collective charitable giving and highlight the positive impact such giving has on our greater community.

Music Committee

Debbie Claar and Joe Stoddard will work with the Music Committee in 2018 and go through their own visioning process, to think about what the future of the church’s music ministries should look like.

IN CONCLUSION

2017 was a year for our congregation to affirm our new Vision and begin to embed it into the very fabric of our church. As detailed above, each ministry embraced the opportunity to challenge themselves, think outside the box, and assess what they did and how they did it in order to change, adapt and grow into who God is calling us to be. Their efforts and accomplishments are truly reflective of the UCC Burlington Vision and show a commitment to strengthening ourselves and our congregation. Their achievements this year position each ministry for continued success in living into our Vision for years to come.

This concludes the formal Vision Team effort. The journey, originating the spring of 2015, has brought the congregation closer together and established our collective view of the future. The Vision Team members are confident that the seeds of our vision are firmly rooted and ready to flourish as the congregation tackles the challenges ahead. The entire effort of the Vision Team is compiled in a report, which encapsulates the voices of our congregation and is posted on the church website for all to access. We suggest that the Chair of each ministry review the report annually to search for inspiration so as to continue to change, adapt, and grow within the church. We suggest that each time our members see the new church logo or come upon the Vision statement, that they reflect upon what the church means to them and how they can make the world a better, more just, and peaceful place for everyone.

The entire Vision Team humbly thanks our congregation members for your honest and open thoughts to enable us to work on your behalf and help to prepare our church for continued success in spreading Gods word.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Silva

On behalf of the Vision Team, including: Ted Brierley, Debbie Claar, Janice Grace,
Dennis Huebner, Rachel McNeil, and Rev. Angela Wells