



Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church

VISION COMMITTEE REPORT OF FINDINGS 2021

April 15, 2021

Introduction

"Where there's no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18

"And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay." Habakkuk 2: 2-3

The Vision Committee was created in September 2020 under the auspices of the Church Council to review Saint Andrews' mission and in what areas Saint Andrew's might invest resources to better fulfill its mission. The expectation of the committee is that this document will be reviewed by Church Council and, when finalized, distributed to the entire church membership.

The committee started with a review of the formal statement of Saint Andrew's vision, mission, and values (VMV: Appendix A). Ultimately, no substantive changes were made to mission statements previously published which emphasize our purpose by the principles of Connect, Unite and Serve.

The VMV document was the foundation of all recommendations arising from the Vision Team.

Two surveys were sent to the full church membership to seek input in two areas:

- Saint Andrews' existing strengths and weaknesses. (Appendix B)
- How best to state the church's values. (Appendix C)

We determined that it was outside the scope of our charge to recommend specific actions or initiatives. Instead, we identified 4 areas in which we recommend the church concentrate resources and provided suggested actions that might prove fruitful.

For each of the broad areas noted below, it is recommended that Saint Andrews' seek guidance from the UMC district to leverage the experiences of other churches that have addressed these issues.

This committee recommends as a next step, the formation of a general implementation committee whose purpose will be to:

- Establish a timeline for the implementation of initiatives to be ratified by Church Council.
- Elect members for subcommittees to implement specific initiatives.

Church Community

“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” Romans 12:5

A sense of community is important because it helps the entire congregation feel connected and have a sense of ownership. By improving that connection, both to the church and to each other, we may also increase participation in worship services and churchwide initiatives.

1. Increase the use of social media to connect members to each other.
 - a. Encourage the congregation to post images/videos/reviews on Facebook, Instagram etc.
 - b. Find and enroll in a church app which allows members to connect online.
 - c. Provide a social media tutorial to teach members how to properly utilize these options.
2. Hold regular all-congregation meetings/potlucks to discuss church affairs.
3. Expand methods for recruiting/training/equipping volunteers.
4. Unite intergenerational ministries (Parents Night Out, Backpack buddies, etc.).
 - a. Engage membership to attend the sporting (or other) events of our youth to show love and support
 - b. Designate mentors for Confirmation class participants.
5. Create a team to consider how we can improve member engagement in the missions of the church (Children’s Consignment Sale, Kidz Cupboard, Rise Against Hunger, etc.).
6. Connect members with needs to members who can assist them. Including but not limited to:
 - a. offering rides to church, doctor appointments, or volunteer opportunities.
 - b. connecting premade freezer meals with members who need them.
7. Create tee shirts, polo shirts, hats etc. for members to show support for SAUMC.

Communication

“Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 4:8-11

Membership has repeatedly mentioned communication (both internal and external) as an area with room for improvement (see Appendix B). By taking steps to improve communication within our church and with the community, both church members and community members can feel informed. We would encourage strengthening our focus on external communication and community outreach (see Appendix B). This may help improve growth in new membership.

1. Establish and fill the position of a communications director.
 - a. Highlight what the church/committees are currently doing to promote a fully informed membership.
 - b. Review what information should be communicated via newsletter/mailings.
2. Improve awareness of the church’s various committees, what they do, who is on them, and how to get involved.
3. Utilize regular all-congregation meetings to disseminate pertinent information.
4. Expand the use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, possible church app) for communication.
 - a. Provide a social media workshop/tutorial to teach use of programs.
 - b. Encourage membership to share church posts and to initiate their own.
5. Offer outside groups use of church facilities as we currently do with Upward, the Chinese School and a limited number of other groups.
 - a. Add a facilities manager that would find people/organizations to use the unused church space.
6. Utilize postcards as a communications medium to reach local communities.

Discipleship

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age.” ***Matthew 28:16-20***

These final words of the resurrected Christ to the disciples form the foundation for one of the most important calls/charges to the church. Discipleship is important to equip people to become fully committed followers of Jesus Christ. So they can lead others to Christ, discipleship helps believers:

- grow their faith, maturity and wisdom.
- foster community and service.

St. Andrew’s has embarked on an intentional discipleship program, which includes

1. establishing a St. Andrew’s Discipleship Team.
2. discipleship-coaching with Mike Maxwell, Pastor of New Life UMC, Resource coach Virginia Conference.
3. planning meetings to evaluate current discipleship structure and plan for fall discipleship offerings.
4. creating an ongoing evaluation plan to measure/refine strategies for growth in discipleship among the St. Andrew’s UMC congregation.

In addition, intentional discipleship for St. Andrew’s includes:

1. Survey congregation for suggestions for potential small group (Suggested name change: community group) offerings (Bible studies/Sunday school/Topical and Book group studies/Fellowship) to increase Biblical literacy and further awareness of the importance of life-long discipleship and learning in the Body of Christ. Have an all-congregation meeting/potluck or other information dissemination event to discuss what we are doing (maybe around Charge conference).
2. Invite and equip members to serve in discipleship programming (Children’s sermons/special liturgical readings, etc.). Expand methods for recruiting/training volunteers.
3. Consider special “Discipleship” topics that go deeper about a specific theme or concept of discipleship. For example, present a sermon series on the importance of the spiritual disciplines and how they impact individual and communal discipleship, or a topical Bible study on the champions of the faith (for example John Wesley and other ancient & contemporary leaders of the church) who can serve as good role models for discipleship.
4. Expand intergenerational programming to increase faith formation conversations between all members of the congregation across all age groups.
5. Designate mentors for Confirmation class participants.
6. Emphasize service as a component of discipleship: Welbourne Food Pantry, Rise Against Hunger, Mission efforts, CCA (rides to church, rides to MD etc.).

7. Ambassador program to introduce and invite visitors and other non-members to explore discipleship opportunities (i.e. “try out” discipleship options before formally joining the church).
8. Establish programs to increase our experience of diversity in thought, worship style and ethnicity.
 - a. Partner with other local churches whose primary ethnic makeup is different than ours.
 - b. Seek opportunities with local churches of different denominations to share community worship.

Membership Growth

“Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46-47

The church is intended to be a vital living organism that grows and changes as needed to further God's kingdom. For at least two decades, the membership at Saint Andrew's has been declining. This was among the issues highlighted by the membership in the SWOT survey (see Appendix B.) At the current rate, it is possible that this congregation will be unsustainable in as few as 10 years.

To thrive, a congregation needs to be exposed to new thoughts, new ideas and new ways of doing things that a robust new membership would bring.

1. Create a New Member team to consider ways that we might attract growth. Among the considerations may be to focus on expanding membership of young adults and families.
2. Consider including more contemporary elements in the worship service. Possibilities may be:
 - a. a separate weekly contemporary service.
 - b. an occasional contemporary service during regular worship.
 - c. to introduce more contemporary music during the regular worship service.
 - d. a shorter service for young adults or parents during the Sunday School period.
3. Extend invitations to our children and family programs among
 - a. surrounding neighborhoods
 - b. visitors
4. Revive the Hospitality Team to
 - a. welcome new members to the church.
 - b. host welcome events for us to learn more about each other and introduce them to the programs of the church.
5. Expand our offering of community gatherings, including but not limited to
 - a. continuation of 'Trunk or Treat' and VBS.
 - b. adding a picnic or cookout.

Appendix A

Statement of Saint Andrew's Vision/Mission/Values

Our Vision

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church is a community connecting to one another and Christ in faith and service. We are a welcoming place to worship, learn and grow spiritually.

Our Mission

Transforming lives and nurturing spiritual growth in Christ by connecting, uniting and serving our community

Core Values

Our core values are compassion, service, outreach and discipleship.

We seek to provide:

- compassion and care for each other, and pursue service to meet the needs of the entire church family
- compassion and care for the greater community, and pursue service to meet the needs of the community
- opportunities for education and growth by teaching God's word
- meaningful worship experiences that can reach members in-person, members unable to attend church and those in the community

Appendix B

Survey Results -- SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats)

Note: these are un-edited responses from church membership

1. What do you see as St. Andrew's strengths?

- a. Friendly, Caring People
- b. Music
- c. Location
- d. Facility that could accommodate various ministries
- e. Uplifting Atmosphere
- f. Dedicated Key Volunteers and Staff
- g. History/Traditions
- h. Missions (both strength and weakness)

2. What do you see as St. Andrew's weaknesses?

- a. Communication
- b. Dwindling Membership
- c. Discipleship
- d. Old Fashioned
- e. Missions (both strength and weakness)
- f. Community Outreach
- g. Methodist Affiliation
- h. Sunday School for Adults
- i. Evangelism
- j. Young People

3. What do you see as opportunities for St. Andrew's?

- a. Service
- b. New Subdivision
- c. Engaging populations who speak other languages
- d. Ministry to young families
- e. Connecting with Community
- f. Missions
- g. Discipleship
- h. Contemporary Music
- i. Re-evaluation of worship experiences and children's programming

- 4. Please share any limitations preventing you from participating in these activities.**
 - a. Day/Time
 - b. Child Care
 - c. Lack of Small Groups

- 5. What do you think St. Andrew's is missing? Are there ministries you would like to see St. Andrew's include?**
 - a. Family Night Suppers
 - b. Community Outreach
 - c. Small Groups
 - d. Young Adult/Parent Ministries
 - e. Bereavement
 - f. Contemporary Worship
 - g. Excited Commitment

- 6. Please provide any other feedback/suggestions you may have.**
 - a. Return to "real" church service
 - b. Increase Diversity
 - c. Offer Space to Community

Appendix C

Survey Results (Summary) -- Vision-Mission-Values

ATTITUDE TOWARD CURRENT VALUE STATEMENTS

Value	Favored	Exclude
We seek to provide compassion and care for each other.	20	0
We seek to provide compassion and care for the greater community.	8	3
We seek service to meet the community needs.	9	3
We seek service to meet the needs of our church family.	11	1
We seek outreach to provide opportunities for addressing the diverse ministries of the community.	5	5
We seek to be disciples by providing opportunities for education and growth by teaching God's word.	5	0
We seek to be disciples by providing meaningful worship experiences to our members.	10	2

SUGGESTED VALUES TO ADD

It would be great to see something around growth. Such as we seek to grow discipleship within our community.
*We strive to maintain a connection with the shut-ins in our church.

Appendix D

Vision Team

John Heins (Chair)

Julie Dorn (Vice-Chair)

Luke Howard (Secretary)

Amy Bush

Bonnie Farrish

Kenley Neuman

Steve Ragland

Sarah Reed

D'Arcy Mays (Advisory)

Denise Watkins (Advisory)

Marcy Wright (Advisory)