

2010: A Call to Seek the Vision of God for FUMC...

I have been reading "Deep Change", a book by Robert Quinn. He notes that people have basically 3 responses when they see problems in an organization. They either do "Peace and Pay", where they basically ignore or make just tiny adjustments trying to make peace with a problem, only to pay twice for that later because that never fixes the problem. Others look for their best opportunity to jump ship when it helps them the most. And a 3rd response is to engage in Deep Change. The reason I mention this is that I see this often in the Church. We either ignore a problem, making at most small changes hoping everything will easily return to our glory days. Or we "church shop" - looking for a perfect church, leaving when things get tough. Or we decide to be a faith family- we dig into a problem and do the hard work of making God-directed changes, never giving up or giving in and going where God leads.

In looking at Church life this way, we move beyond looking at our problems to naming the Mission God calls us to and aligning our strengths to best fulfill that Mission. This Church has so much going right for it- just look all throughout our Church life to see many examples of how God is using us in mission, ministry, disciple-making and in being a faith-family together. God is in our midst!!

2010 is going to be a time where we as a Church are encouraged to dream together about the Vision God has for us as a Church. We will be praying together, reading together, and dreaming together about where God is calling us. Two books will help us: "An Unstoppable Force: Daring to be the Church God had in Mind" by Erwin McManus, and "Growing an Engaged Church: How to stop 'Doing Church' and start BEING the Church Again" by A.L. Winseman. Everyone Church-wide is encouraged to invest in these resources.

We are looking for a team of people to help lead the Church in seeing where our church is called to grow, improve, be more faithful, be more engaged, and more healthy as we step into a God-filled and God-directed future: **The Church's "Vision Team"**. This is a new group of about 10-12 people from throughout the congregation who will gather to pray for, study with and love one another as we stretch to bring leadership to some over-arching things in the Church. This group will meet monthly beginning in January to lead the Church in helping chart where God is leading us into the future.

What will the "Vision Team" do? They will look closely at these areas of Church life, study ways for us to improve by matching our strengths with our Mission, and come back to the Church with a Ministry Action Plan for how we can become a more truly Healthy Congregation. They will be a "listening group", listening to the voice of God as God directs us. This plan will be targeted for next fall.

People who serve on this team should:

- have a passion for God and the calling God has for our Church.
- be a member of the church
- be actively participating in the life of the Church
- have an interest in guiding the Church as we look at areas including Evangelism, Worship, Mission, Outreach, and Education/Spiritual Development. As ideas for these areas arise, we will take them to the wider Church for implementation (as we do not have a Worship, Outreach, Mission or Education/Spiritual Development committees). in ways that fit each idea.

-This group needs many different perspectives: people who see the big picture, people who see the detail; people who can hear the tug of the future and who see the value of our traditions; people who love this church and want to see us grow and thrive even more than we do today; dreamers; builders; planners; leaders; workers; speakers; behind-the-scenes people- all types coming together with a common love for God and love for this Church and a hope to grow and go into the future God calls us to.

What does a healthy congregation look like? It is:

1. Centered in Christ.
2. Making Disciples of Jesus Christ: -Naming the Mission and Vision; -Practicing Radical Hospitality; -Reaching new Disciples
3. Focused on Spiritual Formation: -Passionate Worship; -Spiritual Transformation; -Development and Support of Lay Leadership; -Stewardship of Money, Resources and Time
4. Risk Taking Mission & Ministry: -Ministry and Mission; -Interpreting and Leading Change; -Ability to Grow through Conflict

Scriptural Call to Pray for Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18a

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place." (2 Chronicles 7:14-15)