

## Feb. 13 Town Hall Meeting

**Members present:** Ron & Vicki Zuker, Mary & Steve Hubbell, Marcia & Fred Woodworth, Laura & Brad Dean, Jean Burmeister, Robin & Dave Thomas, Glenn & Dena Chilson, Karen & Jim Post, Diane & Fred Thompson, Karen Booth, Gary Cooper, Mark & Annette Erbes, Jenn Miles, Diane & Fred Miller, Kitty & Bill Gietzen, Marilyn Forton, Julie Fuller, Jim Grace, Betty Kinney, Lisa Kohl, Niki Epplert, Kendra Robbins, Joe Manning, Dolores & Jerome Novotny, David Booth, Wendy Austin

Vicki Zuker and Brad Dean welcomed the participants. Vicki opened the meeting in prayer.

Here is a VERY brief history of what has occurred so far:

- Laity and pastoral training: Read eight books. Attended eight training sessions.
- “Mystery Visitor” reports
- Church Self-Study information put together by staff and lay leadership
- Staff and Lay leadership interviews during the Consultation Weekend
- Administrative Council meeting during the Consultation Weekend
- Presentation of findings after worship on Sunday, February 2, 2014
- Our lead consultant was Naomi Garcia
- Naomi Garcia will be assigned to us as our coach if we voted “yes” on the prescriptions

This report has some good news and some more good news. The report points out five strengths, i.e. things we are doing right. See the Consultation Report for more details.

1. Pastoral skills
2. Leaders
3. Worship planning and schedule
4. VCI Team
5. Church family

There is more good news. There are five concerns that they pointed out. No one and no church is doing everything right. So we would hope that they would find things to do differently to better reach our mission.

With these concerns, they provided five prescriptions to address the concerns. So these areas are fixable. Note that these prescriptions are general in nature. We do not have specific details for each prescription yet. Each prescription will require our coach, Naomi Garcia, and an appropriate team of people to determine the details if the report is accepted by the congregation.

There is more good news. If we decide to accept this report and implement the prescriptions we will get a professional to help us. Our coach is an expert at helping nonprofit organizations implement these kinds of changes and build systems to be more effective. Our coach will work with us for up to the next eighteen months to make these changes and ensure they are done correctly.

It is exciting that we are going to learn how to reach others in the name of Jesus Christ. It is also a little scary. We are being asked to simply TRUST right now as the details are worked out.

There were two “housekeeping items” to mention before getting to the concerns and prescriptions. First, we have a “parking lot” for unanswered questions. We will find out the answers ASAP and get back to the congregation. Second, we will be forming teams to work on the prescriptions. If you are interested in being part of one of the teams, please contact Pastor Mark. The teams are:

- Worship Evaluation (Early Service)
- Celebration Assessment
- Pathways to Discipleship
- Facility Upgrade
- First Impressions

Information about each team can be found in the Consultation Report.

This process is about courage and a leap of faith, not a study of faith. We know that when we show faith to where God is leading us, God is faithful in going ahead of and beside us.

Consider these words from Joshua 3:10-12:

This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites.

See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD---the Lord of all the earth---set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.

Note that the Israelites had to make the first move and that God was there with them as they crossed into the Promised Land.

Consider also these words from Psalm 37:3-7:

Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

This is timely instruction for us. We are called to trust God, commit our hearts and ways to the LORD, and wait patiently for God to act.

The core purpose of these Town Hall Meetings for each and every one of us is to understand the concerns and the related prescriptions in order to cast an informed vote on the prescriptions at the called church conference on Sunday, March 16 at 10:15 am. Our objectives are to:

- Understand each concern,
- Recognize how each concern is hindering us from fully reaching out to our mission field,
- Understand the generalities of the associated prescription and
- Understand how implementing the prescriptions will address the related concern.

This is the first of three Town Hall Meetings. This is the time for questions and comments. Members can come to all three meetings as desired. The remaining two meetings are on Tuesday, February 25 at 7:00 pm and Sunday, March 2 at 3:00 pm.

### **Concern 1: LACK OF STAFF AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Prescription 1 Questions and Comments**

1. **Question:** It sounds like there would be many more staff meetings than there are now. Is that true? Is this a lot of extra busy work? **Answer:** We currently have staff meetings twice a month for the three people who work for 15 hours a week or more. Others have not been able to participate. Most of them have other jobs. More participation has always been Mark’s goal.
2. **Question:** Are there job descriptions for all the staff. **Answer:** Yes.

3. **Question:** Will the meetings be mandatory? **Answer:** Yes, as best we can.
4. **Comment from Pastor Mark:** All of the churches that have participated in this process have been prescribed a service of prayer, healing, and forgiveness (page 3, under 1A). The would take place on a Sunday morning.

### **Concern 2: LACK OF EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY**

#### **Prescription 2 Comments and Questions:**

1. **Question:** How do specific fundraisers fit into this concern and prescription? Would they be counted toward tithing? **Answer:** Giving is a spiritual discipline. It is not to say that doing extra fundraisers is not good, but tithing is based on your income. We are never asking people to give what they cannot, only what they can. We are financially vulnerable given that only twenty members give half the donations.
2. **Question:** Is tithing just about money or is it about time, gifts, etc.? **Answer:** The nature of the prescription is financial, but stewardship is about everything. It is all related.
3. **Comment:** This is a hard subject that no one wants to talk about. The time we spend here does not pay the light bill. From my standpoint, we still have to dig deeper and I believe this prescription is financial.

### **Concern 3: ABSENCE OF INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Prescription 3 Comments and Questions:**

1. **Comment:** The Pathway Team's purpose is to lay out a plan for making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world (see 3A on page 4 of the Consultation Report).
2. **Comment (Brad Dean):** I am part of Celebration Service Praise Team. I have some insight into this prescription because of my experience as part of a new church start in Kalamazoo. Small groups are especially important.
3. **Comment:** The Lay Leadership Team, which will help implement a spiritual gifts inventory, already exists. Many members may have taken an inventory online in Advent 2011 as part of the series on "God's Christmas Gifts."
4. **Question:** How are we going to get more people to get involved in more aspects of the church? **Answer:** Spiritual Gifts help identify passions. That helps lay leadership identify the right way to go -- people will say yes to serving if it aligns with their passions. Parts A and B of this prescription are related. As people are involved in discipleship, they tend to become involved in other areas of church.
5. **Question:** How do we take an inventory? **Answer:** There are online options. **Follow-up response from Karen Booth:** You can take a spiritual gifts inventory at <http://www.spiritualgiftstest.com/test/adult> or at <http://www.kodachrome.org/spiritgift/>.
6. **Comment:** Everyone has heard so much about VCI. I am hoping that has created some enthusiasm for being on the teams.
7. **Comment:** The number of people we have here tonight is an indication that we want this church to survive and thrive.
8. **Comment:** The nice thing about this report is that we get to decide how to make it all happen.

### **Concern 4: LACK OF RADICAL HOSPITALITY**

#### **Prescription 4 Comments and Questions:**

1. **Question:** Are the mystery guests reports going to be available to everyone? **Answer:** The VCI team is still trying to figure out how to distribute it. In the meantime, Karen Booth would be happy to send you the electronic file if you let her know (231-798-8431 or [kwbboth@comcast.net](mailto:kwbboth@comcast.net)).

2. **Question:** Which photos were the consultation team talking about it on page 2 under 4.1? **Answer:** Probably the pastor photos in the hallway across from the office.
3. **Nursery related comments:** A) As a parent, I am so glad to hear the nursery will be closed off. B) The bell ringers are happy to hear about the nursery too. C) There is a reason that the nursery and music areas were not closed off earlier, i.e. poor airflow/heating. It is going to take some creative thinking to get past that.
4. **Question:** How do we start practicing radical hospitality this Sunday? **Answer:** When we see someone new, "I don't think I've met you yet." Introduce yourself to people you do not know.
5. **Question:** Being a Sunday School teacher takes me out of the end of the service where the hospitality piece is crucial. How does that impact hospitality? It would help to have long time members identify who is new. **Answer:** We need to be intentional about exit greeting. Invite people to coffee hour, Sunday School, etc. This might be something the teams will want to explore more.
6. **Comment:** As someone new to the church, we came here to find and make friends because we do not have family here.
7. **Comment:** It goes both ways with new and old members. It was hard to come here after being someplace 40 years. Sometimes it is scary to go to where we need to spiritually. We all need to step out of our comfort zones, but we have Christ with us.
8. **Comment:** No one ever taught me what a greeter is supposed to do and I am supposed to get them. I never thought about following up with visitors after the service. **Follow-up response:** The team will work on training them.
9. **Comment:** Add ushers to the training; I have had to ask for a bulletin more than once. **Follow-up response:** An usher meeting is scheduled for March 2.
10. **Comment:** We need to look at a lot of things. Naomi noted that we have to decide what we are willing to stop doing so that we can do what we need to do.
11. **Question:** Will the assessment team be from a diverse group? It should be a mix of people. **Answer:** The prescription only calls for two to three people, but this may be the minimum number to get things started.
12. **Comment:** Maybe if greeters and ushers visit other churches, they would have a different perspective and it might hit them a different way.
13. **Comment:** It would be helpful to have more cross over between services to give each other feedback.
14. **Question:** Is there a church that is identified as one to visit? **Answer:** No. A variety of places would be helpful. Even if you do not go to the best one, you can learn from other's mistakes.

**Concern 5: LACK OF PASSIONATE WORSHIP**  
**Prescription 5 Comments and Questions**

1. **Question:** I have noticed that the timeline is very tight. We do not vote until March 16. Have we already started finding the teams? **Answer:** We have already begun work on the teams. Let Pastor Mark know if you would like to help.
2. **Comment:** Mark's name comes up on most every prescription, so we really need to help him. **Mark's response:** This is not the pastor's plan; it is the church's plan. My role is forming the teams. I am not on the teams. I am a supporting player. My job is to step back. The coach has drilled that into me and the other pastors in our peer-mentoring group repeatedly.
3. **Comments about forming the teams:** A) Please include youth while formulating teams. Their voice needs to be heard. B) I am in agreement with most of the prescriptions. When we forming the teams, I hope we include a broad cross section of the church on the teams, including new people. C)

We do need to get new and less active members on the teams, but they need to be asked. D) You need to be ready to step up to volunteer for something you are passionate about.

4. **Comment:** I think there is a lot of passion in Sunday morning worship. I see the effort that goes into the sermon, music, prayers. I find it hurtful to hear that we lack passion. **Mark's response:** None of the mystery guests were Methodists. Evaluating worship is all very subjective. For example, we had two mystery guests the very first Sunday in September, one at each service. One guest gave the message a score of 10 out of 10 points possible. The second gave it 2 out of 10. It is very subjective.
5. **Question:** There must be 35 dates and a very aggressive timeline. What if we do not make those dates? **Answer:** The dates are somewhat flexible/negotiable. The reason for the tight timeline is to get us moving so we do not lose momentum.
6. **Comment:** Ad Board has been trying to set goals. It is difficult in a church setting. We need congregational input. What are your passions? We need to set goals to meet those passions. Talk to Jim Post if you have ideas for the next five-year's goals.
7. **Question:** Can we put the minutes from every single committee into every single newsletter? **Answer:** Ad Council minutes were in the last newsletter. They include a paragraph about each committee. Vicki Zuker welcomes communication feedback.
8. **Comment:** Please talk up the town hall meetings so that more people participate in the next two town hall meetings.
9. **Comment:** We need to cherish Pastor Mark for his courage in the face of these prescriptions.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Please read the six FAQ found in a separate document. The last question and answer generated some discussion.

Question 6: What does our pastor and leadership team think of it?

Answer 6: Pastor Mark and the remaining nine members of the leadership team are in **unanimous support** of the prescriptions. These are all things we need to do whether they are accepted or not. We have already begun work in several areas and are confident that we can move forward to complete all of them. It would be foolish to miss this opportunity to have free Conference support (see question 4). Voting "no" will probably send a signal to the Conference that Pastor Mark's vision for Lake Harbor and our congregation's vision are not a good match which would not bode well for us moving forward together.

1. **Comment:** I am very upset about this response. **Mark's response:** As a United Methodist pastor, I could be taken away at any point. **Karen Booth's follow-up:** Mark and Annette Erbes, Ron and Vicki Zuker, Glenn Chilson, and Karen Booth attend a VCI informational session at Cornerstone UMC in February 2012 as part of Bishop's Day. The topic of VCI participation and potential pastoral change was addressed as follows: VCI participation does not guarantee that a church will keep its pastor (see Mark's note above). If however, the pastor has one vision for the church and the church has a different vision, the Conference may see fit to move the pastor to a church that does share his vision. This is also laid out in the VCI Overview Booklet as follows: *A congregation choosing not to follow through in the VCI process will no longer benefit from Conference investment of more VCI resources. It may also mean that an effective pastor serving that congregation will be appointed to a congregation which has demonstrated a desire for healthy change.*

Vicki Zuker and Brad Dean thanked everyone for coming. Vicki closed the meeting in prayer.