

Let's Talk!

Informational Meeting: Sunday Morning Schedule Script and "Minutes"

June 29, 2014

By Karen Booth

JIM POST

Welcome.

Let's start with an opening prayer. (Jim prayed)

We want to welcome you to this informational meeting. It is terrific to see all of you here -- it shows your concern and investment in our congregation and in God's church universal. If you didn't pick up a handout, please raise your hand and we will get one to you. It lists some key points. It also has some space to write down your questions and concerns as they occur to you. There will be time to speak in a few minutes.

Let's begin by making sure that we are all on the same page. The topic of today's meeting is the Sunday morning schedule. What is the best for the Lake Harbor congregation? Can the service times be tweaked to serve our congregation **and** our community better? How does this discussion mesh with our Vital Church Initiative prescriptions?

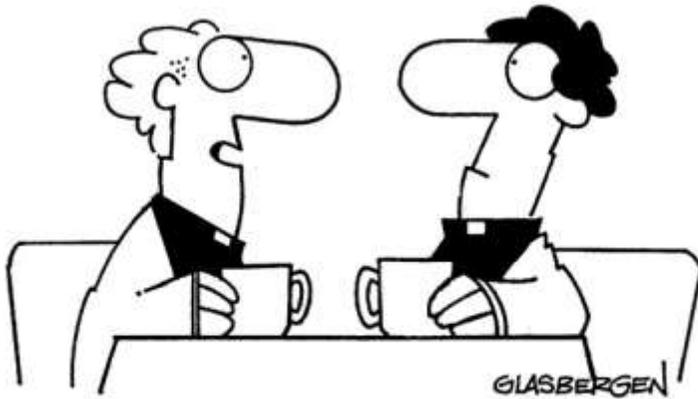
The proposed schedule change has everything to do with the Vital Church Initiative prescriptions. The assumptions underlying this whole VCI process are that: 1) The main thing is the main thing: The church exists to draw people to Christ. 2) Changes in the United Methodist will happen one congregation at a time. 3) No significant change happens without pain. 4) Any strategy for change must develop from the people who live it rather than being directed from outside.

In March, we voted to accept the VCI Consultation Team's report and implement all five prescriptions. The good news is that we have a coach, Naomi Garcia, helping us discover the best strategies for us to make more disciples.



"Basically, we're looking for an innovative pastor with a fresh vision who will inspire our church to remain exactly the same."

We are moving ahead. We have begun making changes. Change is hard and not just for us. We can't expect to keep doing the same things and get different results. Right?



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Change is uncomfortable, maybe even painful. And if we are honest, we are not fond of pain, so it is tempting to avoid making hard decisions.

"After months of passionate debate, my church finally decided to be 'open and affirming,' but we're not going to tell anyone."

VICKI ZUKER

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We agreed to make hard decisions so that we can fulfill our mission.

Our mission statement comes from the Great Commission.

Hear these words from Matthew 28:16-20:

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸The Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹**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, and ²⁰teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Word of God for the people of God.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Our vision statement tells us which strategies we are going to use to fulfill our mission:

Welcoming all. Jesus calls us to welcome friends and strangers after his example.

Empowered by Christ. Jesus is always with us, strengthening and guiding us, now and always.

Sent forth to serve. Jesus calls us to serve others out of love that they might experience God's love firsthand.



Our community is filled with people who yearn to connect with a loving God and welcoming community of faith. They are waiting for someone to reach out to them so that they can touch Jesus---even if they don't know that is what they are looking for.

On June 1st, guest speaker, Gary Step helped us understand what obstacles and barriers have kept us from

reaching out to making more disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We acknowledged that we have not always been loving. We have not always been welcoming. We have not always been quick to forgive. We have not risked "thinking big," because it might upset someone and cause them to leave.

But we also had a chance to repent, ask for forgiveness, and forgive others. This service was a clear sign that it is time to move on. We can do that if we remember it is not about us. It is about making disciples.

GARY COOPER

What obstacles are preventing us from making more disciples? We believe that one obstacle is our Sunday morning worship and Sunday School schedule. Ad Council has been looking at this for several months. What is the best for the Lake Harbor congregation? Can the service times be tweaked to serve our congregation and our community better? We have found (and been told) that people are most willing

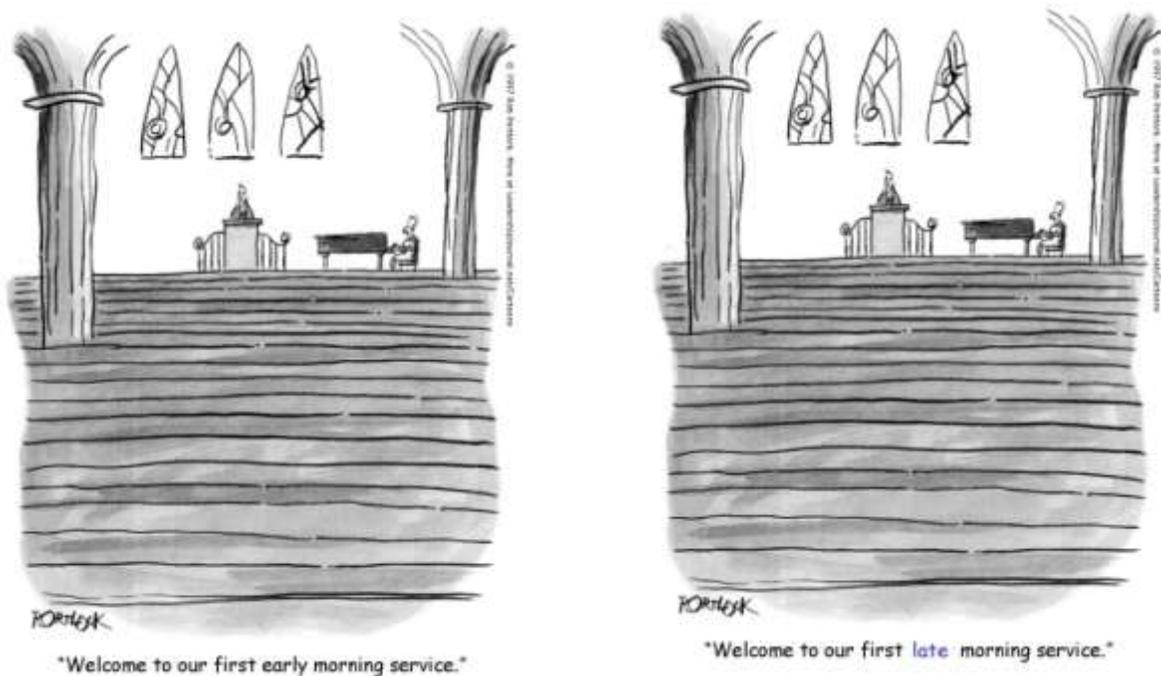
Current Sunday Morning Schedule (Fall)

9:30 am Early Schedule

10:30 am Sunday School
and Coffee Hour

11:30 am Celebration Service

to attend church between 9:00 am and noon on Sundays. What happens when you try to go either too early or too late? Nothing good!



And that has been our problem for quite a while. The Celebration Service has been growing and has the potential to grow even more if the service were to end by noon. If you think back fifty-seven years when Lake Harbor was started, nothing has changed. Worship and Sunday School fit neatly between 9:00 am and noon. It is just a little more complicated now that we have two worship services.

What now? We need to focus on our mission of making disciples. Here is what Ad Council, our VCI team, Pastor Mark, and Pastor Mary have been thinking. We need to:

1. Continue to offer two different worship services Sunday morning.
2. Continue to offer a dedicated "hour" of Christian education for adults and children. Practically speaking, the preschool, elementary, middle school, and high school kids have more like forty minutes of instruction time, but it is dedicated to Sunday School. No one has to choose between attending or teaching a Sunday School class and worshipping.
3. Schedule worship and Sunday School during prime time, which is 9:00 am until noon. How do we know this is prime time? We have learned it through our coach, readings, VCI meetings in Grand Rapids, church visits,

and more. Some of our members have friends who said they would gladly join us, but the service runs too late.

4. Remember it is not about us. Jesus commanded us to go and make **new** disciples. He didn't tell his current disciples to forget the mission field.



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It would be so easy to stay inside these four walls with our friends! Easy, but not Christian. Every decision we make is all about fulfilling our mission.

"What do we do if they NEVER leave the building?"

JIM POST

Ad Council, our VCI team, and both pastors decided that we could do all those things if we just moved the current schedule ahead one half hour like this:

- 9:00 am Early Worship Service
- 10:00 am Sunday School and Coffee Hour
- 11:00 am Celebration Service

We understand this may be less convenient for some members. We understand this is not the only possible Sunday morning line-up. But possibility #1 entails the least amount of change.

Another possibility which had not really considered until this last week or two is to flip-flop the two worship services like this:

- 9:00 am Celebration Service
- 10:00 am Sunday School and Coffee Hour
- 11:00 am Early Worship Service

If we were to do this, we would not call the 11:00 am service the “Early” Worship Service, but that is a minor detail. Possibility #2 is a much bigger change, but it has merit too.

In a just a few moments, we will give you a chance to ask your questions and express your concerns. We will follow the same format we did for the VCI Town Hall Meetings. Individuals can ask questions and/or make comments. When you get the microphone, state your name, and address the whole group. Each speaker may bring one question or comment the first time around, until everyone who wishes to speak has done so. We will write down your comments on the big pads of paper. Any questions about our procedures?

VICKI ZUKER

The main topic of the day is the Sunday morning schedule. Does anyone have questions about **why** we are looking at the Sunday morning schedule?

There were no questions about why we are looking at the Sunday morning schedule.

Let’s look at possibility #1. This schedule meets our goals by moving the schedule up one half hour.

9:00 am Early Worship Service

10:00 am Sunday School and Coffee Hour

11:00 am Celebration Service

Would anyone like to ask questions or comment on this possibility?

Comment: This works well for me because I work third shift, but I can see that it will not necessarily work for everyone else. I am open to other possibilities.

Question: Do we see increased attendance at the Celebration Service in the summer when the service is at 11:00 am? **Response:** No, not necessarily. Many families take vacations then.

Question: What about the choir? The choir is an important part of the Early Service. What does this do to our senior citizens? **Response:** We will have to figure out the best way to find rehearsal time for the choir.

Question: What about Sunday School? I have a hard time with fellowship because I am busy with Sunday School. We need more time between services. **Response:** The Education Committee is looking at how to use the time allotted. The proposed schedule does not solve that problem, but it also does not make it any worse. The education piece was an important part of our discussion at Ad Council on Thursday night. We will continue to look at this.

Comment: I have been a long time member. It will be hard to get her so early, not just for us (choir), but for the bells as well.

Comment: The praise team has the same issues getting here early. We get here by 9:00 am for the 11:00 am service.

Comment/question: I have been a member since the early sixties and have seen a number of changes. We have two places we are worshiping now: the main sanctuary and the Celebration space. If we moved the Celebration Service downstairs, could we have two services in the same time? What if the pastor split her time between the two services? **Response:** We have one pastor. That does not work.

Questions: How about one service every week and alternate the formats? **Response:** Everything we learned during the VCI process said that churches today must offer more than one style of worship to be vital. Churches which had offered only one service had to start another service of a different style as one of their five prescriptions. We need to keep two different services.

Comment: We go to both services. We would like the Celebration Service at 11:00 am. There is a great body of evidence that teens need more sleep and need to sleep later. It is hard for them to get up real early. It is not just older folks who find it hard to get up in the morning.

Comment: I would like to speak for the seniors. In order to get to church, I need to be up by 7:30 am. I wonder how many seniors would have a trouble if the service is moved up one half hour?

Comment: It will affect many seniors. Many do not sleep well and have trouble moving in the morning. They are an important part of this church. They try.

Comment: I am beginning to think I am a senior member. My biggest concern is the choir. I came here because of the music. The choir we have today will be further diminished by a time change. Will the choir have to practice on a weeknight? That may be our demise. Sunday morning rehearsal works best for not just me, but others.

Comment: I come from Twin Lake. I teach the adult class so I am here at least 30 minutes early. I think it will be difficult for me and some others. I do not think possibility #2 would work either. It would be difficult to condense our adult class. Whatever it is, we will work with it. Disciples come from the heart; it is not related to the clock. It will be a sacrifice.

Comment/question: We have had these discussions before. The last change was 15 minutes. It did not seem bad. What is wrong with tweaking the schedule 15 minutes? Maybe it is not as divisive as a 30-minute change.

Comment: I have been here quite a long time. The older group has been getting up early for years. I can see that it may be harder for younger families to get around in the morning.

Comment: Choirs and bell might be able to meet a separate night. I am older, up and waiting to come at 9:30 am. I am betting that most of us are up and could be ready. I do feel bad for the choir.

Comment: We have to look at our priorities. I give up family time to be part of the praise band.

Comment: I want to thank the worship teams for the service today. A lot of scripture was read. We need to look to scripture for how to proceed. Joshua 24:16 says "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." I am open to all the possibilities. We offer ourselves through our money, gifts, and time. Maybe I can help with the service I do not usually attend. We have to remember this whole thing is not about us. Are we remembering that this should be about the people who are not here yet?

Question: How do you feel about the Celebration Service at 5:00 pm and a free dinner every week or at 11:00 am and a free lunch? Food brings people in.

Comment/question: Forest Park has their contemporary service on Sunday morning. What if we offered a Saturday evening service? We would not be competing with their Sunday morning service.

Comment: We can depend on three things: change, taxes, and heaven. Those are sure things.

Many churches were not invited to be part of the Vital Church Initiative process because they were not ready to change. The United Methodist Church has given us a charge to make disciples of Jesus Christ to transform the world. We need to prayerfully discern what is best for Lake Harbor. The Roots ministry is going to begin meeting here soon. That will be another ministry of this church that can reach people who would otherwise not be in church.

The plan was to spend look at possibility #2 also. This schedule also moves everything up a half hour **and** flip-flops the two worship services:

9:00 am Celebration Service

10:00 am Sunday School and Coffee Hour

11:00 am Early Worship Service

Given that the informational part of the meeting and discussion on possibility #1 took 45 minutes, he thanked the one hundred plus members in attendance on behalf of the Ad Council, VCI team, and pastor for coming. They will prayerfully consider all that was said today. Thank you for being good listeners and speaking the truth in love. Brad Hilleary closed the meeting in prayer.