

Moving Forward – Discussion Paper

Council Retreat - June 2016

Moving Forward...

The scriptures remind us that everything we do must be built on the cornerstone of Christ. Deitrich Bonhoeffer, in his book Life Together, reminds us that, “*It is not we who build. Christ builds the church... We must proclaim, he builds. We must pray to him, and he will build.*” This is to say, that our first and greatest work as a church is to seek the presence of God through prayer and communal discernment, listening for the Holy Spirit’s prompting and movement. Unless our strategic planning is fully aligned with the movement of God amongst and through us, we will labour in vain.

Every church has been blessed by the Holy Spirit with a unique mixture of gifts and the opportunities in the local context that shape how it will proclaim Good News so that the kingdom of God may grow. To know where and how to faithfully move into what has been discerned, we must begin with a clear picture of the unique opportunities and gifts that we have been entrusted with.

Opportunities in our Community Context:

1. University Students from Southern Manitoba: In the story of our congregation, a motivating factor in moving to our current location has been our proximity to the University of Manitoba. The result of this for our congregational ministry has meant that for the past few decades, we have been a collecting point of spiritual support and connection for many Christian university students from across southern Manitoba. Although many of these students move on once studies are completed, many others have also made FGMB their church home. Our proximity and experience of vibrant C&C ministry mean that we are uniquely situated to engage with these university students.

2. International Students: Over the past number of years, the University of Manitoba has welcomed an increasing number of international students, many of whom have found housing in the many apartments immediately surrounding our location on Pembina Hwy. We are uniquely situated on multiple fronts to proclaim the Good News to this community.

A) Students in our current C&C ministry already encounter these international students on a daily basis.

B) We have several members with employment connections at the U of M.

C) Our location is conveniently accessible for students living in the area.

D) We have experience with offering conversational EAL opportunities.

3. Recent Immigrants: We are surrounded by numerous apartment buildings (*Pembina Place*) that are home not only to students, but also to many families with young children, many of whom are recent immigrants to Canada. The world is coming to our doors. We are uniquely situated as neighbours to proclaim Good

News to this community through outreach and ministries that support parents and families.

In addition to those living in the apartments next door, our church is already home to numerous EAL community programs that bring hundreds of recent immigrants through our doors each week. We are uniquely situated to proclaim Good News to this community through volunteering, blessing staff and participants, and offering intentional connection.

4. Refugees: We are in a time when the plight of refugees fleeing conflict zones around the world has become an urgent concern in our community. As a congregation with deep roots in the community and with abundant material resources, we are uniquely situated to proclaim Good News to refugees by sponsoring and welcoming these families to our community.

5. Care Home/Retirement Home: Our church is located immediately adjacent both to a Personal Care Home (Golden Door) and to an Assisted Living and Retirement Home (Riverwood Square). As a church with a vibrant Seniors' ministry we are uniquely situated to proclaim Good News to the elderly in our community by providing worship services and friendship to these neighbours, many of whom are lonely and searching for hope.

6. Property Development: The recent opportunity to purchase the property adjacent to our existing facility presents our congregation with tremendous potential for future ministry development. Although this property acquisition is far from complete, it uniquely situates us with the opportunity to dream and discern how it might be redeveloped to benefit the community at large and to extend the impact of FGMB ministries within the community.

7. Hispanic Church Planting Opportunity (C2C): In recent weeks, C2C has presented our pastoral team with the beginnings of a proposal to host/partner with an Hispanic church planter and team. As part of a needs analysis by a number of Spanish speaking ministry workers, it was identified that although there are a significant number of Spanish speaking residents in the south end of Winnipeg, there are currently no Spanish language congregations active in this area. Due to cultural and missiological concerns, there is a recommendation to have such a church plant partner with an English speaking congregation that can minister effectively to second and third generation children of Spanish speaking families that would become part of this ministry.

Our Gifts:

1. Demographics – Our congregation has a well-balanced demographic mix across the various life-stage groups. We have active and vibrant ministry groups in most of

these areas that offer the potential for integration and engagement of newcomers from a wide variety of age groups.

2. Resources - Although people in our church come from all walks of life, a significant number of our adult congregants are socially mobile, well educated, and financially stable professionals. This means that there is an abundance of potential resources (financial, education, services, advocacy, community connections) within our faith community that may be made available to address ministry needs that we encounter in ministering to our community.

3. Positive Relational Dynamics and Leadership Structures – Although this may not seem to be an immediately apparent gift, we are blessed to have strong leadership bodies and processes that guide our vision and mission. Our congregation is well served by dedicated pastors, ministry leaders and council members that consult with and invite meaningful participation from members. This allows the many ministries of the church to function in a coordinated way, unified by a common vision and mission. Interpersonal relationships and congregational participation are marked by open dialogue and positive tone that is evidence of an underlying confidence in our decision-making processes and trust of leadership.

Proposed Ministry Development Priorities 2016-2020

In Psalm 84:4-7 we read that those whose lives are engaged in the worship of God will move “from strength to strength.” So too, as the ministries of Fort Garry MB are focused on glorifying God and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, we will move from strength to strength. In other words, we celebrate what we have accomplished for the sake of Christ and we look ahead to what the Spirit is empowering us to do. As noted in the introductory section of this document, effective ministry begins with, is sustained by, and concludes with prayer and attentiveness to the leading of the Holy Spirit through the discerning community.

Moving Ministry Outward – A constant temptation in congregational ministry is to assume that focusing on strengthening congregational life through teaching and programs will result in effective growth and outreach. Ministry experience and scholarship affirm for us that the greatest growth and maturity for Christian disciples occurs in a holistic approach to faith formation. Vital components beyond actual teaching which contribute to effective faith formation are active engagement in reaching outward through acts of service as well as intentional discipleship-focused relationships.

The broad directional goals of this ministry development plan are addressed here according to the three components of our vision statement: Inviting, Being, Sending.

Inviting:

1. Commitment to outreach, cross-cultural engagement, and removal of barriers
for example:

- *Communications – improved signage, printed materials, online presence*
- *Promotional Plan for current ministries – intentional outreach planning*
- *Equipping – coordinated volunteer training plan for ministry teams*
- *Facilities – continued work on improving accessibility*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

2. Community engagement through multiple on-ramps to relationship
for example:

- *expansion of EAL ministry – faith discovery classes*
- *summer outreach ministries – day camps, community youth programs*
- *life-stage resourcing – parenting, marriage, finances, elder care*
- *additional worship gatherings / interactive teaching / shared meal*
- *recreational opportunities - family gym times / seniors fitness / students*
- *community meals / community group meeting spaces*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

Being:

1. Commitment to increased diversity in leadership and ministry activity
for example:

- *intentional age, gender, and cultural diversity “up front” and “at the table”*
- *leadership development strategy – identifying and equipping young leaders*
- *strategic inclusion component in all ministry planning processes*
 - *How can someone new to faith or new to our church enter into this?*
 - *How can we effectively invite our “neighbours” to engage?*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

2. Discipleship/Faith Formation strategy

for example:

- *development of a structured pathway from new believer to mature disciple*
 - *including focus on missional hospitality and outreach*
 - *regular teaching modules throughout the year on discipleship steps*
- *intentional discipleship/prayer partnerships*
- *revitalized and refocused small group ministry*
 - *identification and equipping of small group ministry leaders*
 - *defined goals and expectations for small groups / leaders*
 - *identified entry and exit points for engagement*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

3. Alternative worship gatherings/spaces (as mentioned under “Inviting”)

for example:

- *non-traditional worship, casual atmosphere, interactive teaching, discussion*
- *outreach focused, missional community model, shared meal*
- *cultural/language group focus? (C2C proposal – Hispanic church plant)*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

Sending:

1. Strategic partnership in mission – local and global

for example:

- *identify and primarily engage with one local mission organization*
(ICYA, Pioneer Camp, Simonhouse, Siloam, Houseblend etc.)
- *develop sister church relationships locally (MBCM) and globally (ICOMB)*
- *identify and invest significantly in one MB Mission location/project*
 - *send short-term mission teams annually*
 - *develop long-term relationship with missionary family*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

2. Focused community impact plan

for example:

- *Pembina Place Apartments outreach proposal*
 - *extend a call to move in, formation of missional community*
 - *formation of a ministry group to engage this community*
(this overlaps with many aspects of the “Inviting” multiple on-ramps)
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

3. Gift discernment, equipping and sending out

for example:

- *identifying, equipping and calling people to serve in local and global mission*
- *affirming and promotion of missional living principles and practices*
 - *the home and family as a ministry centre*
 - *vocation as missional calling*
- *other ideas...*

Affirm as a Priority Not sure Should Rethink This Not a Priority

What resources might be needed? – staffing, volunteers, facilities, finances

Feedback/Further Thought:

Is there something missing from the goals identified above?

Are there assumptions being made here that need to be questioned?