

Vibrant Church Initiative - Town Hall Meetings

Meeting # 1

Wesley United Methodist Church

March 8, 2018, 7:00 PM – Sanctuary

Present: Dr. Douglas Caldwell, Pastor; Cathy Butler, John Scott, Tanya Scott, Jamie Myers, Marilyn Myers, Geri Reid, Betty Elliott, Patsy Wagner, Lisa Spalding, Carolyn Newsom, Vicki Westbrook, and Sheila Davis

Purpose: Pastor Douglas described the purpose of the meeting. Steve Stutz is our VCI Coach. Purpose is to talk about the dreams we've received and allow every person to express his/her point of view. Expressing a preferred future of Wesley UMC from the dreams we have shared.

Instructions:

1. Take a pen and card to the Christian Life Center.
2. Put 3-5 dreams on your card from the "Dream Wall" that resonate with you.
3. Return to the sanctuary.

Cathy Butler explained that we want to record every thought.

Next meeting on 3/13/18 at 11 AM, and on 3/25/18 after Sunday Service.

Pastor Douglas - if you will share your dreams and we will be here as long as needed.

Betty Elliott - transportation for the shut-ins. There are a number of shut-ins with no way to church. If we offer that they would come. It is a realistic dream. First step, get list of people who can drive and do background checks on them. Then set up a schedule. Could do this within 3-6 months. Nothing standing in the way of this dream. Patsy - offer some communication with those people. How to get in touch with them. Who are they. Do they truly want to come? Betty - if evangelism and caring committees could do the checking.

Patsy Wagner - Mentor Program for new members. Particularly unchurched members - we just take their picture and let them go. She has seen this happen many times. Cathy - thinks the mentoring goes along with offering programs that people would take a part in, not just coming to church but getting them involved with ministries, missions, Bible studies, etc. John - if you don't get them involved with something you lose them. Tanya - it's a way to connect people in the church and make them feel a part. Lisa and Tanya put same dream down on their card. Lisa - maybe offer them a class after they join, such as what the church believes. John - mentors need to make sure they don't get burned out or overloaded.

Patsy Wagner - a permanent prayer team. Need to advertise and communicate with others.

Carolyn Newsom - mentoring. As we consider, think about those that grow us in Christ, and strong family ties like the single parent families. Think about the objective to each program that needs to be the bottom line. There is a variety of mentoring programs on the wall.

John Scott - Shower trailers - maybe get area methodist churches together to establish an emergency center. Some of these trailers are up for bid. Having worked with distribution during Hurricane Harvey drew him to this dream. Marilyn - a shower trailer doesn't have to be limited to disasters, but could be used for UMARMY. Pastor - ties to the dream that we get our own generator. Be there when people need you. John - moving kitchen wagons and "go" to where we are needed. Vicki - we had talked about the shower trailer for UMARMY. Pastor - there will be one at the stadium next week for the Heritage Festival. Lisa - could we use it for the homeless? Cathy - is there a way to put washing machines in shower trailers? Pastor - they have the same kind of trailer for washing machines. Marilyn - you could be a connectional church with other churches in the area if we did something like this.

Carolyn Newsom - likes the idea about ways to promote the music, like praise band concerts or battles of the bands and old fashioned gospel nights. The talented people at Wesley and the interest in music draws her to this dream. Vicki - that was one of hers too. River Fest has a Christian Band night draws a lot of kids. The more you expose them, the more effective.

Lisa Spalding - changing service times. It's an elephant in the room. I wish there was a solution that pleased everybody. Just delaying it a bit, at least until 8:30, would be helpful. Some people want something to be done about it. Tanya - we have invited people to church and they refuse because of the early time. If we don't do something, we're not doing what God calls us to do to reach everyone. Marilyn - a way that might please everyone would be to start another service at the 10:30 time in the CLC. Then there would be two contemporary services, and you could add a stage in the CLC. Lisa - at her old church the Asst. Pastor did one service and the Pastor did the other. Marilyn - you could also have lay speakers, or have the sermon early in one and late in the other. Cathy - we could Skype in. Pastor - think about same dream and ask how you have that conversation with our church. When it was discussed earlier during Holy Conversations, it was not well received. Lisa - if you advertised the discussion a lot of people would show up. Vicki - I think this is a start, to bring these Town Hall Conversations to the congregation. Betty - if you had a vote, there a fewer people in the Traditional Service so they would automatically lose. Cathy - I know people who come to the traditional service because they don't want to come to the early service because of the time, not the worship style. John - even pushing back the time might work. Pastor

- we need to pray about how this might take place. YOU can see this will be a lively discussion.

Patsy Wagner - complete the upstairs remodel. We need a larger area for the youth. When we built the CLC that was the dream we had then and it has just been waiting. Money is the holdup, and time. Carolyn - it was explained to her that it requires an elevator, which is a huge expense. It certainly would be a wonderful asset. Patsy - we could work around that. John - has anyone looked into a grant? Pastor - most of the grants are beyond "religious." Marilyn - we are so close to paying off this building, then easily finish the other building, all within 3 years. Pastor - we could possibly pay off this building this year, and put all the money on the other building. The elevator doesn't have to be an expensive one, there are many kinds and styles. The add on would be a place for the tweens. Also a spot for our college students. We are the closest vibrant Methodist church to Lamar. Lisa - how is the Wesley Foundation doing? Pastor - they were flooded and out of their facility and lots of challenges, but Amy is doing a good job and they are growing the program. Could Amy come and give us an update? Marilyn - at Lamar the Wesley foundation was my place to go, and several others. We've got a connection and passion because that was our hangout. Lamar used to be a commutal place, but that has all changed because there are so many dorms on campus and they don't have their own church.

John Scott - some kind of health ministry. That might attract some of the kids, like working out or a walking track. That dream is for the health benefits, and also it's a place for people to get together. Perhaps it would attract some of the neighborhood and community. Marilyn - you could also have prayer stations on the path. Lisa - tied that in with people walking their dogs, and the blessing of the animals. Cathy - a library box of free Christian books. John - Triumph church in the back they have this empty land with a box that includes food for anyone to pick up. Not sure who stocks it, but there's stuff that's left out for people.

Vicki Westbrook - coffee bar where information station is. Put your coffee decanters there and add some bistro tables. Use same area as now. Many of the churches have that right now. It's kind of trivial but it's what people like. Pastor - Grace Fellowship had one called "Holy Grounds." Vicki - it's fellowship, and I think it's inviting - visitors would like it. That's where we could have someone man the station and offer them information. Lisa - I don't think people are aware of our updated brochures.

John Scott - Security - this church is sadly wide open, but if we could start directing people to start using these middle doors rather than the one nearest the nursery. Pastor - what would stand in our way of moving the nursery? Lisa - space. Pastor - our school is in two buildings. Marilyn - some parents may not want their kids in a separate building.

Patsy Wagner - fix the CLC floor. Pastor - that dream has been expressed and we need to set aside some money for that.

Marilyn Myers - digital marquee sign. We don't use our existing sign at all. Lisa - what's the cost? Pastor/Marilyn - about \$10,000.

John Scott - bus cover - we finally got the bus, and now we need to do something to protect it. It won't last if we leave it exposed like it is. It needs a cover or garage.

Marilyn Myers - a Christian Counselor - the Peacemakers offer training. We did the Resolving Everyday Conflict by the Peacemakers.

Marilyn Myers - computer training or "Google for Granny"

Pastor - What could we do differently that would improve this process?

- Lisa - say the questions up front or write them down rather than as you state your dream.
- Patsy - the time was not sufficient (15 minutes).
- Perhaps have the list of questions ahead of time and get people to look at the dreams before the meeting begins.
- Small groups may help since shy people may not speak up in large group.
 - Or provide a card to write it down. Give card to someone who will state it aloud to the group.
- Lisa - why can't it be on the website? Pastor - a link could be put on the website for people to access the shared folder.

The next meeting is scheduled right after UMW. Marilyn - if you have this sized group I think it better to hold in Bible 101, especially where you can see each other's faces.

Pastor - encourage everyone to attend. Vicki - bring food.

Vibrant Church Initiative - Town Hall Meetings

Meeting # 2

Wesley United Methodist Church

March 13, 2018, 11:00 AM – Sanctuary

Present: Dr. Douglas Caldwell, Pastor; Cathy Butler, Sheila Davis, Ramona Guillory, Charlie Cox, John Scott, Betty Elliott, and Tammy Bell.

Purpose: Pastor Douglas described the purpose of the meeting. Steve Stutz is our VCI Coach. Purpose is to talk about the dreams we've received and allow every person to express his/her point of view (without judgment). Expressing a preferred future of Wesley UMC from the dreams we have shared, giving Dream Team guidance to do their work. All dreams will be weighed, not just the ones brought up at a Town Hall Meeting.

Instructions:

1. Take a pen and card to the Christian Life Center.
2. Write down 3-5 dreams on your card from the "Dream Wall" that resonate with you.
3. Return to the sanctuary.

Questions to consider - how does dream help us advance the mission? What obstacles would prevent a particular dream from taking place?

Next meeting on 3/25/18 at 12 PM after Sunday Service.

Ramona - Service Times - from outside looking in, I love this church. The main thing to me is the worship times. I've heard people say the 8:10 service is just too early. If it were 9:00 it would be better. That resonates with me and I've heard that a lot. I see it as a growing part of the church. Charlie - I've been over worship and it's been talked about. The issue is the people in the first service have a problem with the time. The second service doesn't want to change. The issue of trying to be fair - some in the second service have stated they feel like that when first service runs over, their service is the one that pays for it. The 10:30 service is made of people who have been here for a long time, and we need to make sure we don't disrupt them. You also need to worry that Sunday school would suffer. Betty - a number of those from second service don't come when we combine in the summer. We should experiment for a short period, maybe a month or over the summer. Pastor - how do we get away from asking what WE want rather than what the community wants or needs. Charlie - without a doubt, a 9:00am service would bring in more people. Pastor has seen people walk into the second service and walk right back out when they saw how empty was. John Scott has spoken with a couple of people from First Methodist and they are really struggling. Ramona - we

need to take the “I” out of the equation. When they moved their service at the Temple from 8:00 to 9:00 it flourished. John - Providence is also struggling. Some of these people in struggling churches would come to our service if it was later. Pastor - how do you have this discussion? Charlie thinks that discussion might be easier than you think. START with asking the second service people. Sheila - perhaps poll the traditional service on what they would like to see in their service, and when we are trying out a new time, give them special music and have some contemporary people sit in to fill up the sanctuary and liven it up.

Tammy - Children & Security - Cathy added there were a lot of things about latchkey and Rumble Ball. Do you see expansion into that? Tammy - yes and no. Our deterrent is the daycare and the state’s rules. Pastor - if we grow programs we will need to make some changes. May need to move all kids to one building so we are not under the rule of needing background checks. Discussion on moving nursery. It’s not undoable, just a deterrent. Tammy - some churches have separate areas or wings for the students so they are completely separated. Pastor - we are fortunate in trying to figure out how to do more things, while other churches are trying to figure out how to keep the doors open.

John - Bus Cover - would like to see that happen. Could organize where the pit is and could be over by the nativity stuff. There’s so much condensation on the top of the bus and it will rust eventually. Pastory - a portable awning is what you are thinking? John - yes. Pastor - what are some of the dreams for the ministry of the bus? Picking up some people? Yes. Ramona - trip to baseball game. John - it has to be handicap accessible if someone needs it. Charlie - we did it with the first department, and it’s not as difficult as you’d think. Don’t need a lift necessarily, just a ramp in the back. Cathy - what about using someone’s handicap accessible van? (Like Gary Wells’ van.) John - get everyone together for Emmaus events, like Candlelight. Also, church camp, concerts. Cathy - special needs ministry is always tickling the back of my mind. The service time was a hindrance getting some of the special needs people here because I would have had to leave my house at 6 AM on a Sunday morning to go get them and help them get ready.

Consider focusing the 3/25 meeting on service times to get everyone there, and open the discussion.

Cathy - if we work on finishing the CLC, it would allow some movement and a master rethinking of our facility, more than just finishing the upstairs. We need a sound system, an altar/platform area, etc. Pastor - there are some fundamental questions we are trying to answer. Ramona - if you grow that third service you could use the CLC for that. John - some services have simultaneous services. Tammy has 33 people on a waiting list in one class. Pastor - we could actually fill it up. Make facility decisions based on your focus, not focus on a facility and then fill it. Ramona - a lot of churches are set up with a youth focus. Coffee shops. Large rooms for youth with tables, kitchen, coffee shop, decorated to attract them.

Betty - get the College/Career group going again. John - has tried that before and it lasted 2.5 months. Pastor - it is a very fickle group. If anyone has a chance in doing it, it would be us. Charlie - now is the time with the biggest group of graduating seniors coming up. Charlie - we have a coffee shop with hot chocolate in the youth room now. We put new furniture in there today - bean bag couches. Been looking for a small fridge to keep in there. John - coordinate with the Wesley Foundation. Pastor - we are uniquely positioned to do things with Lamar.

Betty - Pickle Ball for seniors. Play out in the parking lot. Gail and Rheda would like to see this happen.