



# SAINT MARK'S UMC VISIONING PLAN

April 30 , 2017



# Leadership Retreat

- A Leadership Retreat was held at Saint Mark's on January 24, 2015 to address the challenges of becoming a more vital congregation. During the retreat the attendees worked in break-out groups and proposed the following ideas for becoming a more vital congregation.
  - ✓ Making disciples through worship. Determine the feasibility of an additional worship service, particularly a contemporary service in the Family Life Center. Find ways to take the church into the community.
  - ✓ Disciples making new disciples. Continue community outreach ministries that bring unchurched persons to the church (i.e. Trunk or Treat), develop small groups that, in turn, develop disciples to mentor new disciples, advertising and communication of the programs and ministries available at Saint Mark's and looking into a restructuring of the Sunday School program.
  - ✓ Disciples growing in their faith. Addition of a Bible study at Saint Mark's similar to the existing Bible study at the Chamberlin. Develop more small group programs.
  - ✓ Disciples engaged in mission. The USDA food program and Night's Welcome are excellent missions but there needs to be an increase in opportunities to serve the community.

# Vision Team

- Four leaders were chosen from the retreat to form a Vision Team to work with the Pastor to devise a plan for implementing the ideas proposed during the retreat. The following areas were considered to be key to developing a plan that will attain the retreat goals.
  - ✓ Demographics
  - ✓ Accepting our current reality
  - ✓ Goals from retreat
  - ✓ Welcoming/hospitality
  - ✓ Small group ministry/relational ministry
  - ✓ Additional staff member
  - ✓ Advertising/Communication
  - ✓ Partnering
  - ✓ Facilities

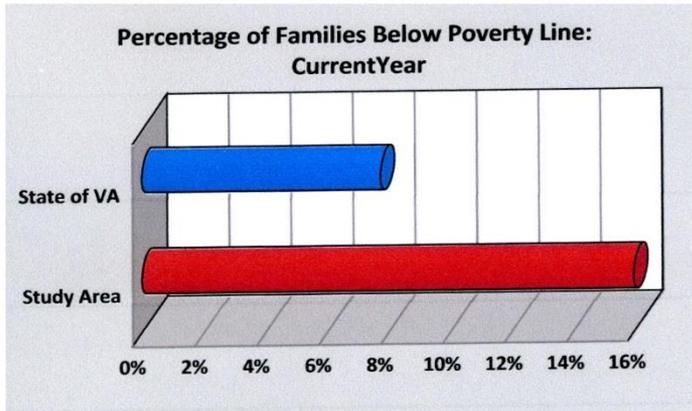


# Demographics

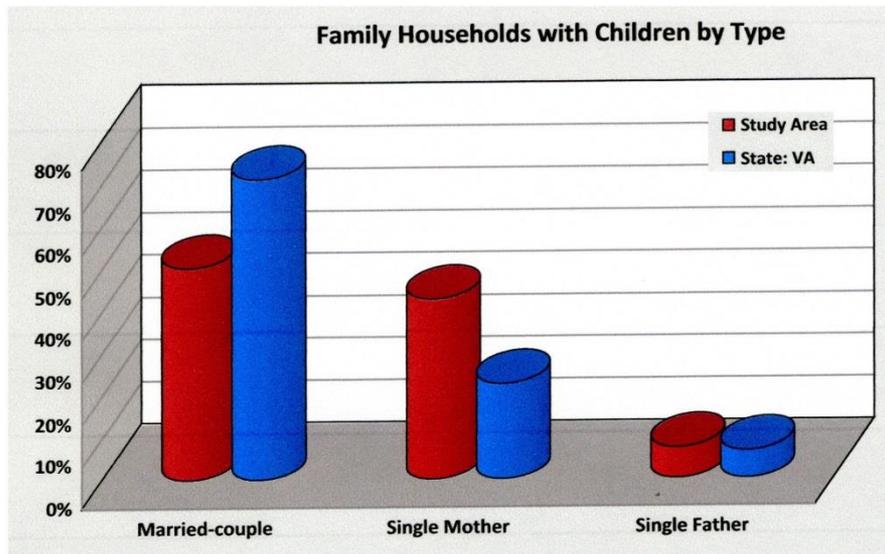
- In order to serve the community we must first understand the makeup of that community. To assist in this effort demographic data for a two mile radius around Saint Mark's was acquired from the Conference.
- So what does our surrounding community look like?
  - ✓ 50% of the households are run by a single parent (43% single mother and 7% single father). Ministry aimed at two parent families is a failure to minister to 50% of families in this community.
  - ✓ The number of families living in poverty is significantly above the state average. Hampton has the highest percentage of low income residents that have no idea where their next meal will come from.
  - ✓ Ethnically, the area consists of 48% African American, 42% Caucasian, with the remainder of the population being Asian or Latino. 52% of the community is non Caucasian, thus ministry with this 52% is essential.
  - ✓ By age, the population consists of 25% children under 18, 10% young adults, 40% family age and 25% retirees/elderly.



# Demographics



← High Level of Poverty



← Large number of Single Parent Households

# Accepting Reality

- What does the demographics of our area tell us about the future of Saint Mark's?
  - ✓ Our mission field is the changing community around us.
  - ✓ We need to accept our reality and optimize the church with an understanding of this reality. We are an older church that wants to perform missions (which we are already good at) but we want to do more to serve the community.
  - ✓ We need to “bloom where we are planted” but we also need to face the fact that the changes we need to make in order to grow can be uncomfortable.
  - ✓ We don't need to recreate the wheel, but build upon our existing strengths.
  - ✓ Welcoming/Hospitality will be crucial to the vitality of the life of the church. There is only a finite amount of time we have to reach someone when they walk through our doors to meet, greet and plug them into the church's ministry.



# Goals From Retreat

- Explain who we are
  - ✓ Update/revise the Bulletin
  - ✓ Use a variety of media to get our message out
- Define who we want to be
  - ✓ Disciple makers.
  - ✓ Be more relevant in the community
  - ✓ Expand our current forms of Missions
  - ✓ Be more neighborly
- How do we get there?
  - ✓ New staff member
  - ✓ Have an outreach Purpose. “Making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”
  - ✓ Training for our current leadership
  - ✓ Utilize peoples talents. Help people discover their Spiritual gifts and help them use those gifts for the church’s ministry
  - ✓ Provide opportunities to develop people spiritually



# Welcoming/Hospitality

- How do we retain new members and energize our existing members to become a more vital congregation?
  - ✓ Welcoming/Hospitality ministry is the first step.
  - ✓ When new people arrive we must openly welcome them, engage them to discover their unique talents, spiritual gifts, and abilities and incorporate them into the life of the Church while developing personal relationships with them.
  - ✓ To engage the existing congregation we need to perform a gifts/talents survey to determine where people can serve and get plugged in. We must tap into people's gifts and clearly define how we can best serve the community with our spiritual gifts.
  - ✓ We have wonderful facilities such as the FLC, let's use them for community outreach. To be a church built in mission we must intentionally put our actions in place one piece at a time.
  - ✓ True Hospitality is risky and will bring change but it will lead us into fulfilling the church's Mission, which is entering into a relationship with the people outside our doors. This leads to life beyond "self" as we are deployed as disciples to make more disciples. This will give us a new energy.



# Welcoming/Hospitality

- Reaching Out To Neighbors:
  - ✓ Ask all church members to let the church office know when a new family has moved into their neighborhood.
  - ✓ All they would have to do is give the address and the church could send out a welcome new neighbor letter.
  - ✓ Then to expand the welcome, a week after sending the letter a small potted plant could be left at the door inviting them to church.
  - ✓ Assemble a team to help with these deliveries if we decide that we want do something like this.



# Welcoming/Hospitality

## ➤ Coffee in the Narthex:

- ✓ Purchasing coffee, cocoa, and teas through an organization called Equal Exchange. It's a co-op of small farmers who struggle to survive amidst larger corporations.
- ✓ Coffee, with the cost of freight, is about the same pricing as any name brand coffee in the grocery store.
- ✓ The UMC General Conference urges local congregations that use coffee, tea, cocoa, to purchase these products through Equal Exchange or another fair trade organization
- ✓ This is an opportunity to provide something extra for our congregation, visitors, and to help others. More information at <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/>



# Welcoming/Hospitality

## ➤ Targeting Demographics:

- ✓ Demographics change year to year, so we need to always be ready to offer something for all ages.
- ✓ Currently the age groups we seem to be in need of improving our programs for are those in their 20's, 30's and 40's.
- ✓ This is the age group that would also bring children and youth into our church.



# Small Group/Relational Ministry

- As our welcoming/hospitality ministry develops we will need to create transitional ministries which meet the needs of the community and congregation. This will be accomplished as a follow-up through hospitality and welcoming.
  - ✓ Small group ministry will be our number one priority
  - ✓ This small group ministry is to be initially led by our recommended new staff member with the title of Minister of Hospitality and Small Groups.
  - ✓ We need specific (divorce support, grief support, addiction recovery, etc.) small groups that will address the needs of our community at large and within this congregation.



# Small Group/Relational Ministry

- Set aside one evening each month (i.e. the first Wednesday of the month) for small groups to have a regular schedule.
- Bring everyone together with a potluck dinner first then have break out groups meeting in the classrooms, sanctuary, etc.
- Have different types of groups, not just 'study' groups. Do a survey of church members to see what type of groups the congregation would be interested in attending.
  - ✓ Crafts groups (quilting, sewing, woodwork - all with a focus on religion); music groups (learn to play chimes/bells, sing, praise songs, etc.)
  - ✓ Missions groups (local and global)
  - ✓ Disciple study group
  - ✓ Mission kit-building groups
  - ✓ Prayer groups
  - ✓ Support groups
  - ✓ A “What is the UMC?” group
- Encourage people to alternate between what group they attend each month to promote fellowship.



# Additional Staff Member

- How do we implement these changes?
  - Expanding into new areas will create a work load that our current staff cannot absorb. We will need a new staff member to:
    - ✓ Coordinate Hospitality ministry and small groups.
    - ✓ Attend to members/visitors
    - ✓ Help plug new members into the life of the Church
    - ✓ Be a member of Lay Nominations
  - Qualifications for this position will be developed in conjunction with the Staff/Pastor-Parrish Relations Committee. This staff person will most likely need specialized training to deal with the kinds of issues our small groups will be focused on.
  - A church must staff for grace. The church's priorities are what the church looks like!



# Advertising/Communication

- Once we implement these changes how do we let the surrounding community know what we have to offer?
  - ✓ Request that the Lay Leadership Development Committee (formerly the Nominations Committee) begin immediately to fill the position of Communications Chair which is presently vacant.
  - ✓ Consult with younger members on what they want to see on the web page
  - ✓ Continue our outreach on Facebook
  - ✓ Invest in improved event signage
- Internally we also need to enhance communication
  - ✓ Revise our Marker and Bulletin to be more user friendly and informative for guests and new members
  - ✓ Add a new member orientation class to introduce people to the organization of the church for ministry



# Advertising/Communication

- To bring the local population into the church we must advertise.
  - ✓ Door-to-door flyers
  - ✓ Articles in the Daily Press (the DP has free religious activities advertising in Thursday's paper), flyers at the local WIC office
  - ✓ Flyers at the Healthy Families Partnership office on Franklin Street
  - ✓ Advertise anywhere we can put flyers, etc. (restaurants, laundry mats, grocery stores, hotels)
  - ✓ People receive information differently, and we have many mediums to choose from. Use a Media Blast to reach folks who are connected electronically (Email, Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat)
  - ✓ Use the website for announcements, reports and updates from various committees.
  - ✓ Use Facebook to send notifications to our “friends” whenever an update is made.
  - ✓ Develop an App for St. Mark’s as an opportunity for instant messaging, for urgent needs, keeping connected when people are out of town, sending out a scripture for the day, or a quick morning devotion.
  - ✓ Use electronic notification when we have events. It’s cheap, simple, and effective.
  - ✓ Since there will always be those who can only be reached by snail mail or phone; call them when possible. People like the personal touch.



# Advertising/Communication

## ➤ Media Screen:

- ✓ Make more use of the media screen in the sanctuary.
- ✓ Reinforce important items in the Marker/Bulletin by showing them on media screen before Worship Service.
- ✓ Advertise upcoming events.
- ✓ There are Methodist organizations that people don't know about, why not use it to let people know they are out there? For example, there are graphics and a YouTube video already available for UMC Marketplace, all we have to do is utilize them.



# Advertising/Communication

- Quarterly Gathering:
- Have a quarterly breakfast (on the 5th Sunday of January, April, July, and October) that replaces Sunday School on that Sunday. For example:
  - ✓ Have an activity/lesson sponsored by two or three committees who will use the opportunity to announce their upcoming projects.
  - ✓ The lesson could be planned jointly with the folks who typically work with the kids in order to provide children's activities so the parents could be free to participate in the activity.
  - ✓ Promotes fellowship, communication, idea gathering, inter-generational sharing, congregational bonding, and a more relaxed atmosphere for guests who are looking for a church body to be a part of.



# Partnering

- Reach out to our neighboring churches to conduct joint events as we did in the past with Hampton Christian and the Episcopal Church
- Partner with other churches for certain things like the Easter Tomb, Vacation Bible School, maybe even some outreach events.
- We've had help with USDA, we certainly could increase our outreach with additional arms.
- Partner with a local school like John Tyler to provide tutoring, reading to kids, etc. in a Big Brother-Big Sister outreach



# Facilities

- Need to invest in repair to make facilities more attractive to members.
- The ceilings in the hallway and several classrooms have been damaged due to the roof leaking and need to be repaired.
- The physical state of these areas sends the message that if they don't care about their facilities how are they going to take care of my family's spiritual needs.
- If the environment is not safe/healthy, people will not will not stay or come back.



# Where Do We Go From Here?

- Priority Actions To Take Now
  - ✓ Request Staff/Pastor-Parrish Relations Committee fill the position of Hospitality Coordinator. We need a staff person to provide leadership for our new ministries and act as the glue that holds it together
- Actions For The Next Few Months
  - ✓ Start Hospitality Ministry
  - ✓ Start New Bible Study
  - ✓ Implement Small Groups
  - ✓ Develop Alternative Sunday School (6 week studies)
  - ✓ Develop New Bulletin
  - ✓ Develop New Newsletter
  - ✓ Assign a Communications Chairperson





# Long Term Goals?

- What Can We Do In the Next Year
  - ✓ Offer a Spiritual Gift Inventory/Talent/Interest Survey
  - ✓ Monthly Dinner/Movie
  - ✓ Athletic Events at Church
  - ✓ Electronic Giving
  - ✓ Endowment/Finance Workshops
  - ✓ Special Subject Workshops
  - ✓ Start Using UMCmarket
  
- What Can We Do In the Next 3 Years
  - ✓ Shower Ministry
  - ✓ Weekly “Need-A-Meal” Program
  - ✓ Theology On Tap Lectures
  - ✓ Get Connected Ministry
  - ✓ Quarterly Concerts
  
- What Can We Do In the Next 5 Years
  - ✓ Alternative Contemporary Worship Service

Failure Is Not The Worst Outcome, Mediocrity Is  
Dharmesh Shah – Founder of HubSpot

# The Choice Is Ours To Make



**Plant, Water, Grow... or do nothing!**

