

Strategic Plan – Our GPS

Dear Friends and Colleagues in Ministry,

A few years ago I bought my first GPS car navigation unit. Actually, I bought it as a Christmas gift for my wife Suzanne. She seems to naturally have a good sense of direction. However, I thought this device would enhance her directional skills even more - it did. And now, she seems to always know where she is going.

As you may know the initials GPS stand for Global Positioning System. This navigational system relies on a network of 24 satellites that constantly orbit the earth, triangulating data to precisely calculate the user's location and provide directional information related to a destination. While other information may be obtained by the user, the most important piece of information the user wants from his or her GPS is how to get to where they want to go.

I see a parallel purpose between the GPS and an organization's strategic plan. While the former is technology based and the latter is people oriented, both are focused on giving directions for future outcomes. The following strategic plan was developed by our district Leadership and Visioning Team. You may want to think of it as the GPS for our district. It is intended to provide directional information for the mission and ministries of the CAS district for the next two years.

STRATEGIC PLAN Capitol Area South District - West Ohio Conference 2010 – 2012

REALITY ANALYSIS

The Capitol Area South District (CAS) consists of many different kinds of churches: urban, rural, inner-city, small town, big, small, ethnically diverse, conservative, liberal, and more. There are 125 Local Churches in CAS served by 82 Elders, 15 Local Pastors, 13 Retired Elders, and 11 other pastors of varied credentials. At the present time, 12 of these pastors are ethnic minority persons: seven (7) of which are serving in cross-racial appointments. There are four (4) African-American congregations in the CAS district.

The geography of the district covers all of Licking, Madison and Pickaway Counties; all of Franklin County south of Main Street or west of US 33; Fairfield County north and west of US 23, Delmont Road SW, County Road 33, 55, Mill Road SW, State Route 793, Stump Hollow Road SE, State Route 37, Schwilk Road NE, County Road 35, George Road NE, Valley View Road NE, State Route 188, State Route 256, County Road 82, 1.

Based on year-end church statistics for 2008, the total average worship attendance in the CAS district was 16,773 spread across the 125 local churches. This is a -2.4% change from the year 2000. The smallest number in attendance was 10 and the largest 2,281. An analysis shows that 81 (65%) churches had an attendance of less than 100, while 30 (24%) churches reported an attendance in the 100–250 range. There were 6 (5%) churches in the 250-400 range, and 8 (6%) reported attendance of greater than 400. This latter range shows the largest average attendance in the district, with a count of 6,360 attendees.

Acts 2 criteria are significant measures of a congregation's health and missional effectiveness. There are six criteria (1-6) on which a congregation is assessed, 1 is the lowest and 6 is the highest. A congregation that achieves all six criteria is rated as being a full Acts 2 congregation. The CAS district reported 14 full Acts 2 congregations at the 2008 Annual Conference. This number increased to 18 churches in 2009.

Opportunities and strengths of the CAS District are its geographical and cultural diversity, number of growing churches (52 or 42%), connection to metropolitan Columbus, and potential for reaching Latino/Hispanic and other expanding ethnic/racial communities within our boundaries.

Weaknesses include congregations struggling to maintain old buildings and outdated facilities that no longer meet their missional needs, with operational budgets that reflect financial instability. In some situations, there is a strong inward focus on nurturing the congregation while not reaching out and paying attention to the missional needs of their communities. Resistance to change is an obvious weakness. There may also be resistance to partnering with other congregations for ministry development and growth.

VISION: All local churches are disciple-making centers that mirror the demographic composition of the community in which they are located in terms of age, ethnicity, and cultural background; and that the congregations continually grow and reach new people for Christ and strive to be open and inclusive of all God's children.

MISSION: Provide high quality leadership development and training opportunities for lay and clergy, and develop and implement strategies that are aligned with the general church's Four Areas of Focus initiative.

VALUES: Ministry partnerships, missional outreach by local churches, community involvement, team work, constructive interpersonal communication, collaborative problem-solving, healthy conflict-management, change initiated in a grace-filled Christian manner, and modeling of these values throughout the district.

ORGANIZATION: Organize the work of the Leadership and Visioning Team (LVT) to address the Four Areas of Focus of the United Methodist Church. A focus team is assigned to each area: Developing Principled Christian Leaders for the Church and World; New Places for New people and Renewing Existing Congregations; Engaging in Ministry with the Poor; and Stamping out Killer Diseases of Poverty by Improving Health Stability. Each team reports monthly to the parent body (LVT) concerning its work and progress. The LVT makes decisions about strategies and goal-setting, and develops action plans for achieving desired outcomes.

GOALS: DEVELOPING PRINCIPLED CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

- Provide coaching and mentoring training for both clergy and laity
- Encourage and teach pastors and laity about the significance of ministry partnerships, and foster implementation of said partnerships
- Develop a “Re-think Church” training team to be deployed for training with smaller churches that are in decline or dying
- Work with pastors serving LVT Churches of Special Focus to provide needed resources
- Provide training opportunities for S/PRCs and other administrative committees
- Hold a district-wide training and development event for all Lay Leaders, to be facilitated by the WOC Co-Leaders
- Join with Capitol Area North District in offering one major training event for lay and clergy
- Provide asset mapping seminar
- Offer leadership training for local church work areas and committees
- Promote established training events, e.g., Nehemiah and Lay Ministry Academy
- Explore possibility of sponsoring evangelism seminar (Nancy Grace Reese: “Unbinding the Gospel”)

NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE AND RENEWING EXISTING CONGREGATIONS

- Identify two potential Multi-Site (extension) churches for new worshipping congregations
- Identify two Parent-Child (mother-daughter) churches for new worshipping congregations
- Establish a Hispanic/Latino outreach ministry
- Develop and establish a community mission outpost
- Identify one local church in the following demographic areas for special focus and resourcing by the district: County-seat, Ethnic Congregation, Rural, Suburban, Urban
- Provide at least two training opportunities for local churches to catch the spirit of missional outreach and revitalization
- Provide consultation and assistance to local churches that are ranked 4 and 5 on the Acts 2 criteria, with the intent of achieving all 6 criteria
- Work with all local churches to promote 100% apportionment giving
- Provide skill-building training to congregations for individual and group evangelism for ministry and community outreach

ENGAGING IN MINISTRY WITH THE POOR: To equip the district congregations with resources and opportunities to engage in ministries with the poor

- Become familiar with the outreach ministries in the Capitol Area South Districts gleaned descriptive information about each one through published resource materials, i.e.UM Community Ministries Materials, County agency resource materials, Metro ministries information.
- Make information about outreach ministries including speakers and contact information available to area congregations via the CAS website
- Develop relationships with outreach ministries with the specific goal to assess needs of each ministry and invite congregations/people to help supply these needs via. This information will be placed on the CAS website
- Encourage congregations to partner with other congregations/agencies to meet needs
- Put a link on the CAS website to Metro Ministries and UM Community Ministries

STAMPING OUT KILLER DISEASES OF POVERTY BY IMPROVING HEALTH GLOBALLY

- Increase the number of churches that contribute to the global AIDS fund
- Engage parish nurses as champions; host an event to recognize their work to help inform congregations
- Reach 25 percent of United Methodist Youth with “Nothing But Nets” message
- Increase awareness of the problem and those working to forge solutions through submission of 2 or 3 newsletter articles throughout the year

STRATEGIC EMPHASES of the West Ohio Conference 2005-2010

Leadership Excellence

New Venues for Ministry

Strengthening Existing Churches

Mission Partnerships

Financial Resources Development

Missional Alignment

Ministry plans/strategies will be developed and implemented to address the above six West Ohio Conference Strategic Emphases, as appropriate and pertinent to the contextual needs of local churches and their communities.

- Give support and guidance as may be needed to work teams focused on these strategic emphases
- Provide resources and leadership as requested and needed

STRATEGIES: Continue to work in focus teams addressing the above goals. As may be necessary, expand the teams beyond members of LVT to implement work and accomplish goals. All work-groups and teams report progress to the parent body on a regular basis. An evaluation of progress will be made January 2011. Make necessary adjustments and/or changes for goal achievement at this time. A final report on goal achievement is to be made December 2012.

UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY MINISTRIES OF THE CAPITOL AREA DISTRICTS

The purpose and objective of this district mission society is to assist congregations in doing ministry in their communities. Local outreach and capital improvement grants are provided to churches and other organizations to help them reach beyond their walls to care for people who are affected by poverty and/or marginalized by society. Skill-building workshops and other educational tools are also provided for congregations and persons, so they may learn how to become more involved in community ministries and mission.

The Leadership and Visioning Team (LVT) shall maintain a liaison relationship with this mission focused corporation, of which the District Superintendent is a Steward along with one pastor and two laypersons from each United Methodist Charge in the two Capitol Area Districts. There are 40 Trustees of the corporation: 18 from each district, 18 shall be elected by the Stewards, 2 shall be the District Superintendent, and 2 shall be chairpersons from each district Council on Ministries or comparable group.

The District Superintendent may consult with the LVT about potential nominees for these positions, and invite feedback and input on effective performance of this mission unit. When appropriate and as the need may arise, the Director of United Methodist Community Ministries will be consulted and/or invited to attend LVT meetings.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS: Going forward, an analysis of the situation in the District related to implementation of goals and performance of mission and visioning for the future will be undertaken by the LVT. The demographic environment, cultural situation, and/or missional needs may shift. If it is determined that a new strategic plan would be helpful or an updating of the current plan is needed, the LVT is the District body responsible for this work.

**Leadership and Visioning Team
Approved 11/17/09**

I invite you and all who share our faith community in the CAS district to be guided by this strategic plan. Focus your energy outward and not inward on yourselves. Reach-out in mission and ministry to the least and lost in your communities. Know that you have my prayers and unwavering support. And may the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and always.

*Sincerely in Christ,
Hank Stringer*