

# 30 for 30 Visioning Team Report



First United Methodist Church  
Opelika, AL  
Presented July 21, 2015

Preface	3
Vision and Mission Statement	4
Outline of Recommendations	5
Full Report	7
30 for 30 Team Organization & Meetings	7
Recommendations	10
Organizational Recommendations	15
Ministries Chart	15
Ministries Chart with Support Mechanisms	16
Ministry Team Organizational Chart	17
Members of 30 for 30 Visioning Team	18

## Preface

During the summer and fall of 2014, a new ministry for First United Methodist Church in Opelika, AL (FUMC) was being discussed by the Board of Stewards. In the course of the discussion, a member of the Board asked if the ministry idea conformed to the vision of the church. It was quickly realized and noted that there was no vision statement for the congregation. There were also ongoing discussions happening among various leaders in the church about moving our congregation from a “membership-model” to a “discipleship-model” of church life which would require a strong vision for ministry.<sup>1</sup>

On February 17, 2015, a group of individuals representing the depth and breadth of the congregation of FUMC met to create a vision for ministry for the entire congregation. For four months this group met both as a whole and in smaller groups to discern not only a vision statement for FUMC, but to see if there were any immediate recommendations for growth that would assist the congregation in fulfilling both its vision for the future as well as its day to day mission to the community.

The following document is the final report from this committee. The report contains the new vision statement for the church. This vision will guide all areas of ministry as each area grows and discerns how to better conform to the image of Christ in the world. It can be used as a benchmark and as well as a tool for determining if a ministry is moving in the right direction.

This report contains a chart of immediate recommendations for change/growth that came out of the discussions of the various small groups formed out of the overall 30 for 30 group. Some of these recommendations reflect findings from the church-wide study that took place during the Season of Lent 2015. Other reflections grew out of prayerful discernment and movings of the Holy Spirit within meetings of the 30 for 30 Team.

The full report contains notes from the team meetings that are pertinent to how this group of individuals created the vision and recommendations. This part of the document can be used as a tool to help the congregation move in the direction of completing the recommendations as well as a tool of accountability to make sure that the congregation stays true to this vision in all areas of ministry.

Finally, there are charts at the end of the report to help visualize the organizational structures required to embrace this vision and a better discipleship model for ministry.

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<sup>1</sup> These models come from: Michael W. Foss, *Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2000.

## **Vision and Mission Statement**

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### *Vision Statement*

The vision of First United Methodist Church in Opelika, AL is to transform passive attenders to active disciples of Jesus Christ with an emphasis on continued growth in their relationship with Jesus Christ through weekly worship, daily discipleship opportunities (prayer, Bible reading and study), service in and beyond the church, spiritual friendships, and giving of time, talents, and resources.

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### *Mission Statement*

The mission of FUMC is to WIN people to Jesus Christ, GROW people into a deeper love for Christ, and DEVELOP people into a greater love for their neighbor.

## Outline of Recommendations

Recommendation	Timeline	Notes
<p><i>Communication</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update website</li> <li>• Increase social media presence</li> <li>• Update print media</li> <li>• Improve communication among congregants</li> </ul>	3-6 months	
<p><i>Worship</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared testimonies in services</li> <li>• Greeter/Usher training and encouragement</li> <li>• Silent time for prayer</li> <li>• More intentionality in process to achieve excellence</li> <li>• Prayer at the altar rail (call to faith, recommitment, invitation, specific prayers)</li> </ul>	3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin with Philippines trip</li> <li>• Expand and re-organize</li> <li>• Most of the recommendations will be completed with staff worship team (pastors and program directors), but accountability is held by congregation</li> </ul>
<p><i>Evangelism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revival</li> <li>• Preface revival with small group study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10/25-10/27/15</li> <li>• 8/19/15 (beginning of Wednesday Connection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being planned and coordinated at this time</li> </ul>
<p><i>Missions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase spending to 10% of general budget</li> <li>• Continue international missions</li> <li>• Continue youth missions</li> <li>• Find more local/US based opportunities</li> <li>• Partner with local Christ-centered ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase 1%/year until goal is reached</li> <li>• currently active</li> <li>• currently active</li> <li>• currently active</li> <li>• currently active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to communicate better those opportunities already existing</li> <li>• Add to mission statement of Mission Team</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Timeline	Notes
<p><i>Teaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase use of Right Now Media</li> <li>• Develop new teachers and offerings</li> <li>• Encourage even more small group participation</li> <li>• Provide lay-led accountability and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• currently active</li> <li>• 6 months</li> <li>• 6 months</li> <li>• 6 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communicate availability to the congregation on a regular basis</li> </ul>

# Full Report

## 30 for 30 Team Organization & Meetings

### *First Meeting and Presentation by Rev. Ron Ball*

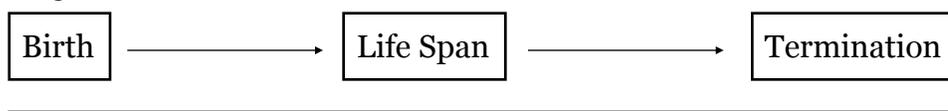
The 30 for 30 Visioning Team was first convened on February 17, 2015 to begin the process of creating a vision statement as well as recommendations for continual growth of the people of First United Methodist Church in Opelika, AL (FUMC). At the first meeting, Rev. Ron Ball presented on the ideas needed to foster growth and change in an organization. His presentation included the following ideas:

#### Essentials for Fruitfulness

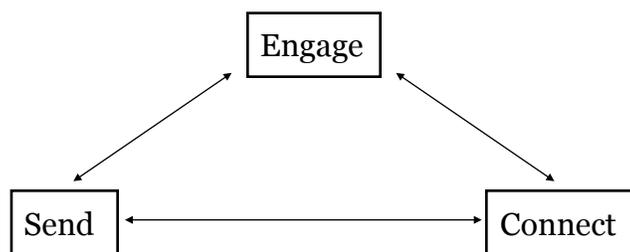
- Unity of leadership
- Risk becoming incarnation leaders - connect with others and leave comfort zone
- Expect the miraculous
- Alignment of church under governing system
- Synchronization of ALL our actions - no silos or kingdoms
- Timing: choosing our priorities prayerfully
- Know what to continue and what to discontinue

#### Models for Doing Church Life

##### *Program Model*



##### *System Model*

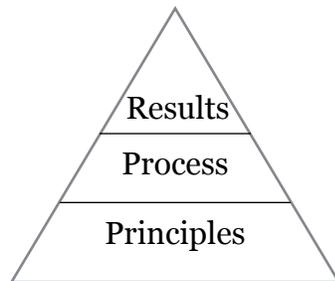
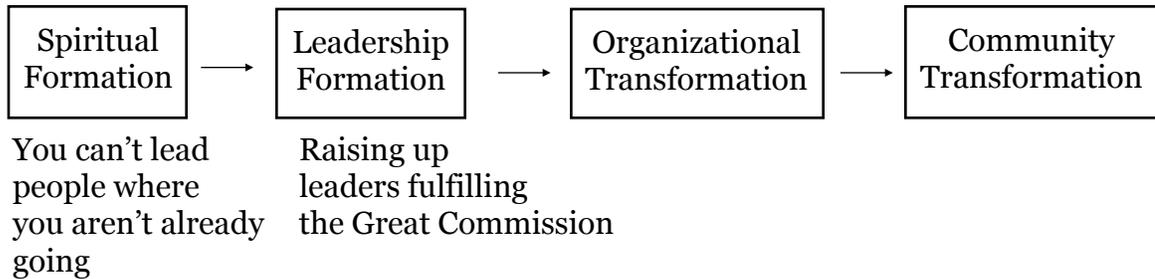


#### Developing Visions

*Generative visions that are good and sustainable have the following qualities:*

- Success is based on momentum, innovations, multiplication
- Spiritual leaders helping others become spiritual leaders
- Able to overcome adaptive challenges
- Fruitful

### *Measuring Success*



### Characteristics of Healthy and Unhealthy Teams

#### *5 Dysfunctions of a Team:*

- Absence of Trust
- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Commitment
- Lack of Standards
- Lack of or Poor Results

#### *Healthy Teams:*



*Disciple-making requires understanding the values and vision that undergirds each ministry and task.*

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## *Visioning and Creating Recommendations*

In preparation for the rest of our process, the Visioning Team was asked to evaluate the 20/20 Vision Task Report (September 1, 2007) to see what goals were accomplished, what goals needed continued improvement, and what needed to be discontinued. The team also read the book *Power Surge* by Michael Foss to get a better understanding of what it means to change a membership-model congregation into a discipleship-model congregation.<sup>2</sup>

At the next two meetings the team reviewed both the 20/20 Vision Task Report as well as the recommendations from the church-wide study conducted during February and March of 2015 using *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Bishop Robert Schnase.<sup>3</sup> Common themes from these discussion emerged:

- struggles with the most effective way to communicate information within and outside the congregation
- needs for improved signage and visitor information as well as dissemination of visitor information
- ideas to strengthen our collective interaction in Sunday School
- how to continue to capitalize on the talent that our congregation holds to lead small group studies without compromising our Sunday School programs
- a need to continue to focus on Christ and commitment to Christ as our centering focus rather than membership numbers.

These discussions also led to the establishment of four smaller teams to create more focused planning and ideas. Dr. Shannon Cason recommended the scope of the groups based on the focus of the early church found in the New Testament of the Bible. These groups were:

- Worship
- Teaching
- Spreading the Word (Evangelism)
- Meeting Needs (Missions)

Each member of the Visioning Team participated in one of these small groups and met at least once before the next convened meeting. The following three meetings included the presentation of ideas for each small group, discussion of the ideas from the larger group, and recommendations for implementation. It became evident that the Holy Spirit was present for all these small group meetings as similar ideas from each group were presented that undergirded or echoed those of the other groups.

The final meeting of the 30 for 30 Visioning Team was conducted on June 21, 2015 with representatives from each of the small groups to finalize recommendations to the Board of Stewards and give an actual timeline for the completion of those recommendations. The following pages include the final division of recommendations with notes based on the larger group discussion as well as recommended organizational charts for ministry at FUMC.

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<sup>2</sup> Foss, *Power Surge*.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Schnase, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.

## Recommendations

“Lord, we believe that you can do awesome things here at FUMC. Help our unbelief so that we can perform your will”

The following recommendations were developed by the 30 for 30 Visioning Team to help fulfill both the vision and mission statements of FUMC. These are a compilation of those areas identified by the various small groups as most important. Some groups gave background information behind their recommendations, and that information is included. Some recommendations crossed over from one group to another. Because all the groups identified a need for better communication, that section of recommendations was added. Many of these recommendations can be completed within a year of approval. The discussions around these recommendations led to the formation of the church’s vision statement (p. 3), and they can be used as an accountability tool by each ministry area at FUMC.

### *Worship*

The small group that focused on worship was intentional in making sure that any recommendations made could be carried out by all worship services regardless of location or style. When the recommendation was location specific, it is labeled as such. The majority of these recommendations will be carried out by those directly in the planning and execution of worship - pastors, musicians, ministry directors, but it was recommended that the Worship Committee be an accountability mechanism for the staff leading worship. This would require a refocusing of the current committee from a “behind-the-scenes” group for the Sanctuary services to a more dynamic group supporting all services and providing constructive feedback and recommendations to the worship staff. All these recommendations should be completed within three months of approval.

#### *Vision and Values for Worship at FUMC*

We believe that the vision for all our worship services is to present an excellent and authentic offering to God that is Spirit-led and draws and welcomes all to Christ in order to transform souls, recharge spirits, and prepare to send believers into the world.

Because of this vision, we believe that our worship services should:

- Be a time when individuals experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit without distractions
- Be experiential, passionate, and participatory - not just engaging the mind, but the heart as well; linking our emotions to our faith. Fearless singing and corporate proclamations of faith should be two of the primary sounds in the service.
- Reflect our faith in God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as revealed by scripture and tradition
- Center on God and God alone

- Be anchored on the Bible as God's authoritative Word as well as be an anchor for believers to be in community with other believers; to connect with one another and to God through acts of greeting, proclamation of statements of faith and prayer, and responses to the hearing of the Word read and preached. Without the anchor of community, our faith can become stale and we can easily be swayed by the world around us.
- Be a safe sanctuary for souls to refuel each week. We should be a welcoming place for messy people to come, find support, and walk the journey of faith in Christ with other messy people.
- Equip and empower us for service through preaching and testimonies from fellow believers serving in the community and the world
- Be intentional and well planned while allowing the Holy Spirit to move freely in hearts and elicit unplanned responses (i.e. extra prayer time, changing of the final hymn/song during worship, not being limited to one hour of worship)
- Embrace the great traditions of the Church universal and the United Methodist denomination while also looking forward to new ideas, rites, and music grounded in Scripture and faith

#### *Recommendations for Worship Based on Vision and Values*

- More intentional weekly planning by the participants; not just in the preparation of the order of service each week, but also a quick meeting before worship on Sundays to make sure everyone is prepared for their role (knows announcements, any changes to normal order of service, who will be at what microphone and when). Distractions from poorly rehearsed musical offerings or sermon to a poorly or non-functioning microphone take away from the excellency of our worship.
- Include shared testimonies in worship - Invite and encourage laity to share their personal testimony in worship services and church gatherings. These testimonies will occur quarterly, and a rotational calendar with representation from all the varied ministries will be created. The same testimony will be given in all services. A long-term goal of this recommendation is to make videos of these testimonies and include them on the website.
- Expand and re-organize training for greeters and ushers to encourage them and help them with tasks such as greeting during the Sunday School hour, guiding visitors to various locations throughout the church, movement throughout worship services, etc.
- Create intentional silent prayer time during the worship service.
- Create a regular time of prayer at the altar rail whether it be a call to faith, a call to recommitment of faith, an invitation to membership, or for specific prayers.
- Request the Trustees Committee to consider feasibility of an expanded vestibule/narthex area at the main entrance to the Sanctuary for greeting visitors when they arrive for worship in that particular space.
- Specifically for worship services in the Sanctuary and any that might occur in the Fellowship Hall: move to acquire better sound equipment as well as training for and expansion of our current sound team

- For all services: commitment to intentionality and excellence in the operation of sound in worship
- A preparation time for the congregation at the beginning of the service when they are invited to turn their hearts from the distractions of the world to meet God in worship
- Intentionality and Spirit-led preparation of corporate prayers (even those done extemporaneously require prior commitment to an active personal prayer life)

### *Spreading the Word (Evangelism)*

“We need to Inreach before we Outreach.”

Recommendations from this small group carried into other areas such as Communications and Worship.

- Create a network of mentoring and support to foster spiritual growth in all involve with the ministries at FUMC. This includes building one another up spiritually through one-on-one discipleship and mentoring (older Christians in relationship with younger Christians) and directing all guests and members into small groups.
- Conduct a church-wide/community-wide revival lead by our congregation. Current dates proposed are October 25-27, 2015 beginning at 6:30 each evening. A church-wide study would be offered to prepare the congregation for the event. There is currently a team working on specifics related to the event.
- Foster a spirit of accountability in which we all expect involvement of each other in the life of the church (not just at worship services, but throughout multiple areas of ministry)
- Creating a Visitor’s Center (possibly in the Fellowship Hall) staffed with church members and furnished with printed media to guide visitor’s to various ministries and locations throughout FUMC.

### *Meeting Needs (Missions)*

FUMC is already a missional congregation with opportunities to expand her reach in Opelika and throughout the world. Most of the goals for this ministry area are currently active, but could be communicated better to the congregation and the community.

- Increase ministry spending to 10% of the entire General Fund budget. Currently, missions spending is between six and seven percent. The recommendation is for spending to be increased by 1% each year until 10% is reached.
- Continue offering short-term international mission trips
- Continue offering mission opportunities for children, youth, and college-aged individuals
- Continue to participate in and expand participation in local/US based mission opportunities (Backpack Program, Prison Ministry, Congregational Care). The congregation is currently active a multiple local missions, but there is a need to communicate these mission opportunities better and regularly to the

congregation. It is also recommended that missions team consider looking at opportunities like the Appalachian Service Project or inner city mission projects in Atlanta.

- Partner with area churches and organizations that are Christ-centered that meet needs in the community
- Limit giving to outside organizations to only those organizations that are Christ-centered. This will be written into the mission statement of this ministry area.

### *Teaching*

FUMC has a strong teaching foundation built upon Sunday School offerings and Wednesday Connection classes. The goal of these recommendations is to build on this foundation and enhance the experience and spiritual growth outcomes across all age groups and facets of education with a focus on continuity. Because the congregation is transforming to a growth model, educational offerings must be positioned to support changes in the church demographic (e.g. age, spiritual needs, and requirements, etc.). These recommendations support the practical outcomes of:

- Administrative accountability (preferably lay-led)
- Succession planning for current and future teachers
- Consistent delivery of Christian education,
- Meeting the education needs of ALL church members and guests.

Before making recommendations, the strengths and weaknesses of our current system were evaluated.

#### *Strengths*

- Strong teachers
- Church-wide series
- Wednesday Night Connection
- Diversity in ratio of classes to age groups
- Teaching (Summer joint classes, Celebrate Sundays)

#### *Weaknesses*

- Space and teaching facilities
- Depth of teaching
- No administrative responsibilities nor accountability for teaching
- No planning to support plan to transform teaching with planned growth

#### *Recommendations to Strengthen and Expand Teaching Ministry*

- Create a supervisory role with overall responsibility and accountability who can develop a plan to grow the pool of teachers with the tools and methods required. This Small Group Coordinator would be a lay position and granted power from the Board of Stewards to coordinate all church sponsored teaching programs and efforts.
- Develop new teachers and offerings. New teachers can be trained alongside current teachers to alleviate teaching responsibility throughout the year as well as succeed current teachers when they feel called away from teaching responsibility. With the expansion of small groups on Wednesday evenings and

throughout the week, teachers and offerings need to be expanded to provide for the entire community.

- Based on the teaching and educational demands of the church members, a pool containing an adequate number of teachers or “teachers-in-training” must be sourced and developed to ensure a consistent church-sponsored educational experience is made available that can support the long-term needs and growth requirements. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the following be done:
  - Identify candidates – source from those interested or qualified
  - Maintain directory – regular or substitute capability
  - Teacher training – develop quarterly or biannual training plan
  - Classroom modernization – update facilities and teaching utilities as budget allows and newly identified Small Group Coordinator supports
- Encourage small group participation for all those who are members/regular attenders.
- Increase the use of Right Now Media as a tool for small group studies. This is a service already utilized by some in the congregation, but could be easily expanded through better and regular communication that the resource exists for all congregation members to use both on the church grounds as well as in groups meeting off-site.

### *Communication*

Recognizing that we have a tremendous deficit in congregational communication despite current efforts to keep everyone informed, it is recommended that the following actions be implemented:

- Investigate ways to update and maintain communication within and outside the congregation through the use of a communications service or addition to the staff
- Update website in form as well as content, regularly updating ministry information
- Have a better social media presence
- Update print media - church brochure, Sunday School information
- Update and investigate the best ways to communicate among the church community - web and print-based communications
- Better communicate to the congregation and the community what mission opportunities we already offer
- Use video of sermons and lay testimonies posted on the church website and throughout social media
- Better signage throughout the church and a visitor’s center to provide visitors with information on Sunday mornings

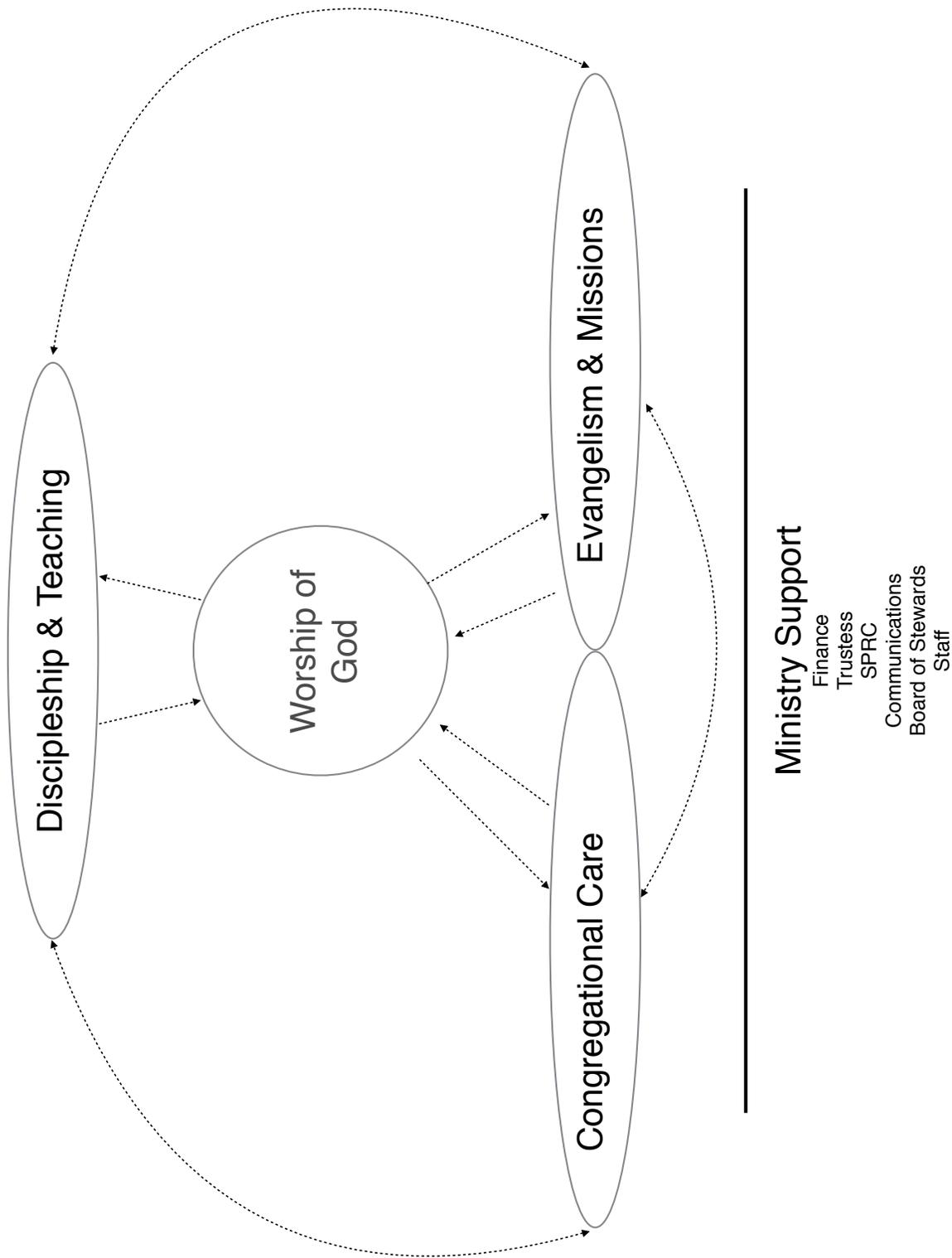
These recommendations should be accomplished with three to six months from approval.

# Organizational Recommendations

## Ministries Chart



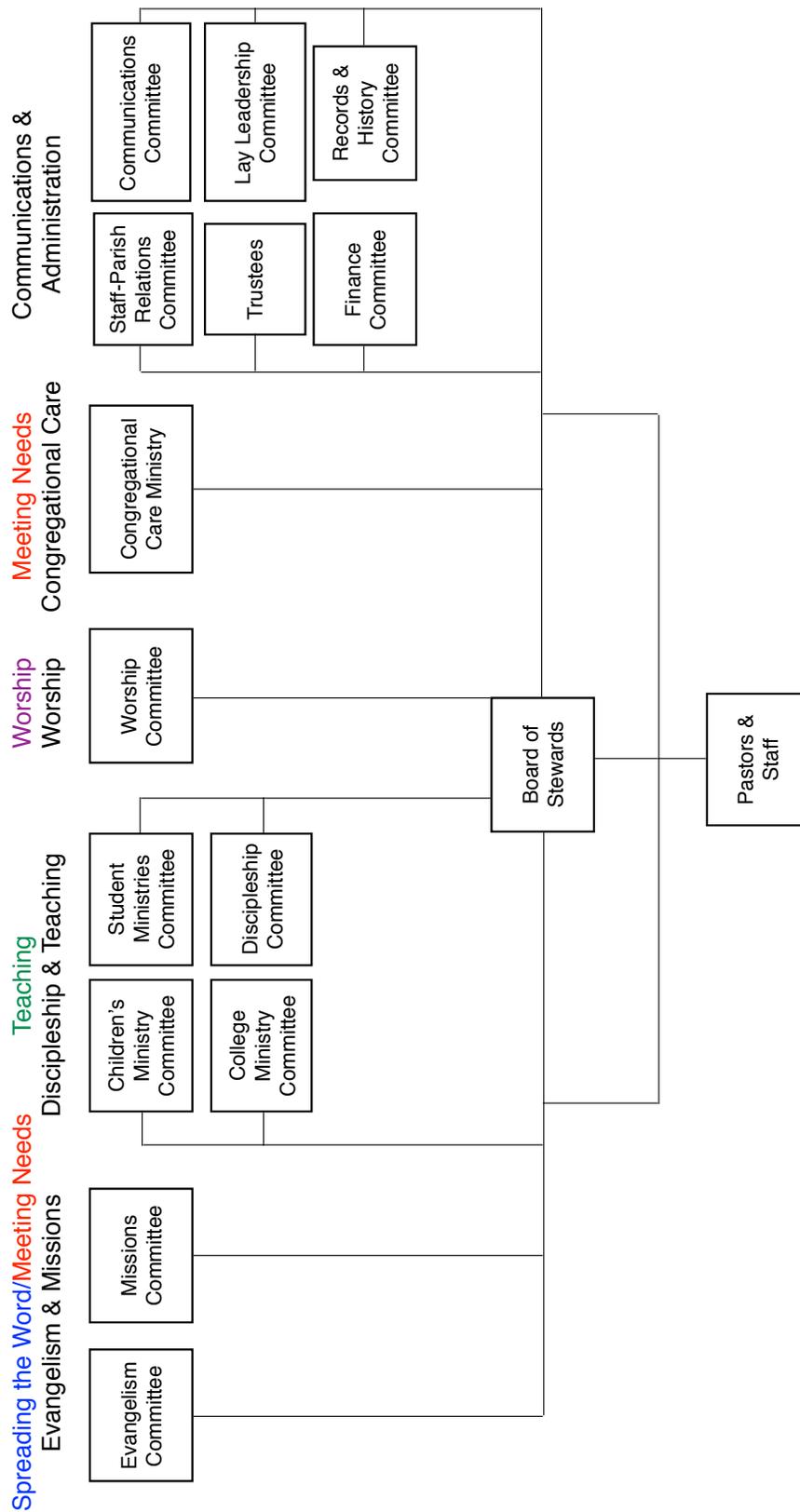
# Ministries Chart with Support Mechanisms



## Ministry Support

- Finance
- Trustess
- SPRC
- Communications
- Board of Stewards
- Staff

# Ministry Team Organizational Chart



## **Members of 30 for 30 Visioning Team**

Clay Harper, Chairman  
Rhonda Boothe  
Karen Bush  
Eric Canada  
Frances Capps-Palmer  
Shannon Cason  
Bert Harris  
Becky Hilyer  
Jeff Hilyer  
Andy Jordan  
Scott Kaak, Executive Pastor  
Terri Knight  
Rick Lane, Associate Pastor, Student Ministries  
Kate Larkin  
Don Lawrence, Facilities Supervisor  
Dan McKeever  
Leslie Melton  
Mary Virginia Norris, Director of Music Ministries  
Wallace J. Paschal  
Jerry Perkins  
Paula Plan  
Julene Pugh  
Philip Rowton  
Ellen Royal  
Nell Samford  
Drew Speakman, Director of Children's Ministries  
Lee Stutts  
Crawford Tatum  
Sara Jane Tatum  
John Vedder, Director of College Ministries  
Chuck Wacker  
Hayley Welsh  
Ann Whittelsey  
Randy Woodham, Senior Pastor  
Matt York  
Becky Young