

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS
OF
ST. ANDREW UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

West Lafayette, Indiana

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Church Consultant/Coach
in consultation with the St. Andrew Visioning Team:

Congregational Draft – January, 2009

This study is a starting place to help us together as a congregation to discern what God is calling us to be and do in the years ahead (our “future story”). This is a “draft” or “living document” because it is still open to change, correction and refinement as the process of discernment unfolds.

A consultant/coach is an “interested outsider” and can thus be helpful in asking the right questions. However, it is ultimately the congregation and our leadership that must embrace the analysis, correctly discern God’s desires for this congregation, and take responsibility for the various recommendations and actions that will grow out of the process.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.”

Introduction

December, 2008

St. Andrew United Methodist Church has considerable strength and stability. Our leadership believes that the time is right to undertake a process of self-examination and discernment that will help St. Andrew's build on its strengths and move into the future with renewed purpose and vision.

To assist in this, Dr. Richard L. Hamm has been enlisted to lead us in such a process, which will follow five basic steps:

- 1) The development of a "contextual analysis" that will help us understand who we are as a congregation and the community in which we are located.
- 2) A time of discernment in which the entire congregation will be invited to join in a program of prayerful dialogue about what God is calling us to become.
- 3) The development and affirmation of a "future story" coming out of the time of dialogue and discernment.
- 4) The development and affirmation of a strategic plan designed to help the congregation implement the "future story" which we have discerned and affirmed.
- 5) A period of coaching by Dr. Hamm, to help us stay on course and remain accountable to the "future story".

The Vision Team and Dr. Hamm together gathered information about our history and our community and that has been drawn together into this "contextual analysis" document. The Vision Team believes this is a reasonably accurate account of where we stand today and how we got here. This document may still be altered as relevant information is developed or discovered.

Once any needed amendments are made and the congregation affirms the "contextual analysis" as reasonably accurate, we will move to the second step: a time of discernment in which the entire congregation will be invited to participate. This step will involve the formation of "Prayer Triads": groups of three members each that will be asked to meet 10 times (at the three members' convenience) for 90-100 minutes each time over the course of 120 days. These "triads" will be provided an agenda for each of their ten sessions and the insights and discernments discovered in these small groups of three will be gathered by the Vision Team for use in the next step. It is hoped that half or more of the congregation will choose to participate in these "Prayer Triads."

Once the triads have completed their 120 days of prayer, dialogue and discernment, we will move to the third step: the writing of a "future story" that reflects what was discerned in the Prayer Triads. This work will be done by the Vision Team and brought back to the congregation for critique and affirmation.

After the "Future Story" is approved by the congregation, the Vision Team will lead in the development of a strategic plan to assist in implementation of the Vision. The congregation will be involved in the development of this plan and it will ultimately require the affirmation of the congregation.

Finally, Dr. Hamm will remain in contact with us for at least six months to assist our staff and lay leaders in starting the process for realizing the plan.

The Vision Team is pleased to bring the following "contextual analysis" for the congregation's consideration and critique. Comments and corrections are encouraged.

General Background

(Historical notes unique to St. Andrew United Methodist are taken from the compilation by Debbie Honsowetz in 2007.)

In 1946, the Evangelical denomination and the United Brethren denomination, both with roots among German American pioneers, merged to form the Evangelical United Brethren. The newly formed denomination decided to start a new congregation in the Northern Indiana District and decided upon West Lafayette, partly because of the significant number of EUB students at Purdue.

On Sunday evening, October 24, 1956, the first worship service of the West Lafayette Mission Church was held in a house that had been purchased for a parsonage, led by founding pastor Dr. James Sutherland. Thirty-five persons were present. On November 7, the first regular Sunday morning worship service was held with some 85 present. The services were moved to the Junior High School building at Fowler and Vine, then to the Student Center 206 Russell St., then to the basement of a new parsonage at 322 Meridian (1955). On November 3, 1957 the first worship service was held in the newly completed sanctuary and it was dedicated December 8. By 1960, the congregation had 105 members (some of whom had been commissioned from the Grace EUB congregation), 134 average worship attendance, 78 average in Sunday School.

Rev. Garth Shepherd became pastor in June, 1961. In October, 1963, a second building unit was dedicated. In 1965, Rev. James Nutt became sole pastor of St. Andrew, followed by Rev. Carl Lemna in 1966.

In 1968, the EUB denomination and the Methodist Episcopal Church united to form the United Methodist Church. In 1969, Epworth Heights Methodist was a new congregation served by pastor Phil Klinger. They met at the Soller Baker Funeral Home and sometimes had to share the worship space with a casket. Epworth Heights merged with St. Andrew and Rev. Klinger and Rev. Lemna served as co-pastors for a year, when Rev. Lemna became the sole pastor. By 1970, the combined church had a membership of 351 persons.

Rev. Hilbert Berger became pastor in 1972 and Rev. Raymond Brown followed him in 1974 and Rev. Ron Liechty in 1976. That year, a vote to relocate the congregation to the north side of West Lafayette was negative. So the congregation went about refurbishing and expanding at the Meridian St. property. The Rev. Brian Witwer arrived in 1980, followed by Rev Robert Dexter in 1985 and Rev. Jacob Williams in 1988. A new educational/office building addition was dedicated in 1989. In November, 1992, an arsonist started a fire in the new building and it burned down. Fortunately, it was insured and was rebuilt.

In 1995, Rev. Tim Burchill became pastor, bringing new energy and stability to a congregation that had seen so much change since its inception in 1956. A "CrossRoads" youth and young adult ministry was established. The church grew to 400 members and beyond. A Contemporary service was added in 2000 and a third worship service was needed two years later. In 2001, Pat Sleeth was called as the CrossRoads minister.

Given the increasing need for space, the congregation voted to relocate and the present site was purchased in 2004. 1.8 million dollars was pledged in a capital campaign and 1.2 million was earned in the sale of the Meridian St. property to the Unitarian Universalist congregation. In July, 2007, after a dramatic move from the Meridian St. site to the new building, the congregation celebrated its first worship in the new building.

Church Demographics

Length of membership:

0-5 years	176 (33%)
6-10 years	104 (20%)
11-20 years	122 (23%)
21+ years	<u>129</u> (34%)
	531

This chart shows that a significant number of the members have joined in the past five years (about one-third). Another 21%, one-fifth, have been members 6-10 years. This is an indicator of congregational health, yet also means that many members have no personal experience of the church before 1998. Thus, it is important to share the recent history of St. Andrew's frequently.

Education (among 466 adults)

Education completed	St. Andrew	U.S. Average
Less than H.S.	0 <1%	20%
High School	25 5%	29%
Some College	25 5%	27%
College graduate	228 49%	16%
Post graduate	<u>188</u> 40%	9%
	466	

<u>Employment</u>	Active		Retired
Teacher (primary, secondary)	50	12%	6
Professor	44	11%	16
School Administrator	26	6%	7
Medicine/Nursing/Pharmacy	34	8%	3
Service provider	40	10%	3
Middle Management	48	12%	4
Upper Management	31	8%	5
Clerical	19	5%	2
Laborer	5	1%	2
Farmer	3	1%	1
Business owner	7	2%	0
Real Estate	4	1%	0
Homemaker	15	4%	0
<u>All retired (including those above and 32 others)</u>	81	20%	
	407		

The congregation is comprised mostly of white collar workers, middle and upper level managers and professionals, including teachers in all levels, school administrators and medical personal. This complements the extremely high level of education.

Marital Status

Of 459 adults, 369 are married and 52 are single never married, 23 are single by death of a spouse, 15 are single by divorce: totaling 90 single adults, nearly one-fifth of the adult membership.

Map and Community Demographics

The map which pinpoints the residential locations of St. Andrews members, demonstrates the following: 1) There is a large concentration of members in the neighborhoods immediately north of Purdue University; 2) There are other members scattered through Tippecanoe County and beyond, but relatively few south of SR 26; 3) The northern county public schools serve Battleground as well as the area immediately around the church, which means that Battleground (and all areas served by these schools) should be included in the areas intentionally evangelized by St. Andrew.

The Community demographics below are given for Tippecanoe County as a whole and a more narrowly defined “primary target area” which is generally described as by River Road on the east and on to Battleground; SR-26 on the south (excluding the Purdue campus per se); US-231 on the west; and the county line on the north.

Population Totals

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>
1990	28,110	130,598
2000	32,179	148,955
2008	36,349	155,808
2014 projected	39,049	160,739

Percent Change in Population

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
1990-2000	14%	14%	+13%
2000-2009	13%	5%	+8%
2009-2014	7%	3%	+5%

Race/Culture

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Euro-Am:	83%	84%	65%
African Am	3%	3%	12%
Hispanic	4%	7%	15%
Asian	9%	5%	4%
Other	2%	2%	3%

Lifestyle Diversity

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Affluent	10%	12%	15%
Middle America	24%	38%	31%
Young & Coming	61%	36%	15%
Rural families	1%	2%	13%
Senior Life	4%	5%	7%
Ethnic and Urban	<1%	6%	18%

Generational Groups

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Generation Z (0-6)	9%	9%	11%
Millenials (7-26)	36%	39%	28%
Survivors (27-47)	28%	27%	29%
Boomers (48-65)	17%	16%	21%
Silents (66-83)	8%	7%	9%
Builders (84 up)	2%	2%	2%

Population by marital status

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Single never mar'd	41%	38%	27%
Divorced or widow	11%	14%	16%
Married	47%	39%	57%

Households with children by marital status

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Single mothers	15%	19%	23%
Single fathers	5%	6%	7%
Married couples	79%	73%	69%

Adults (25 and over) Education completed

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Less than H.S.	7%	12%	20%
High School	20%	31%	29%
Some college	20%	24%	27%
College graduate	24%	18%	16%
Post graduate	29%	15%	9%

Stress factors

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Below poverty level	18%	16%	13%

Single mothers	15%	19%	23%
H.S. drop outs	7%	12%	20%
Basics (food, etc.)	24%	24%	24%
Family problems	10%	10%	11%
Community problems	15%	15%	16%

Average household income

Primary \$63,312 County \$57,963 U.S. \$67,918

Faith receptivity

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Not involved	38%	36%	35%
Somewhat involved	31%	32%	30%
Strongly involved	31%	32%	35%

Church style preferences

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Worship traditional	25%	23%	20%
Music traditional	28%	25%	24%
Architecture traditional	27%	27%	27%
Worship contemporary	28%	27%	26%
Music contemporary	23%	22%	20%
Architecture contemporary	17%	17%	16%

Religious Preference

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
No preference	16%	15%	15%
Non-historic Christian	6%	4%	8%
Historic Christian	78%	80%	77%

Church Program Preference

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Spiritual development	22%	23%	25%
Personal development	11%	10%	10%
Community/Social Services	21%	22%	20%
Recreation	38%	37%	38%

Average Age

Primary: 35.1 yrs County 33.6 yrs U.S.: 37.5 yrs

Observations based on demographics:

1. There is an amazing percentage of “Young and Coming” folks in both the primary and county areas (this is in large measure due to Purdue, whether new staff or Purdue graduates who stay in the area for at least a few years to begin their careers).
2. Silents and Builders (people over 65) comprise only 9% - 10% of both the primary and county area while comprising about 16% of the congregation.
3. The marital status percentages are affected somewhat by the number of college students living in the area. Hence, the actual percentage of “married”, “single”, and “single never married” *apart from students* is probably closer to the national average.
4. Both the primary area and (to a somewhat lesser degree) the county have an extremely high level of education compared to national averages, as does the congregation itself.
5. The percentage of people living under the poverty level is skewed by Purdue students, though there are others in the area living in poverty.
6. More than one-third of those in both the primary area and county are involved in no religious institution whatsoever.
7. Recreation is a strong component of that which is desired by persons who relate to religious institutions. If the area being surveyed were Lafayette proper (rather than West Lafayette and suburbs), community/social services would probably be first in line. But, in West Lafayette and the suburbs, where people have lots of cloths and food, lots of opportunities for personal development at work and elsewhere, but a felt need for more rest and recreation, "Recreation" scores high. The actual percentages shown in the study are: recreation 38%, spiritual dev 22%, community/social services 21% (this could reflect young people's desires to contribute to these efforts as well as reflecting some who need such services), and personal development 11%.

The congregation is a typical United Methodist congregation in that it is theologically moderate to progressive. This congregation understands that taking the Bible literally (as so many people do today) is not always the same thing as taking it seriously. Unlike many congregations in the community, St. Andrew welcomes women to positions of leadership. The congregation has a longstanding tradition of open membership (that is, rebaptism is not required for membership) and an open Table.

The building is handicapped accessible and has access to adequate parking to accommodate current worship services and regular programming.

General Observations About St. Andrew

Staff of the past fifteen years

(Staff has been quite stable.)

Pastors: full time

Pastor Jacob Williams (92-95)

(The average tenure of all pastors since the UM merger in 69 is 4 years, however the congregation has made its greatest progress when there were longer pastoral tenures such as that of Tim Burchill)

Tim Burchill (6/95-present)

Pat Sleeth, CrossRoads Pastor (2002—present)

Educational Assistant/Director

Sue Ringenbach (-- to 98) (full time)

Patti Hoefler (98-99) (full time)

Becky Brainard (99-07) (half time)

Karen Siefert (07-08) (23 hours)

Cindy Nycz (08-present) (23 hours)

Secretaries: full time

Judy Stout (91- 97)

Administrative Secretary

Donna Biehl (97-present)

Office/Secretarial Assistant: 10 hours

Office Assistant (secretarial):

Tricia Sembroski (2000-2007)

Office Assistant (financial emphasis): 12 hours)

Melissa Martin (2007-present)

Director of Music: half time

Paul Addison (95-97)

Mary Warren (97-present)

Organist:

Dana Pershing (78-95)

Luann Boggess (95-present)

Assistant Organist: 1 Sunday a month

Luann Boggess (83-95)

Natalie Robinson (95-2005)

Lisa Tally (2005-present)

Joyful Sound Director: very part time

Paul Addison (-- to 95)

Lisa Tally ?

Susie Blom (2000)

Jeni Leaird (2000 – present)

Praise Team Director: very part time

Paul Addison (2002-present)

Custodian: about 30 hours a week
 Bruce and Dana Pershing (-- to 94)
 Greenbush Cleaning Service (94 – 01)
 Karen Berger (01-02)
 Jason Pierce (02)
 Wilma Myers (02-2006)
 Linda Hamilton (2006- present)

Fusion Worship Leader/Musician: very part time

Kevin Watson 3 semesters (04)
 Ryan Martin 1 semester
 Becky Winger 1 semester
 Ryan Schroer 2 semesters 06
 Katie Biehl (fall 07 – present)

The Yearbook Reports

<u>UNITED METHODIST YEARBOOK STATISTICS for 1997-2007</u>									
	Total Memb	Adds	Transfers Out	Deaths	Total Losses	Bapt	Worship Attend	% in worship	SS Attend
1987	420	26					233	55%	180
1988	424	31					249	59%	162
1989	403	30					243	60%	165
1990	400	31					235	59%	157
1991	398	24					218	55%	149
1992	414	32					252	61%	148
1993	424	22					250	59%	149
1994	417	36					259	62%	155
1995	405	12					228	56%	139
1996	399	21					185	46%	140
1997	418	35					195	47%	103
1998	406	18					249	61%	110
1999	395	18	26	3	29	17	260	66%	120
2000	409	29	11	4	15	14	286	70%	101
2001	416	35	25	3	28	44	309	74%	113
2002	419	15	6	3	9	6	314	75%	117
2003	461	47	26	3	29	10	333	72%	143
2004	467	15	5	4	9	5	338	72%	149
2005	485	59	37	4	41	10	345	71%	111
2006	491	34	25	3	28	5	349	71%	147
2007	514	36	10	3	13	16	379	74%	202

The Yearbook figures imply the following observations:

1. Membership and worship attendance have been growing steadily for the past 10 years.
2. Worship attendance (measured as a percentage of confirmed membership) is phenomenally high – especially since Tim Burchill has been pastor.

3. Because St. Andrew is a young congregation (in terms of average age of members), the average number of deaths have remained quite low.

4. The congregation has typically sustained a good number of annual additions by transfer, but these have been required to maintain steady growth in worship attendance. This is primarily because significant numbers of St. Andrew members are highly mobile and move away to other communities.

5. There has been substantial Sunday school increase in recent years.

Youth Group

The congregation sponsors scout troops for 50 boys and for 20 girls. It also has youth groups for junior high (30 participants) and senior high (20 participants). There are also Sunday School classes for 6th-8th grade (30) and senior high (20) youth. All youth work is under CrossRoads, which addresses the needs of 6th graders through young adults.

Men's and Women's Ministries

The women's group meets monthly and involves about 20 women. There is also a "prayer shawl ministry", a women's Bible study (Oasis) and a scrap booking group.

Small Groups for Adults in Which Participation Is Emotionally Significant

Vacation Bible School—175 kids and a tight cadre of adult volunteers—50-60 adults

Breakaway (6th graders VBS)—20-30 kids, 5-6 cadre of adults

Boy Scouts: 50 boys, 25 adults (though only a few of these adults are members of St. Andrew)

Girl Scouts: 20 girls, 5 adults

Scrap Booking Crop Group—20-25

Tour de CrossRoads (Bike Tour)—planning group 12

Disciple Bible Study I: 12

Disciple Bible Study II: 12

Know and Grow class: 12

Christian Issues: 30

Young Families class: 20

Young Adult Class/Ministry: 12

Prayer Shawl: 12

Oasis Women's Bible Study: 18-25

Echoes of the Gospel Book Group: 13

CrossRoads Leaders Book study: 9

Dinners of Nine—5-6 groups of 9: 54

Center Stage Lunch Bunch—25-30

Koinonia Groups (monthly fellowship) - 4 groups of 10: 40

Music ministries:

Joyful Sound--14

Chancel Choir-14-18

Praise Teams - 3 groups of 9: 27

Waiting to Wake: 6

Mustard seeds: 5

Neighborhood groups (3-4 working groups of 8-14 people)

Prayer chain (via phone & email): 26

Simply People Puppets: 10
 United Methodist Women: 14-22
 Missions: 11
 CrossRoads Tutors: 6-8 regulars
Fusion Worship: 15-25 regulars
 Total: 40-43 groups Total # of participants: 460-515

The rule of thumb is 7 small groups per 100 active members. Thus, 514 total members suggests the need for 36 small groups. By this measure, there are enough small groups available. A further question has to do with how many of these assertively seek to bring in new people from inside the church and, especially, from outside the church. Groups often *say* they are open to newcomers when they are really not.

Though the total number of participants is about 460-515, many members participate in more than one group, so perhaps 200-250 total members are actually involved in any small group.

Governance

The congregation has typical Methodist (episcopal) governance structures. There is an Administrative Board of 20 and Council on Ministries of 20. The Administrative Board generally operates by Roberts Rules (as directed by “The Discipline”) while the Council of Ministries tends to operate by consensus. The “debate and vote” method is most attractive to the “Silents” and “Builders” generations (born before 1945), while dialogical and consensus models are most attractive to younger generations. Attendance at most all committees is good (about 75-80% typically). However, some concern has been expressed that too few are responsible for too much and, conversely, that some members feel they do not get to express themselves adequately in regard to some important issues.

It may be that an Annual Planning Event could help reduce the number of meetings required of various committees/ministries while enhancing coordination of planning and events. (Hamm has information about this approach.)

The policies of the church (building use, employment, etc.) are in good order. The position descriptions for ministerial staff are adequate. The fiscal and program years are January-December.

Evangelism

According to the Vision Team, the primary evangelism area is Tippecanoe County. However, there is not an active, intentional evangelism effort.

“Associational evangelism” is the most natural approach for St. Andrew UMC. That is, offering programs and extending invitations that will bring new people into association with the congregation. Then, let the preachers and the choir and the Sunday School and other programs preach the Gospel. Part of the attraction of St. Andrew for many is the fact that it does engage in associational evangelism rather than the more aggressive tactics of many fundamentalist churches. Nevertheless, the congregation could be much more intentional and consistent in its evangelistic outreach. Small groups are

key in this regard because they provide easy and “safe” points of entry into the life of the congregation. It is difficult and scary to walk into a large assembly of strangers for the first time and few people actually attempt it.

Also key is specifically and intentionally reaching out to un-churched young families in the suburbs. Some of those who St. Andrew needs to reach are young people who have never had a church connection. Another group is comprised of the “de-churched”: people who have been abused, or felt abused, by previous experiences of church and those who are unaware that there are non-fundamentalist approaches to the Bible, faith and the life of the Spirit.

Outreach

The Vision Team considers the congregation’s core “local *outreach* target area” (outreach in terms of charity and justice activities) to be Greater Lafayette.

The congregation is engaged in a number of outreach ministries globally and locally. Globally, St. Andrew is the second highest percentile giver to mission through the United Methodist Church in the entire Northern Conference. Other global and local involvements include: Indonesia Scholarship, Four Homes of Mercy in Palestine, Africa University in Zimbabwe, Bashor Home of Indiana, the Lafayette food pantry, Lafayette Urban Ministries Homeless (shelter meals and Jubilee Christmas), Family Promise (for homeless families in Lafayette), Habitat For Humanity, and the United Methodist Commission on Relief (UMCOR).

Finance

Operational and mission contributions are doing well. In regard to capital needs, paying off the church’s mortgage has precedence right now.

There are no endowment funds invested, though there are policies to enable the receipt of endowment gifts.

Current Mission and Core Values Statements

The Mission

God is calling us
To become like Jesus,
In authentic community,
For the sake of the world.

Core Values

Unapologetically Christ-centered & Biblically based
Encourage and provide for spiritual growth
Fellowship:

The Sense of Belonging to a Community Where Relationships Are Valued
A Compelling Call to Share Faith with & Equip the Next Generation

Hospitality:

Making Room for Those Who Want To Be A Part of Our Christ-Centered Circle
of Friends

Compassionate Outreach Ministries

Visioning Team Perspectives

When asked why people attend St. Andrew UMC, the answers given by the Vision Team were (in order):

- 1) Family based – exposure and bonding with other children and other families.
- 2) Pastor as draw, guidance, leadership and influence on congregation.
- 3) Location.
4. Outreach ministries.
- 5) Welcoming/warm genuine congregation.
- 6) Education – Sunday school, Disciple study, etc.
- 7) Small group focus: church related, hobby related, service related, etc.
- 8) Worship choices: traditional and praise/contemporary worship.
- 9) They were invited.

Asked what things the congregation does *best*, the Vision Team responded:

- 1) Vacation bible School
- 2) Volunteers
- 3) Education
- 4) Worship services
- 5) Participation in outreach: local and beyond – large percent of budget.
- 6) CrossRoads and focus on youth groups
- 7) Lay involvement in all levels of leadership.
- 8) Excellent praise team.
- 9) Prayer

The things identified by the Vision Team as those the congregation does *least* well are:

- 1) Evangelism: when we do follow-up, we may sometimes overwhelm people.
- 2) Newer/younger people to lead for the long run and not ad hoc: lacking mentorship and managed leadership.
- 3) Need more emphasis on spiritual growth (tend to focus most on social concerns).
- 4) Too few volunteers doing the work (small pool): need to develop more volunteers and volunteer leaders.
- 5) Bridging fellowship between the services (one group doesn't know the other – perhaps have combined service quarterly).
- 6) Appeal to more diverse demographics of all kinds (we are exclusive sometimes).

Asked to identify “significant signs of renewal,” the Vision Team responded:

- 1) Attendance has grown in second service – SS attendance up.
- 2) Enthusiasm.
- 3) Happy, warm people that made the move and are hospitable because they have ownership in the new location and building.
- 4) Strong future focus – we are concerned about where we are going to be.
- 5) Building the church has put new life in the congregation.
- 6) This facility was an act of faith - we built it for people that are not yet here.

Asked about “signs of decline,” the Vision Team identified:

- 1) Lack of demographic diversity (not intentional – may be supported with move to the country)

Self-Image

The self-image of the congregation is described by the Vision Team as:

“Family oriented, comfortable and inviting. Non-judgmental. Realistic rather than idealistic. Open to criticism and self-reflection. 10% - 20% are actively involved; 60% waiting to be led (waiting to be engaged but haven’t found a way to contribute meaningfully); 20% burned out either from life or from leading and doing so much in the church in the past; a few tend to be negative in outlook.

Conflict

There is no significant conflict presently in the life of the congregation and past conflicts have been handled well so that they have brought maturation rather than destructive results.

Desired outcomes of this process (named by the Vision Team):

- 1) Long term future plan.
- 2) Futuring of our ministry: where we are with ministries will tell us where we need to go/build/develop.
- 3) Intentionality about how we approach diversity.
- 4) What we are going to be will determine what we are going to do.

Vision Team’s Description of Greater Lafayette

Greater Lafayette (West Lafayette, Lafayette and the surrounding county) is a cross section of middle America USA at its best, in many ways (though there are issues including poverty, especially in Lafayette per se). Greater Lafayette is stable – not cutting edge. The trade off for our community is that some of the things that define major cultural change in our country happen on the east and west coasts.

West Lafayette is the home to our church, most of our congregation and Purdue University, an internationally renowned university that specializes in areas of engineering

and business and agriculture. West Lafayette is periodically defined in national publications as one of the best places in the USA to live and raise a family. West Lafayette was recently named 6th Smartest City from U.S. Census American Community Survey.

Lafayette is home to several large multi-national manufacturing concerns including Subaru, Wabash National, Alcoa, Fairfield, and numerous others.

Reflections from Dr. Hamm (which have been affirmed by the Vision Team)

St. Andrew UMC is basically a very healthy congregation. The membership is committed to the United Methodist Church and has commitment to both local and global outreach.

The congregation's theological stance is a reflection of important core values inherited in part from its denominational heritage and further nurtured by a well educated and socially engaged membership through the years. The congregation must teach and regularly reaffirm these values if they are to be maintained. St. Andrew represents an important theological and spiritual voice in a spiritual wilderness of American fundamentalism.

The good news is that the educational level of the current congregation compares very well with the educational level of those living in the primary target area and the county as a whole. This means that many current and new residents are naturally compatible with the current members, at least as far as education is concerned.

There is some concern among Vision team members that St. Andrew is not as diverse as it should or could be. This is a matter that will need to be explored.

There is some concern that too few are bearing too much responsibility for decisions and the work of the church, while others feel somewhat excluded from decision making and are not sure how to become more involved in the work of the church. These contradictory perceptions are common in mainline churches and can be rather easily addressed by providing opportunities for the congregation to express itself at times other than when decisions are being made ("providing "hearings" or "listening sessions" in which the Administrative Board members and/or the Council of Ministries actively invite members of the congregation to share their thoughts and actively listens to those of the congregation who wish to express opinions or offer advice) and by having more intentional volunteer recruitment efforts that seek to involve a broader percentage of the congregation.

The discussion about lay involvement raises a question about staffing. Is St. Andrew staffed for decline, remaining on a plateau, or for growth? The answers to this question will depend in part on the direction St. Andrew perceives it is called to go in the future. However, as a congregation that has just made a major move from an old building to a new one, a large percentage of the budget is tied up in capital needs. It is also safe to say that current ministry staff is probably over-functioning in a number of ways, which is to be expected in the short-run, but can lead to burn-out in the longer term. It may be that some shift of financial resources will be needed toward more program ministry staff (not to do work *for* the membership so much as to engage more of the membership in their own ministries). Staffing will need to be explored further as the Vision is discerned and strategic plans are developed.

Because West Lafayette is a place where young professionals move in and out rather quickly, the congregation needs to become very adept at quickly drawing new people in, quickly educating and assimilating them into ministry, and quickly recruiting and training them into leadership.

How large could or should St. Andrew United Methodist Church grow? The lovely new facilities likely will soon feel somewhat crowded, but the new site can accommodate significant growth with further construction. The congregation will need to discern the desired and appropriate size to seek. The question should not be framed as a “size” issue only or primarily, but as a matter of mission. As St. Andrew does its God-given mission, what size will most effectively express and support that mission? One size is not automatically better than another, except as it is discerned that God desires one or the other for the congregation.

As this visioning process unfolds, all of the members and active participants are encouraged to help shape the final Vision. However, the faithful question is not simply, “What do *we* as members of St. Andrew want for ourselves? The larger question, which needs to be answered carefully and prayerfully and which this discernment process will seek to answer, is this: “What does **God** desire for St. Andrew United Methodist Church?” Thus, this process is driven by *discernment* rather than purely by *democracy*. “*Democracy*” seeks to know the will of the people, which has its place. But “*discernment*” seeks to know the will of God, which is more difficult and which requires absolute humility and the ability to acknowledge that we may be wrong no matter how right we think we are. It is not that God is trying to be coy or to fool us, rather we are simply limited in our capacity to know and understand God’s will and so we must always maintain humility and openness to new information.

The fact that the needs of younger people get addressed does *not* necessitate that older members do *not* get *their* needs met. However, meeting the needs of each generation *will* mean doing some new things and doing some things differently.

St. Andrew UMC must take serious stock of its **current** context and resources and discern a way forward that will be both faithful and effective. You have real gifts and strengths as well as challenges and God will honor an honest effort to discern God’s future for St. Andrew.

As a coach/consultant, and more, as a brother in Christ, I am most grateful to have the opportunity to share this journey with you.

Dick Hamm