

REPORT III: Our Future, Our Mission, and Our Shape

Thomasburg United Church

Introduction

The first report of the Task Force dealt with the history of Thomasburg Church and the Pastoral Charge. The second report gave a picture of our church's identity at present. Building on these two reports, this third report attempts to show how the congregation feels the Spirit is moving us forward into the future.

Mission Statement:

We propose a new and more focused Mission Statement:

To share the love of God in thought, word and deed with those within our community and beyond.

Value Statement:

As a result of months of discussions and interviews, we conclude that the core values of this congregation are...

- WORSHIP: a regular and meaningful time in which we sense the loving presence of God;
- FELLOWSHIP: loyalty to one another, joy in worshipping and working together as a church family;
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: opportunities for learning suited to all ages;
- MUSICAL EXPRESSION: the use of music in all its forms;
- LEADERSHIP: by a minister and a minister of music who empower us to be our best, and an efficient and productive governance structure;
- VARIETY OF INDIVIDUAL TALENTS AND ABILITIES: the mutual appreciation of the diversity of gifts making the total greater than the sum of its parts;
- THE CHURCH BUILDING: a well maintained building which meets our needs and is a source of pride for the congregation.
- SERVICE AND OUTREACH: supporting one another, offering help to the community and world as we can;

Vision Statement:

Building on the statement of our mission, and on the expression of our core values, we envision a church where...

- all ages are represented and actively involved; - not asking people to fall into our plans, but to make changes that will encourage others to come
- *governance is efficient and productive, making best use of members time and energy;*
- *musical diversity is encouraged;*
- *members of the congregation are an integral part of the ministry of the church (pastoral, worship leadership, new programming etc.);*
- *we have a facility that enables our mission and serves our needs and the needs of our local community,;*
- *we experiment with how we worship;*
- *we are supportive of one another;*
- *worship is inspiring and the central focus of our church community;*
- *the arts are promoted, celebrated and incorporated into the church building and worship services(decorations around the sanctuary, banners, dramas etc.);*
- *we experience spiritual growth;*
- *questioning is encouraged and valued (procedure and basis of faith);*
- *social justice is important and acted upon;*
- *focus is on something other than finances and survival;*
- *we are accepting of everyone;*
- *expression of faith is a priority.*

The above statements were presented for consideration to the congregation at a Town hall meeting on Sunday May 29, 2011. Those in attendance wrote comments, and voted on the order of importance thus giving the Task Force areas to focus on. The listing above is in order of priority according to members of the congregation. The committee would observe that it is likely that the priorities would change over time as we grow and develop our faith and implement our action plans.

Following this meeting, the committee developed an overall plan and some detailed plans for action and in a town hall meeting on Sunday November 27, 2011, the congregation was asked to consider these plans and decide which ones to move forward with immediately. What follows is the result of these meetings, with comments offered by members of the congregation.

OVERALL PLAN

The primary areas of concern of a typical church should be:

Worship, Pastoral care, Education, Community and global service & outreach, Governance and communication, Resource management, and Property, facilities and chattels.

We have concluded from our consultations that for Thomasburg church the following is the order of priority of these areas of concern, and our goals.

Worship – modernize our worship experience

- Introduce varied formats, mixing traditional and contemporary, speaking to all ages
- Invest in modern technology
- Encourage lay participation in worship leadership

Community & Global Service & Outreach – Increase awareness of and connection to the wider church and community

- Continue to support the M & S fund and the Food Bank
- Identify new projects which interest different age groups and connect to the community
- Continue to support and encourage initiatives involving children and other age groups

Education – focus on education for all ages

- Ensure that elements within worship and programs are speaking to all ages
- Increase opportunities for interactions during programs and worship

Pastoral care – strengthen lay ministry and communication

- Share visitation with the minister
- Devise better methods of connecting with our church family
- Increase opportunities for social interaction

Governance and Communication - Adopt efficient and productive governance and communication procedures

- Develop and implement a new governance structure

Resource Management – make the most efficient use of what we have

- Identify and implement improved methods of coordinating, recruiting, training and mentoring of volunteers.
- Pursue careful stewardship of congregation's finances

Property, facilities and chattels – provide a compatible setting for our plans

- Identify and meet government requirements for building accessibility
- Monitor congregation's needs and pursue alterations where required by other objectives and plans

The objectives listed in this 'road plan' toward our future reflect the ideas and dreams expressed by people in the congregation. We believe that we have set up realistic goals.

The next step is to put together a practical action plan to realize each objective. This will require the energy, imagination and enthusiasm of us all. The following plans for action include suggestions made at the November town hall meeting

PLANS FOR ACTION

Worship & Education - combined by consensus at the meeting on November 27th.

Modernizing our worship experience with educational opportunities for all ages.

Goals:

- Develop a plan for worship services and programs which
 - Are inspirational, inclusive, varied and which speak to all ages
 - Benefit from the expertise of the minister, the director of music and members of the congregation
 - Increase opportunities for participation and interactions during programs and worship services.
 - Implement within a 2 year time period

Steps for Action:

- Form a committee of interested persons along with the minister and minister of music;
- Assess each component of worship and each program area and identify areas requiring change or new approaches;
- Prepare proposed descriptions of new approaches/programs for presentation to the congregation, with intent to implement in September 2012;
- Examples:
 - Within the church year, plan varied formats (e.g. lay services, once-a-month events, combined worship children/adults, guest speakers for all ages)
 - Identify a variety of musical resources (instruments, performers, new music)
 - Research what is available locally, through other churches, and online
 - Consider what new technology would be valuable with a plan for funding
 - Provide opportunities for discussion of scripture and sermon topics
 - Share UCW programs with congregation
 - Consider the timing of programs & worship weekdays evenings or weekends
- Assign responsibility for these changes;
- Make allowance for regular reporting, feedback and suggestions.

Community & Global Service & Outreach

Increase awareness of and connection to the wider church and community.

Goals:

- Share what we have with others
- Reach out to include people
- Become more involved with outreach initiatives

Steps for Action:

- Continue to support and encourage initiatives involving children and other age groups.
- Continue to support the M&S fund (and display the M&S banner)
- Continue to support the Food Bank
- Identify a project:
 - Appoint two people to identify potential new projects, for example Canadian Food Grains Bank and Habitat for Humanity, and in consultation with congregation, community and other churches choose one project
 - Propose this project to be undertaken in September of 2012

Pastoral Care

Strengthen lay ministry and communication

Goals:

- Encourage members of the congregation to take opportunities to make connections with each other and others in the community;
- Reinforce the existing connections among the members.
- Keep all members, adherents and the greater community informed;

Steps for Action:

- Expand the use of the phone tree.
- Increase use of internet email and webpage.
- Encourage more regular reporting to the newsletter and ensure delivery of each issue (in person or mailed)
- Encourage planning of frequent (non-fundraising) social events (e.g. potluck lunch, cookies and juice with Sunday School)
- Propose assignment of responsibility for these changes

Governance and Communication:

Reshaping how we govern ourselves

Goals:

- Develop and implement a new governance structure that:
 - complies with *The Manual*
 - reduces the amount of time, talent and treasure required
 - places a greater emphasis on making things possible
 - frees people up to minister
 - promotes community building

Steps for Action:

- Have basic concept in place by May 1, 2012
- Have detailed concept, including job descriptions and lines of communication in place by July 30, 2012***
- Present concept at Joint Board meeting in September, 2012

- Consider and deal with concerns and suggestions by October 15, 2012.
- Produce draft Constitution for the Pastoral Charge by Dec. 15, 2012***
- Present completed package to Joint Board at January meeting 2013.
- Present to Congregations before Annual meeting, 2013
- Present to Presbytery for approval February 2013.
- Adopt, implement, train during 2013 or reject.***

*** indicates those items on the list for which a detailed Action Plan will have to be created.

Resource Management

Make the most efficient use of what we have.

Goals:

- Effectively utilize people's talents and abilities.
- Set and reach financial objectives.

Steps for Action:

- Explore opportunities for training of volunteers and arrange funding for participants
- Assess current methods of managing job assignments
- Implement a budgeting process and appropriate progress reporting
- Create an inventory (talents and abilities) of congregational members

Property, facilities and chattels

Goal:

- Provide a compatible setting for our plans
- Make the most use of our facility for the congregation and the community

Steps for Action:

- Identify and meet government requirements for building accessibility
- Consider interim solutions such as a portable ramp
- Monitor congregation's needs and pursue alterations where required by other objectives and plans.