



Report for
Burke United Methodist Church

September 30, 2018



The Weekend Innovation Team (WIT) would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the Burke United Methodist Church staff and NLI leadership team. It has been an honor to share in this time of prayer and discernment together exploring how God has blessed your congregation and the next innovations in your ministry.

Strengths

1. People are Loving

The first answer to “what is ‘awesome’ about this church?” is often “The People.” What about the people? They are loving, non-judgmental, and welcoming. They share their gifts, they care for each other, and they work hard to contribute in the name of Christ for the transformation of the world.

2. Clergy, Staff and Leadership

Over and over again, we heard that the people of the church love Jason and Katie, love the staff, and know their church has great leadership with skills and talents readily shared with the community. We heard this from newcomers, from youth, and continually during the Saturday retreat (attended by 90+ people). Burke UMC is blessed in the ‘people’ area!

3. Service

We heard many different people talk about how important missional service is to this community. We saw great strength in the “Life of Service” area through the Real Discipleship Survey. This community is ready, willing, and able to be in service in a multitude of ways. One person told us they would like to hear it said “that church on the corner is EVERYWHERE!”.

4. Welcome Statement

Newcomers told us how important the Welcome Statement was for their decision to visit and ultimately join the church/call it theirs. Current members told us again and again that the Welcome Statement is integral to the life of the church. This church sees itself as inclusive. The mystery worshippers affirmed that Burke UMC is welcoming, and leans heavily into this welcome as identity-forming for the church.

5. Location and Facility

Burke UMC is located on a busy corner in Burke, VA. Now that new signage has been installed, all that is needed is a few tree branch trims for maximum visibility. The facility itself has undergone extensive restoration and repair, and we applaud the decision not to do temporary fixes for the structural issues, but to get to the bottom of drainage and space enhancement. You have a beautiful, welcoming, friendly facility that feels like a spiritual home.



Concerns

1. Alignment

Staff and leadership of the church repeatedly told us that one of their biggest desires was for unity of purpose and direction in order to move more effectively into the future. The Ministry Focus Event, the interviews with leadership, and the Saturday retreat all revealed that this church is going in many directions simultaneously. The vision from several years ago overlaps with the current new vision. For good alignment to occur and to make steady progress in accomplishing church-wide goals, there needs to be more clarity. Communications and new leadership development are also areas where clarity and focus would be helpful.

2. Next Level Discipleship

Discipleship is going well; however, we heard a call for some deeper work in this area, specifically around times, styles, and methods. People asked for more and different small groups (especially those that reach out into the community), as well as worship at alternative hours, in alternative ways, and in alternative places. We heard great stories of faith journeys told, and more ways to do this work are needed.

3. Diffused Impact of Missions

In looking at the many clipboards, baskets, and containers for collection in the church, it is easy to see why some of the leadership and folks at the Saturday retreat felt that there was mission resourcing overload. The church could continue to collect for many different areas, and give back in a huge variety of areas, but we were particularly struck by the idea that a focused effort on the part of the church could leverage the gifts and skills in a more impactful way.

4. Room for Missional Needs

The number one request (via a 'magic wand!') at the Saturday retreat was an updated kitchen. What the WIT team loved about the request was that it was for missional purposes, not just the occasional church potluck. While the facilities are in good shape, there are space issues, and it may be time to do a full review of what is needed in alignment with the vision.

5. Funding

Burke UMC is generous with time, talent and gifts. In recent years, with a decline in worship attendance there was a decline in giving. In addition, there are more than 60 areas of restricted giving, reducing giving to the operating budget. When a particular missional need is highlighted, people give; but overall funding for the budget, and necessary funding for new Innovations in areas like missions and facilities will need to be addressed, especially with the new additional debt from recent repairs. Financial policies and procedures also need a good review.



Next Level Innovations

To become a competent and compelling congregation in the twenty-first century is a very complex, messy, hard, culture-changing and long process. It requires a great deal of prayer, endurance, hard work, dedication, risk and tenacity. Bob Farr and Kay Kotan

1. Running with the Vision

“Then the Lord answered me and said, Write a vision; make it plain on tablets so that a runner may read it.” –Habakkuk 2:2 (NRSV)

Burke UMC has adopted a clear identity as a welcoming/inclusive congregation. A clear Welcome Statement has become well-known through the bulletin and website; it is attracting newcomers who find the statement compelling, it is creating a reputation for the congregation in the community, and it has been adapted into a Vision Statement.

We see great potential to run with this statement in various ways for greater effectiveness in “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (our UMC mission statement). For example, we heard someone offer a vision of Burke UMC as “that church on the corner that is everywhere” throughout the community. Imagine a church that welcomes everybody and whose impact is felt everywhere, especially throughout the Burke community.

1. We believe that a good place to dive in is to get clear on the “why” of the Welcome Statement. We suggest that there is work to be done by the new Leadership Board, to clarify and then to align mission and resources around it.
 - a. The Board should engage some resources to gain a common language and framework for this conversation, and become a learning board as they live into their new structure.
 - b. Possible books that can help with this process include:
Essentialism, by Greg McKeown,
Inside the Large Congregation, by Susan Beaumont,
Canoeing the Mountains, by Tod Bolsinger,
Simple Church by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
2. Questions for the Leadership Board to pursue:
 - a. *Can people articulate how the Welcome Statement connects to being a disciple of Jesus?*
 - b. *How does the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus lead us to welcome all?*
 - c. We believe that there is a way to deepen discipleship through a theological engagement with the Welcome Statement, so that the “why” of the Welcome Statement becomes at least as important as the “what.” That deepening “why” will lead to a more harmonious alignment of the Welcome Statement with discipleship, community engagement, leadership development, infrastructure, and stewardship.
3. A clear Christ-centered vision, in the driver’s seat, aligning the church’s life behind it, provides synergy and momentum for mission. People are inspired to participate, support, and share with others. With this; work, time, and energy are focused, and leadership inspires and



attracts new leaders. Once the theological “why” is clear, then the alignment toward discipleship (Innovation #2), community engagement (Innovation #3), leadership development (next paragraph), infrastructure (Innovation # 4), and stewardship (Innovation #5) will flow from it. This clarity on the why should be tackled as soon as possible and completed by **February 28, 2019**.

4. Leadership Development should be coordinated with the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee in **2019**, to develop a system for recruiting, equipping, and deploying persons who are well-grounded in the vision, so that as people are deployed throughout the church’s ministry teams with the **2019 Charge Conference**, there will be a common thread of working together in the same direction for a vital Christ-centered purpose. As the Leadership Board becomes a learning community, it will raise up new leadership that are also learning leaders.
5. There are some key issues that need evaluation by the Leadership Board as they work toward alignment and clarity. We heard specific needs around:
 - a. Staffing – we heard a call for some current part time positions to move to full time positions; would that meet the clarified vision?
 - b. Programming – how does the current scope of programs align with the vision?
6. Funding decisions should also be reviewed with the question in mind, “How does this contribute to advancing the vision?”
7. By **January 2020**, the Leadership Board should have developed an ongoing process for regularly discerning issues such as the ministry and missions of the church, the management of the church, staffing and funding.

2. Deep and Wide Discipleship

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. –Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

We heard from several people whose lives have been transformed through Disciple Bible Studies, Companions in Christ, and other small group discipleship experiences. We know that Burke UMC understands the importance of focusing on helping persons to develop a deep personal sense of following Jesus. We would like to see this kind of disciple-making continue within the church as well as in the community. To be truly welcoming for all people and to be a church that has an impact everywhere, we need not wait for people to come to the church building. We can find ways to take the rich treasures of the church’s resources out into the world to share and bless people where they are.

1. By **February 2019** recruit, train and equip an Innovation Discipleship Work Team. This team will fall under Burke’s Learn Area and Worship Area and will include the key leaders of these areas and the NLI Mentor. The goal of this team is to develop a next level discipleship plan that aligns with the vision of the church. This team should plan to report their findings by **June 2019** to the Leadership Board.



2. Issues for this team to investigate and study include:
 - a. Consider ways churches are using online classes, meeting offsite in public spaces, homes, schools, campuses, nursing homes, etc. The District staff can provide ideas and resources. A named goal (heard during our listening opportunities) is to include all ages such as youth Bible studies, intergenerational opportunities, and young adult groups in such an effort.
 - b. Partner with the Serve Team to enhance the intersection of mission and discipleship (theology, scripture, missiology, etc.).
 - c. Provide coaching for and offer opportunities for faith-sharing during worship, with small groups, or on social media.
 - d. We suggest the preaching team develop a 5 to 6-week sermon series about Discipleship to use during **Lent 2019**. The series could address the spiritual habits found in the Real Discipleship Survey.
 - e. Encourage all members to tithe during **Lent 2019** and then provide opportunities to share their tithing stories.
 - f. Worship is a part of discipleship. Research and experiment with offsite worship and live streaming. Consult with other churches (United Methodist and non-Methodist), new church starts, and District Staff to help discern best practices for communities similar to Burke.
 - g. Evaluate the current Sunday morning schedule in terms of discipleship for children, youth, and adults. Incorporate technology that will enhance these experiences.
 - h. Identify which particular local demographics are currently missing from worship. Research what schedule, worship, and discipleship efforts might meet their needs. Again, District staff has some resources available and other NLI churches working in this area could be collaboration partners. Discuss openly within the congregation what might need to change for the next generation(s) to find church and worship accessible.

3. A Heart for the Local Community - Burke Gives Back Initiative

“The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.” –John 1:14a (MSG)

Burke UMC has taken the bold step of engaging the community through creating and developing *Burke Gives Back* (BGB) through partnerships with other organizations, to meet the needs of the community and beyond. To this point the work of *Burke Gives Back* has been ongoing and successful, but could be effectively taken to the next level to have significant impact and saturation in the Burke community.

Burke UMC is already actively involved in going out and blessing the people of the Burke community. We encourage you to continue those ministries that are effectively demonstrating the love of God for all people to this community. We encourage you to leverage the clarified vision statement (see Innovation #1) to propel you into the community in new ways to bless even more people. To tackle this innovation, the Community Engagement Team, in consultation with the NLI Mentor, will work towards the following:



1. By **April 2019**, in alignment with the vision, establish a clear vision and mission for BGB along with measurable goals. These goals should challenge Burke UMC to be stretched beyond the current scope of BGB. The goals should be focused around the following concepts:
 - a. Multigenerational – opportunities to serve with BGB need to allow for multigenerational participation. These could be families or different ministry groups, like seniors, serving alongside youth.
 - b. Long-term relationships – the development of long-term relationships in mission and ministry changes lives; the lives of both those within the church community, and those in the neighborhood/community of Burke VA.
 - c. Small groups around Serve – reflecting on the work done together with others outside of the church is a good way to become more invitational and go deeper in relationships and connections with the community.
2. In **June 2019**, implement the developed goals which expand the focus of the BGB to reach more people and build relationships.

4. Making Space for God's Work

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. –Psalm 127:1 (ESV)

God has blessed Burke UMC with a vibrant congregation that wishes to better serve their community. The facilities must appropriately align with the vision God has given this church. Therefore, we encourage the engagement of a Facility Utilization Team to ensure that BUMC has the facility needed to be in proper alignment with its missional needs. The team should be sure to consider the kitchen, preschool, children and youth spaces.

1. Form a Facility Utilization Team by **July 2019**.
 - a. The team is to be put together under the direction of the Leadership Board.
 - b. The team should include at least two members of the Leadership Board and should not be more than six persons. One person should be an official trustee of the church.
2. The tasks for the team will include ensuring the facility is able to be in alignment with the church's clarified vision statement developed in Innovation #1.
 - a. There are specific requirements in the Book of Discipline that might help outline a process for facilities utilization and potential building. See paragraph 2544 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.
 - b. Review the vision work of Leadership Board from Innovation #1. (*Note: this indicates that the visioning work and the alignment of programs, missions and ministries must be done before the Facility Utilization Team begins its work. This is to ensure that the building fits the needs of the church and community once it is aligned.*)
 - c. Do a comprehensive assessment of facility to meet the missional needs of the church. This assessment should be intentional about considering the needs of the ministries to and with the greater Burke community.



- d. This team should check with Serve and Learn teams regarding their missional needs. Technology needs that have been raised during the NLI process should also be considered – online classes, live streaming of worship, communications, etc.
 - e. Evaluate the facility's current capacity to meet those needs. Consult with experts on both feasibility and cost estimates regarding facility changes that address any unmet needs.
3. Present Facility Utilization Team's Report to the Leadership Board by **October 2019**.
 4. Once approved by the Leadership Board, have at least two town hall meetings to discuss and finalize as necessary by the church.

5. Discipleship through Generosity

The point is this; whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as they have decided in their heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. –2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (ESV)

Financial generosity is a key Christian virtue that enables us to trust God with our resources, demonstrate financial wisdom, resist the culture of materialism found in Northern Virginia, and participate in the Christ-honoring work of God's Reign in the world. Churches that cultivate and expect generosity in the lives of their members attend to an essential element of the discipleship path. At the same time, church members are wise to expect thoughtful planning and the considered use of the resources they provide, with policies and procedures that work at a level of excellence.

1. In **June 2019**, the Leadership Board will create a Generosity Work Team (GWT). This team will begin to create a Master Financial Plan that will include five key elements: the ministry budget, expenses related to Next Level Innovation Plan expenses, debt reduction, future facility upgrades and equipment replacement, and planning for whatever the Facilities Utilization Team reports (later in October 2019 in #4 above).
 - a. This will be a working document that will be updated as Innovations are developed, and work team needs are understood more fully. This document should be reported to the Leadership Board on a quarterly basis.
2. In order to financially support the key elements of the master financial plan, the GWT will develop a five-year strategy which will include an annual generosity emphasis related to the ministry budget and a capital campaign related to debt reduction and fundraising for the Burke Gives Back initiative. This campaign will encourage those new to Burke to join the ongoing generosity of more tenured members in their ongoing devotion to the church and its ministry. The GWT will also create an ongoing funding strategy for facility upgrades and equipment replacement.
3. Financial stewardship is not a campaign, but a way of life. Beginning **September 2019**, the designated task force will bolster financial training for Burke members with programs such as Financial Peace University, a sermon series on personal financial management, and



ongoing celebrations of how generosity at Burke makes disciples of Jesus Christ and transforms the world.

4. The Generosity Work Team should also develop processes for endowments, planned giving, technological giving, and other appropriate strategies for giving.
5. Along with good financial planning, good financial practices and procedures should be in place to keep a high level of trust in the work of the church. The Leadership Board should task a group to accomplish this work quickly and effectively. A financial policies and procedures audit should be started by **January 2019** and completed by **April 2019**. The District has resources to help Burke UMC accomplish this work.



Next Steps

Burke United Methodist Church will hold Town Hall meetings within the next 30 days to discuss this report and recommended innovations. The dates for these town halls are as follows:

- Tuesday, October 9 at 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, October 14 at 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, October 25 at 7:30 p.m.

The congregation will vote on this report within 30 days at an official church conference led by the district superintendent (or elder designated by the DS) on **Sunday, October 28 at 11:30 a.m.**

If the report and innovations are approved by a vote of 70% or more of members present and voting, the NLI process will continue as your mentor assists your leadership to implement these innovations.

If the report and innovations are rejected, the NLI process will be deemed complete and your mentor's ministry with your congregation will be concluded. Resources will be redeployed to other NLI churches.

Report Written by:

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Proposed Innovations Timeline

