



Innovations Report
for
Good Shepherd United Methodist

November 14, 2021



The Weekend Innovation Team would like to express our gratitude to the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church staff and NLI leadership team. It has been an honor to share in this time of prayer as we explore how God has blessed your congregation and discern how God is calling Good Shepherd United Methodist Church to serve in the future.

Strengths

1. Outreach and Mission

Good Shepherd has a heart for missions. One leader stated that this love for missions is because we care for our community. The various outreach and mission events and projects give Good Shepherd a credible presence in the community. The Real Discipleship Survey indicates that Good Shepherd is maturing in a life of service, indicating that members join Jesus in mission to others, using their gifts, talents, and passions.

2. Welcoming and Loving

When asked, “What’s the best thing about Good Shepherd?” often, the answer was, “The people!” Good Shepherd is experienced as a warm and welcoming place that invites people into a journey of faith formation to become more like Jesus. One leader noted that Good Shepherd is “incredibly supportive of each other.” Good Shepherd has been described as having “a family feeling” and is a place where relationships are formed and nurtured. Good Shepherd also has a strong desire to be a diverse faith community, reflective of the broader community.

3. The Pastor, Clergy, and Staff

Good Shepherd is blessed with a creative and supportive staff. Several people shared stories of how the pastor and staff have had a positive impact on their lives. Many stated that they trust the staff. The staff is dedicated, imaginative, and creative. The pastor is energetic and passionate, which is contagious to others. One leader stated that they “made prayer and contemplation a bigger priority because my church has placed value on this and given instruction and encouragement to do so.”

4. Small Groups

Leadership indicated that small groups had made a considerable impact on their faith lives. Since 2016, the number of small groups has increased. The Real Discipleship Survey showed that 32.31% are growing in a life open to Jesus, indicating that people are exploring new spiritual disciplines and experiencing greater intimacy with God. In addition, 38.46% are beginning in a life obeying Jesus, meaning that people have accepted a call to follow Jesus, suggesting people are ready to grow deeper in their faith, seeking maturity as they grow to become more like Christ.

5. Willingness to Move Forward

God is moving at Good Shepherd! In interviews with leadership, there is a strong spirit for innovation and creativity. High optimism is present. There is a willingness by the leadership to try new things and follow God’s spiritual movement into the future. In addition, Good Shepherd is transitioning to the Simplified, Accountable Structure, which will enable the church to “boldly imagine a church in the post-pandemic era.”



Challenges

1. “We are Good”

While we recognize that key leaders are excited about what God is doing, there is a sense that some are comfortable being “Good” Shepherd instead of being “Great” Shepherd. To be great, a church cannot be okay being good. This is often reflected through a lack of focus and clarity. Great churches expect excellence in all areas of ministry.

2. Alignment and Clarity

While the mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, the vision of a local church informs how, in their unique context, the church will make disciples. In the life cycle of the church, when Vision is not driving the car, clarity is needed to understand God’s direction for the church. Vision informs the church’s governance, ministries, communication, and discipleship. There is a need for clarity, alignment, and focus. A new vision will provide the needed focus and clarity to gain alignment of mission and ministry.

3. Equipping Disciples

One of the needs that were named multiple times was “increase involvement of all.” There is an understanding that 20% of the people do 80% of the work. The Team heard a strong desire for leaders and members to be equipped for ministry, including identifying their gifts for ministry. For the church to unleash a spiritual movement into the community around it, each layperson will need to be equipped and empowered to be in ministry.

4. Ministry with Youth

Ministry with youth is important to the people of Good Shepherd. Different perspectives voiced throughout the interviews and the weekend event pointed to the need to strengthen Good Shepherd’s ministry with youth. Clarity of goals and expectations is needed in a post-pandemic era.

5. Space

The Team heard several times during the Saturday retreat that there is a concern about having enough space for the ministry and missions of the church and potential growth. Areas of space that were named multiple times include a larger music area, dedicated sanctuary, space for Indian Church, and dedicated youth ministry space. The lack of dedicated space often is perceived to hinder growth.



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, 10 Prescriptions for a Healthy Church)

1. A Vision for a New Day

"Make sure that no one misses out on God's grace." – Hebrews 12:15

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything, including how we do ministry. While much has changed because of the pandemic, the mission of the Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ has not. As Good Shepherd transitions to the Simplified, Accountable Structure, the Leadership Board will begin the work of casting a new vision in alignment with the mission to make disciples. A strong vision will reflect the core values of a congregation and provide focus and direction. The Vision for a New Day will enable the congregation, as one leader put it, to "boldly imagine a church in the post-pandemic era." This process, facilitated by Good Shepherd's Simplified, Accountable Structure coach, should begin in **January 2022**. The process should include, but not limited to, the following:

- A ministry audit of current ministries, asking, "What ministries are going to lead us into who we are? Do these align with the vision? What adjustments are needed?"
- The Leadership Board should review current staff job descriptions asking, "Are the current job descriptions in alignment with the vision?" The NLI Coach can support the Leadership Board in this review and alignment of staff with the vision.
- Clarifying the relationship between Good Shepherd and Indian Church, which includes how it aligns with the vision, how resources and finances are deployed, and if necessary, developing a 3–5-year sustainability plan.
- One leader told the Team that the church budget dictates the giving, not the other way around. The vision process will include preparation to develop a budget driven by and aligned to the vision and ministry goals.
- Nomination & Leadership Development will consider how to encourage, equip, and motivate all laity to be in ministry beyond the church.

After the vision processing, the Leadership Board will use the Innovations Report to establish goals for the coming year.

2. Next Level Missions

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." – Matthew 28:19 NRSV

Good Shepherd has a heart for missions. The Real Discipleship Survey indicates maturity in a life of service. Good Shepherd should explore a new paradigm, building on its strengths of "Outreach and Mission" and "Welcoming and Loving" to effectively reach more people with God's love and grace. How can the church adapt its methods so that new people will receive the message of God's love and grace? Perhaps the new paradigm is the church going to where the people are, aligning missions, and going deeper in relationships to form new disciples. As one youth stated, "If you want to share the Kingdom of God, show them what it means."



To consider this new paradigm, the Leadership Board will establish a Next Level Missions Task Force, including youth, young adults, and newcomers. The Task Force should discern how current outreach and mission ministries can be leveraged to go deeper by sharing the grace of God more broadly, including strengthening the relationship with R. C. Longan Elementary School. In addition, the Task Force will consider innovative partnerships with community groups whose mission aligns with Good Shepherd's vision. The goal is to form new disciples.

The District will resource a congregational workshop called "Connect: Relationships Matter" to equip the congregation in relationship-building with new people. This workshop will explore the information provided in the Mosaic Group Segment reports (included in the NLI Saturday Retreat workbook). A coach will follow up with the Next Level Missions Task Force to develop a relational evangelism plan to reach the community. The plan will incorporate guiding principles from the Connect workshop so that the congregation can be equipped to engage in effective, relational evangelism.

3. Expectation of Multiplication

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." – Matthew 28:19 NRSV

In the early Methodist movement, growth was experienced through multiplication. Disciples in such a spiritual movement expect multiplying disciples, small groups, and other ministries. Good Shepherd will establish an expectation in all areas of ministry to multiply by cultivating a culture of inviting.

Good Shepherd's Leadership Board will task the appropriate Ministry Team to develop, communicate, and implement a Discipleship Pathway that aligns with the vision. This Pathway should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A definition of a mature disciple and what a small group is in the context of Good Shepherd as it relates to our Biblical and Wesleyan tradition.
- A guest follow-up system to retain first-time guests through all points of entry so that new people are connected well, and spiritual needs are met.
- Discipleship and small group opportunities for all ages that provide opportunities for those who are exploring, beginning, growing, and maturing in their faith that promotes ongoing, continual growth to become more like Jesus.
- Developing intergenerational discipleship opportunities that children, youth, and adult membership can interact and grow together.
- Developing a system for forming mature, thriving disciples who will be sent to launch new discipling groups.
- The Real Discipleship Survey indicates 47.69% are beginning in a life of generosity, meaning that people are just starting to give more regularly. Financial stewardship is not a campaign but a way of life. A renewed emphasis on financial generosity for all ages and stages within the congregation is needed to fund the missional opportunities identified. The District can provide a list of resources.



Youth and Children's Ministry is a clear priority for Good Shepherd. To strengthen these ministries and to take them to the next level, the Leadership Board will establish a relationship with an outside facilitator(s) to do an independent audit of the current ministries so that the church may develop a strategic plan for reaching and discipling children, youth, and their families.

4. Using God's Space

"If one of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't you first sit down and calculate the cost, to determine whether you have enough money to complete it?" -Luke 14:28, CEB

Good Shepherd's location and building are an incredible blessing. There are abundant opportunities for ministry and the missional heart of Good Shepherd to shine. Good Shepherd will conduct a Ministry Space Feasibility study to explore possibilities of continuing and creating new ways to use God's space to engage disciples in alignment with the vision. The Leadership Board will establish a task force to conduct this study that should include a youth, young adult, and newcomer, and can be resourced by the NLI Coach. This study will be, but not be limited to, (1) a space analysis and usage assessment that should address the concerns about worship and youth ministry space, (2) how the building and grounds are welcoming and hospitable to new and current groups, and (3) off-campus spaces that would enable "Next Level Missions" and "Expectation of Multiplication" innovations to take shape and form. The options for new space should not be limited to new construction but inclusive of innovative potentials such as renting, partnerships, shared space, community spaces, etc.

Next Steps

Good Shepherd United Methodist Church will hold two Town Halls within the next 30+ days to discuss this report and recommended innovations. The dates for these Town Halls are as follows:

- Sunday, November 21 at 11:15 am
- Tuesday, November 30 at 7 pm

If you have questions or comments, you can email them to nligsumcrva@gmail.com. The office will be closed on Monday, November 15 to allow the congregation and the staff to have a time of rest and intentional time of prayer before receiving comments.

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, December 12, 2021, at 11:15 am.**

If a vote approves the report and innovations of 70% or more of members present and voting, the NLI process will continue as your coach and district resources assist your leadership in implementing these innovations.

The commitment to these Next Level Innovations should be celebrated during a special worship service. The worship service will be a time of prayer and celebration. Participants will have the opportunity to come forward for a time of blessing and commissioning for this new chapter of ministry in the life of Good Shepherd United Methodist Church.



If the report and innovations are rejected, the NLI process will be deemed complete, and your coach's ministry with your congregation will be concluded. The resources of the NLI process will move on to other NLI churches that are moving forward with their innovations.

Addendum

Worship is an essential element of life together as a faith community. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, mystery worshipers were not able to attend in-person worship and provide feedback. In the coming months, mystery worshipers will be sent and will provide feedback. The District will write a report with recommendations based on the input and provide it to the Leadership Board. In addition, Jason Moore, a consultant and coach, will be provided to assess hybrid worship. Jason will also provide coaching.

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