



Lynn Haven United Methodist Church Vision Team Report

"2020 Vision"

September 7, 2014

Table of Contents

Background	3
Team Purpose	3
Team Membership.....	3
Team Products and Timeline	3
Team Actions and Activities.....	3
Congregational Surveys	3
Percept Group Ministry Area Study.....	4
Ministry Assessment	4
Community Needs.....	4
Guiding Principles	4
Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, Definitions.....	5
Radical Hospitality.....	5
Passionate Worship	5
Intentional Faith Development.....	5
Risk Taking Mission and Service.....	5
Extravagant Generosity.....	5
Mission Statement	5
Purpose	5
Vision.....	6
Core Values	6
Goals	7
Recommendations	8
Distinctive Branding.....	8
Radicalize Hospitality	8
Intentional Worship Service Definition and Design.....	9
Communicate Class/Sport/Life Group Offerings, Offer Additional Options.....	9
Clearly Defined Discipleship Path	9
Training for Leadership Roles.....	9
Address Local Community Needs	9
Address Regional/National/International Needs.....	10
Communicate Current Financial Picture	10
Promote, Emphasize Biblical Stewardship.....	10
Debt Retirement Plan	10
Prayer Ministry.....	11
Communications	11
Ministry Life Cycle	11
Efficient Church Structure.....	11
Technology and Innovation.....	12
Closing Thoughts.....	12

Background

Team Purpose

The Lynn Haven Church Vision Team (the Team) was brought together to intentionally revise, strengthen, and reaffirm the mission, core values, and envisioned future of the Lynn Haven Church. Through study, prayer, and investigation, the Team examined our people, ministries, facilities, money, resources, and community – and identified intentional adjustments to better focus the church on its overall mission and purpose. Our initial guidance was, “*intentionality in all aspects of future decision making at the Lynn Haven Church.*”

The Team was not chartered with execution duties, nor would it displace in any way the current leadership structure of the Lynn Haven Church. The products of the Team’s actions, and this report, are to be used as starting points for our leadership.

Team Membership

The Team is made up of the Pastor and 9 lay members, each representing distinct segments of our congregation. Team members include those from all 5 of our Sunday services, and both of our campus locations. The members of the Team are:

<i>Craig Carter</i>	<i>Will Humphreys</i>
<i>Marc Eadie (co-chair)</i>	<i>Frank Scott</i>
<i>Chris Morton (co-chair)</i>	<i>Bob Sitten</i>
<i>Shannon Hicks</i>	<i>Jeniece Sowell</i>
<i>Heather Howell</i>	<i>Bonnie Wirrick</i>

Team Products and Timeline

The visioning timeline used was the year 2020. The Team was tasked to deliver a concise listing of recommendations to the Church Council and church leadership. The Team’s products are to be used as suggested starting points, catalyzing Lynn Haven Church activities, organization, and future decisions. It is envisioned that the visioning process does not end with this report, but will be periodically revisited so as to confirm and maintain future focus.

Team Actions and Activities

The Team determined that it needed to better understand the Lynn Haven Church, including its current capabilities, culture, resources, facilities, ministries, people, and surrounding community. In support of this, the Team engaged in several efforts, including the following:

Congregational Surveys

The Team enlisted the support of online survey services to query our congregation. Six surveys were developed by the Team and aligned to the categories identified in Bishop Robert Schnase’s book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. The categories included Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. The surveys also collected limited demographic data of the Lynn Haven Church.

Survey response rates were acceptable, generally meeting or slightly exceeding the industry average of 20%. The raw data from the surveys is considered sensitive and will not be part of this report. It has been assembled and forwarded to the appropriate church leadership.

Every survey response was carefully read and analyzed by the Team members, and each survey's results were captured, summarized, and condensed into higher-level themes. In addition, any urgent issues (aka, "Must-Fix-Now") were forwarded to the church staff/leadership along with low/no-cost suggestions that would have immediate positive impacts (aka, "Do-it-Now"). The survey themes, along with other items generated through Team discussions, served as the basis for many of the Team recommendations listed later in this document.

Percept Group Ministry Area Study

In support of understanding the community surrounding the Lynn Haven Church, the Team requested and received several 2012 Ministry Area Profile reports, showing demographic information for 5, 10, and 15-mile distances from the church. These demographic reports were provided to the church free of charge by the PerceptGroup (www.perceptgroup.com).

Ministry Assessment

Using the same online survey services, the Team requested information on each of the church's ministry offerings. 72 ministries were identified, and the Team was able to gain a better understanding of each ministry's goals and use of church resources. Each ministry was linked to at least one of Robert Schnase's practices of fruitful congregations. As the Team moved through the visioning process, the ministry data was used to identify gaps, overages, or duplications in our ministry makeup.

Community Needs

One of the final data collection efforts of the Team was that of understanding the needs of our surrounding community. The Team hosted a workshop with leaders in our community and interviewed them to understand (from their professional perspective) the most-pressing needs of our community, how their organization worked to meet these needs, and in what ways their organization could utilize outside support.

The Team's effort in understanding community needs was not exhaustive, but focused on community leaders within the membership of the Lynn Haven Church. Community organizations that participated in the Team's meetings included: Anchorage Children's Home, Haney Vocational School, City of Lynn Haven Commission, Bay County Commission, Bay County Schools, Life Management Center, Children's Home Society, Guardian Ad Litem, and Hand-Up International.

This assessment of community needs was highly enlightening and revealed sizeable needs in our community. As a result, the committee concluded that the Lynn Haven Church should increase awareness, engage in training, and implement programs based on the community needs.

Guiding Principles

During meetings and discussions, the Team agreed that the Lynn Haven Church should align to the structure of the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations (*Five Practices*). This includes aligning all aspects of church operations, church ministries, resources, and staffing. This is a critical element of the Team's efforts. The thinking was that adopting the

Five Practices and organizing the church along those categories would well-position the Lynn Haven Church to impact our local community and world for Christ. Based on this decision, the *Five Practices* served as a basis for the recommendations, structure, values, and goals of the Lynn Haven Church. Listed below are the general definitions for each of the *Five Practices*, borrowing from insights provided by Bishop Schnase.

In addition, the team reviewed the existing mission and purpose statements for the United Methodist Church, our Conference (AL/West FL), and our District. This corporate information was used to develop specific statements for the Lynn Haven Church, which are also listed below.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, Definitions

Radical Hospitality

Radical Hospitality is the active, over-the-top desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ. It involves a restlessness caused by the realization that so many people do not have a relationship to a faith community.

Passionate Worship

Passionate Worship is worship that connects people to God and one another; worship that is authentic, alive, creative, and comprehensible, where people experience the life-changing presence of God in the presence of others.

Intentional Faith Development

Intentional Faith Development includes high-quality learning experiences that help people understand Scripture, faith, and life in the supportive nurture of caring relationships.

Risk Taking Mission and Service

Risk Taking Mission and Service includes the projects, the efforts, and work people do to make a positive difference in the lives of others for the purposes of Christ, whether or not they will ever be part of the community of faith. It involves pushing beyond ordinary service and everyday missions to offer extraordinary opportunities for life-changing engagement with people.

Extravagant Generosity

Extravagant Generosity describes practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures. It describes lavish sharing, sacrifice, and giving in service to God and neighbor.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lynn Haven United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who seek to change their community and world.

Purpose

Changing lives, changing our community, and changing the world for Christ.

Vision

2020 Vision: A Fruitful Congregation for Christ

Core Values

One of the responsibilities of the Team was to revisit, refine, and reaffirm the core values of the Lynn Haven Church. To accomplish this, the Team thoroughly reviewed the current core value listing and mapped them to the *Five Practices* structure identified previously. The resulting core values do not significantly depart from the old listing. They are rephrased within the structure of the *Five Practices*, and will better integrate with the church's organizational structure, ministries, and vision. The Team recommends the use of the following core values for the Lynn Haven Church:

1) Radical Hospitality

(Romans 12:9-21) We offer the invitation and embrace of Jesus Christ to all people. We sense a calling and responsibility to pray and work to invite others and to help them feel welcome and supported in their faith journey.

2) Passionate Worship

(John 4:24) We are honest before God and one another. We are open to God's presence and will for our lives. We earnestly seek to enhance the quality of worship in order to not only deepen our own faith, but also to allow God to use us and our congregation to offer hope, life, and love to others.

3) Intentional Faith Development

(1 Corinthians 12) We seek to equip our congregation for the unique mission God has given each person to accomplish. We seek to teach the Bible, the authoritative and truthful Word of God, through Life Groups (Bible study classes, Sunday school, small groups, social groups, and support groups). We desire to teach special topics of interest to attract all people.

4) Risk-Taking Mission and Service

(Matthew 25:31-46) We seek to offer ministry opportunities that stretch our congregation, causing us to do something for the good of others out of a deep desire to serve Christ because of the love He has shown us. Persons of all ages are encouraged to participate in the teaching and experiential components of these service ministries, including children and youth. We collaborate with other churches, denominations, civic organizations, social agencies, and non-profit groups to make a difference in the lives of unchurched people in our community and world.

5) Extravagant Generosity

(2 Corinthians 9:6-15) We speak confidently and faithfully about money, generosity, and the difference giving makes for the purposes of Christ and the life of the giver. We emphasize mission, purpose and life-changing results with our spending. We seek opportunities to teach, model and cultivate generosity among children, youth, and adults.

Goals

The Team sought to identify goals for the Lynn Haven Church that aligned with our vision structure, but we did not seek goals that were based on human desires or ambition. We sought inspiration and guidance from God on how best to challenge our church and pursue our vision for Christ. These goals are not random numbers. These goals are God-sized, and many of them are intentionally not humanly possible. Only by the work of God's Holy Spirit will we reach them. The focus should not be the goals themselves, but instead should be on our congregation living out the underlying core values. This, in turn, will enable the Lynn Haven Church to do God's will and accomplish His purposes.

By the year 2020, with God's help, the Lynn Haven Church seeks to:

1) Claim 2,020 Professions of Faith

This goal stands above all other goals. Professions of Faith represent changed lives for Christ, lives that will never be the same, souls that are saved. This is what it's all about. This is "the main thing." The church should remember that all other goals and recommendations ultimately trace back to professions of faith.

Professions of faith should include those that give their lives to Christ during all church-sponsored ministries such as worship services, VBS programs, youth weeks, special music events, local service events, and international mission trips.

Every member of the Lynn Haven Church can help with this goal. It's everyone's responsibility to do their part in creating an environment and culture that helps people find fellowship in Christ.

2) See 2,020 People in Weekly Worship Services

The size of worship services is not itself a direct measure of saved lives, but it does provide a measure of those that consistently seek to worship and glorify Jesus. This goal is not simply an effort to grow numbers, nor is it a goal that should dictate any type of building program.

A supporting goal here is to double the opportunities for worship offered by the Lynn Haven Church, including alternative locations and time slots: 10 passionate worship services in place and thriving by the year 2020.

3) Double the Percentage of Worshipers in Life Groups

Participation in some form of church Life Group is critical to sustaining one's life in Christ. There is a progression from the initial profession of faith, to participation in weekly worship, to consistent participation in a smaller community of believers (Life Group).

To achieve this goal, the Lynn Haven Church will need many more Life Groups and many more Life Group leaders, not to mention new faith development curriculum. In fact, this goal will require creating an *average* of 20 new Life Groups per year.

4) *Double our Involvement in Mission/Service*

Continuing the progression from worship involvement to consistent Life Group participation and faith development, Christians are called to spread the gospel and the love of Christ through service to the community and beyond. Members of the Lynn Haven Church are commanded by God's Word to reach out to those in need with spiritual, physical, and emotional help. Reaching this goal will require a doubling in the percentage of worshipers actively engaged in local service projects, along with a two-fold increase in our mission spending and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) team participation.

5) *Retire all Debts*

Freeing the church from the financial burden of debt service will allow more of its resources to be applied to the goals and recommendations in this report. This goal is an enabler to effective missions, excellent faith development, passionate worship services, and changed lives.

Recommendations

The following Team recommendations are grouped into two sets. The first set of recommendations fit neatly under each of the *Five Practices*. The second set of recommendations is more functional and foundational in nature, and may fit into multiple practices. All recommendations are based on information collected and discussions held during the Team's meetings.

Radical Hospitality

Distinctive Branding

In order to support the goals associated with Radical Hospitality, improve communications, and increase our impact to the community, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church develop and adopt a branding strategy that is recognizable and distinctive. The recent and anticipated future expansion of the Lynn Haven Church has significantly increased our physical exposure to our community. There should be no confusion about what facilities, ministries, missions, or advertisements are associated with the Lynn Haven Church.

Radicalize Hospitality

By most accounts, the Lynn Haven Church is known (both internally and externally) as a friendly church. Radical hospitality goes beyond being friendly and courteous; it surprises newcomers with a glimpse of the unmerited gracious love of God that we see in Christ. In order to reach our 2020 goals, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church transform our current culture of basic hospitality to a radical, over-the-top approach to hospitality. Instill radical hospitality within our membership and underscore the idea that it isn't just the responsibility of a few people, but takes the entire body of Christ to reflect this kind of hospitality. Develop campus cultures that exhibit "radical" hospitality both when people enter through our doors and when we go out into the community. Ensure consistent and effective follow-up is performed with guests, newcomers, and inactive members.

Passionate Worship

Intentional Worship Service Definition and Design

To encourage people to prioritize their lives and consistently attend worship, we must continuously and intentionally design our worship services to meet the needs of our community of faith. In order to achieve the 2020 goals associated with Passionate Worship, we recommend the Lynn Haven Church examine the current worship service offerings and structure, and make intentional decisions regarding the makeup of current and future offerings. Structure and format all worship service times to increase the number and types of worship services being offered. Make specific efforts to preserve the sense of unity within the Lynn Haven Church membership, while at the same time promoting diversity in worship for our community. Continue offering the One Worship experience on a periodic basis and intentionally promote unity among all services and campus locations. Take advantage of new time slot opportunities and location alternatives for new worship services (for example, Saturday night services, or Sunday service support to nearby struggling churches).

Intentional Faith Development

Communicate Class/Sport/Life Group Offerings, Offer Additional Options

In order to reach the 2020 goals of Intentional Faith Development, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church clearly articulate learning and fellowship opportunities. Offer new classes, sports opportunities, and Life Groups that anticipate/meet the needs of our church and community. Work closely with our risk-taking missions and service practices. Get outside the walls and meet people where they can be offered a way to connect with our community of faith.

Clearly Defined Discipleship Path

Continue to be intentional about growing disciples at every age and stage of their Christian walk. In order to reach the goals of Intentional Faith Development, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church develop and communicate a path to discipleship that will challenge adults, youth, and children to further their Christian development. Ensure that members and newcomers, representing many different life situations, clearly understand where they can plug in and develop as disciples of Christ. Create a culture of continuous learning, development, and growth.

Training for Leadership Roles

To increase the number of Life Groups and programs at the Lynn Haven Church, we need additional passionate and capable leaders. In order to reach the 2020 Life Group participation goals, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church refine and better define processes to train and engage members in leadership opportunities. Adults, young adults, youth, and children are needed to lead ministries, projects, Life Groups, fundraisers, sports camps, community events, etc. With a clearly defined discipleship path in place, all members of the Lynn Haven Church should be challenged to engage in leadership opportunities.

Risk Taking Mission and Service

Address Local Community Needs

In order to understand and positively impact our local community for Christ, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church engage in the following:

- 1) Awareness: Establish programs at the Lynn Haven Church to increase the awareness of needs in our community. Subjects may include the effects of poverty, mental illness, foster care system, support to disadvantaged schools, alcohol and drug abuse, etc. Increase awareness of these needs at the Lynn Haven Church by making it a normal part of our small group and weekly worship celebrations.
- 2) Training: Develop and promote training programs to educate and enable church members to take effective action in support of our community's needs. Host training and awareness events at the church campus locations for both church members and community residents.
- 3) Action: Intentionally align the outreach ministries of the Lynn Haven Church to help meet the needs of our community. We recognize that the Fusion facility can serve as a key resource in the outreach efforts of the Lynn Haven Church.
- 4) Partnership: The Lynn Haven Church should seek partnerships with local churches, non-profit organizations, or government agencies that have effective community programs that align with our goals (for example, St. Andrew Baptist's Center of Hope).

Address Regional/National/International Needs

In support of reaching people for Christ beyond our local community, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church plan and promote additional UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission) service opportunities. We recommend seeking consistent participation of 20% of our worshipers in UMVIM programs. Additionally, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church position itself to allocate 20% of the yearly budget to mission programs.

Extravagant Generosity

Communicate Current Financial Picture

One component of maintaining trust with respect to how our church spends its resources is providing an on-going, easily accessible, clear financial picture. In order to ensure church members are informed about the financial status of the Lynn Haven Church, we recommend that the church leadership establish a presentation schedule to communicate how the church is doing financially, what programs we support, and highlight special opportunities to practice generosity.

Promote, Emphasize Biblical Stewardship

In order to achieve the Biblical financial goals, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church regularly train and educate our members on Biblical stewardship. Include specialized programs, sermon series, and member testimonies that are relevant to all ages. Ensure that the membership of the Lynn Haven Church is offered clear opportunities to practice Biblical stewardship. We believe such an emphasis will significantly increase (perhaps doubling) the number of members who practice tithing.

Debt Retirement Plan

The financial state of the Lynn Haven Church impacts the ability to reach every goal and recommendation in this document. Freeing the church from debt will reveal opportunities across the *Five Practices* spectrum and allow the Lynn Haven Church to launch new programs and ministries, thereby reaching people never thought possible.

In order to increase our ability to pursue and reach all the goals outlined in this report, we recommend that the Lynn Haven Church leadership develop and execute a detailed plan to retire the church's debt by the end of 2020.

Foundational / Operational

Prayer Ministry

The Lynn Haven Church is clearly a spiritually-minded church. We must continue to make prayer the basis for everything we do. Ensure that the membership is aware of corporate prayer opportunities. We recommend that the Lynn Haven Church continuously communicate to members the need to pray regularly as part of their daily routine – even in support of the most humble of details.

Communications

We recommend that the Lynn Haven Church improve communications, both internally (membership awareness) and externally (to our community). Establish processes to ensure consistent and correct information delivery, and maximize the exposure to our church community. Make available to members and guests short summaries of Life Groups, missions, ministries, service opportunities, worship services, and current events. Provide online access to church calendars to include general church events as well as administrative and functional area meetings. Ensure that all contact information related to Life Groups, missions, ministries, and service opportunities are properly controlled and available to staff and members. Ensure that guests have the proper contact information to get plugged in. Standardize and manage the use of technology and online resources, including social media and traditional media formats (print, audio, and video).

One of the first major communication efforts should be aligning staff and congregation to the 2020 Vision. Articulate and communicate the goals through multiple outlets (online, sermons, pastor workshops, staff meetings, church council, prayer meetings, and Life Groups). When we think we have communicated the message enough, do it some more!

Ministry Life Cycle

We recommend that the Lynn Haven Church leadership identify and use processes to expand effective ministries (that align with our vision) and to prune ineffective (or misaligned) ministries.

Efficient Church Structure

Create teams (with staff leaders) for each of the *Five Practice* areas and communicate this alignment to the membership. Ensure that all church ministries have a staff point of contact, and integrate all church-related programs into the ministry structure (e.g., Little Lambs, Fusion Sports, Cub/Boy Scouts, etc.) Affirm or adjust and maintain the right size and shape structures (both campuses) to properly support our pastors, ministry leaders, ministries and members. Efficient organizations empower decisions at the lowest level. Clearly defined staff job descriptions that support the 2020 Vision will help assign responsibility to a position and provide the authority to make decisions for which the staff member is responsible.

Technology and Innovation

Embrace technology and encourage innovation in all *Five Practices*. Technology can help us accomplish our goals and offers ways to implement recommendations. All teams working toward vision goals should consider innovative ideas and available technology.

Closing Thoughts

This is a time for confidence in our great and mighty God. As the Vision Team completed its work, we sensed a bit of uneasiness about the goals and recommendations. In some cases, the word *overwhelming* was used to describe a feeling of nervous excitement and anticipation. This made sense because we were dealing with a future that is unknown to us and recommending God-sized goals for our church. In the end we decided that we would choose not to be overwhelmed by our circumstances or the challenges put before us, but instead we would choose to be overwhelmed by the power and grace of God as he guides us along our journeys.

This is a time for the Lynn Haven Church to recommit itself to reaching these God-sized goals, to embrace the certainty that God has it all under control, and resolve that this vision is much bigger than us – individually and collectively.

This is a time for each member of the Lynn Haven Church to decide whether they want to go “all-in” with Vision 2020 and see it through. One of the keys to success in implementing the Vision Team recommendations and accomplishing the overarching goals is to release the incredible God-given talent within our community of faith. Every member from the youngest to the oldest has a servant role to understand, recognize, and embrace within the Body of Christ.

Your Vision Team thanks the leadership and congregation for their support to this visioning effort, and we thank our church and God for the opportunity to serve.

With God’s power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine. To him be glory in the [Lynn Haven] church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20-21 NCV)
