



Report for
Centreville
United Methodist Church



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

Strengths

1. Missions, Missions, Missions!

Centreville UMC loves to be in mission to serve those in need. Again and again we heard how passionate CUMC is about GRACE Ministries, UFOs, Sneedville, and the many (many) other mission projects you engage in. A “Life of Service” from the Real Discipleship Survey is one of the strongest discipleship expressions at Centreville.

2. It’s Music to Our Ears

We were told frequently during the weekend that Centreville does music with passion, excellence and commitment. The depth of the program is substantial, touching people of all ages with opportunities to reach out to God and community through music. The music program is truly a multi-generational important ministry in the church.

3. Committed Core of Lay Leadership and Pastoral Staff

Centreville is blessed with a passionate and well-disciplined core of lay leadership who strongly desire a vital church. We heard from your leaders and staff how Centreville has transformed their lives. Many spoke of how impressed they are by the way the pastoral team works so well together, modeling using everyone’s gifts for the good of the whole.

4. Generous Sharing of Your Facility

We heard from the self-study and from the staff and laity leaders that Centreville generously hosts all kinds of community groups (Boy Scouts, AA, etc.), offers ESL and Upward Basketball and generously shares space with Korean UMC of Koinonia. We see love for others in the staffing and resources required to make this sharing possible.

5. Desire to Reach a More Diverse Community for Jesus

People spoke passionately about how Jesus has transformed their lives, and how they want others to experience that same transformation. At the Saturday workshop, many people also shared their passion for reaching new neighbors who are more ethnically diverse than those who currently attend Centreville. There is an awareness that almost 50% of the community is not Euro-American.



Challenges

1. Focus

CUMC is a church that is doing a lot of things. Many mentioned that while there are a lot of missions and worship services, there are too many to accomplish and fill with the resources available. While looking at current resources (both human and capital) there is a need to figure out what are the highest priorities and the best use of those resources. At Saturday's retreat we heard in several different places that some things need to be released and others narrowed in focus in order to avoid burnout and mission fatigue. We also heard from many leaders that ministry areas are increasingly siloed, disconnected from the whole of the work of the church.

2. Hospitality

CUMC is a friendly church. Yet mystery worshippers identified that on the whole they didn't feel welcomed by the people of the church. Many described the mass exodus after each worship service and felt a loss of fellowship opportunities. Mystery worshippers told of "insider" practices like holding hands at the 8:15 am service that made them very uncomfortable. There is work to be done to welcome people into the life of the church.

3. Longing for the Past

CUMC was a very large church not too long ago, but has declined in worship attendance fairly substantially over the last 10-15 years. And yet many of the same missions, ministry, and worship services remain strategically in place for a much larger church with fewer devoted participants. We wonder, what new stories could be told, and what new strategies for worship and discipleship could more closely match the current realities?

4. Lack of Volunteers

The leadership team as well as the newcomers identified that CUMC currently has about 10% of the people doing 90% of the work. You told us that the same faces are showing up again and again at activities. While some folks are incredibly passionate and committed, many people in the church are less connected and missing discipleship opportunities as a result.

5. A Scarcity Mentality

As a result of the current financial situation with operations at CUMC and the current debt level on the building, the budget has been cut and programs have been reduced. The team heard anxiety around scarce resources at CUMC that suggest because of the current budget reality there is no room to expand or create or innovate. This scarcity is clearly heard by the even the youth and newcomers to the church and is as much a discipleship issue as a resources issue.



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. Developing a “Great Commission” Vision for Change

Make sure that no one misses out on God’s grace. — Hebrews 12: 15

When a church is clearly aligned around a vision stemming from the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19- 20, it becomes much easier for the staff, the church leadership and the congregation to do the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The gifts of the church community are best stewarded when there is clarity of vision, adherence to internal core values, and the realistic meeting of the greater Centreville community expectations.

1. We discerned that as it seeks to go to the next level, it is essential for CUMC to have clarity around a compelling vision of disciple-making. We would like you to consider a vision of disciple-making that includes the word “share” or “connect” and the importance of both sharing the “Good News” message of Jesus Christ with a hurting world and connecting with people who do not know Christ or one another. The result should lead to a new vision for CUMC.
2. In addition, we discerned that CUMC should develop 4-5 core values (guiding principles that dictate behavior and action) that answer the question “What does God want from CUMC?”
3. We further discerned that an environmental or external scan is necessary in determining the expectations of the immediate Centreville community. We believe that this scan will raise awareness in the community as well as inform Centreville Mission Teams of the opportunities and possible partnerships and will involve engaging with the neighbors and businesses around the church. This work will answer the question “How are we relational to our neighbors?” The CUMC Mentor has done work like this and can be helpful with this project.
4. To accomplish the above, there will be a Vision Alignment Team (VAT) of 6- 8 persons, nominated by the Senior Pastor and selected by the Executive Committee. The VAT will be created by **February 2019**.
 - a. The VAT will implement and be accountable for developing and implementing the vision and values as well as the external scan mentioned above.
 - b. All ministries of the CUMC will be guided by the vision and values and the VAT will help determine priorities and resources accordingly. The team will also help with alignment of ministries so that no ministry is siloed. This will build up capacity for doing the work of alignment around vision as a new vision is developed. The basic questions for ministry alignment are:
 - i. Does this align with the vision?
 - ii. Is this where God is calling us to prioritize our time and resources?
 - iii. Is Vision in the driver’s seat? Or are we letting Relationships, Programs and/or Maintenance drive our decisions for the future?
 - c. This team will develop and propose to the church a vision for the next season of ministry. As part of this work, this team will develop clarity around a shared meaning of discipleship, so that there is a common and energized understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. The goal would be completion of this new vision by **November 2019**.
 - d. We suggest that a sermon series on the church’s “Great Commission” vision be preached and that a Journey spiritual formation study be conducted in which persons will share their personal Jesus stories. We strongly suggest that all persons involved in church leadership take this study.



- e. As part of this alignment, the VAT should read together and think through CUMC application of:
 - i. *Built to Last* by Jim Collins, so that the team/church can see the connection between and importance of vision and core values.
 - ii. *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, so that the team/church can see a vision of how a church can be aligned for effectiveness.
 - iii. *Connect!* by Phil Maynard so that the team/church can have practical ideas and application on outreach.
 - iv. *Evangelism in the Inventive Age* by Doug Pagitt, so that the team/church can understand the importance of sharing Jesus with a changing world.
- 5. This is ongoing work for the church and should be revisited every two or three years after initial completion. Eventually, the work of the VAT can be rolled into the role and work of the Executive Committee.

2. Relationships

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. — Matthew 10:40

Christians are called to welcome others as we are welcomed by Christ. CUMC has a desire to love and welcome neighbors and guests. However, the mystery worshippers helped the congregation become aware that while they are friendly, and they have some systems that work, the congregation and the facilities are not always intentionally welcoming. The WIT recommends:

1. Establishing a Firm Theological Foundation for Deep Hospitality and Developing Relationships

- a. By **January 2019** the pastors should develop a sermon series to establish the theology of hospitality so that the whole church is considering how God welcomes them and they welcome others. Suggested book: Amy Oden's *God's Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World*.
- b. By **March 2019**, CUMC will host church-wide training on hospitality and welcoming to empower all to be a welcoming presence both at Centreville UMC and in Centreville, VA. In God's church all the people of the church are greeters for the Kingdom. District Staff can provide and facilitate this training.

2. Welcoming Guests

- a. By **February 2019**, the Executive Committee and Senior Pastor will appoint three to five people to form a Hospitality Team (HT). This group should include people who have gifts of hospitality, networking, event planning, communications, and leadership.
- b. By **September 2019** the HT will develop a comprehensive plan of action for welcoming guests and inviting the local community, incorporating the following strategies and ideas:
 - i. RESEARCH:
 - 1. The HT will research the hospitality practices of at least three other churches identified as particularly adept at welcoming guests, determining those practices that CUMC might incorporate into everyday use. District can offer ideas of who to contact.
 - 2. The HT will review the mystery worshiper reports and solicit the input of other guests who are not part of CUMC to better understand the experiences of those not integrated into CUMC life. District can send additional mystery worshippers as necessary.
 - 3. The HT will become a learning team and identify and implement best practices for hospitality. We suggest reviewing: *Beyond the First Visit* by Gary



MacIntosh and the Hospitality chapter from *Shift 2.0* by Phil Maynard. Consider inviting experts in the area of hospitality, such as hotel and other hospitality industry leaders.

4. By **January 2020** the HT will create a Building Hosting Team. The CUMC facilities are used extensively by outside groups, such as Upward, AA and ESL. CUMC can interact with the greater community by being better hosts to those groups when they are in the building. The HT will recruit and train people that provide hospitality with neighbors using the building (including welcome, directions, conversation and refreshments).
- ii. COMMUNICATIONS:
 1. Review the content of the bulletin, emails, and weekly announcements to ensure they are accessible and understandable to guests not familiar with CUMC programs and internal language.
 2. Develop tangible ways to communicate to the greater Centreville community, including possible external road signs as allowed by the County of Fairfax. The District has resources for developing this kind of communication.
 3. By **Easter 2019**, the HT and Trustees will identify, and address as needed, temporary ministry signs (such as sandwich boards) to assist newcomers as they move from the parking lot to the sanctuary and navigate the building.
3. **Relating with the Greater Community** - People gather most organically in their homes, in their workplaces, and in 'third places', such as coffee houses, clubs and parks.
 - a. By **September 2019**, the Executive Committee will recruit a Community Connect Team of 5-8 people with gifts in communications, community connections, and hospitality.
 - b. Beginning in **January 2020**, the HT will work to develop possibilities and implement one or two 'third place' ministries, which will connect the congregation to more diverse neighbors in places where those neighbors already gather. Suggested resource: The Tom Bandy guides from *MissionInsite*, that describe the neighbors. The District office can assist the HT with accessing and interpreting these guides.
 - c. By **Easter of 2020** the HT should lead congregational prayer walks around local neighborhoods and possible third place sites. Training on prayer walking is available from the District.
 - d. The HT should visit and analyze at least three examples of 'third place' ministry, such as:
 - i. A soccer field
 - ii. A gym
 - iii. Coffee shop
 - iv. Restaurants
 - e. At least two of these places should be tried by the pastors and other leaders for studies, committee meetings, and other activities by **September 2020**. Experiment and see what works in this context and where people gather. The goal is for CUMC to be seen outside the building and part of the greater whole of the Centreville community.

3. Creating a Worship Experience that Transforms Lives

O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to the Lord with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
— Psalm 95

A common theme at CUMC is the love of worship and yet there is also a recognition of new needs and challenges around worship as it exists today. One desire we heard from many on the weekend is



to have worship in which the pews are filled with praise and energy! We also heard some concerns about the worship times and how they align with discipleship needs. There were also concerns voiced at the newcomers meeting and on the Saturday retreat about the location of the 11:02 service.

1. The leadership and church need to answer the question “Why do we worship?” We recommend the pastors teach and preach on the theology of worship so that the entire worshipping community better understands how God intends for worship to build community and reach out to others. The Worship Team is encouraged to work with texts such as *Worship Ways* and *Worship as Evangelism* as part of this work.
2. The Executive Committee should create a Worship Revitalization Task Force (WRTF) to include a representative of each current worship service and appropriate staff and clergy, and at least one member of the VAT from #1 above. The first meeting of this team will be by **May 1, 2019**. Questions to consider and report back to the Executive Committee by the WRTF include:
 - a. Why are you currently worshipping at the times and in the current styles of worship?
 - b. Who are you trying to reach?
 - c. How is worship affected by the vision work from the VAT in #1 above?
 - d. Specifically, the WRTF should explore a new time and space for the current 11:02 service as suggested several times during the NLI weekend.
 - e. A new worship arrangement should be proposed to the Executive Committee, approved by the Church Council and executed on an experimental basis for 6 months at a time by **Fall 2019**.
3. There is a longing in this community for Sunday School for all ages. The church realizes the importance of discipleship while balancing that reality with the schedules of people in the community. Creating a Sunday morning discipleship hour could create the opportunity for all who attend to participate. This should be part of the work of the Worship Revitalization Task Force and could be tested with the new worship plan in the **Fall of 2019**.
4. CUMC has a strong music program, as we noted in the Strengths above. In order to best leverage this strength, the Music staff should create a Music Dream Team to include one of the pastors and a member from each of the choirs and band. This team will dream about ways that CUMC can take the beautiful gift of music and share it with the community in a way that helps the community see CUMC’s music as a gift and resource. The first meeting will be **June 2019**. In addition to this CUMC should connect with the local middle and high schools seeking partnership and offerings in worship for these communities. This team should also look for ways to connect to the community outside the church buildings by **December 2019** to help the community find CUMC music by Christmas.
5. Explore new means of technology (such as livestreaming worship) to connect with those unable to attend on Sunday mornings and engage those who travel for work or sports, or have second homes, etc. This should happen by **January 2020**.

4. Servant Leadership (Lay Leadership Development)

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. — Matthew 20:28

In today’s world we all understand what it means to volunteer. A volunteer is a person who freely offers to undertake a task. As Christians, we look to Jesus’ life as a model for how we are to serve and that takes volunteering to a new level. The servant heart is the fundamental characteristic of a servant leader. It is about wanting to help others because we were loved first by God. It is about identifying and meeting the needs of the community and the church because of a calling from God. We heard several times during the weekend about a committed core, about a desire for more volunteers, and about a desire for more active participants in the life of the church.



As author Jim Collins writes in his book *Good to Great*, we need the right people on the bus, the right combination of people in the right seats, and the right job for each person on the team. Leaders are identified, equipped, and nurtured through an intentional leadership development process. Without a plan there is a lack of understanding about the job and the commitment when a person agrees to a volunteer position.

1. In order to build the leadership and address the concerns noted by the congregation, an intentional process will be put into place by the Nominations and Leadership Development Team in order to identify, raise up and equip existing and future leaders of the church. The plan should include:
 - a. Mentoring. By **January 2019**, each Pastor will begin a six-month mentoring relationship with 4 individuals who are not currently serving in a leadership capacity. The District can help facilitate the development of this mentorship process.
 - b. Leadership Academy. The team should review available systems for developing an ongoing leadership academy, and have it in place by **January 2020**. The Mentor has some experience with this and can help the team.
2. By **Lent 2019** we suggest to the Spiritual Formation Council that as part of the Journey Program they create learning communities that meet on-site, off-site, or online that would study the theology behind servant leaders. Consider materials such as:
 - a. *Power of Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf
 - b. *Lead Like Jesus* by Ken Blanchard & Phil Hodges
 - c. *The Volunteer Church* by Leith Anderson & Jill Fox
3. Database. Develop a new database of skills, such as the S.H.A.P.E., or Clifton's StrengthsFinder for use by Team Leaders and the Nominations Team by **Fall 2019** to help identify new leaders and increase the servant leadership of the church.
4. The Worship Team should also consider making servant leadership a church-wide sermon series and book study, again, suggesting the above materials as reference. The deeper CUMC goes in discipleship around the change of heart a Christian life brings, the more people will understand themselves as servants of God and others in the name of the One who loved them first. This is the key to the issue of 'more volunteers'.

5. Generosity

What I mean is this: the one who sows a small number of seeds will also reap a small crop, and the one who sows a generous amount of seeds will also reap a generous crop. Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver. — 2 Cor 9:6-7

We heard over and over again how crippling the debt is at Centreville. We also heard that issues with the building are requiring major investments of money and time. When we asked people on the weekend what their highest priority desires were, many of them told us to pay off the debt and get finances into a more stable place. Consider what it would be like to have the mortgage payment of \$31,000 per month available to the mission and ministry of the church. How freeing would it be to make decisions based upon the best ways to make disciples of Jesus, rather than "What can we afford"? From easing of the staffing and budget cuts that have become the norm, to the entrance of new and bigger dreams for the future of CUMC — so many things could happen if this debt was not such a large item in the budget. Working on this issue is also an opportunity to cultivate the generosity of the individuals in the congregation, a spiritual key that enables us to trust God more deeply in all areas of our lives.

1. By **February 2019**, the Spiritual Formation Council will facilitate training in personal financial stewardship, along the lines of Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace* or Tom Berlin's *Defying*



Gravity. The intention of this process is to help each individual and family understand their own personal context of financial stewardship in light of God's generosity to us all.

2. By **September 2019**, the Finance Committee (and Trustee Committee as needed) will report to the Executive Committee a Master Financial Plan (MFP) to include:
 - a. a ministry budget
 - b. a plan for debt reduction in 5 years
 - c. a plan for facility upgrades, from the standpoint of both guests of worship, as well as the tremendous number of people using the facilities every day. Consider:
 - i. Technology such as live-streaming of worship, sound, connections, database, and other identified technology needs.
 - ii. A more welcoming environment for guests of the church, such as inviting entrances, out of sight storage, wall paint, even additional artwork.
 - d. a plan for future facility upgrades over the next 5-10 years.
 - e. The Executive Committee will work with the Church Council to finalize and enact the plan, which is essentially a total needs assessment for this time in the life of the church.
3. By **January 2020**, in order to financially support the key elements of the Master Financial Plan, the Finance Committee will recommend to the full Church Council a five year strategy which will include an annual generosity emphasis related to the ministry budget and may include a future or continued capital campaign related to debt reduction and upgrades. This campaign will encourage those new to Centreville to join the ongoing generosity of the more tenured members in their ongoing devotion to the church and its ministry.



Next Steps

Centreville UMC 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:

- Sunday, November 18 at 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 27 at 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 28 at 10 a.m.
- Sunday December 2 at 6:30 p.m.

The congregation will vote on this report at an official church conference led by the district superintendent (or elder designated by the DS) on **Tuesday, December 11 at 7:30 p.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, and the resources of NLI will move on to other churches.

Report Written by:

Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert, Rev. Tim Craig, District Superintendent Cathy Abbott, Rev. Amy Grant, Maria Maxwell, Rev. Tim Ward, and Kim Johnson



Proposed Innovations Timeline

