

Our Vision Statement: **"To Love God, Share Christ, and Serve the World"**

*"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this in gentleness and respect. . . " 1 Peter 3:15*

First Church's 2007 Focus: **"Building on a 'Greater Love'"**

*"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13 NIV*

## **Final Children's and Young Adult Ministries Team Report to the April 22, 2007 Congregational Business Meeting**

**The Team's Mission** approved by the April, 2006 Congregational Business Meeting: "That an Ad-Hoc Team be formed to develop recommendations regarding what steps First Church needs to take to develop a leading edge ministry to Children and Young Families.

### **Foregone Conclusions:**

A. We are a spiritually based congregation. We are all members of the Body of Christ, working together as one healthy body to further Christ's work on this earth.

B. Our church members support our Vision Statement and our Statement of Purpose found in the Constitution.

C. Children's and Young Adult Ministries are not stand alone ministries. They are intertwined with the total church ministry. Therefore some of the following recommendations although they may appear to be beyond Children's/Young Adult Ministries, need to be adopted as this congregation is one body.

**Some changes are already being made!** The congregation is already taking steps to implement new ideas since the April, 2006 Congregational Business Meeting. Examples include: (a.) more church-wide fellowship events are planned starting May, 2007; (b.) a small coffee area is now located in the hallway Prior to SS; (c.) some church organizations have already, or are in the midst of establishing mission statements or statements of purpose; (d.) a sermon series earlier this year addressed our 2007 Focus: "Building a Greater Love"; (e.) the Executive committee is revising pastoral job description to reflect pastoral ministries by age groups; (f.) formal congregational feedback opportunities are taking place; (g.) various web site changes have been made to reflect some of our recent thinking, (h.) the CDC is incorporating fresh ideas to form a closer knit relationship with First Church. There are probably others.

### **The Final Report:**

A. **Early February, 2007:** The C-YAM Team provided a list of specific job responsibilities to the Executive Committee for their preparation of the proposed Director of Christian Nurture job description.

B. **Today (April 22, 2007):** The C-YAM Team recommends that the First Church of the Brethren adopt the following general strategies as a portion of its total ministry.

1. Strive for a stronger Christian Nurture focus via staffing, congregational enlistment and training.
2. Become a more inclusive congregation.
3. The Congregation supports the Children's and Young Adult Ministries.
4. The Congregation becomes more inviting, welcoming, assimilating, nurturing and caring.
5. All church organizations have written mission or vision statements and that are available and widely communicated to the Congregation. All members and friends of the congregation have a common understanding of the organizations' purposes.
6. First Church provides more congregational fellowship opportunities on Sunday mornings and throughout the week.
7. Each church member is an ambassador of First Church (using tools such as pamphlets and other handouts provided by the church).
8. Safe Sanctuary: Take the necessary steps to become a Safe Sanctuary facility, then publicize it.
9. Establish a formalized plan for big sister / big brother / friend relationships with our youth, college students and others that have graduated from high school, and provide fellowship opportunities when they

are home for holidays, breaks and summer vacations.

10. The congregation accepts the philosophy that we are an experimenting church. We will try new ideas. If the idea works, continue on; if the idea does not work, drop it, but there is a NO FAULT or NO BLAME attitude.

The above general strategies will be achieved through short, medium and long range plans carried out by the appropriate church organizations or ad-hoc teams. Following are some suggestions.

#### **What can we do now (next 6 months)?**

- A. Publicize and market our total Church Ministry by our church members and friends via pamphlets, mailings, and web site.
  - B. Publicize and market our Sunday School Ministry by our church members and friends via pamphlets, bulletin inset, newsletter and web site. (Development of the publicity information is already underway).
  - C. Provide more frequent inter-generational fellowship opportunities.
  - D. Hospitality: Provide an elective and/or investigate the feasibility to bring in a denominational hospitality expert for a weekend of hospitality training for the entire congregation.
  - E. All church organizations prepare and incorporate Mission Statements for their reason for being. Those Mission Statements are readily available to the congregation.
  - F. Begin taking steps to incorporate ministries to Young Adults (post high through age 35 approx.).
  - G. Pastors and congregation affiliate more closely with the Child Development Center and Scouting programs, recognizing that they are a part of First Church and are sources for new members.
  - H. Encourage the congregation to support the "1,000 Ideas" process.
- This is not a complete list. There are undoubtedly other suggestions.

#### **What can we do in the medium range (6 months - 1-1/2 years)?**

- A. A Director of Christian Nurture (or whatever title the congregation adopts) is on staff and that Children's and Young Adult Ministries are being developed and implemented.
  - B. Consider a Wednesday Night Out (or some other week-night) for a meal, fellowship, Bible study, electives, and children's activities. Hire a consultant if needed to present the pros and cons, then make a congregational decision.
  - C. Consider restructuring a portion of the Nurture Commission into Ministries by General Age Groups, then develop a ministry plan for each group.
  - D. Consider implementing other techniques that seem to work in other growing churches.
- This also is not a complete list. There are undoubtedly other suggestions.

#### **What can we do in the longer range (beyond 1-1/2 years)?**

- A. There are undoubtedly suggestions being considered by the congregation.

#### **As We Journey - - -**

We will be more closely bound to each other.

Relationships with each other will be far more important to us than our concerns about the details of our programs.

More church members will want to attend rather than feel obligated to attend on Sunday morning.

We will be more welcoming.

We will be more friendly.

We will be more tolerant.

We will be more forgiving.

And we will be closer to our vision of

***"Loving God, Sharing Christ, and Serving the World"***

Signed: John Anderson, Larry Gibble, Pat Gibble, Beth Hollenberg, Stephanie Stoolmaker.