



UBC Strategy Team Update May 6, 2019

The following report was presented at the May 6th Church Meeting.

When we were here last, we showed you a nice neat diagram of how we thought that the Strategy Team process would proceed: mission...vision...values...strategy. We also shared when and how we would communicate the work of the Strategy Team to the congregation.

Well, that is not how the process has gone. It has been totally unexpected, but God-driven and God-inspired.

When we started in July, we knew - almost from our very first meetings that God was doing a new thing...that our usual way of thinking about strategy and planning and working in groups was going to be different. We did not know that our ideas were going to be turned upside down and inside out. He has required us to *move beyond reliance on human thinking and strategizing to a place of deep listening and response to the Spirit of God within and among us.*

We are being transformed as a body. It was as if God was saying, you are not ready for what I am about to do. I cannot put this new vision in that old vessel. I need you to be in a process of spiritual transformation individually and together as a Strategy Team. And over the last 8 months, He has been taking us individually and together through a process of transformation that is like nothing we have experienced previously.

It has been humbling to say the least...The ST is composed of ministers, deacons, trustees, sunday school teachers, missionaries, deaconesses, choir members, ministry leaders, long time and newer members, and none of us was ready, and none of us expected or understood the work that God was going to require in us before we could do the work of the team. Each of us needed to be in a spiritual transformation process so that we *will be able to notice what God is up to now... and get on board with that rather than being intent on pushing any version of our personal agendas.*



Our book says, "If individuals in the leadership group are not on an intentional journey of transformation in which God is clearing away the debris...It won't matter how intelligent the leaders are, how much theological education they have or how much business acumen they possess."

And I will speak for each of us...the process is amazing!

We have learned some things individually and together. We have grown to a place where we want God and God's will more than anything-more than ego gratification, more than wanting to look good in the eyes of others, more than personal ownership, comfort or advantage. We ask God to bring us to a place where we want God's will alone, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

We are not the same...and we will never be the same. And we thank God that He did not allow us to move forward with information before showing us that we needed transformation.

So while this personal and Strategy Team transformation process is occurring, the work continues to be informed in many ways.

In January, you shared many impassioned ideas about Leadership and Vision in the workshop led by Pastor Rivers.

In February, God led the ST to a Study of Leadership and Church Size: How Strategy Changes with Growth. I am sure that Pastor will share some of this with you in the future. It pointed so clearly to many of our growing pains and how many of our pains are related to the transition over the years from a small church to this wonderful, very large church...Joyfully, it also pointed to our opportunity and responsibility to do something in our community and in this world that could not be accomplished as a smaller church. Most of all, it pointed to the need with growing church size for change, culture change...for Transformation.

In March, God took us further as a group, and 6 members of our team attended a retreat in Chicago entitled, "Transforming Church".

Then beautifully, and with His ease and grace, God ushered us into the Lenten season. Just as we were returning from the Transformation Retreat, He guided Pastor to the sermon series "Being Transformed". I know that you enjoyed the



daily readings on Being Transformed because I have heard many requests for Pastor to continue creating these readings beyond Lent. I will say more about that in a moment.

This is all a part of God's plan. He is telling Pastor, the Strategy Team and the congregation the same thing. We are to be a Transforming Church.

Yes, Union Missionary Baptist and all that means...and a Transforming Church.

Let me just say that it has not been easy to be still. We know that you are so ready to go to the next level and that you want a plan.

BUT what God has revealed in this time is that transformation is not only the process by which we know what the next level is, but being a Transforming Church is actually the next level.

We imagine a transforming church where everyone (and we mean everyone) is in community, where everyone feels valued, where no one is more or less important, and where everyone knows that someone is praying for them.

Imagine a church where people can show up right where they truly are, struggles and all, without being judged.

Imagine a church where faith is not only built, but restored.

Imagine a church where activities and programs do not become more important than being in the presence of God.

Imagine a transforming church where conflict is inevitable, but where we pause long enough to say...God is at work...and then we listen to what God is saying to us in that moment.

Imagine a transformation happening in each of us so that when we show up in the world, that corner of the world is different because God is at work in us in a new way.

Imagine a church where exhaustion from church work is not necessarily a good thing.



Imagine a church where everything that we do is for the purpose of Leading All Generations Into God's Transforming Love.

Imagine if Union became known as that church.

The reason that we can imagine it is because this is exactly what God is doing inside the Strategy Team already, right now.

So here we are - May 6th. And here is the work for the next several months as we have discerned it.

- 1) The Strategy Team is discerning a Mission that Pastor will present in draft form tonight.
- 2) We have prayerfully over the last several months of listening to you and to God been led to key areas of Transformation.

Pastor will come now and walk through the Mission draft and the key areas of Transformation.

*Note: The draft mission statement presented by Pastor is below along with the 7 areas of transformation, in no particular order.

Draft Mission Statement:

**Leading all generations
into the transforming love of God,
equipping disciples to bring renewal and hope
to Durham and the world.**

7 Areas of Transformation:

Transforming Vision
Transforming Mission
Transforming Leadership
Transforming Community/Relationships
Transforming Ministries
Transforming Worship
Transforming Spaces



- 3) From May - August, we will be focused on three areas:
 - Transforming Leadership (We will utilize your feedback from the Leadership workshop.)
 - Transforming Community/Relationships
 - Transforming Worship

- 4) Also in that timeframe, because we have heard you, and because God is calling us into transformation as a body of Christ, over the summer while Bible Study is in recess, Pastor Rivers will provide readings on transformation for the congregation (not weekly!) but several times over the three month period. Because we seek to Lead All Generations into God's Transforming Love, we will share appropriate readings, not just with our adults, but with all generations. We seek for this to be a time for God to speak to us as a congregation in preparation for the Transforming work to follow.

- 5) By September, we will report back to the congregation the progress on the first 3 key areas of transformation: leadership, community/relationships, and worship.

- 6) Also by September, Pastor will begin a series of teachings on Transformation, much like the Leadership/Vision Workshops to begin even more intentionally bringing us into where God is for UBC now and in the future. As the plans unfold, we want all of us to be speaking the same transformation language and walking into the same vision.

That's what we know for now.

We are so humbled by this process for UBC. We are so grateful that God has chosen UBC to be a transforming church! God is at work.

Please continue to share any thoughts with us and to pray for us.

Blessings,
The UBC Strategy Team
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