

Plan for Spiritual Renewal

Executive Summary

Bear Creek UMC has a rich and vibrant history. Begun in the early 1990s, the journey continues in worship, study and service today. In recent years thriving adult classes, improved financial status, and growth in small groups have proved strengths. We have also reaffirmed the importance of worship, study and service as ways to develop discipleship.

In the last year Pastor Orendorff led us in a period of discernment. The initial focus was in four efforts: Family and Children's Ministries, Worship, Evangelism and Communication/Marketing. Many participated in listening and discussing current and future needs. Despite the accomplishments, an undercurrent of dissatisfaction has led some to leave BCUMC. Central themes emerged in needs for spiritual reflection and how we relate to each other.

BCUMC leadership returned to the Mission, Vision and Values Statement to guide the next steps in this journey. The Executive Committee (EC) incorporated input from the four efforts, and proposes a Plan for Spiritual Renewal in three phases. Each phase will have two foci: culture and programs. Throughout both of these areas, the EC recommends weaving a thread of accountability.

Culture is the way in which we relate to each other with compassion, justice, and lovingkindness, as outlined in Bear Creek UMC's Mission, Vision and Values. Programs include events, classes, groups and worship in the communal life of the church which are based around worship, study, and service. The Executive Committee has come to the firm conclusion that accountability is crucial to the success of spiritual renewal. A system must be developed that provides feedback and evaluation of changes toward our preferred culture and to God driven, quality programs.

Phase 1 - A Time of Discernment is nearly complete. Learnings include a continuing disconnect in managing disagreements, and the need to integrate guests into the life of the church. Marketing, Worship, eTeam, and Children/Family Ministries reported on various aspects of church life and created short- and long-term plans.

Phase 2 - A Time of Action will continue with plan approval. Highlights include forming a Cultural Renewal Task Force to renew/revise the Mission, Vision and Values. Another group will develop plans to help integrate guests, members and constituents into discipleship. The effort areas will mature into small groups, committees, or ad hoc groups as work continues.

Phase 3 - A Time of Discipleship will see the integration of the Mission, Vision and Values with culture and programs to foster ongoing individual and congregational spiritual renewal. Continual evaluation will assure the sustainability of changes as new initiatives are identified and nurtured.

Accountability will be woven throughout this time, as processes are refined to measure and provide feedback on cultural change, as well as new and continuing programs.

Submitted June 2009 by the Executive Committee: David Orendorff, Jim Morris, Jeannie Morris, Marge Kuykendall, John Lambert, Susan Jackson, Terri Stewart, Sara Lambert, Robert Stewart.

Plan for Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual Renewal is planned in three phases. Each phase will have two foci: culture and programs. Culture is the way in which people relate to each other, and is articulated in Bear Creek UMC's Mission, Vision and Values (Appendix A). Programs are the shared events in the life of the church based on worship, study, and service. In addition, the key to success of spiritual renewal is a system of holding each other accountable to our preferred culture and to God driven, quality programs.

- **Phase 1** is a Time of Discernment as Bear Creek develops readiness for renewal. It is a time for openness to God's direction. It involves an honest review of both our culture and our programmatic strengths and weaknesses.
- **Phase 2** begins a Time of Action. This is a time to be willingly transformed by God. It involves a congregational re-examination and recommitment to a preferred culture as stated in our Mission, Vision, and Values. It also begins the work of making identified programmatic improvements.
- **Phase 3** is the Time of Discipleship to continue to examine and hold ourselves accountable to our cultural Vision, Mission and Values. We will continue to make programmatic improvements and adjustments in programs as led by God.

Phase 1: A Time of Discernment: BCUMC is currently in this phase, now about 80% complete. The Executive Committee (EC) over the last year has guided the Administrative Council (AC) in a review of culture and programs. The Four Efforts of Worship, Children and Family Ministries, Evangelism and Marketing have completed broad and careful listening to the congregation for program strengths and areas that need improvement.

- Culture:
 - Some improvement has been made in welcoming guest; still need to work on methods of connecting them to the life and disciple-making process of BCUMC.
 - A past history of conflict inhibits the ability to speak directly and compassionately with each other to manage problems before conflicts arise.
 - No consistent accountability for the stated Mission, Vision, and Shared Values.
- Program:
 - The eTeam (Evangelism) completed discernment, and is now studying spiritual disciplines as a small group. They helped form a Youth Choir, and spurred a group to attend "The Race to Reach Out" workshop. R-TRO will guide the effort to reform BCUMC's system for inviting, welcoming and integrating guests into discipleship. eTeam encouraged the focus on spiritual renewal, and led to the study of The Pathway to Renewal by Dan Smith and Mary Sellon. The EC used this book to guide the renewal proposal for BCUMC. Full report is Appendix B.
 - Marketing finished an initial assessment of internal and external communications, and will become a standing Marketing Committee. Recommendations include better use of the web site, signage, print and visual media as a support to church programs. They were first to identify the need to improve connecting guests to the congregation. The full report is Appendix C.
 - Worship Listening Team compiled ideas and studied current and future needs. Changes already made include adding liturgy, supporting acolytes and youth choir, and creating a smoother flow to worship. A New Worship Service Task Force will soon begin work to plan for a second Sunday morning worship service. The full report is Appendix D.
 - Children and Family Ministries Listening Team has gathered input from stakeholders, and will pass this report to the Christian Education Committee for implementation and further planning. Key points include reviewing Safe Sanctuary Policies (safety is highly

Plan for Spiritual Renewal

valued by parents) and expanding program offerings for families with children. The full report is Appendix E.

- Other: During the Time of Discernment, input from several areas reinforced the need to welcome new attendees into the congregation. A program for connecting people to the many facets of discipleship at BCUMC is needed.

Phase 2: A Time of Action: It is time now to act on the discernment of Phase 1.

- Culture

- Cultural Renewal Task Force (CRTF) will be established to guide a congregational review and recommitment to our Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV). The CRTF will use existing small groups, committees and open sessions culminating in a revision, as needed, of our MVV. A congregational adoption of the MVV with a celebration in worship is planned for May 23, 2010 - Pentecost.
- Executive Committee will continue to emphasize accountability in its work and in the Administrative Council's work both in culture and programs using the Mission, Vision, and Values as the canon. More below on Accountability.
- Task Force on Discipleship/R-TRO (Race to Reach Out) will be formed to review and modify the current process of connecting guests and disciple-making at BCUMC. This ad hoc group under the leadership of Joan Pierce will meet this summer. A report to the Administrative Council with recommended system changes is anticipated in the Fall of 2009.
- Conflict Resolution remains a work in progress in the need for cultural change. Previous work with Conference or other consultants may be recommended.

- Program

- eTeam

- In conjunction with Christian Education, a new Adult Sunday School class will be established to study and practice spiritual disciplines.
- Will identify members to assist in spiritual renewal activities, such as Cultural Renewal and Discipleship Task Forces/R-TRO.
- Has researched and recommended consultants in the spiritual renewal process. eTeam defers final decision to EC and/or the Administrative Council.

- Marketing

- AC will create a new Marketing Committee by August 2009.
- Marketing Committee to develop a committee profile by October 2009.

- Worship

- Articulated short term ideas.
- Implemented short term ideas in spring 2009 as above.
- Develop New Worship Service Task Force in summer of 2009.
- Implement new worship service plan in Spring of 2010.
- Ongoing evaluation/listening sessions at least biannually.
- Evaluate impact of changes in September/November of 2010.

- Children and Family Ministries

- BCUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy Update in August 2009.
- Complete new and recertification training for Designated Safety Officers as a part of Safe Sanctuary by September 2009.
- Provide Safe Sanctuary training for all adults working with youth and children in September of 2009.
- Complete Washington State Patrol background checks on adults working with youth and children.
- Offer Third Grade Bible Knowledge class in September-November 2009.

Plan for Spiritual Renewal

- Establish Children and Family Ministry Advisory Board in August 2009.
- Hold Children's Sabbath Sunday October 11, 2009.
- Plan for children and families to serve Tent City or Midweek dinner.
- Update and maintain Children & Family Ministries bulletin board.
- Offer quarterly family events in October, November, April and July.
- Children and families serve as door greeters four Sundays of the year.
- Strengthen congregational relationships with children during 2009-2010.
- Task Force on Discipleship/R-TRO
 - EC will create a new effort incorporating "The Race to Reach Out" (R-TRO).
 - A chair for this group has been found.
 - R-TRO to start meeting now to develop a plan of action by August 2009.

Phase 3: A Time of Discipleship: Phase three includes living the Mission, Vision and Values ensuring that the congregation continues in spiritual growth and renewal. To assure sustainability in the proposed actions the following areas will be addressed:

- Culture
 - Task Force on Discipleship/R-TRO will have a system for integrating guests into the life of the church, with evaluation and feedback on a continual basis.
 - Conflict Resolution discussions and/or training will be ongoing.
 - Cultural Renewal will be reviewed on continual basis using independent qualitative measurements.
- Program
 - Development of lay leadership for future needs.
 - Enhanced congregational care.
 - Complete existing initiatives.
 - Nurture new initiatives as led by God.

Renewal is never finished. During this phase the Executive Committee and Administrative Council will vigilantly monitor both culture and programs. Accountability is key to this effort.

Oversight and Accountability: The Executive Committee will hold primary oversight responsibility for the spiritual renewal process. The Administrative Council will be given updates monthly. Accountability will include:

- Culture
 - Measuring aspects of congregational life against the Mission, Vision and Values.
 - Checking the strengths and needs of BCUMC annually using a qualitative measuring tool such as Natural Church Development. This will include input from both core leadership and regular attendees.
 - Establishing ad hoc or short term committees as needed to address identified cultural changes.
- Programs
 - Evaluating programs against the Mission, Vision and Values.
 - Setting priorities based on the Mission, Vision and Values.
 - Reviewing annual quantitative and qualitative reports to the Conference.
 - Establishing ad hoc or short term committees as needed to support emerging ministries or improve existing ministries.

Conclusion: This is an exciting time for Bear Creek United Methodist Church. We have grown in discipleship over the last several years, but there is still much more to accomplish. This Plan for Spiritual Renewal will focus on culture, programs and accountability in three phases. As each phase progresses, they will be aligned with the Mission and Vision Statements, and Shared Values. This will allow BCUMC to hear the call of God to foster growth

Plan for Spiritual Renewal

in personal and congregation discipleship.