

Strategic Planning Committee
Meeting Notes
October 19, 2021

In Attendance: Pr. Chris, Steve Frei, Chair, Alan Halverson, Angie Rieger, Jen Holmer, Tom Golden, Sara McCormack, David Vogt, Brenda Wilcox and Kristin Wiersma from the Joshua Group.

Unable to Attend: Sarah Iverson and Stephanie Barth (she did attend briefly via phone).

The meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom by Chair, Steve Frei. Jen Holmer led the group in a devotion based on Hebrews 13: 8 on how her faith has changed. She feels she's had fewer mountaintop moments. We reflected on how the Church changed during the pandemic. However, what hasn't changed and won't is Jesus. We need to place our trust in Him. Alan agreed to lead the devotion for our November 8th meeting.

Alan made a motion that was seconded by Tom to approve the minutes from the October 4th meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve commented on the importance of communication and shared that David Vogt will lead the communication efforts of our committee to the congregation.

Steve reviewed the near term schedule for the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC).

- November 8th – the SPC will meet at the Madison Campus in the Good Shepherd room from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Zoom will be available. The group will discuss the research completed and group into common themes and prioritize where our efforts should be centered.
- November 22nd – the SPC will meet and review GS's vision, mission and values and discuss our strengths and opportunities.

A few members shared some of the key takeaways from the Shared Leadership retreat hosted on October 11th.

- Steve commented that it's unclear on what issues / actions need to be brought to the Board for approval vs. what the Committee is empowered to do.
- Brenda commented on the importance of strengthening our lay leadership so that they feel confident to establish goals and drive actions in support of their charter.
- Tom commented on the importance of communication between the Committees.
- Pr. Chris reiterated the importance of the strategic plan in helping the Committees focus on their "why's" and "how's" vs. just "what's." It will also give accountability to the Committees.

The meeting then shifted to a continued review of the major points uncovered during our research.

Angie / Stephanie – interviewed former members of GS. They shared the fact that these discussions were very thoughtful and prayerful and that input was really not pandemic-driven.

- Keep Jesus at the center of all that we do.
- Looking for a solid Biblical message that is consistent and that uses neutral language (neither left nor right politically).
- Congregants are looking to create deep relationships with the pastors. They are looking for connections.

- Members would like clarity for roles of the committees and staff and their alignment with mission and vision.

Pr. Chris – discussions with Synod leaders

- Jesus needs to be at the center of all we do.
- Stop catering to the status quo.
- Highlighted the importance of pastoral care / relationships.

Kristin – interviewed the GSLC staff

- They want alignment and focus (that will come from a strategic plan and vision implementation).
- Staff sense that people feel disconnected and in silos. Need for reconnection.
- Need for shared ownership by members before there is shared leadership.
- Power vacuum because a strategic plan is not in play.

Kristin summarized from a 100,000 foot view the 128 interviews and survey results from 494 participants that provided input in 2018.

- Desire for deepened relationships and connection to each other and GS.
- Opportunity to engage the growing Verona population in meaningful ways for evangelism.
- Opportunity to engage the Madison community in service, partnership and connection.
- Appreciate variety of worship and program opportunities.
- Need to create ownership of ministry and develop lay leadership.
- Need vision and strategic plan to help focus all the moving parts of GS and create a sense of unity. GS needs a narrative to unify, create meaning, connection and belonging.
- At the time...need to focus on quality worship at both locations, uneven experiences.
- At the time...desire for more pastoral connection. (Note from KW – this may come from strong personality pastoral leadership style in prior years.)

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m. with the Lord's prayer.