



University Baptist Church

Discernment Journey

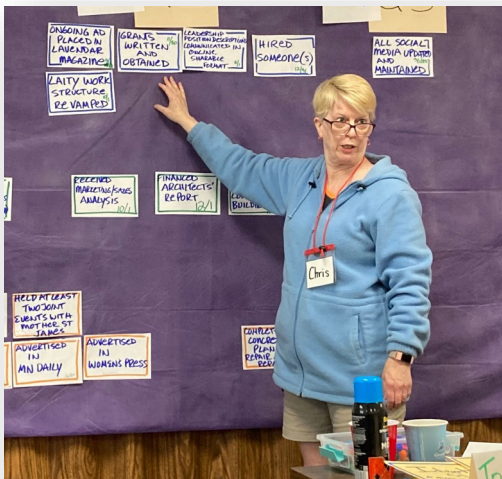
February—May 2024

*“And this is my prayer,
that your love may over-
flow more and more with
knowledge and full in-
sight to help you to deter-
mine what is best...”*

Philippians 1:9

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Introduction

In the spring of 2024, participants gathered to celebrate University Baptist Church's past, understand its present, and imagine its future through a discernment journey facilitated by Travis Beck and Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan. The discernment journey involved a series of workshops spread out over three full-day sessions: February 10, March 9, and May 11.

Prior to these sessions, Travis and Richard met with church leadership to clarify the goals of the process

GOALS for the DISCERNMENT JOURNEY

- ***To be on the same page about how and whether we're going to move forward***
- ***For participants to feel heard by UBC leaders and have an opportunity to provide input***

and develop the overarching question for the discernment journey.

DISCERNMENT QUESTION

What do we need to do in the next 5 years to create a viable future for UBC?

Participants:

Laurie Brazman
Megan Dahlberg
Doug & Kim Donley
Trish Donley
Deidre Druk
Chris Follett
Don Follett
Lynette & Elwyn Fraser
Margot Garmers
Karole Graham
Laura Justin
Betsy Kerr
Marie LaFrance

Mindy & Steve Lee
David Lesniaski
Carrie & Jonathan Lubke
Jean Lubke
Gayla Marty
David Martyn
Claire Mavity
John Medeiros
Paula Moyer
Nancy Myers
Olivia Olson
Denise Roy
Cody Sanders

Betty Shaw
Karen Swenson
Kathleen Tice
Terri & Ty Wottrich

Agenda & Workshops

SESSION 1 | February 10

- Welcome, Introductions
- Wall of Wonder workshop (historical scan)
- The Wave workshop (trends analysis)
- Past-Present-Future workshop (situation assessment)
- Survey/data review & reflection
- Practical Vision workshop*

SESSION 2 | March 9

- Practical Vision workshop (review and finish)
- Underlying Contradictions workshop

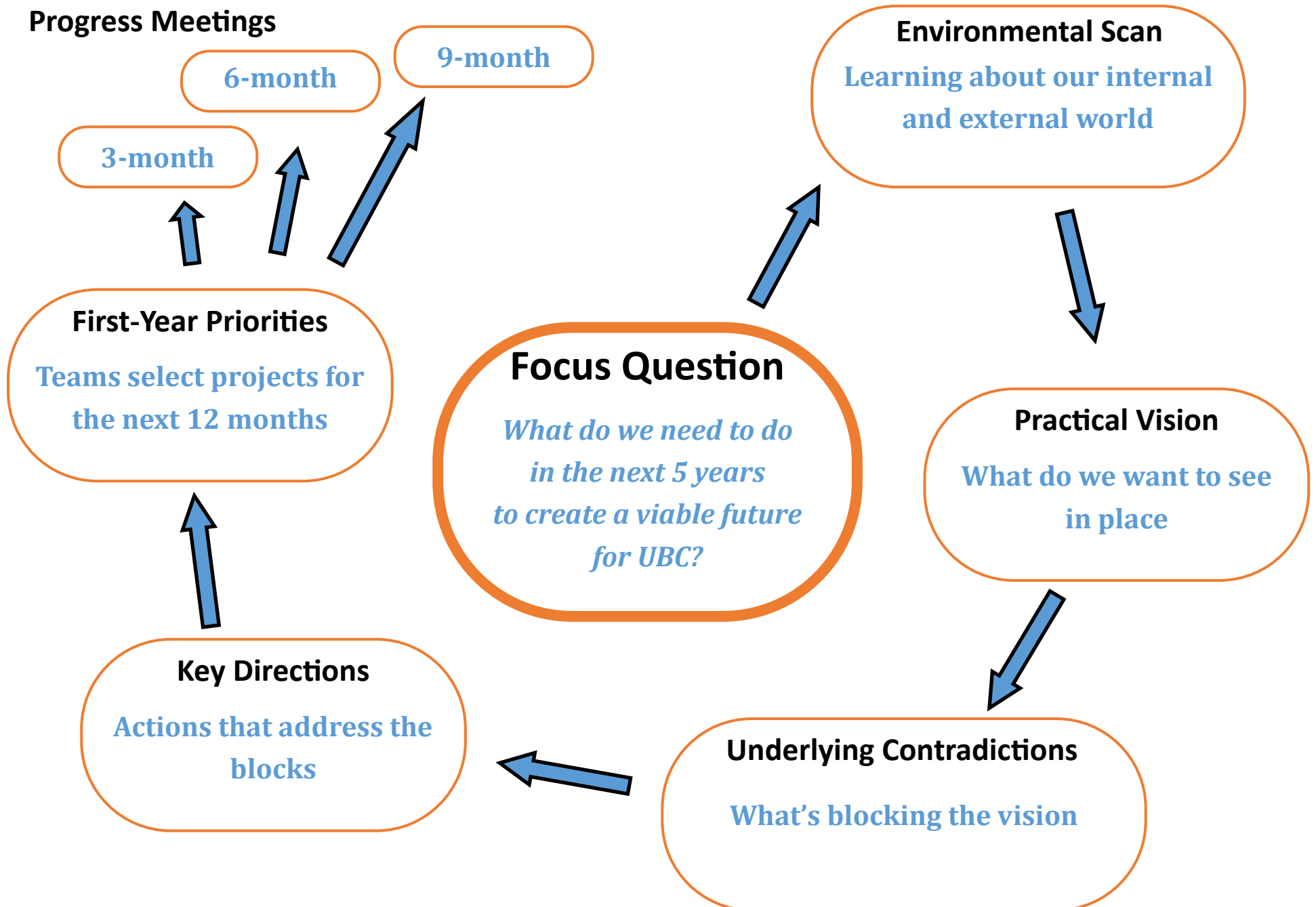
SESSION 3 | May 11

- Key Directions workshop
- Focused Implementation workshop

Each workshop answered a specific question. Participants brainstormed answers to the question individually and in teams. The whole group then discussed and organized the ideas, learning from everyone's wisdom.

**Additional work on the Practical Vision was led by Jean Lubke at an adult forum on March 3, 2024.*

DISCERNMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW



Many conversations were held throughout the discernment process.

The table below highlights the core of what was discerned by the participants.

University Baptist Church Discernment Summary

What do we need to do in the next 5 years to create a viable future for UBC? We need to...

focus our innovative, substantial actions in...

to deal effectively with...

and realize our...

Key Directions (May 11)	Underlying Contradictions (Mar 9)	Practical Vision (Feb 10)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Refocusing People Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Expand paid Admin role → Increase visibility to connect with a wider community → Revisit laity work and structures ➔ Solving Building Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Identify & clarify emotions & ideas, especially building → Assess building challenges & opportunities ➔ Opening Our Doors Withing and Without <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Generate creative ideas → Empower diverse groups in us and with us → Expand building uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ The fear of losing us is causing a lack of consensus about the building and stopping the congregation from seeking long-term solutions ✘ Perfectionism blocks development of strategic action plans and realistic expectations ✘ Imbalance between our human resources & congregational actions is interfering with the accomplishment of our internal operations and outreach missions ✘ Not prioritizing professional marketing and communication has inhibited our sustainability and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Imaginative, Sustainable Building Plan ◆ Relationally Inclusive Ministry, Partnerships, & Leadership ◆ Realistic Growth Strategies ◆ Efficient & Accessible Organizational Operations (including staff & volunteers) ◆ Thriving, Diverse, & Collaborative Music Program ◆ Clear Definition & Claiming of Our Identity & Our Voice ◆ Active Participation & Support of Social Progress & Justice ◆ A Sense of Belonging Through Intergenerational Support & Growth

Wall of Wonder

We began the first session by looking back over the past 200 years to explore UBC's history and what has brought us to where we are.

What are the events, people, innovations, and actions that have shaped our mission?

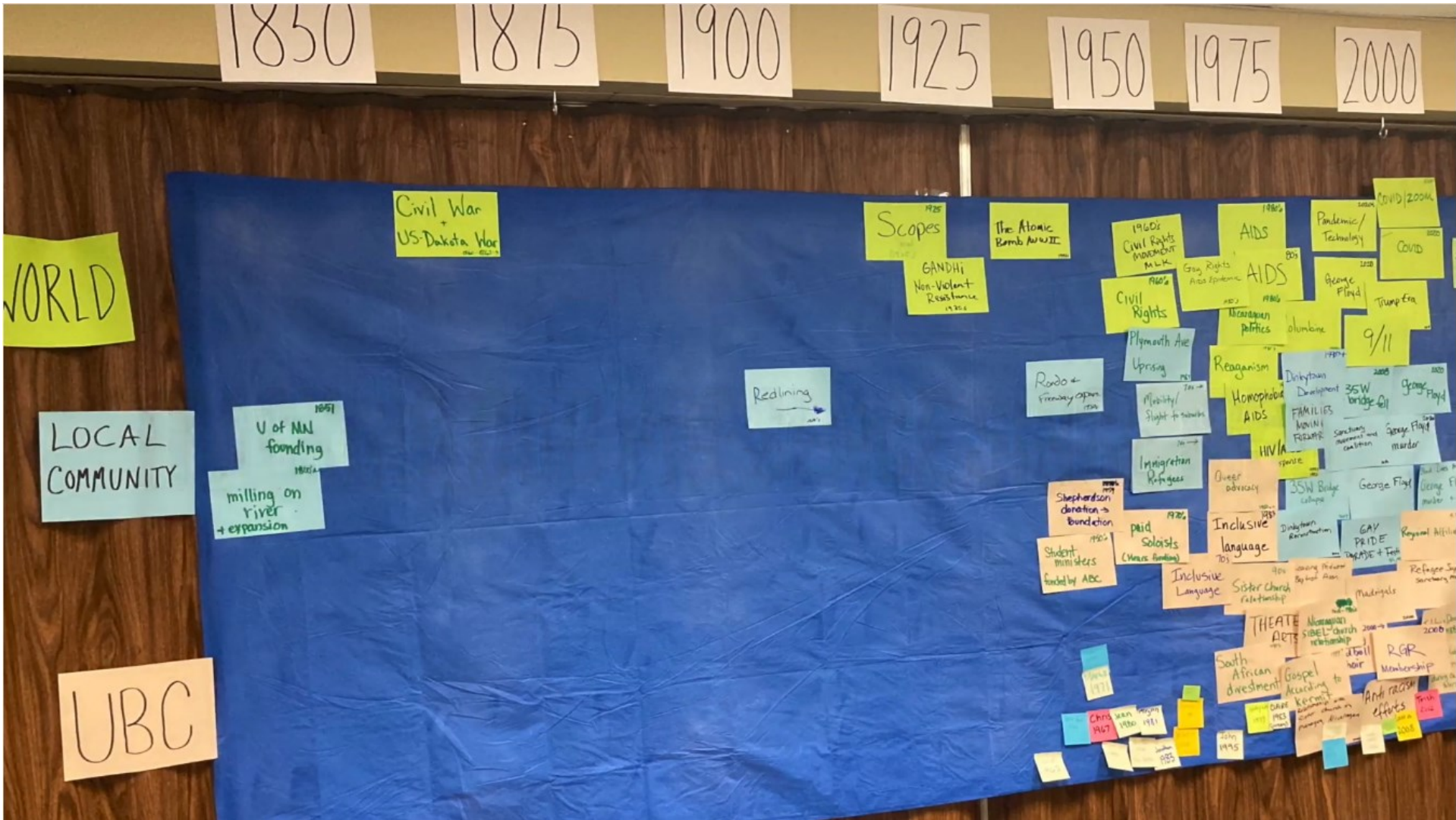
	1800	1850	1900	1950	1960	1970
WORLD			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '25 Scopes trial • '30s Gandhi and nonviolence resistance • '40s Atomic bomb/ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '60s Civil rights movement, MLK • '60s Civil rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
LOCAL COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milling on river and expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1850s U of MN founding • 1860s Civil War • 1860s US-Dakota War 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1900s Redlining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '50s Rondo and freeway expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '69 Plymouth Ave Uprising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70s Mobility/flight to suburbs • 70s Immigration Refugees
UBC				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '50s Student ministers funded by ABC • '59 Shepherdson donation —> foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70s Paid soloists (Mears funding) • 70s Inclusive Language

Wall of Wonder

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
WORLD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80s Gay Rights, AIDS epidemic • '80s AIDS • '80s AIDS • '80s Nicaraguan politics • '80s Reaganism • '80s Homophobia, AIDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90's Columbine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '01 9/11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trump Era 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '20s Pandemic/Technology • '20 George Floyd • '20s COVID/Zoom • '20 COVID • Systemic racism
LOCAL COMMUNITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '90s Dinkytown Development • Families Moving Forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '07 35W Bridge Collapse • '08 35W Bridge fell • Dinkytown reconstruction 	Gay pride parade & festival Sanctuary movement and coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '20 George Floyd • '20 George Floyd murder • '20 George Floyd • '20s Black Lives Matter, George Floyd murder & uprising
UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '83 Inclusive language • South African divestment • Gospel According to Kermit • Relationship with Sister Church in Managua, Nicaragua 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sister Church relationship • Theater Arts • Leaving Midwest Baptist Assn. • Nicaraguan SIBEL church relationship • Handbell Choir • Madrigals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RGR Membership • Anti-racism efforts • Regional Affiliation • Refugee Support, Sanctuary mvmt • Tibby & Donna... • Acknowledgment of stolen land during call to worship • Regional Affiliation 		

TRENDS

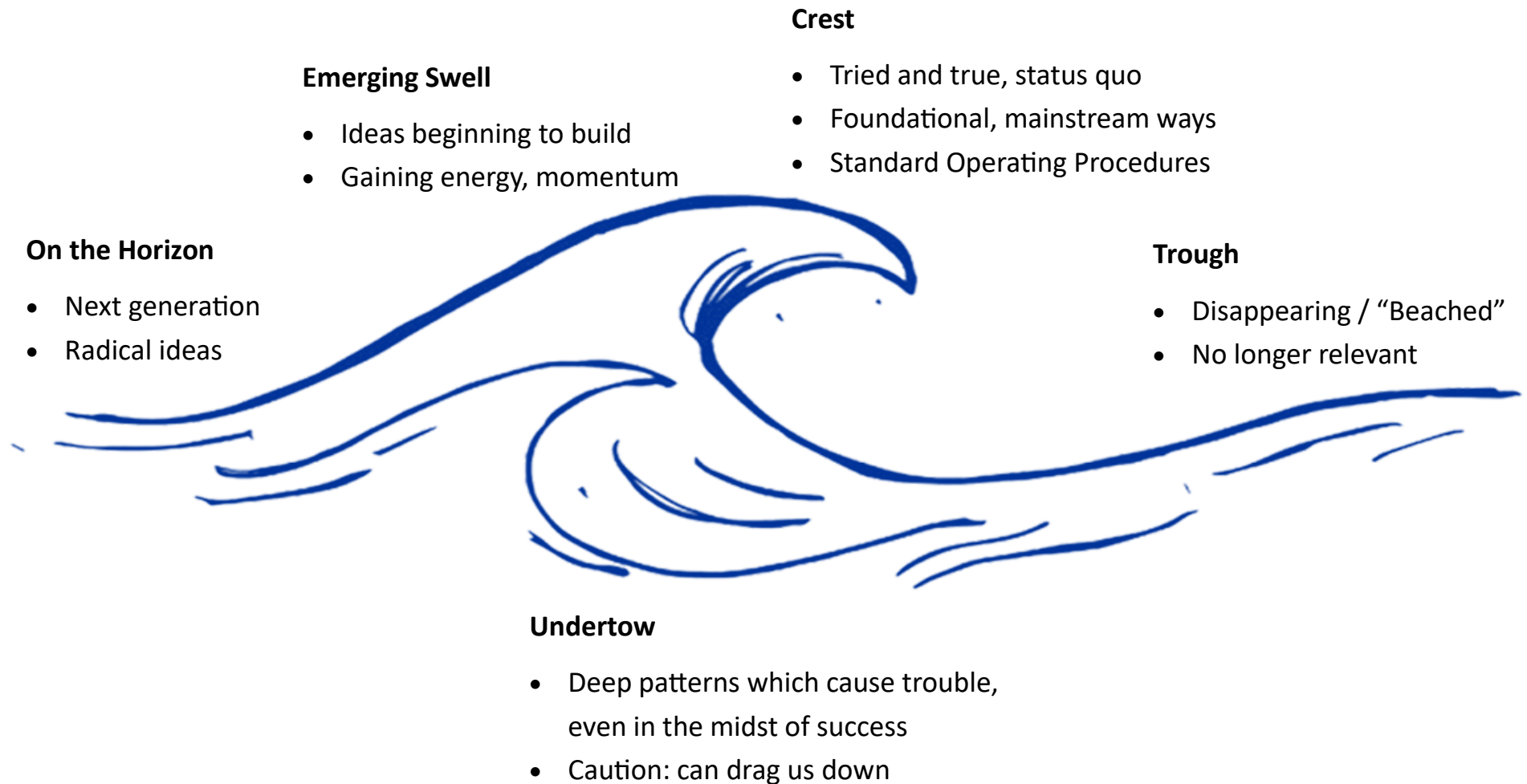
- Decline in church attendance
- Aging community
- Activism
- COVID implications
- Passionate response to turmoil
- Concern about accessibility (building/property)
- Great opportunity
- Mainstream (overall trend)



The Wave

Then, we used the image of a powerful ocean wave as metaphor to explore changes in our world that we need to consider.

What's going on around us that we need to pay attention to as we move forward?



The Wave

What's going on around us that we need to pay attention to as we move forward?

Horizon

- Need for robust grassroots communities of care & justice & mutual aid
- Aging cong. & attending needs
- Civilizational stressors: climate collapse, migration, politics, fragmentation, rise of fascism, tech acceleration that...
- Evolving perspectives on spirituality
- Role of tech in spirituality & church community
- New creations reaching out while maintain strengths
- People living virtually
- Gig/reimagined rental structure to intro & welcome ALL neighbors to space & value while providing different ...
- Pastoral successorship
- Intentional diversification
- New paradigm of relevance
- Trans activism

Emerging Swell

- Programs & support for families w/ young children
- Epidemic of loneliness & isolation
- Creative use of church bldg space
- Streaming
- Music, language, action speaking to under-40s
- Anti-racism
- Rising interest from younger family
- Anti-racism
- Dinkytown housing
- The SIGN

Crest

- Passion-led groups
- Newsletter "This Week @ UBC"
- Worship—joys & concerns, music, coming together
- Questioning/value of doubt
- Council
- Family feeling, interconnected
- Liturgical framework
- Sunday worship
- Inclusive language
- Joys & concerns
- Music programs
- Forums
- Music—non-traditional arts integration

Trough

- Expectations/definitions of membership
- Some traditional parts of worship
- Whiteness
- Delegation & prioritization of people power
- Language: binary, colorism, militaristic...
- Finances on soloists
- Building use & upkeep
- Sunday school?
- Identification with "Baptist"
- Measure of church involvement w/ Sunday morning attendance (rather than hub of a multi-spoked wheel of involvement practices)
- Baptist label
- The evangelism question
- Need of new tech (decentralized)
- Joining 1st Congregational

Undertow

- Decrease of church "attendance" & associational priorities in U.S.
- Aging building
- Communication budget inadequate
- Being discouraged by small #s
- People over-stressed
- Music—not diverse
- Finances budget-bound ...
- Location (parking, demographics) (embracing?)
- Decreasing financial support
- Aging pop.
- Failure to increase #s
- Burnout
- Building demands
- Problem solving mindset
- Volunteers stressed
- Inadequate admin staff
- Confusion about HOW to be involved & share ideas
- Super politeness & not taking ourselves too seriously

6-8 for your category

1 for each of the other categories

1. HORIZON

Need for Radical Openness: Communities of Care & Justice & Mutual Aid

Aging Cong & Attending Needs

Civilizational Successors: Open Church, Open Bible, Open People, Site of Power, Open Architecture

Evolving Perspectives on Spirituality

Role of Tech in Spirituality & Church Community

New creations reaching out while maintaining strengths

People living virtually

Intentional diversification

Pastoral Successorship

NEW PARADIGM OF RELEVANCE

TRANS ACTIVISM

2. EMERGING

music, language, action speaking to under-40s

PROGRAMS + SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES N/ YOUNG CHILDREN

Anti-racism

Epidemic of Loneliness & Isolation

Rising Interest from Younger family

creative use of church bldg space

Anti-racism

Streaming

Dinkytown housing

the SIGN

3. CREST

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Passion-led groups

Council

JOYS + CONCERNS

worship - joys & concerns music coming together

FAMILY FEELING INTERGENERATIONAL

MUSIC PROGRAMS

QUESTIONING/ Value of Doubt

LITURGICAL FRAMEWORK

FORUMS

newsletter THIS WEEK @ UBC

Sunday worship

music - non traditional arts integration

4. TROUGH

expectations/ definitions of membership

some traditional parts of worship

whiteness

delegation + prioritization of people power

language: binary, alarm, militaristic...

finances on soloists

Building use + upkeep

Sunday School?

Identification with "Baptist"

Messiah of Church involvement of Sunday Morning attendance

BAPTIST LABEL

the evangelism question

Need of Arts tech (dead/lost)

JOINING 1st Congregational

5. UNDERTOW

Decrease of Church Attendance & Associational Membership in US

aging building

Communication budget inadequate

Being discouraged by small #

people over-stressed

music - not diverse

finances left-bound actions

Location (parking, demographics) (embracing it?)

Decreasing financial support

Aging pop

Failure to increase #

Burnout

Building demands

PROBLEM SOLVING MINDSET

Volunteers stressed

inadequate ADMIN STAFF

Confusion about how to be involved


SUPER POLITENESS NOT TAKING OUTSIDE TOPS EASILY

Past-Present-Future

Building on the previous two workshops, we highlighted important items from our past, present, and future that might be crucial to our planning.

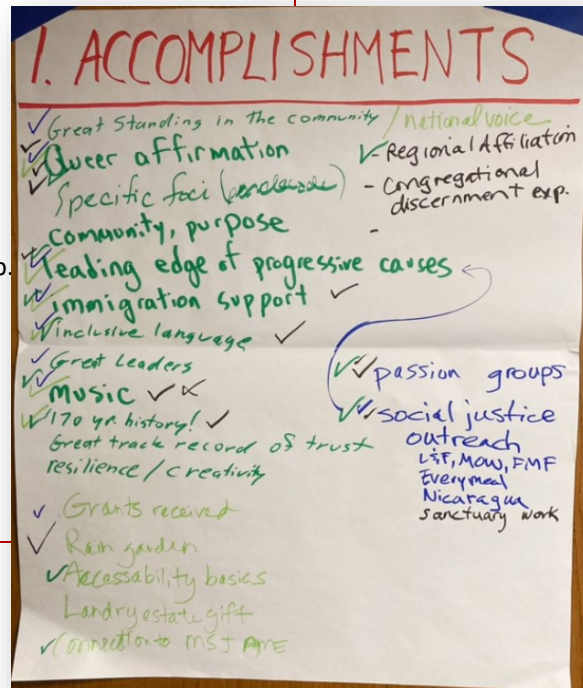
What from our past, present, and anticipated future will help inform our planning?


PAST



Accomplishments

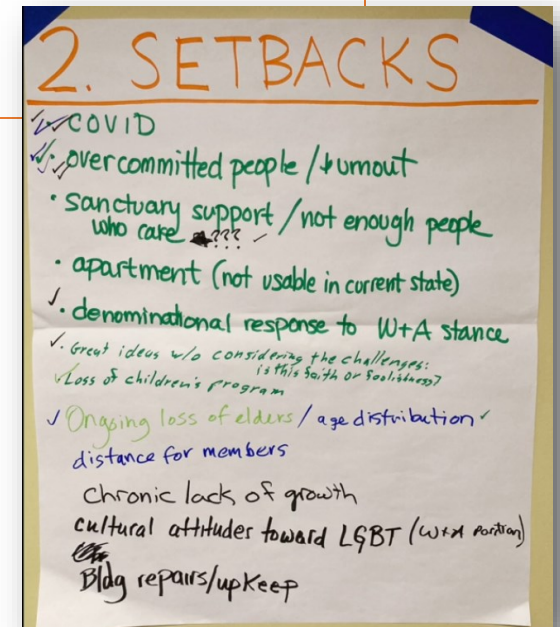
- Great standing in the community/national voice ✓
- Queer affirmation ✓✓✓✓✓
- Specific foci (per decade)
- Community, purpose
- Leading edge of progressive causes ✓✓✓✓
- Immigration support ✓✓✓✓✓
- Inclusive language ✓✓✓✓
- Great leaders ✓
- Music ✓✓✓✓✓
- 170 year history! ✓✓✓
- Great track record of trust
- Resilience/creativity
- Grants received ✓
- Rain garden ✓
- Accessibility basics ✓
- Landry estate gift
- Connection to MSJ Ave ✓
- Regional affiliation ✓
- Congregational discernment exp.
- Passion groups ✓✓✓
- Social justice ✓✓✓
- * Outreach
- * L & F, MOW, FMF
- * Everymeal
- * Nicaragua
- * Sanctuary work





Setbacks

- COVID ✓✓✓
- Overcommitted people/burnout ✓✓✓✓✓
- Sanctuary support/not enough people who care ✓
- Apartment (not usable in current state)
- Denominational response to W&A stance ✓
- Great ideas w/o considering the challenges: is this faith or foolishness? ✓
- Loss of children's program ✓
- Ongoing loss of elders/age distribution ✓✓
- Distance for members
- Chronic lack of growth
- Cultural attitudes toward LGBT (W&A position)
- Bldg repairs/upkeep





Strengths

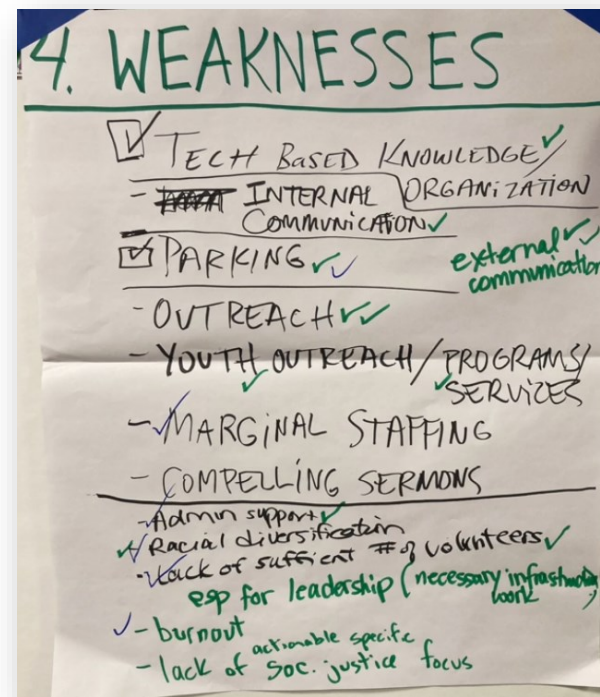
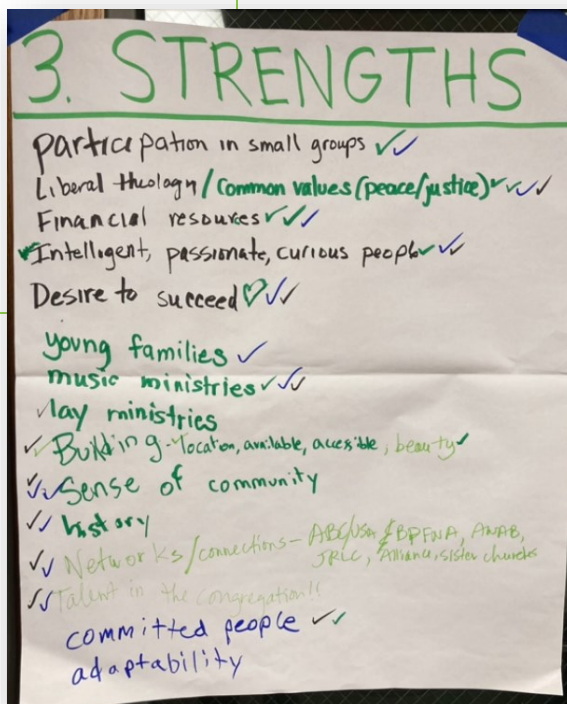
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- Social justice ✓✓✓
 - * Outreach
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 - * Everymeal
 - * Nicaragua
 - * Sanctuary work



Weaknesses

- COVID ✓✓✓
- Overcommitted people/burnout ✓✓✓✓✓
- Sanctuary support/not enough people who care ✓
- Apartment (not usable in current state)
- Denominational response to W&A stance ✓
- Great ideas w/o considering the challenges: is this faith or foolishness? ✓
- Loss of children's program ✓
- Ongoing loss of elders/age distribution ✓✓
- Distance for members
- Chronic lack of growth
- Cultural attitudes toward LGBT (W&A position)
- Bldg repairs/upkeep

PRESENT





Risks

- Building: cost & opportunity vvvvv
- People power vvv
- Fail to develop realistic plan and follow it vvv
- Reliance on foundation funds (market/economic instability)
- Hiring/outsourcing consultants \$\$
- Make the wrong choice
- Making a hasty, uninformed choice v
- Nationalism & conservative Christianity
- Culture of religious apathy v
- Changes in city infrastructure (dev't and changes in street usage) w/decreased parking v
- Decreased pledges as people die
- New people/ideas can run up against sacred cows: music, language, "property"
- Fear
- Climate change
- MN nice
- Invisibility in community
- People reaching age of dramatically ↑ needs
- Boiler v
- Small details & feelings are valued over research



Opportunities

- God/faith vv
- Location: UM/new people vvvvv
- Committed, caring group vvvv
- Pastoral call
- Diversification (people & practices) v
- Talented group vv
- The Foundation vvv
- Aligned in many core values v
- Not dogmatic
- People are in great need of spiritual nourishment
- Mormon Parking Lot! v
- Admin support
- Trans activism
- Students in the area v
- "Marketing" outside neighborhood
- Ride-sharing (w/ other local cong)
- Hire mktg/comm./church growth specialist
- Build partnerships with like-minded churches (FCC, SAPUCC, MSJAME, JCDSON, CABRIN, St. Cecelias)
- Shared values (education, environmental issues, arts & music, migrant rights, spiritual exploration/questioning)
- Mutual ♥

FUTURE

5. RISKS

people reaching age of dramatically ↑ needs

- building: cost & opportunity > Boiler
- people power
- fail to develop realistic plan and follow it (feelings are valued over research)
- Reliance on Foundation Funds (market/economic instability)
- HIRING/OUTSOURCING CONSULTANTS
- MAKE the wrong choice (making a hasty choice - uninformed)
- nationalism + conservative Christianity
- culture of religious apathy
- changes in city infrastructure (dev't and changes in street usage) w/ decreased parking
- decreased pledges as people die
- New people/ideas can run up against sacred cows: music, language, "property"
- fear
- MN nice
- invisibility in community
- climate change

6. OPPORTUNITIES

- ✓ God/Faith
- ✓ Location: UM/new people
- ✓ Committed, caring group
- ✓ Pastoral call (people + practices)
- ✓ Diversification (practices)
- ✓ talented group
- ✓ the Foundation
- ✓ Aligned in many core values →
- Not dogmatic
- People are in great need of spiritual nourishment
- ✓ Mormon Parking Lot!

Admin support
- Trans activism
- students in the area

"Marketing" outside neighborhood

- ride-sharing (w/ other local cong)
- hire Mktg/Comm./church growth specialist

Build partnerships w/ like-minded churches:

- FCC
- SAPUCC
- MSJAME
- JCDSON
- CABRIN
- St. Cecelias

Shared Values

- Education
- Environmental Issues
- Arts + Music
- Migrant Rights
- Spiritual exploration/questioning

mutual ♥

Practical Vision

Then, we moved into the rest of the discernment process, beginning with the end in mind: Where to we want to be? What would we want to move toward if there was nothing in our way?

What do we want to see in place in 2-5 years as a result of our actions?

IMAGINATIVE, SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PLAN

- More use of building space
- Plan for building made & begun to be implemented
- Financial plan that keeps UBC in our building thru 2060
- Building interior has been refreshed
- Building tech upgrade (sound, instruction, events, admin)
- Shuttle bus & driver (electric) (can charge on 13th Ave!)
- Cooperative ownership / mgmt of building (multi-faith, multi-racial, multi-abled, collaborative)
- Bldg as a community center with its own ID
- Building used by multiple congregations, musical groups
- Formulated short & long-term strategy for building maintenance
- Improvements to bldg.—solar, update spaces, fully rented/useable
- Plan to either maintain the building or move

THRIVING, DIVERSE, & COLLABORATIVE MUSIC PROGRAM

- Thriving music program
- Collaboration with U of M music students
- More diversity of musical styles in worship

REALISTIC GROWTH STRATEGIES

- Active membership of > 120
- 120 active members
- 20 more people in church each Sunday
- Growth—families, young people
- Strong, sustainable marketing / outreach
- Shuttle bus & driver (electric)
- Public narrative about who we are (invitationally with others)
- More effective welcoming & orientation of new people
- Found connection to/ways to involve student population

EFFICIENT & ACCESSIBLE ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS (including staff & volunteers)

- Google drive/Open source of affinity groups; church council communications
- Smart use of grants & consultants
- Bookkeeper—office admin
- Volunteer assignments in manageable bite-size pieces (coordinator)
- Updated, searchable admin docs
- Grant writer → new income stream
- Collaborative info sharing tools
- Outsource & use tech to get admin work done more efficiently (U of M students)
- Partner with the U for help with duties around the church (build community)

Continued on next page

Practical Vision

What do we want to see in place in 2-5 years as a result of our actions?

RELATIONALLY INCLUSIVE MINISTRY, PARTNERSHIPS, & LEADERSHIP

- Joint worship services with our sister church
- A more multiracial congregation (including leadership)
- A new pastoral leadership team
- Robust international ministry partnerships
- Meaningful relationships w/ Black a/o Native churches/ neighbors (art?)

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT OF SOCIAL PROGRESS & JUSTICE

- Larger community hotspot for progressive activism (shared values)
- Social justice passion groups tripled
- Active membership on MN Council of Churches
- Leading public voice for progressive issues
- Land reparation in some form
- Actively support vulnerable communities (women, immigrants, LGBT)

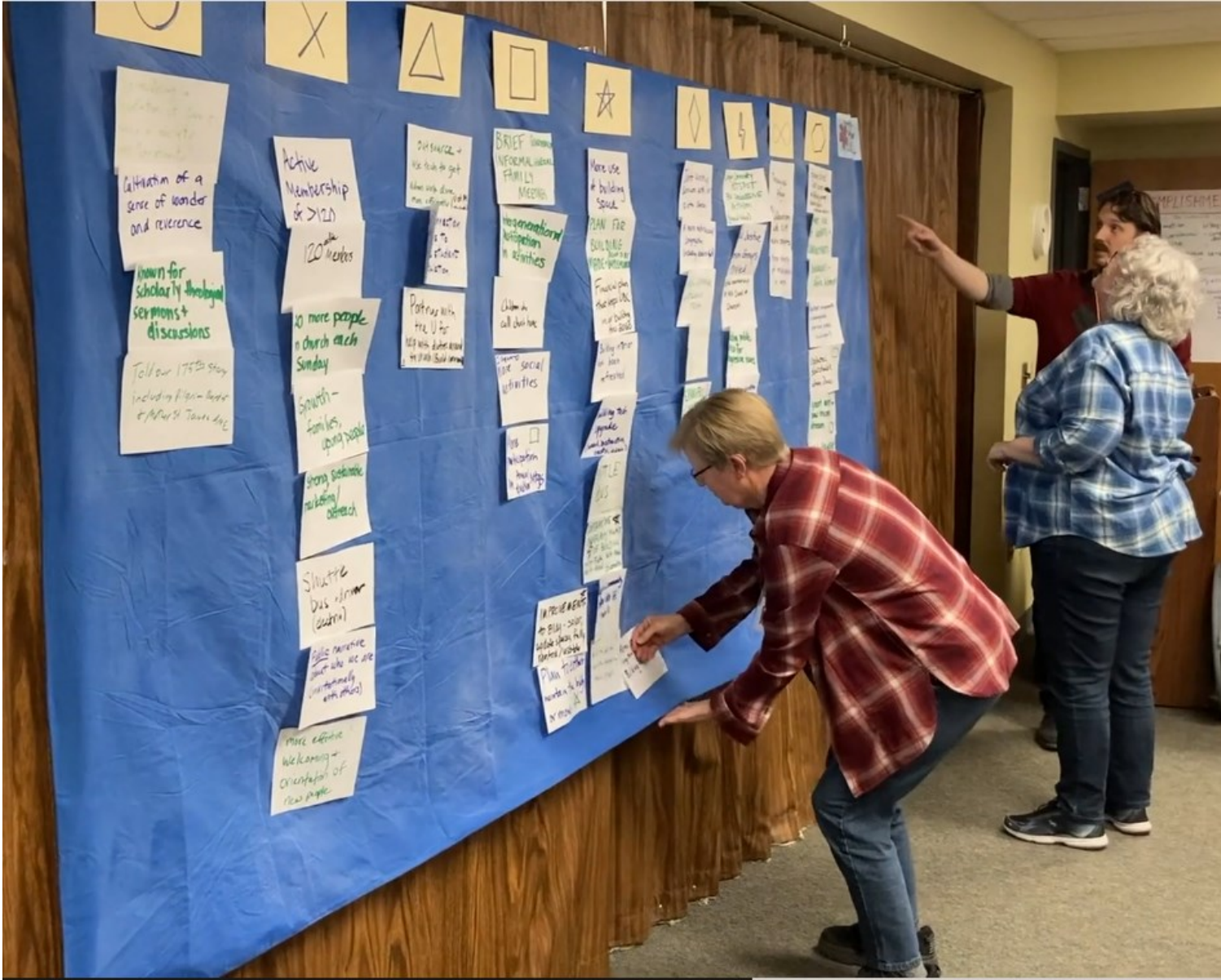
CLEAR DEFINITION & CLAIMING OF OUR IDENTITY & OUR VOICE

- Role-modeling a re-definition of love & family in society over "Christianity"
- Cultivation of a sense of wonder and reverence
- Known for scholarly theological sermons & discussions
- Told our 175th Story including Pilgrim Baptist and Mother St. James AME
- Public narrative about who we are (invitationally with others)

A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL SUPPORT & GROWTH

- Brief quarterly informal, general family meetings
- Intergenerational participation in activities
- Children who call church home
- More social activities
- More participation in annual & midyear meetings

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Underlying Contradictions

*How can we reach our destination unless we clear the blockages in the road?
We explored the ways we prevent ourselves from realizing our vision.*

What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?

4. Not prioritizing professional marketing & communication has inhibited our sustainability & mission.

- Knowledge of how to market ourselves
- Ineffective communication/marketing
- Incomplete communication
- Narrow area demographics
- Unclear how to define and reach target audience
- No message of what our church is
- Unclear about the role of Jesus and our theological rootedness in church's identity and mission
- Atmosphere of declining attendance
- Confusion about differences between being a church w/ a social justice mission and being a social justice non-profit
- Technology change fast and we don't change with it
- Liberal/progressive (Baptist) in practice can appear narrow and off-putting (to some)
- Stumbling blocks to in-person attendance
- Low membership
- Limited empathy/understanding of other cultures
- "Church" is not a desirable social concept
- Our W&A commitment may alienate communities we want to work with
- Generational gap between leadership & potential new participants
- Aging membership
- Limiting activities/ministries to particular groups
- Conflicted attitude about diverse music

2. Perfectionism blocks development of strategic action plans & realistic expectations.

- If we don't solve everything, we can't solve anything
- Neglected near-future thinking about community & wider world (i.e., too much thinking of church's future in a vacuum)
- Unrealistic hope of pleasing everyone
- Defining before acting
- Extensive & fragmented goals
- Narrow definition of "Diverse" in music & worship
- Unrealistic justice values (sister church, Latin focus, Black church)
- Complacency, comfort, & predictability
- Inaccessible music choices
- Overthinking blocking action
- Diversity of our own views/opinions
- Paralysis of analysis
- Unrealistically high expectations

1. The fear of losing us is causing a lack of consensus about the building and stopping the congregation from seeking long term solutions.

- Indecision about future of building
- Staying in the current building
- New location; attached to this building; organ, where we have been, huge step
- We don't all see our building or our location as an asset
- Unimaginative building use
- Disproportionate balance of costs and resource to maintain building
- Outsized consumption of resources of all kinds devoted to building inhibits 1) growth (parking) 2) operations (extra staff, et. al.) 3) participation in social justice (members burned out due to handling building needs)

3. Imbalance between our human resources and congregational actions is interfering with the accomplishment of our internal operations and outreach missions.

- "Passion led" model is burning out
- Pastor-centric leadership
- Dismissive attitude re: ops
- Weariness by some in leadership
- Depleted energy; spread too thin
- High/unrealistic expectations of volunteers (e.g. officer positions)

Not prioritizing professional marketing & communication has inhibited our Sustainability + Mission. 4

INCOMPLETE COMMUNICATION

Unclear how to define + Reach Target Audience

No message of what our church is.

Confusion about differences between being a church of a social justice mission and being a social justice non-profit.

Stumbling blocks to in person Attendance

Low Membership

Technology change fast + we don't change with it

ATMOSPHERE OF DECLINING ATTENDANCE

Liberal/profession in practice can appear narrow + of putting (to some)

"Church" is not a desirable societal concept

Our WFA commitment may alienate communities we want to work with.

Aging Membership

Limited empathy/understanding of other cultures

Generational gap between leadership + potential new participants

CONFLICTED ATTITUDE ABOUT REVERSE MUSIC

Limiting activities/ministries to particular groups

Unclear about the role of Jesus in our theological rootedness in church's identity + mission.

Knowledge of how to market ourselves

NARROW AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

The fear of losing Us is causing a lack of consensus about the building and stopping the congregation from seeking long term solutions

Indecision about future of building

STAYING IN THE CURRENT BUILDING

Attached to this building

We don't all see our building or our location as an asset

Disproportionate balance of costs + resources to maintain bldg.

UNIMAGINATIVE BUILDING USE

Outsized consumption of resources of all kinds devoted to building, inhibits:

How Visions blocked

1. Growth (parking)
2. Operations (extra staff, et. al.)
3. Participation in social justice (members burned out due to handling building needs.)

Perfectionism ~~Overanalyzing~~ blocks development of strategic action plans and realistic expectations.

If we don't solve everything, we can't solve anything.

Neglected near-future thinking about community + wider world (i.e., too much thinking of church's future in a vacuum)

UNREALISTIC HOPE OF PLEASING EVERYONE

Deming before acting

Extensive + Fragmented Goals

Narrow definition of "Diverse" in music + worship

Unrealistic justice values (e.g. church, Latin-focus Black church)

Complacency comfort + predictability

INACCESSIBLE MUSIC CHOICES

Overthinking blocking Action

Diversity of our own views/opinions

Paralysis of analysis

Unrealistically high expectations

Inbalance between our human resources and congregational actions is interfering with the accomplishment of our internal governance and outreach missions. 3

"Passion led" model is burning out

Pastor-centric leadership

Weariness by some in leadership

DISMISSIVE ATTITUDE RE OPS

Depleted Energy Spread too thin

High unrealistic expectations of volunteers (e.g. officer positions)

What is the block?

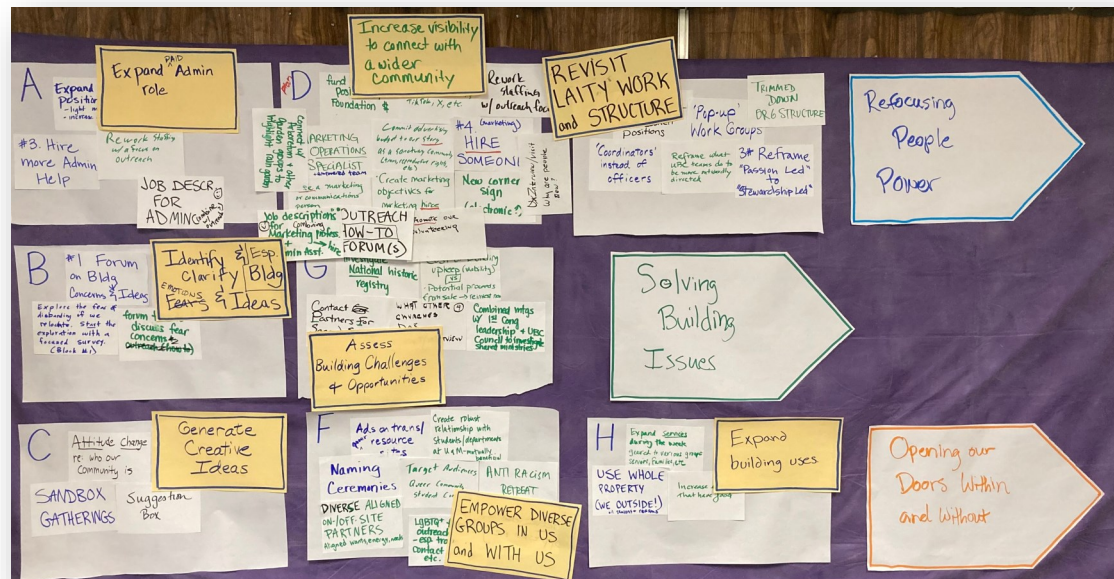
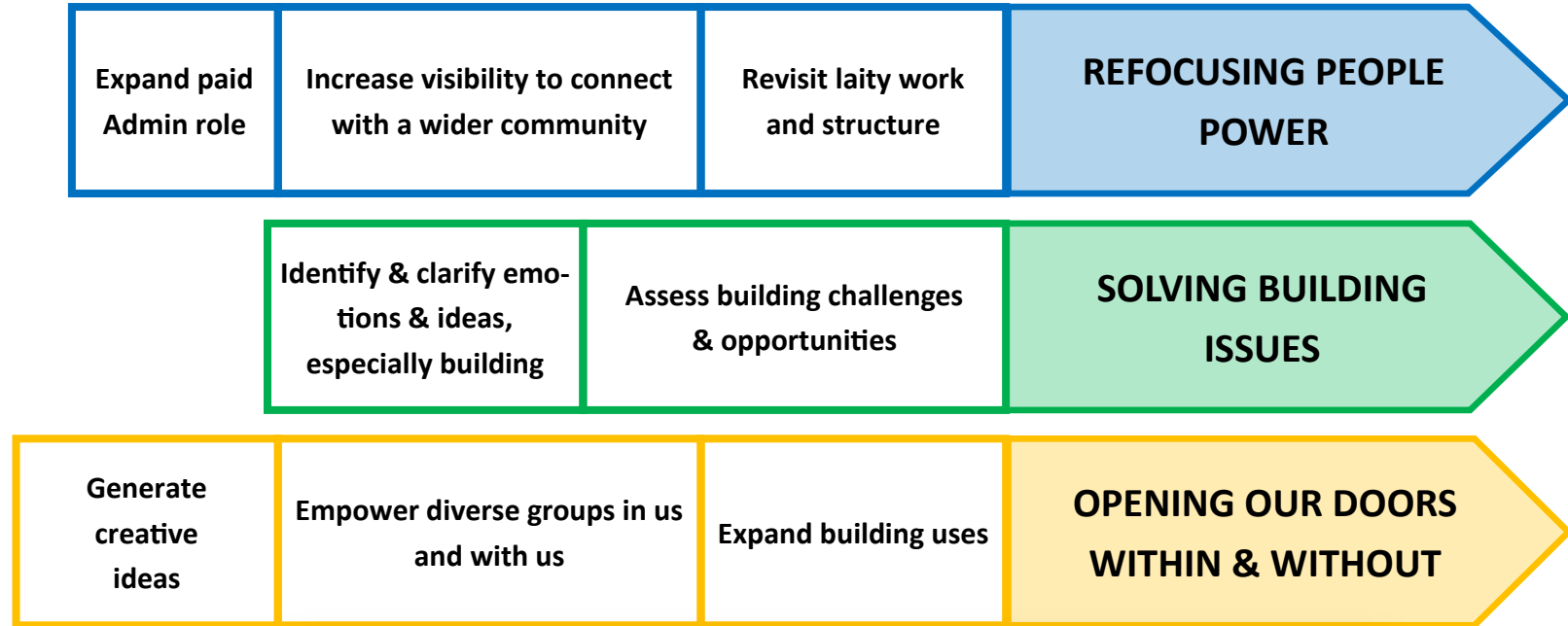
What part of the vision is it blocking?

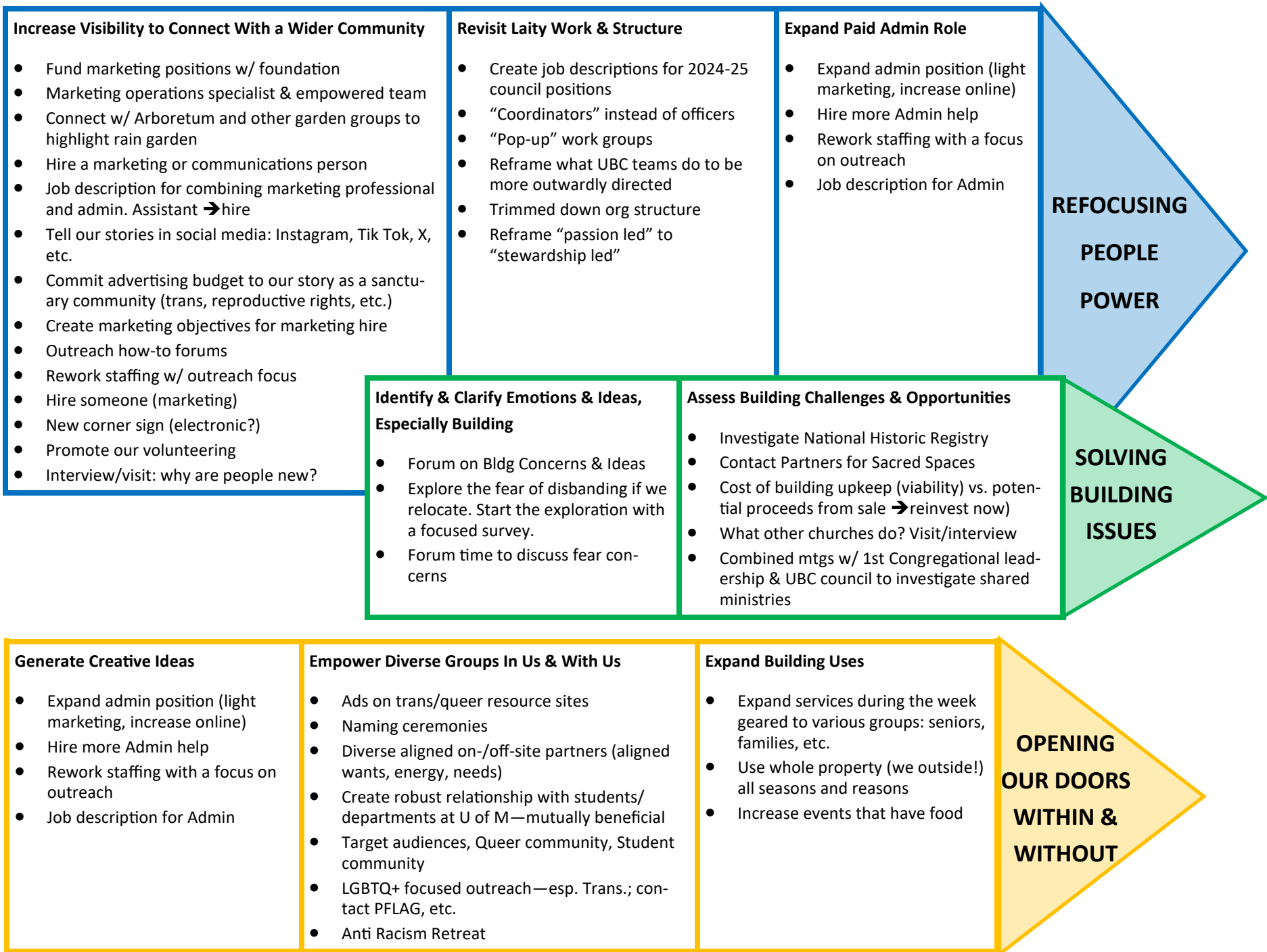
How is it blocking?

Key Directions

With the contradictions identified, we developed areas of action to help focus our energy and begin to shift the blockages and move us forward.

What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?





First-Year Accomplishments

For each area of action, we reflected on our advantages and limits, identified measurable signs of success, and brainstormed actions for Year 1

REFOCUSING PEOPLE POWER

		Advantages	Limits	
Present		<p>Strengths of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + wisdom, commitment + experience + courage + talent 	<p>Weaknesses of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time limitations - perfectionism - traditionalism - finances 	<p>Success Indicators <i>Measurable</i> changes we will see in 2-3 years as evidence of our success</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. less white 2. more younger 3. higher attendance 4. full building usage
		<p>Benefits of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ growth ○ more efficient operations ○ new voices 	<p>Dangers or unintended consequences of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ logistics △ resources △ parking crisis △ lack of consensus △ not knowing everyone 	<p>Possible 12-Month Accomplishments that build on our advantages and acknowledge our limits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hire someone(s) 2. all social media updated and maintained 3. grants written and obtained 4. 15 new members 5. laity work structure revamped 6. ongoing ad placed in Lavender magazine 7. leadership position descriptions communicated in online, shareable format
Future				

First-Year Accomplishments

For each area of action, we reflected on our advantages and limits, identified measurable signs of success, and brainstormed actions for Year 1

SOLVING BUILDING ISSUES

	Advantages	Limits	
Present	<p>Strengths of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Patrick & Doug + courage + garden team + large, available square footage + custodial apartment 	<p>Weaknesses of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 yr. old building - hidden costs, unknown - lack of parking - large, available square footage - assumptions - boiler 	<p>Success Indicators <i>Measurable</i> changes we will see in 2-3 years as evidence of our success</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. decided where we're going to be & how it will be funded 2. resolved parking crisis; found adequate access 3. more butts in seats 4. sustainability
	Future	<p>Benefits of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ great community resource ○ less worry ○ safe space ○ increased financial stability 	<p>Dangers or unintended consequences of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ tenant relationships △ interpersonal conflict △ may discover it was unsustainable △ obligation to ongoing maintenance

First-Year Accomplishments

For each area of action, we reflected on our advantages and limits, identified measurable signs of success, and brainstormed actions for Year 1

OPENING OUR DOORS WITHIN & WITHOUT

	Advantages	Limits	
Present	<p>Strengths of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + love + welcoming + creativity + space + glad to be woke 	<p>Weaknesses of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ego - perfectionism - biting off more than we can chew - culture of white supremacy - lumping all diverse groups into "diversity" 	<p>Success Indicators <i>Measurable</i> changes we will see in 2-3 years as evidence of our success</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. increased regular attendance 2. increased engagement 3. bold initiatives tried, succeeded or failed 4. more comfortable with the word "oppression" 5. a lot of people who need a place have found a place
	<p>Benefits of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ church growth ○ getting stretched ○ personal growth ○ reinvestment 	<p>Dangers or unintended consequences of successful implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> △ protests △ lack of consensus △ getting called out on our biases 	<p>Possible 12-Month Accomplishments that build on our advantages and acknowledge our limits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. advertised in Lavender 2. advertised in Minnesota Daily 3. advertised in Women's Press 4. contacted Trans-support organizations 5. two forums/presentations from Trans organizations 6. visited Mother St. James 7. at least two joint events held with Mother St. James 8. concrete plan for repair and reparations for indigenous community completed
Future			

Refocusing People Power

Current reality	1st Year Accomplishments	Success indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + wisdom, commitment + experience + courage + talent - time limitations - perfectionism - traditionalism - finances o growth o more efficient operations o new voices Δ logistics <small>not known everyone</small> Δ resources Δ parking crisis Δ lack of consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hire someone(s) all social media updated & maintained grants written & obtained 15 new members weekly work structure revamped ongoing ad placed in Lavendar magazine leadership position descriptions communicated in online, shareable format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + less white + more younger + higher attendance + full building usage

Opening Our Doors Within and Without

Current reality	1st-Year Accomplishments	Success indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + love + welcoming + creativity + space + glad to be woke - ego - perfectionism - biting of more than we can chew - culture of white supremacy - lumping all diverse groups into "diversity" o Church growth o getting stretched o personal growth o reinvestment Δ protests Δ lack of consensus Δ getting called out on our biases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advertised in Lavendar advertised in Minnesota Daily advertised in Women's press contacted Trans-support orgs. two forums/presentations from Trans organizations visited Mother St. Jms at least two joint events held with Mother St. James concrete plan for repair & reparations for indigenous community completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + regular attendance + engagement bold initiatives tried, succeeded or failed more comfortable with word "oppression" a lot of people who need a place have found a place

Solving Building Issues

Current reality	1st-Year Accomplishments	Success indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Patrick + Doug + courage + garden team + large, available sq. footage + custodial apartments + 100 yr. old building + hidden costs, unknown + lack of parking + large available sq. footage + assumptions + boiler o great community resource o less worry o safe space o ↑ financial stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financed an architects report investigated national register of historic place submitted grants (if appropriate) received marketing/sales analysis contacted partners for sacred space determine approximate cost of alternative site collected info about Cong. building needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + decided where we're going to be + how it will be funded + resolved parking crisis; found adequate access + more butts in seats + ↑ sustainability

First-Year Timeline & Assignments

Next, we put our first-year accomplishments on a timeline and assigned individuals and committees to manage the work.

OVERALL COORDINATOR:
Claire

Quarter I
Jul-Sep

Quarter II
Oct-Dec

Quarter III
Jan-Mar

Quarter IV
Apr-Jun

REFOCUSING
PEOPLE
POWER

- Staffing plan & strategy (Personnel Committee, 9/30)

- Ongoing Ad Placed in Laverdard & Women's Press Magazine (John, 9/1)
- Grants Written and Obtained (Megan/Grant writing team, 11/30)
- Leadership position descriptions communicated in online, shareable format (Council, 11/1)

- All Social Media Updated and Maintained (Trista or Mktg, 3/1/25)
- Hired someone(s) (Personnel Committee, 12/31)
- Laity Task Force Formed to revisit work structure (Betsy/Karole)

- 15 New Members Joined (6/30/25)
- Laity work structure revamped (Year 2?)

SOLVING
BUILDING
ISSUES

- Contacted partners for Sacred Space (Carrie, 6/1)
- Investigated National Register of Historic Places (Council, 7/1)
- Form Building Task Force (Carrie, 8/1)
- Submitted Grant Applications (Grant team/Megan, 9/15)

- Received marketing/sales analysis (Carrie/Task Force/Council, 10/1)
- Financed Architect's report to stay (Council, 12/1)
- Collected Info about Congregational Building Needs; forums, survey, feelings intensity (Terri-survey/Trish/Jean, 12/1)

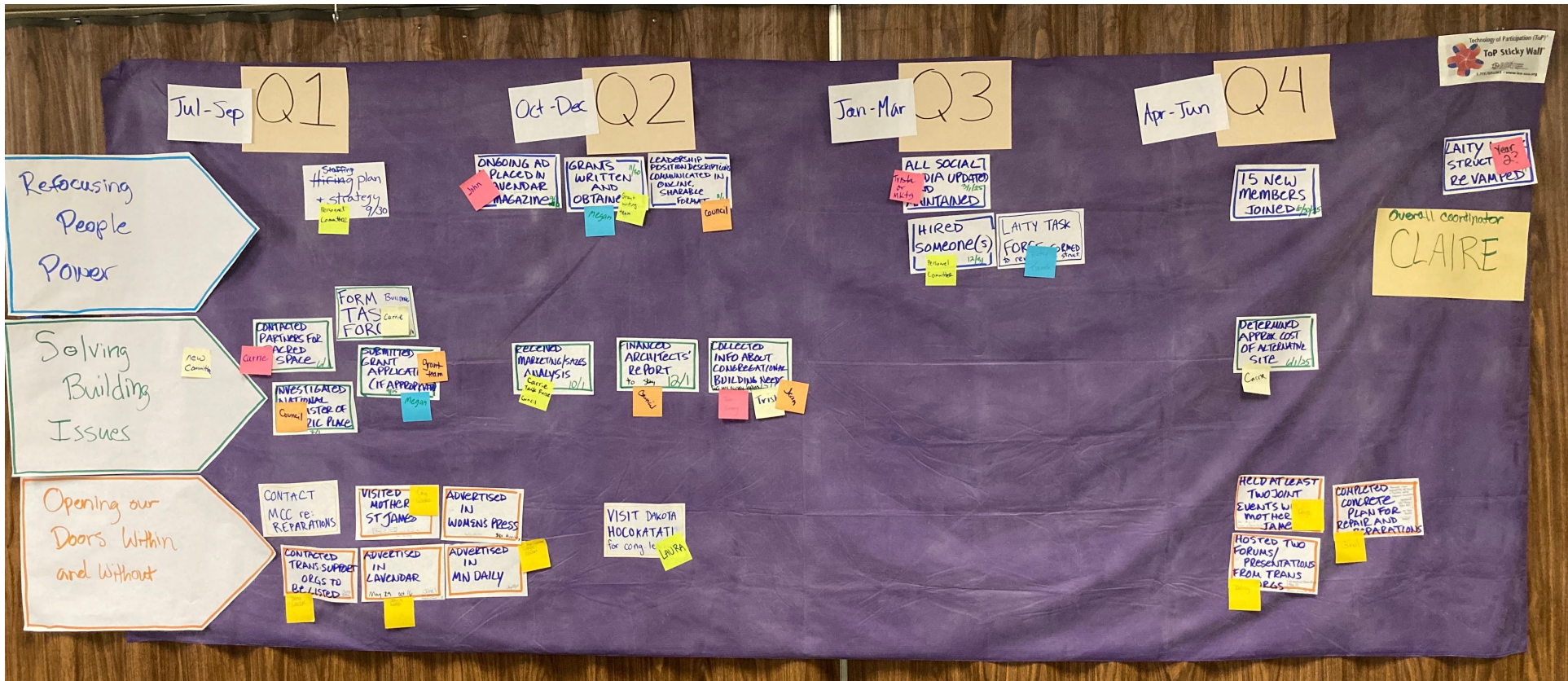
- Determined approximate cost of alternative site (Carrie)

OPENING OUR
DOORS
WITHIN & WITHOUT

- Contacted Trans-support orgs to be listed (Betsy/Deidre, 6/1)
- Visited Mother St. James (Doug/Deidre, 5/18 event; fall event there with them? By Thanksgiving?)
- Advertised in Lavender (John M/Deidre, 5/29, 10/16); John getting info; wedding issue in Oct.
- Advertised in Women's Press (Sep/Oct election)
- Advertised in MN Daily (Forum Coordinator/Deidre, 8/20)

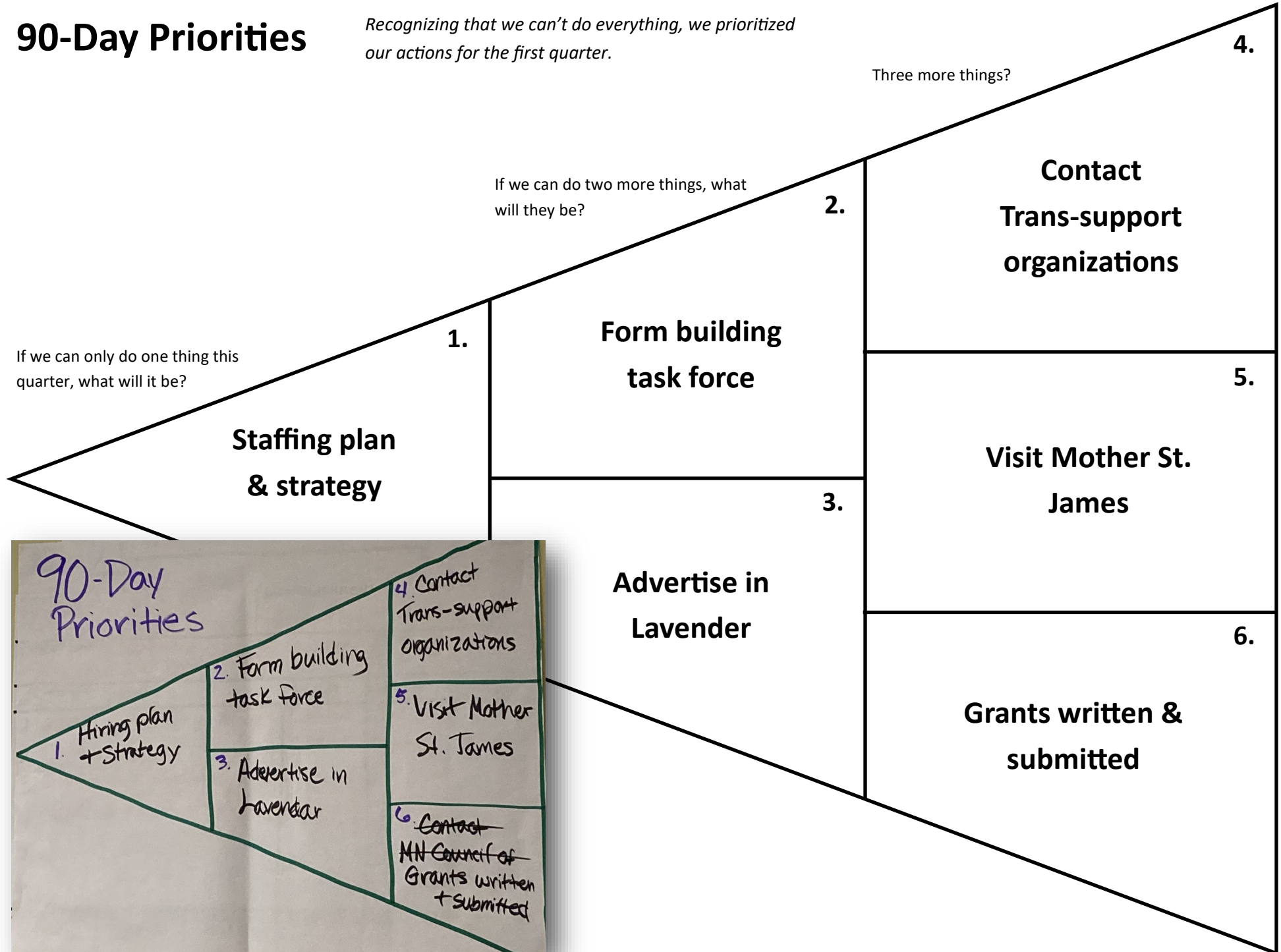
- **Contact MCC re: reparations**
- **Visit Dakota Hocokatati for cong. Learning (Laura)**

- Held at least two joint events with Mother St. James (Doug, by Aug 1); convo re: desire/event plan
- Hosted two forums/presentations from Trans orgs (In touch w/ Trevor & Myrtle, May 12; forums during '24-'25 yr) (Betsy)
- Completed concrete plan for repair and reparations (research other congregations, MN Council of Churches, asking indigenous communities; speaker at UBC forum from MCC; Jim Bear Jacobs; hocokatati, visit exhibit) '24-'25 yr forums (Council)



90-Day Priorities

Recognizing that we can't do everything, we prioritized our actions for the first quarter.



90-Day Implementation Steps

Key Direction		Measurable Accomplishment (WHAT)		
Intent (WHY)		Start Date:		
		End Date:		
Implementation Steps (How)		WHO	WHEN	WHERE
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
Coordinator	Collaborators/Partners	Evaluation Measures	Budget/Resources	Next Meeting Date
Team Members				

Quarterly Evaluation and Planning Rhythm

How will we evaluate our progress? This is a template for holding quarterly evaluation and planning sessions.

Participants: Those involved in the planning and implementation

Goals: To assess accomplishments and plan for the next period; to re-energize individuals and teams

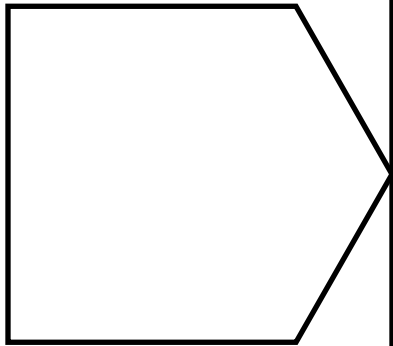
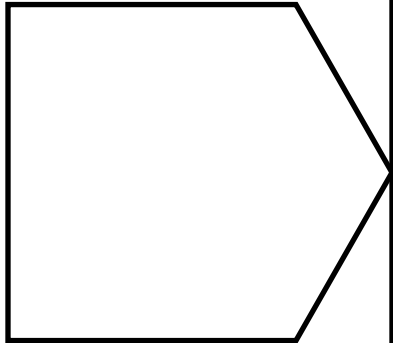
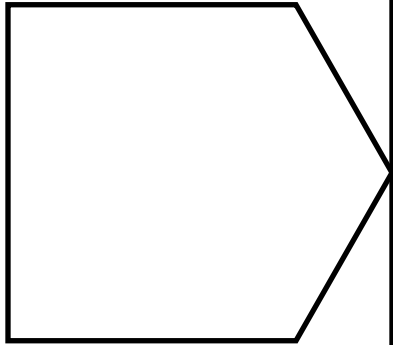
Product/Outcome: Clearly-defined tasks and roles for the next period

Month:	Month:	Month:	Month:
<p>Quarterly Planning Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision, Blocks/Barriers, and Key Directions Evaluation of 90-Day Action Plan: What we accomplished, what didn't get done, high points, low points, insights/learnings, implications for the future Plan for next 90 days: Place measurable accomplishments on the quarterly timeline; develop 90-day action plan (implementation steps) for each accomplishment 	<p>Quarterly Planning Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision, Blocks/Barriers, and Key Directions Evaluation of 90-Day Action Plan: What we accomplished, what didn't get done, high points, low points, insights/learnings, implications for the future Plan for next 90 days: Place measurable accomplishments on the quarterly timeline; develop 90-day action plan (implementation steps) for each accomplishment 	<p>Quarterly Planning Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision, Blocks/Barriers, and Key Directions Evaluation of 90-Day Action Plan: What we accomplished, what didn't get done, high points, low points, insights/learnings, implications for the future Plan for next 90 days: Place measurable accomplishments on the quarterly timeline; develop 90-day action plan (implementation steps) for each accomplishment 	<p>Quarterly Planning Event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision, Blocks/Barriers, and Key Directions Evaluation of 90-Day Action Plan: What we accomplished, what didn't get done, high points, low points, insights/learnings, implications for the future Develop measurable accomplishments for the next 12 months on a quarterly calendar Plan for next 90 days: Place measurable accomplishments on the quarterly timeline; develop 90-day action plan (implementation steps) for each accomplishment
2-3 hours	2-3 hours	2-3 hours	Half-day

12-Month Accomplishments

Key Direction		Success Indicators <i>Measurable changes we will see in 2-3 years as evidence of our success</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Advantages</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Limits</td> </tr> </table>		Advantages	Limits
Advantages	Limits			
Present	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Strengths <i>of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Weaknesses <i>of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</i> </td> </tr> </table>	Strengths <i>of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</i>	Weaknesses <i>of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</i>	Possible 12-Month Accomplishments <i>that build on our advantages and acknowledge our limits</i> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.
Strengths <i>of the congregation that will promote successful implementation</i>	Weaknesses <i>of the congregation that may hinder successful implementation</i>			
Future	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Benefits <i>of successful implementation</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Dangers <i>or unintended consequences of successful implementation</i> </td> </tr> </table>	Benefits <i>of successful implementation</i>	Dangers <i>or unintended consequences of successful implementation</i>	
Benefits <i>of successful implementation</i>	Dangers <i>or unintended consequences of successful implementation</i>			

Key Direction



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

90-Day Priorities

Decide the most important accomplishments for the quarter and build excitement for moving forward

The diagram is a large triangle pointing to the left, divided into six numbered sections. The sections are arranged from left to right, with the narrowest part on the left and the widest part on the right. The sections are numbered 1 through 6, with 1 being the narrowest and 6 being the widest. The sections are arranged in a funnel shape, with the narrowest part on the left and the widest part on the right. The sections are numbered 1 through 6, with 1 being the narrowest and 6 being the widest. The sections are arranged in a funnel shape, with the narrowest part on the left and the widest part on the right. The sections are numbered 1 through 6, with 1 being the narrowest and 6 being the widest.

1. If we can only do one thing this quarter, what will it be?

2. If we can do two more things, what will they be?

3. Three more things?

4.

5.

6.

Date:

Team:

1. What happened? *What we accomplished, what didn't get done, etc.*

2. High Points *What went well?*

3. Low Points *Where did we struggle?*

4. What have we learned? *Key insights, takeaways*

5. Plan for moving forward? *Next steps*

6. Assignments *Who will do what & by when*

7. Next meeting: