

**United Methodist Church of Vista
GAP Team and Congregation
In Home (and At Church) Listening Sessions
Collated Meeting Notes
March – April 2018**

GAP Team (formerly Building Inspiration Team)

Lyn Berry

Beth Brainerd

Warren Elsasser

Margene Haase

Dakota Koenig

Susan Kronoff

Barbara Mitchell

Billy Stempson

Michael Walker

Jim Wills

Rollin Grider, *Ex Officio*, Lay Leader

Rev. Leigh Ann Shaw, Senior Pastor

Rev. Mary Scifres, Church Consultant

Notes from in-home meeting at Lyn Berry's 3.10.18

In attendance: Lyn Berry, Beth Hallock, Jim Wills, Loretta Pierce, John and Margene Haase, Leigh Ann Shaw, Gary Lamb

- All of our experience is different; listen with focus to others.
- It's respectful.
- Will there be other in-home meetings after the first round?
- You can go to more than one meeting
- Our perception is important in the information we glean.
- When addressing negativity or doubt, remember that negativity can be wisdom, pointing to important questions: Does it change who will come? Does it change us? Will I be ignored? Will I still be loved and cared for?
- Focus on ministry? What is our purpose? Ministry center or preschool?
- My view of consensus: thumbs up, support 100 percent; thumb to side; support with questions; thumbs down, I hate it. Goal is not 51%; we want broad engagement.
- Reconciling ministries; no discrimination; first impressions are important. Stage in social hall. Invite all kinds of programs – drama, Jimmy Patton's group. Kitchen as part of it.
- Would you have volunteers or staff in charge?
- Showers; needed if we serve homeless or become an emergency shelter.
- We need flexibility.
- Support washer and dryer; needed if we have preschool
- Serve homeless off site; serve immigrants.
- Not building focused; staff focused. Same level. Space use. Security.
- In choir room, no one can see who comes in the building.
- Do we have the people to do it? Who is going to pay? We need to step out in faith. Is money the determining factor? Does our current demographic determine our future?
- LGBT community.
- Joy of being associated with one another.
- Some of the nay-sayers are vocal; they have honest fears. Fewer than 5% are negative.
- Ministries: Feeding people, LGBT, preschool, community center; addiction; community garden and environmental fellowship; gymnasium
- Men are under-served.

Notes from in-home meeting at Humphreys 3.14.18

In attendance: Tom and Sue Humphrey, Lenore and Larry Averell, Geneva Christiansen, Dakora Koenig, Luene and Norm Corwin, Brenda Foss, Bill and Ruth Rockwell, Merry Nickerson, Mal and Sherry Blakeslee, Leigh Ann Shaw, Lyn Berry, Mary Scifres, Chris and Marlize (don't know their last name)

- History of GAP team and ministry plan; building has been an issue; what would your purpose and passion be if there were no limits of health, money, pastor, etc? What is your dream for UMC Vista?
- People from all walks of life; building relationships
- Concern about empty patio area; we ignore it; it's plumbed; it's just sitting there. Put in a kitchen. We congregate in the lower area with a microwave and giant refrigerator; we need more room for meetings and for Sunday school.
- We need to build a kitchen; we have land above the parking lot; we could build dorms and house the homeless up there, and then rent out as apartments once that problem is solved.
- Lenore – I want a kitchen. We would attract more.
- Wants to believe the vision, but “people don't do church” these days. We had an “If you build it, they will come” philosophy. We built it, and they didn't come. We need to grow congregation, get the numbers up.
- We won't do “If you build it, they will come.” How would you grow the church? It's about ministry and community. Our intergenerational focus is vital.
- We need a kitchen, not a big, fancy one, but a place to store things; UMW likes our church for conferences because it's big enough, but we need a kitchen. UMW is working on a project we hope will attract younger people.
- Helping others is important, and we need to communicate that.
- Attract younger people; start a preschool. How many people live within a half-mile of church? We don't have members from the apartments across the street. In Britain, some older churches are used for camping, where they rent out rooms at night.
- Our Halloween event attracts people from the community.
- Movies on the Lawn attracts people. We try different things.
- A lot of religious activity is in home locations, develop arms outside the church.
- Our homes can be a place of community; safe place for neighbors to feel welcome; people come into the sanctuary not know what is expected; home is more secure. Pop-up church; a place to go and worship.
- I hear that the church doesn't do anything. What can we do for others: How can we help? Let them see what we do, meet the needs of others. We need to promote what we do. What brought me back to church was the music.

Notes from in-home meeting at Humphreys 3.14.18 (continued)

- Families are spread all over the country. We need the church family. Thanksgiving dinner used to be great.
- Back in the “anti-Coke” days, I asked for a Coke machine; quite an uproar came about; we need to center on younger people, put aside “Coke is bad for you.”
- I attended a meeting for Welcome Home and saw a woman who looked familiar; she approached me afterward and said she used to come to our meals at Lado de Loma; she was vocal and she ended up in jail. She found Welcome Home and works for them now. She remembered me from the meals.
- Do we publicize that our building is available for meetings? How do we connect with our community? Are we visible?
- Our church is connected with the Centering Prayer network.
- Some of us visited Christ Ministry Center, which used to be a church, but closed several years ago. It reopened as a center with a multitude of services; they have a computer room, health care programs; many cultural programs.
- In London, the Wesleyan Church provides beverages and a brief service for workers in the area at noon; we could do that with the courthouse and other nearby employers.
- Apartments might be a source; management won’t allow solicitations, but we can send mail.
- Barbara Mitchell is a great example; she wears her name badge every time we go to lunch after church. She lets people know.
- Attended a meeting at Kaiser and had left name badge on; started talking with a woman who ended up coming to church.
- I have a neighbor I met after my husband died; I didn’t know much about her before; I invited her to our concert.
- Met a young family man who has been coming to church here (and Lado de Loma) for 37 years. I had no idea.
- Use Facebook and NextDoor and Instagram; use social media to inform people and invite them.
- Put up fliers in the neighborhood. What is UMC of Vista Rocks? (Private Facebook group.)
- Go door to door in your neighborhood.
- We should do more social media.
- Beckie is in charge of the website. We also have UMC Vista.
- Library has college-age boys who teach older people computer skills; there’s always a waiting line; senior center, also.
- We are of one generation at this gathering; are we reaching younger people?

**Notes from in-home meeting at Humphreys 3.14.18
(continued)**

- We have scheduled a meeting right after the Easter Walk; I'm also meeting with youth.
- There is a real void in the Methodist Church in the 18-30 age group; we haven't improved.
- Faith and psychological development in becoming adults; we do leave, and some come back. How do we make it a safe place to come back to?
- I met someone who is visiting for six months and asked if we have a place for her son; are we handicapped accessible?
- Several people met their spouses at church events as young people.
- We need to expand family ministries position.
- Threw Bible and Common Book of Prayer from truck at young Marines during time in service.
- Grew up with increasing responsibilities in church.
- Stories about tables and chairs in storage.

In “Home” (“At Church”) Meeting Notes - Wed., March 14, 2018 - Chapel

Present: Margo Rogers, Martha Phillips, Susan Kronoff, Suzanne McMurchie, Jacque Howard, John Mitchell,
GAP Team members: Beth Brainerd-Hallock, Mary Scifres, Mike Walker (facilitator), Barb Mitchell (notes)

Meeting opened with prayer by Mike Walker; Introductions and one word to describe the church; followed by background on process.

Words chosen: Friendly Welcoming (3) Caring (3) Inspiring Supportive Spirited

Began with question: “If there were no limitations on time, money, staff, facility and resources, what dreams would you have for our church?”

- *support of And Two Fishes

- *this is not a perfect place

- *Use of an offsite building like Walgren’s, Vista

 - Homeless Soup Kitchen

 - Showers/counseling

 - Complete list of services

 - A One Stop Shop

 - Not quite so close to the Court & Sheriff (makes homeless uncomfortable)

 - Homeless need more than one meal per week

As part of this: be more involved with community programs and reciprocal referrals—“let them do what they do best”

- *(Then can have) Pre-school onsite

 - Include building a new Sunday School wing to minimize sharing conflicts

 - Sponsor low income families

- *Bringing ministry to where it’s accessible to folk

- *Hire a professional to manage

 - *Gray hairs can’t do it all anymore; need infusion of younger folk

Why a Pre-school?

- *A lot of families aren’t able to prepare their children for success in school

- *introduce children to Christian background to give them building blocks for life—our

own not another

- *Mike in speaking with Church Preschool Directors in the past found it was yes/no on getting folks into membership—this might be a side benefit, but should not be the focus

- *Affordable preschool is missing in this area—it is a gap unless you are already under services through another program

- *Mission for children is not necessarily a ministry to the parents

- *through the use of Cable funds might offer a ‘free’ preschool which might encourage younger families

Pg. 2—In-home Meeting Notes – Chapel —3/14/2018

Suggestions to bringing in younger folk

- *Arrangement of facility needs some changes

- *the main focus is Sunday mornings: How about other choices?

 - Other times during week for fellowship, Bible Study

- *Intergenerational Fellowship time with dinner and breakouts for Adult Bible Study/Kids craft time

Other thoughts

- *should not be counting members vs. ministry

- *Bible Study after services: one on sermon-topic discussion

- *okay to have it “look different” throughout the year

- *need to foster church family idea and enhance communication

- *there are fewer potlucks than used to have

- *small groups are good

- *More mission projects together

- *we like knowing we make a difference

- *small group studies as well as service

- *patio outside near the hospitality center—1 year goal?

- *be more ecological when we do meals so don't have to use plastic, styrofoam

In Home Meeting Notes – Home of Warren & Carol Elsasser – 3.17.18

Leader: Mike Walker

In attendance: Rev. Dr. Leigh Ann Shaw, Diane and Phil Biggs, Vic and Sherry Johnston, Rollin and Linda Grider, Sharon Hall, Don and Rae Ann Wirth, Mike and Brenda Walker, Heidi Kendall, Dakota Koenig, Warren and Carol Elsasser

- Mike introduced the meeting with an overview of the origin and purpose of the Gap Team
- Mike asked the group to highlight various aspects of the church that have a positive impact on parishioners, which included: friendly, camaraderie, bell choir/music program/support, fellowship, sense of family, outreach/mission work, caring/support, worship, and finally that the church had a powerful impact on the community at large

Responses to the question, “If you dared to dream big, no limitations on time and money, what would you like to see?”

- Adequate facilities for music ministries
- Expanded kitchen facilities
- Central meeting place for youth groups, gatherings, programs
- Day care for under privileged; preschool; senior activity center
- Reach out to/create opportunity for young adult group (21-30)
- Improved Nursery facility needed
- Offer programs sponsored by the church to attract adults (30-50) such as financial planning seminars, etc.
- Facilities expansion ‘upstairs’ (same level as sanctuary) is needed for fellowship prior to/after Sunday worship
- Sports facility for youth (soccer field?)
- Will these suggestions grow the church?
- The path must be a worthwhile endeavor to get parishioners on board...

Comments by leadership as to next steps:

- Consultant Mary will gather the input and present it to the church to determine next steps
- The process is to be transparent
- Be mindful to avoid ‘parking lot’ decision-making
- All voices will be heard, however we must realize the majority opinion/view will be the direction taken
- Additional staff needed to care for expanded facilities, as well as and coordinating programs and calendaring events
- Additional staff positions to consider might include...Discipleship Coordinator, Coordinating outreach programs, Christian Education and Adult Bible study expansion, Custodial position/facilities coordinator/maintenance

In Home Meeting Notes - Wed., March 21, 2018 - Home of Robbie & Katie Pierce

Present: Beckie Henselmeier, Colleen Guffey, Jim and Carol Pence, Sue Humphrey, Robbie & Katie Pierce, Pastor Frank Hallock + GAP Team members: Beth Brainerd-Hallock, Pastor Leigh Ann Shaw, Billy Stempson (facilitator), Barbara Mitchell

Meeting opened by Billy Stempson at 7:09 with prayer by Robbie Pierce. Introductions and word to describe the church, followed by background on process.

Words chosen: Family (2) Openness/Welcome People/Community
Heart Music Village (2) Compassionate Stained Glass

Began with question: “If there were no limitations on time, money, staff, facility and resources, what dreams would you have for our church?”

*music—more space for music programs where bell tables, for instance

*studio space for even community - use particularly for families that can't afford music lessons for children

*more classes/community outreach—a satellite for outreach, i.e. homeless—food pantry, free clinic. Space at Walgreens's mentioned.

*programs that we have , but on a “grander scale”—more days per week- where is there a need??? What is it that's lacking in the community??

*Childcare/afterschool options that are affordable, start early, go past 6 o'clock, perhaps even on weekends for parents that work weekends—can be for respite or enrichment

*more staff/volunteers to cover these issues

*reality of having volunteers may not be possible—money needs/demands of volunteers and time

*value of what's being offered: i.e. music lesson valued at \$100 vs \$10 for a meal

*'free' often means no commitment, so may not be the best answer

*If Volunteer staff (i.e. And Two Fishes) we will need training and staff oversight

Comment: Volunteers often = folksy/rural; vs. “Paid” seeming more professional (i.e. paid section leaders)

*Long-term volunteers vs One-shot Project (i.e. Habitat for Humanity)

*More engagement (purposeful and meaningful) with community: after school programs: paying college students could be ministry both to students and families

*having a community space for AA, Mom's, other programs; 7 days a week

*Why not a low-cost preschool? A computer lab? Classes of all kinds?

*Summer programs which could provide internships for college students (pay them a stipend; i.e.. Robbie in Dallas); Childcare focus with more hours: this could be a way for college students, home for the summer, to give back to their community

*Raising up leaders from the youngest to the oldest

Comment: Methodist Church system makes it difficult to raise up leaders

*Need to empower and value our laity

In Home Meeting Notes – 3.21.18 - Home of Robbie & Katie Pierce, Pg. 2

Question: “What’s keeping you from your dream??”

- *fulltime jobs

- *family

- *time and energy

- *UMW at night

- *leaders at church who allow those who just want to be ‘worker bees’, but NOT in charge

Question: “How do we identify times that folks can participate?”

- *Offer up options as to times

- *Recognize all dreams don’t “call” to everyone

- *need to be open to and encourage communication of ideas

Question: “Do we have to be everything to everyone?”

- *team can’t be just ‘worker bees’ there has to be at least one with the vision

- *people need to know where their gifts and strengths are

- *decide what our vision is as community (1 or 2 or 3—which may not be everyone’s favorite) and then really work them!

Comment: people who care for/work with each other/ grow in relationships, can do so without a lot of material things

An example is the LDS: afternoons where older members of the congregation teach children

Question: Where do we go from here? Billy shared some possible thoughts: expand/strengthen adult and young families Sunday School; strengthen first service

Questions?

- *Are we looking at how we take care of each other?

- *What is driving us? Do we forget?

NOTES FROM CHOIR LISTENING SESSION ~ 4/12/2018
Gathering Facilitated by Mary Scifres with 37 Attendees
(about ½ of whom said they have attended another meeting; four younger than “senior”!)
Notetaker: Barbara Mitchell

Mary opened with prayer and question: If no limits of any kind, what are your hopes and dreams for UMC Vista over next 3-5 years?

- *Sunday school rooms bursting @ seams with children and youth
- *not just SS, but many hands & feet, all ages, to do community service, including partnering with our Cable recipients
- *a ‘real’ rehearsal and concert hall—twice as big as what we have, tiered, single use—translation: one that we don’t have to set up/tear down and set up again!! Could help lead to increased participation and larger audiences.
- *facilities to make music ministry happen, including children’s music
- *contemporary music
- *preschool in a church—leading to habit development of being involved at the church; adults must participate with the preschool
- *Community Center: a place offering creative Christian exposure to those who are perhaps spiritual, but not truly religious—concerts, local bands, children’s theaters and arts
- *Youth group—our kids don’t really know South District kids and feel somewhat ostracized as they generally spend quality time only about once a year at camp, whereas other kids often go to school together and hang out together
- *Need a mixing of age groups in lots of areas and include participation of youth and children in all areas of church life, including Worship (more than just the few times that the younger groups participate)
- *Sharing of musical talents across age lines (i.e. children invited to watch/play organ)
- *Hospitality Center for all including visitors
- *Youth want to do things
 - church offer help, listening and safe space
 - might be spiritual, again but not necessarily religious, and not preachy
- *We don’t want to expand into a large and empty facility—the community space can be used for hospitality, sharing movies, whatever—be smart about expansion and sharing space
- *have a church presence at street fairs, emphasizing families

Thinking about our leadership “role as Choir”, how can we help build forward into consensus—forward into change?

- *we have to listen, be open to others
- *spend/commit a little more time to being in relationship with our congregation—before, between and after services (doesn’t have to be every week)
- *encourage discussion, but not “parking lot conversations”—bring forward concerns/complaints so that common ground/solutions can be explored/found
- *more blended services, intergenerational—once a quarter? Throughout the summer?
- *of all \$\$\$ we give away (Cable) does it help encourage others to come here? Our Outreach does help us meet needs, and we are encouraging ourselves to make connections
- *have various ‘inside’ groups host info booths, share what’s being done, & interact with congregation
- *talking to people matters; putting funds into outreach also matters

NOTES FROM YOUTH LISTENING SESSION
4/22/2018

Gathering facilitated by Andrew Ponder Williams with 6 attendees

Lead Question: If no limits of any kind, hopes and dreams over next 3-5 years.

- *More team building activities and opportunities with the youth of Vista and other churches
- *More service and mission with a local focus, such as Loaves and Fishes and Heifer Project
- *Worship service for children led by you once a month that includes small groups
- *Youth offer leadership for Summer music workshops
- *More connection with adults, adults get to know the youth so the youth can also know them
- *Youth want to lead congregation in being friendlier and better listeners of ideas from young people
- *More interactive music and songs in both worship services, including some camp songs
- *Bring back Family Camp at Cedar Glen for everyone in church

Notes from Boat Exercise-draw Vista UMC if it was a boat!

- *Youth would like to offer leadership in worship including helping with audio/visual
- *Youth feel a lot of connection and care for the children of the congregation
- *They hope for intergenerational relationships with their church family
 - *They would like to lead some of the congregation's mission focuses and projects