

REACH

UP TO GOD!

INTO YOUR HEART!

OUT TO ALL PEOPLE!

Ministry Action Plan
For 2010 Through 2012
Bishop Janes United Methodist Church
Basking Ridge, NJ

Ministry Action Plan For 2010 Through 2012

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RATIONALE:

Bishop Janes United Methodist Church is a happy congregation of people who support each other and do good works in the community. By all measures, we are a faithful and active church. Looking forward we want to ensure a positive future for BJUMC.

While our members feel very positively about our church, BJUMC has not experienced membership growth in the past few years. While a church is not a business, success and survival are dependent upon having a critical mass of members to support the congregation in ministries as well as finances. Religion is in a very competitive environment today. According to a survey report released in January 2009 by Ellison Research (Phoenix, AZ), titled “**Protestant churchgoers are no more loyal to their church denomination than they are to brands of toothpaste or bathroom tissue**”, “Protestant denominations are simply facing what most companies face as they try to develop brand loyalty – consumers with many different options who may not perceive strong differences among those options.... brands that develop stronger loyalty tend to do a better job of differentiating themselves from other brands...With one-third of all Protestant churchgoers not even being able to identify a preferred denomination, denominational leaders face many of the same challenges as do the leaders of brands such as Coke, Chevrolet, or Home Depot.” A study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life conducted in August 2007, titled **U.S. Religious Landscape Survey**, reports that “...constant movement characterizes the American religious marketplace, as every major religious group is simultaneously gaining and losing adherents.”

Clearly, we have a friendly congregation, a charismatic pastor, a lot of excellent mission community service programs and a great music program, which should draw people to get involved. As we look to the years ahead, we need to keep those ministries and build on them, while making them evident to those outside the church so that we can ensure a bright future for Bishop Janes United Methodist Church.

With these thoughts and concerns in mind, the Administrative Council decided that we should develop a plan for the future that would ensure the ongoing health and vitality of the congregation by setting and following up on long term goals, as does a successful business.

IMPLEMENTATION:

We sought the advice and guidance of Rev. Douglas Ruffle, PhD to coach us through the long term planning process. Dr. Ruffle, who had just completed his book “Roadmap to Renewal” (which the team read and used as a guide), is the Director of Congregational Development for the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. His services to local churches are paid for by the Annual Conference.

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A core team was invited by the pastor to consider the project and discuss it with Dr. Ruffle. These were Ron Schinbeckler, Mark Fentress, Judy Linton and Howard Leary. After agreeing to the value of the project, the core group invited people to join the team. The team members that executed the project are Barbara Amato, Mark Fentress, Art Havighorst, John Grotland, Brittany Linton, Judy Linton, Micky Mayfield, Chris Park and Fran Smith with Howard Leary as team leader, Dave Dutcher as ex-officio advisor and Dr. Doug Ruffle as coach.

Following the roadmap in Dr. Ruffle's book, the team:

- Focused on the direction in which Christ would point us: to be a sign and an instrument of God's kingdom, helping others as well as ourselves, not just a sanctuary for our members.
- Interviewed people in the community outside our congregation to find out how we are perceived and what needs exist in the community that we might help address.
- Surveyed the congregation to be sure we understand the values held and measure the important issues perceived by our members.
- Reviewed several demographic surveys of our surrounding area.
- Visited other churches that have been increasing their membership to see what best practices we might be able to apply to our situation.
- Selected six issues that the plan should address, based on all the information we had collected.
- Assembled this plan that lays out goals and milestones, with a recommended approach, to address each of those issues.

The team was consecrated on Sunday, March 1. We met eight times over a four-month period, doing research work between meetings. The plan presented here represents the collaboration and consent of the team members.

THE PLAN:

The following pages list goals in six areas that the team feels are realizable. Also included are milestones for review, validation and assessment of the success achieved for each.

Issues Addressed by the plan are:

Membership Growth

New Worship/Music Style

Community Outreach

Adult and Family Education

Financial Stability

Youth Ministry

This plan was approved by the Administrative Council at a meeting held on August 13, 2009.

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MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

The MAP team feels that with the increased level of interest and activity resulting from the other objectives of this plan, New Worship/Music Style, Community Outreach, Adult and Family Education, Financial Stability and Youth Ministry, our membership should increase. In addition to that, however, there may be some opportunities to employ marketing strategies to bring in more prospective members.

Our Membership Ministry Team has good programs in place to follow up with new visitors, make them feel welcome and draw them toward becoming members. Once people are in the door, this is very effective as evidenced by recent new member enrollment. Marketing or advertising strategies would be addressed toward getting more people through the door initially. In the past any form of advertising (other than our monthly ad in the Bernardsville News) that costs money has been summarily dismissed.

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	Investigate mailings, advertisements, flyers, etc. Select one for a trial marketing program	Work with finance to carve out a budget once options and their cost have been determined.	Membership Finance Community Relations
	Plan an update to the web site (sermon recordings, contemporary graphics, e-giving, interactive calendar, etc.)	Work with webmaster on software capabilities, maintenance requirements, graphics sources, cost, etc.	Community Relations
2011	Evaluate the success of initial program. If new faces have shown up at services, plan additional or repeated marketing campaigns.	Justify budget allocation based on new member interest.	Membership Finance Community Relations
	Implement web site update.	Have volunteers in place for site building and maintenance, get funds approved, purchase software and graphics.	Community Relations
2012	Based on success and cost effectiveness continue or modify marketing programs. A 5% membership increase is a goal.	Justification would be based on growth and maintenance of membership.	W Membership Finance Community Relations

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NEW WORSHIP/MUSIC STYLE

The MAP Team took “Road Trips” to observe successful practices and see what we might be able to adapt that would fit in the context of our congregation. We had heard about churches in our area that are thriving, who offer a contemporary style of worship service, different from our own. These congregations are known to be welcoming and friendly. We had information on Stonecrest Church in a report on a visit by Russ Archer, Ron Schinbeckler, Jeff Heinaman, and Ken Sausville in 2008. Barbara Amato reported on Liquid Church. The team visited two Methodist churches that are growing in membership and thriving, that also hold contemporary style services. The team reviewed written reports by Art Havighorst, Mark Fentress and Howard Leary.

We learned:

- Contemporary services appeal to people of all ages, not just to younger people.
- The music is part of the service, not an accompaniment. It is used in a way that builds up emotion through prayer in song. While the music is being performed (several numbers consecutively), the congregation is on their feet singing, clapping and swaying to the music.
- Everyone is casually dressed, including the pastors, who may wear jeans and sport shirt but not clerical robes.
- The Praise music songs sound similar to current pop or country music. They are easy to sing. The choruses are reprised with building intensity of the music, which elevates the mood.
- Contemporary instruments are used (electric and acoustic guitar, keyboard, etc.) along with a vocal group to lead the singing. The musicians and vocalists are volunteers but the leader may be a pastor who leads the music as a prayer service. The word “choir” is not used
- PowerPoint is used throughout, to display words to songs and to accompany the sermon.
- Seminaries teach courses in how to run a contemporary service.
- Services are on Sunday mornings as well as Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening.

Praise music has been introduced at some of our traditional services through the efforts of Bob Trokan and the new Praise music group. It has been well received. This gives us a beginning for molding a contemporary service around this music.

While our church doesn't have the audio-visual equipment and separate large hall that some larger churches use for contemporary services, the team feels that we can use the key elements of this worship style. Our sanctuary has good acoustics and a good basic A/V system, which can be augmented by separate amplifiers provided by the performing musicians. Certainly there are issues to be worked out such as staff workload, recruiting and rehearsing performers, ensuring sound quality and equipment investment, which would have to be addressed, presumably by the Worship and Music Ministry Team. The MAP team proposes that we commit to a series of at least four monthly contemporary services, evaluate response and build from there on the original success.

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New Worship/Music Style (continued)

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	Run a series of at least four monthly contemporary services, announced in advance. Increase volunteer participation by 25%.	Recruit volunteers for PowerPoint, performers and production support. Advice can be obtained from other Methodist Churches using contemporary services.	Worship and Music Ministry Team
	Make others in the community aware of the new style of service being offered	Investigate, mailings, newspaper listings and press releases.	Community Relations
2011	Evaluate the success of initial services and, assuming positive, make them a regular recurring (monthly, by-weekly) event. Increase volunteer participation by 50% over 2009	Get commitment from volunteers.	Worship and Music
	Make others in the community aware of the new style of service being offered	Investigate, mailings, newspaper listings and press releases.	Community Relations
2012	Based on success, justify the investment and appropriate additional A/V equipment to improve the presentation quality.	Justification would be based on growth and maintenance of membership and participation in worship..	Worship and Music Finance

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Statement of Issue: Can we increase our level of community service it in a way that people are drawn to share in the mission experience?

Our membership is rightly proud of the good work we do in the community. The team learned from outsiders that we are known for things like the charity Christmas tree sale, cheap hot dogs on Charter Day, Little Lambs, etc. The Congregation Values Survey confirmed that our members feel strongly about this and believe it is important to our mission.

We should ensure that our community mission outreach continues. Beyond that, we should build to a greater level of community outreach and do it in a way that we demonstrate to the community what our mission in Christ is about. By making others in the community aware of these ministries they hopefully will want to join us.

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	Identify new opportunities for service projects in our area.	Contact local social welfare agencies. Take suggestions from the congregation, local residents, staff and other clergy.	Mission & Social concerns
	Develop a plan to keep the community aware of our activities and invite involvement.	Investigate web site listings, cable channels, mailings and other media in addition to newspaper listings and press releases.	Community Relations
2011	Adopt one or two new programs, while continuing our existing community service programs.	Determine activity, arrange with recipients and recruit volunteers.	Mission & Social concerns
	Keep the public informed of new and existing program activities so that others are attracted to join in and so that we are a sign of Christ's work.	Implement the media options as appropriate.	Community Relations
2012	Evaluate the community service programs in place. Continue, revise or replace as appropriate. Set a new date for re-evaluation.	Get input from volunteers and recipients on results, problems and successes. Make appropriate adjustments.	Mission & Social concerns
	Keep the public informed of current and revised program activities	Modify media and information activities appropriately	Community Relations

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ADULT AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT

Learning more about our faith enriches our religious and personal experience. Understanding more about the history of Christianity, the context in which Bible stories were written, influences of Christianity on world events (and vice-versa) and the like give us a deeper understanding of who we are and a more fulfilling experience. In the past, adult education offerings have been available in the form of lectures and discussions, which have had modest attendance. Some small groups meet regularly for discussion.

A vision of the MAP team is to combine education with activities in which all church members would participate. Families and single adults would participate in the activity and an educational component. An example might be private screening of a movie with a discussion afterward on the historical and theological aspects. Another might be a camping retreat or picnic with Bible discussion around a campfire. Perhaps a bicycle trip to a nearby retreat house where refreshments and discussion would be had.

There is no standing ministry committee that would be responsible for such an activity. It is our hope that an individual with creativity and inspiration would volunteer to coordinate this, and volunteers would be sought to assist with each individual event.

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	Develop ideas for activity/education events. Plan and implement one or two events.	Seek ideas from the congregation. Get plan approved by Finance (can be self-funded by asking participants for a fee.)	Volunteers
2011	Evaluate the success of initial events. Plan similar events or change the type of event based on feedback from participants and members of the congregation that chose not to participate.	Record attendance at events. Talk to attendees and non-attendees following each event.	Volunteers
2012	Measure event attendance, check for sustained interest. Continue to gather feedback on event types and acceptance. Establish a regularly scheduled event calendar.	Record attendance at events. Talk to attendees and non-attendees following each event. Secure volunteers for regularly repeated events.	Volunteers

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FINANCIAL STABILITY

As part of the MAP process, the MAP Team determined that financial planning, reporting and strength needed to be one of the core elements of the plan. This determination was made for several reasons:

- Any recommendation in the MAP that required funding to implement has to be accommodated in the Church budget.
- Membership changes will affect the Church's financial health.
- Periodic reporting to the entire membership in ways that are clear, concise and understandable will help ensure the Church's financial needs.
- Lack of funding through the budget can be accommodated by fundraising initiatives if there is sufficient notice of such needs to the membership.

The following table reflects the MAP team's determination of how the financial aspects of the MAP can be integrated and implemented. The MAP team hopes that the annual budget can be made more open to the membership, in a church- separate wide meeting with a presentation and materials. Financial reports are provided now, presented at an annual meeting and always available in the Welcome Center, yet input received in the Congregation Values Survey indicate that members seek to better understand our financial status. Technology available to us now can make this process easier to implement and should be taken advantage of (e.g. PowerPoint presentation e-mailed to members in advance). Knowledge of the Church's current financial condition, together with projections for the next few years, should increase the Church's ability to meet its goals and objectives, including the full and necessary funding of MAP programs.

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GOALS:

Financial stability of BJUMC

Implementation of the MAP and its financial implications.

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	(1) Establish long range financial plan for BJUMC for 3 / 5 / 10 years based on clear projections. (2) Share long-range plan with congregation so all are aware of church needs.	(1) Review projections; establish parameters for growth & attrition; funding needs for existing and new programs, reserves. (2) Hold membership meetings to present projections. Create PowerPoint slides to assist and handouts so members can review past.	Finance
	Fund MAP programs	Review MAP and determine financial needs to implement suggested programs. Develop funding sources either through budget or special fundraising.	Finance with coordination of implementing committees
2011	Fund implementation of MAP programs	Allocate funds according to budget lines now established. Oversee and administer funding.	Finance
	Determine efficacy of new MAP Programs	Review programs' success and failure, and if failure determine whether lack of sufficient funding is main cause.	Finance with coordination of implementing committees
2012	(1) Continue review of MAP programs. (2) Cancel programs that are not working; strengthen ones that are.	Review programs with implementing committees and MAP to determine whether lagging programs should be terminated or adjusted. How can strong programs be expanded and what are funding needs.	Finance with coordination of implementing committees
	Review and adjust 3 / 5 / 10 year projections	Review projections; establish parameters for growth & attrition; funding needs for existing and new programs, reserves.	Finance

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YOUTH MINISTRY

The MAP team recognizes the importance of youth ministry to the families of our congregation. It is also a key component in making our church attractive to potential new members. The input received from the Congregation Values Survey underscored the importance of an effective youth program.

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is presently recruiting a new Director of Youth Ministries. This new leader will be responsible for leading an effective program of youth activities. Clearly, the content of such a program will be defined with the new Director's and the Pastor's direction. The MAP team offers the following goals:

Year	Actionable Goal	Means to Accomplish	Who Implements?
2010	Increase participation of youth in the services so that at least one young person has responsibilities during each service	Planning services jointly by the Pastor and Director of Youth Ministries.	Staff
2011	Increase participation of youth in BJUMC youth activities.	Develop programs that are well planned that include activities that draw attendance and fit in young people's busy schedules. Communicate effectively with youth, using contemporary media.	Director of Youth Ministries and volunteers
2012	Have at least 10% of youth involved in youth activities come from families outside the church membership	Continue and improve successful youth programs. Encourage participants to invite their school and other friends.	Director of Youth Ministries and volunteers