

New Life at Old First

Roadmap To Renewal Report to Church Council 01/05/2011

In May of 2010 the church council selected and commissioned the Road Map to Renewal Team, (to be known as the RTR team) to assess our church's current ministries and report back to the church council. The guide used by our RTR team over this past nine month span has been the book *Roadmap to Renewal* written by Rev. Dr. Douglas Ruffle, currently the team coordinator of Congregational Development with the New Jersey Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Members of the RTR team are Terry Frazier, June Holder, Donna Ahrens, Leota Santiago, Ed Ahrens, Julio Santiago, Chet Burtt, Bill Tompkins, Reverend Boyle and Marty Garland. The RTR team has been meeting about every two weeks since May. Our final meeting in preparation of this report was this past Sunday, January 2, 2011, for an all-day Retreat/worship workshop at the Upper Room Retreat Center in Neptune, NJ. During this retreat we reviewed all of our findings and prepared vision and mission statements to remind ourselves and tell others who and what we are. These statements underlie the Mission Action Plan (MAP) found at the end of this report to help us become a more effective "sign" of the Kingdom of God.

As indicated in our RTR guide book, our ultimate goal as a church should be to serve as a "sign" to God's light and love in our community and a sign of the Kingdom of God here on Earth and in Heaven. The tasks that were given to the RTR Team by the Church Council are as follows...

- Celebrate who we are
- Measure our effectiveness
- Face outward (to the community)
- Reconnect prayer and giving witness
- Rediscover who, what, and where Old First serves
- Reassess our ministries
 - What we should continue, stop, and start
- Find a path to move from maintenance to mission

At the onset of our "Road Trip" the congregation was given a survey to complete for the RTR team to use in discerning what our congregation's core values, issues and concerns are.

The next phase of our research was to reach out to the community through our Ministry by Walking Around. This required RTR team members to go out to places in our community where the people are and talk to them. Bill Tompkins and Reverend Boyle went to the local shopping

center were the dollar store is to talk to people; Terry Frazier and Marty Garland went to the student center at Monmouth College; and June Holder interviewed people in her office. Our mission was to simply engage people and ask them if they knew about our church, if 'yes' we asked if they knew anything particular about our church and also what they thought or felt a church should do for and in the community. Terry Frazier and Donna Ahrens in addition went to Cranford United Methodist to experience a worship service and meet personally with members of their congregation and talk about the successful ministries that they currently have.

A "road break" as explained in our RTR Book was the next step in completing our mission. Each member was asked to read a book from a suggested list and cull the information they felt was relevant to our congregation and share it with the rest of the members of our RTR team. The titles read were *"Leading beyond the Walls, Un-Christian, Velvet Elvis and The Gospel According to Starbucks"*. This was also done to prepare us to discern what God is calling our congregation to do.

Having completed each of these steps it was now time to begin putting all of the information and data together that we had collected and attempt to discern what God is leading us to do to be a more effective "sign" of his Kingdom. These recommendations are presented in this report to Church Council in the form of a new vision and mission statement as well as a Mission Action Plan (MAP) with ways to make us a more effective "sign" to the kingdom of God.

Please find below the findings of our RTR team...

The congregation survey indicates that we are a happy church, a healthy congregation. Our values lie in the teaching of God's word and the spiritual needs of its members. Most important to our congregation is worship, discipleship and reaching out to our community. Our core values are Ecumenism, Education and personal and social holiness. While we want growth within our congregation we do not want any radical changes in the worship that we currently have on Sunday mornings. Based on the survey results the current focus of our congregation is inward toward our selves, not outward toward our community.

When looking at the current ministries of our congregation we have much to celebrate just as we have celebrated in the past. The RTR team did not find that we are currently involved in any ministries that should be discontinued.

Many, wonderful ideas were discussed among the RTR team in regards to the additional ministries that could be started within our congregation. Already new ministries have begun. The Transportation Ministry for Peter Cooper Village and our Dollar Store ministries are two examples of ministries that have begun since our RTR team been meeting.

In evaluating our ministries here at Old First the RTR team found that all of our current ministries are effective. Effectiveness was looked at in terms of who is benefiting from each ministry, what the benefits are and what could make each ministry blossom even more. Time after time in our discussion we came up with usually the same answer. All of our ministries

would benefit greatly simply by having more members of our congregation participating in each ministry.

By evaluating all of the information that the RTR team has assembled over these last nine months along with all of the prayers from our congregation and with each other we have prepared the new vision and mission statements and mission action plan (MAP) for approval by church council.

The MAP that the RTR team has prepared recommends four things that we can do right now to become a more effective “sign” of the Kingdom and Realm of God. All four of these actions have been suggested with the belief that these activities and actions will make our congregation a more effective “sign” leading both us and others to the Kingdom of God as we have been called to do through the great commission.

Matthew 28: 16-20 (TEV)

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him, even though some of them doubted. Jesus drew near and said to them, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”

Please find below the RTR teams vision and mission statements and Mission Action Plan for council’s consideration.

Our Vision Statement

*Seeking to share God’s healing light
and the transforming love of Jesus*

Our Mission Statement

*Magnifying God’s call to be the hands and feet of Christ by serving the needs of
our community and congregation in an ever changing world*

Our Mission Action Plan

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>WHO</u>	<u>WHEN</u>
Soup/sandwich (Served to community)	feed the hungry	NOW team	monthly
Increase relevance of Bible teaching	More adults in Christian education	Marty and Education team	weekly
Expand Worship (Contemporary)	reach all generations	RTR Team	monthly
Quarterly ‘event’	increase community awareness of OFUMC	Church Council	quarterly

It is the belief of the RTR team that with approval from Church Council these actions steps will make us a more effective "sign" pointing both community and ourselves to the Kingdom of God.