

## **Report and Recommendations from the Strategic & Implementation Team**

**November 15, 2009**

The first strategic plan for Sharon United Methodist Church was completed in 1966 when the church was constituted with 60 members. Since that initial plan, there have been 5 other plans that have helped to shape the church as we know it today. These 5 plans included the development of our facility for worship, small group experiences and recreation. The mission statement for our church was initiated and developed during 2 of these planning periods. During the last strategic planning process, 33 recommendations were made and 29 of these were fulfilled. The remaining 4 were determined to be no longer relevant at this time. The results of this strategic planning process addresses core elements of Christian faith and concerns of the members of Sharon UMC.

Since April 2009, 6 areas have emerged as areas of concern for the membership of Sharon United Methodist Church. These topic areas were identified after initial discussions of the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team, a series of Round Table discussions, a Town Meeting, another meeting of the team, another series of Round Table discussions and a final meeting of the team to finalize the recommendations in this document.

The 6 focus areas are:

- Focus on Christ
- Worship
- Spiritual Development
- Membership Development
- Staff/Lay Leadership
- Relationships with Each Other and Our Neighbors

Strategic Planning & Implementation Team Members:

- Dr. Julian Aldridge
- Elizabeth Bartee
- Pat Clayton
- Carrie Elam
- Nancy Fleming
- Robin Hill
- Mayreese Koraly
- Brenda Lampson
- Clayton Leech
- John Stafford
- Elizabeth Taylor
- Margery Warner

Team Leader: David Rhew

**FOCUS ON CHRIST:** Jesus Christ is the head of the body, the church, and should be at the center of our ministry as a church. We should be deliberate about seeking God's will for our church.

**Recommendations:**

Become a praying church. The recent creation of the Prayer Link is an important step in this process.

Renew our covenant to uphold Sharon UMC and the United Methodist Church with our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness as part of a corporate act of worship during the season of Lent.

**WORSHIP:** Come before the Lord with gladness! Sharon UMC is committed to providing diverse opportunities for worship.

**Recommendations:**

Implement the following worship schedule effective February 2010:

9:00-10:00am	Traditional Worship
10:15-10:45am	Café Worship
11:00-12:00pm	Contemporary Worship

Please note that this recommendation is offered to meet the needs of a changing demographic which includes singles and families with young children, as well as current faithful members of Sharon UMC. This change is also based on the experiences of other churches like Sharon UMC.

Create a transition for children in worship as they move to Godly Play or Live B.I.G. This should provide an opportunity for children to come forward for a dismissal, a blessing or other opportunity to participate in worship.

**SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:** As our faith journey continues, opportunities for growth through a variety of study opportunities should be provided.

**Recommendations:**

Continue Sunday morning study opportunities for children and youth from 10:05am-10:55am and for adults from 10:05am-10:50am, consistent with worship times.

Create a work team to investigate the implementation of community groups by the fall of 2010.

Encourage participation in current study opportunities such as Disciple Bible Study and Crown Financial.

Offer Confirmation on an annual basis starting in the spring of 2010 given a minimum of 4 participants. In the event the class is less than four, Sharon UMC will seek a partner church.

Embrace Bishop Goodpastor's mission for Sharon UMC to bring into membership 24 people on professions of faith in 2010 including members of the confirmation class.

**MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Welcoming new members into fellowship at Sharon UMC and working to meet the needs of those who are currently members are important elements of a community of faith.

**Recommendations:**

Re-establish the Greeter Program for both the Traditional and Contemporary services on Sunday morning under the leadership of the Welcoming Ministry Team.

Establish a team to begin work in February 2010 to contact inactive members to invite them to return to active membership and a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ at Sharon UMC. This team should help the church to understand the needs of these inactive members and conclude its work by July 1, 2010.

**STAFF/LAY LEADERSHIP:** Jesus provides the model as a servant leader. As we serve in leadership positions at Sharon UMC, we are working to discern how to seek God's will for our church and its ministries.

**Recommendations:**

Designate Covenant Council as the strategic planning team for Sharon UMC charged with overseeing the implementation of this strategic plan, communicating the results to the congregation and structuring future strategic planning as needed.

Charge the Staff/Parish Relations Committee with the re-examination and updates of job titles and descriptions of all staff members to ensure that they clearly reflect the direction of the church.

Charge the Staff/Parish Relations Committee to develop a full-time staff position to serve children and their families, i.e. Director of Children's Ministries.

Charge the Lay Leadership Committee with the examination of the ministry team leaders' job descriptions by June 1, 2010, so that they clearly reflect the direction of the church.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER AND OUR NEIGHBORS:** Living in community is part of the Christian commitment. We are a part of a local community, a regional community and a global community. How might we be called to serve?

**Recommendations:**

Continue to build authentic relationships and opportunities for collaborations with the community where we can be relied upon and trusted.

Support the Western North Carolina Conference four focus areas for 2009-2012:

Developing principled Christian leaders

Engaging ministry with and among the poor through our ministries of mission and outreach

Praying for newly planted churches and the revitalizing of existing churches

Supporting global health initiatives with the contribution of our apportionment and our own mission initiatives