

On Our Way Together: The Journey of Loving Relationships and Purposeful Living
A Next Steps Action Plan for Lee Street CRC
(June 2015 – June 2018)

Congregational Vision:

To be a truly multicultural, multigenerational body of Christ.

Statement of Mission:

To make and mature disciples from the neighborhoods in which we minister and live.

Discipleship Indicators:

We understand that following Jesus involves the ongoing experience of God's grace that brings joy and growth in key areas of our lives: witness, worship, relationships, learning, and service. We also understand that these patterns of growth emerge not only in our individual lives but also in our life together, and in a way that calls us to join God's mission in our world.

A Summary of the Discovery/Planning Process:

In December of 2013, the council approved of and signed an agreement with Partners in Neighborhood Transformation to help complete an action planning initiative that had begun with the Long Range Planning Team. The purpose of the agreement was to build on the good research done by the LRPT, to engage more people (i.e. congregational members and community stakeholders) in the overall discovery and planning process, and to produce a "next steps" action plan reflecting God-given desires and abilities and shared hopes and dreams for the future. The LRPT was reconstituted, and members now included Dave Bouwkamp, Rachel Bouwkamp, Brian Hoeksema, Scott Meekhof, Dave Veltkamp, and Jason Wierenga. Brian Hoeksema was designated as team leader, and Wayne Squires from PiNT was asked to provide coaching and consulting assistance. The first meeting of the re-formed team was held on February 1, 2014 with a view toward completing the whole process by the beginning of the 2015 calendar year.

The congregational listening (or "look inward") involved a ministry capacity survey accurately filled out by 165 members, personal interviews with 73 members, mapping of congregational assets by 31 council and ministry leaders (at a specially called meeting), and a spiritual gifts assessment of 118 participants. This part of the process also included training 20 additional people who conducted the interviews and assisted in interpreting the feedback. The community listening (or "look outward") included three neighborhood walks (30 total participants), 24 interviews with community stakeholders, and careful analysis of demographic data from the Community Research Institute. 13 people were trained to conduct interviews and help interpret

the feedback, and those who went on the walks and talked with neighbors provided helpful insights and identified opportunities for follow-up interactions. All these listening activities took place before the end of the 2014 calendar year, and council and congregational updates were periodically given to facilitate ongoing interest and provide important insights.

In January of 2015, the LRPT began to meet on a weekly basis to integrate all the feedback, identify key patterns of insight and energy, and draw conclusions for planning purposes. In addition, LRPT members created a number of future ministry scenarios and began drafting an action plan, the result of hundreds of hours of prayerful, creative, collaborative work by team members. A full draft will be shared with the church council in mid-April, after which it will be shared with the whole congregation. Adjustments may be made through all stages as members come to own and implement the plan.

An Overview of the Action Plan:

The comprehensive feedback and discernment process (overseen by the Long Range Planning Team) confirmed a growing commitment to and understanding of Lee Street Church's mission, with its focus on discipleship and neighborhood presence. It also provided patterns of mutual hopes and expectations which became the basis for this action plan. These collective, God-given dreams are reflected in the objectives and goals listed below. [Note: For a detailed description of feedback patterns, see the response to question 3 in the "key questions" section at the end of the document, page 22.] The strategies provide specific suggestions and potential ways for meeting the objectives and goals (i.e. a roadmap of implementation for staff, council, and ministry leaders). However, they are not exhaustive in nature and serve as prompts to think and act creatively in faithfulness to God's call.

Three major objectives and eighteen supporting goals can be outlined as follows:

1) to grow as a disciple-making community of faith by:

- identifying key markers and habits on the spiritual journey for all disciples of Jesus
- designing gathered worship as preparation for joining God's mission in the world
- utilizing small groups and ministry teams as primary contexts for ongoing spiritual growth and effective mission
- increasing the discipling influence of identified leaders (e.g. council and team/group leaders)
- establishing mentoring connections between willing adults and willing young people
- implementing a gifts-based approach to ministry/mission participation

2) to develop “love of neighbor” practices by:

- encouraging greater involvement in good neighboring by Lee Street members where they actually live and work
- increasing relational presence and strengthening neighbor-to-neighbor connections in the Godfrey-Lee area
- establishing and sustaining working partnerships with local organizations for the purpose(s) of spiritual and social transformation
- reinforcing and enhancing the partnership between Iglesia Alas de Aguila and Lee Street CRC
- addressing local systems of injustice and advocating for those most affected by them
- enhancing the ability and comfort level of each member to share his/her story of faith

3) to establish a strong yet adaptive organizational framework for effective ministry/mission by:

- praying together with greater focus and consistency
- developing healthy, creative, and productive communication processes
- streamlining our decision-making processes
- ensuring an appropriate level of staff oversight for ministry/mission priorities
- recommending building improvements that enhance community-oriented hospitality, learning, and service
- building greater capacity for faithful stewardship and sacrificial giving

This action plan is intended to be read as an opportunity to continue God’s story among his people at Lee Street Church (wherever they live and work) and in the Godfrey-Lee neighborhood. It is not a strategic rulebook laying out inflexible principles, but rather a series of practical invitations to experience and bear witness to God’s goodness, grace, and justice. As such, the Long Range Planning Team hopes it will be received with great joy and anticipation. It should be noted that an implementation team of 5-7 members will be formed to discern how and when the identified strategies will be applied and to ensure appropriate follow-up responses.

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Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 1: identify key markers and habits on the spiritual journey for all disciples of Jesus

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> commission a 3-5 member task force to design a “map” for the discipleship journey at Lee Street (e.g. core spiritual practices, spiritual gifts assessment, and mentoring relationships); this map will include practical entry points and opportunities for taking next steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and recruit key members for the task force
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and evaluate previous work on this (i.e. the witness-worship-relationships-learning-service outline of growth areas)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a useful discipleship map/framework/diagram available to all
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elicit needed feedback, make revisions, and gain council blessing and congregational affirmation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide training and resources for those involved in some aspect of spiritual mentoring (e.g. designated elders or parents of children/youth)
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> adapt current ministry approaches/systems to this map for following Jesus (e.g. membership pathways, educational strategies, and small group priorities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage staff members, the administrative council, council members, and ministry leaders in identifying organizational implications and recommending changes <i>[note: this can be done in regularly scheduled meetings, in specially designated meetings, and/or in retreat settings]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make needed changes...as appropriate (e.g. rewrite curriculum, adjust the membership process, clarify ministry area responsibilities, and/or further integrate youth and adult ministries)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create spaces for ongoing self-reflection and personal initiative (e.g. in ministry team interactions or household visits)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide training and/or mentoring to key leaders to ensure consistent integration of discipleship principles and practices

Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 2: design gathered worship as preparation for joining God’s mission in the world

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> increase the amount of sharing/storytelling in all gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with the staff, worship team, and other key leaders to establish a weekly time minimum for imaginative narration (mostly of a personal nature) • develop an approach/system by which transformational stories are identified and people are effectively prepared to share • establish a wide creative spectrum for sharing/storytelling (i.e. from individual “testifying” to professionally produced videos...and everything in-between) • draw upon the gifts/skills of effective, creative communicators
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> increase the level(s) of individual participation in all gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with the staff, worship team, and other key leaders to limit the amount of time devoted to passive listening • deepen and broaden patterns of active involvement via singing, reading, confessing, and praying • experiment with interactive activities such as dialogical preaching, breakout groups (e.g. “neighbor nudges”), and spontaneous words/prayers of blessing • continue to emphasize intergenerational involvement in a variety of worship activities
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> utilize “fifth” Sundays as a corporate opportunity for community service and neighborhood engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find community venues for the worship gathering(s) on these days • plan a variety of “serving others” initiatives throughout the day in conjunction with trusted community partners (e.g. a mini-SERVE project) • encourage hospitality/celebratory activities with individual neighbors and neighborhood families (wherever church members live)

Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 3: utilize small groups and ministry teams as primary contexts for ongoing spiritual growth and effective mission

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> ensure leadership oversight and focus on small group ministry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hire a director of small groups for 15-20 hours per week • form an oversight team to creatively support the work of the small groups coordinator (<i>note: this may involve the re-formation of the relationships team</i>) • adjust/restructure current staff roles in light of this strategic priority • integrate elder responsibilities with small group involvement/engagement
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> develop a wide spectrum of small groups that allows for multiple entry points (i.e. everything from temporary “fellowship groups” such as dining connections to home-based groups focused on spiritual formation and mission)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include this expectation in the job description of a small groups director • emphasize the “open chair” approach in developing leaders and forming new groups • create consistent storytelling opportunities about life-change in small group settings and utilize as many communication vehicles as possible (e.g. a personal interview in gathered worship or a newsletter article or a short training video) • deepen and broaden the annual congregational initiative highlighting the value/importance of small groups and inviting people to get involved...or more involved (e.g. a small group Sunday or a small group month)
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> integrate small group dynamics into all team-based ministries (e.g. the praise band, learning team, cadets, and making meals group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include this expectation in the job description of a small groups coordinator • equip all ministry team leaders to initiate or facilitate core habits of small group life (e.g. praying, sharing, supporting, serving, celebrating) • adjust ministry expectations/responsibilities as appropriate (as well as budgeting support for increased relational activity)

Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 4: increase the discipling influence of identified leaders

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> consistently equip, encourage, and support elders and deacons in their shepherding and serving responsibilities <i>[Note: This basic strategy of mutual learning, team-building, and hands-on training applies also to all leaders in their crucial serving and support roles. In addition, any leadership retreat event will likely include elders <u>and</u> deacons <u>and</u> administrative council members <u>and</u> other identified ministry leaders.]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work through a developmental resource on an annual basis (e.g. the elder’s handbook and deacon’s handbook) • schedule at least one leadership retreat per year for prayer, learning, and team-building • provide hands-on training for household visits and care at the start of each ministry season • provide hands-on training for household visits and care at the start of each ministry season • identify those in the congregation with shepherding and serving gifts and train them to provide additional help in key areas...as appropriate
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> form an apprenticeship strategy for all council and ministry leadership roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create overlapping elder and deacon relationships (of either 3 or 6 months) so that short term mentoring connections can be established between outgoing and incoming leaders • form a long term coaching team (of former deacons and elders)...whose members are available to support, encourage, and challenge current or potential council members • encourage and equip all ministry leaders to develop apprentice leaders in their given ministry area(s) • incorporate this leadership development strategy into role descriptions for all ministry leaders (including staff members) • create clear expectations for ministry leadership transitions (i.e. identify tasks and activities associated with “handing off” leadership responsibility)
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> ensure organizational focus on developing and equipping all those serving in some leadership capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hire a director of leadership development & equipping ministries for 20 hours a week • include the previous two strategies in the job description • form a support/advisory team to enhance the work of the leadership development/equipping ministries director <i>(note: this may involve adjusting administrative council roles)</i> • adjust/restructure all staff roles in light of this strategic priority

Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 5: establish mentoring connections between willing adults and willing young people

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> increase leadership oversight and focus on the spiritual formation of young people (i.e. beginning with middle and high school students...eventually expanding to post high school young adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase the number of staff hours devoted to youth development/formation; this may mean hiring a part-time director of youth discipleship (for 15-20 hours per week)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adjust/revise staff, council, and learning team responsibilities in light of this strategic priority (e.g. catechism instruction and profession of faith)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen group/team dynamics with current leaders and volunteers

<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> develop a cross-generational life mentoring model that fits the Lee Street environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitate discovery, brainstorming, and planning work with current leaders/volunteers around this recommended strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get feedback from other churches or organizations who have effectively implemented some form of cross-generational mentoring
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify helpful resources and training processes for potential mentors and mentees alike
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiate a pilot project (over a period of 6 or 9 months) that connects available mentors with willing mentees, provides ongoing coaching support for all mentors, and allows for consistent sharing/storytelling
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make adjustments and provide structure (as appropriate) for sustaining this life mentoring/coaching model and integrating it more fully into youth ministry and congregational life

Objective 1: to grow as a disciple-making community of faith

Goal 6: implement a gifts-based approach to ministry/mission participation

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> establish leadership support for gifts-based ministry and mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a staff “champion” for overseeing a comprehensive implementation process • adjust/revise staff role descriptions as appropriate • incorporate “completion of spiritual gifts assessment” into council role expectations • include gifts-based questions in household visit templates (for elders and deacons) • create reflective/brainstorming space in council meetings and retreats for looking at ministry and mission through the lenses of recognized individual, congregational, and community gifts
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> form a 4-7 member advisory team to help with the achievement of this goal via the following activities:</p> <p><i>[Note: this may involve the re-formation of the service team and/or stewardship & finance team]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify age appropriate assessment tools/processes (e.g. head-hands-heart framework for children, “network” for youth, and an online test for adults) • work with key ministry leaders to ensure periodic assessment work and the incorporation of appropriate mentoring/coaching strategies • include gifts assessment and coaching in the welcome/training of new members • offer periodic biblical teaching/training and assessment opportunities in small group, classroom, and gathered worship settings • link growing gifts-based understanding with youth mentoring strategies mentioned above and community engagement strategies mentioned below

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 1: encourage greater involvement in good neighboring by Lee Street members where they actually live and work

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> design an annual congregational initiative (e.g. a <i>friendship or good neighbor</i> month) that includes a message series, small group learning, training support, hospitality and serving opportunities, and creative storytelling in gathered worship)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify key leaders and form an event team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design and plan the event (i.e. provide administrative/organizational support)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement event initiatives/activities (perhaps in August? or May?)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the event’s success through the lenses of relationship-building and life transformation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pursue follow-up opportunities for developing good neighbor practices
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> support the development of small groups in which members have a geographical affinity and desire for neighborhood involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide periodic teaching/training on the neighborhood as a primary context for spirituality and mission (e.g. a 3-4 week Sunday series using <i>Gospel in Life</i> resources by Tim Keller or <i>God Next Door</i> by Simon Carey Holt)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and update a visual map identifying the places where Lee Street members live
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage the formation of house groups focused on neighborhood/community transformation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify leadership support/oversight for these groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • link this strategy to the strategies listed under objective 1, goal 3
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> make “love of neighbor” a key theme of household visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporate a modeling expectation for elders and deacons around neighbor relationships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide mentoring/training/resources for elders and deacons in this area
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include appreciative questions on good neighboring practices in the home visit template
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule time in elder and deacon meetings for neighbor/neighborhood engagement stories...and prayerful response(s)
<p><u>Strategy 4:</u> affirm and promote the practice(s) of being a good neighbor in the workplace and other vocational settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and tell transformational stories of kingdom influence from our work and vocational lives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage participation in workplace groups, neighborhood associations, community/civic organizations, education boards, and home-based service

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 2: increase relational presence and strengthen neighbor-to-neighbor connections in the Godfrey-Lee area

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> form a neighborhood walking team to consistently stroll through the parish area, talk with neighbors, observe activities, and pray together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify willing leaders/participants (including neighbors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up a basic framework and conduct initial training(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiate walking team activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create feedback loops to staff and council members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop an inventory of neighbor/neighborhood stories, gifts, and resources

<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> place greater emphasis on neighborhood/community hospitality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form a community hospitality team that includes interested neighbors (<i>note: this may involve the re-formation of the relationships and/or witness teams</i>)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reach consensus on simple, helpful, encouraging events for relationship building (e.g. Saturday morning breakfasts, picnics at Marquette Park, parking lot cookouts, and block level parties; note: this will mean building on <u>and</u> moving beyond the annual BASH event)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve other organizational stakeholders as appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate activities/events from a “having fun and building trust” perspective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invite even greater utilization of campus space by local groups and organizations (and/or creative use of other neighborhood facilities/spaces) [<i>note: this may call for a revision of building use policies and associated fees</i>]

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 3: establish and sustain working partnerships with local organizations for the purpose(s) of spiritual and social transformation

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> convene a neighborhood collaboration task force to build on the “community discovery” work of the LRPT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affirm and build capacity around current partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review feedback from stakeholder interviews with LRPT representatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow up with interested organizational representatives as appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue and broaden the stakeholder interview strategy to cultivate relationships/friendships and clarify potential collaborative opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop other simple, interactive feedback strategies with potential partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a volunteer “partner liaison” role to strengthen support of local organizations/ministries and coordinate volunteer opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hire a part-time “community connector” in partnership with other neighborhood organizations to help meet this goal and goal #2

<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> host or sponsor quarterly community forums/ roundtables with interested stakeholders for the purposes of networking, relationship building, storytelling, and brainstorming around collaborative opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • link this strategy to the work of the collaboration task force (for communication and planning support)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find another organization or two to help sponsor and shape these community conversations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify key leaders to facilitate these conversations and follow up with emerging opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create collaborative experiments when appropriate

<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> actively support local businesses and establishments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design an annual congregational initiative (e.g. “Invest in Your Neighborhood” month) that includes a message series on serving the common good, patronization of at least one local business, communal prayer for local establishments, and experiential storytelling in worship and group settings) <i>[take note of activities listed under goal 1, strategy 1]</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage ongoing support of local businesses/ establishments through effective, consistent communication (e.g. a list of local businesses to patronize or a bulletin board for promoting/ advertising purposes)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use local businesses willing to support church/community events (e.g. catering or supplies or equipment or specific services)

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 4: reinforce and enhance the partnership between Iglesia Alas de Aguila and Lee Street CRC

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> complete a clarifying process that brings renewed, deeper understanding of the partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule an event with leaders from each congregation (e.g. a weekend retreat) to reach consensus on the substance and key details of a renewed partnership • compose a written document outlining the shared values, expectations, commitments, activities, and responsibilities associated with this ongoing partnership • creatively and consistently communicate the priorities and hoped-for outcomes reflected in the agreement • plan a joint celebration and storytelling event that highlights the transformational significance of this particular congregational partnership
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> create a practical roadmap for mutual growth in worship, fellowship, and community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form a small, representative “partnership planning” team that builds on previous and current strategies (of the administrative council), identifies new opportunities, and recommends specific activities or initiatives (i.e. identify potential members, designate a team leader, and establish team priorities/expectations) • implement specific recommendations for strengthening individual relationships and worshiping/serving together (e.g. utilizing the fifth-Sunday strategy mentioned above for gathered worship) • develop simple feedback tools/processes that help capture the shared hopes, dreams, and expectations of both congregations (e.g. an annual, one-page survey)
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> prioritize meeting a local justice challenge on the journey toward a stronger working partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on LRPT feedback from local stakeholders (which identifies shared interest in improving educational access/achievement, strengthening families, creating access to working wage jobs, and expanding mentoring and leadership development strategies with young people) • home in on a challenge that produces significant energy/interest/participation from both congregations (e.g. addressing the educational achievement and strengthening family challenges via the Gatherings of Hope weeknight events at the Early Childhood Center) • identify practical ways to work together (and with other interested stakeholders) in addressing the designated challenge

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 5: address local systems of injustice and advocate for those most affected by them

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> form a social justice team (or committee) to help prioritize local justice pursuits and encourage greater involvement in advocacy efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a leader (or group of leaders) and form a team (<i>note: this may involve the re-formation of service, witness, and mission teams</i>) • develop a charter document defining team purpose/mandate and providing detail to member expectations, team responsibilities, and organizational fit (i.e. place within Lee Street’s systems) • use the above mentioned partnership around a particular challenge (in strategy 3 under goal 4) to identify growing interest and leadership potential for justice-oriented activities • get feedback from local churches who have vibrant social justice teams and effective participation in local/regional advocacy initiatives • fully utilize denominational resources in implementing this strategy (i.e. the personnel, curriculum, and recommended processes of the Office of Social Justice) • work collaboratively with other teams (e.g. the neighborhood collaboration task force or the deacons) to deepen and broaden efforts to overcome unfair social practices and policies
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> consistently and sensitively provide training opportunities for increased awareness and competency across racial, cultural, and economic boundaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule an annual “introductory” educational activity that includes church <u>and</u> community members (e.g. a trip to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University) • host and/or sponsor inclusion training events to heighten awareness and skill for participating in a diverse cultural context (in partnership with local schools?) • form diverse, short term learning groups with willing neighborhood churches and organizations • incorporate cultural competency training into expectations for all staff, council, and ministry leaders (e.g. the Eracism Experience or CORR workshops or training/coaching provided by the Cultural Intelligence Center)

Objective 2: to develop “love of neighbor” practices

Goal 6: enhance the ability and comfort level of each member to share his/her story of faith

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> conduct a relational evangelism training of staff, council, and ministry leaders in an offsite retreat setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enlist a skilled, experienced facilitator for this retreat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> schedule and conduct this training in conjunction with the annual leadership retreat (<i>note: see activities associated with objective 1, goal 4, strategy 1</i>)
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> provide extended, periodic “sharing our faith” instruction for church members (perhaps in a series of Sunday morning or Sunday evening trainings)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enlist a skilled, experienced training/facilitator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> schedule, communicate, and complete the training(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> follow up with participants as appropriate
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> form a coaching group to encourage experiential learning, offer needed support, and identify helpful resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilize some of the activities associated with forming a social justice team (i.e. identify a leader and gifted members, develop a group covenant or team charter, and work in partnership with other ministry groups/teams)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> link evangelism opportunities and stories with fitting prayer activities

Objective 3: to establish a strong, adaptive organizational framework for effective ministry/mission

Goal 1: pray together with greater focus and consistency

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> ensure leadership attention and emphasis on prayer ministry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a person gifted in prayer and administration to serve as prayer coordinator for 8-10 hours a week; this can be a paid or nonpaid staff position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form a 4-7 member prayer action team to support the work of the prayer coordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjust/restructure staff and other leadership roles in light of this strategic priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take advantage of the most helpful denominational events and resources

<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> integrate the practice of prayer into all aspects of congregational ministry and mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include this expectation in the job description of the prayer coordinator and the purpose/mandate of the prayer action team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess all current prayer strategies and practices for their helpfulness, effectiveness, and levels of energy/participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make recommendations for further development of current approaches and the implementation of new practices (e.g. a monthly prayer calendar or prayer-focused small groups)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equip all council members and team/group leaders in “prayer first” thinking and practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide periodic experiential training and practical resources for all desiring to grow in the individual <u>and</u> communal aspects of prayer

Objective 3: to establish a strong, adaptive organizational framework for effective ministry/mission

Goal 2: develop healthy, creative, and productive communication processes

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> increase overall technological support and capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a technologically skilled person to serve as technology coordinator for 8-10 hours a week; this can be a paid or nonpaid staff position • form a 5-7 member “adaptive technologies” advisory team to support the work of the coordinator; priorities include website development and maintenance, social media involvement and development (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), data base development, software and hardware recommendations for staff leaders, and ongoing evaluation of corporate communication strategies and audio/visual capacities • adjust staff/leadership roles ... as appropriate
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> form an active group of storytellers/creative writers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a skilled, gifted communicator to serve as leader • establish consistent patterns of meeting/interacting and include basic group dynamics (i.e. praying, sharing, encouraging, and supporting) • focus on capturing and “telling” personal, congregational, and neighborhood/community stories of struggle, growth, and transformation • utilize all available forms of communication to tell these stories (e.g. a page or blog link on the website, a monthly newsletter, a verbal presentation in a worship or educational setting, or a posted video on Facebook) • develop new forms of storytelling (e.g. an annual anthology of essays or short stories, a quarterly community meal & storytelling forum, seasonal dramas, or short videos/films) • provide training(s) and resources for effective verbal and written storytelling
<p><u>Strategy 3:</u> increase sharing and storytelling in worship gatherings</p>	<p><i>[Note: Incorporate all activities listed under objective 1, goal 2, strategy 1.]</i></p>

Objective 3: to establish a strong, adaptive organizational framework for effective ministry/mission

Goal 3: streamline our decision-making processes

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> commission a 3-5 member task force to help simplify the overall organizational structure, clarify leadership roles and responsibilities (both staff and non-staff), integrate (or eliminate) current committees/teams where possible, and create an empowering environment for all those who lead and serve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and recruit a leader and key members for the task force (preferably a staff person, a representative from the administrative council, and two or three church members gifted in developing effective organizational systems)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review previous work done by staff and council leaders to improve organizational structure and evaluate the helpfulness of current processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a series of recommendations to improve organizational effectiveness in supporting those directly involved in ongoing ministry and mission initiatives; this includes making it easier for new initiatives to take root
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get needed feedback from leaders and members as appropriate, make revisions, and gain council blessing ... recognizing the adaptive nature of the process (i.e. that there are very few “fixed” and permanent recommendations to be made in light of constant organizational change)
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> wisely implement the recommendations for greater organizational effectiveness with a view toward responsive, empowering decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage members of the leadership community (i.e. staff members, ministry team leaders, group leaders, council members, etc.) in identifying opportunities and challenges in the change process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create spaces for prayer and discernment around organizational transitions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make needed changes (e.g. rewrite role descriptions, develop a new organizational chart, revise bylaws, adjust budgeting processes, or edit/simplify written policies)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide mentoring or training to key leaders that brings clarity and a renewed sense of empowerment in fulfilling their call

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Goal 4: ensure an appropriate level of staff oversight for ministry/mission priorities

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> initially schedule consistent interactions between implementation team members and administrative council members with a view toward building staff capacity (see also goal 6, strategy 1 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and affirm action plan staffing recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify budgeting implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brainstorm resourcing possibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anticipate changes in staff dynamics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist in the hiring process(es)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist in writing/rewriting job descriptions
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> develop a clear, consistent process in which current staff members are evaluated and affirmed <u>and</u> new staff members are recommended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review current evaluative strategies and processes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjust evaluation approaches in light of equipping expectations for all staff
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify “tipping point” dynamics and/or indicators for hiring new staff in light of discipleship and local mission priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revise hiring processes and procedures as appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form helpful feedback mechanisms and communication methods around staffing needs and possibilities

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Goal 5: recommend building improvements that enhance community-oriented hospitality, learning, and service

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> build on the recent prioritizing work of the ad-hoc facilities and finance team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and/or revise stated building priorities in light of the action plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a leadership agreement (i.e. a working document of stated intentions and priorities) with regard to building improvements; this will include a future scenario and an overall timeline for completing core projects in coordination with the building & grounds and stewardship & finance teams
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure broader communication to members and community partners as appropriate

<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> develop an “annual project” approach to making needed improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-enlist the ad-hoc facilities and finance team to coordinate with the building & grounds and stewardship & finance teams in prioritizing and implementing capital improvements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elicit help from outside individuals and/or organizations as appropriate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design annual funding campaigns around the specific projects identified in the agreement; this amounts to a “scaled” approach to building upgrades and invites “above and beyond” giving from congregational members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve as many church, denominational, and community stakeholders as possible (e.g. members, Classis leaders/teams, business owners, known philanthropists, and local foundations)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take into account the presence and availability of local assets via other community organizations; this may also involve coming alongside other entities to support their building/physical space improvement efforts

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Goal 6: build greater capacity for faithful stewardship and sacrificial giving

<p><u>Strategy 1:</u> empower the administrative council (along with the stewardship & finance team and other skilled, interested leaders) to creatively resource key elements of the action plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve the implementation team in developing specific recommendations for resourcing embedded staffing, program, and partnership requests • create new budget lines and/or funding streams as appropriate (e.g. linking endowments to “matching funds” strategies around particular initiatives) • develop effective communication methods for inviting increased financial support from church members and community stakeholders
<p><u>Strategy 2:</u> provide regular training, assessment, and coaching around time/talents/gifts/passions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate this strategy with the gifts-based approaches listed above (see objective 1, goal 6, strategies 1 & 2) • identify a life stewardship “champion” to serve on the advisory team (see objective 1, goal 6, strategy 2) ... or to form a small but separate advisory team • reach consensus on training approaches and survey tools • develop needed data base capacity and administrative support • implement and assess identified methodologies on an annual basis

On Our Way Together: The Journey of Loving Relationships and Purposeful Living
A Next Steps Action Plan for Lee Street CRC

Key Questions

1. Where did the title of the action plan originate?

The language reflects deep appreciation for God’s faithful presence in and through Lee Street Church’s long term story as a community of Jesus-followers. It affirms an ongoing, shared commitment to be God’s people who gather and serve in a particular place and who support one another in intentional, creative love for God and neighbor. As such, the title mirrors a consensus that we need each other (and our neighbors) to discern how to live out God’s loving purposes in a quickly changing world.

2. What are the priorities of the action plan?

The very structure of the plan indicates the top priorities. In other words, the three objectives reflect what is considered most important, the eighteen goals are next in terms of main concerns, and so on. As far as priorities at the strategy level, the long range planning team believes the strategies connected to small group life, leadership development, neighborhood engagement, youth discipleship, and congregational partnership(s) are among the most important. For these and other strategies, however, the implementation team will help identify which steps to take on in what order. The team will also help refine target dates, timelines, etc.

3. What key discoveries formed the basis for the recommended strategies?

While space does not allow a highly detailed response, several core patterns emerged in the discovery process. There is shared hope for stronger relationships among congregational members (via survey and interviews). There is a deep desire to pass on a vibrant faith to upcoming generations (via survey and interviews). There is growing awareness of God-given resources and a willingness to make them available to local residents and organizations (via congregational asset mapping). There is opportunity and need for more intentional development of leaders (via gifts assessment, survey, and interviews). There is passion for strengthening neighborhood relationships and creating stronger partnerships with other local organizations (via congregational interviews and asset mapping, along with community stakeholder interviews). There is recognition of a changing neighborhood and a growing appreciation for the partnership with Iglesia Alas de Aguila (via neighborhood walks, stakeholder interviews, and demographic information). There is identification of social improvement opportunities related to family health, youth development, and academic achievement (via stakeholder interviews and demographic information). These discoveries (and many others) helped shape the action plan strategies.

4. Do I have to agree with or support everything in this document?

No. At least this is the short and rather obvious answer. It is expected that all members will support the three major objectives, that most members will agree with the eighteen goals, and that many will participate in individual strategies. There is no expectation that every member will “get behind” everything. That said, it is worth noting that the components of this plan reflect comprehensive feedback from congregational members and community stakeholders. It should also be noted that anything involving staffing, budgeting, or major organizational changes will go through normal channels for discussion and approval.

5. Is there concern that this plan might feel overwhelming and cause frustration?

A little. The long range planning team admits that some recommendations are bold and will perhaps stretch Lee Street’s capacities in key areas. Yet, many strategies reflect things already started or underway. All strategies indicate a level of meaningful expectation or passion from several members. Even so, nothing in this plan will be implemented apart from willing leadership and appropriate participation.

6. What are the specific recommendations for additional staffing?

The following new roles have been identified for serious consideration over the next few years: a) Director of Small Groups (15-20 hours per week), b) Director of Leadership Development and Equipping Ministries (15-20 hours per week), c) Director of Youth Discipleship (15-20 hours per week), d) Prayer Coordinator (8-10 hours per week), and e) Technology Coordinator (8-10 hours per week). It should be noted that hiring a part-time Community Connector (20 hours per week) in partnership with other neighborhood organizations is an important factor in developing “love of neighbor” practices (i.e. objective 2). It should also be noted that the coordinator positions for prayer and technology might be filled by nonpaid staff members (i.e. gifted volunteers who function as staff members). While most of these appear to be “internally focused” hires, they are actually designed to equip congregational members for joining God’s mission in the world.

7. How will progress be monitored and communicated?

The administrative council will appoint a 5-7 member task force (i.e. the implementation team) to oversee the whole implementation process. This task force will work with staff, council, and ministry leaders to affirm priorities, identify key personnel and resources, ensure needed follow-up, keep communication channels open, and provide congregational updates. It should be noted that the following “growth opportunities” are embedded in the plan: a) stronger relationships, b) increased reflection/discernment, c) higher level(s) of risk-taking, d) more empowered leaders, e) more members joyfully using their gifts, f) increased focus on neighborhood engagement, and g) more imaginative storytelling.