

Continuing the Journey of Discernment and Visioning

(See the accompanying Group Response Document for January 20 small group responses. Contact Scot Headley at sheadley@georgefox.edu for further information)

Introduction

This document provides information related to the ongoing visioning process at North Valley. Over the next three to four weeks, a number of groups will interact for the purpose of conducting an assessment process as described below in the December Business Meeting minutes. During the past two weeks, several meetings have occurred. A Saturday (1/9) meeting occurred, which provided a picture of who NV is and suggested some priorities. The Administrative Committee met on 1/18 to debrief that meeting and determine next steps in the process. A discernment group met with the Administrative Committee with the intent of providing challenging questions in regard to the visioning process and the budget situation.

Business Meeting (December, 2009)

In order to deal with a budgetary gap for 2010, the following actions were recommended by the Administrative Committee and adopted by the Meeting, as minuted in the December Meeting for Business

The Administrative Committee felt clear that we should not immediately cut programs that are serving the mission of North Valley (i.e. Wednesday night programs, ministry to children and youth, GFU scholarships, etc.)

Given our income constraints, the Administrative Committee suggested a three-prong approach to approving a budget for 2010, as follows:

1. Borrow supplementary funds from ourselves (a maximum of \$4,000) for January-March 2010. Money would be repaid with 3% interest, loan repayment coming from 2010 budget surplus, if any, and any remainder of the loan to be built into the 2011 budget as monthly payments.
2. Conduct an assessment using an outside facilitator to help us focus on God's mission, our gathered resources, and how to use those resources to accomplish God's mission for us.
3. Approve a working budget for January-March 2010; following the assessment process, the meeting would approve a budget for the remainder of 2010.

Four Conversations, Four Groups

Beginning on 1/13, and continuing on 2/3 and 2/10, as well as online (and several Sunday mornings, if needed), four groups will be convened for the purpose of providing broad input to the visioning process. You are encouraged to select a group from one listed here and either stay with that group for future sessions or move to different groups. A brief description of each group follows along with general instructions. The aim is to find the place you are led to participate in; however, the intent is to provide for opportunity for you to have interaction around each of these four areas over the next few weeks, if you desire that. Notes from each small group will be transcribed and shared, and added to as time goes by.

1. A prayer and discernment group. While all groups and all individuals are reminded to set aside personal agendas, this group in particular will be asked to focus on praying and listening to God. We expect that you will sit in the silence, seek direction, pray and be faithful to speak when led. We ask that you record the messages and share those with the larger group.
2. Examining NVFC Mission (2004) with the picture of NV that emerged from the Saturday, January 9, 2010 meeting. The Mission statement arose from a long and deliberate process of discernment. How does the work done on 1/9/10 align with or differ from the NVFC Mission? We ask that you record the discussion and share with the larger group.
3. Systematic naming and describing of current NVFC program, activities, ministries. What are we doing as a community and as individuals and groups within the community? How do we allocate our resources, our attention, and our time as NVFC? We ask that you record the messages and share those with the larger group.
4. Exploring resource allocation. Realizing that we have finite financial resources as a community, how do we prioritize, and what process do we use for determining budget? We ask that you record the messages and share those with the larger group.

General Instructions for Groups.: One person should serve as a facilitator and one as a recorder. These conversations will go on for several weeks, so know that questions and uncertainties named now, as well as hopes and fears are welcomed. **Each group will have three minutes to share** with the whole group during the re-gathering time. Where applicable, consider the following and record:

- a) Questions and requests for additional information.
- b) Issues identified that need to be resolved.
- c) Key themes of the discussion and specific points.
- d) Resources needed or invested.
- e) Specific involvement of people either currently or in the future.
- f) Other points and concerns you deem to be important.

Time Schedule for Wednesday Evening

6:45-7:10 Gathering, prayer and debrief

7:10-7:55 Small group time

7:55- 8:15 Re-gathering of the group

Possible Questions

As you meet, try and view this work as a process of asking, of waiting, of listening and responding. Expect God to speak. Don't debate one another, yet be faithful to ask and speak what you hear.

Ways to think about asking questions:

- Questions that you could not possibly anticipate the answer to it.
- Questions aimed at helping yourself and others focus rather than at satisfying your curiosity.

- Questions that are brief and to the point rather than adding to them with background considerations and rationale.
- Questions that go to the person as well as the problem—for example, questions about feelings as well as about facts.

Mission Statement and a Picture of Vision

NVFC mission statement (2004)

North Valley Friends Church is a Quaker community of ministers who seek to follow Jesus Christ faithfully, love each other deeply, and continue His ministry in the world.

To accomplish this mission we will:

1. Create a loving environment regardless of who you are, what you look like or why you come.
2. Nurture and equip every attender in the knowledge and intimate experience of Jesus Christ through a wide variety of age-appropriate programs and activities.
3. Offer a truly participatory worship and community life, encouraging and inviting the gifts and talents of every attender.
4. Encourage active, Christ-centered justice, peacemaking and reconciliation both locally and globally.
5. Work to meet spiritual and practical needs not only at NVFC, but in Newberg, the Chehalem Valley and around the world.

Several Excerpts from the Saturday Visioning Activity

“As a community, what is your hope? What is essential? What are you about?”

Images created – authentic (Mona Lisa), multigenerational, many ministers with opportunity to lead (gifts, packages, hands), gifts with the light of Christ within, ministry willing to pay a cost (blood, sweat and tears), reaching a hand out to our community and in to help each other, teaching our children, helping children to learn to minister now and later, genuinely worshipping community that fuels the outreach (light in the middle that pulls it all together and sends it all out), intercultural and interracial, acceptance of diversity in our community (not just racial), accepting ministries of reconciliation, heart for social justice (hammer, islands connected by bridges), Biblically based with scriptural teaching, willingness to be pushed beyond our current understanding and comfort zones (climbing out of a box, pushing through a bubble), deep care and supporting each other (woman with a plate of food), small communities giving deep care to each other, new faces (invitation card), my bucket is being filled while I’m filling others’ buckets with Christ at the top, listening with hearts and minds, waiting (antenna), Quaker and not just evangelical

“Make believe you’re in a time machine, getting out in January 2011. Describe a possible and positive scenario.”

- Relationship(s) established or deepened with another community with a different culture from our own in a way that would enrich both parties, focus on diversity
- Awareness of what’s going on in our own body (diversity, needs, ministry), internal connection/communication, mutually supportive relationships

- Clearer understanding of the role of Scripture and the communication of the Spirit in our lives... deeper disciplining program for adults... spiritual growth has been a focus
- Our priorities and our time/money/resources match, our staff are actually released, a sense of peace... via an intentional process that we completed in 2010
- Reshaped kids' programs
- New faces

Discernment

The following characteristics and actions describe good discerners. Please reflect your own characteristics and commitments. Good discerners are those who have or are willing to learn:

- interior freedom (the ability to be open to voices other than their own, the ability to ask for God's will alone, ability to cultivate indifference to anything but God's values, willing to name and release personal preferences)
- Self-aware of personal ego-triggers and emotional "buttons"
- Explicit sense that discernment is a process of faith and that God can be trusted
- Deep belief that God does speak to us
- Awareness of how God speaks to them
- Deep desire for the common good of the community
- An attitude of prayer
- Commitment to the process of discernment.