

Hutto Discovery United Methodist Church

HEALTHY CHURCH INITIATIVE – CONSULTATION TEAM REPORT

March 30, 2014

INTRODUCTION

It has been a great privilege to work with Rev. Alan McGrath, the staff, leaders and congregation of Hutto Discovery United Methodist Church in Hutto, Texas. Everyone has been very helpful and provided us with all the information that was required for us to conduct this consultation. Hutto Discovery UMC is a vital church with a great future. Our prayer is that God will use this report and this process to motivate the congregation to do great things for the Lord's mission in the Hutto community and beyond.

STRENGTHS

1. CONGREGATION'S CONFIDENCE IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

One of the most significant strengths that we identified during the consultation was the congregation's confidence in the leadership of Rev. McGrath. We heard numerous positive comments from the staff, lay leadership and the congregation as well as the mystery guests confirming his preaching skills and warm welcoming style. The interviews confirmed that Pastor Alan is both passionate and capable to lead the congregation in outreach, mission and ministry, as well as the challenges of achieving their intended vision. Pastor Alan also stressed his commitment to the long-term future of this congregation and the potential that he believes it can achieve in the next ten years. We believe the partnership between the lay leadership and Rev. McGrath is the most substantial asset this church has in achieving their strategic vision for the future.

2. CHURCH LOCATION AND LAND FOR EXPANSION

Hutto Discovery UMC is in a prime location in a dynamic community that is experiencing rapid expansion. With ten acres of land there is great opportunity for growth. The potential for this church to reach 1,000 people for Jesus Christ in the next 5-10 years is a reasonable expectation.

3. COMMITTED CONGREGATION

The consultation team found the lay leadership to be forthcoming in their insight and showed an ability to fully understand their current reality. Among the entire congregation we sensed openness to the HCI process and a commitment to doing great things for Jesus Christ in the Hutto community. While there is some hesitation about how rapid growth may occur within the church community, there is a shared sense that the Hutto community needs this church to be an effective and growing mission outpost of God's kingdom.

4. PASSION TO SERVE AND SUPPORT MISSIONS

Hutto Discovery UMC has a strong passion for serving the community. This is illustrated by their desire to support the Food Pantry, Hutto Has Heart, the YMCA and support of the pastor's leadership in mission.

5. GROWING COMMUNITY AND RIPE MISSION FIELD

God has intentionally placed Hutto Discovery UMC in a mission field which is ripe for reaching new people with The Good News. The MissionInsite report for the Hutto study area shows a 38.45% increase in households by 2018. It is expected that a large percentage of these households will be young families, young professionals, single parents and the unchurched.

CONCERNS

1. LACK OF CLEAR SHARED VISION AND CLEARLY DEFINED GOALS

The church lacks a clearly defined and unifying vision that drives all the activities and events of the church. There is no definition of the mission/purpose of the church for making new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. There is also no clear vision as to how the church uniquely lives out the mission. There is no planning process that includes annual goals of how the church will live into the vision and accomplish the mission.

2. FACILITY

The facility is inadequate for serving the current congregation much less the Hutto Discovery community.

3. WORSHIP/11:00 AM SERVICE

Mystery guests consistently reported being disconnected from the people in the worship experience and worship itself. Comments included a negative assessment of the music and the welcome before and after the service. There was discomfort in leaving small children in a distant second building.

4. INTENTIONAL ASSIMILATION AND PATHWAY TO DISCIPLESHIP

There is no plan for marketing to mission (communicating the church's story, assimilating new people, making disciples and connecting to mission).

5. INTENTIONAL LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPING STAFF

There seems to be no intentional process for developing existing laity leaders, raising up new leaders or staff development.

PRESCRIPTIONS

In becoming a more outwardly focused church, the pastor will call the leaders and congregation to a Day of Prayer and Healing. The purpose of this Day of Prayer and Healing is to pray that God will give the leaders and congregation a clear vision, energy and strategy for reaching the community in which the Hutto Discovery church exists. This day will be held during Sunday morning worship led by someone other than the Pastor, chosen in consultation with the coach, to occur on or before June 8, 2014.

1. LACK OF CLEAR SHARED VISION AND CLEARLY DEFINED GOALS

The coach will conduct a visioning workshop for the congregation. The purpose of this workshop is to discern how God is calling the congregation both individually and collectively to reach the surrounding community. This workshop will occur on or before June 30, 2014. Following the visioning workshop the pastor in conjunction with the coach and the leadership of the church, will discern a vision, which will guide the ministries of the church. The vision will be blessed by the leadership by August 31, 2014. Beginning in September the pastor, in consultation with the coach, will preach a sermon series on visioning and the new vision. Visibility and communication of the mission and vision will be a priority.

The pastor in conjunction with the coach will conduct a Leadership Retreat teaching strategic ministry planning. At this retreat the leaders will identify the core values and set annual goals in order for the church to live into the vision and accomplish the mission. The retreat will be held offsite and overnight by January 31, 2015. After the retreat the pastor will establish objectives for church staff (paid and unpaid) to accomplish church goals. This will be an ongoing annual process.

2. FACILITY

The pastor in consultation with the coach will assemble a Site Planning Team by May 1, 2014. This team will develop a site master plan. This plan is to be completed by Easter of 2015. The potential for campus development to support an ambitious vision for reaching this community is a reality, but proper planning of how the 10 acre site is developed is a key component of realizing that potential. The entire church is aware of the need for facility expansion but there is less clarity on how additional space should be prioritized. As this plan is developed, it should clearly address the needs of those within the Hutto community who are not yet connected to the church rather than simply responding to the needs of the current members.

3. WORSHIP/11:00 AM SERVICE

A concern that must be addressed immediately is enhancing the 11:00 am worship service. The pastor in consultation with the coach will assemble a Worship Evaluation Team by May 1, 2014. The key issues are the welcoming environment, the quality of the music and the availability of appropriate space for children. Addressing the issue of appropriate space for nursery is an immediate need. We do not believe it is a concern that can wait for a new facility before it is addressed.

These issues should be addressed prior to Fall 2014 in order to allow church leadership to plan for the launch of an additional service in the Spring of 2015. Increasing the worship attendance of Hutto Discovery is a critical need in order to achieve the vision of further expansion. Until this church can reach a worship attendance average in excess of 300 people, it will be impossible to move forward in the process of expanding current facilities.

It should also be noted that the consultation team believes that the current worship services will not be sufficient for growing the attendance to the necessary level.

By Spring of 2015, a third worship service is to be added. The work done to enhance the current 11:00 am worship hour should be the basis for starting additional services. When the third service reaches an average worship attendance of 60, plans should begin for the launch of a fourth service which should be outside of Sunday morning.

4. INTENTIONAL ASSIMILATION AND PATHWAY TO DISCIPLESHIP

The pastor in consultation with the coach will assemble a Pathway team by May 1, 2014. This team will develop a plan for marketing to mission by September 15, 2014.

- How do we tell our story to the community
- How do we welcome guests
- How do we assimilate new people
- How to we make new disciples
- How do we involve them in outreach and mission

5. INTENTIONAL LAY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPING STAFF

Identify a team to address staffing needs according to forecasted growth of the church.

There was a lack of clarity among leaders about how key decisions of the church are made. A component of this effort should include establishing the purpose for each leadership team, and a process by which new leadership can be identified and properly trained.

- Have each team read the Team chapter in The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni.
- What is the purpose of this team?
- What is the win for this team?
- How will we evaluate?

CONCLUSION

We, the consulting team, want to thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation in this manner. Our prayers and hope for your congregation is that God will use this process to help implement the vision effectively, create a compelling congregation and make an eternal difference in the Hutto Discovery UMC mission field for the Glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lead Consultant: Rev. Mike Ramsdell

Church Coach: Rev. David Alexander

Team Members: Susan Potter-PCC, Mr. Bob Potter-MSBA

cc: District Superintendent Dr. Clifton Howard

Town Hall Dates

Sunday, April 6, 2014 at 10:00 am

Tuesday, April 22, 2014 at 7:00 pm

Wednesday, April 23, 2014 at 7:00 pm

Church Conference to vote: Sunday, April 27, 2014 at 11:00 am

Recommended resources to consider:

1. Get Their Name, Bob Farr
2. Winning on Purpose, John Kaiser
3. Five Practices for a Fruitful Congregation, Robert Schnase
4. The Equipping Church Guidebook, Ann Mallory
5. Beyond the First Visit, Gary McIntosh
6. The Race to Reach Out, Coyner/Anderson
7. Charting Your Course, Dr. David Brown
8. Visioneering, Andy Stanley
9. Renovate or Die, Bob Farr
10. Simple Church, Thom S. Rainer