

Northminster Baptist Church

Long Range Planning Committee 2022

Overview

The Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) received its charge from the Deacons in 2021, requesting a review of many institutional support items of the church. The committee's first order of business was to have five listening sessions with the Congregation, held at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. The feedback the committee received from each of those sessions fell into four broad topic areas:

1. Church Finances
2. Communication and Interaction
3. Congregational Engagement
4. Community Ministry and Involvement

From those topics, further ideas arose and were considered by the LRPC just as some were dismissed from consideration at the current time. This document includes the LRPC's topics and recommendations, as well as suggested actions for implementation. While we should consider measures for success, the LRPC believes the Deacons should determine which items to implement and how to do so, and then set timeline expectations for the relevant committees to act on the specific items.

Recommendations

- 1. As a statement of principle, if we need something from our members, we must ask for it – we have a legacy of doing so.**

We propose retooling the Church's overall communications efforts. This should include, but is not limited to, emails to members, the website, the newsletter, and church financial updates. The future of the church – ours and globally – must meet people where they are. Understanding that, we believe digital outreach should be a part of the communications overhaul. Our goal as a community of faith is for Northminster's message to be heard by as many people who can hear it. Research data exhibits trends for receiving information, and the preference for the digital space far outpaces other mediums and continues to grow. We should consider engaging outside help with this question as well. Northminster needs its members to actively participate in all facets of church life, and we need the best platforms to communicate needs and opportunities for service.

Recommended Committee Action by Outreach Committee

- 2. Create an Outreach Committee to oversee communications efforts, etc.**

An Outreach Committee would oversee communications writ large to church members, new members, and the community. While the LRPC considered many of the

recommendations within this report, it became apparent that there was not a standing committee to handle the new tasks. Creating an outreach committee to oversee these items would be needed to enact them.

Recommend Deacons create Outreach Committee

3. We need more monthly communication – with context – about church finances.

The stakeholders of the church – its members – should have a general understanding at all times of what our church's finances look like. As a member of the church, and hopefully a tithing member, it is all of our responsibility to consider and confront our financial status. This messaging – however crafted – should be a part of ongoing communication with our members. Showcasing how the church spends its money is another example of improving the communication channel with our members. We should have confident conversations regarding our financial condition – we must ask members for what we need to honor our obligations. We should also showcase expenditures of the church that are perhaps not visible to most members, such as local and direct missions projects and successes. A more comprehensive annual report of missions might be a worthwhile idea.

Committee Action by Finance, Missions, and Outreach Committees

4. We should create a trust vehicle for gifts that benefits our campus.

- a. As the CBF says, *“Planned giving programs are ways for the church to make commitments and plans for its future. They are to be understood in the context of a church’s overall stewardship for the financial support of its mission.”*
- b. A planned giving vehicle provides an optional way for our members to continue to ensure the work of Northminster continues upon their death. Participation is optional. Everyone can have a conversation about such a fund and decide if its mission is worthy of their financial support.
- c. The planned giving fund would be separately governed and managed from the church's finances.
- d. The fund might take years (or decades) to reach a threshold where annual contributions to the church were realizable.
- e. The fund should be governed by a mission statement.
- f. This is a separate effort from annual giving.
- g. No member or family should feel pressured to participate.
- h. We all should feel comfortable talking about the program, its goals and aims, and what ancillary benefits its existence provides Northminster every year.

Committee Action by Finance and Special Gifts

5. We should acknowledge and thank the church's donors.

We need to do this better and more often – include in communications plan. This is separate from normal tithing or gifts to the Special Gifts Committee.

Committee Action by Finance and Outreach Committee

6. We should improve the onboarding process for new members.

- a. We agree there is some work to be done here. Some questions to consider:
 - i. How do we get to know new members? (part of communications revamp)
 - ii. How can we make them feel at home and a part of the church?
 - iii. Do we invite them onto a committee to serve so they better understand how our church functions and governs itself?
 - iv. We should update and employ new informational forms from new members which include information about the importance of committee work's relationship and finances with church membership.

Committee Action by Outreach Committees

7. Focusing on younger members requires a concerted effort geared toward them.

- a. This requires mentorship and leadership of our pastoral staff and congregational mentors.
- b. What forum should we provide that we aren't providing currently?
- c. What do gatherings for this age group look like?

Committee Action by Adult Ministries and Outreach Committees

8. We should re-think Sunday evening activities:

- a. As part of creating a gathering that younger people are more likely to attend, we suggest that once a month we have a Sunday evening vesper service.
- b. Since we feed the children and youth already on Sunday nights, if the vesper service is added, we could create another opportunity for fellowship by having everyone eat in the Great Hall on the Sunday evening of the vesper service.
- c. The vesper service could take the place of adult ministries' Sunday night sessions.
- d. We should feed everyone in the easiest way possible so as to not create another burden for the Fellowship Committee.

Committee Action by Fellowship/ Adult Ministries/ Outreach Committees

9. The Youth suggested better integration of upper-elementary students and junior high students.

This is a perennial discussion between the children's and youth committees. We are including it for their consideration as a long-range planning item.

Committee Action by Youth and Children's Committees

10. Wider Net as we have known it is changing.

- a. While our commitment to community ministry remains strong, the leaders of Wider Net shared the current landscape of our mission and the challenges we face continuing it:
 - i. No clergy staff leader for this effort (temporary staff only)
 - ii. Question about the future of Yellow Church management and availability
 - iii. After-school program has ended.
 - iv. Our members are good at specific, acute needs – not long-term recurring responsibilities for WN.
 - v. Benevolence needs are a large part of WN ministry today.
 - vi. 20 years on, the neighborhood is different, and the needs are different.
 - vii. The mission of WN at a minimum is being evaluated for the future.
 - viii. The Congregation should be engaged in this discussion and potential change to our mission/ staffing for WN.
 - ix. The Congregation at large will need to be a part of determining the future of our mission to the city at large.

Committee Action by Wider Net and **Congregation**