

## **Vision & and Long-Range Planning Process NWYM Local Churches**

- I. Local church contacts the NWYM office to look into resources or request assistance
  - A. NWYM staff connects with Clerk of the Elders and pastor to discuss the request
  
- II. Initial meeting(s) with the local church elders
  - A. Background reading information sent ahead of meeting
  - B. Process and key issues are discussed
  - C. Assessment of the current situation—honest conversation regarding the readiness of the church to begin this process.
    - 1. Is there a sufficient sense of “urgency” and commitment?
    - 2. Are there relational or spiritual barriers that need addressing first?
    - 3. What is the current health and state of the church?
  - D. Elder’s determine whether or not (and when) they wish to pursue the process
  - E. Tentative time frame is discussed
  - F. If they desire to move forward, a NWYM staff person (or contact) agrees to serve as a coach/facilitator for the process
  
- III. Building Phase
  - A. Discussion with the local church about the process—overview of what the work will entail and an anticipated timeline
  - B. Clear communication about why this is important and timely. Discuss hopes for anticipated outcomes—building a sense of excitement and ownership in the process
  - C. Meeting discusses and approves the recommendation to undertake this work
  - D. Elders work to establish a recommendation for a “Vision Committee” (VC)
    - 1. This group works with the NWYM staff person to finalize a timeline and make modifications to the process in order to fit the needs and context of the local church.
    - 2. Determine what responsibility and authority will be given to this group. Their task, however, is to oversee the process from beginning to end.
    - 3. 5-7 individuals who are spiritually mature, with a mix of gifts & perspectives, trusted, discerning, caring about the whole church, willing to focus on this as a priority for the duration of the process. Includes at least one member of the pastoral team
    - 4. Vision Committee approved by the Meeting
  - E. Local church commits to praying for God’s will to be done through this process
  
- IV. Listening Phase
  - A. Create opportunities for Scripture and the Spirit to re-shape people’s thinking about the church
    - 1. Teaching by the pastor and other leaders on the image of the church in Scripture
    - 2. Create opportunities for people to tell personal stories about how and why this local church is such an integral part of their lives

3. Create forums for people to share how they see God at work in the church and in the community. Focus on the question “What is God already doing among us?”
- B. Working with the coach/facilitator, the VC establishes a set of queries to put before the congregation. This work will vary depending on the previous work done by the congregation.
1. These questions and prayer discussion will focus on:
    - a. How has God been (in the past and currently) at work in us?
    - b. Who is God calling us to be (our identity/vision)
      - i. Informed by Scripture, the leading of Holy Spirit, and Friends *Faith and Practice*
    - c. What is God calling us to do (our mission/purpose)
      - ii. Informed by our unique gifts, passions, dreams, and the opportunities for ministry at this time and in this place
  2. Information compiled and shared with the rest of the congregation
- C. VC (or delegates) will assess the community in which they exist
1. This may include a demographic study
  2. It could include gathering input from community members about the church and its ministry
  3. This will include a conversation within the church regarding “Who is our neighbor”...and the needs of the community in which you live
  4. Information compiled and shared with the rest of congregation

## V. Discernment Phase

- A. VC leads a fearless self-assessment of the current state of the church
1. What are our strengths and weaknesses, barriers and opportunities
  2. What kind of church are we vs. what we may be called to be (see church models)
  3. Consideration given to where the church is in its life-cycle (see attached)
- B. In light of the work done in the “listening phase”, the VC begins to work on developing a draft Mission and Vision Statement for the church to consider
1. Interactive process allowing for dialogue & feedback until approved
  2. If this work has already been done, this may be time to “re-mind” people of these documents and how they apply to the church
  3. The Mission Statement describes the purpose of the church—why you exist.
  4. The Vision Statement is an artistic rendering of what you will look like as you faithfully carry out your mission. This process will focus on a 5 or 10 year vision.

## VI. Integration Phase

- A. Based on the emerging Mission and Vision for the local church, it is important to discern areas of alignment and misalignment. This will occur through a prayerful examination of the current circumstances. This will include a look at:
1. Healthy relationships within the church

2. Functional structures—assess committees, ministry teams, small groups
3. Financial needs—in light of our vision...what financial adjustments need to be made?
4. Staff and volunteer responsibilities—do they need re-shaping?
5. Facility changes—are these adequate for our purposes?
6. Other

#### VII. Implementation Phase

- A. Once there is a clear self-understanding regarding who the local church is called to be and what they are called to do in their context, the VC helps the church learn to plan toward the shared vision for the future. This will include such areas as:
  - B. Committees & ministry teams discern annual ministry priorities, goals, action steps, etc in light of mission, values, vision and priorities of the church
  - C. Develop budget requests based on ministry plans
  - D. Develop a timeline for implementation & who will be responsible for implementation
  - E. Monthly meeting approves plans & annual budget
  - F. Get to work!
  - G. Regularly celebrate the work God is doing through you!

#### VIII. Evaluation Phase

- A. Do a year-end review of priorities, goals, actions steps to see whether your anticipated outcomes were met
- B. Review the mission, values, and vision statements and prayerfully assess how you have moved in the direction you feel God leading
- C. Begin work on the next year—continuing to prayerful discern ministry priorities and modifying your shared life as needed