



TO: Jodi Gruening
Greg Kenyon
Sarai Rice

FROM: Christine Woods
Karen Jeske
Strategic Plan Implementation Committee

DATE: July 15, 2021

RE: Strategic Plan Implementation, Status Report

Preamble:

This report is one summary of the implementation work underway to bring to life the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Interim Senior Minister, the Director of Operations and Finance and other staff or groups may have additional information about other projects or efforts that are also working to advance the aims of Plymouth's Strategic Plan, *Practicing Radical Love Everywhere and Always*, with its four practice pillars of: *Meaning and Purpose, Hospitality and Belonging, Justice and Kindness, and Operational Excellence.*

In particular, work is ongoing or has been completed to:

- Improve the technological resources at Plymouth
- Hire a Volunteer Coordinator
- Review/revise all staff job descriptions
- Implement a new data system
- Change our approach to stewardship
- Remodel the Center for Spiritual Growth
- Reinvent the Sunday morning schedule at Plymouth to enable significant new practices toward Meaning and Purpose as well as Hospitality and Belonging.

In addition to this report, each of these efforts should also be considered significant pieces of implementing the Strategic Plan.

Background:

The Church Council adopted the new Strategic Plan: *Practicing Radical Love Everywhere and Always* on August 25, 2020, just as the work of the Boards and Committees for the 2020-21 Program Year was getting underway. As stated above, the Plan is organized around four

“pillars” – *Practicing Meaning and Purpose, Practicing Hospitality and Belonging, Practicing Justice and Kindness, and Practicing Operational Excellence.*

To begin the implementation of the plan, the Church Council asked the Boards to add an element to the existing MAP (Ministry Action Plan) process, identifying the “pillars” most aligned with the work of that particular Board. The Council also put out a general call for Plymouth members to help implement the plan and asked each Board, except Trustees, to assign one person to round out a Strategical Planning Committee.

The full committee was filled in January 2021. Christine Woods agreed to Chair the committee and Karen Jeske was asked to staff the group as they began their work.

The others members of the committee include:

Keith Uhl (at-large)
Barbie Sullivan (at-large, representing the Strategic Plan Committee)
Anita Micich (Board of Christian Education)
Jen Jensen (Board of Membership)
Judy Stark (Board of Deacons)
Larissa Hadley (Board of Spiritual Growth)
Lori Fenton (Board of Music and Fine Arts)
Lorraine May (Board of Stewardship)
Robin Maharry (Board of Benevolences)
Alicia Clabaugh (Board of Christian Social Action)

“We Have a New Strategic Plan”

The first large task was to begin to share the Strategic Plan with the congregation. This work began as the committee was still being formed during the fall of 2020 and the winter of 2021. Cindy Eaton and Elsie Brault, Communications staff, assisted during this phase.

In addition to making a special place for the plan on the website and discussing it during worship, fellowship forum, Church Council and Board meetings, staff and Implementation Committee members produced a series of articles in *The Contact* and put together a booklet of Lenten practices that was mailed to all members of the church, encouraging them to engage with personal and communal practices in each of the pillars of the plan.

Implementation Committee Work and Priorities:

Once fully formed in January 2021, the committee met during the winter and spring months of 2021. Members shared the priorities of each Board as well as their impressions about the Strategic Plan. Working together, they created a matrix of the work of Plymouth’s Boards and how the work fits with the different pillars of the plan. (Board Chairs should have received this as a separate document)

The Committee quickly determined that the pillar of *Practicing Hospitality and Belonging* is being engaged by several Boards, especially the Board of Deacons and the Board of Membership. Significant hospitality projects seem to overlap between different groups and also felt especially relevant as we were looking ahead and imagining a time when we would be able to “come back” to church as pandemic conditions began to improve.

Having shared this initial direction with other staff, Sarai Rice, asked the Committee to also look at and talk about some of the spaces in the church - the gym, the courtyard, and the Waveland Hall kitchen - and how improvements to these spaces might be viewed in light of a focus on *Hospitality and Belonging*.

Recommendation: The Church Council and the Boards should make *Practicing Hospitality and Belonging* a priority for the 2021-22 Program Year.

***Hospitality and Belonging* Recommendations/Opportunities:**

- Each Board or Committee should pay special attention to *Hospitality and Belonging* efforts in their MAP processes for 2021-22.
- The Board of Deacons, Board of Membership, and Plymouth Women should work jointly to improve Sunday morning hospitality and the whole welcome process leading new members to join the church.
- Create a work flow with the new database to track and monitor attendance of members to alert us to members at-risk of leaving.
- The Gym is potentially a new gathering space for alternate forms of worship, but it is also a potential space for children and youth activities. The House and Space Committee should engage a process for the best use of this space with appropriate stakeholders.
- The Waveland Kitchen is small and not terribly functional. In addition, equipment and supplies are old and/or outdated. The House and Space Committee should be asked to lead a process, engaging multiple stakeholders at Plymouth, to determine future use and needs for this space.
- The Committee was very captivated by the possibilities of the Courtyard (see more below). Everyone noted as well the beauty of the Greenwood and Burling Room spaces that are adjacent to the Courtyard. The Committee recommends that Plymouth consider these three spaces - Greenwood, Burling and the Courtyard - as the “living room” of the church and consider moving Sunday morning coffee/fellowship into these spaces.

From Planning to Doing

As stated above, several Committee members become captivated by the potential of the Courtyard. They organized themselves very efficiently and quickly into a volunteer gardening committee, working for several weeks to clean-up and beautify that space. As we begin coming back to church and gathering in the Greenwood and Burling rooms, the Committee hopes people will also feel like extending their time at the church into this space.

Continuing, Next Steps

One other topic captured the attention of the Committee — the MAP process. (COMPETE - New MAP Process is being distributed for 2021-22)

Recommendation: The MAP process should be revised to be simpler and to also generate more meaningful conversation for the Boards and Committees. They ask that staff work on this process and propose a revised process to the Church Council Executive Committee.

The Committee also greatly valued the opportunity to talk to each other and learn about the work of the other Boards.

Recommendation: Continue using a similar Implementation Committee to help keep the work of the Boards aligned with the Strategic Plan. Recruiting a new Implementation Committee each year can help generate fresh ideas and will extend knowledge and engagement with the Strategic Plan to more of the congregation. (See new MAP Process)

It has been a pleasure and honor to initiate these efforts at Plymouth. We welcome comments and questions.