

Visioning Small Group
 Wednesday, September 16, 2009
 St. Mark's library

Attendees: Jackie Tack, Elizabeth House, Fiona Miller, Robert Hohhof, Cecilia Smith, Lea Forsman, Robin Currie.

Facilitator: Ginnie Judd

Our group had a wide age range, from early twenties to mid-eighties, as well as a wide range of longevity at St. Mark's, from one month to more than 20 years.

The ideas are listed by category below in no particular ranking.

Category	Idea
Outreach	St. Mark's preschool – find a unique niche that is currently not being served in Glen Ellyn, so that our preschool is not just duplicating what is already out there.
Outreach	Increase opportunities to work on social needs with other Glen Ellyn downtown congregations, so improve leverage with money and volunteers
Outreach	Identify a key mission project that will help identify us in the community, e.g., a resale business that both serves the community and raises funds for a cause
Outreach	St. Mark's as a destination for arts – visual and music – where work of congregation and greater community is regularly shared
Outreach Youth	Set up a public / parish computer lab, perhaps in the basement. Could have many functions – something for the youth, outreach for the community, tutoring for at risk kids, etc.
Youth	Community / activities for teens to keep them interested in St. Mark's. Game nights, for instance.
Youth	A youth program where transition from middle to high school uses momentum. Kids continue to participate and increase participation after confirmation rather than see it as “graduation from church”
Youth	Vibrant youth group with weekly activities to attract youth from all areas & denominations
Communication	Remodel the website to improve the navigability and info about what's going on.
Communication	St. Mark's online forum for discussion groups
Communication	Better communication about what is going on, where it is happening, and when the building is open

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Communication	Transportation coordination: Do you need a ride? One new member who cannot drive because of vision problems spent a frustrating 6 months trying to get to St. Mark's. Now she has a regular ride for Sunday mornings, but still would like to participate in other things, like the Tuesday morning bible study, for instance. There may be others in similar situations that need transportation.
Fellowship	More programs like Reeny's yoga (art, singing, more discussions, etc.) open to the congregation and drawing in members of the community. Maybe have all of them on a specific night of the week, to create an understanding that "Tuesdays are St. Mark's Arts Nights"
Fellowship	Make newcomers feel at home. Call them when they are newly joined. Keep them interested. Don't let them have to make all the effort.
Fellowship	Continued fellowship with more participation by <u>all</u> of our amazing congregation. E.g., create a culture of <u>many</u> in the kitchen.
Fellowship	More prayer group/Bible studies at night for people who work, like the Tuesday morning Bible study – have one after work.
Fellowship	Have casserole making sessions a few times a year to fill the freezer at church and have at the ready for illness, babies, etc. We all get together to make them so they are ready to go. The current Meals Ministry volunteers might try this approach.
Worship	Maintain quality worship with guest-welcoming bulletin and singable congregational music.
Worship	An adult choir with 6-8 members in each section (24-32 total) with choir activities publicized and new members welcomed (without pressure)
Worship	Great strides have been made with children's choirs – need to strengthen this further, keeping building participation
Staff	Full-time / part-time paid office staff: front desk full time, book keeper to assist treasurer
Staff	Full-time assistant rector
Staff	Imbue the parish leadership with enough confidence that they don't need to require the rector at every meeting, and the rector feels confident that his presence isn't needed at every meeting.
Staff	Implement a staff-support ministry to retain and appreciate staff, give them a sounding board, make sure they know they are valued.

Category	Idea
Facilities	More parking – so we can comfortably accommodate newcomers. Not enough parking available for those who have trouble walking, who sometimes will drive back home if they can't find a place within a reasonable distance (down the block and around the corner is not reasonable for those who have trouble walking).
Facilities	A hand-washing sink in the kitchen that is thoroughly scrubbed and well supplied with soap and towels.
Facilities	A clean facility <u>culture</u> (cleaning off table surfaces after use in Mahon Hall before putting them away; handsoap and towels in all dispensers always; tools needed for cleanup on hand, in stock, easy to get to)
Facilities	A new cross for above the altar
Finance	Raise sufficient funds to pay down/eliminate “The Debt” – freeing money for community and international Mission and Outreach projects
Finance	How can we put money and the need / lack in balance with faith and service to others?
Finance	Pay off the debt comfortably and feasibly with a dependable plan in the next ten (?) years
Focus	Focus on fewer things but become more involved in them.