

Long Range Planning 5 Year Vision

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of North Raleigh United Methodist Church (NRUMC) spent much of 2018 meeting with various committees and groups within the church, asking each of them to dream boldly about the future of NRUMC. We spoke with more than 350 church members and compiled over 37 pages of their dreams. The ideas, concepts and out-of-the-box thinking that came from our congregation were invigorating and exciting. The LRPC has summarized what we heard from the congregation and developed a vision to achieve those dreams.

The rate of change in personal, business and religious portions of our lives has increased significantly during the last two decades. Technology advances, social media and political polarization have impacted how we act, how we think, and the pace of all activities in general. Although statistics reflect that Christian church membership and attendance have been declining for several years, many people of all ages remain hungry for spiritual growth that adds meaning and beauty to their lives. People are still yearning to find ways to make a positive impact around the world and in the communities in which they live. While traditional methods to grow and bring new people into the church community and to keep it relevant are not as effective as they have been in the past, the church still remains the most viable and relevant institution in which people can satisfy both these desires in ways that honor God and serve their neighbors.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we want to continue to grow His kingdom, impact lives, and transform ourselves and others in the process. We must continue to build on our strengths to help retain current church members and adopt new methods to adapt to the changing environment. We will grow by focusing on our core values, but we cannot be afraid to experiment.

NRUMC is well positioned to be a destination for those drawn by God into holy relationships shaped by acts of piety and mercy. To ensure NRUMC lives into God's call and continues to be a place where those seeking such a relationship find a home, now is the time to consider bold investments in our future in terms of building on strengths such as our music program, the JOY group, and Stephen Ministry as well as modernizing existing buildings, growing and entering into new community partnerships, expanding NRUMC's physical footprint and/or new facilities and growing our staff to live into our God-given mission and the strategies that we have discerned to realize that mission.

Vision

The vision below outlines the key actions defined by the congregational inputs cited previously. The specific actions and tactics will be defined by the next Ministry Action Planning (MAP) group. While we have noted the segments as steps in the process, these items will not necessarily occur sequentially, e.g. an item from Step 2 or 3 may occur prior to or simultaneously to an item in Step 1.

Step 1 – Engagement – Look within to more deeply engage and grow our existing congregation, add new members that share our bold vision

To prepare NRUMC for bold investments in our future, we propose to first seek to (a) more deeply engage our existing faith community; (b) grow the congregation by adding new members that share our bold vision:

- Increase the Engagement of Existing Members - Create a personal engagement map which will identify multiple “Disciples’ Paths” to help guide members in their spiritual growth and introduce accountability measures to get individuals involved in new areas and get more people involved.
- Welcome Center – Implementation of a permanent Welcome Center
- New Member Recruitment – Focus on expanded new member programs and activities that attract NRUMC members that share our vision. Define diversity as it applies to NRUMC and establish a plan to achieve it.
- Expand Use of Technology – Update website, podcasts, live streaming of services, expand use of social media

Step 2 – Worship & Service - Expand Opportunities to Worship and Serve locally and globally

With our expanded and more highly engaged membership, we will create expanded opportunities for our membership to worship and serve through building pathways that lead people to God and spiritual and missional fulfillment:

- Alternative Worship Service -- Investigate and implement alternative worship opportunities that seek to further engage existing members and attract new members
- Sacred Conversations – Continue providing a safe place for open candid discussion and improved understanding of controversial and divisive subjects
- Small Groups – Initiate small group meetings off campus that combine worship, Bible Study and/or a service project followed by a social or fellowship activity.
- Repurpose Existing Space
- Missions -- Expand participation in missions, both around the world and locally

- Identify a signature mission of the church that would be local and intergenerational and visible to the community
 - Combine evening services with other outreach and fellowship activities
 - Deepen partnerships with other local churches to potentially expand our existing outreach efforts or better enable engagement with communities we may not be able to reach on our own
- Sponsor New Faith Community - Consider launching a new faith community, potentially in a geography different from our church facility, if through discernment we determine God will bless this path

Step 3 – Investment - Growth and development of financial resources; invest in upgrades/improvements in physical spaces to support growing membership programs and missions

Depending upon our performance against financial goals including debt reduction, we will achieve these new investments for NRUMC:

- Continue to Develop Endowment
- Increase Financial Resources - Execute a financial campaign to raise financial resources to reduce current debt and fund future investment, including traditional and non-traditional strategies
- Upgrade Existing Buildings – Potential changes:
 - Add an elevator in Education Building to enhance potential usage
 - Decommission trailers
- Acquire Additional Property - Overcome building restrictions of the watershed and provide space for new facilities/services
- Construct a New and Multi-Purpose Family Life Center - Potential uses could include:
 - Christian Music Academy
 - Expanded preschool program (more classes / more age groups)
 - Local missions center
 - Alternative worship service
- Build Gymnasium and/or Athletic Fields - Allow a variety of recreational activities, providing recreational opportunities for members and opportunities to engage the community and attract new members