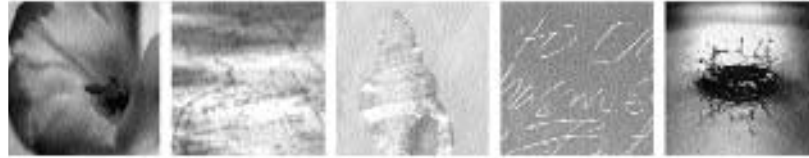


*What Every Leader
Needs to Know About*



Mission and Vision

*(Formerly **Leading with Purpose**)*

Carol F. Krau



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Introduction

Congregations identify leaders all the time. Someone is named to chair a committee, for instance, or asked to guide a task force. There are many reasons that individuals have a leadership position. Some leaders are chosen because they know about the work the committee will do. Others are asked to serve because of their faithful commitment to the congregation. Some people agree to lead simply because the job needs to be done and no one else will do it. Some leaders emerge because of their professional and secular experience; others emerge because their lives display the fruits of deep faith.

Effective ministry calls for leaders who combine both skills and faith. Effective ministry calls for spiritual leaders. Spiritual leadership is a life of growth. Spiritual leaders continually increase their practical leading skills while deepening their relationship with God.

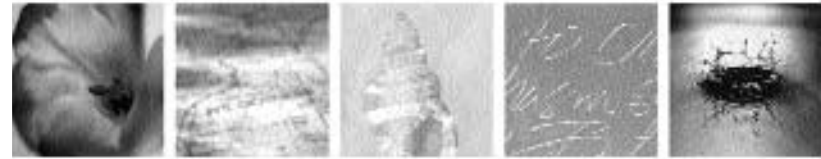
The booklets in this *What Every Leader Needs to Know About . . .* series are about being a spiritual leader. Each

booklet has basic information for the growth of spiritual leaders in congregations. Some booklets in the series focus on people skills and others focus on spiritual practices, yet each one brings these two facets of leadership together. There are other resources apart from this series that outline job descriptions and models for specific ministries. Some of those helps are listed in the bibliographies of these booklets.

Spiritual leadership suggests that every leadership experience includes the possibility of life-changing transformation. It may be that the leader's life is transformed. It may be that the committee or task force becomes a faith community in which God's presence is known. It may be that the product or project of the work transforms the congregation and the world. Spiritual leadership expresses the hope that God's transforming love will infuse individual lives, small groups, congregations, and the world.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. . . . Let love be genuine" (Romans 12:2, 9).

Betsey Heavner
Director, Leadership for Congregational Renewal



Focus on Mission and Vision

One day a pastor went for a walk. He was enjoying being outdoors so much that he was not paying attention to where he was going, and he accidentally stumbled upon a military base. There he encountered a sentry who barked at him, "Who are you and why are you here?" Surprised, the pastor looked at the sentry, but did not answer. Again the sentry demanded, "Who are you and why are you here?" The pastor began to grin and asked the sentry, "How much do they pay you to do that?" Totally confused and irritated, the sentry responded, "Why would you ask me that?" The pastor replied, "I would gladly pay you well to ask me those questions every day."

These questions are at the heart of this book. Whether you are the pastor or a lay leader in your congregation, I hope that reading this resource will remind you to ask yourself regularly, "Who am I and why am I here?" I also hope that you will move beyond addressing these questions personally. You are invited to think about your congregation

and ask, “Who are we and why are we here?” You and your team will begin answering these questions as a result of prayer, study, dialogue, and discernment.

Your responses to these questions should lead to a clear sense of identity and purpose for your congregation. In other words, your discernment process will enable you to state why you are doing what you are doing. Out of all the possible ministries, programs, and services that could be implemented where you are, your congregation decided to implement the ones you now have in place. Through focusing on your purpose, your leadership team not only will develop a rationale for ministries in place but also can clarify your reasoning to discontinue a particular ministry and/or to begin planning for a new ministry.

The purpose of this resource is to provide food for thought and practical assistance as you work through your process of discernment. It begins with the “big picture”—the mission of the church and how congregations go about fulfilling that mission—and moves to a vision of what that mission looks like in your congregation. As you work with this material, you will also discover implications for shared vision, shared leadership, spiritual gifts, identifying priorities, and setting achievable goals.



The Mission of the Church

The mission of the church, simply stated, is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. And it is through the ministries of your local congregation that disciples will most likely be made. Yet, as the old saying goes, that is easier said than done. One obvious barrier to fulfilling this mission is a lack of understanding of the meaning of Christian discipleship. How will you know a disciple if you see one?

That really is not intended to be a facetious question. If your leadership is focused on your purpose, and your purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, you need to determine the criteria by which you will judge whether or not your congregation is successful in providing opportunities for children, youth, and adults to become disciples. Therefore, one of your early steps must be to develop a description of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ within the context of your congregation and community.

Here are several ideas to assist you in this process of developing your description of Christian discipleship. Choose one or more of these methods to become part of your congregation's ongoing growth.

1. Engage in biblical study and reflection.

As United Methodists, we affirm that the Scriptures are our primary authority for decision making and relating to God and one another. With your leadership team, identify passages of Scripture that will help you develop a vision for Christian discipleship where you are. Over the course of several weeks or months, look at a variety of passages each time you meet. Possible passages include

- Matthew 5:2-16 (the Beatitudes; salt and light)
- Matthew 25:31-46 (Judgment of the nations)
- Mark 8:27-38 (knowing who Jesus is; self-denial)
- Mark 12:28-34 (the Great Commandment)
- Luke 4:14-30 (Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy)
- John 15:1-17 (the vine and the branches)
- John 21:4-17 (Jesus appears to the disciples)

Another approach is to study an entire Gospel or Epistle over the course of two or three months. You can go through all four Gospels to create a comprehensive picture of discipleship, using the perspectives of the four Gospel writers. If you want to use an Epistle, consider starting with Ephesians, Romans, or 1 Corinthians. Each of these letters addresses issues specific to congregations, such as spiritual gifts and other significant aspects of congregations.

TIPS: BIBLE STUDY

There are a variety of approaches to use in studying selected passages of Scripture. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Use a group version of *lectio divina* (sacred reading).
 - Assign partners in the group.
 - Read aloud a portion of the passage.
 - After the first reading, invite partners to reflect silently on words, phrases, or images that “jumped out” at them as they listened to the passage.
 - Read the passage again. After the second reading, ask participants to reflect silently on what God is saying to them through the passage. Then let partners discuss briefly their reflections.
 - Read the passage a third time. Ask participants to reflect silently on what God is saying to their congregation about discipleship. Then give partners time to discuss their reflections.
 - Invite partners to share highlights of their conversation with the total group. Make note of common images, ideas, and themes that emerge from this time of reflection.

- Consider these questions in light of the Scripture passage you are studying:
 - What does this passage say about the nature of God?
 - What does this passage say about the nature of human beings?
 - What does this passage say about the relationship between God and human beings?
 - What does this passage say about Christian discipleship?
- Enjoy creative writing. Ask members of your leadership team to write a job description for a Christian disciple, or have them write a “want ad” for your local newspaper. Make sure that their writing is based on the Scripture passage you are exploring during the meeting.

2. Read and discuss your denomination’s statements about ministry.

United Methodists should read Part III, Section II, “The Ministry of All Christians,” in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. These paragraphs provide an overview of your denomination’s understanding of the call to Christian discipleship. Talk about how these paragraphs inform the purpose of your ministry. Discuss what ministry will look like if you plan with these paragraphs in mind.

3. Read *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, by John Wesley.

For an updated version of this classical text, use *A Perfect Love: Understanding John Wesley’s “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,”* by Steven W. Manskar. (See the resource list at the end of this booklet.) *A Perfect Love* also includes theological reflections on Wesley’s work by Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki and a study guide by Diana L. Hynson.

- Explore the relationship between Wesley’s understanding of God’s grace and the process of Christian faith formation and discipleship.
- Assess your congregation’s opportunities for forming faith and discipleship in light of the doctrine of Christian perfection.
 - What are your strengths?
 - What needs to be improved?
 - What is missing and needs to be added?

4. Use a resource that is designed to help you think about your congregation, mission, and vision.

Possibilities include

- *Charting the Course*,
- *Deepening Your Effectiveness*
- *Does Your Church have a Prayer?*

(See the resource list at the end of this booklet for publication information.) Each of these resources includes Bible study, and suggestions for group discussion and planning action.

Regardless of the process you choose for discernment,

all plans for ministry to the congregation and through the congregation should first be evaluated in light of the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. If you cannot make a clear connection between an activity and your mission, that may be a sign that this is an activity to be eliminated, disregarded, or reframed to fit your mission criteria.

Developing Your Congregation's Understanding of Christian Discipleship

Think about how you will lead your congregation toward a fuller understanding of what it means to be Christian disciples.

- 1. How will you engage your congregation in Bible study and reflection on the meaning of Christian discipleship?

- 2. How and when will you engage your congregation in a discussion of your denomination's statements about the meaning of ministry?

- 3. In what ways will you lead your congregation in assessing discipleship in light of understandings about the doctrine of Christian perfection?

- 4. What plans will you make to help your congregation think about mission and vision through concentrated study and planning for action?

- 5. Who needs to be involved in leading these conversations? Who should be invited to participate?



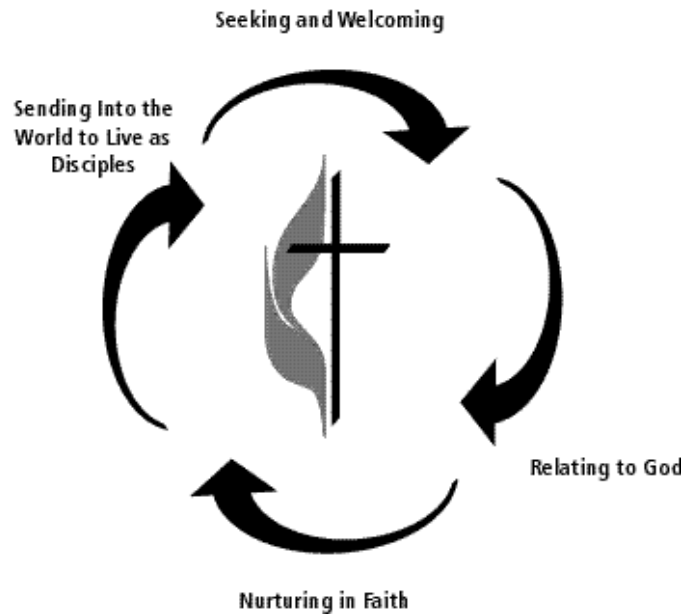
Our Mission and Core Process

One way to express the mission of the church is to describe the process of fulfilling the mission. This description should focus on what is essential, or what is the core of the mission. In other words, ask yourselves: What must we do to be a church and not some other organization? If making disciples of Jesus Christ is a statement of the mission of the church, what processes must be in place in order for this mission to be fulfilled?

To help your leadership team focus on the core process, ask members to name whatever they think of when they hear the word *church*. Make a list of their ideas on newsprint or on a chalkboard. After a brief period of brainstorming, invite the team to review the list and then to suggest which word or words come closest to what it means to be the church. Based on their responses, ask them to state what the primary task of the congregation is.

Then focus the group’s attention on Figure 1, which illustrates one way of describing the core process for carrying out our mission.

Figure 1: The Core Process of the Congregation



1. What similarities and differences does the group see in the information in Figure 1 and their descriptions of the primary task of a congregation?

2. What aspects of your congregation can you identify that support each part of the core process? (Remember that one aspect of congregational ministry may support several parts of the core process.)

3. What areas need to be strengthened in your congregation?

As your leadership team discusses these processes, help members understand that this is the process for the whole congregation. It is not intended to be divided up and assigned to various ministry teams. Leaders in evangelism may have spiritual gifts for creating a climate of hospitality and for welcoming newcomers into your community of faith. However, that task is done within the context of the entire core process. Leaders in evangelism are also called to pay attention to how their leadership encourages individuals to commit their lives to God, to be nurtured in the faith, and to live lives of justice and compassion as servants of Jesus Christ.

In the same way, teachers and small-group leaders may assume primary responsibility for nurturing children, youth, and adults in faith. Yet they too are called to be hospitable as they create settings that foster an experience of God's love and grace and empower people to live as Christian disciples. Similar connections between all aspects of the core process can be made for worship leaders, outreach and mission leaders, and leaders of administrative teams such as the trustees and members of the committee on pastor/staff-parish relations.

This conversation may result in recognizing that your congregation's leadership needs additional support (knowledge and skills) in order to implement the core process. You might need to assess these needs. Prioritize the responses and begin providing the assistance that is needed for all leaders to be able to connect their work with the core process of the congregation.

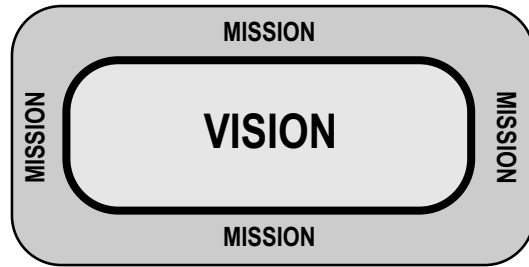


A Shared Vision for Ministry

If you are the pastor, you have gone to seminary, Course of Study, or some other avenue for education and preparation for ministry. Through your studies, you developed an idea of what should happen in a congregation. If you are a lay leader, your previous and current experiences in church, as well as any courses you have taken or books you have read, have shaped how you view ministry. These ideas are the kernel of vision. As individual leaders, you bring hopes and dreams for your congregation. In order for these ideas to be effective, they need to be shared. Otherwise, it is possible that conflicting or competing visions for ministry are present in your congregation.

Previous sections of this book have suggested ways for the core leadership of your congregation to develop a common understanding of the church's mission. As you study, worship, and pray with your ministry team, ask God to give you a vision for ministry.

Vision is a picture of what the mission looks like in your congregation.



Vision is context-specific. Grounded in Scripture and in our heritage, vision takes into account the community in which you are located and all its particularities. As a ministry team, create a description of your community that includes

- demographic information related to age, income, housing, family patterns, racial/ethnic heritage, and occupation;
- the types of organizations and businesses that are in proximity to your congregation (for example, elementary school, bank, and so forth).

Spend some time comparing the information about the community with the composition of your congregation. How well represented is your community in your congregation? Where are the gaps? Who is missing?

(For help in this community assessment, contact the Research Office of the General Board of Global Ministries at <http://new.gbgn-umc.org/resources/peopleplaces/churchprofiles/>

As a team, spend time talking about your hopes and dreams for your community and your congregation.

- Pray for your community and its leaders.
- Pray for the leaders of your congregation, the Sunday school teachers, church staff, children, and so forth.
- Make notes about what you are hearing, and look for patterns that emerge.
- As you consider the specific people in your congregation and the gifts you have to offer the community, think about what they mean in relation to the ministry to which God is calling you.

Then spend time talking and listening with individuals, families, and small groups throughout your congregation.

- Ask about their hopes and dreams for ministry.
- Share ideas that have emerged from your prayer, study, and conversation.
- Test your conclusions. Learn what questions they have and what contributions they can add. Don't assume that everyone has the same perspective. Ask questions for clarification and understanding; check to be sure that people understand what you are saying.

TIPS: LISTENING

There are a variety of ways to listen to people in the congregation. Here are a few ideas:

- Schedule one-on-one interviews with the “people of influence” in your congregation. (Remember that these may not be the people who hold an official position.)
- Schedule a series of Open Houses to discuss the congregation’s vision for ministry. These may be held at the church and in homes. You can organize the list of participants by neighborhoods, by the alphabet, by age, or some other way.
- Contact teachers and leaders of youth and adult Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, and other small groups. Schedule a visit to share your ministry team’s vision for ministry and ask for group feedback.
- Ask for feedback through a listserve on your congregation’s website.

Vision-building should be a living, dynamic process. As this process becomes a part of congregational life, every member of the congregation should be able to describe the vision. I heard about a congregation whose vision included every person in ministry. As part of sharing this vision, the congregation decided to avoid any

reference to volunteering. Instead they spoke of opportunities for ministry. As the story goes, one Sunday morning two kindergarten children were overheard having a conversation. The first child asked, “What will be your ministry this week?” The second child responded, “At school nobody likes Johnny. This week I’m going to eat lunch with Johnny three times.” Now that’s a church that understands vision so clearly that even the five-year-olds get it!

A part of your role as a leader is to articulate the vision and to keep it in front of your congregation. As you develop a shared vision for ministry,

- work to describe the vision in a succinct, compelling statement;
- post the vision statement on bulletin boards, in classrooms, in the church office, and in other areas of the church building;
- include the vision statement in the newsletter, in the bulletin, on the website, and through other communication channels;
- incorporate the vision into your greeting and other acts of worship on a regular basis;
- print the vision on the agendas for meetings.

Also make sure to plan times for review and revision of the vision. The mission of the church is eternal. The vision needs to be revised as new people arrive in the congregation and new issues develop in the community. A general rule of thumb for reviewing the vision is once every four or five years.

What Have You Learned About the Vision?

1. What have you learned about the vision for ministry from your study of your community?

2. What have you learned about the vision for ministry as you have talked with individuals in your congregation?

3. What have you learned about the vision for ministry from talking with and listening to individuals and families in your congregation?

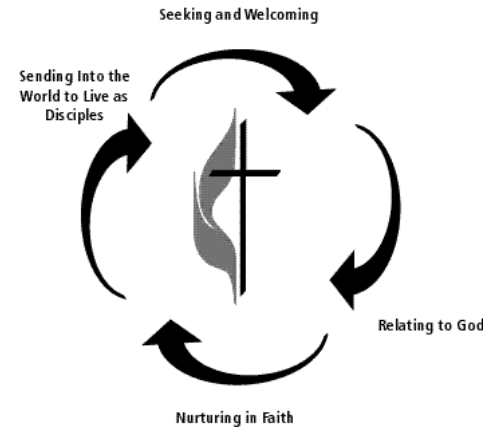
4. What have you learned about the vision for ministry from small groups, congregational leaders, and “people of influence” in your congregation?

5. What will be your next steps toward creating a shared vision that will be understood and supported by every member of your congregation?



Spiritual Gifts and Shared Leadership

Leadership with purpose takes into account the spiritual gifts that are present within a congregation and its leadership. God calls us to ministry and equips us with the gifts to answer the call. Review the core process of the congregation (pages 17–20).



Make a list of spiritual gifts that are implied in this process. (My list includes gifts such as evangelism, teaching, prophecy, service, and leadership.)

In recent years many congregations have abandoned prescribed structures for ministry and have attempted to create structures that more closely match their local context and understanding of mission and ministry. One part of this trend has been an increased interest in gifts-based ministry. Dissatisfaction with the status quo has led to a renewed commitment to authentic congregational life and to the development of leaders who can equip children, youth, and adults for ministry. These leaders may fill “traditional” positions such as usher, lay leader, chairperson of the church council, and so forth. Often they fill “new,” context-specific positions such as coordinator of discipleship, mentor, communications director, and so forth.

As a leadership team, you will want to consider the spiritual gifts resident in your congregation. For assistance in this process, you may want to refer to *Serving from the Heart* (See the resource list at the end of this booklet.)

Identifying spiritual gifts can assist you in clarifying your vision for ministry and for setting priorities for nurture, witness, and outreach.

Even before a formal analysis, though, which of the spiritual gifts you identified as part of the disciple-making process are evident in your congregation? How are they expressed? How can they be used more effectively?

As you review your list of spiritual gifts, you will probably recognize that no one leader in the congregation has all the gifts. Even leaders with many gifts do not possess the same degree of each gift. Together you are the body of Christ, and together you serve in ministry. Spiritual gifts are given in order to build up the body for the work of ministry. (See Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4.) Therefore, to state the obvious, leadership must be shared. In the sharing, spiritual gifts are offered to the community in support of the common good.

Shared leadership can be compared to taking a trip. When you take a trip, you have to decide how you are

going to get where you want to go. If you are like my mother was, you want to take the scenic route and stop at every interesting site. If you are like my father was, you want to get there as quickly as possible with few (read: *NO*) stops. And sometimes shared leadership can seem like the old adage, “You can’t get there from here!”

Just as there are various routes to take on a trip, there are various ways to fulfill leadership roles in a congregation. The pastor and key lay leaders must be open to leadership styles, processes, and methods that differ from their own. Leaders should realize that there can be more than one “right” answer. The criteria for evaluating the correctness of an answer, or action, is whether the action supports the mission of the church, not whether it matches the preference of another congregational leader.

Sharing leadership is an act of humility. When we invite others into leadership, we acknowledge our own limitations and our need for the gifts of others. This kind of leadership is often described as servant leadership, and that is an apt description. It is leadership after the example of Jesus, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8, RSV).

Shared leadership, servant leadership, involves the daily work of taking up our crosses, denying ourselves, and following Jesus.



Turning Ideas Into Action

Purposeful leadership begins as response to God’s call and can be articulated as a vision for ministry. However, good visions must produce concrete action. Leading with purpose requires articulating vision and analyzing your current reality. Vision states where you want to be; reality identifies where you are. Leading with purpose involves planning ways to move from where you are to where you want to be.

As you identify possible ministries, your leadership team will need to determine which possibilities to pursue and the order in which they will be pursued. Factors that will affect your determination include

- the connection between the possibility and your vision for ministry;
- the spiritual gifts resident in your congregation;
- the amount of passion and commitment people in the congregation have for the possible ministry;

- time, money, and people needed to plan and implement the possible ministry;
- comparable programs, resources, or services offered by other congregations or organizations;
- the preparation needed by leaders to implement the ministry.

TIPS: SETTING PRIORITIES

There are several processes that can assist you in evaluating ministry options and setting priorities. One such process is a SWOT analysis.

SWOT stands for **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats. Strengths and Weaknesses refer to the internal environment of the congregation. Opportunities and Threats refer to the external environment of the congregation.

- To begin this process, divide a sheet of paper or newsprint into four sections. Print one of the following headings in each section: “Strengths,” “Weaknesses,” “Opportunities,” “Threats.”
- As a leadership team, analyze the internal strengths and weaknesses of your congregation and write them in the “Strengths” and “Weaknesses” sections.

- Identify and write in the “Opportunities” section any opportunities that exist within your community.
- Identify and write in the “Threats” section any competition, limitation, or hindrance external to your congregation that can pose a threat to the success of the ministry.

After completing the SWOT analysis, discuss the implications of the analysis for the ministry options you are considering.

Given the information you have generated from your analysis,

- Which ministry options seem to have a strong probability for success and effectiveness?
- Which options will best use the spiritual gifts of your congregation without draining your energy and commitment?

Use the lines below to summarize your finding from your SWOT analysis.

1. What are your congregation’s

Strengths? _____

Weaknesses? _____

Opportunities? _____

Threats? _____

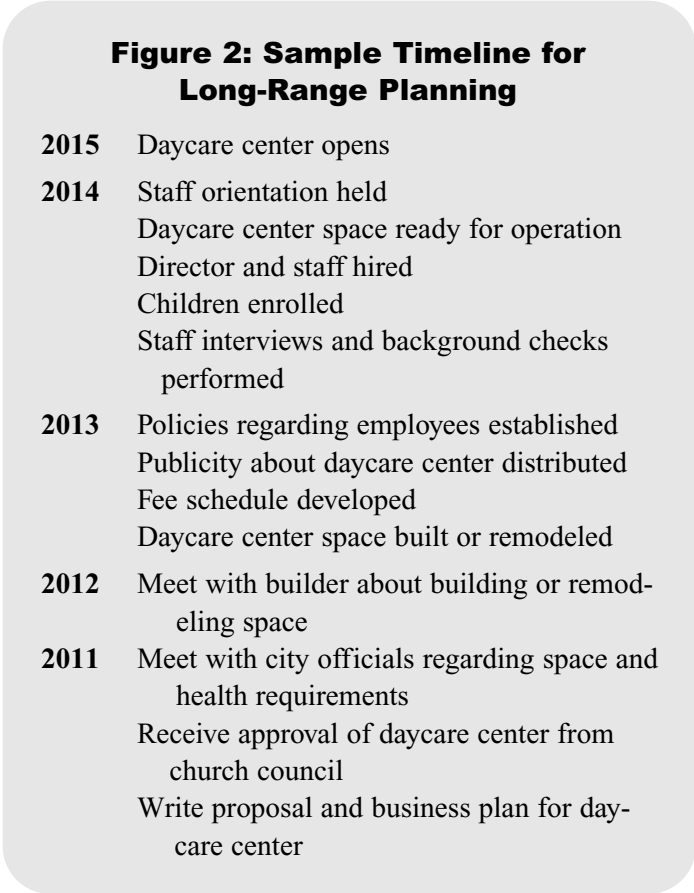
2. What ministry options will you pursue?

Once you have selected the ministries you will pursue, you are ready to begin the planning process. Planning can be short-term or long-term. Effective planning includes both time ranges. The nature of a vision requires long-term planning. If your vision is something you can accomplish tomorrow, that is not much of a vision. On the other hand, if your vision will require work for the next twenty-five years, you need to focus. Many long-term planning cycles are based on a three-year to five-year range. In The United Methodist Church many of our congregational positions are designed to be held for three years. On the annual conference level, leaders serve for four years. Both of these cycles easily work for long-range planning.

For this part of the planning process, leaders begin at today and project what they want to have accomplished at the end of three, four, or five years. Long-range planning is necessary for major congregational initiatives, for example, beginning a new ministry such as a daycare center, or raising funds to build a family life center. (These ventures should emerge from your vision.)

Long-range planning moves to short-range as you consider what will have to happen during each of the next two, three, or four years in order for your new ministry to

be in place by your projected deadline. See Figure 2 below for an example of how this process might look if you were planning to begin a daycare center in your church. The time frame can be adjusted depending on the extent of the ministry you are planning.



In addition to major new initiatives, such as the daycare center outlined in Figure 2, you may have a vision for congregational growth, worship, small groups, or another aspect of congregational life that will take several years to put into place. You will project where you want to be in three to five years, and then you will plan what needs to happen in each of the coming years in order to reach that goal. For example, if you want to increase attendance in worship, you will need to identify aspects of worship that can be enhanced in ways that will increase attendance. Plans for the next few years may include equipping worship leaders, hiring new staff, purchasing new equipment, remodeling space, and communicating the goal of the worship initiative to the congregation and community. In some cases, this process may take only six months to a year. However, if you need to find funding for new space, equipment, and staff, this project can easily become a multiyear emphasis.

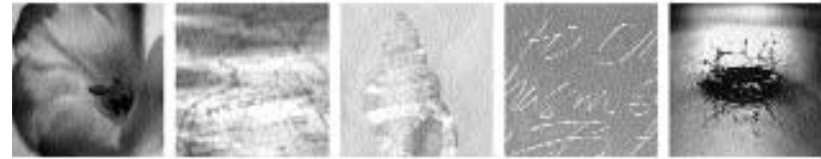
Ongoing and short-term plans should also relate to the mission and vision of your congregation. As you plan for the church year in worship and study or as you develop strategies for responding to local and global needs, you do so within the context of your vision for ministry and your spiritual gifts. As a leadership team, you will probably want to meet at least quarterly throughout the year. Depending on the size of your congregation, you can easily plan for the next three months. At these meetings, you will cover the specific details involved in moving toward your vision. For example, policies related to hiring and

supervising employees in your daycare center should be approved at one of these meetings.

Each meeting should also include a time of biblical reflection and ongoing discernment so that your plans are aligned with God's call to ministry in your setting. In addition, your leadership team will need to plan periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of your ministry plans. In addition to reports related to attendance and participation, you will want to consider how this ministry is helping people grow as Christian disciples and how it is serving the needs of the community (locally and globally).

And so the process begins again. Leading with purpose involves an ongoing cycle of reflection and discernment, action, evaluation, action, and back to reflection and discernment. Sometimes your evaluation and reflection on action already taken will lead to improvement in an area of ministry; sometimes it will lead to expanding the ministry. At times it may lead to discontinuing a particular ministry. Each of these possible responses grows out of learning from what works and what does not work. More importantly, each of these responses leads to ongoing learning about what it means to be the people of God in your location—who you are and why you are here.

May God shower you with blessings as you lead with purpose, vision, commitment, and passion!



Other Helpful Resources

Websites

Alban Institute (www.alban.com)

Resources for congregational excellence, including, books, a magazine, consulting, seminars, podcasts. Search the articles archive under the topic of governance or leadership to find material that meets your situation.

Best Practices (www.gbod.org/)

Cokesbury (www.cokesbury.com)

Cokesbury is an online bookstore for curriculum, books for church leaders, and official United Methodist resources such as the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Book of Worship.

General Board of Discipleship (www.gbod.org)

GBOD helps local church, district, and conference leaders fulfill the shared dream of making world-changing disciples. The website is a primary way the agency connects leaders with what they need for spiritual formation, new church development and revitalization of local churches. Leaders will find resources by clicking the tab “lead your church.”

United Methodist Communications (www.umcom.org)

Information and resources for ReThink Church, Find a Church, and other audio and visual clips for congregations. Umcom.org is the site for EcuFilm church video resources; for UM Tech shop, and helps for increasing technological outreach of your congregation through a web site, email, e-letters.

A Magazine for Leaders

Interpreter is published digitally as well as print for church leaders. Every congregation receives a limited number of free subscriptions for designated leaders. Available through United Methodist Communications (615-742-5107) or www.interpretermagazine.org.

Job Descriptions

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, a series of booklets describing leadership tasks and functions of a variety of groups in the local congregation (800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com).

Job Descriptions and Leadership Training for Local Church Leaders (Discipleship Resources, 2009). Job descriptions for leadership and committee positions that are described in the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. Includes a leadership development program for the nominations committee of a congregation and workshop for training church leaders. (www.upperroom.org/bookstore).

Consultants

Curric-U-Phone, for help in selecting and using curriculum resources (800-251-8591.)

InfoServ, for answers to questions about The United Methodist Church and its Ministries. Online at www.umc.org

GBOD Staff, for answers and ideas for congregations in a process of transformation and renewal (Email: info@gbod.org)

Books

A Perfect Love; Understanding John Wesley's 'A Plain Account of Christian Perfection' by Steven W. Manskar, Diana L. Hynson and Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki (Discipleship Resources, 2004) A modern-language version of Wesley's work for today's readers. Includes theological reflections by Marjorie Suchocki and a study guide by Diana L. Hynson.

Charting the Course, A Workbook on Christian Discipleship, by Teresa Gilbert, Patty Johansen, Jay Regennitter, with John P. Gilbert (Discipleship Resources)

This workbook provides guidance for developing a disciple-making process in your congregation that is appropriate for your context. It includes suggestions for biblical reflection related to discipleship, historical and contemporary examples of disciple-making, ideas for evaluating current ministry, and recommendations for exploring each chapter more deeply.

Deepening Your Effectiveness by Claudia Lavy and Dan Glover (Discipleship Resources)

Develop a plan to increase authentic discipleship in the congregation. This book, for group leaders to work through together, provides a framework for developing mature and functional disciples.

Does Your Church Have a Prayer? In Mission Toward the Promised Land, by Marc Brown, Kathy Merry, and John Briggs (Discipleship Resources)

Through six weeks of Bible study and worship, congregations are invited to discern God's call to live in God's "promised land" through Christian discipleship. The study includes reflection on texts from both the Old and New Testaments. Participant workbooks and a Leader's Guide provide step-by-step guidelines for assessing current reality, creating a vision, and developing a strategic ministry plan.

Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry, revised edition, by William J. Carter (Discipleship Resources, 2002). Encourages readers to discover God's call to ministry in their own lives and assists congregations as they identify and deploy members for ministry.

Leadership from the Heart, Learning to Lead with Love and Skill, by Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile (Church of the Resurrection Resources, Abingdon Press)

This ten-week small group study explores the biblical principles of servant leadership, as well as ideas for team building. The Leader Kit includes a copy of the material in the Participant's Workbook and a DVD for use in each session.

Listen for God's Leading, A Workbook for Corporate Spiritual Discernment, by Valerie K. Isenhower, Judith A. Todd (Upper Room Books) Making faith-based decisions is a sign of Christian maturity — both individually and corporately. With so many voices and opinions within a congregation or organization, it may seem an insurmountable challenge for church leaders to settle on a direction. Learn how your church can be more available to God through the "dynamic dance" that can be corporate decision making. They model a dynamic and positive technique that's full of prayer and worship, discussion and interaction. It's an opportunity for living in God's presence more deeply.

Serving from the Heart, Finding Your Gifts and Talents for Service, by Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile (Church of the Resurrection Resources, Abingdon Press) Designed as an eight-week small group study, this resource provides session plans for exploring and identifying individual spiritual gifts and developing a ministry profile. The Leader Kit includes a CD-ROM with slides to use in the sessions and master copies of the necessary hand-outs.