

**YOUTH MINISTRY
REPORT**



ASSESSMENT

***First Free Methodist Church
Seattle, Washington***

April 16, 2011

BACKGROUND

Seattle First Free Methodist Church is a congregation just at the foot of Queen Anne Hill and across the street from Seattle Pacific University. The Queen Anne area of the Emerald City is a neighborhood of diversity and transition. It includes the sub-neighborhoods of North Queen Anne, West Queen Anne, East Queen Anne and Lower Queen Anne (or Uptown). Queen Anne has approximately 18,000 households and a total population of about 32,000. Even with some families moving to the suburbs, a large percentage of church members remain faithful and travel in to attend. They generally describe their church family as welcoming and a place of opportunity.

The church was established in 1880 by Rev. John Glen who was sent from the New York Conference on a missionary appointment to preach the gospel and establish Free Methodism in the Northwest Territory. Eleven years after the beginning of the church, Seattle Pacific College was founded in 1891 by Free Methodist pioneers where “Seattle Pacific University has grown from humble beginnings on a small piece of land in early Seattle, Washington, into one of the nation’s premier Christian universities, located in the heart of one of the world’s great cities.”

The early vision of the institution partnering with the church was to train missionaries for overseas service. Today that vision has grown to focus on equipping 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students to engage the culture and change the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 1906 the church moved to its present day location across from the university. Throughout its history the relationship between church and university has presented a connection for ministry to faculty and students while physically offering space for chapel services and other events.

Over the years, the ministry of the church has offered light and hope to people in the community, the city and the university. There have been many faithful pastors over the years and most recently the longest-term shepherd, Pastor Mark Abbott retired after a 28-year tenure. He was followed by an interim pastor, Rev. David Hicks and after a prayerful search, Rev. Blake Wood was assigned full-time beginning May 2011. Members describe this as a time of “hope” and “looking to the future” with great expectation.

The church’s membership numbers 664, with an average weekly worship attendance of 460 people. The church has two worship services each week, the 9:30am sanctuary service featuring music and hymns led by the choir, pipe organ and orchestra. The 11am “Encounter” service is held in the gym and offers “a casual community atmosphere with contemporary media and liturgical elements led by a band.”



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With an annual operating budget of \$1,021,277, the church has designated a 2011 youth ministry budget of \$49,341, including funding for the youth program budget, intern stipend and salary for the director of youth ministry. This comprises 5% of the total budget.

The Youth Ministry has seen many changes in recent years with director of youth ministry transitions occurring on average about once every two years. One high school senior reported having “three different directors of youth ministry in seven years of youth group.” Most recently Stephanie Chatfield has been in place for four years. She is universally loved. When interviewed people reported that many are “drawn to Stephanie,” “she looks them in the eye and engages them,” “she has taken ownership and invested a lot of herself” and “she has a real teachable spirit.”

Currently, there are approximately 48 6th through 12th graders on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, about 32 of them participate in either Sunday school, worship or the Wednesday night youth program. The youth ministry is described by some students and parents as a “friendly” and “safe” place, while others say it is a “vital” and “hopeful” ministry.

There are approximately seven adult volunteers involved each week in one of the major youth programs. Others help out at special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

The “youth group” currently meets on Wednesday nights with a community dinner beginning at 5:45pm followed by worship, short message, prayer stations and break off into small groups. On Sundays, the high school group meets at 9:30 am concurrently with the worship service in the sanctuary. Middle School meets at 11am at the same time as “Encounter” is held in the gym.

The church currently provides adequate space in the Youth Center. This was re-designed during 2009 to re-purpose different spaces for different phases of the Wednesday and Sunday programs. Outside of the Wednesday and Sunday programs special events are offered through a Fall and Winter Retreat, “Foot to Float,” Summer Shindigs, “Meet Your Maker” to name a few.

Like so many youth ministries, this one had some “glory years” in the 60’s, ‘70s, and ‘80s. Since then, with the changing demographics of the neighborhood and numerous shifts in leadership, the ministry has experienced a plateau and then subsequent decline.

Youth Ministry Architects was invited to provide an assessment of the youth ministry and to make recommendations about how the church might strategically move the youth ministry forward. We met with 36 individuals in 11 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

YOUTH MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens we like to use for understanding youth ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” In working with churches across the country, it has been our experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not insure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff and the congregation at large.

Youth ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. And those youth ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing and discouragement.



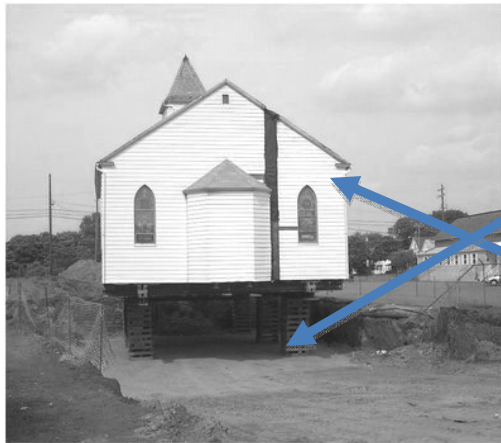
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Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church’s ministry. It is important for this target number to be clearly agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the youth ministry is typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

Rent #2: PROGRAMS—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, the youth leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective youth programs that give both students and parents “something to talk about.”

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the youth staff, volunteers and the youth themselves are essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and with the parents.

As the leadership of the youth ministry develops its long-range vision, it will simultaneously need to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the youth ministry faces parallel challenges, not terribly unlike this picture of “The Church Worshipping on Stilts”:



1) Laying the Foundation:
Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the ministry’s *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,

2) Continuing to Worship on Stilts: Maintaining the *current* ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of kids and students and their families.

As the youth ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, four rules of thumb will be helpful to keep in mind:

1) **\$1,400 a Kid**—FFMC has a budget of \$49,341 dedicated to the youth ministry. With a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 32 students in some aspect of the church’s life, the figure would normally be closer to \$44,800. It could be argued that this church is poised for slight growth. The current budget should allow the youth ministry to reach **35** youth on a weekly basis.

2) **1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—According to this rule of thumb, FFMC will max-out its capacity at about 50 youth on a weekly basis. In the meantime, it must be understood by the congregation that the director of youth ministry will be spending significant time in the next few years to build a stronger foundation for the ministry to expand and thrive. This will include expanding the ministry to the families of the congregation, recruiting and



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developing an equipped volunteer base of leaders, and enlarging the visibility and engagement of the youth ministry into the larger life of the church.

- 3) **1 Adult for Every 5 Youth**— We like to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five students on an ongoing basis. FFMC is currently at a ratio of 1 leader for every 4 youth – counting only the people who have made a weekly commitment to the Sunday and Wednesday programs. It is right on target (and ready to take on more) with the current number of active students, but it will need to increase the volunteer pool if the church wants to minister to the 48 total students on the rolls and also expand to friends of students currently involved.
- 4) **10% of the Worshiping Congregation**—In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshiping congregation. Being in a church with an average worship attendance of 460, the fact that there are approximately 32 youth present in the church weekly means that FFMC Youth Ministry is engaging fewer Junior and Senior High students than they should be capable of reaching.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. We have found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three different kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The Construction Foreman:** A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, or particular skills in planning and managing events, or particular skills in teaching.

Many churches hire, as their lead youth director, someone who may have gifts in a single area—for example, working with youth, managing a facility—but never train them to oversee the complex components of a ministry of 50 or more youth. The result in these situations can be a pattern of unrealistic expectations for the staff, which can lead to “scape-goating,” particularly in settings in which a sustainable infrastructure for ministry has not been established.

ASSETS

All Aboard! Among those in listening groups, there was an across-the-board consensus that ministry to this generation is important. Though the challenges will be elaborated later in the report, the good news is that there is no disagreement that parents, youth leaders and a small but growing group of leaders are ready to go forward. One listening group member declared “We want to see the stakeholder group enlarged,” and we are ready to “turn this large ship” in the right direction.



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Bring It On: Though Stephanie initially invited this assessment, many people, including the original stakeholders Jim, Deb and Do were supportive. The fact that 36 people attended focus groups indicates that this is a church that sees the spiritual and moral development of its youth as a high priority. Whether members of the pastoral staff, the youth ministry staff or parents, the sentiment remained: “The process will take time but we are ready to take action.”

Pastoral Support: New senior pastor Blake Wood has expressed his passion for and deep commitment to the youth ministry. He understands this is a time to take action, and the climate of hope will offer opportunities to make healthy and progressive change. As a loving father of five children, two presently a teenager, it can be projected he will have a personal interest in the excellence of youth ministry.

Little Competition: It is not uncommon for youth to look for the “best and brightest” show in youth ministry. They want friendship, belonging, care but they also look for fun events and creative programming. Common friends will often invite them and they may or may not continue going to “the other youth group.” In our listening groups we heard little to no mention of youth leaving First Free to attend elsewhere. Those who don’t come regularly are busy or not going anywhere. They can be brought back! One teenager remarked when asked about another popular ministry said, “I like ours better. I feel known here.”

Solid as a Rock: With all the transitions in youth leadership over the last decade, Stephanie has now established some stability. Her present four-year tenure has been solid and has engendered a building trust among parents, youth and church leadership. One staff member added, “I’m excited in what I see with Stephanie: one hundred percent Christian, youth ministry growing, passionate about the kids. I’m excited.” This stability has allowed the youth ministry community to take a collective deep breath and settle in to the relationship. One parent of a rising 6th grader offered, “Our daughter is looking forward to being in the youth ministry. She thinks Stephanie is great.”

Enthusiastic, Confident Parents: There is a core group of well-connected, highly committed parents who want their children to have a positive church experience throughout their teenage years. Five years ago, parents were not welcome in the Youth Center. In the years since Stephanie arrived parents are appreciated and there has been a re-building of the relationship between them and the youth ministry. One parent commented, “Stephanie has a very teachable spirit.” Another said, “Traditionally we have viewed the role of youth leaders as a paid position. We as parents and volunteers need to step up.” Parents here are ready see and invest in change.

Hope Floats: With the end of this “interim” season in ministry and the beginning of a new senior pastor, the attitude of hope is evident among parents, staff and youth leaders. They are looking forward to “listening” leadership and challenge toward the future. There is the feeling of expectation that those who left may return and confident direction will once again emerge among the leadership. This hope spills over into the life of the youth ministry as parents, youth leaders and staff have appreciated the willingness of the church to receive help.

Booming Building: First Free boasts well-managed spaces for ministries. Rooms and buildings are used frequently by many groups and ministries. Youth Ministries in other churches are sometimes relegated to the “north end of a children’s Sunday school room.” This is not true at First Free Methodist church! Teenagers are offered a quality, dedicated space for “hanging out,” worshipping, having fun and



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growing deeper in their relationship with Christ. Stephanie is well respected by the Facilities Manager and seeks to help youth value and appreciate the gift of space they are afforded.

In addition the long history of relationship and proximity of First Free with Seattle Pacific University (a Free Methodist institution) always offers the potential for greater opportunities in leadership recruitment, education and extended ministry to late adolescents.

Caring Core: Stephanie had the foresight to invite three very different adults who exhibited a love for teenagers and the desire for the renovation of Youth Ministries in the context of this church to read the book, “Sustainable Youth Ministry.” They made the commitment and pledged their support to walk with her through this time of transition. Their backing was clearly evident as they physically stood behind Stephanie in a Sunday morning presentation announcing our coming. This core of “stakeholders” will offer a foundation for enlarging the base of ownership. Their desire to see this work was clearly expressed in comments such as, “We want to know we are doing the right things in youth ministry” and “we want this to be a place where kids don’t want to miss.”

Let’s Go to Camp: The national Free Methodist church has a history of being connectional. The Seattle church is taking advantage of this opportunity to take their youth to camps in the fall. At these events they join with other FM churches and offer youth the occasion to make new friends, receive encouragement from other youth and leaders who are seeking to follow Christ and do something “bigger.” These camps and other camping experiences get kids out of their “comfort” zones and expand their understanding of Christ’s love and leading in their lives. When asked what program elements they would like to keep, youth enthusiastically said, “camp!”

CHALLENGES

High Tolerance for Low Expectations: Programming for adults and children in the church has been consistent and well-supported, with particularly high expectations for traditional worship and intellectual preaching. But the youth ministry seems to have been on another playing field entirely, with church leadership enduring years of a less than effective youth ministry without concern in the church rising to an acute level. Supervision of youth ministry by senior pastoral staff has been inconsistent and at times, non-existent. No wonder that the program has lacked investment and consistent growth by the greater church. As one youth volunteer told us, “Sometimes I think the youth ministry is un-cherished by the church.”

Waiting for Superman: As one member told us, “We’ve not broken the habit of ‘The Big Gamble.’” In other words, FFMC has persisted in the overly-optimistic assumption that it’s all about finding the “right” director of youth ministry to make things happen, and as a result, there has been remarkable turnover for several years. One student told us that there had been 3 different leaders in his time in the youth ministry. There needs to be a commitment to sustainable youth ministry that is embraced by the entire church, rather than repeatedly gambling on a charismatic director of youth ministry to solve all the problems.

Leadership Development Vacuum: Though there are several leaders involved with the teenagers in the church, many of them reported that they could be helped by a good bit of training, especially in classroom management. The volunteers reported a desire for more recognition and support from church leadership, a sense of discouragement at times, and a sense of feeling pulled in several different directions by all that there is to do. As one leader said, “The same small pool of people is being asked to do the bulk of the work in a variety of places.” For example, some of those serving as leaders on



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Wednesday are also involved in the set-up and take-down of the 11am contemporary “Encounter” service on Sundays.

Lack of a Critical Mass: Many parents of youth who are not active participants in the youth ministry indicated that those youth typically choose to stay away because they are relatively certain that “no one” their age will be there. More than one parent reported that their child was resistant to coming on Sunday or Wednesday because their child was not confident that there would be a “buddy” they could stick with.

Both parents of active and inactive youth seem to agree that youth having friends in the youth group is the key to their children wanting to come. Occasionally a few youth have indicated to their parents that they choose not to come because of a lack of substance, but it is likely that those youth also have the experience of having few or no friends that are regularly involved in the group.

When parents of active youth were asked why their sons and daughters participate in the youth ministry, one parent summed it up: “My son loves coming because he has a group of friends there, and he really likes his small group leader.” Yet another parent said, “Because attendance is sporadic my child can pretty well count on the person he wants to see not being there.”

Can You Hear Me Now? Though Stephanie works hard to get information about the youth ministry into the bulletin, and has created a calendar for the year, the youth department has yet to establish a pattern of fully accessing the communication resources of the church (newsletter, calendaring, etc.). As a result, some families and the church at large are not aware of what is going on with the youth program. For example, some middle school parents mentioned not hearing about events until the day before. Another parent said, “I asked about some summer plans and was impressed to find out there was a calendar through the end of summer, but I had no idea, even though the calendar had been out for months. So there is a disconnect.”

On a broader level, another parent commented, “The geography of our building prevents most parents from even knowing what is going on in the youth ministry.” Since the children’s ministry facilities are in another building away from the youth center, 5th grade parents are not familiar with the youth ministry because they are not walking past that part of the church campus. Furthermore, while some parents mentioned real affection and appreciation for the youth staff, other parents had no idea who the leaders were! We think that this is a youth ministry marketing problem. A long-term lack of vision for and attention to the youth ministry by the church leadership has kept the work with youth off the church radar.

Disconcerting Disconnects: Some parents of middle schoolers whose children had been involved in Kidtown indicated a nervousness they had felt about their children moving from a highly structured, closely supervised program for pre-K through 5th graders into a wilder and looser youth group setting. For example, one parent said, “Sometimes I’m not comfortable with the level of activity in the youth room – the wrestling is too physical, and furniture has even been knocked over.” Some seminars for parents on developmental stages of adolescence, along with some training in classroom management for the volunteers, would help the anxiety diminish.

Missing Rites of Passage: It seems that the logical time to have a rite of passage for the youth would be 1) when they step into the youth program and 2) when they move from the middle school program to the high school program and 3) when they graduate from high school. Some parents spoke of their



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concern that these events have not become rites of passage for their children because of the minimal attention they receive in the congregation at large and in the worship services in particular. While Jan and Stephanie communicate directly about ways to coordinate the Children's and Youth Ministries in terms of calendar, there needs to be a larger-scale promotion plan for moving children seamlessly from the Children's Ministry into the Youth Ministry, preparing parents and youth for the transitions and at the same time celebrating the growth toward maturity and adulthood.

Terminal Uniqueness: We observed that many we met with suffered from a perception disorder we call "terminal uniqueness," focusing intensely on the "unique" challenging factors facing FFMC:

- Multiple feeder schools, making it difficult for kids to feel connected
- Youth with packed schedules, who are therefore unable to participate regularly
- Youth attending schools that demand high levels of performance, including multiple hours of homework each night
- Being a church that does not come from the same zip code, making it difficult to get people to come back to church beyond Sunday mornings.
- Being a church with many dual income parents who might not have time to volunteer
- Being a "university church" with a lot of transitory SPU students who may help out with various programs but not get deeply involved in church life, thus creating a transitory membership.

The fact is that none of these challenges are even remotely unique to this church. Since we know that the majority of these factors are present in almost every successful suburban/large city youth ministry in our country, the church can make the decision to keep their thinking about youth ministry off the dead-end streets of explaining away a less than effective program by pointing to these factors.

Missing In Action: A "hot button" surrounding the youth ministry is the fact that there is a noticeable gap between the number of students on the church rolls and those who are actually involved. There are vague theories as to why this has happened, seen in these comments:

"With all the transitions, the youth ministry lost my son about two years ago."

"The church has been going down in terms of numbers for quite some time. Of course that will affect the youth ministry."

"My daughter is the only girl in 5th grade; she is nervous about moving up into the youth ministry and not knowing anyone. How can we get more people to go?"

Many factors contribute to the drop in overall attendance at FFMC and to the disparity between student numbers on the rolls versus weekly attendance. For those youth who have not come in awhile there is not a noticeable plan for a follow-up communication from the director of youth ministries or volunteer staff. Yet until solid goals and strategies are established, frustration will only grow as the numbers stall or decrease.

Meet the Parents: A number of listening group participants spoke about the enjoyable involvement that parents have had in the faith formation of their children and in their participation in the children's ministry. Many voiced concern that they are not clear how they can continue that partnership and involvement as parents of teenagers. They are ready to help the youth ministry but are not clear how



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they could do that. Some have assisted with cooking or driving on retreats and camping trips, but want to do more. They are also thankful that Stephanie has put out the welcome mat to parents in the Youth Center, but there is still a lot of baggage about the grievous “un-welcome” that existed in previous years.

Lack of a Strategic Plan: The current staff, volunteers, parents and youth are passionate about the youth ministry; they want to see marvelous things happen, and they are willing to work, and work sacrificially, to do so. But many indicated a need for structure and an ongoing discipleship plan that spans ages 0 to 18:

“The children and youth have no connection.” (expressed by a current high school student)

“I was practically born into this church, and have learned about Abraham every year! It’s not Stephanie, but I know there’s more to the Bible than that. I’m ready for more.”

“The fun events are fun and effective, but I wonder if we should be using them to do any sort of gospel proclamation or outreach.”

“We need more service projects – but we need to think through a plan for them over time.”

“My son tells me that sometimes the teaching is great, and other times it doesn’t make sense.”

“I want to see more organization, more planning ahead for activities. I like spontaneous, but that’s not the way that life works.”

I would love to see a curriculum that runs through the entire church that brings a unity... A broad super-highway that takes everyone in the same direction.

Though Stephanie has great organizational skills, she, like almost all youth workers her age, has little experience with strategic planning and implementation. Given responsibility to make a project or event run smoothly, she will have no problem. But expecting her to come up with the right combination of projects, programs and structures to move the youth ministry forward is not terribly realistic (or fair to her). It will be crucial for a Youth Ministry Renovation Team to come up with a set of measurable standards for what is considered “successful” as FFMC Youth Ministry moves from here.

O Sister Where Art Thou? Both youth and adults pointed to the absence of young girls from the youth program. One high school girl described youth group as “Me and the boys.” A middle school girl stated that “I think the boys get way more attention.” Some have noted that girls naturally want to have good friends at a youth event before they commit to going. This deficit also allows some activities to get very loud and physically active, further alienating girls who are shy or more comfortable with calmer activities. As two middle school boys told us, “Sundays are way more crazy than Wednesdays!” It is crucial that the middle school Sunday school class get consistent female leaders to assist with leadership and teaching.

But I Go to a “Church” School: A growing number of FFMC families are opting to send their children to faith-based schools. The Christian instruction they receive at those schools makes some teens feel that their attendance at youth group is less than crucial. These schools also foster core friendships that are outside of FFMC, thus somewhat decreasing their fidelity to the youth ministry.



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Finally, this level of Christian instruction creates a broad spectrum of discipleship needs. Some students come to the FFMC Youth Ministry with an extensive background in the Bible and discipleship, while others come completely un-churched.

Who Is My Neighbor? Several members and staff mentioned how much the church's relationship with the neighborhood has changed. In previous decades, members lived near the church. In more recent years, members would continue to make the drive to church even after moving to the suburbs. In 2011, families are less willing or able to make the drive, especially for Wednesday night church activities, which are both for youth and all generations. Furthermore, the cost of living is such that the families connected to Seattle Pacific University, a former source of many of FFMC's members, can usually no longer afford to live in the neighborhood.

Another aspect of shift in neighborhood relationship is seen in the North Queen Anne Childcare program, which is filled to capacity. However, the children come from neighborhood families who are not related in any other way to FFMC. This program also has an after-school component that goes up through middle school, but no connection with the church is happening there as well. Though this is a "ministry" of the church, there is minimal connection with the church and the ministries to youth and children.

Make Yourself at Home: While FFMC offers a welcome place for youth to be there seems to be no definitive plan to follow-up with newcomers or inactive youth. Visitors may show up with their families or come with friends but a strategy is not in place to collect information, give a call, distribute information about the youth ministry and make further contact. An assimilation strategy that moves visitors into active engagement and involvement needs to be developed.

A Divided Kingdom? We heard from a few families that it was a challenge to have middle school and high school Sunday school classes occur at separate times. For example, one family told us, "My son is taking guitar and drum lessons, and I'd love to have him participate in Encounter, but that is when he goes to Sunday school." While we understand that this speaks to the larger dynamics of church life, we do think it is preferable to have the two groups meet during the same period of time so that families can worship together.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Designate the next 17 months as a time of infrastructure building and vision casting for the youth ministry. Name **September 2012** as the target date for the establishment of a sufficient infrastructure to provide long-term stability, with the director of youth ministry spending more time building and leading the youth ministry team at First Free Methodist.
2. Ask the Senior Pastor and Local Board of Administration to endorse an intentional 17-month strategic design process for the youth ministry, as proposed in this report.
3. The pastoral staff appoints a five-to-seven person Youth Ministry Renovation Team, which over the next 17 months will take responsibility for implementing the strategic, long-term changes recommended in this report. This will be comprised of parents, youth staff and church leaders.
4. Charge the Youth Ministry Renovation Team with responsibility to report at least quarterly to church leadership regarding the team's two overarching responsibilities:
 - a. **Immediate Pressure Points:** Work with the youth ministry leadership to address the immediate pressure points facing this ministry as they transition toward sustainability.
 - b. **Long-Term Infrastructure:** *Establish a consensus and vision for the direction of the youth ministry and oversee the development of a long-term infrastructure.*

Renovation Team Task #1: Immediate Pressure Points

Work with staff and the youth committee to remove the immediate pressure points:

- i. **Supervision:** Establish dependable, supportive supervision between the director of youth ministry, Stephanie Chatfield and the new Senior Pastor, Blake Wood, who is starting May 1.
- ii. **Coaching for the current youth ministry staff:** Start weekly coaching sessions for the director of youth ministry from experienced youth ministry professionals immediately, with particular attention given to:
 1. strategic communication with parents
 2. training/recruiting of volunteer leaders
 3. creation of directories & calendars for parents
- iii. **Summer Ministry:** Publicize all the youth ministry programming and events to happen June through August of 2011
 1. Finalize the summer calendar. Confirm all dates, times and distribute to all parents and youth.
 2. Recruit additional Sunday school teachers and leaders. A female leader is needed immediately for middle school. Furthermore, the middle schoolers requested that Stephanie be more involved with them, so at least one more teacher is needed to co-teach high school with her.
 3. A training on classroom management is given to the youth volunteers.



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4. Recruit summer major event coordinators and additional parents/youth leaders for each of these activities.
 5. Develop a publicity strategy for all summer events. Use every available church-wide and youth ministry medium to communicate this information.
- iv. Creative Kick Off:** Plan a fun event to kick off the youth ministry programs in September 2011, which will include:
1. promotion events for middle school and high school. This event should be designed to move the youth ministry activities higher up the priority list of busy youth and to also establish greater visibility of the youth ministry within the church
 2. distribution of calendars
 3. sign-ups for key events
 4. an explanation for service opportunities for parents.
- v. Assimilation of Visitors:** Welcome new youth to the group:
1. Create an information card for new youth to be completed and handed to the director of youth ministries
 2. Inform youth leaders of new assimilation strategy and train them to use with new, visiting and inactive youth.
 3. Follow up with a call and/or personal note to welcome visitors. Mail a calendar.

Renovation Team Task #2: Vision and Sustainable Infrastructure for the Youth Ministry:

- i. **Visioning:** Create or Confirm Four Key Visioning Documents—1) A Youth Ministry Mission Statement, 2) A Statement of Values, 3) A Set of Three-Year Revolving Goals, and 4) an Organizational Chart for the Youth Ministry, integrated into the church's master strategic plan.
- ii. **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training and support of all volunteers in the youth ministry.
- iii. **Leadership Development, part 2:** Continue with internship program with Youth for Christ (YFC), and also establish a youth ministry internship with Seattle Pacific University's (SPU) School of Theology's Youth Ministry program.
- iv. **7-Year Intentional Curriculum Plan:** Create an integrated template for youth curriculum, including a design for youth group and Sunday School and for how the youth curriculum plan ties into the curriculum plan for the children's ministry.
- v. **Parent Empowerment and Engagement:** Sponsor and execute at least one broad-scale, encouraging parent-equipping event, particularly targeting parents of teenagers in the church



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- vi. **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, that an application and screening process for volunteers is in place and that a sexual abuse/child protection policy is adopted and affirmed in writing by all adults working with youth.
- vii. **Internal Marketing:** Establish normative processes for ensuring a “good name” for the youth ministry in the church, including the public, specific celebration of volunteers leading the youth ministry.
- viii. **Retaining the Rising 6th:** At least 6 months before the new 6th graders become a part of the youth ministry, processes are in place to communicate with rising 6th grade parents in ways that instill confidence and enthusiasm in families.
- ix. **Rites of Passage:** Develop rites of passage events surrounding the key turning points along the youth faith journey (from 5th to 6th grade, from middle school/junior high to high school, and from high school to post-high school), with each event having the following four components: a ritual, food, a gift, and an intergenerational component.
- x. **Youth Ministry Manual:** Compile all the key control documents, including a youth directory, a volunteer directory, a visitor directory, an annual major event calendar, the curriculum template and calendar, the preventative maintenance calendar, parent and student surveys, compliance documents, and major event notebooks.
- xi. **Strategic Student Leadership:** Develop a “friendship epidemic” outreach team of students who will be trained and supported as they work over the next year to create a climate of friendship for the youth ministry, a climate that is effectively focused beyond the current comfortable friendship clusters.
- xii. **Strategic Staffing:** Propose clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan for the youth ministry that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth.
- xiii. **Integration and Intentional Extended Family Building:** Create a vision and a strategic implementation plan for intentionally building a broad-based extended family for the youth of the church, including initiatives for integrating the youth ministry into the fabric of the entire church.
- xiv. **Missions Mindset:** Develop a game plan for an annual or bi-annual intercultural missions trip for high school students and quarterly local missions/service opportunities for Middle School/High School youth. Make sure to include opportunities for families and church members to serve inter-generationally.



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