



Mission Initiative

Report to the Congregation

June 10, 2018

Mission Initiative Team:

Al Lund, Carly Twilley, Rev. Elizabeth Lyman, John Barineau,
Sally Coulson, Kay Jewett, Liz Rowe, Raven Studer, Steve Studer

Introduction from the Pastor

It was the end of a long and intense Elder/Deacon/staff retreat in January. We had been very honest in lifting up the strengths and challenges that faced Concord in this interim time. We recognized the strengths of our staff, the excellence of our worship and music, the strength of Christian Education.

We also recognized that our mission and outreach had stalled, that we did not have adequate means of communication between all committees, and that other areas of church focus were “tired.” There was still grief over what Lynn Horan’s departure meant to Concord. Most had gotten over the shock of Lynn’s leaving so quickly, but not over the loss of the hopes and dreams attached to her ministry. There was anxiety over what an additional interim period would do for the overall health of the church. Lynn had only begun to put in place some of her vision when she left.

Therefore, we came together to pray and to read Scripture and to listen to God for God’s leading of Concord at this place and time. We knew that we needed to find a way forward to address some of these issues right now. Concord could not afford to wait for a new pastor to come to address its pressing concerns. We understood that the mission team structure that had been put in place only a year previously was not cohesive and that there were some serious gaps in the work of Concord Presbyterian Church.

It was decided at that meeting to appoint a group of dedicated Concord members to go back to very basics. We needed to move beyond what the Presbytery would require for a Mission Study. This ‘initiative’ would be a place to truly engage in spiritual discernment for the future of Concord Presbyterian Church. I am trained as a spiritual director as well as an interim pastor, so we decided to use a spiritual direction approach to this work.

Al Lund and Carly Twilley would represent Session and Sally Coulson and John Barineau would represent Deacons. The initiative also drew on the strengths of Raven and Steve Studer, Kay Jewett, and Liz Rowe. We met together for two hours every Monday evening for a period of twelve weeks.

What you have before you is the result of that intense prayerful reflection. It is both analysis of where Concord is at present and a way forward that does not depend on pastor initiative. It does depend on a ‘collaborative ministry’ that requires true oversight by the Session and Deacons. It does not require as much oversight by staff. It is a process we can begin now and can continue without interruption when a new pastor is installed.

It is a deep dive into how God is calling Concord, based on the gifts and skills that are already present. It is, as Fred Beuchner would say the, “place where your deep hunger meets the world’s deep need.” It is a document of hope.

Where does this work fit into the forward movement of seeking a new pastor? It contains the steps we can begin right now to strengthen the ministry and mission of Concord Presbyterian. It will inform the Mission Study that will take place in the very near future. We pray it is to be the ‘living document’ that carries this church forward in faith. Mission studies are a tool to help a church find a new pastor. They are rarely consulted after that process has ended. This Mission Initiative is to be used to inform the work of Concord over the next few years.

Session has received this report. It will be further refined at the next Session meeting in June and will form the basis for the Mission Study. This report will be on our website with all the appendixes available. We have printed it for you now in the hopes you will read, reflect, and pray on it, and find ways that you fit into the exciting story that is God working out the Gospel at Concord Presbyterian Church.

In Christ,

Rev. Elizabeth Lyman
Interim Pastor
Concord Presbyterian Church

Concord Mission Initiative Report

Initiative Purpose: Discern God’s yearning for Concord and propose a missional direction and priorities for the congregation consistent with the leadership of the Holy Spirit and Concord’s gifts.

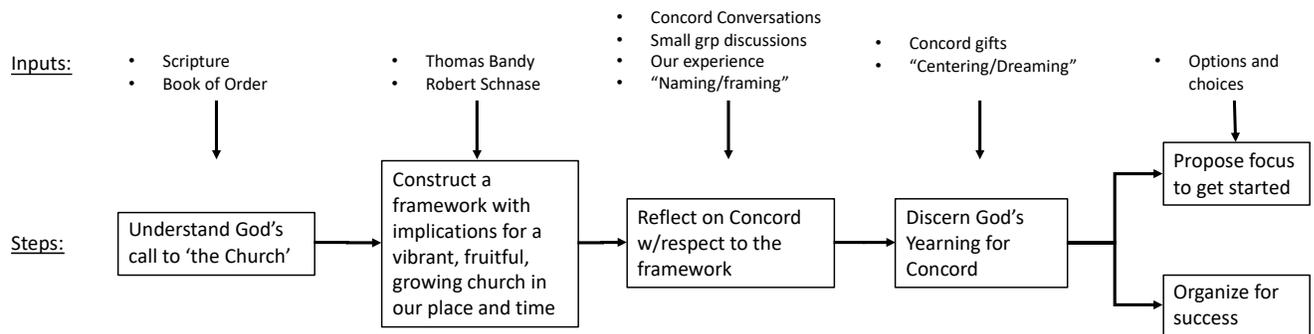
Who and When:

- Nine of us met 2 hrs, once a week for 12 weeks in March-May 2018
- Elizabeth Lyman, Carly Twilley, Liz Rowe, John Barineau, Kay Jewett, Sally Coulson, Raven & Steve Studer, Al Lund

How: We started each meeting with a short worship and were guided in the process by the book, Listen for God’s Leading: A workbook for Corporate Discernment by Valerie K. Isenhower and Judith A. Todd, Upper Room Books. (For reference, some notes from this book are included as Appendix 1.). It was useful as it:

- Refocused us on God’s call and guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Helped us let go of preconceived ideas/past, personal issues
- Encouraged patience to listen to each other
- Provided a common terminology for the team

Initiative Road Map:



God’s Mission:

In order to ground ourselves on the biblical basis of the church, we studied several scripture passages and the summary of God’s call to the church as interpreted in the Presbyterian Book of Order. The following is what we called God’s ‘Big Picture’ for the church.

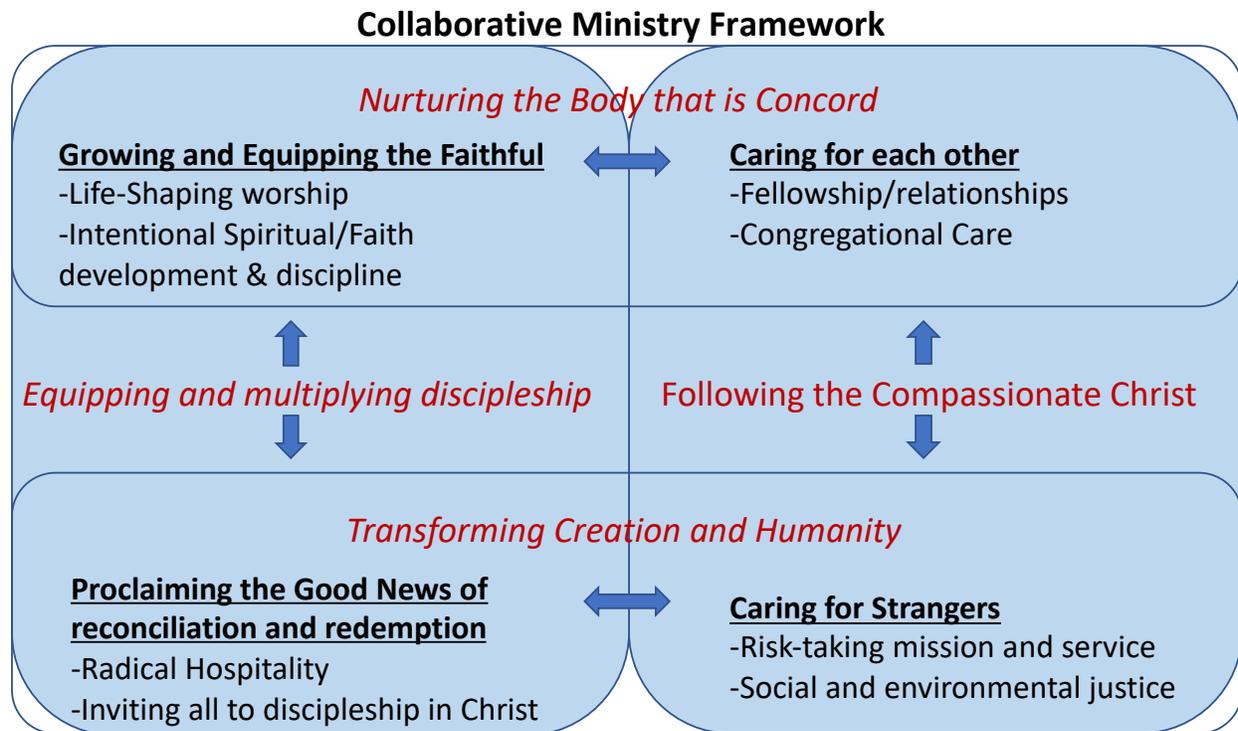
“The triune God creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people, bringing the Good News to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord’s favor upon all creation. In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.” Presbyterian Book of Order (2017-2019. F-1.01)

From this and other passages it is clear that the church is to 1) reach out and minister to all people in need and 2) help transform creation and humanity by proclaiming the good news and inviting all to discipleship. The emphasis is on an outward focus on others rather than an internal focus on congregations.

Definition of a vibrant, fruitful, growing Church:

We studied two reference books by respected consultants on the characteristics and practices of successful and growing churches in 21st century North America: 95 Questions to Shape the Future of Your Church, Thomas G. Bandy, Abingdon Press and Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, Robert Schnase, Abingdon Press. These two authors present perspectives on translating God’s ‘Big Picture’ Mission into approaches that seem to be working in our post-secular society today. (For reference some notes from these books are shown in Appendices 2 & 3.)

Based on these texts we constructed a composite Collaborative Ministry Framework for a vibrant, fruitful and growing church to use as a reference for assessing where we are at Concord versus this ideal and to stimulate our thinking on the possibilities for our future.



In this framework, the ministry of the church is broken down into four, key elements within which we placed the characteristics and practices of fruitful congregations.

Life-shaping worship refers to worship that is pragmatic and purposeful. Not just about praising God, but about doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with the Lord. The

objective is inspiration, motivating faithful people to do the right thing, live more Christ-like, and share the joy. 'Good worship' is any worship design that accomplishes that. Congregations with life-shaping worship come to worship with open hearts, expecting something important to happen to them today rather than coming with an attitude of evaluating the quality of the elements of the service.

Intentional spiritual and faith formation and development involves high-quality learning opportunities specifically designed to nurture the development of faith in all congregants no matter where they are in their faith journey. It takes advantage of mentors, bible study, and hands-on service. It is not about gaining biblical knowledge so much as cultivating in us the 'fruits of the Spirit' of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These spiritual qualities are relational and we only learn them in the presence of others.

Worship and faith development together are about developing the spiritual basis and motivation for Christian discipleship over time and thus equips the faithful for the work of God's mission.

Caring for each other through fellowship and congregational care builds and solidifies the church community and develops a familial intimacy which is required for sharing our lives in Christ. It creates the personal support and camaraderie required to be effective in carrying out God's mission.

We note that these top two boxes, Growing and Equipping the Faithful and Caring for Each Other, are mostly internally focused on the congregation and serve to nurture the faith community so that it can be an effective force for God's purpose. We also observe that this internal focus on church community and faith development, while essential, does not by itself advance God's 'Big Picture' mission of ministering to all in need and transforming the world. For that, we must embrace the ideas in the bottom two boxes.

Risk-taking mission and service flows naturally and inescapably from the teachings of Jesus Christ. Ordinary Christian service (ushering, serving communion, serving on a board, etc.) is about making ourselves useful and building the Body of Christ. Mission turns service outward reminding congregations that Christ's compassion, grace, mercy and love extend to the entire world. Mission changes the lives of recipients as they get to experience God's love and grace through the volunteers. Hands-on mission changes the lives of volunteers, altering attitudes and assumptions about strangers. Risk-Taking Mission steps into greater uncertainty, a higher possibility of discomfort, resistance, or sacrifice. People naturally love those that love them. The stretch of discipleship is to love those for whom it is not automatic, easy, common, or accepted, to love those that do not look like us, think like us, or live like us and to express respect, compassion, and mercy to those we do not know and who may never repay us in kind. Schnase asserts that Risk-Taking Mission is one of the fundamental activities of church life that is so critical that failure to practice it in some form results in a deterioration of the church's

vitality and ability to make disciples of Jesus Christ! No matter how well you care for the congregation, turn inward with time and resources and spiritual vitality wanes.

Radical Hospitality is more than being friendly and welcoming. It comes from a restlessness, calling, responsibility to pray, plan and work to invite others. It focuses more on the stranger than on the congregation. It is achieved when members offer the utmost of themselves, their creativity, their abilities, and their energy to offer the gracious invitation and reception of Christ to others. Radical hospitality looks at every aspect of congregational life through the eyes of a stranger and seeks to adjust attitudes, practices, and values to make every interaction with a stranger a demonstration of God's love and acceptance.

Proclaiming the good news and inviting all to discipleship in Christ meets with special challenges in our culture. Media advertising is not very effective. Door-to-door visitation is unwelcome, people are wary of others. Successful invitations to discipleship extend the church attitude of radical hospitality to designing programs that speak to the life issues of the community and ministry opportunities that appeal to strangers. Creating acquaintances between church members and strangers in which church members model Christ's love and acceptance can afford opportunities for meaningful conversations. Growing and deploying laity to interact with seekers is not easy or automatic, but requires spiritual discipline and a commitment to personal mission.

So, the bottom two boxes on the framework are externally focused and directly linked to God's 'Big Picture' mission. It may also be helpful to notice that the left two boxes have a shared theme of equipping and multiplying disciples. Bandy talks about activities focused on integrating these two areas as a 'discipling process'. Likewise, the right two boxes share a common theme of following the Compassionate Christ. Loving and caring for members and strangers gives church members the opportunity to practice Christ-like compassion, which further cultivates in us the fruits of the spirit and matures our faith.

Finally, we have observed, that as helpful as this framework is in dissecting church ministry into its elements for organizing our discussions, the power of the church is best revealed when we begin to see how the elements and their individual purposes and practices are integrated into ministerial themes that link, for example, worship and spiritual development with mission, or mission with hospitality and inviting. It seems clear that this requires that Christians work together to be successful and thus we named this model of a vibrant, fruitful church the "Collaborative Ministry Framework".

Concord and the Collaborative Ministry Framework:

The next step in our process was to do an informal assessment of Concord's strengths and challenges or opportunities mapped onto the framework for vibrant, fruitful, and growing churches. Our notes from those sessions are shown below, but overall it is clear that Concord has some of the desired characteristics and practices in place. In some cases, we have lost the thread of why we do certain things, getting focused on tasks and activities rather than our purpose, and therefore fail to inspire or maximize our effectiveness. In some cases, small

changes or focus could make a big difference. And in some areas, it may require further development of ourselves to better carry out God's Mission.

Life Changing Worship

Concord Strengths:

- Music – strong choir; special guests; range of music; Concord Concert Series
- Creativity – traditional services with a variety of creative and contemporary elements such as music or dance
- Worship Service – scripture-based, well-coordinated, high-quality, consistent. Strong worship connection between sermon, music, liturgy and children's sermon
- Friendly & welcoming congregation
- Children's Involvement – children are welcomed and included in worship; they are a valued part of the congregation; weekly children's sermon; opportunities to participate in worship as part of the children's choir or as acolytes or ushers

Concord Challenges & Opportunities:

- Only one worship service (maybe provide another worship option 2x per month?)
- Need more accessibility to services via media/technology/audio/video options
- Offer more Bible study opportunities
- Need to cultivate our messages of personal ministry and mission more effectively

Spiritual and Faith Formation and Development

Concord Strengths:

- Adult Sunday School
- Children's Sunday School/Youth Group
- Mug & Muffin
- Lenten Study/Lunch & Learn opportunities
- Acceptance of diverse views/populations; non-judgmental; welcoming
- Deep caring for one another

Concord Challenges & Opportunities

- Limited opportunities to worship
- Worship not necessarily a "transformative" experience
- Spirituality not held up as a priority – more talk around mission/current events than personal spiritual development
- Not comfortable speaking to others with "self-witness" spiritual language
- Need to mentor/share with each other more about personal spiritual development and faith journeys

Caring for Each Other

Concord Strengths:

- Mug & Muffin – opportunities to share personal beliefs/experiences
- Concord Connects – genuine time of fellowship
- Informal network of support for others especially shut-ins

Concord Challenges & Opportunities:

- Need more fellowship opportunities – especially intergenerational events
- Support for members/shut-ins is informal so sometimes people fall through the cracks
- Need to help people build more personal confidence so they can do more congregational care – needs to come naturally and not feel like a task
- Offer more opportunities to support local families in the community
- Make sure Pastor and staff are recognized appropriately for their work/dedication
- ***Deacons are currently working on how to better build relationships with those members of the congregation that need care so it is not all left to the pastor/associate.

Caring for Strangers

Concord Strengths:

- Welcoming/Inclusive congregation
- Mission work is the soul of Concord
- Mission outreach is consistent to Friendship House/Emmanuel Dining Room/Seamen's Center, etc.

Concord Challenges & Opportunities:

- Provide alternative mission opportunities (short term projects) that include all ages to provide more fellowship between our members while also connecting mission projects as a way to 'live out our faith'
- Better connect with young families from the preschool and members of the Fairfax community
- Partner with other organizations for mission work to gain more diversity/cross-cultural experiences
- Cultivate more mission leadership and share more personal stories with the congregation
- Provide social work support and/or resources for members and needs in the local community
- Be willing to take risks beyond our current comfort zone

Inviting all to Discipleship

Invitation to mission through doing good works – attracting people to discipleship

Concord Strengths:

- Welcoming visitors – we are known for our friendliness and welcoming nature

- Concord Connects – time of strong fellowship after worship that members enjoy
- Concord Concert Series – Quality and execution of the Messiah and other special concerts is done very well and receptions offer time for fellowship

Concord Challenges & Opportunities:

- Learn about the notion of “Radical Hospitality” -- more than friendliness, what can we do for YOU?
- Need to take our welcoming nature OUTSIDE the church walls (we do well with visitors that come through the door on their own – but need more follow-up with them)
- Need more meaningful outreach and relevant mission projects that connect us to the local community as well as more ways of communicating with them
- Develop stronger spiritual mentoring relationships between members
- Offer additional spiritual retreats/events
- Close the loop on the CCS events to get those visitors to come back more often – make better use of time for meaningful conversation during fellowship/receptions
- Better follow-up after major worship services (Christmas and Easter)

Notes:

- Life changing worship is about motivating people to go DO...starts from the pulpit
- Holy Indifference - If we only focus on what WE want...Do we miss what GOD wants? how does that serve others?
- Intellectually we know we WANT to be inclusive/diverse...but what are we missing? How do we serve the STRANGER over the member?
- How do we become a MISSION-DRIVEN church as opposed to a MAINTENANCE-DRIVEN church?
- Financial committee is concerned about Concord’s survival through money/investments...but can we be good stewards and also be willing to take risks for mission purposes?
- Our history is of being mission-driven but we need to revitalize our leadership in that area

Concord as a person metaphor

Based on our reflections about Concord, we did an exercise aimed at helping us further describe who we are as a congregation and how we as Concord are perceived at least by the team members. The exercise challenged us to describe Concord as if it were a person. The following is a sort of composite description you may find interesting.

Concord is a white, middle-aged, upper middle-class person with graying or thinning hair and looking a bit frazzled. This person is generous, warm, friendly, helpful, well educated, and musically talented. This person has a strong faith and life experience, but is introverted and reserved in sharing that journey. He/she has a mature, realistic commitment, good leadership qualities, and has financial

resources managed for conservation and longevity not risk-taking. He/she is analytical but comfortable with low-tech means of sharing and processing information. The Presbyterian 'Decently and in order' ethos has developed into a strong sense of organization, fairness, playing by the rules, and a certain resistance to change. This person tends to assume everyone knows the rules and may not perceive the danger of inadvertent exclusion when that assumption is not true. He/she has a touch of midlife crisis, mourns the loss of youth, is nervous about retirement, suffers angst about the younger generation, and approaches the future with equal parts optimism and pessimism, excitement and fear. After many years of dedicated service to others, he/she has grown to be somewhat more focused on personal health and security than on the needs of others. This person is easily distracted by activities and can lose sight of the mission. He/she is sensitive to what others think of him/her and thus the reaction to stress and conflict is more covert than overt, and conflict is avoided if possible. He/she relates well to God both personally and corporately in worship, but has a tendency to relegate God to the background in daily living and in carrying out the routine work of the church.

God's Yearning for Concord

Given our new understanding of a vibrant, fruitful church illustrated by the Collaborative Ministry Framework and our assessment of Concord strengths, we endeavored to discern God's Yearning for Concord by answering 5 questions.

God, what is your yearning for Concord in Worship? We sense that through worship, God yearns for Concord members to abide in Jesus and to feel alive, motivated, and inspired to carry out God's mission of redemption, reconciliation, and caring for others. We are urged to include all, designing worship opportunities for people that experience the Holy Spirit in different ways and that speak to the hearts and minds of people where they are right now. Examples of things we could consider doing include: Continue inspirational, scripture-based preaching and variations in musical styles and selections that support the message, continue providing lay leadership opportunities and supporting participation of children, maximize the use of our flexible worship space to offer fresh experiences that prevent worship from becoming routine, reassess the details of worship and greeting to assist strangers unfamiliar with our services feel included and supported starting their very first week, use technology to make worship more accessible to shut-ins and to reach the un-churched, expand worship opportunities to different places, times, and styles, retain elements of fellowship and sharing associated with worship.

God, what is your yearning for Concord in spiritual formation? We sense our Creator yearns to cultivate in us the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In order to do that, God yearns for us to re-establish Spiritual formation and growth as a priority for Concord. We are urged to lose some of our shyness or self-consciousness in sharing our spiritual lives with each other in order to provide mutual support for spiritual formation and growth of all. Examples of things we could consider doing include: Design and offer Christian education learning experiences at different levels of

learning including times other than Sunday morning, partner with other churches on spiritual development opportunities and extend invitations to the surrounding community, create opportunities in worship and in small groups to share faith journeys, experiences and questions, develop some members into mentors for others, emphasize the spiritual growth opportunity of every mission and service initiative.

God, what is your yearning for Concord in Caring for each other? We sense that The Holy Spirit yearns for us to be present and to care for each other in body and spirit, to genuinely appreciate and value each individual in our church family by recognizing the divine among the human flaws and frailties in each person, seeing the goodness first, and being quick to forgive. We think this is already a Concord strength, but some ideas we might want to consider further include: Continue to cultivate informal support networks among members, establish a more formal process to shepherd every member, active and inactive (already happening through Deacons), retain sharing of joys and concerns, create opportunities for people to get to know each other through small group activities, create fellowship opportunities for subsets of the congregation and some that are intergenerational, promote routine service activities (ushering, serving communion, choir, serving on a board or ministry activity, etc.) as acts of caring for our church community, pursue next-stage opportunities for improved disabled access (e.g. chair lift on stairs, help with heavy sanctuary doors, etc.)

God, what is your yearning for Concord in caring for strangers? We sense that God yearns for us to be a visible expression of Christ's love, a beacon shining light into dark places. We think Our Redeemer yearns for Concord to reignite the excitement for outreach and social justice that is Concord's heritage, to strengthen the Concord community through worshipful work, and thus to experience the joy of selflessness and to appreciate the gift of our abundant lives. Some ideas for doing this could include: Better understand the needs of subpopulations in our community and design specific activities to address them, develop collaborative mission opportunities over individual mission that also create opportunities for dialog between recipients and volunteers, design mission opportunities for people of different ages, skills, physical abilities, and work schedules, invite non-members to participate in Concord mission projects, plug Concord into mission activities initiated by other organizations, design with other organizations an approach to create readiness for responding to unexpected needs of the community, focus on a few, well-planned mission opportunities each year (some short term, some long term) and design in components of spiritual growth, radical hospitality and inviting others to discipleship thus transforming 'philanthropy' into 'mission', offer both adult and youth mission trips, create and voice faith-based positions on social justice issues.

God, what is your yearning for Concord in inviting others to discipleship? We sense that Christ yearns for us to extend the fruits of the Spirit to others through an increasing confidence in reaching out to the unchurched so that they may discover their need for God's grace and the love of Christ by experiencing it from us. Some ideas for doing this could include: create and take advantage of meaningful contacts with targeted subpopulations of the community including those that are using or could use our building (preschool, AA, Fairfax Civic Association) through service projects, mission, concerts, lecture series, classes, worship, etc. to invite others,

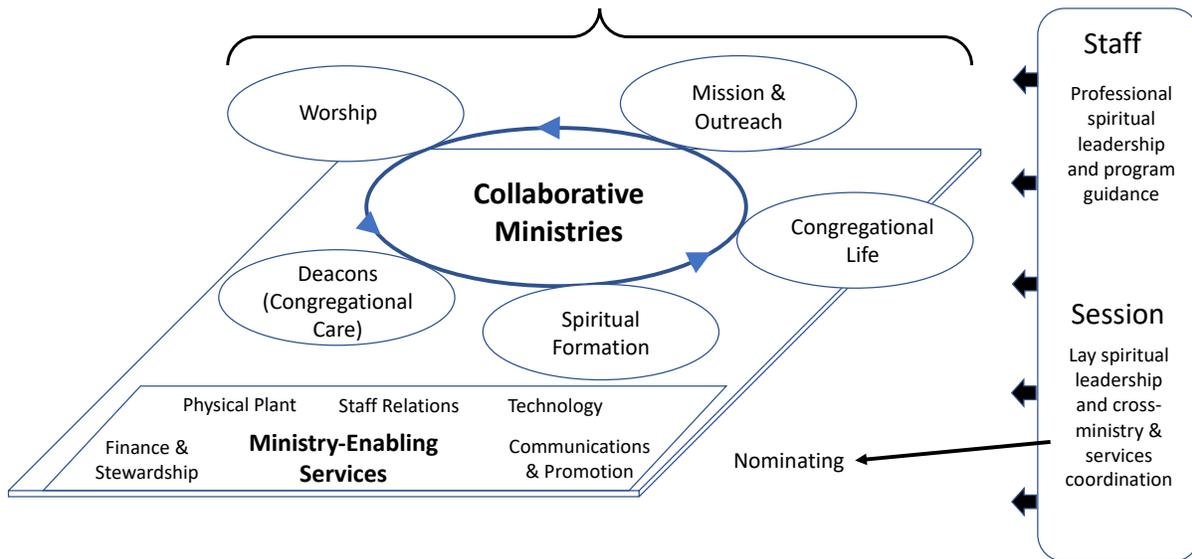
increase promotion of such opportunities through multiple modalities, engage people, listen to them, help them feel accepted, respected, connected, needed, involved, loved, equip members in inviting ('we have a service/activity coming up that I think might interest you') and increase comfort in sharing our witness, reassess the details of worship and greeting to assist strangers unfamiliar with our services feel included and supported starting their very first week, develop information packets for visitors and reevaluate our follow-up process for visitors.

Recommendations for Moving Forward with Collaborative Ministries

With our new understanding of Concord’s strengths, God’s yearnings for Concord, and a list of possible actions we could take to respond to those yearnings, we considered how we could organize our efforts to be more effective. From that exercise we make 4 recommendations which are described below and also illustrated in the following diagram:

Organizing for Concord Collaborative Ministries

Collaborative Ministry Characteristics: Life-Shaping Worship, Intentional Spiritual Formation, Fellowship, Care for Others, Risk-Taking Mission, Radical Hospitality, Inviting Others to Discipleship



1. Organize our efforts around “Concord Collaborative Ministries”. We recommend that we organize our efforts into five ministries: Worship, Spiritual Formation, Deacons (Congregational Care), Congregational Life, and Mission & Outreach. The concept is that each ministry will have lead responsibility for a subset of the overall Concord ministry, but planning, scheduling, and implementation of certain key initiatives will require inputs and cooperation across ministries, thus the notion of ‘Collaborative Ministries’. As one small example, consider the Advent festival. That would involve partnering of Worship (how do we intentionally coordinate this event with the seasonal worship message of Advent?), Spiritual Formation (what elements of this event create opportunities for spiritual and faith development for children and adults?), and Congregational Life (how do we use hospitality and fellowship with this event to have fun and build intergenerational relationships?). “Collaborative Ministries”, then, are a consequence of an initiative sponsored by one committee but supported by the others

in order to build in as many of the characteristics of a vibrant, fruitful church as practical into each initiative. Joint annual planning and calendaring will allow each ministry to understand its part in the key events throughout the year.

2. Recognize the support role of “ministry-enabling services”. We recognize that several of our current committees are not directly involved in planning and implementing Concord ministries, but instead provide essential services that enable all ministries. They include finance and stewardship, physical plant, staff relations, technology, and a new one, communications and promotion. We propose that we formally differentiate the role of these services from the collaborative ministries. We envision that the Collaborative Ministries and the services will work together to define and fulfill the needs of the ministries for facilities, staff, money, initiatives, communications, and technology. One committee, nominating, is neither a ministry nor an enabling service. Rather we view it as a direct subcommittee of Session with a specialized function as defined in the Presbyterian Book of Order.
3. Shift role of session toward spiritual leadership and cross-ministry coordination. We recommend further developing and strengthening the spiritual leadership role of elders. In addition, in this design, Session becomes the vital cog in collaborative ministries, helping make the connections between partnered ministries and enabling services on initiatives and taking responsibility for the effectiveness of Concord’s overall ministry. We envision a shift in Session meetings focus from reporting on various activities to finding ways to include many ministries in the work.
4. Continue the role of staff as professional spiritual leadership and program development. While we do not anticipate a fundamental change in the role of our staff members, it is clear that new ways of working will be required with the collaborative ministries, services, and session. We envision that as our ministries develop and strengthen with lay leadership and participation, staff will be able to devote more energy to ministry enhancements and innovations.

Of these four recommendations, it is clear that the move toward Concord Collaborative Ministries is the shift that is driving all other changes. The following table provides a more comprehensive view of collaborative ministries. It relates each ministry to the results of our discernment, lists the lead responsibilities for each ministry, and recommends some priorities each ministry might focus on to get started.

Discerning God’s Yearnings for Concord and Moving Forward with Collaborative Ministries

God’s Yearning for Concord		Concord Collaborative Ministry Structure	Responsibilities	Short-Term Priority Recommendations
<p>Inviting others to Discipleship:</p> <p>We sense that Christ yearns for us to extend the fruits of the Spirit to others through an increasing confidence in reaching out to everyone so that they may discover/rediscovers their need for God’s grace and the love of Christ by experiencing it from us.</p>	<p>Life-shaping Worship: We sense that through worship, God yearns for Concord members to abide in Jesus and to feel alive, motivated, and inspired to carry out God’s mission of redemption, reconciliation, and caring for others. We are urged to include all, designing worship opportunities for people that experience the Holy Spirit in different ways and that speak to the hearts and minds of people where they are right now.</p>	Worship	Seasonal Sunday worship planning, worship music, space set-up, flowers, paraments, liturgists, acolyte schedule and training, children’s sermons, Deacon’s-In-Charge, Communion Servers, home communion in conjunction with Deacons, usher & greeter training and schedule, Bulletins, pew maintenance, visitor welcome packets, visitor follow-up process, Technology in support of worship, exploration of other worship options. Work with Spiritual Formation to coordinate children and family participation in Worship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and lead inspirational worship with variation in elements of our otherwise traditional services with the purpose of motivating discipleship. Complete our plans to record services for posting on our website Add video projection capability in the sanctuary as another tool for worship and augment the sound system for hearing impaired worshippers. Explore opportunities for alternative worship times and styles for subsets of worshippers. Reassess Sunday morning practices to maximize radical Hospitality toward strangers, e.g. Prepare a ‘welcome easel’ for the narthex, consider a prayer board for the narthex, and train greeters to meet and assist visitors.
	<p>Spiritual Formation: We sense our Creator yearns to cultivate in us the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In order to do that, God yearns for us to re-establish Spiritual formation and growth as a priority for Concord. We are urged to lose some of our shyness or self-consciousness in sharing our spiritual lives with each other in order to provide mutual support for spiritual formation and growth of all.</p>	Spiritual Formation	Children and Adult CE, youth group, Children’s ministry, Bible studies (M&M), circles, book groups, men’s group, Christianity 101, Vacation Bible School, Safe Space Group, develop spiritual mentors, promote spiritual discipline and practices, encourage witnessing. Work with Mission & Outreach and Congregational Life to create spiritual formation in Mission and fellowship activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design opportunities to share faith stories in worship and smaller group activities Offer Adult VBS along with Children’s VBS Develop a group of members willing to mentor newcomers/seekers. Develop an education opportunity for a broad range of people that focuses on Christian basics, and consider alternative opportunities for spiritual formation (i.e. Safe Share group, Spiritual Meditation, etc.) Investigate collaborative opportunities with other churches. Continue to support our strong Children’s ministry.

Discerning God’s Yearnings for Concord and Moving Forward with Collaborative Ministries (Continued)

God’s Yearning for Concord		Concord Collaborative Ministry Structure	Responsibilities	Short-Term Priority Recommendations
<p>Inviting others to Discipleship:</p> <p>We sense that Christ yearns for us to extend the fruits of the Spirit to others through an increasing confidence in reaching out to everyone so that they may discover/rediscovers their need for God’s grace and the love of Christ by experiencing it from us.</p>	<p>Caring for each other: We sense that The Holy Spirit yearns for us to be present and to care for each other in body and spirit, to genuinely appreciate and value each individual in our church family by recognizing the divine among the human flaws and frailties in each person, seeing the goodness first, and being quick to forgive.</p>	Deacons (Congregational Care)	Member visitation, transportation, meals, flower delivery, memorial receptions, Deacon’s fund, prayer shawls, home communion – in conjunction with Worship. Work with Spiritual Formation and Worship to better support those with spiritual, emotional, or physical needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue reorientation of Board of Deacons toward Congregational care and associated services (meals, transportation, home communion) for active and inactive members. Reassess building access by the disabled and work with Physical Plant to design corrective action as appropriate.
		Congregational Life	Membership initiatives, plan ongoing, regular fellowship events, Concord Concert Series promotion and reception, Sunday Concord Connects, Trunk or Treat, Advent Fair, Chili cook-off/chocolate challenge, intergenerational events, new member shepherding/inclusion, hospitality events for preschool. Work with Mission & Outreach, Spiritual Formation, and Worship to promote fellowship components of those ministries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage fellowship opportunities for subsets of the congregation by adding one event to the calendar for each month. Increase promotion, hospitality, and inviting components of CCS events. Explore ways to promote Concord in the community, e.g. electric sign. Review fellowship opportunities across the wide range of church activities and assess the balance of opportunities for different ages, personal schedules, and physical abilities.
	<p>Caring for Strangers: We sense that God yearns for us to be a visible expression of Christ’s love, a beacon shining light into dark places. We think Our Redeemer yearns for Concord to reignite the excitement for outreach and social justice that is Concord’s heritage, to strengthen the Concord community through worshipful work, and thus to experience the joy of selflessness and to appreciate the gift of our abundant lives.</p>	Mission & Outreach	Promote and oversee ongoing mission: EDR, Seaman’s center, fleece for keeps, Friendship House, Hanover food closet, clothing bank, scholarship program, blessing bags etc. Develop new mission opportunities: Discern needs of local community, discover partners, new service projects, mission trips, platforms for social, environmental issues. Propose annual list of designated benevolences and session benevolence for approval by Session. Work with Congregational Life and Spiritual Formation to expand the fellowship and spiritual development opportunities associated with Mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission an effort to study the needs of the surrounding community (neighborhood, Preschool, AA) with the aim of identifying possible mission opportunities and partners. Design elements of Inviting others to discipleship. Reassess each of our current missions and redesign as collaborative ministries. Explore the opportunities for additional or alternative ministries. Plan 1-3 events/year (seminars, speakers, discernment efforts) aimed at understanding/advancing our Christian response on specific issues of social and environmental justice.

Processes for Collaborative Ministries:

The Mission Initiative stopped short of creating new processes or procedures for planning and implementing Collaborative Ministries. However, there are clearly operational implications of this organizational structure and approach to Concord's ministry that will need to be explored further as we move forward. A few thoughts that surfaced in our discussion included:

- Joint annual planning retreat to define and align on Concord's key initiatives for the following year and alignment on what committee supports or enabling services are needed.
- It may make sense for certain ministries to meet on the same night to have some joint time together.
- A well-planned ministry with quarterly objectives may reduce the need for monthly meetings.
- Empower the Ministries by reducing the approval function of Session.
- We will need a practical process for those providing enabling services to hear and respond to the needs of the Ministries.
- We need a better procedure for bringing new officers up to speed and to grow into leadership roles.
- We may need to produce a procedures manual for a few, critical processes.
- A number of necessary tasks are handled by staff members and there is no intent to complicate that by having a committee responsible for those. For example, the Staff designs the weekly worship services, Margaret prepares the bulletin with inputs from the staff. We will need to work through other examples like this as we think through the work of committees.