

**Bald Eagle Valley Community
United Methodist Church**
Bellefonte, PA; March 28-30, 2014

GROWING EFFECTIVE CHURCHES

Consultation Report

Introduction

The Consultation Team would like to thank the Pastor, staff, leadership and congregation of Bald Eagle Valley Community United Methodist Church for the opportunity to bring a Matthew 28 consultation into the church family. Their openness and cooperation were indeed a blessing as we shared together in a very positive experience. We pray the Matthew 28 consultation will serve as a catalyst for a new spiritual journey as the Bald Eagle Valley Community Church seeks to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Strengths

1. Pastor

The pastor is regarded well personally. The pastor has continued his learning and personal growth in order to enhance and hone his skills for fruitful church leadership. The team believes that the pastor has many gifts that will be helpful in leading the church in healthy disciple-making. When the pastor and core leadership team combine gifts for leadership they greatly increase their impact.

2. Various Outreach Ministries

The local outreach ministries of Bald Eagle Valley Community UMC encounter those outside the congregation. These ministries show a deep love of Jesus and the people who live nearby and are not yet part of the congregation. These mission outreach ministries include the community dinners, food distribution around Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Christmas day meal, Building Bridges, and the upcoming offer of space for a garden to assist in teaching life skills.

3. Resources

The site and facilities are a resource and a strength. The sanctuary is good sized. There is ample parking. The church is located in a prominent location which is poised for ministry. Another resource is the people who are warm and generous.

4. Congregational Care of One Another

Members value the congregational atmosphere and a willingness to help and support each other in difficult times. The congregation has been faithful to Sunday morning worship and are committed to intentional care of each other. There are several individuals in the congregation who have a passion for the children and youth.

Concerns

1. Mission and Vision Alignment

While the vision of Bald Eagle Valley Community UMC is posted in throughout the church and the mission of the Church is listed weekly in the Church bulletin, much the leadership is not able to articulate Bald Eagle Valley Community's mission. Currently, decisions are not being made based upon

the mission of making disciples. There is no clear vision of how this congregation will implement an outward focused mission.

2. Discipleship

There is no clear path of discipleship or leadership development. There is no intentional vehicle for spiritual formation. It is a concern that there are very few opportunities for the spiritual formation of new disciples. It is also a concern that intentional leadership development happen on a regular basis. The current leadership feels that the leadership development is disorganized. A fuller understanding of service as one of the marks of discipleship will emerge through intentional faith formation.

3. Structure

Currently, there is more structure than necessary to sustain appropriate ministry for Bald Eagle Valley Community. The structure lacks a plan for a path of discipleship for children and adults. Additionally, there is a lack of personnel to focus on some of the concern areas of the church, e.g. visibility of the church, accessibility of the building, and community presence.

4. Stewardship

There is not currently a culture of stewardship in the church. This Church's repayment of its debt has caused the Church to lose focus on its first mission – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world – and also to neglect the Church's connectional giving in full. Bald Eagle Valley Community Church does not have an annual stewardship program in place to address the spiritual aspect of stewardship within the daily lives of those in the congregation.

Prescriptions

1. Mission and Vision Alignment:

With the acceptance of this report, the congregation will claim this as its mission: *Bald Eagle Valley Community UMC mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.* All decisions by all leaders and staff will then be evaluated by how those decisions help implement that mission. Thus the focus of the congregation will be as much on those who are not yet part of the church as it is on those who are already here.

Acknowledging that God "is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20), the pastor will form a prayer team to pray with him weekly for the mission and vision of the congregation, for the community and for the consistent making of new disciples. This team will be in place by **May 15, 2014** (#5).

The congregation will make a commitment to 365 days of prayer in which each day is covered in prayer by one church member/ attendee. This will be implemented by **May 15, 2014** (#6).

The pastor will lead the leadership team and staff in a study focused on evangelism based on the book Catch by Hamilton and Nixon. Following the study the pastor and all the leadership team and staff members will share a testimony on the new relationships they have built. This can be done within the context of worship, meetings, other studies and small groups. This study will be completed by **November 15, 2014** (#17) so that intentional efforts can be made to invite non- and nominally church members to Church during the Christmas season.

The Congregational Coach will lead the congregation in a day of discernment of God's vision for Bald Eagle Valley Community UMC. This event will take place by **July 15, 2014** (#9). This day will initiate a process toward developing a clear, compelling vision, which will be presented to the congregation by **August 1, 2014** (#10) with implementation by **September 1, 2014** (#13). With the claiming of the mission and the naming of the vision, Bald Eagle Valley Community UMC will focus on the present and the future to where God is calling the church and will let the past be in the past.

The pastor, leadership team and staff will conduct a mission/ministry audit. The purpose of the audit is to determine how every ministry of the congregation helps to make new disciples. Those that do not must then either be changed, in order to meet the mission, or be dropped from the life of the congregation. This audit will be completed by **September 1, 2014** (#14).

The pastor and staff will lead the congregation to conduct four big events, two of which will occur on Sunday morning during the worship service that are designed more for those who do not attend the congregation yet, than for those who attend regularly. These four events will occur by **May 1, 2015** (#20).

The pastor will develop a worship team that will evaluate the current worship service and design worship so that it is sensitive to the needs of non- and nominally churching persons and inspires the congregation to invite non- and nominally churching persons. This team will give particular attention to the worship design, styles of worship, the bulletin, the potential need for an additional worship service, and the presentation of the worship experience. This team will be assembled and begin to work by **May 15, 2014** (#7) and will make a preliminary report to the leadership team by **August 1, 2014** (#11).

2. Discipleship

The pastor and leadership team will work together to develop a clear path for discipleship. This will include opportunities for spiritual formation and an establishment of a small group ministry. The pastor will lead the leadership team and staff in a study of Five Practices of Fruitful Living to be completed by **September 1, 2014** (#15). This will be followed by a study of Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations during the **fall of 2014** (#16). (Both books written by Bishop Robert Schnase) The outcome of these two studies will be to establish a fresh understanding of radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service and extravagant generosity and incorporate these into the life of the church by **December 1, 2014** (#18).

The pastor and Discipleship staff member will start at least five new small groups that meet both in the church and outside of the church in homes or public places. These new small groups will be in place and fully implemented by **May 1, 2015** (#21).

The pastor will take on as a key responsibility the development of leaders. While delegating some pastoral responsibilities to appropriate staff persons, he will focus on leadership development with his new leadership team, his staff and others in the congregation. This ministry will begin **immediately** upon the acceptance of this report, and as the pastor begins to assemble his staff (#4)

In order to help the members of the congregation to better know how God might be calling them to serve in the life and ministry of the Church the Pastor will implement a sermon series on Spiritual Gifts including a Spiritual Gift Inventory. This will be done by **December 1, 2014** (#19).

3. Structure

The church will adopt a simplified and streamlined structure that provides oversight of ministries and resources while freeing most leaders and people to do ministry. Because of limitations of time, energy, and personnel, it will be essential to carefully prioritize ministries choosing to simplify, eliminate, and streamline while developing several visible, clear ministry areas.

Accountable Leadership Structure:

If this report is accepted by the congregation, it is understood that the congregation will adopt the new structure permitted by the Conference. This means that administrative committees will disappear, and that there will be one council of 10-12 people who will care for the work of the Trustees, SPRC, Finance Committee, Committee on Lay leadership, and the current Administrative Board (council members will be interviewed, nominated in conjunction with the lay leadership team, the pastor and the DS) with specific and yet limited responsibilities. The leadership team will meet monthly in the first year and 6-8 times a year in subsequent years. The leadership team will hold the pastor accountable for leadership and growth goals. Staff positions will include the following responsibilities immediately and be further developed by the leadership team, pastor, and congregational coach.

The pastor will create a staff (unpaid servant leaders) in the areas of Discipleship (to include both children's and adult discipleship), Hospitality, Outreach, and Caring in order to manage ministry. The new structure, including staff, will be in place by **July 1, 2014** (#8). The pastor and staff (paid and unpaid) will schedule regular meetings, meeting no less than monthly. This will begin as soon as the staff members are in place by **July 1, 2014**.

Director of Discipleship – lead ministries to help adults and children grow in their discipleship. The director likely will lead discipleship planning for either adults or children and recruit another leader to be the primary leader in the other area. A basic plan for adult discipleship will be implemented by **August 1, 2014** (#12). This plan will include the development of a plan to increase involvement in small groups and include spiritual formation for people who are new to faith and Bald Eagle Valley Community Church.

Director of Hospitality – lead ministries to create hospitable welcoming for all who come to worship. The focus needs to be both inside and outside of the church building as well as curb appeal and directional signage (including both indoor and outdoor signage). This person will also give oversight to the publicity of the church through the street sign, Facebook, and the church web-site.

Director of Outreach- lead ministries to create connections with the congregation and the community *and* the community and the congregation. A primary focus of this staff person will be bridge events.

Director of Caring – will train persons to do lay visitation, support the prayer shawl ministry, follow up with visitors and regular attendees who have been absent for a few weeks.

4. Stewardship

The pastor and leadership team will lead a month long emphasis on Biblical Stewardship including opportunities for testimonies, studies, and sermons. Some possible resources are New Consecration Sunday, Enough by Hamilton, Climb Higher and Bounty by McKenzie. This will be completed by **May 1, 2015** (#22). Following this month long emphasis the pastor and leadership team will offer regular opportunities for the congregation to engage in study and prayer around the spiritual discipline of stewardship. As a result of this intentional focus, Bald Eagle Valley Community Church will continue to pay down the debt and increase giving to Connectional giving (Shares of Ministry and Insurances) until these are being paid in full on a regular basis.

The Pastor and council will provide opportunities for the congregation to discuss and pray about this report for the next several weeks. Listening sessions for information and conversation will be on **Sunday April 6 at 2:00 pm** (#1) and on **Monday April 14 at 7:00 pm** (#2). The congregation will then be given the opportunity to either accept or reject this report at a special church conference on **Wednesday, April 30 at 7:00 pm** (#3). If accepted, the Conference makes a commitment to provide a congregational coach to walk alongside the congregation for one year to help implement this report.

Conclusion

We came to this consultation with prayer. With prayer we leave knowing that this congregation has great potential to truly fulfill its mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We have found people committed to serving Jesus and their neighbors. We sincerely believe that Bald Eagle Valley Community Church is gifted by God for mission and ministry in the Bald Eagle Valley area and beyond. We look forward to their journey as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ in new and exciting ways.

Respectfully submitted:

The Rev. Jeff Welsch, Consultant

The Rev. Dr. Kathleen Kind, Coach

The Rev. Lori Steffensen, District Superintendent