

Results from the Mission Study Team Sunday, September 25th

This past Sunday, our Congregational Mission Study Team held a two-part visioning exercise during worship. In the first part, we were introduced to a paraphrased version of the Six Great Ends of the Church (see [Book of Order F-1.0304](#)). Those present were instructed to choose the three Ends that they thought were the most important for us as a church going forward. Which were the three that we felt God wanted us to put most of our energy and effort into? After the votes were tallied, the results were posted. They are:

- Providing for the Physical and Spiritual Needs of Individuals - 62
- Maintaining Regular Worship - 53
- Proclaiming the Good News of Salvation - 40
- Being the Visible Kingdom of Heaven on Earth - 29
- Advocating for Social Justice for the Oppressed - 24
- Safeguarding Spiritual and Moral Standards - 19

Please note that none of these Ends can ever stand alone. They are all intertwined, each depending on all the others. When we worship regularly, we are safeguarding spiritual and moral standards. Proclaiming the good news of salvation moves us towards providing for the physical and spiritual needs of individuals. Being the visible kingdom of heaven on earth requires advocating for social justice and proclaiming the good news of salvation.

The individual rankings tell us what our priorities are, but none of them can be avoided altogether. While we may concentrate on a few, each of them needs our attention.

In the second part, we were given a list of 10 items that we either talk about, spend energy on or invest money in. In this case, we were asked to choose the five items that we think are most important for us as a congregation moving forward. Which are the five items that we feel God wants us to put the most time and energy into?

After the votes were tallied, the results were posted. They are:

- Caring for our Members and Friends - 64
- Local Missions - 62
- Children & Youth Faith Formation - 58
- Recruit New Members - 57
- Adult Faith Formation - 47
- Fellowship Activities - 38
- Building Maintenance - 34
- Music Ministry - 28
- Mission Trip - 10
- Landscaping - 0

Again, each of these matters, but they are all interconnected. A church has to put resources into landscaping. We say we want our church to attract new members, but visitors are never going to enter a church that looks like a vacant lot. We have to have attractive landscaping. Also, a well-maintained church lifts everyone's spirits but a church with maintenance issues looks like no one cares about it. New members get to know their congregation at fellowship activities. Music (and it doesn't matter what kind so much as doing it well) creates a sense of unity and enhances esprit de corps. We want our children and youth to grow in faith, but the reality is that parents (and grandparents) spend more time with their children than we do. If we want children to grow in faith, we must help their adults grow in faith, also.

Results from the Mission Study Team (continued)

The individual rankings reveal our priorities are, but none of them can be avoided altogether. We may concentrate on a few, but each item needs our attention.

These lists are not blueprints for our future. Rather, they are broad guides to what we as a congregation value and believe God wants us to invest in. They are our understanding of the general direction in which we believe God wants us to go.

Also, these lists can help our future Pastor Nominating Committee discern who will be the best pastor for our church. Sharing these lists with a prospective pastor is a good way of learning what the pastor values and helping the pastor discern if we are a good fit for them. It would be tragic to call someone who is friendly, outgoing and a spellbinding preacher only to learn that their values are the opposite of ours.

We will have one more such exercise, during worship, on October 9. Then, we will be given a list of 20 attributes or skills we think would be valuable in our next installed pastor. This time, we will be asked to choose our top 10. Again, the results will be shared during the service, and we will have a chance to discuss them.

Pastor Ken