



**CHURCH-WIDE MINISTRY
ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR**

**St. Paul UMC
Louisville, KY**

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BACKGROUND

St. Paul United Methodist Church is located in Louisville, Kentucky. The church sits prominently at the intersection of Bardstown Road and Douglass Avenue, in the heart of the Highlands area. Church members describe their church family as “community-minded,” “welcoming,” and as their “home away from home.” While many consider the church a haven, some church members describe the church differently using words such as “broken,” “drifting,” and “hurting.”

St. Paul has remained a steady and strong presence given many recent challenges in our culture. In the past five months, the country has been struggling through a global pandemic dealing with closings of businesses, schools, major events, and churches for an extended period of time. Churches across the country quickly shifted their in-person worship services to streaming virtually live worship (or pre-recorded). St. Paul certainly stepped up to the challenge and church members expressed their gratitude.



More so, because of the global pandemic, large gatherings have been postponed across the country and this included the delay of the United Methodist General Conference which was to be held in May. This is a critical time for the UMC denomination as it faces some difficult decisions regarding same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ pastors. The Methodist church issues have been in the national news, with the announcement of a high-profile proposal for the church to eventually separate into two denominations. Within St. Paul, this controversy is playing out among the members of the church. Congregants are anxious about the future and fear a schism in their own church.

In addition, there has been increased racial tensions across the country forcing citizens to take a hard look at the systems and attitudes that have enabled racism to thrive despite civil rights legislation. The city of Louisville has seen protests, both peaceful and violent, as civic leadership works to address these long-standing issues.

In its history, St. Paul has been a church that has stood right in the middle of social justice issues. The statement on the church’s website describes their core values:

As a congregation, we desire to engage our minds along the journey of faith. We seek to celebrate faith as a gift of God, a gift that transforms our hearts to share God’s heart. Ultimately, we commit our hearts and minds in steadfast and faithful hands-on service. At St. Paul, you will find a safe and open congregation where we experience the love of God and grow as followers of Jesus Christ. Know there is always a place for you here.

Church members live out their hands-on service through the many outreach ministries that serve the community. At the beginning of 2020, a new Christian Action Group was formed to address the social justice issues the church is confronted with. The Beyond the Walls Team plans service projects and volunteer opportunities for church members to serve locally, globally, and at St. Paul. Some of these ministries include the Touch Twice Health Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, meals for those in need and showers for the homeless through The Resource Center, and dedicating each month of the year to a particular agency like Portland Promise and Kentucky Refugee Ministries. The church also hosts Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA).

St. Paul also strives to offer the highest quality programs for children, youth, and adults through the following ministries:

Children's ministry (pre-COVID 19): Programs include Sunday school classes, Kids in Christ's Service (KICS), Kids Club on Wednesdays, tweens, special events, and vacation bible school. There are about 93 children on the rolls of the church and about 50 children are active in a given week.

Youth ministry (pre-COVID 19): Programs include Sunday school classes, Youth Group on Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings, special events, Confirmation, and mission trip. There are about 57 youth on the rolls of the church and about 45 youth are active in a given week.

Music ministry for children and youth (pre-COVID 19): Programs include Musical Milestones choir (3 years old - Kindergarten), Joyful Song choir (1st - 3rd grades), Wesleyan choir (4th-6th grades), youth choir (7th -12th grades), St. Paul Orchestra, hand bells, and music camp.

Music Ministry for adults (pre-COVID 19): Programs include Chancel choir, hand bells, St. Paul Orchestra, Koinonia Worship Team, concerts, and special events.

Spiritual Formation Offerings for adults (pre-COVID 19): Programs include small groups, reading groups, guided meditation, Wednesday evening classes (current: Exploring the Historical Roots of Racism), prayer bead group, United Methodist Women, bible studies, dinner groups, Kaleidoscope (women's fellowship), Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), Sunday School classes, St. Paul Adult Ministry for Seniors (SPAM), and exercise and yoga classes.

The event that St. Paul is most known for in Louisville is the Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival, a Christmas tradition held for several days following Christmas. This event has been a tradition for 40 years and it brings more than 2,000 people to the church annually to share in a unique depiction of the gift of Christ to the world. Approximately 75 church members have volunteered on stage and behind the scenes over the years, as the festival has grown.

The membership of St. Paul is around 2,114 and on an average week, prior to COVID 19, 358 people attended one of the church's worship services. Prior to the pandemic, worship services were offered at 8:30 AM (traditional), 9 AM (contemporary), and 11 AM (traditional) on Sunday mornings. When Kentucky's governor mandated that churches not worship in person in mid-March, the leadership of St. Paul rallied and began to offer an online worship service. That service takes place at 10 AM, is a combination of both traditional and contemporary elements, and is streamed live through Facebook. About 140 homes watch the service online each week.

The Senior Pastor, Darren Brandon, has led the congregation since 2017. Other staff include a new associate pastor, a director of music ministries, a director of Koinonia worship, a director of youth ministry, a director of communications and outreach, a director of spiritual formation, as well as administrative and custodial staff. There is one staff position currently not filled that the church is searching for - the director of children's ministry. The lay leadership comprises several key committees such as the administrative board, the finance committee, and the personnel team. Other committees or teams in the church include Beyond the Walls, Christian Action Group, and the Health and Wellness Committee, just to name a few.



In the past year, St. Paul has seen the departure of four, beloved, staff members who held key positions in the church. This stirred up quite a bit of controversy among church members who were not privy to the circumstances surrounding each person's departure. That conflict is prevalent still and divides the church into two camps. Because of this the personnel team has addressed the lack of policies by developing a new employee handbook and staff job descriptions.

The church has a 2020 budget of \$1.2 million which is an increase over the previous annual budget. The following chart depicts ten years of data in terms of budget, membership, and worship attendance. While membership has not varied greatly, the average worship attendance has dropped by 52% since 2009. There are extenuating circumstances affecting this decline, one of them being when St. Paul planted a new congregation on the eastern side of the city. Church members left St. Paul to start the new church plant. The other factor affecting attendance is the general decline of the United Methodist denomination within the Kentucky Annual Conference. Of the 775 churches in the conference, 372 (48%) of them saw a decline in worship in 2018 and 201 (26%) saw no change in worship attendance. The annual budget has not seen a dramatic difference in ten years but it has dropped 12%.

Historical Data	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Annual Budget	1,310,205	1,241,649	1,211,543	1,185,942	1,158,842	1,150,988	1,195,670	1,264,362	1,234,797	1,239,870	1,158,767
Avg. Attendance	750	694	670	667	618	522	511	492	492	428	358
Membership	2119	2149	2152	2142	2081	2079	2093	2090	2097	2114	

Note: These numbers come from the annual reports submitted to the Kentucky Annual Conference.

The church boasts a large facility that includes the Family Life Center. The physical plant is well-maintained and the grounds are beautifully landscaped. There are plenty of classrooms, many meeting rooms, offices for the staff, the sanctuary, and large group gathering spaces. The traditional worship services take place in the sanctuary while the contemporary service, named Koinonia, takes place in the Family Life Center. The room used for Koinonia is well designed and equipped for a contemporary service. While parking might typically be a challenge in an urban setting, the church has several parking lots off the alley that runs behind the church buildings in addition to street parking.

Given the continued conflict within the church and as St. Paul faces the denominational decisions in the next year, Ministry Architects was hired to assist St. Paul with creating a healthier church culture, leading a team through the renovation work, and helping to improve staff relations. This process includes an initial assessment of the church's ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. Ministry Architects met with 67 individuals in 12 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. In addition, 46 surveys were filled out by church members. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed implementation timeline for the future.

MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Churches that “pay these rents” with their ministry tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those churches that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

It has been Ministry Architects’ experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff, and the congregation at large.

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

The consensus is that this rent is not being paid. Prior to COVID 19, worship attendance had dropped 17% from 2018 to 2019.

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

This rent appears to be paid. Church members spoke highly of the numerous outreach opportunities as well as Sunday school classes for all ages and Bible studies.

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

The current tensions in the church suggest that this rent is not being paid on time. The departure of four staff members last fall has caused a division in the church leading many to worry.

As the leadership of the church develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.”

CHURCH NORMS

There are seven rules of thumb – “church norms” – that Ministry Architects has researched from consultant work across the country which will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) Budget —The average church budget settles around \$1400 per attender. With a budget of approximately \$1.2 million (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits), St. Paul has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly total worship attendance level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 857 attenders. With 358 currently attending every week, the ministry is experiencing the generosity of its congregation above most other churches of this size.

2) Staffing—Ministry Architects has found that most churches have the equivalent of 1 full-time staff member (40 hours per week) for every 75 people in average total worship attendance. Considering the average worship attendance of 358 and all the positions giving time to the church’s ministry, including:

Full-time

Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Director of Music Ministries and Organist
Director of Koinonia Worship
Assistant Director of Music Ministries
Director of Youth Ministry
Director of Communications & Outreach
Administrative Coordinator
Administrative Assistant
Director of Spiritual Formation

Part-time

Ministry Assistant
Custodians (2)
Project Coordinator

St. Paul has the equivalent of 1 full-time staff for every 36 attenders. According to this rule of thumb, St. Paul has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 750 worship attenders on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

3) Payroll Percentage—In a typical church, the percentage of the budget that goes to support the staff of the church (including salaries, continuing education, and benefits) tends to fall in the range of 45-55%. St. Paul Church's budget of \$1,200,000 has \$726,000 dedicated to the staff of the church, about 60%. The staffing to budget percentage is slightly above what churches usually spend on staffing.

4) Facilities—A church's ministry is also impacted by the physical layout of its campus and the constraints it may contain. Typically, parking and seating become constraints for churches who are looking to see growth. Consider the following norms:

- **Parking Spaces:** Most churches need **three parking spaces for every five attenders**. With 170 spaces available, the church has a capacity of 283 worship attenders in a single service.
- **Seating Capacity:** Most churches will simply stop growing once the worship space is 80% filled on a regular basis. St. Paul has a capacity of 600 in the main sanctuary and 300 seats for the Koinonia worship service in the Family Life Center. With 900 total seats available, the church has an attendance capacity of 480 in the main sanctuary and 240 in the Family Life Center in a single service.

Parking suggests that there are plenty of spaces for worship attenders at each of the services. Seating suggests that St. Paul can expect to reach its capacity in the current three-service structure at 1200 people in weekend worship.

5) Visitors Retention—For the average church, about 10-30% of first-time visitors will turn into regular attenders. Therefore, in order to grow by, say 10-30 people in a single year, the church will need to see about 100 first time guests in that year (including guests at regular services and special services like Easter Sunday). This norm can be used to project target growth numbers for St. Paul.

6) Volunteers—In an average church, 45% of the amount of weekend worship attenders (adults and students, but not children) are serving regularly in a volunteer role. With an estimated 200 regular volunteers in the church and an average worship attendance of 358, St. Paul estimates that 55% of its weekend worship attenders are serving regularly.

NOTE: Normally this number is correlated to the amount spent on staffing; the more staff a church has, the lower the volunteer percentage becomes as more of the work is accomplished by paid workers.

7) Involvement in Groups— While data for what's *normal* for churches and group involvement varies, there are some targets worth noting. It's been observed that healthy churches have at least 40-50% of their adult attendance in some form of small group. Great churches have upwards of 80% of their adults in groups. These groups can include Sunday school classes, small groups, Bible studies, youth groups, men's or women's groups of fewer than 25 people. St. Paul currently has 197 (55%) church members involved in a group within the church.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a pastor or staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has 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 group that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The General Contractor:** A person or team 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, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as St. Paul pursues a more sustainable model of ministry. The administrative board of St. Paul is learning to live more fully into the role of the architect alongside the staff. As the church moves forward, paid staff will need the time (or training) to do their important work as the "general contractor" of a complex ministry understanding they are not to serve in all three roles.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current ministry

Music Ministry

One of the most frequently named assets of the church is the music ministry. Church members greatly appreciate the quality of music in worship, particularly in the traditional worship services. The music ministry staff is passionate about giving their best and their commitment is felt at every level. One church member said, "The music is spectacular. The service is well crafted and the music is coordinated with the scripture, prayers, and liturgy. The service really sparkles." Another participant said, "We have the top-notch music program more than any church I've ever known." One person even shared, "Music is what draws a lot of people to St. Paul; it drew me here."

Several listening group participants also spoke highly of the music education that children and youth receive when participating in the choirs. One parent shared, "Our daughter got a real music education here. It wasn't just about going to choir." Another parent said, "Children and young people have been taught as much or more about music, reading music, and the proper way of using your voice than any child in any public school program in the city." The children's music staff has kept choirs going during the pandemic as well as hosting a music camp that is both virtual and in-person.

Youth Ministry

The other program that was mentioned across listening groups is the youth ministry. Church members speak highly of both the director of youth ministry and the youth themselves. One youth shared, "Our new youth minister has helped make the church feel more like the home it once was to me. I feel there are people I can talk to if I have an issue and I'm close to other youth as well as the adults that help with the youth." Another youth said, "The new youth minister has been really good for us and spent a lot of time with us. I can talk to her about my problems." One of the adult volunteers said, "The last retreat was over the top, incredible. It was the first time I got slapped with God moment after God moment all weekend. And she put it together before she was hired." A parent shared, "The youth have been amazing. My daughter has loved being a part of the church."

The youth ministry has been a strong program even with the transition of different youth directors. Regardless of there being a revolving door of youth directors, it is one of the strongest programs at St. Paul. Reasons for the success are attributed to the team of adult volunteers and the parents who have been there throughout the staff changes. One volunteer said, "We had a plan in place to continue forward with or without a youth minister." Because of this the youth ministry has seen growth in numbers, relationships, and spiritual depth.

Beacon of Hope

St. Paul is known in the Louisville area as a church that serves the community and has a long tradition of serving those right in their neighborhood. In every listening group, serving the community was named as a priority of the church. St. Paul members are proud that the church is responsive to those in need. An example of this ministry is the monthly outreach focus for a different ministry/population/local agency. Other ministries named were Habitat for Humanity, Touched Twice Health Clinic, and offering meals and showers to the homeless. Even during the pandemic when the church facilities have been closed, congregants have helped with collections and delivering items to other local agencies. One person said, "We are addressing social issues that are happening around us, that's so important." When talking about the



homeless ministries, another person shared, "People have a good heart at St. Paul; that's one of the things that stands out to me." St. Paul is truly a beacon of hope to many in the city.

Christian Action Group

The creation of this group is quite timely and of importance to many church members. The church is dealing with some difficult things, not just internally but externally as well - conflict, decision of the Methodist denomination, racism, and the implications of the long-term pandemic. This group is helping to assist the congregation begin to grapple with these issues. One member of the team said, "I joined the Christian Action Group and am very inclined to that in a church. We have some serious issues in the world and in our city to deal with. We are situated well in the Highlands to be a beacon of these issues." This group is leading St. Paul through the necessary work of facing such challenging issues and are not shying away from the work.

Strong Staff

The pandemic forced the church to make changes to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation. While there were probably a few bumps at the beginning, listening groups agree that the staff has done an excellent job of creating online worship. A church member said, "I've been pleasantly surprised at how we are doing online worship from the very first week. There is an incredible difference - improvement each time. The staff works hard." Congregants are grateful for the quick response on the part of the staff to implement new ways of doing ministry.

The staff has shown unity, resilience, and creativity. Given that there are new people on staff, the team cohesion is strong and the staff are working better together than ever. They have served together under immense stress and worked as a team. Another church member said, "We have a strong staff team right now. I have been so impressed with how everyone has stepped up and pivoted and kept up with their area of ministry." In turn, the staff shared their gratitude for the flexibility of the congregation during this pandemic.

Facilities

St. Paul has wonderful facilities - offices, worship space, classrooms, and the Family Life Center. There is plenty of parking in the lots designated as belonging to St. Paul as well as parking on the streets and parking in lots of nearby businesses. Everything is clean and well maintained including the lush grounds. One church member said, "We have amazing facilities and should be able to reach more people." Members of the church are proud of how much the facilities are used for the community. One person said, "Our building is always in use by so many outside groups." Another person said, "I'm really impressed that the church is open every day and there is so much going on." Finally, another participant said, "When you go by the church, there are always cars there." St. Paul is generously sharing their facilities with the community and remains a very active congregation.

Central Location

St. Paul is in a prime location in Louisville. For many church members, the church is within walking distance of their home. Bardstown Road is a major thoroughfare and upwards of 20,000 cars drive by the church daily. One church member said, “We are on a corner where people who need help come through.” The church is very visible to the community and is easily accessible. A listening group participant also shared, “It’s amazing to feel connected to a place that I drive by every day.” A staff member said, “People know where St. Paul is.” Two other ways that St. Paul makes itself known is lighting up the stained glass window that faces Bardstown Road so that all see Jesus and the refurbishing and installation of bells so that the bells ring regularly now. It is clear that the church takes their geography seriously staying visible to the community.



We are Family

St. Paul was described by many in listening sessions as “family” or “home.” A newer member of the church said, “We visited and what impressed us most when we walked into the sanctuary was the friendly greeting and the worship. We got in the car to leave and said we have found our church home.” For some at St. Paul, they have been members for generations. One participant said, “This is my church, my home; it’s where we were married and our babies were baptized.” Another person said, “Friends who I have gotten to know over the years are like extended family.” Relationships matter most and creating a place that feels like family and home is in the DNA of St. Paul. An adult member shared, “I’ve been here all my life. It feels like family,” while another person said, “It’s the best church I’ve been to.”

Desire to Come Together

Participants seemed to really appreciate the church investing in a process like this. One person wrote, “I think St. Paul wants to move forth in a positive manner or you wouldn’t be involved. I find that a good sign to base hope on.” Given the recent conflict, many in the church have been hurt and some have left the church. Those involved in this process consistently spoke of hope and for moving forward. Others shared their care and concern for those who are hurting. One church member said, “Part of moving forward is letting people know that we’ve heard them,” while another shared, “I’m hoping we can listen to concerns and figure out a path forward.” Another noted, “I will be here no matter what.” Church members agree that it is time to pause, heal, and find a way forward together. One person summed it up well by saying, “My genuine hope is to find a way to walk forward; that’s a strength. It’s not easy to come together and move forward.”

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to moving the current ministry strategically forward

Communication

Communication in a church is like an onion. There are multiple layers of communication that each have to be functioning harmoniously in order for people to feel like they're in the know. As you peel back the external layers and find there are issues with communication at the core, there is nothing to hold the rest of the layers in place. Each of the layers represents something different: communication to and among staff members, communication from staff members to the congregation, communication within leadership teams such as the administrative board, personnel team, children's ministry search team, and Christian action team, to name a few. St. Paul is struggling in all areas of communication. Dissatisfaction, anger, and despair were all shared during listening groups as participants voiced their concerns. Over all of the listening groups, it became clear that most issues with staff departures, conflict, and hurt boiled down to a deficiency in communication. One listening group member said, "There is trouble with communication in several different places in the church. There are some times when someone will say 'Did you hear that?' and I didn't." Other people mentioned the nuance between direct communication and the feeling of innuendo that they experience. A person said, "When I spoke about the need for communication, I'm referring to the need for openness as opposed to hushed words about serious concerns in the church." In this day and age, communication is already a challenge when trying to capture people's attention. This is an area where St. Paul can improve.

Church Culture

St. Paul is currently suffering from a lack of trust and a vacuum of staff and lay leadership willing to own the division and create a unified path forward - all in the midst of a global pandemic. Over the course of listening groups, church members and staff listed the church's inability to deal with conflict as a challenge. One person said, "COVID has allowed us to just not deal with this conflict because we don't have to but it's hurting us more." Staff departures over the last year were not communicated well, creating a situation wherein gossip and blame were cast from both sides of the sanctuary and between pews. This unhealthy climate infected all aspects of church life, including worship. One participant mentioned a congregant refusing to stand during worship because they did not want to do what the pastor told them. Clearly, this unhealthy culture has impacted people on a very visceral level. It was shared that several families have left the church in addition to the staff departures. A few of the participants in the listening groups even named this issue. One person stated, "I'm really concerned that a whole lot of people felt like this wasn't a process they could participate in." In order for the church to move forward as a unified body, the climate and culture of St. Paul UMC will need to be at the forefront of everything it does from planning weekly worship, in ministry team meetings, as part of any staff development plans, and larger church programming. The church should start everything thinking about how to foster a healthy culture as part of what it is doing.

Unresolved Hurt (congregants and staff)

Connected to the culture is the reality that people across the board are experiencing quite a bit of unresolved hurt. Both staff and congregation members have been impacted by the events of the past year, their perception of the reaction and handling of events, and the loss of decades-long friendships over the idea that people had to choose sides. Across all listening groups, there was a desire to find healing, with some people articulating the desire to see healing occur as their primary motivator in deciding to stay with St. Paul through the division. A participant said, "There is some real healing to be done to recover and go down a new path." When describing

the staff departures, one person said, “It was just not feeling good for a church that I love or that I’ve been part of for 25 years.” Another added, “There was a lot of backbiting and rumors and people didn’t behave well around that.” A member of the administrative board said, “It’s the reason we have you here. There is a lot of hurt and anger and resentment. The challenge is going to be mending those feelings. I don’t want it to appear like a ‘get over it’ attitude but for us to move forward, we have to have some of the anger and hurt healed.”

Like other challenges, COVID complicates this unresolved hurt among church members, providing an “easy out” for some. When talking about online worship, one person said, “When I watch worship on Facebook Live and look at the names of who is watching, I don’t see the names of people who were feeling hurt. My concern is, will we be able to get a feel for who those people are? I would like to see the pain and hurt healed. But I also don’t know how many of those people are open to being healed.” In order for the church to move forward, healing has to occur.

Not Dealing With Conflict

If you hang around in church circles for very long, you’ll often hear the phrase, “the issue is not the issue,” repeated ad nauseum. St. Paul is experiencing the fallout from both the issue *being* the issue as well as the issue *not being* the issue. The conflict that arose during the time when St. Paul’s staff members were expressing their grievances combined with the subsequent conflicts that surfaced over time has created a pressure cooker environment that has to be addressed in a systematic way. Participants in listening groups expressed thankfulness for the opportunity to be heard as part of this process. Several people emailed after their listening group to say that they’ve not yet had the opportunity to face this conflict head on. One person shared, “It has been hard in certain situations because there wasn’t a clear path of how conflict could be resolved. It either wasn’t resolved or was to the point that you felt the presence of tension if there was conflict.” Another person spoke to the lack of a process in dealing with conflict by saying, “As a newcomer, what I’ve disliked about the tension is that there’s not much detail, just a lot of innuendo.” Responding to that, someone added, “I agree with that. Conflict is not addressed. When it does get addressed, it’s kind of my way or the highway.” When conflict is not faced head-on, the pressure cooker will explode.

Personnel Pathway Is Not Clear

In listening sessions with St. Paul staff, it appeared that there are more questions than answers related to their employment. This stretches from job descriptions to processes for sharing concerns related to their working environment. Although several staff mentioned the personnel team’s creation of personnel policies, they felt unsure about whether or not that had been finalized and felt in the dark about the implementation of it and its contents. One person was excited about its creation, adding, “When I came on staff, I wanted an employee handbook so I could know holidays and vacation time.”

As the past year’s staff departures occurred, many of the responsibilities from the vacated roles were divided up among other staff members. As those positions have been filled, there is still not clarity around who does what. Both staff and church members expressed confusion around clarity of roles. Additionally, when asked to describe the proper process for addressing conflict among the staff, particularly if it should happen with a pastor, there were several shoulders shrugged and side glances. One person answered, “I’m unclear, too, actually. Is the process to go to personnel or to go to the senior pastor?” A church member said, “Going forward, we have

to have a support person for staff members. Someone they can trust when there are issues. Previous staff didn't have that person."

As staff talked about the reallocation of responsibilities during a staff transition, one said, "Every time we've had to go through a rebuilding phase, the distribution of responsibility has stretched people thinner. Without that handbook, lines became very gray." Another person added, "A lot of times, we don't know what the plan is." There was a lot of energy around this conversation. Another added, "It's frustrating that we don't know. Like right now the children's position is open and we have no idea how that is really going. Even if they're not hiring anyone soon, at least keep us informed."

One church members summed it well saying, "We need to think in terms of what we can do to make a good environment for our staff so that we can make them feel good about what they're doing." Clarity regarding personnel issues will instill confidence in the staff.

Lack of Shared Vision

One of the best ways to foster healing in a congregation is to provide opportunities for people to see what they *do* have in common as they work together with a shared vision. While St. Paul has a lot of great things happening, a unified vision is lacking. In regards to the outreach and ministry happening with St. Paul, a long-time church member said, "I think there's a lot going on and it's not very organized. There are dozens of projects and I don't know how we communicate that to everyone." Several people mused about what the church would be like post COVID-19. One staff person added, "I wonder what the church vision is post-COVID. What do we keep doing and what do we need to discard because it wasn't working anyway?" Especially as St. Paul looks toward the United Methodist Church's stance on LGBTQ inclusion, it is very important for the church to name its own identity and shared vision for its future.

Lack of Discipleship Plan

It's no secret that there are several groups at St. Paul that are very strong. Some foster relationships among members, others nurture the spiritual formation and practices of participants, and groups like the youth group are the "best thing" about the church. However, there is not a clear and intentional discipleship path for people who are connected to St. Paul. From the first time someone joins in online worship or walks through the doors of the building, there should be a process in place to move them into a deeper connection with their faith. A discipleship path should span various demographics of the church so that a chunk of people don't feel neglected. As one person offered, "There's never anything offered from the time you graduate until you're 35 and have kids." A handful of other young adults concurred.

There also appears to be a lack of consistency among what is offered to people in each of the services. If there was a clear plan for discipleship, the feeling of tension that there are three separate congregations might not be so ubiquitous. With a clear understanding of how people are moved through their spiritual and relational journey in the church, this tension might be relieved. One person shared, "There's a massive wall between the staff and the congregation and each of the three services. There's absolutely no connection. People on both sides are reaching their hands out but they're not connecting."

Lack of Contact Plan

When new people join St. Paul for worship online or walk in the doors of the church building, it is ideal to be greeted with an intentionally warm and hospitable reception, to be offered opportunities to connect, and to be followed up with in a systematic manner. Right now, St. Paul

is not facilitating a process like this in a sustainable way. In addition to meeting new people where they are, St. Paul appears to be missing a process that cares for its lost sheep. Though the church has experienced the loss of several families over the past year, there has been no official process of communication from the church to reach out to those people. Concurrently, there is not a method by which St. Paul would know if someone had missed worship for a few weeks in a row. This is the perfect storm, allowing for people to walk in the front door and right out the back door, potentially without even being noticed. When asked whether or not there is a systemic process for new worshippers or current members, a participant said, "There's no plan for new people or way to know when people have left." Another added, "We are new to the church. Been here two years. It was hard for us to find out who was doing what in the church." One staff person mentioned this as a primary concern, "Connection and assimilation... We've been trying to get a directory and we experience challenges in terms of follow up. People are usually missing a long time before we're aware of it."

When speaking about the care that was extended to the families who made the decision to leave the church, a personnel team member shared, "As of a month ago, no one from the church had reached out to the people that had left." Another said, "We haven't done a good job as the church to help them heal or how to keep them here. We've done a lot of hurting and then hiding." Someone else added, "Concerning people who leave, we've never been good at reaching out to people who've left. We just need more engagement like that." Until a process for contacting and caring for people is in place, the church should expect a similar result to occur.

Not Clear Regarding the UMC Stance on Sexuality

As the United Methodist Church looks toward its future, St. Paul is called to learn who it is as a body so that it will know where it aligns once the denomination comes to a decision. It's a bit ironic that people labeled this issue as "the elephant in the room" but, at the same time, most listening groups spent time talking openly about it. While most people who participated in listening groups suggested that they hope St. Paul will decide to become a fully reconciling church, with only one person clearly who articulated not wanting to have a pastor who was part of the LGBTQ community, several people mentioned the church being more equally divided. One participant said, "The other thing we're going to be dealing with is that the United Methodist Church is facing a schism. That's a reality and this part of town in Kentucky is very different than the rest of the Kentucky conference and that's going to be hard." Another person said, "I don't like the exclusion of anyone and I was troubled with the denomination, not just with our worship location." Someone else offered, "St. Paul is very well situated in the Highlands to be a beacon for social issues, particularly LGBTQ issues. It's splitting the United Methodist Church and St. Paul needs to be able to take positions on these issues."

While most people who spoke did so in favor of supporting LGBTQ equality, one person added, "There's an undercurrent, as a church in general, we're in an identity crisis with the LGBTQ conversation. That has people uneasy about who feels what." Undercurrents are not healthy to the church body, as seen in other conflicts St. Paul is facing. In order for St. Paul to know its own identity so that it can make a calculated decision when the time comes, it is important to engage in healthy and transparent conversations so that, when the time comes, there is a process for blessing people who feel like they need to become part of another congregation and a process for becoming one body who clearly understands its identity and stance.

RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Reframe the next 24 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the ministry. Name July 2022 as the target date for ministries that have sufficient infrastructure and support to provide long-term stability, while enjoying incremental successes along the way.
2. Present this report to the administrative board requesting that they endorse a 24-month strategic design process.
3. Invite a church prayer team to pray for this time of strategic development and share this timeline with them.
4. Establish a Strategic Renovation Team, who report regularly to the administrative board and pastor, to focus on the recommendations below. These non-anxious, goal-oriented people will free up the staff to focus on providing day-to-day ministry.
5. Ministry Architects has partnered with St. Paul UMC for 12 months to take responsibility for:
 - I. Managing the renovation process by chairing the team tasked with doing this work, working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report's timeline
 - II. Assisting the church in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of renovating the ministry.
 - III. Conducting onsite visits that include a Quick Start Summit, time for healing around the church culture, a Staff Relations and Team Building Summit, a Vision Summit, a Discipleship Summit, and a regroup visit.
 - IV. Creating a staff development plan, a strategic staffing plan, and a contact and care plan.
 - V. Executive coaching for the senior pastor for the duration of the contract

Note: Items marked with an asterisk () are specific tasks Ministry Architects is responsible for managing.*

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report fall into four main categories. A brief summary of the needs in each category is contained below with more detailed recommendations named in the following section of the report.

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

Summary: In order to enhance congregational vitality, St. Paul UMC must cultivate a climate of trust, reconciliation, and celebration. Past wounds and tensions must be faced in ways that foster healing and conflict transformation. Current tensions and questions must be faced in ways that foster trust and healing. The congregation must also find ways of fostering positive and highly-anticipated memory-making opportunities.

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Summary: The staff at St. Paul UMC looks very different than it did a year ago. Positions have been vacated. Some of these vacated positions have been filled, while the search team for the director of children's ministry is struggling to fill that vacancy. During all of the staff transition, job responsibilities have been parceled out creating a situation wherein the name of the position is the same but its job description looks different. Neither staff nor church members are completely clear about who does what. It is time to strategize, prioritize, and then organize.

BUILDING SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Summary: There are a few key areas where it's time to square the corners and ensure the foundation is stable. Those areas range from directories, personnel policies, communication and marketing strategies, to ways that church members and guests are contacted and cared for. Once those behind-the-scenes matters are firmed up, they will create a more secure foundation for the expansion of this congregation.

VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

Summary: Everybody has an idea and most of them are quite good. Consequently, the church will need to make some tough decisions about what it will do together and what will have to wait. Develop a clear mission statement that everyone embraces, as well as a clear set of core values and a small set of audacious goals that will drive the church toward a common future. St. Paul will also need to spend a significant amount of time engaging in conversation with church members regarding the UMC's statements on human sexuality so that, when it becomes time for St. Paul to align itself, the local church has avoided a schism in itself.

STRATEGIC RENOVATION TEAM TASKS:

These specific initiatives will enable the church to develop the four categories summarized above.

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

- **Host Fireside Chats***: For a predetermined amount of time, host weekly or monthly fireside chats that allow for church clergy and staff, as well as lay leadership teams to both address specific concerns, as well as provide a forum for people to find out answers to their questions in an intentionally transparent way.
- **Staff on Same Page***: Create a process by which St. Paul's staff are regularly made aware of answers to questions that the congregation may ask them, even if the answer is that there is not a plan yet.
- **Strive for Reconciliation***: Commission pastors, two members of the personnel team, and two members of the administrative board to coordinate a service of reconciliation. This service should acknowledge the frustration and hurt that have happened in the past among various church bodies and seek God's guidance and blessing on the journey of trust-building and reconciliation.
- **Celebrate the Wins**: Create a written game plan that will address how the church will celebrate the good work God is doing within and beyond its walls. Create an intentional strategy that celebrates the successes with the entire congregation on a regular basis while maintaining a fresh and exciting presentation.
- **Us versus Them***: Create an intentional campaign to foster team relationships between members of the church staff, members of the administrative board, and members of the related committees. Utilize events that provide a fun environment and opportunity for deepening relationships. Promote dialog appropriate for staff and volunteer leader interaction.
- **Exhibit Transparency**: Develop a written game plan that outlines the way decisions are made and communicated in relationship to programming, staffing, building and grounds, and budgeting.
- **Establish a Climate of Respect and Cooperation***: Create a game plan in order to develop more positive means of collaborating. The game plan should include lines of discipline, accountability, and communication so that a person who feels bullied (staff or congregant) has a channel of advocacy and support.

STAFFING AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- **Strategic Staffing*:** Develop a sustainable staffing model for the church that aligns with the church's current and anticipated resources.
- **Personnel Policy:** Review the content of the newly created personnel policy to implement new job descriptions, set a mutually understood level of accountability between those in leadership and the staff, and address any changes in staffing practices.
- **Leadership Evaluation:** Provide mechanisms for ongoing evaluation for all church staff members. The process should include space for self-reflection, supervisor feedback, and requests from the employee about how the church can help him or her succeed. It should be done in a way that leaves leaders feeling supported, encouraged, and positively challenged.
- **Staff Development*:** Provide mechanisms for ongoing education and coaching for the church staff including coaching, reading and continuing education.
- **Leadership Clarity*:** Review written job descriptions for all paid staff positions in the church. Work with staff to ensure the job descriptions accurately match the work being done. Prominently include the role of building volunteer teams.
- **Sustainable Pace:** Help each staff member develop a "rhythmic week" including a Sabbath and "balcony" time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).
- **Re-structuring:** Invite members of the staff and key leaders to participate in a facilitated process of evaluating the current organizational structure for the church and clarifying the function and purpose of all church committees and teams. Write out a current organizational chart. Create the ideal organization chart for continued growth. Upon examination of the current structure, restructure the organization in a strategic way in order for the church to be poised for success.
- **Staffing Audit*:** Gather feedback from staff members on their current job descriptions, understanding pressure points and suggested changes. Gather the chair of the personnel team and the senior pastor along with Ministry Architects consultants to evaluate the current staffing descriptions, gather feedback, and design an overall staffing strategy that leverages current staff and identifies the holes that need to be filled.
- **Staff Orientation:** Create consistent welcome packets that help all staff, especially when new, feel welcomed and oriented to all things St. Paul. Ensure that the packet includes an employee handbook, a brief description of the ministries in the church, a staff directory, vision documents, an organizational chart, and standard best practices and procedures.
- **Affirm Staff:** Continue to ensure all staff members have been affirmed and encouraged in their role by hosting an annual staff appreciation event.
- **Personnel Team:** Explore the current role of the personnel team. Evaluate the difference between being a team that governs vs. a team that manages. Determine the

best use and equip the team with the skills needed to govern the personnel of St. Paul UMC.

- **Develop a Staff Reporting Process:** Clearly outline and/or communicate the process by which staff bring issues or concerns to the personnel team when their issue or concern is regarding their direct supervisor.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Host a “Quick Start” Summit*:** Invite the Strategic Renovation Team, key volunteers, and church staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the tasks outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first and builds momentum for the church’s renovation process (typically items in the first few months of the timeline).
- **Communication:** Review and revise current church communication practices to ensure that all congregants, regardless of age or technological proficiency, feel informed. Utilize as many forms of communication as possible including updating the church’s website, brochures, social media, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Marketing and Branding:** Create a written game plan that will address how to introduce the church to the community around it in an inviting and welcoming way. Create an intentional strategy in order to be consistent with your marketing approaches (logos, graphics, etc.). Consider the following list of items:
 - Church Signage
 - Upgrading the website with an engaging section just for newcomers
 - Identifying communication channels for reaching out to those outside the church family--flyers and mailers, posters, the NextDoor app, etc.
 - Identifying target programs for inviting newcomers.
 - Designing a database growth process.
 - Communicating regularly with tenants and others in the building.
- **Internal Communications:** Create a protocol by which all decisions and important information are shared throughout the whole church community, ensuring that the church is not just communicating information, but that people are actually receiving it.
- **Stabilizing Document Development:** Maintain and publish a 12-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month. (Example: October - Order candles for the Advent Wreath.)
- **Attendance:** Continue to record attendance for all programs (worship, Sunday school, bible studies, book studies, special events, etc.), digitally and in person, and develop a written game plan to track attendance in a consistent way in order to identify MIAs.
- **Compliance System and Management:** Ensure an Operations Manual is in place and updated annually. The manual should include all legal documentation needed for the ministry including background checks, financial documents, licenses, child protection policy, facility use policies etc.
- **Database:** Numbers matter because people matter. Create a database of all of the people who are connected to your congregation. This database will be an important tool as you communicate and as you determine who is active. We recommend using categories that indicate the level of involvement of each person. For example:
 - **Active** are the families are members of St. Paul UMC and have attended at least six times in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the ministry. They should show up in your printed directory, if you use one.

- **Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to call them every time the doors are open at the church, but you'll want to regularly pursue these families, whether they ever show up or not.
- **Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly worship and/or activities but are not an official member of the church.
- **Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow-up. But you'll want to keep their information for the occasional big event to which you'll want to invite everyone you know.
- **First Timers** refer to visitors who have attended worship for the first time. You'll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.
- **Contact and Care Game Plan*:** Develop a multi-faceted plan that ensures strategic and intentional connections are made with all in the church. It includes the following:
 - **Visitor Follow-up:** Carefully develop a process for welcoming visitors who visit the church. Craft a process for following up with adults and families that have become loosely connected to the church. Ensure the database is regularly updated with information from visitors.
 - **MIA Follow-up:** Determine the approach to follow-up with people who are MIA. Create a database to track who has gone missing, the reasons they have gone, and who followed up with them on staff. Create a culture of care for MIA church members.
 - **Connections:** Create a process for connecting with church members at regular intervals during the year.
- **Connections Brochure:** Create a clear list of the various opportunities for people to connect with each other at St. Paul UMC. Give a clear explanation of each group, so that a person can make an informed choice about whether that group is a good fit. Include meeting times and contact information with a name and phone and/or email. Make this information available in a brochure and on the web site. Make sure that this brochure is easy to edit and update as the times and locations of events will change from season to season.

VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

- **Visioning*:** Invite leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of envisioning the future with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministries and support the church's vision:
 - A mission statement
 - Defined core values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals with one-year benchmarks

Vision Summits work best with a group representing pastors, staff, board, leadership teams and other key ministry leaders. Sometimes it may be helpful to extend an open invitation to the congregation.

- **Sharing the Vision:** Upon completion of the long-term vision and goal-setting process, create a game plan that will outline the best ways to communicate the vision, values, and goals of the church's ministry (sermon series, guidebooks, small group curriculum, etc.).
- **Focus:** Through the visioning process, explore the target groups for ministry. Instead of "being all things to all people," establish priorities for discipleship, outreach, and evangelism.
- **Establish a Vision Team:** Upon completion of the church-wide visioning process, create a team that will help carry the vision forward and keep the congregation on task for meeting the benchmarks and goals. This could also be assigned to an existing team.
- **Develop a Clear Mission Strategy:** After engaging in strategic visioning, develop a game plan that will clarify the ways in which the church will joyfully engage in outreach. Include ways the church will build relationships with its tenants and the neighborhoods it serves. At the same time, create awareness and education opportunities among the congregation.
- **Continue Conversations Regarding UMC's Human Sexuality Stance:** Re-engage the church-wide conversations about the UMC's stance regarding human sexuality so that St. Paul has a unified vision prior to the denominational decision.

PRESSURE POINTS

In order to create a healthy climate conducive to change, Ministry Architects suggests addressing the most pressing needs in the first four to six months of the timeline. Pressure points are the issues that, unless addressed, could very well keep the church “stuck.”

The following timeline outlines an intentional and strategic approach to implementing the recommendations listed above. The recommendations section is a broad and thorough list of recommendations for the church, but they are not presented in order or priority.

The timeline below prioritizes the following pressure points over the next four to six months:

- **Communication**
- **Healing among the staff and congregation**
- **Intentional transparency**
- **Congregational engagement regarding the UMC’s human sexuality proposals**

PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides St. Paul United Methodist Church with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a healthy, sustainable ministry.

Month #1 – August 2020

Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins

Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the administrative board for the strategic renovation of the church's overall ministry and the administrative board has given full support of this plan.
- The Strategic Renovation Team has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Summit.
- A Quick Start Summit has taken place in which the renovation process was launched and pressure points outlined in the assessment report have been addressed. The summit tackled the items that needed to be done first to initiate the renovation process.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the renovation process. They have received a copy of this report and timeline.
- Staff members have given feedback on their current job descriptions.
- A plan has been created and implemented for weekly (eventually becoming monthly) fireside chats that allow for clergy and staff, as well as lay leadership teams to provide a forum to foster transparent communication, allowing church members to ask questions, staff to communicate to the congregation, create intentional feedback loops, and have open discussions about the UMC's statements on human sexuality prior to the Vision Summit.
- Church clergy and staff, two administrative board representatives, and two personnel team representatives have begun planning a service of reconciliation for November that will acknowledge the frustration and hurt that have happened in the past among various church bodies and seeking God's guidance and blessing on the journey of trust-building and reconciliation that lies ahead.

Month #2 – September 2020

Focus: Pressure Points & Staffing

Outcomes:

- A church-wide Visioning Summit has been scheduled for February and a "save the date" email has been sent to the church leadership (staff & volunteer).
- Representatives of the administrative board, personnel team, and senior pastor have met with Ministry Architects to begin drafting an overall staffing strategy for the church.
- The renovation work has been added to the preaching/worship calendar for the upcoming year through liturgy, sermons, and/or special presentations in worship.
- In order to account for appropriate staffing, an evaluation of the current organizational structure has taken place. During this evaluation:
 - An "as-is" organizational chart for staff has been created and current relationships/roles have been documented.



- The strengths and challenges of the current organizational structure has been named.
- Work has begun on the new organizational structure that includes a revised organizational chart.
- A process has been created and implemented so that church staff are regularly made aware of internal shifts in staffing, process, and programming, so that the staff is able to answer questions posed by church members in casual conversation.
- A process has been created by which staff can bring issues or concerns to the personnel team if there is a conflict of interest in bringing a concern to their direct supervisor.
- Plans are in place for a service of reconciliation that will acknowledge the frustration and hurt that have happened in the past among various church bodies and seeking God's guidance and blessing on the journey of trust-building and reconciliation that lies ahead.

Month #3 – October 2020

Focus: Pressure Points & Staffing

Outcomes:

- A staff meeting strategy has been developed that helps staff stay in regular conversation about the ministry of the church that leaves staff members feeling well-prepared to respond to changes in the ministry. Consider using *Death by Meeting* as a resource to design this strategy.
- A game plan has been created in order to develop more positive means of collaborating between and amongst the staff and the congregation. The game plan includes lines of discipline, accountability, and communication so that a person who feels bullied (staff or congregant) has a channel of advocacy and support.
- Job descriptions for all paid staff positions in the church have been written and reviewed. The staff has been included in the process such that the job descriptions accurately match the work being done. The role of building and equipping volunteer teams is prominently included.
- Ministry Architects has worked with church staff and leadership to create a Staff Development Plan that provides a healthy eco-system for the paid staff to thrive in their ministry, sustain their own emotional and spiritual health, while at the same time, staying highly engaged and productive in their positions.
- An organizational chart has been developed for all the current volunteer roles in the church that labels the positions that serve as:
 - “Coaches” – Volunteers who serve to oversee ministry areas and multiple teams
 - “Leaders” – Volunteers who lead specific teams and direct volunteers on those teams
 - “Workers” – Volunteers who fill a specific role, duty, or task
- A major event coordinator job description for an annual staff appreciation event has been written

- The role of the personnel team has been evaluated and it has been determined whether the primary role for the personnel team is to govern or manage. The team has been empowered to fulfil its role and the members of the team have been equipped to function in that role.

Month #4 – November 2020

Focus: Communication & Pressure Points

Outcomes:

- Ministry Architects has worked with church staff and leadership to develop a Strategic Staffing Plan that takes into account staffing needs for certain thresholds and provides a healthy eco-system for cultivating the talent necessary to ensure the consistent healthy and effectiveness of St. Paul's programs.
- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices have been implemented that ensure that all congregants, regardless of age or technological proficiency, feel informed. Utilize as many forms of communication as possible including updating the church's website, brochures, social media, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- The personnel policy has been revised to include new job descriptions, set a mutually understood level of accountability between those in leadership and the staff, and to provide for annual review and evaluation.
- All pressure points have been addressed.
- A draft of the new organizational chart and organizational structure has been shared with the administrative board and feedback has been given.
- A major event coordinator for an annual staff appreciation event has been recruited
- A Leadership Game Plan has been updated or drafted that better outlines the responsibilities of the administrative board as it reports to the senior pastor and provides oversight for the ministry of the church. Ensure that every area of the church's ministry is represented in the ministry leadership team.
- An onsite Staff Relations and Team Building Summit has occurred to provide job clarity, foster climate improvement, and begin the process of conflict resolution.
- A service of reconciliation has taken place that has acknowledged the frustration and hurt that have happened in the past among various church bodies and seeking God's guidance and blessing on the journey of trust-building and reconciliation that lies ahead.

Month #5 – December 2020

Focus: Preparing for Vision & Welcoming New Staff

Outcomes:

- Promotion of the church-wide Visioning Summit has begun.
- A Mission InSite Report has been reviewed by Visioning Summit participants prior to the event to help inform the missional impulse of the process.
- A job description has been created for a Vision Team that will help guide the vision process moving forward and recruitment for this team has begun.



- A welcome packet that includes the employee handbook, a brief description of the ministries in the church, a staff directory, vision documents, an organizational chart, standard best practices and procedures has been created.
- An annual staff appreciation event has been calendared

Month #6 – January 2021

Focus: Mid-Course Evaluation & Staff Appreciation

Outcomes:

- The Strategic Renovation Team has completed a six-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments that are necessary to improve the work being done.
- All pressure points have been addressed.
- Mechanisms for ongoing education and coaching for the church staff including coaching, reading and continuing education has been provided.
- An annual staff appreciation event has taken place where all staff have been affirmed and encouraged in their role
- A Vision Team has been recruited to carry forward the goals and benchmarks that will result from the upcoming Visioning Summit.
- The organizational structure and chart have been approved.

Month #7 – February 2021

Focus: Visioning & Celebrating

Outcomes

- A church-wide Visioning Summit with all major stakeholders has occurred and produced visioning documents for the church (mission statement, core values, and goals) has taken place.
- After the Vision Summit, a “target database” has been created that names a clear target audience for each ministry in the church and major event.
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the church-wide visioning process.
- A database and directory for all ministry leadership teams and leaders has been created to provide clarity and connection for all ministry leaders.
- An intentional strategy has been created that celebrates successes with the entire congregation on a regular basis while maintaining a fresh and exciting presentation.
- A save-the-date has been sent out for the Discipleship Path Summit, focusing on improved church culture, resulting in a plan to explicitly identify how the newly formed core values and the varied efforts of the ministry work together to enfold guests, then deepen and strengthen the faith of all of those involved in the healthy culture of St. Paul’s congregation.

Month #8 – March 2021

Focus: Healthy Staff Communication

Outcomes:

- An intentional campaign has been created to foster team relationships between members of the church staff, members of administrative board, and members of the related committees.
- Mechanisms for ongoing evaluation for all church staff members that include pace for self-reflection, supervisor feedback, and requests from the employee about how the church can help him or her succeed has been implemented.
- Each staff member has developed a “rhythmic week” including a Sabbath and “balcony” time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).
- A written game plan has been developed that outlines the way decisions are made and communicated in relationship to programming, staffing, building and grounds, and budgeting.

Month #9 – April 2021

Focus: Discipleship Pathway & MIA

Outcomes:

- An onsite Discipleship Path Summit has occurred, focusing on improved church culture, resulting in a plan to explicitly identify how the newly formed core values and the varied efforts of the ministry work together to enfold guests, then deepen and strengthen the faith of all of those involved in the healthy culture of St. Paul’s congregation.
- The church database has been evaluated for effectiveness and strategies have been developed for cleaning up the rolls of the church. We recommend using categories that indicate the level of involvement of each person. For example:
 - **Active** are the members of St. Paul UMC and have attended at least six times in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the ministry. They should show up in your printed directory, if you use one.
 - **Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to call them every time the doors or open at the church, but you’ll want to regularly pursue these families, whether they ever show up or not.
 - **Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly worship and/or activities but are not an official member of the church.
 - **Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow-up. But you’ll want to keep their information for the occasional big event to which you’ll want to invite everyone you know.
 - **First Timers** refer to visitors who have attended worship for the first time. You’ll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.
- A game plan has been developed to identify and follow-up with church members and regular attenders who are MIA that includes a database to track who is missing, reasons they are gone and tracks follow up.
- Work has begun on the 2021-2022 ministry calendar.

- A cascading communications strategy has been created that helps to easily identify “who needs to know what” throughout the church when decisions are made. Consider the concentric circles of leadership in the church and the timeline in which they should be informed of decisions. Ensure a list of communication tools is created that will help carry the information to the correct groups.

Month #10 – May 2021

Focus: Connecting

Outcomes:

- Results-based job descriptions have been written and distributed to the appropriate volunteers for their feedback.
- The Strategic Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- A game plan has been developed to capture information from events and worship services and provide invitational follow-up to visitors. Be sure to include mechanisms for updating the database.
- Ministry Architects has worked with church staff and lay leaders to develop a Contact and Care plan that establishes clear processes to ensure that every person visiting the church experiences a surprisingly welcoming environment, as well as consistent, comfortable follow-up contacts appropriate to the DNA of St. Paul UMC.

Month #11 – June 2021

Focus: Finishing Well & Looking Ahead

Outcomes:

- The 2021-2022 ministry calendar has been completed.
- Ministry Architects has completed an onsite regroup visit to celebrate the work that’s been done, assessed what is next for St. Paul UMC, and revised the timeline to provide a roadmap for the next 12 months
- An outreach strategy has been created that will help the church engaged the community around them and be “good news” to their neighbors.
- Stories of reconciliation have been scheduled into the worship services at least once per month for the next six months.

Month #12 – July 2021

Focus: Ongoing Coaching

Outcomes:

- A prioritized list of all ministry programs at the church has been created along with the named target audience and a strategy has been determined relating to how best to retire programs near the bottom of the priority list.
- The 2021-2022 ministry calendar has been publicized.



- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- An attendance-tracking game plan has been written that ensures attendance has been tracked throughout key ministry gatherings (worship, youth & children's ministry, major events, etc.), including digital/virtual opportunities.

Month #13 – August 2021

Focus: Leadership Launch, Benchmarks, Marketing

Outcomes:

- All game plans that have been launched in the last 12 months have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.
- A marketing game plan has been created that selects the best communication methods to the community and assigns next steps for implementing them.
- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for September for the volunteers in the church where each team leader gathers with their volunteers to launch their team's ministry. This could be a church-wide event, or different gatherings for each department or team.

Month #14 – September 2021

Focus: Preventative Maintenance Calendar and Major Event Notebooks

Outcomes:

- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the church's annual ministry that will help regularly deal with on-going "behind the scenes" ministry maintenance.
- A Leadership Launch has taken place that inspires and equips leaders in their particular area of ministry.

Month #15 – October 2021

Focus: Ministry Manual

Outcomes:

- A ministry manual for the church has been completed, including
 - Visioning documents
 - Directories
 - Volunteer directory
 - Annual calendar
 - Results-based job descriptions
 - Game plans and new initiatives
 - Budget and other financial documents
 - Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
 - Compliance documents
- Catch up on lingering timeline options

Month #16 – November 2021



Focus: Operations Manual**Outcomes:**

- A Church Operations Manual has been created/reviewed and contains all legal documentation needed for the ministry including background checks, financial documents, licenses, child protection policy, facility use policies etc.
- Catch up on lingering timeline options

Month #17 – December 2021**Focus: Future Staffing****Outcomes:**

- With the changes in the ministry, the staffing to meet the size and scope of the church has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- Catch up on lingering timeline items

Month #18 – January 2022**Focus: Benchmarks****Outcomes:**

- All one-year benchmarks are on track to be achieved in February. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.
- Work has begun on the 2022-2023 major event calendar for the church.
- A volunteer recruitment process for the various ministries has been established.

Month #19 – February 2022**Focus: Volunteer Recruitment****Outcomes:**

- Volunteer recruiting seasons have opened. Each ministry has taken these steps:
 - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
 - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
 - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list have been merged.
 - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to their teams.
 - Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators, and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2022-2023.

Month #20 – March 2022**Focus: Compliance****Outcomes:**

- All the necessary paperwork for volunteers has been collected and screening has been completed.



- The church is in compliance with the child protection policy.

Month #21 – April 2022

Focus: Game Plans

Outcomes:

- The team has reviewed all game plans and process that have been put in place during this timeline and has made any necessary adjustments for future use.
- An annual staff appreciation event has taken place where all staff have been affirmed and encouraged in their role

Month #22 – May 2022

Focus: Review and Reassess

Outcomes:

- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- Current pressure points have been named.

Month #23 – June 2022

Focus: Calendar

Outcomes:

- The 2022-2023 major event calendar has been finalized and distributed to church members.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for September for the volunteers in the church where each team leader gathers with their volunteers to launch their team's ministry. This could be a church-wide event, or different gatherings for each department or team.

Month #24 – July 2022

Focus: Pressure Points and the Future

Outcomes:

- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that included game plans for the current pressure points
- The Strategic Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the church and focused on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.
- The staff and Strategic Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.

The **Ministry Architects** Team Serving St. Paul United Methodist Church (Louisville, Kentucky)



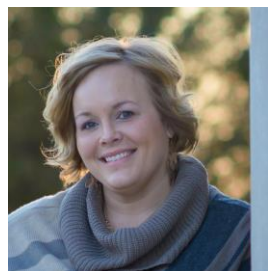
SARA BAILEY – LEAD CONSULTANT

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Sara is a life-long Episcopalian having grown up in Memphis, Tennessee, the land of Elvis. She has been in professional youth ministry since 1993 serving Episcopal churches in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. While no longer in full-time paid ministry, she serves the children and youth at her own congregation in Louisville, KY where she currently resides. She's been part of the Ministry Architects team since 2006 as a Lead Consultant and the Search

Manager. Sara's husband Geoff works at the University of Louisville (go Cards!) and they have a tween daughter as well as two dogs. Butterflies are a significant symbol of her faith journey; you'll find them everywhere in her home. Anyone who guesses correctly how many there are gets a prize!



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Since 2000, Monica has served in a variety of roles in both small and large churches, and understands the unique opportunities each setting brings. She has a passion for setting up systems that help to equip people in relationship and mission. Monica believes that churches are always changing and with the correct structures in place, ministry will continue to flourish and new possibilities emerge during moments of transition. Monica earned a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Master of Divinity degree from Louisville

Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Monica lives in the Kansas City area with her minister spouse, their two children (for whom they try every day to create normal lives as double preachers' kids) and their dog, Princess Leia (who likes long walks, terrorizing rabbits, and cleaning up after meals).



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Bryant began working in youth ministry in 1996 in the United Methodist Church. He has been a worship speaker for summer camps, taught seminars for youth workers, and written curriculum for the Florida United Methodist Camping programs. Bryant graduated from Florida Southern College with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology. In his free time, Bryant enjoys all things outdoors, technology, movies, and hosts *The Sustainable Ministry Show*. He and his wife,

Tonya, and two kids live in Kernersville, NC.

