



E A S T M I N S T E R
P R E S B Y T E R I A N

Dreaming and Discerning

The Path Forward

Open Our Doors

24/7



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Overarching Themes	4
Building Community Within & Beyond	19
Christ-Centered Living / Corporate & Personal Worship	21
Faith Formation and Discipleship for Adults	23
Faith Formation and Discipleship for Children, Youth, and Young Adults	25
Inviting, Including, Engaging	28
Missions: Joining in God’s Work in the World	33
Our Life Together and Congregational Care	35
Stewardship and Kingdom Visions	38
Afterward	40
Appendix	41
Epilogue	48



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

INTRODUCTION

In January of 2020, over 70 small groups, representing 680+ Eastminster members, met once a week for eight weeks to prayerfully discuss how God is calling our congregation to grow and move forward in the next decade. Small groups explored topics ranging from missions to stewardship to faith formation across all ages. Feedback from the small groups on each weekly topic was submitted and later summarized by a group of 20 individuals, called the Dreaming and Discerning coordinating team.

The Dreaming and Discerning coordinating team was challenged with collecting and presenting the input, feedback, and recommendations from each small group. During this process, the coordinating team looked at the feedback from the small groups and compiled the following call to action, which we've named "**Open Our Doors 24/7.**" Throughout this time, the coordinating team stayed committed to answering the call of providing direction for the Eastminster congregation and how we carry out God's plan for our church.

In response to feedback from the small groups, the following themes emerged as areas of focus for our next steps:

- + enhancing the role of technology in our church
- + facilitating intergenerational connections
- + equipping our members to engage in the ministry of Christ

After reviewing the feedback and discussing ways to move forward, the coordinating team saw fit to distill information from each of the eight weeks and leave the distillations divided into the original eight sections. Some ideas and subject matters are echoed and perhaps repeated across several sections. Moving forward, the action team should read this plan in its entirety to glean ideas that may be relevant and applicable from each section.

Open Our Doors 24/7 became the statement that best describes how we are to proceed in carrying out God's work. Our church, its members, and the community have varying spiritual needs that could be fulfilled with a multitude of opportunities at differing times. This summary will offer a look at each day of the week and different opportunities Eastminster offers to meet the spiritual needs of a diverse cross section of our membership. We are excited to help members grow in their faith journey through **Open Our Doors 24/7.**

August 31, 2020



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OVERARCHING THEMES

As the Dreaming and Discerning Coordinating Team compiled the results of the more than 70 small groups, three dominant themes were reflected in each of the eight sections. These overarching themes included: **enhancing the role of technology in our church; facilitating intergenerational connections; and equipping our members to engage in the ministry of Christ.** To preclude redundancy, the responses have been consolidated and listed below as overarching themes.

Enhancing the Role of Technology in Our Church

“And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.’” Genesis 11:16

“And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So, they strengthened their hands for the good work.” Nehemiah 2:18

Eastminster will further its mission to the congregation and the community-at-large through a user-friendly website, electronic communications, and up-to-date printed materials. Technology will be used to help people of all ages become engaged in the life of the church and meet people where they are in their walk with God. Eastminster realizes the importance of diverse methods of communication to reach all ages within the church.

Goal:

Enhanced technology will help the church provide clear, concise, and consistent communication and provide members connection with the church wherever they are, at any point during the week.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will offer a revamped website that will implement a complete media strategy to include in-house communications, social media, podcasts, phone apps, and external communications that is transferable between tablets, phones and computers to spread the good news of Eastminster.
- B. Eastminster will offer streamlined emails, e-newsletters, and have links to sign up for volunteer, social, and other opportunities available that week.
- C. The website will have resources and relevant faith information for parents and families. (Tip sheets, vetted links, videos, etc.)



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

- D. Eastminster will enhance their audio/visual equipment for crisper, tighter shots for close-ups, and clearer sound in all live worship services.
- E. The website will post all past sermons, devotionals, and Wednesday night classes (taught by pastors) and will be organized by themes, scripture, and topic. All recordings will also be available in podcast-like (audio only) format.
- F. Eastminster will support the use of a website/apps /social media for pastoral support. This includes a “Prayer Request Submission” page online enhancing the prayer request cards in use.
- G. All Sunday School classes will be listed on the Eastminster website with description, room number, contact leader listed with email, and phone number. Classes will be updated to include books and scripture, so members feel comfortable "dropping in."
- H. To augment a long-term, long-ranging calendar of Bible study and other worship opportunities, a periodic “Eastminster 101” video with a virtual tour of Sunday School class options and other things going on at the church will be available. This is to assist new members, as well as longtime members looking to know more about programs at Eastminster. This is in the spirit of Rally Day in that it gives members a chance to learn about opportunities at the church. Allows ministers to offer glimpses of different service opportunities, etc. Possibly developed by a communications employee adept at video technology to disseminate information.
- I. Online resources through the church website will be available as a regular part of programming for church membership. This programming is designed to be accessible and appealing to our diverse membership. (Ex: Tabs for special needs families, couples growing old together, the single Christian, etc.)
- J. Various media will be utilized to advertise a variety of groups and classes, which do include "one and done" classes, special topic classes, and classes calling for more commitment.
- K. Eastminster will offer live church services for the Jubilee and Traditional services.
- L. A website communication platform will be developed for families of young children.
- M. Social media conduits will be used to appeal to the young adult demographic and will be more strategically utilized to engage and invite them to participate in church events and programs.
- N. Expand @Eastminsteryouth_ColumbiaSC Instagram account to include college and young adult focused. Consolidate and/or cross-market posts so that non-youth members and their families can see what the youth are doing in the community.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

- O. Eastminster will promote mission and volunteer service and activities using videos, social media, the website, and printed documents.
- P. All mission groups will use social media and the website to share their journeys with fellow members including an update after the mission trip that will include photos and their experiences.
- Q. An online two/three-year church calendar will be created, which lists current, weekly, monthly, and yearly opportunities of all church offerings on the Eastminster's website.
- R. A youth, a middle school, and a high school calendar will be created on the website and will list all information about Sunday School classes, Sunday night youth group, Jesus Rocks, Wednesday nights, volunteer opportunities, and mission trips.
- S. The website will regularly update the membership directory to include photos of current members and add photos/information about new members.

Facilitating Intergenerational Connections

"Carry each other's burdens and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

"So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good, to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10

Programs, ministries, and events at Eastminster consistently and intentionally seek to include and engage participants along and across our membership demographics. This includes, but is not limited to, such subsets as singles, families, older members, and members with special needs. Intergenerational programming is consistently part of these events.

Goal:

Provide opportunities for Eastminster members to develop relationships with other Eastminster church members.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will continue to encourage intergenerational social opportunities and educational opportunities through small groups, Sunday School, and Sunday and Wednesday night classes.
- B. Eastminster will offer regularly scheduled church-wide events to allow all ages to share fellowship and work together: covered dish suppers, picnics in the field, music events, breakfasts, service days around the church, Advent and CORE retreats, women's retreats, Supper Six or Couples' Nights Out with church youth providing babysitting.
- C. Eastminster will create small groups based on interest or hobby (e.g., movie enthusiasts, foodies, people who like to travel, etc.) so that groups can grow together around topics



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

of interest and be more open and welcoming to new members. The Neighborhood Buddy System will continue to provide all members with support by members within their immediate physical vicinity.

- D. Eastminster will continue to encourage intergenerational mission and service opportunities (global, domestic, and local), with focus on expanding local volunteer opportunities in which families (youth, parents, and grandparents) can participate in one-and-done programs, ministries, events (one day or one-hour events).
- E. Eastminster will offer an electronic needs forum where members can post needs that other members can respond to (e.g., seniors who need lawn care, parents of newborns who need meals, single parents who need errands, etc.). Youth, college, and young adults will be encouraged to sign up for these opportunities to interact with senior members of the church.
- F. Socials between service and Sunday School— Eastminster will use space (currently Adult Reception Hall, possibly in the courtyard during accommodating weather months, and possibly consider Thompson Hall especially if Jubilee moved) as an area to congregate between Sunday School classes and church worship. Eastminster will offer a warm and inviting area with coffee and small bites to encourage socialization and an opportunity to get to know other members.
- G. Small groups will be encouraged to attend People Enjoying People (PEP) meals.
- H. The PEP program will engage in supportive letter writing, emailing, or texting to Eastminster college students.
- I. Eastminster will continue to involve senior members more comprehensively in Eastminster Day School Programs, Vacation Bible School, chapel programs, and story times.
- J. Eastminster will more comprehensively collaborate with assisted living facilities to offer Bible studies, music programs, and other events at the facilities. Youth and families with young children are often engaged and involved in these events.
- K. An event modeled after the Sportsman's Banquet will be offered as a community event.

Equipping Members to Engage in the Ministry of Christ

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28: 19-20 NKJV

Eastminster is a congregation composed of members who are equipped to share the importance of their faith. The membership has been trained and is comfortable having conversations with friends and new acquaintances, telling them of Eastminster's ministries and inviting them to church, Sunday School, or special community gatherings.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Goal:

Teach sound doctrine from the pulpit to include deep Biblical teaching and equipping the Body of Christ, so the congregation can go out to spread the word of the Lord in this community and beyond.

Actions:

- A. Provide training for those who are in leadership positions or who are volunteering in ministries to carry a consistent message across all communication platforms within the church.
- B. Eastminster will develop and offer a brief, five-session course on active listening, praying, and offering lay support to those in emotional need. This includes information on consulting with the pastoral staff in the event of more serious emotional needs.
- C. A three-session class will be held twice a year to help members in the dynamics of inviting others to church and/or sharing the gospel with others.
- D. All members will be encouraged to participate in Sunday School, Sunday evening programming, small groups, Wednesday night programming, and Christian education classes that meet everyone's spiritual needs and encourage spiritual growth and development.
- E. Online resources through the church website will be available to assist those in wanting to know more about how to invite others and/or share their faith with others. (These might be short tips or even three-minute videos.)
- F. Welcome Centers will be manned by greeters who have training in "best practices" for effectively engaging visitors.
- G. Eastminster will research, review, train and equip active church members through training in how invitations are offered to re-engage inactive members.
- H. Eastminster will continue to build upon the neighborhood shepherding program. Along with many other uses, staying in touch with neighbors could encourage attendance by inactive or potentially inactive members.
- I. Eastminster will research and consult with other resources regarding the best ways to engage senior demographic in our church. The church will confirm and ascertain what they wish to be involved in. They might be involved in teaching, mentoring, and visiting shut-ins, or speaking in the new member class.
- J. Eastminster will intentionally and strategically engage its neighborhood constituencies and residents. These include Trenholm Road United Methodist Church, Epworth Children's Home, and Tuscan Gardens Senior Living Center (to be developed). The hope is to collaborate with other churches and organizations to promote community and cooperation thru events/programs/ministries.
- K. Eastminster will actively train, assist PEP, Sunday School classes, and other diverse Eastminster groups to engage and collaborate with other churches and community



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

organizations for service, fellowship, and worship events (Habitat, Migrant Ministries, Choir exchanges, work-day projects, etc.)

- L. The current church strategies for integrating new members into the church will be reviewed to incorporate new ways of capturing/engaging new members into the fellowship life of the church and the various ministries of the church. A one to three-month mentoring/shepherding program helps integrate new members effectively.
- M. The church will aggressively provide outreach programs that engage young adults, particularly college-age individuals, and recent graduates.
- N. Eastminster will provide resources, both online and hard copies, to educate the congregation about grief, healthy grieving, and grief recovery. This includes contact information for grief support in the community.
- O. Eastminster will offer mentoring among members to encourage specific groups to become more involved in church life and feel more supported. These relationships are intended to be personal, making each member's experience different, but still meaningful.

FUTURE STORYTELLING

Want to know what these three themes might look like in action? Read on as we tell stories of how Eastminster could look each day in a week in 2028 from different members' perspectives. Church life is full and enhanced by technology, intergenerational connections and equipping our members to engage with others in our membership and beyond Eastminster.

A Full Sunday at Eastminster

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8

Russ and Susan are a couple in their mid- 40s with three children—Rebecca (20), Christopher (15) and Hannah (10). They have been attending Eastminster since their early 20s and though they are involved with the church, they still find it challenging to keep up with all that happens at the church. Sundays are always a full day at Eastminster. Susan sings in the choir, and so she is off to choir practice at 8 a.m. before the 9 o'clock worship service. Rebecca is in college, and Russ gets Chris and Hannah to Sunday School and the 11:15 worship service.

As they get to church, Russ, Chris, and Hannah stop briefly at the church Welcome Center to meet another couple who Russ invited to worship. For years Russ wanted to invite a family to Eastminster but never felt confident and couldn't find the words to ask. After attending a brief "Sharing Your Faith" class at Eastminster, Russ felt much more comfortable and asked Kenny and Sidney to join them at church. Kenny and Sidney are a young couple. They are fairly new to Columbia and they're looking for a church home. Russ is glad to see them and happy to introduce



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

them to the Welcome Center where they get a good orientation to Eastminster, its ministries, programs, and small groups.

Son Chris is off to his Sunday School class. Russ, Kenny, and Sidney walk Hannah to her class and then Russ guides Kenny and Sidney to one of the Young Adult Sunday School classes where they are greeted warmly and led in an on-going study of the Psalms. Russ is off to his intergenerational “Current Culture and Christianity” class but makes a point to slide out early to meet Kenny and Sidney as their class ends. Kenny and Sidney want to go to the Jubilee worship service. Russ rather enjoys the traditional service, but he and Susan often tune in to the live stream Jubilee service offered on Sunday night as well.

Christopher, who is 15 years old, enjoys the music and the “feel” of the Jubilee service. He and his friends sit together. The Jubilee service continues to attract a large crowd. It has developed over the years, but still offers nuanced differences from the traditional worship service. Jubilee has not grown out of Thompson Hall (yet), but you wouldn’t recognize Thompson Hall as it has been renovated to enhance the worship experience. There is a live sermon with a minister, rather than the video recorded sermons of years ago. There is a second 7 p.m. Jubilee service on Sunday evening when many youth activities are also taking place. This service is particularly popular with families who have been away Sunday morning. Jubilee is so interwoven into the tapestry of Eastminster ministries that there are no longer concerns that the services might become a “church within a church.”

Whether Jubilee or traditional worship, both services provide enriching opportunities for joyful music and worship, warm fellowship, communal prayer, and scripture-centered preaching of the word. These elements not only set the tone for the week but have equipped the congregation to reach out in mission both locally and in the broader world. Folks feel “at home” and renewed at Eastminster but also challenged to grow in their faith and service.

Both traditional and Jubilee services have benefited from technology since the COVID-19 pandemic of the early 2020s. The live stream of both services has a strong viewership, and this helps keep “in-person” numbers manageable. The church also invested in technology to monitor body temperature in a non-intrusive way, as well as an improved air quality system to keep air from getting stagnate in the worship space. Hymnals and pew Bibles are gone; lyrics and Bible verses are projected on to screens. After each service, the worship spaces continue to be cleaned thoroughly. “Safe Church” is a comprehensive term in 2028.

After worship, Russ and Susan (with kids in tow) join Kenny and Sidney in the church parlor for a very brief time of Coffee and Conversation. (Today it is too hot to do it in the church courtyard.) Russ invites Kenny to join him for the evening live streamed local missions update meeting. Sidney has enjoyed the Jubilee service so much that Susan invites her to come again to the 7 p.m.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

service. But then Susan remembers that she and Rebecca have their mother/daughter Bible study via Zoom tonight at 7 p.m. "I've got just enough time to get the kids back from Sunday evening youth group before Bible study starts. Maybe some other time," Susan asks Sidney.

It's a full Sunday of worship and fellowship. It sets the tone for the week, equipping the membership to recognize each day that they are blessed to be a blessing.

Monday Madness at Eastminster

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

Jen and Andy begin their work week each Monday like many American families. The week begins with hope and excitement for what might come as the couple balances marriage, work, a young family, a budget and an ever-present tug from the Creator of the world to explore what it means to be called Christian. Though Jen works from home, she prepares each morning to feed, dress and pack lunches for the couple's 4-year-old and 2-year-old, who both attend the Eastminster Day School (EDS). Before the day begins, the young couple has decided to start each morning with prayer and quiet time. The EPC app on their smart phones push out Monday's devotional with supporting scripture, each day at 6 a.m. Andy has found it hard to ignore God when the banner alert on his iPhone X28 glows brighter with each passing minute. As they meditate on the Word and the week, they remember Sunday's teaching from the pulpit. The six-week sermon series on "The Lord's Prayer" has piqued their interest in further study of Matthew's Gospel account, and in particular, Jesus's famous teaching, the Sermon on the Mount.

Unfortunately, further exploration of Matthew will have to wait until small group, as the baby is crying loudly now, and work calls have started. Andy rushes to pack the car and head out to EDS. At check in, Andy's phone buzzes with updates from EDS including the upcoming choral performance, information on Donuts with Dads, and the scripture passage of the week, Matthew 6:11.

After drop-off, Andy calls Jen to let her know that it went smoothly, though he neglects to mention one child is shoeless. He arrives at the office just in time for his first of several meetings. At lunch as he blesses his daily bread, he thanks His heavenly Father, who has truly provided so much more than food. Andy hits play on the EPC podcast titled, "Fruit at Work" and settles in for this quick mid-day devotional.

It's late in the day and the family comes together for dinner. God's blessings abound as Andy prays in thanksgiving to God for children, health and the meal. This couple's enthusiasm for a heart like Jesus equips them as they engage with their community this evening. After dinner, Jen checks in with their neighbor and fellow EPC member, Ellen, who is home and often lonely following the death of her husband after 62 years of marriage. Jen leads her in prayer this evening



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

for the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding. They are both grateful to God for their church home which has blessed them with wonderful relationships and teaching for their years in Columbia.

Tuesday at Eastminster for a Retired Couple

"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12

Mitchell and Catherine are a retired couple with three adult children with families of their own and two grandchildren. They moved from Greenville back to Columbia about two years ago in 2026 and recently joined Eastminster. They previously knew about Eastminster but were surprised that they could stop into the Welcome Center during the week and talk with someone, as well as access information virtually about the church. Both Mitch and Catherine were impressed by the busy calendar at Eastminster and the mix of technology as well as "human" touch.

As a retired couple with some time on their hands, they like to start their mornings with the emailed daily devotional. They enjoy that it is written by the membership and they have dared to write a few devotionals themselves. While Mitchell enjoys the men's small group breakfast on Monday, Tuesday is the day he and Catherine go together to the CLC for a Stretch and Strengthen class specifically for their older demographic. The CLC seems to be a hub of activity at Eastminster. After exercise class, Mitch and Catherine stop downstairs at the HeBrews Coffee Shop for a cup of decaf. A recording of the Sunday Jubilee Worship Service plays on the screen behind them. On their way out, they listen briefly as another retired church member (in her 70s) reads a Bible story for the Eastminster Day School kids. This intergenerational effort of mixing young and old has shown itself to be a blessing to all involved.

Mitch and Catherine could stay for lunch at Eastminster, but the PEP group has an outing planned for the afternoon and they don't want to miss the trip. They clean up and lunch at home to return to the church in the afternoon for a bus ride in one of the church's buses which runs on natural gas. Eastminster has gone "green" and Mitchell and Catherine like this ecological stewardship. (Technology is not just about the internet!) Church transportation is a big help for these outings. Mitch and Catherine want to be part of them for as long as they can. Programs which provide fellowship with their contemporaries is very attractive to them. They enjoy the energy of the young people at Eastminster, and it's nice to share stories from your earlier years with others.

With the trip over, they pick up some take-out supper from the Eastminster kitchen and head back to their house. They have been attending a class on "Sharing Your Faith," but tonight they'll live-stream the class. The class has helped them feel more comfortable talking about church. It is great to learn from different people of different ages—the hesitations they have had and how



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

much more at ease they have become in the company of friends of neighbors sharing why church is important.

For Mitch and Catherine, the access to various classes, programs, resources, and fellowship at Eastminster has really given them a sense of community. It seems there is something new every day!

A 2028 Wednesday at Eastminster

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Kristin is 32, the single mother of 10-year-old Rebecca and 8-year-old Steve. Kristin's husband, David, died in a tragic car accident six years ago. Through the difficult process of grieving, Kristin has counted on the ministries of Eastminster church to help her family. Kristin grew up in Eastminster and she will quickly mention the church's importance in her life. "This church today is even more important to me than the Eastminster I grew up in.," she says.

Grief is one of those experiences that crosses generations. She feels particularly blessed that there are Eastminster members with the spiritual gift of support and have been equipped by the church to help her in her struggles.

Kristin makes a point to start the day with Rebecca and Steve by looking at the church devotional that comes across via email. They like that it is written mostly by fellow members and they really like the diversity of topics. "There's always one particular day when the verse is just what I need," says Kristin. She is trying to nudge the kids toward "something we might write as a family" to offer as a devotional.

While at work, Kristin will often get a text from Melanie, a Stephen Minister who has become a close friend. Even though it has been six years since her husband passed away, Kristin will occasionally feel overwhelmed. She knows she can easily contact Melanie or the church staff for a warm word or quick prayer. During her lunch break, she will sometimes check Eastminster's website for updates on grief and loss. She's found things to read, brief videos to watch and even the online support group composed of Eastminster members who have all had some kind of loss in their life.

The online group spans a range of ages, but there is one thing in common: grief and loss. She thought that she would feel out of place as a young widow, but she has felt such solace hearing from older church members and even male church members with whom she might not have thought to connect. Grief, and giving it meaning in your life, has been the bond for them all.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Kristin is fortunate that her parents (also Eastminster members) are available to watch her kids on Wednesday evening after work. On occasion, all three generations are together for the Wednesday evening food and fellowship at Eastminster. But tonight, it's a nice break for her to have a meal with other church members. She has found great refreshment in several of the short courses offered on Wednesday night after supper. There was a short session on Psalms and another one on the writings of C.S. Lewis. She even sat in on a one-time class on the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. She's toying with a longer study commitment, an overview class of the Old Testament. Kristin is pleased that Eastminster has done such a good job "training the trainers." Many of the teachers are laypeople, but they always come prepared and know the material. She feels such connection and comfort with the prayer time they share together.

Often in the evening, after the kids are in bed, Kristin will flip to the Eastminster website and listen to a few of the virtual resources. She particularly likes listening to recorded choir anthems and songs that are so readily available. It seems to her so easy to recapture the feelings and sensations of being in worship together with others when she hears the organ and the voices. That reminder of being connected is so comforting when she feels alone.

Thursday Transitions

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Mark 12:31

Eight years ago, Lucy was under-employed and close to homeless. On yet another Thursday of scraping by, she found herself at the Food Lion in Five Points. Motivated by hunger, she approached a kind-looking stranger and asked, "Can you help me out?"

The kind-looking stranger, Barbara, responded with a smile and said, "Sure. How can I help you?"

Lucy asked, "Could you buy some okra for me?"

Startled, Barbara asked, "What?"

Lucy replied (a little louder): "Okra."

Barbara laughed and said, "Sure! I've never had anyone ask me to buy them okra before. You go pick some out and then meet me in the meat department."

Lucy filled a plastic bag with okra and rejoined Barbara. She handed Barbara the small bag of okra.

"Would you like a little ground beef to go with your okra?" Barbara asked.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Lucy's eyes lit up at the unexpected question. "Sure!"

Barbara put Lucy's groceries in the front section of her cart. "I've got more shopping to do. Come walk with me."

Lucy was drawn to Barbara's relaxed manner and engaging smile. Oddly, though discouraged and down on her luck, Lucy didn't feel "less than" with Barbara. There was something about her demeanor.

In the simple act of walking aisles and gathering groceries, Barbara talked with Lucy and listened to her story, learning a little of who Lucy was and where she came from. Barbara told Lucy that she reminded her of her daughter; they were about the same age.

"I bet you're a really good mom," said Lucy.

"God has blessed and trusted me with three children. I feel very blessed."

"So... you go to church?" asked Lucy.

"Yes. God's love is very important to me."

"Wow, you... you talk about that so easily. Have you always been like this?"

"Well, not always," Barbara replied. "There was a time in my life when I didn't know how to talk about God's love. I got a little help at church to learn how to do it."

Lucy and Barbara turned down the aisle and head to check out.

Barbara asked, "Do you go to church?"

"No, not in a while," Lucy replied.

"Would you like to come with me this Sunday?"

"I'd like that," Lucy said. "But I don't have a car."

Barbara asked, "What if I pick you up in front of Food Lion? Sunday morning, maybe 10:30?"

Lucy looked hesitant and a little unnerved. Barbara noted her discomfort, then asked her, "Do you have a phone or access to a computer?"



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

“Sure. I do have a phone,” replied Lucy.

“Google ‘Eastminster Church in Columbia’.” The website will tell you about the church. There are some neat videos of worship and even some musical recordings. I’ll leave it up to you. If you’d like to join me, I’ll see you here, at 10:30 Sunday morning.”

That was eight years ago. Lucy *did* join Barbara for church that Sunday. And another Sunday, and another Sunday. It took several Sundays before Lucy confessed her struggles with reading and her failure to finish high school. With a grace that surprised Lucy, Barbara reassured Lucy. “God loves us all, people who can read and those who can’t.”

With Barbara’s encouragement, Lucy found a tutor through Eastminster. That opened other doors: A GED, a driver’s license, a better job and a supportive church community.

Lucy is now an active Eastminster member. She’s active with the Transitions ministry. She also volunteers to drive the bus to bring folks to worship. She’s never forgotten Barbara’s encouragement and her kind words: “God loves us all.”

Fellowship, Fun, Friday Nights

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Jacob has always been involved in sports. Eight years ago, he played basketball at Eastminster’s Christian Life Center for the first time. It was such a great facility and the parent volunteers seemed so nice. Some of it was foreign to him because he didn’t grow up in the church. He understood sportsmanship, but some of the praying stuff and the scripture banners were really new to him. But his mom felt he was safe at Eastminster, so she encouraged the basketball and other outings to the CLC.

Jacob’s mom is a night nurse and a single parent. She worked hard and came to what games she could—basketball, soccer, and then football. By the time Jacob was 15 and a freshman at AC Flora, his skills had earned him a spot as second-string quarterback on the varsity squad. He had heard about the Friday night pre-game ritual for Flora players. Before home games on Friday night, the squad came to Eastminster for a pre-game meal and a devotional.

The food on Friday night was always good. There was contemporary Christian music or a video playing in the background. Mr. Taylor, a retired coach who got around with a cane, was always so personable and encouraging. Jacob never figured out how Mr. Taylor did it, but he seemed to know every name of every Flora student there. It was a great feeling before getting braced for



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

the football competition ahead. Jacob often wondered if other students felt as welcomed and at home at Eastminster as he did. "Good lasagna will do that for you!"

But it wasn't just the food. This was a gathering where not only his teammates but all the adults in the room seemed to be cheering each other on, pulling for one another. Jacob even liked the devotionals. They got him thinking about his own life in a serious kind of way. They also got him wondering and curious about God.

After that first freshman football season was over, Jacob really came to miss Friday evenings at the church. A teammate, Chuck, who was a member at Eastminster, asked Jacob to come back for the Jubilee service. He started coming to Jubilee, then Sunday night youth group, then Sunday School. He even did some singing with the Youth Band. He had never heard of the Souper Bowl of Caring, but soon he was in the thick of that, holding a soup pot at the end of worship that Sunday. His mom even let him watch the Super Bowl game up in the youth lounge with some friends.

Jacob is a senior now and that first encounter with Friday Night Highlights with God at Eastminster seems like a while ago. Flora continues to have a pre-game meal and fellowship at Eastminster. After the game – win or lose—most of the players come back to Eastminster for a soda, popcorn and maybe some pickup basketball. High school kids from all over Columbia seem to come to the post-game hangout at Eastminster. There are good people there.

Jacob is beginning to understand what there is about a relationship with God that moves people to reach out and connect with others. It's tough to be a 17-year-old in 2028. But there's some kind of blessing he feels when he comes to Eastminster.

The Saturday Seeker

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

For most of Kyle's life, he has considered himself a nice person, generally full of good thoughts and always willing to help others. He worked as a construction crew manager for 18 years before losing his job due to the acquisition of his employer's construction company. Kyle finds himself now managing stress he has never experienced before with serious questions about life and his ability to cope. He and Leah have three school-aged children and a son in college. This is a difficult time to be without income as the bills come in. Fortunately, Leah was able to pick up shifts at the hospital to help with the challenges they face.

It is a crisp Autumn Saturday morning and Kyle and his family have been invited to a mission day at Eastminster Presbyterian Church. Normally Kyle would pass on the offer as his prior church



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

experiences from the early 2000s turned him off to church. And they had not attended a traditional church in many years.

This is different, however, as the invitation came via a Friday night text from Ken, owner of a local construction company where Kyle might find employment as a foreman one day. Ken has mentioned his mission-minded church several times over the years and Kyle sees Ken smile when he talks about EPC. Reluctantly, Kyle doesn't have a good reason to say no and agrees to bring Leah and a couple of his kids to the mission gathering which Ken refers to affectionately as "Go God."

The opportunities to serve on this day are eye-opening. It is like a buffet of service engagement opportunities from a Habitat for Humanity build to packing college care packages, Transitions meal preparation, even a blood drive. Ken was given a flyer showing more ways to serve beyond this one Saturday a month! Kyle and Leah notice how many people are determined, engaged and joyful as they gather to serve. They see folks of all ages, retirees down to children, plugging in to complete the tasks at hand, and are amazed at the enthusiasm and joy they exude as they serve. Ken makes sure that the couple plugs in and meets a few people. Though they participated for only a couple hours, one thing was clear, Eastminster was a place where many different people came together with purpose.

As they left, Kyle's phone buzzed with thank yous and messages of encouragement. One alert grabbed his attention, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" Jeremiah 29:13 Later that evening his social media news feeds were full of ways to connect at Eastminster.

Several weeks pass, and Kyle, still without work, decides to reach out to Ken and ask for help. Immediately Ken answers the phone and offers to meet for coffee. The next morning, Ken realizes the trouble facing his friend and offers to listen and ultimately lead Kyle in prayer. As Ken prays, Kyle feels a nudge to further explore His faith. After many weeks of meetings and discussion with Ken, Kyle has decided he wants to move from listening to EPC sermons and podcasts to experiencing worship in person.



Building Community Within & Beyond

"It is not good that man should be alone..." Genesis 2:18

Knowing that God created us to be in relationship with one another, Eastminster strives to build a thriving community by providing opportunities for members to fellowship in rich and meaningful ways so that each person may grow in his/her relationship with Christ.

As Eastminster grows as a vibrant community the sharing of information is vital. The various platforms we use, whether in person, virtual, as a community within the church, and as a church within the community, all reflect clear, concise, and consistent communication.

1. **Goal:**

Design printed materials to be clear and concise.

Actions

- A. Design all informational materials so they are available either by pdf online or as printed material.
- B. Design materials to allow members to select whether to receive information online or through a printed platform.
- C. Provide printed materials in large print as needed.

2. **Goal:**

Leaders communicating information for Eastminster will be well informed.

Actions:

- A. Provide training for those who are in leadership positions or who are volunteering in ministries to carry a consistent message across all communication platforms within the church.

3. **Goal:**

All new members will be encouraged to become involved in the work of the church.

Actions:

- A. New members, through their First Step Class or Individual Sponsors, will be introduced to service and learning opportunities in and around Eastminster. New members will be encouraged to select areas of interest and be introduced to a contact person.
- B. First Step Class leaders or individual sponsors will follow up with new members to ensure that they have found opportunities to serve.
- C. Inform young couples what it means to be a Covenant Family for the EDS.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

4. **Goal:**

Involve nonmember Christian Life Center (CLC) users in the life of the church.

Actions:

- A. Get contact information of nonmember CLC users and provide them with information on Eastminster programs, worship, and activities.

5. **Goal:**

Involve nonmember Eastminster Day School (EDS) parents in the life of the church.

Actions:

- A. Use contact information of nonmember EDS parents and provide them with information on Eastminster programs, worship, and activities.

6. **Goal:**

Enhance the perception of Eastminster in the community at large as a body of Christ which is welcoming, scripture-based, and mission-oriented.

Actions:

- A. Provide opportunities for members of Eastminster and other diverse churches to worship and fellowship together.
- B. Hold a community hymn sing to benefit a common mission such as Family Promise and invite neighborhood choirs to participate.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

CHRIST-CENTERED LIVING / CORPORATE & PERSONAL WORSHIP

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Romans 12:2

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster Presbyterian Church will grow into a community epicenter which provides easy access for all people to worship our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, with a body of believers in person or via virtual means. To ensure this goal is reached, we will meditate on scripture as our cornerstone and guide as we invest in technology, personnel, and physical worship spaces while offering a variety of worship styles and meeting times.

1. **Goal:**

Increase attendance and active participation at all worship services.

Actions:

- A. Evaluate current service times and locations and make changes as needed.
- B. Build or repurpose spaces to accommodate growing Jubilee and Peace services. Develop a plan for the future space of the Jubilee service and consider a chapel-type space to offer an intimate setting available for smaller gatherings such as the Peace service. Developing these plans will require considerable energy and expertise to effectively accommodate unique styles of worship.

2. **Goal:**

Maintain scripture as the foundation of the church.

Actions:

- A. Teach sound doctrine from the pulpit to include deep Biblical teaching equipping the Body of Christ, so the Body can go out with the Gospel at the center of their service in this community and beyond.
- B. Develop scripture-based sermon series used in all worship services to promote harmony on the church campus.
- C. Launch thematic studies of the Bible in small groups and Sunday School.



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

3. Goal:

Encourage congregational participation in worship through music.

Actions:

- A. Utilize more familiar hymns/songs in all services while continuing to introduce newer worship music.
- B. Provide better guidance to encourage congregational singing/participation in Jubilee.
- C. Include children's choirs and youth bands in worship more frequently.

4. Goal:

Expand staff to address growing needs.

Actions:

- A. Explore hiring a Director of Christian Education.
- B. Review the roles and responsibilities of current staff.
- C. Explore the hiring of a Social Media Coordinator.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

FAITH FORMATION AND DISCIPLESHIP FOR ADULTS

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.” 2 Peter 3:18

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster is committed to giving our congregation diverse opportunities to grow in their walk with Christ. These opportunities will meet the individual where they are in their faith journey. Whether it is giving support to individuals who are finding Christ for the first time or opening new pathways of discipleship for lifelong believers, educational programming will be offered in a variety of platforms (in-person, virtually, podcasts, etc.) and topics to meet the needs of our congregation.

1. **Goal:**

All members will be encouraged to participate in Sunday School, Sunday night, small group, Wednesday night, and Christian education classes that meet everyone's spiritual needs and encourage spiritual growth and development.

Actions:

- A. Offer a one-and-done Sunday School class.
- B. Offer short Sunday School series (no more than 3 weeks) open to all members.
- C. Encourage a culture of “open” Sunday School where members are encouraged to rotate to different classes based on topic, invite friends to their Sunday School class, etc.
- D. Eastminster will offer more Sunday School classes led by pastoral staff. This could be a rotating schedule of pastors (ex. One month taught by one pastor then next month another pastor). These pastoral-led classes should be recorded, organized, and made available to members who were unable to attend in person.
- E. All small groups will be listed on a website with study description, day, time, and where meet, and group leader name, email, and phone numbers.
- F. All small groups will be encouraged for others to join their group.
- G. Educational offerings, including Sunday and/or Wednesday night classes, should be recorded, and made available online.
- H. Educational offerings should be offered during weekday times by virtual meeting format so working members can participate.
- I. Eastminster will host guest speakers throughout the year, focusing on mental and physical health, wellness, and mindfulness.



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

2. Goal:

Eastminster will enhance its welcome, support, and involvement of new members.

Actions:

- A. The Evangelism and Membership Ministry, together with its support personnel, will review the current new members program considering what kinds of programs are effective and/or have been effective in other churches. Similar reviews should be conducted by the Nurture Education and Discipleship Ministry (NED) and its support personnel to ensure that the educational and discipleship offerings of the church are as appealing as possible to new members and that new members are being informed about those opportunities and are being specifically encouraged to participate. Also, the Fellowship Ministry should review its offerings and activities with a special emphasis on the needs of new members and extending personal invitations to new members to actively participate in fellowship activities.
- B. Pairing new members to encourage faith formation through Sunday School classes, Sunday night classes, Wednesday evening classes, small groups, and volunteer opportunities. The Evangelism and Membership Ministry and/or First Steps Coordinators will give the leadership of small groups, Sunday School classes, and service and outreach groups, along with all ministers and staff, the names and contact information of new members who may be a good “fit” for the particular small group, class, or outreach which they coordinate so that those leaders may extend a personal invitation to new members to join them (i.e., a new member who is a young single person who has expressed interest in working with their hands may be referred to the Young Adults Sunday School class, a particular small group for younger single people, and the grass cutting and Habitat for Humanity outreach ministries.)



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

FAITH FORMATION AND DISCIPLESHIP FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND YOUNG ADULTS

“Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.” Proverbs 22:6

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster is focused on establishing a strong faith foundation in our youth and young adults. The world is constantly changing, where our youth and young adults face new challenges each day that distract them from remaining focused on living Christian lives. We will strive to provide our children, their families, and our young adults with guidance and direction to stay Christ-centered in their lives.

1. **Goal:**

Eastminster will create a solid faith-based educational foundation for children, middle/high school youth, and their families.

Actions:

- A. Revamp Sunday School (K-5th grade): Consider updating curriculum for K-5th grade Sunday School classes. Consider adding more staff/interns to support director of children’s ministries.
- B. Sunday School Teacher Recruitment: Recruit and encourage older or other church members to become Sunday School teachers for K-5th grades. This will expand the intergenerational interactions within the church and allow parents of younger children to attend an adult Sunday School class.
- C. Update the church bulletin for 1st-5th grade.
- D. Consider dividing Jesus Rocks into two groups (1st-3rd and 4th-5th).
- E. Encourage middle/high school youth to interact more with children and youth through teaching Sunday School or Jesus Rocks.
- F. Expand the opportunities for middle/high school youth to write devotionals.
- G. Involve youth more in the Jubilee and Traditional Service outside of Youth Sunday.
- H. Sunday School Information for Visitors: Have Sunday School class information for each grade level on the website.
- I. Increase Outside Speakers or Series for Youth: Bring in outside speakers to speak to youth. Look at educational/development programs that target critical ages for social/emotional needs of our youth (i.e. Created by God series).



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

2. Goal:

Eastminster will support faith formation and church involvement for college-age youth and young adults (21-30).

Actions:

- A. The Minister for Younger Adults, along with the NED Ministry, will establish a mentoring program within the church through which college students and other younger adults (members and visitors) may be assigned an appropriate mentor who would be available to that younger person as a spiritual and life adviser. Mentors would be recruited from Eastminster members who have exhibited spiritual and personal maturity but who also have a youthful perspective on life. The mentors and proteges would establish their meeting schedule and goals but would report generally to the Minister for Younger Adults (at least quarterly).
- B. The NED Ministry, along with the Fellowship Ministry, will review successful programs at other churches which have and/or are providing educational and support groups for younger members and visitors (to include college students) and professional and/or networking opportunities for this age group, to establish, maintain, and grow a program at Eastminster, which encourages young adults to grow spiritually and socially in a Christian setting. The program, when fully established, would be as strong, popular, and effective as the program which Eastminster has established for its senior high youth.
- C. Fellowship Ministry, with support from the Minister for Younger Adults and the CLC, will create and support popular activities for social interaction among members and visitors in this age group. These activities may include concerts, lunch bunch/dinners, outdoor activities, special interest groups, sports teams, Saturday Soda City, Nickelodeon Movie Night, and personal and professional offerings such as personal finance, paying off loans, career development, and interview skills.
- D. Plan and provide volunteer opportunities and missions specifically for this age group.
- E. Start a young adult care team to help older church members with chores, errands, yard work, etc.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

3. Goal:

Eastminster will provide opportunities for all children, youth, and young adults to volunteer and participate in mission/community outreach.

Actions:

- A. Provide local mini-mission opportunities for families.
- B. Create a quarterly workday where a local project is offered with varying amounts of difficulty so whole families can help with the work (Family Workday or Youth Workday).
- C. Participate, potentially, in Nailbenders, which meets one or two Saturdays a month to tackle local mission projects at the homes of elderly, handicapped, or non-profits.
- D. Team up with another local church to support other missions.

4. Goal:

Eastminster will actively support and grow Eastminster Day School as a resource for members and the community; Eastminster will encourage family involvement, participation, and spiritual growth and development through Eastminster Day School programming.

Actions:

- A. More physical space, allowing more members' children to attend the Day School.
- B. Extend the Day School's hours to allow for earlier morning and later evenings to accommodate working families' schedules.
- C. Re-evaluate Covenant Family requirements.
- D. Evaluate and expand the Day School after-hour programs; what are other local church preschool programs doing (hours of operation, features, functionality, benefits, etc.)?



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

INVITING, INCLUDING, ENGAGING

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster is a congregation composed of members who are equipped to share the importance of their faith. The membership has been trained and is comfortable having conversations with friends and new acquaintances, telling them of Eastminster ministries and inviting them to church, Sunday School, or special community gatherings. Church programs, ministries, and events are diverse and accessible for visitors, new members, and long-term members of every demographic. Programs will be inclusive of diverse age demographics, marital status, and special needs. Various expressions of worship (traditional, Jubilee, and the Peace Service) are still offered and have been enhanced to engage the interest of a diverse membership. Various opportunities for smaller group interaction (traditional Sunday School, small groups, etc.) continue to be offered and are enhanced to engage the interest of the membership.

1. **Goal:**

Anyone interested in Eastminster will have easy access to information about the different programs, ministries, events of the church through multiple conduits. That information will include what the programs are and how to become involved.

Actions:

- A. Members will be encouraged to retake and/or review their Spiritual Gifts inventories to affirm or discover where their interests in the programs of the church lie. A designated staff member is available to review responses and put them in a database and contact members to discuss results and opportunities for engagement.
- B. There will be a database of members who do not access the website and need analog info and communications and opportunities to sign up for church programs and events.
- C. There will be advertising and marketing of any scholarship available for those who would like to participate in a mission trip but find it cost-prohibitive.

2. **Goal:** Eastminster will equip members better to invite others to church and/or otherwise share their own faith stories with other people.

Actions:

- A. A three-session class will be held twice a year to help members in the dynamics of inviting others to church and/or sharing the gospel with others.
- B. Online resources through the church website will be available to assist those in wanting to know more about how to invite others and/or share their faith with others. (These might be short tips or even 3-minute videos.)



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

3. Goal:

Programs, ministries, events at Eastminster will consistently and intentionally seek to include and engage participants along and across our membership demographics. This includes (and is not limited to) such subsets as singles, families, older members, and members with special needs. Intergenerational programming is consistently part of these events.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will develop a long-ranging, three-year calendar to include a list of class offerings so that members can plan and feel more confident that their study and learning needs are being met. The calendar will include more options for Wednesday night classes and studies and consider the value of launching long-term studies like Bethel, Financial Peace, and Sunday School teacher training.

4. Goal:

Visitors will easily find programs, events, ministries that they can engage in.

Actions:

- A. The church campus will continue to be attractive and well-maintained, providing much curb appeal to visitors.
- B. Welcome Center “strategy” will be reviewed and updated to address changing needs and current needs. The strategy will possibly include a clearly designated "welcome team" of church members to direct visitors. Welcome teams are positioned in the breezeway. The location of the visitors' parking spots is re-evaluated.
- C. The Welcome Center will transition from a desk in the narthex to a more obvious and mission-specific location. It is now a space to receive people and register them as guests. It will provide direction and lead them to where they are going, whether that is to Jubilee or Traditional service, a Sunday school class, or the nursery. The Center could potentially grow to be staffed daily throughout the week.
- D. Welcome Centers will be manned by greeters who have training in “best practices” for effectively engaging visitors. Updated maps and materials about Eastminster will be readily available.
- E. Materials about Eastminster programs, events, ministries will include descriptions and contact information about how to find out more.
- F. Campus signage to make the campus navigable for visitors will be reviewed and updated.
- G. Internal campus signage will include larger “You are Here” maps throughout the church campus.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

5. **Goal:**

Eastminster will continue to be intentional about developing programs, events, and ministries to engage inactive members.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will review current plans and strategies to re-engage inactive members.
- B. Eastminster will research and consult on the contemporary “best practices” for inactive member outreach and re-engagement.
- C. Eastminster will train and equip active church members through brief training in how effective invitations are offered to re-engage inactive members.
- D. Eastminster will continue to build upon the neighborhood shepherding program. Along with many other uses, staying in touch with neighbors could encourage attendance by inactive or potentially inactive members.

6. **Goal:**

Eastminster will continue to be intentional about updating strategies and models to engage its new members.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will assert a more vigorous program of handholding to assist new members in finding a Sunday School, small group, or mission project to begin fellowship.
- B. Eastminster will continue to actively encourage diverse Sunday School class experiences with opportunities for moving between classes. On an ongoing basis, Sunday School classes programs are reviewed, as well as the strategy to incorporate new members.
- C. A strategy to attract new members, consideration, and strategy will be given to as well as to keep active Sunday School classes fresh, novel, and current, open to new ideas and new members of every demographic.

7. **Goal:**

Eastminster will continue to be aggressively intentional about developing programs, events, ministries to engage, invite, include young adults (college students, those who have just graduated, singles). A designated staff member or team will be responsible for shepherding this demographic at our church.

Actions:

- A. The appropriate ministry team will be directed to review the current strategies we employ. They will be further tasked with researching and consulting to update our strategy to invite, gauge, and include young adults.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

- B. Eastminster will offer two annual “one and done” programs or events and one on-going church program for this age group.

8. Goal:

Eastminster will continue to be aggressively intentional about developing programs, events, and ministries for the engagement of parents and families.

Actions:

- A. The appropriate ministry team will be directed to review current programming and strategies we employ to engage and include this demographic. They will be further tasked with researching and consulting to update our plan to engage, invite, include this demographic in church life.
- B. Eastminster will offer two annual “one and done” programs or events and one on-going church program specifically engaging this demographic.

9. Goal:

Eastminster will be intentional about developing programs for the engagement of retirees and seniors. (inclusive of their different capacities as “Go-Go’s; Slow-Go’s; No-Go’s”)

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will re-evaluate its physical plant for accessibility for those (elderly and others) with mobility issues.
- B. Eastminster will continue to aggressively support the PEP fellowship group for our senior members. This includes a re-evaluation of church staffing needs for this demographic, which may include a Senior Director of Ministry.
- C. Eastminster will establish a Senior Member Worship Sunday on the model of Youth Sunday. Senior members will be invited to be guest preachers.
- D. Eastminster will evaluate and establish an effective transportation program to assist senior members with transportation needs. This includes getting to church events (worship, Sunday School, Wednesday night programs, brief service projects) as well as other lifestyle needs (doctor visits, etc.).
- E. Eastminster will research and consult with other resources regarding the best ways to engage senior demographic in our church. The Church will confirm and ascertain what they wish to be involved in. They might be involved in teaching, mentoring, and visiting shut-ins, or speaking in the church New Member class.
- F. Eastminster will continue to establish conduits for senior member feedback regarding their pastoral/ministerial needs and their interest in contributing to church programs and ministries. This would also include giving this group opportunities to teach and mentor.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

- G. Eastminster will amplify church programs for senior wellness- physical, mental, social, spiritual, emotional, and even financial. These include programs and resources through the website and other social media applications. Many of these programs are offered in daylight hours.

10. Goal:

Eastminster will continue to use its facilities and resources to invite, include, and engage our membership, as well as non-members.

Actions:

- A. Visitors to the CLC will continue to have easy and portable access to information about programs and ministries at Eastminster.
- B. Based on their interest and with their permission, non-member users of the CLC will be asked for email addresses to receive information about church programs. They might clearly unsubscribe at their convenience.
- C. Exercise classes and other programs at the CLC will continue to be open to non-members.
- D. Eastminster worship services will be re-broadcast into the CLC for visitor viewing.



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

MISSIONS: JOINING IN GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD

"Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" Matthew 25:37 - 40

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster will continue to thrive in large part from the involvement of our congregation in local missions and beyond. Members are easily navigating the revised Service Commitment platform. The combined Stewardship and Service Commitment on Dedication Sunday stresses the importance of both for the life of the church.

Members will be more knowledgeable about our mission partners and service opportunities. Ongoing groups will welcome new volunteers to participate when they can. A monthly mission and service calendar and weekly activities will be printed in the bulletin with a contact person and make it convenient for both long- and short-term planning. Over the last few years, Eastminster has increased on-site service projects with our local mission partners, which have allowed members to have more personal interactions with the ministries and opportunities to work with members of other churches. Our churchwide support of service opportunities throughout Columbia on MLK Day has grown each year and worldwide mission trips will continue for adults and youth.

1. Goal:

All members of the congregation will be encouraged to be involved in the life of the church within and beyond Eastminster.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will implement a revised Service Commitment platform. (Appendix A)
- B. Eastminster will combine Stewardship and Service Commitment on Dedication Sunday.
- C. Eastminster will hold a Mission Fair / Service Opportunities Info before Dedication Sunday.
- D. Eastminster will prepare and distribute an interactive Mission and Service Calendar. (Appendix B)
- E. Eastminster will compile and distribute a list of volunteers to each ministry.
- F. Each ministry will contact all volunteers who have indicated an interest to serve. The appropriate ministry will follow-up with members who do not make a service commitment.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

2. Goal:

Educate members on all missions Eastminster supports financially and provide timely communications to members about service opportunities.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will have a quarterly “Get Involved” Sunday School class highlighting upcoming mission and service opportunities.
- B. Eastminster will promote the upcoming mission and service opportunities using timely videos.
- C. Eastminster will publish a monthly Mission and Service Calendar.
- D. Eastminster will publish weekly activities with a contact person.
- E. Eastminster will promote inclusion for all service opportunities.
- F. Eastminster will publish a follow-up article after each service opportunity.

3. Goal

Provide opportunities for Eastminster members to develop relationships with the missions Eastminster supports financially.

Actions:

- A. Contact each local mission Eastminster supports financially to determine ways Eastminster members can volunteer.
- B. We will join with other congregations for larger projects involving organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Fisher House, and Thornwell Home for Children.
- C. We will search for city-wide service projects that Eastminster members can participate in on MLK Day.
- D. We will continue to seek meaningful ways both youth and adults can serve at home and abroad.
- E. Eastminster will continue to facilitate the targeted financial support of mission trips by those with financial means to assist church members without financial means and who otherwise would not be able to go on mission trips.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

OUR LIFE TOGETHER AND CONGREGATIONAL CARE

“Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.” 1 Peter 5:2

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster reflects the image of a Christian community by providing ample opportunities for members of all ages, interests, and abilities to discover, express, and apply their spiritual gifts as the body of Christ through ministry, social activities and active care for one another.

1. **Goal:**

Continue to support the growing interest in Contemporary worship service while keeping the worship service part of the broader mission and life of Eastminster.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will offer an additional Sunday evening contemporary worship service.
- B. Eastminster will re-evaluate the staffing needs to support the Jubilee service as it continues to grow.
- C. Eastminster will re-evaluate the need for space to accommodate the Jubilee service as it continues to grow.
- D. Eastminster will re-evaluate the worship service bulletins, methods for conveying lyrics, and/or musical scores for worship songs.
- E. A robust, obvious, and dedicated Welcome Center will direct guests to the appropriate service, including the Jubilee worship service.

2. **Goal:**

Eastminster continues to adapt, develop, and support opportunities for fellowship, affirming that fellowship builds up the body and provides care, support, community, and interdependence.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will utilize space in the CLC to develop a fellowship area in the manner of a coffeehouse or juice bar. This area may be seasonal in offering or year-round.
- B. Outreach to our family college students will be strategic, comprehensive, and aggressive, utilizing social media platforms and other conduits of outreach.
- C. The current church strategies for integrating new members into the church will be reviewed to incorporate new ways of capturing/engaging new members into the fellowship life of the church and the various ministries of the church. A one to three-month mentoring/shepherding program helps integrate new members effectively.
- D. Eastminster will consistently offer in-town / short-distance outings and programs and retreats congruent with the liturgical calendar (Advent, Lent, other church seasons).



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

- E. The variety of mission trips and service projects will continue to expand with diverse “one and done” and “closer to home” projects.
- F. Eastminster will continue to support a strong small group ministry. More traditional groups such as Sunday School will be reinvigorated. Church staffing, potentially including a Director of Christian Education to support Sunday School teachers and programs, will be evaluated.

3. **Goal:**

Eastminster offers new and varied channels for members to notify the church of personal and/or pastoral needs. The church expands programs and resources to help parishioners address those needs.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will sponsor personal development programs to include short-term courses as well as special speaker community programs on a variety of topics to include relationship enrichment, parenting skills, personal finance, elder concerns, etc.
- B. Eastminster will encourage partnering with neighboring churches and community organizations with similar programming/interest. Wider service and fellowship opportunities with the broader community are developed.
- C. The “Special Persons” ministry of the diaconate will continue. Other programs such as Care Team Ministry and neighborhood care teams will be re-evaluated and revamped as needed. Stephen Ministers program will be re-evaluated and updated/alterd as needed.

4. **Goal:**

On an ongoing basis, Eastminster will assess its care programs to the members of the congregation. The watchword for this assessment and care-program development will be “nimbleness.” In a time of rapid social change, it is recognized that the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of congregants will change. On a continuous basis, the church will ask if we should continue programs and what we need to do differently.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will monitor, adjust, and evaluate and alter programs such as Stephen Ministers, Care Teams, Prayer Shawls, Prayer Cards, and other ministries in place to support the emotional life of the congregation.
- B. Eastminster will re-evaluate staffing needs for congregational care, as are often done in a large, growing, and theologically diverse congregation.



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

5. Goal:

Focus on care to our aging congregants, young families, and college-age young adults and single adults as these seem most urgent.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will enhance its strategy to assist in transportation needs for those without the capacity to drive and wanting to participate in church programs. The most obvious need is our senior members.
- B. The church will offer support/education programs for effective parenting for young families with small children.
- C. The church will aggressively provide outreach programs that engage young adults, particularly college-age individuals, and those just out of college.

6. Goal:

Eastminster will support, provide training programs to equip and train members in programs of person to person care and support.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will support and promote the spiritual gifts inventory for congregants to receive affirmation of their gifts for ministry.
- B. Eastminster will provide resources, both online and hard copies, to educate the congregation about grief, healthy grieving, and grief recovery. This includes contact information for grief support in the community.
- C. Eastminster will develop and offer a brief five-session course on active listening, praying, and lay-support to those in emotional need. This includes information on consulting with the pastoral staff in the event of more serious emotional needs.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

STEWARDSHIP AND KINGDOM VISIONS

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

As we Open Our Doors 24/7, Eastminster is called to give beyond ourselves with gifts of our time, talent, and financial resources to those in need within the immediate community and the world at large.

1. **Goal**

Respond to nonprofit organizations seeking financial assistance and honor God through mission work.

Actions:

- A. An organization’s mission must reflect that of Eastminster.
- B. Standardization and accountability will guide the application process.
- C. The recipients will have the opportunity for presentations to the congregation.

2. **Goal:**

Eastminster members will reach beyond themselves to serve in church ministries.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster will examine the number of organizations it supports to determine the effectiveness of its involvement.
- B. A Membership Coordinator will be dedicated to the coordination of member involvement in church ministries and those within the community.

3. **Goal:**

Eastminster desires that all members commit to tithing.

Actions:

- A. Eastminster is blessed with members who offer their spiritual gifts through their time and talents. Coordination between the Time and Talent information, the ministry chairs, and Eastminster staff will ensure the fulfillment of these gifts.
- B. A directory of services, both within the church and in the community, will be available to help navigate one’s desire to give of their time and talent



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

4. Goal:

Eastminster will become good stewards of that which has been entrusted to us and to have initiatives in place to enhance and protect the environment of the campus.

Actions:

- A. A professional landscape company will be engaged to develop a master plan to address the overall footprint of the campus. Seasonal plantings add interest and beauty to the grounds.
- B. Eastminster volunteers will extend a labor of love by assisting with the planting and upkeep of designated areas.
- C. There will be a master plan to address the maintenance and sustainability of the physical plant to include the interior and exterior of all buildings.

5. Goal:

Maximize the use of Eastminster facilities and footprint

Actions:

- A. We will evaluate the use of our meeting space assets and use of those assets (including CLC, Sanctuary, Thompson Hall, Classrooms, etc.) for worship services, Sunday School, small groups, youth activities, sports, meetings, gatherings, and other outreach/evangelism.
- B. We will determine whether additional space is needed or whether Eastminster can sustain for the foreseeable future with existing facilities and footprint.

6. Goal:

Eastminster will provide enhanced educational opportunities to non-members and communities in need as well as church members.

Actions:

- A. We will evaluate and explore enhanced programming in the areas of financial wellbeing, peace, opioid addiction, mental health and suicide prevention, family support (marriage building, divorce care), prison ministry, children's services (hospital, homeless children and other children in need).
- B. We will explore additional opportunities for evangelism based on community needs.
- C. We will spread the word for these opportunities through enhanced website, marketing, and social media presence to reach both members and the community we serve.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

AFTERWARD

*“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
John 13:34-35*

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.” Matthew 5:44-45

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20.

The year 2020 at Eastminster will be remembered for COVID-19 and keeping distance from one another, as well as discussions about racism, social injustice, and civil unrest. But when our church embarked on our Dreaming and Discerning small group conversations, these ideas, which are so prevalent in our thoughts and conversations now, weren't on our radar in the meaningful ways they are today.

And yet, as the Dreaming and Discerning coordinating team, we believe that enhancing technology, facilitating intergenerational connections and equipping church members to engage are not only clear desires of our membership for Eastminster's future, but also malleable enough to lay the foundation for action steps our church can take to address prevalent societal issues and, most importantly, the directions in which God is leading us.

This plan is extensive, of course, to include responses from dozens of small groups and their prayerful conversations about the future of Eastminster. In order to carry out these actions, the Dreaming and Discerning coordinating team recommends that the church form an action team. This new group, separate from current ministries and committees of the Session and Diaconate, can help shepherd the plan and delegate action steps to the church's existing committees, as well as fine tune timelines for implementation. Of course, this group would report to the Session, but because **Open Our Doors 24/7** is a long-range plan, a separate shepherding group can make plans to carry out this action plan and outlast the serving terms of the Session and Diaconate.

Eastminster's future is in God's hands, as we all know and acknowledge. It is an honor to dream and discern and lean on Him as we move forward and grow in the next decade.



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Appendix

Appendix A

Eastminster Presbyterian Sample Service Commitment Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Children/Youth

- Serve on Youth-Parent Committee for Pre-K, Elementary, or Youth)
- Teach/lead Preschool Sunday School
- Teach or lead Sunday School Pre School Elementary Middle School
- Senior High
- Assist with 2nd grade Worship Discover
- Assist with children during Sunday night activities
- Assist with special-needs children
- Serve as a Youth Leader, Sunday nights Aug – May Middle School Senior High
- Serve as a mid-week Bible study leader, Aug-May Middle School Senior High
- Serve as a 9th-grade confirmation sponsor
- Chaperone Youth Trip Middle School Senior High
- Chaperone a youth mission trip
- Assist with Boy Scouts Cub Scouts Girl Scouts Daisy Scouts
- Coach youth basketball

College

- Help with the college ministry

Adult

- Participate in older adult fellowship (Pep – People Enjoying People)
- Participate in the Monday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast Bible/Study
- Teach/lead adult Sunday School
- Teach/lead year-long Bible study

Bible School

- Serve on a team to plan/coordinate Vacation Bible School Children's Adults
- Serve as an assistant at Vacation Bible School



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Presbyterian Women (EPW)

- Serve on Eastminster Presbyterian Women Coordinating Council (EPW nominating Committee)
- Participate in Eastminster Presbyterian Women's events, circles, Bible studies

Worship and Music

- Serve on the Worship and Music Ministry Team
- Assist with Peace Service held every other month Play Instrument Sing
- Assist with preparing communion 2-3 times per year
- As an ordained Elder assist with serving home communion
- Assist with the children's choirs
- Sing in the adult choir 9:00 am 11:15 am
- Play in the handbell choir
- Play piano or musical instrument for worship or special events
- Sing in the Jubilee Praise Group Play an instrument in the Jubilee band
- Usher at Traditional or Jubilee service or special events Usher for funerals
- Assist Flower Guild in decorating at Christmas and Easter
- Serve as a Sanctuary Keeper (replenishing pew racks once a month)

Congregational Care Ministry

- Assist with support groups
- Drive a member to a doctor's appointment or bring them to church
- Prepare a meal for the sick
- Participate in Food for the Soul Ministry
(assisting with the preparation of a meal/reception for families at the time of a funeral)
- Participate in Love Bearers Ministry
(writing brief notes or call shut-ins or recently hospitalized members)
- Participate in Prayer Shawl Ministry
(knit shawls to give to those in need of care or love)
- Participate in Vases of Care Ministry
(arrange flowers from worship for delivery to shut-ins)
- Serve as a Stephen Minister
(trained layperson to provide one-on-one support to someone going through a difficult time)
- Serve on a Care Team assisting members with practical needs
- Serve on Prayer Matters praying for families of Eastminster throughout the year
- Serve on Connection Keepers visiting homebound individuals



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Evangelism and Membership Ministry

- Serve on the Evangelism and Membership Team
- Serve on Visitation Ministry (welcome visitors, make birthday calls)
- Host First Step Class for prospective members
- Serve as a greeter on Sunday mornings (5-6 times per year)
- Serve as a host at the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings (3-4 times per year)
- Communicate with inactive members

Mission, Service and Benevolence Ministry (MSB)

- Serve on Mission, Service Benevolence Team
- Build or renovate houses with Habitat for Humanity
- Communicate with missionaries (letters, emails, or calls to those living in the US)
- Help cook/serve for Transitions Center Third Thursday monthly meal
- Help coordinate the Circle of Giving, annually
- Participate with the Cooperative Ministry's Circle of Giving
(provide gifts, help children shop, wrap gifts, help with crafts)
- Help coordinate Operation Christmas Child, annually
- Help coordinate St. Lawrence Place Christmas Shop and Party, annually
- Lead a local mission trip
- Mentor a child at Bradley Elementary School as a "Lunch Buddy". (Twice monthly)
- Pack backpacks with weekend food for Bradley Elementary Backpack Program
- Participate in disaster relief trip, such as RHINO "Rebuilding Hope in New Orleans"
- Participate in an administrative or leadership role in a disaster relief trip
- Participation in an administrative or leadership role in a global mission trip such as Haiti
- Serve on the Haiti Steering Committee
- Travel with Living Waters for the World Team to provide clean water to international communities
- Serve at the Washington Street Soup Cellar
- Serve with a hosting team for Family Promise, which serves families experiencing situational homelessness
- Serve on the Footcare Ministry at Christ Central
- Tutor a Communities Helping, Assisting, Motivating Promising Students (CHAMPS) student
- Assist with CHAMPS activities and monthly meetings
- Drive a bus for CHAMPS events (after training and meeting criteria)
- Tutor an adult through the Turning Pages Literacy Agency



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

Eastminster Day School

- Serve as an officer on EDSP0 (President, Chair or Treasurer)- Covenant Family Service Opportunity
- Bus Driver – Drive EASTMINSTER bus on field trips or ride along in afternoon during the school year – Covenant Family Service Opportunity
- Adopt an EDS class to encourage and pray for during the year

Christian Life Center (CLC)

- Serve on the Christian Life Center Committee
- Serve as a CLC Front Desk Volunteer
- Serve as CLC volunteer coordinator

Nurture, Education and Discipleship Ministry (NED)

- Serve on the Nurture, Education and Discipleship Team
- Serve on Small Groups Planning Team Help fall/spring Small Groups events
- Host a small group meeting at your home, office, or other location
- Lead or co-lead a small group
- Help plan/implement the Living Nativity
- Volunteer during Holy Week (week of Easter)
- Volunteer in the library
- Serve on the Library Readers Team (preview books and offer commentary)

Fellowship Ministry

- Serve on the Fellowship Ministry Team
- Serve on a team to plan and coordinate Advent Retreat
- Serve on a team to collect money at Wednesday night dinners, and other congregational meals
- Serve on a team to assist with decorating for church-wide events
- Serve on a team of kitchen volunteers to help with Wednesday night dinners and other congregational meals as needed.
- Serve on a team to plan and coordinate Sportsmen's Banquet
- Assist with a game provision, food preparation, and serving for Sportsmen's Banquet

Communications Ministry

- Serve on Communications Team
- Serve on A/V Team for Jubilee Worship Soundboard
- Assist in recording sanctuary workshop services and other events
- Assist with graphics for flat screen/worship slides



EASTMINSTER

PRESBYTERIAN

- Assist with recording and/or producing short videos of church events
- Assist with photography at church events
- Assist with writing and editing articles
- Write daily devotionals (Advent, sharing your story of how God works in your life)

Finance

- Serve on Finance Committee
- Serve on the Count Team to count worship offerings one Monday per month
- Write acknowledgments for memorial gifts

Personnel Ministry

- Serve on search committees for pastoral staff positions
- Assist with staff-related functions (Appreciation Luncheon, etc.)

Property Ministry

- Serve on the Property Committee
- Serve on the Memorial Garden Association (oversee regulations, maintenance and encourage use)
- Serve on Security Committee (evaluate security, make recommendations and follow-up on the implementation)
- Serve on House Committee (provide input for decorating)
- Serve on Painting Team (small projects inside)
- Serve on Lawn Care Team (mowing, edging)
- Serve on Weekly Weeders (flower bed maintenance)
- Drive church bus for various groups (training and certain criteria required)

Stewardship

- Serve on Stewardship Committee (You do not have to be an officer)
- Serve on Planned Giving Team
- Assist with theme ideas for annual stewardship campaigns
- Assist with writing thank-you notes for pledges/gifts
- Assist with follow-up phone calls for pledge commitments

Administration

- Assist office staff by greeting guests and answering phones in church office 1-2 hours per week as needed
- Assist office staff with stuffing bulletins, preparing mailings, making phone calls, typing, data entry occasionally as needed.



E A S T M I N S T E R
P R E S B Y T E R I A N

Other

Use your expertise and talents to assist the church as needed. Please list your area of expertise here: _____



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Appendix B Sample Calendar December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Family Promise host week Socks in a Box collection all	2 Family Promise host week	3 Family Promise host week EASTMINSTER at Wash St. Soup Cellar Footcare ministry	4 Family Promise host week Church decorating	5 Family Promise host week Church decorating Weekly weeders	6 Family Promise host week Lawn Care Team Sanctuary	7 Family Promise host week Advent Retreat
8 Advent Retreat	9 St. Lawrence Place Christmas Shop and Dinner	10 Footcare ministry Lunch Buddies	11	12 Weekly weeders	13 Circle of Giving (set up) Sanctuary Keepers Lawn Care	14 Circle of Giving
15	16	17 Footcare ministry	18	19 Weekly weeders Transitions meal	20 Sanctuary Keepers Lawn Care Team	21
22 Peanut Butter Sunday Living Nativity and Chili Supper	23	24	25 Transitions meal	26	27 Wreaths come down	28
29	30	31				



EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

EPILOGUE

"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." John 13:34-35

The Discerning Coordinating Team consisted of 20 team members who formed four teams of five. Each team addressed two sessions.

- Building Community With & Beyond and Missions: Joining in God's Work in the World – Bill DeLoache (leader), Ann Cameron, George Hutton, Fredna Lee, and Nancy Scott
- Christ-Centered Living / Corporate & Personal Worship and Stewardship & Kingdom Visions – Robin Gorman (leader), Kelly Barbrey, John Barr, Mark Sullivan, and Sims Tillirson
- Faith Formation & Discipleship for Adults and Faith Formation of Children, Youth & Young Adults – Rachelle Tomlin (leader), Lyndey Bryant, Dustin Curtis, Paul Dobyns, and Daniel Lott
- Engaging, Inviting & Including and Our Life Together & Congregational Care – Julie McCue (leader), John Arnold, Miles Daniel, Bobby Fuller, and Katie Alice Walker

Throughout the journey, Lucie Eggleston was a wellspring of wisdom having chaired VISION 2020.

More than 70 small groups and 681 people signed up to participate in the Dreaming and Discerning process for an eight-week period that commenced in January and concluded in February. Contrast this with the 350 Eastminster members who started meeting for a seven-week period in September 2012 to envision what God was calling us to do by the end of the year 2020.

The Discerning Coordinating Team had its first meeting on Sunday, March 22, 2020, two days following the deadline for small groups to submit insights gathered during their small group discussions. By the end of June, the 20-member Discerning Team had prayerfully considered the voluminous dreams and insights, and began to move into production mode with a 10-person team that consisted of the four group leaders and six others whose special talents and commitment brought together this report with care and detail.

As the Discerning Team closed in on completion of its assignment, it was reminded that regardless of circumstances at any given time, Jesus Christ will always be our LORD and Savior, the Holy Spirit will always be our Helper, and God will always be sovereign. So, with homage to the small groups, let us now **Open Our Doors 24/7** and take the path forward. "Look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest." – John Barr, Chair