Report of the Culture Subcommittee
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

Overview & Process

Culture can be defined as the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.

As Prince of Peace moves into a new vision we are reminded of Peter Drucker's quote, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." Culture drives an organization's behavior more powerfully than its structure or strategic focus. The mission of the Culture Subcommittee is to provide recommendations to the Board of Directors outlining needed culture changes, along with some suggestions on tools to make those changes.

For the purposes of our work we defined culture as the central beliefs, values and habitual behaviors within an organization. While our espoused beliefs and values are articulated on our website we sought to discern the actualized beliefs and values of our culture (those things that actually drive us) rather than our aspirational beliefs and values (those things we want to drive us).

We heard about and observed God doing many great things at and through Prince of Peace. Over and over again we heard that people deeply value powerful worship, moving music and a focus on serving the needs of others. We heard stories of impact in the lives of disciples, members of the wider community and world. We heard the witness of disciples growing in faith through worship, engagement with Scripture, small group community and service to our neighbor. There is much to celebrate. God is present and at work in our community of faith. While the work of this subcommittee focused, of necessity, on needed change, it's important to remember that there is a great foundation that has already been laid for this community of faith to move into the new vision.

Our process included dozens of formal and informal interviews and conversations with disciples at Prince of Peace, as well as team discussion and discerning prayer.

What Surfaced

Based on our interviews and conversation the following needed changes surfaced in our culture:

Beliefs
- Because this is a big church we believe that there's always "someone else" to volunteer. How do we help believe that everyone and every contribution matters?
- We seem to believe that failure would be tragic and so we (especially our staff) are slow to experiment and try. How do we help believe to believe that failure isn't fatal and that life is a joyful experiment? Is there something about believing in grace here?

- We believe that "success" in ministry is primarily about numbers, about "how many". How do we move to a belief that success is also about Kingdom impact?
- We talk of Church as a location ("I'm going to church") and something outside of ourselves. How do we help people to believe that Church is a people, a community and movement of God?
- We believe that Mission Outpost clients are recipients alone. How do we help people to truly believe that we can all learn from one another?

Values
- We value worship as something we "consume" or "get something out of" rather than valuing the power of a community gathering to praise, thank, lament and celebrate God.
- We value low expectations, asking little of people so as not to "scare them off", rather than proclaiming and embracing the high expectations of following Jesus in daily life.
- We value anonymity, allowing people to not be greeted as they enter our campus and to sit by themselves in worship. Similarly we value a spirituality that is private, that "my" spirituality is "my" business and has little to with community and public witness. How do we help people value deeper community and a spirituality that includes a communal element? Move from "mine" to "thine".
- We value the notion of being "one hour" Christians. How do we help people to value a faith that is a way of life, that all of life is Kingdom work?
- We place a high value on "OUT...for the world". How do we as a community equally embrace the value of UP and IN?
- We value being "the big church" in the South Metro, a "one stop spiritual mega mall". How do we help the community to value being a collaborative partner with others for the sake of the Kingdom?
- We value charity, ensuring that people have what they need for today. How do we help our faith community place a higher value on justice and sustainability?

Behaviors
- We observe people being too busy to grow and mature spiritually. There's a need to slow down, reflect, learn to say "no" and value what matters.
- We observe disciples being disengaged from the vision implementation process, and wonder if that behavior, in part, stems from being such a staff-driven culture. There may be a need to shift from staff doing the ministry to staff equipping and engaging disciples - to move from program doers and creators to people/disciples advocates.
- Connected to the above, we observe that leadership relies upon broadcast and technology to recruit and engage people, rather than utilizing personal contact and relationships development.
- We heard a number of disciples grieving or expressing loss for "what was" at Prince of Peace. There may need to be more acknowledgment of that, allowing for public lament. This may be especially true around potential land and building changes.
- We heard a repeated theme that not all demographic groups at Prince of Peace see themselves in the vision. We need to help people understand and to see themselves having a significant place in what God is doing in our midst.

- We observe that regular stewardship has been diminishing at Prince of Peace (and in churches around the country). We may need to envision and embrace other ways to fund the ministry.

Core Themes

When we stepped back from the data we noted the following core themes:
- We need to move past the past to embrace the future.
- We desire for diversity but we are not prepared for it as a culture. How do we equip our volunteers?
- How do we get equipped to take personal responsibility to be modern-day missionaries with our neighbors?

What should our priorities be in regard to Culture Change in the next decade?

- Help people to embrace our homes, offices and schools as Mission Outposts. We need to equip and empower disciples for this.
- Articulate why do we need to change at all. Times have changed, and people need to change with it. As motivation for change, we need to recognize God is calling us in a new direction and we want to honor God.
- Help people to people value and articulate the "bull's eye" of the church as equipping people to live like Jesus in daily life.
- Value and believe that discipleship isn't about spiritual consumerism but about spiritual formation.
- Value and believe that the Church is the body of believers in mission, not merely a building or an institution to which we belong.

What culture change should we focus on between now and June 30, 2017?

- Be open to experience and experimentation. Value and believe that the life of faith is a daring adventure. Failure isn't fatal; it's an opportunity to experience and grow individually and corporately.
- Value and embrace spiritual formation as a way of life: UP, IN & OUT.

What tools can we utilize to embed these culture changes?

- Create a common language and script. A common vocabulary around all culture change is important. For instance, perhaps we refer to the process of spiritual formation as "The Way of Jesus."
- Mentor and Teach it. Teach adaptive leadership skills and equip people for spiritual formation. Consider teaching a very simple tool for spiritual formation each month in multiple venues (Direction, Weekly Connect, bulletin, website, etc.)

- Tell stories. Stories will help people to see themselves in the vision and in spiritual formation. Stories of "failing" and growing will help. Stories communicate on an emotional level.
- Articulate what's being left behind, or what needs to be left behind. What do we need to let go of in order to move into the vision? If we do a "funeral" for our past we need to focus on eulogy.

Who needs to lead this culture change?

- Staff
- Lay leaders
- Early adopters
- Consider a culture team that tends to these issues at a high level and provides feedback from the outside.