

MICHAEL VINSON, HEALTHY SPACE INC. 420 WELLESLEY DRIVE,
CONWAY, AR 72034

Paint Me a Church Book of Proceedings

Open Space Technology Meeting

First Presbyterian Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas

2010

Background: There were several meetings with the vision committee and the pastor. The following information comes from work done with the vision committee and the pastor.

Story Up to this Point

This church is a place that seems to fit the needs of the whole family. It is a place that offers the “right amount” of welcome. It is also a place with inadequate infrastructure to support the work that is being done. There is no discernable history related to “ministry” of the church. Rather it seems to be a place where people come for Worship.

Story after the OST meeting: This is information about how the group would see the story of this congregation after the OST meeting. There was the perspective that there was no expectation for what might happen after the meeting. There is no way to know what will happen. There is also the thought that after the meeting, the church will become a hub of activity which would result in greater influence in the community and more people would be involved in the church. There is also the idea that after the OST meeting, there will be ministries that are initiated that people are excited about and are willing to commit to. There will be no infrastructure to support the ministries, the session will be permission giving and enable people to lead and participate in ministry.

Givens: These are the non-negotiable for the meeting. At this time they cannot be changed.

- At this time, the purpose of the organization is fixed.
- The direction for the organization is to move forward.
- Whatever is done must fit within our current understanding of what it means to be “reformed” and a ministry of the PCUSA.
- The structure is open to change.

- Information gathered at this meeting is *not* for information only. Information is to provide an opportunity for members to identify areas of service and action.
- Accountability comes through the Vision Team and the Session. The Vision Team will prioritize initiatives and pass them along for session for approval.
- Within two weeks of the Open Space meeting, Rev. Ann Russ will meet with each of the conveners of the meetings to provide guidance and assistance in moving the initiatives forward
- If money is needed for the initiative, it will need to be put in the budget.
- All information from the meeting including the book of proceedings will be available within one week on line, at the church website. There will also be copies available in the church office.
- The following areas of ministry are present but open to change and open to new membership:
 - Building and Facility
 - Creative Worship
 - Budget and Finance
- Anne added these given's in her Sermon on Sunday before the Open Space Meeting. For today you may not say:
 - Nobody will come
 - We don't have the money
 - It won't work

Theme: The Theme for the meeting is: Paint Me Church.

Purpose of First Presbyterian Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas:

Why are we here?

To Live and share the love of Jesus Christ in ways that reach out to everyone.

Leadership

How will we lead our purpose?

We will lead with respect and creativity, using the gifts of God's people.

Vision

Where do we see our church over the next 3 to 7 years?

To be the heart of Argenta where the unconditional love of Jesus Christ is demonstrated so that people can live their passion in response to God's presence in their lives.

Discernment and Development of a Ministry Plan to Accomplish the Purpose

On Saturday evening, August 28, the congregation met to reflect on its history. Reflecting on the history of an organization is important in helping the group understand the history they are building on. It is also an opportunity to honor the work that has been done up to the present. It is difficult to move into the future without acknowledging the past and honoring and learning from what has happened up to the present moment. The group had time for individual silent reflection, reflection in pairs and then sharing to the entire group about their relationship with the church. Additionally the group met in small groups to discern their Joys and Sorrows.

Joys

Survival

Communication

Anne

Originality

Sorrows

Losing people

Disrepair of building almost overwhelming

Resistance to Change

Need more folks from community

List of sorrows is short

Community Revitalized

Non member help

Pastor makes good coffee

Feel Comfortable coming here

Attitude Change

Number of Members

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Going back to the Sanctuary

More young people

Friendships

New gifts/talents

Anne and her family

Music—thank you Erica

Sunday Service/Sermon

Kept church together

Growth

impoverished neighborhood
nearby

New members don't know
history and tradition.

Church Members Crisis

Air conditioning

End of Men's Bible Class

End of Moody Sunday School
Class

Number of Members

Leaving Fellowship Hall
Community

Decline of the
neighborhood/safety

Miss the choir

Not enough people to hear the
message of God

Need for new educational toys

need for new children

not currently having Sunday
school

Not more folks involved

having to put up the iron gates

Losing original bell tower

Welcoming Community for the unchurched

Challenges of maintaining older building

Mix of all ages

trying to keep everyone happy in the midst of change

Easter Blue Grass

Air Conditioning in Sanctuary

Erica/Music

Spaghetti suppers

Art Space

Children's Involvement

Piano player and piano

Church is still here

Stained glass grant

Dale's Bulletins

Being blessed with Erica and Anne

The piano

Growth of church with new members

Artists and the recording studio and all the help they provide

Lynette and Sherry and all their talents

The work done to improve the nursery and the time Jennifer spends with our children

Having more joys than sorrows.

Observations

Some joys were also sorrows and vice versa. Moving out of the fellowship hall into the sanctuary was seen as a joy. And there was sorrow over the loss of intimacy the group felt in the fellowship hall. The air conditioning for the Sanctuary was a joy but the lack of air conditioning in the fellowship hall was seen as a sorrow. Although it is a joy that the facility has survived some years of inattention, it is noted as a sorrow that the up keep of the building is such a great need.

Open Space Meeting

On Sunday, August 29, after worship and lunch, the congregation gathered to develop a strategic plan for moving forward. The methodology used was Open Space Technology. (See appendix A for a description of Open Space Technology)

Theme: Paint Me a Church

The following areas of ministry were brought forward as priorities for moving the purpose forward:

Ministry #1

Membership and Hospitality

Those present to discuss the ministry:

Dale Rowelt, Glen Leesby, Nancy Russ

How does this ministry serve our Purpose?

Makes people feel welcome. Increases membership. Encourages repeat attendance. Promotes Growth.

What is needed to begin this ministry?

Name badges for members (permanent), volunteers to help make name tags, volunteers to call people, handout for visitors and prospective members, information-come as you are, coffee cups, sandwich boards.

What is needed to move this ministry forward and help it grow?

Attendance pads. Have someone pass them out just before service starts, acknowledging events, need a team (care and concerns team)-illness, anniversaries, etc. Flyers and sandwich boards send bulletins to people.

Who will take responsibility for moving this ministry forward?

Glen and Jim

Ministry #2

Mission and Outreach

People Present:

Beth Spears, Elizabeth Elizandro, Bob Spencer, Beverly Williams, Jim Haney, Erica Morrison, Jeannie Price, Glen Leesby, Mike Dougherty, Nancy Russ

What is needed to begin this ministry?

Outreach team, coalition of willing, immediate goals, target the area, and establish who would like to serve.

What is needed to move this ministry forward and help it grow?

We have the Gerry Gault fund. Team of people, steering meeting to establish looking into other churches-other ministries

Who will take responsibility for moving this ministry forward?

Michael and Nancy Dougherty and Beth.

Jim will call Our House

Jeannie will follow up with Dark Hollow

Bob will follow up with Lewis House food Pantry

Beth will follow up with St. Francis

Ideas: Stewpot, Our house-once a month, Ronald McDonald House, Lewis House, Vera Lloyd, Food Pantry-Dark Hollow, Advertising.

Ministry #3

Building and Facilities

People Present:

Sherrie Shepherd, Ross Stanley, John Price, Katie Kasten, Bill Matthews, Skip Lenz Jackie, V. OL. Cox

How does this serve our purpose?

Presentation is the key!! Provides us a place to meet.

What is needed to begin this ministry?

Money, List of priorities.

What is needed to move it forward and help it grow?

Contractor, Responsibility, Increase in Budget.

White board for ideas for improvements in the church

Building Maintenance meeting before church service next Sunday.

Who will take responsibility for moving this forward?

Short based—Lynnette—Building manager

Long based—Skip—working with the finance committee

Lawn Maintenance and outdoors—Ross Stanley and Doug Gorrel

Ministry #4

Concert Ministry

People who attended this meeting:

Pam Matthews, Elizabeth Elizandro, Mike Dougherty

How does this ministry serve our purpose?

Brings the community in, Reaches out through music.

Who is needed to begin this ministry?

Contacts—maybe four times. Health with technology, commitment to underwrite if needed. People who would run concessions.

What is needed to move this ministry forward and help it grow?

Promotions continued good relations with Infrared Studios, papal account, updated website.

Who will move this ministry forward?

Anne Russ will move this forward is someone will run concessions. Pam says she will.

Ministry #5

Christian Education and Fellowship

People Present:

Jim Haney, Nancy Dougherty, Beth Spears, Bill Matthews, Jeannie Price, Beverly Williams, Jackie Scott, Ross Stanley, Katie Kastlen.

How does this ministry serve our purpose?

This ministry will fulfill outreach to the children, youth and adults through Christian education and fellowship.

What is needed to begin this ministry?

Volunteers, director for curriculum, structures to split age groups, possible rotation schedule.

What is needed to move this ministry forward and help it grow?

Curriculum, volunteers for each segment, money for supplies.

Who will take responsibility for moving this ministry forward?

Co Chairs: Jackie Scott and Jeanie Price.

Youth: Jackie and Bruce Scott

Curriculum: Katie Kasten

Sunday school: Beth (rotation) 9-12; Nancy K-6; Jeannie K-6; Adult classes
Beth.

Email for volunteers to teach, assist, etc –Jeannie

Survey of what people might like to study-- Katie

Ministry #6

Creative Worship

People Present:

Nancy Russ, Lori Moore, Glen Leesby, Jim Stanley, Linda Stanley, Bob Spencer

How does this ministry serve our purpose?

No answer was given.

What is needed to begin this ministry?

Parameters—do we style (?)

Worship prep schedule

Acolytes

Music Schedule

Liturgist Schedule

Screen, projector, computer, screen team

What is needed to move this forward?

Participation

Who will take responsibility for moving this ministry forward?

Anne, Dale, Arica, Lori, Pam, Glenn.

Ministry #7

Finance

People Present :

Lori, Jim, Pam, Linda

How does this ministry serve our purpose?

To care for the finances of the church

What is needed to begin this ministry?

A group that is willing to maintain the finances of the church

What is needed to move this ministry forward?

Good use of our resources. Need stewardship push for October.

Who will take responsibility for moving this ministry forward?

Pam

Appendix A: Brief Description of Open Space Technology

"Open Space Technology" is the name given to a meeting without a predetermined agenda. Developed in the late 1980's by Harrison Owen of Maryland, U.S.A., this meeting methodology is now used around the world as an effective process for facilitating change in both Organizational and community settings.

Open Space Technology meetings are simple to organize, require very little lead time, are effective for any sized group from seven to one thousand people, are effective for established groups such as corporations, private sector and public sector organizations, government and non-government organizations, coalitions, teams or communities. They enable the building of energy and participation in ways that few other processes do. Open Space Technology meetings create the conditions for interactive processes that allow leadership to surface naturally.

Open Space Technology is best used when there is an important issue to be addressed; there is a diversity of people involved; there is complexity; and when decisions need to be made quickly.

Open Space Technology operates on four principles and one law. Those principles are:

1. Whoever comes are the right people. This reinforces that the wisdom to achieve solutions is present in the room and the group is not to worry about who is not present or to panic about who is.
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have. This keeps the attention on the best possible effort in the present, not worrying about "what we should have done".
3. Whenever it starts is the right time. This reminds people that creativity cannot be controlled.
4. When it's over, it's over. This encourages people to continue their discussion so long as there is energy for it. Some sessions will finish well within the anticipated time. Others will run longer than the time allotted.

The one law or rule is called The Law of Mobility, also known as The Law of Two Feet. This indicates that people can enter or leave an open space session as they choose. If the session you are in is not meeting your needs for either contributing or learning, go to another one.

So How Does It Work?

An Open Space meeting is announced. Duration is most commonly between one and three days, though they can be shorter.

The venue is a large conference room with lots of "break-out" or session rooms or areas adjacent. When people arrive for the Open Space Technology meeting, they initially come to the plenary room and find a venue in which there is an empty room, except for a large circle of chairs. The circle is an invitation to communication with no barriers.

The workshop begins with a welcome by the sponsor that is brief, highlighting the theme and the "givens" and then a facilitator who explains how the Open Space Technology workshop will operate. The broad purpose of the workshop is stated again, as are the "givens" or constraints. An example of a broader theme might be "Issues and Opportunities for the Future of the Organization". Sometimes the broad purpose is quite focused such as "Issues and Opportunities for reworking the assembly line". In the middle of the circle is a collection of newsprint paper, masking tape, and felt pens. Participants are then invited to create the agenda for the workshop. It works like this.

Anyone who has any ideas at all that relate to this broad topic are invited to take a sheet of butcher's paper and along the top write their topic of interest or passion. People are asked for

ideas for which they have passion and for which they are prepared to take the responsibility of leading a discussion group on that idea (they do not need to have had previous experience in leading a discussion group but simply to get their topic started and to be sure that everyone who comes to their discussion has a chance to speak), and to make sure a record of the discussion is recorded (report forms are provided). The sheets announcing each of the ideas, along with the name of the person who put up the idea and a note of when the topic will be addressed and which breakout area it will be in) are affixed to a blank wall. Participants can put up ideas for which they have a lot of information including having handouts that they have brought to the meeting for the purpose of sharing the information, or they might know nothing more about the idea than to have a question.

The next step involves a "market-place". All workshop participants go to the market wall to look at the ideas outlined on each sheet. When they find the topic of most interest to them, they sign up, by writing their name on the sheet beneath the topic.

The next step involves participants going to the break out spaces to participate in the topics of their choice. As far as possible, each session is defined by a circle of chairs and no other furniture, though it may have flip charts, post-its, felt pens, etc. The person who posted the idea is responsible for leading the session in whatever way s/he chooses. The facilitator has no involvement whatsoever. The only requirement is that, at the end of the session, the session leader brings back to a central point a summary of session ideas, and who has agreed to do what. This is to be provided in a somewhat standardized format, usually noted on a pro-forma given to the session leader at the start of their session. It is important to record the highlights of the discussion in such a way that they can be understood by people who were not part of the discussion.

A bank of computers is available and session leaders or a representative from the group enters the report into a computer. As soon as a report is entered, the facilitator prints a copy of it for a newswall and posts it so that all participants of the broader meeting can read about what has happened in each session. As well, a copy of the report is made to be entered into a "book of proceedings", a book that is comprised of all of the reports and contact information of the participants so that they can reach each other for further networking. This book is available to each participant of the meeting. In a multi-day meeting, the "book of proceedings" is handed to each person prior to a time of converging the various topics and getting further input from the collective about next step actions. In a meeting that is one day or less, the "book of proceedings" is available to participant within the week, either through a pick up or mailing. Often, the "book of proceedings" is available electronically as well on a website or by e-mail. In meetings where the intention is to move topics to action steps, the facilitator conducts a summarising session for convergence, prioritizing and action planning, including seeking input on next steps and follow-up. This is a feature of Open Space Technology meetings that are longer than one day.

Open Space Technology has one outstanding characteristic - the generation of energy and commitment. It also has one outstanding enemy - control. It will not work where the energy and commitment generated are not permitted to bear fruit. This is not to suggest that OST is an invitation to anarchy. Far from it. Provided the constraints -economic, political, legislative - are recognized and spelt out very clearly at the start, and the areas where discretion and freedom to be creative ('defining the space") are also made clear, Open Space Technology is proving itself to be a powerful tool for harnessing commitment and responsibility. Several organization-wide Open Space Technology meetings within a short time frame will start to shift an organizational culture from something that might be de-energized into a more vibrant organic networked community that is effectively producing results.

