

George Street United Church
Vision 2023 Update, as of 10 June 2018
(Prepared By: Rev. Dr. Peter Bartlett IIM Minister)

Background

George St United Church (UC) has accepted that we are being challenged to remain relevant and sustainable as a faith community in a changing world.

In covenanting a time for Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM), George St UC expects a journey of discovery, discernment, healing, and collaboration, that invites a realistic understanding of our faith community, that enables a Vision for the future.

On **22 October 2017**, we empowered our IIM Transition Team, to lead a process that would help George St UC determine our future.

On **10 December 2017**, the IIM Transition Team led an Information Session, during which the congregation was updated on progress to date, and was invited to provide feedback. At that time, the Team anticipated it would be able to bring forth a proposed *Vision*, with supporting Recommendations, for a way forward during the Annual Congregational Meeting in 2018.

On **4 March 2018**, during the Annual Congregational Meeting, the Transition Team led a Recommendation Session, to propose a strategic way forward which included a revised *Mission Statement*, a proposed *Vision 2023*, and a *Strategic Planning Framework*.

A “Backgrounder” was provided for all to review well ahead of the Meeting, and following an engaging and productive discussion, the Congregation approved all Recommendations.

Mission Statement

“George Street United Church is a community of faith in the United Church of Canada. We are children of God, who proclaim our belief in a creative and positive God. We celebrate God’s love through divine Worship, and we experience the Beauty of God’s Spirit present in our sacred spaces, our sacred music, and in our sacred history. As God’s practitioners of social justice in the world, we accept God’s call to sacred Hospitality, and our covenant to be the hands of Jesus Christ, who offer a loving and accepting embrace to all people.” 4 March 2018

Vision 2023

“In response to God’s continuing Call to be active and relevant disciples of Jesus Christ in the world, the people of George Street United Church will be a sustainable centre of worship and community outreach. Rooted in downtown St. John’s, we welcome all who seek to be in Right Relationship with us.”* *(God’s love when put into practice becomes “Right Relationship”) 4 March 2018

Strategic Planning Framework

The Strategic Planning Framework approved by the Congregation includes 5 principal Planning Categories:

- 1. Mission (Worship) and Outreach**
- 2. Infrastructure (Physical and Human Resources)**
- 3. Governance and Polity**
- 4. Healing**
- 5. Change and Transition**

Strategic decisions regarding **Planning Category 1 - Mission (Worship) and Outreach**, are central to maintaining the historical Mission, and to achieving *Vision 2023*.

Goal-Setting

Upon Congregational approval of all Key Recommendations in support of the way forward for George St, clearly, the “Next Goal” in our church transition process, was to begin developing in a *Comprehensive Strategic Plan*.

When determining the Objectives necessary to achieve this Next Goal, the Transition Team concluded that a *Comprehensive Strategic Plan* could be completed by **15 October 2018**.

On **10 May 2018**, the Transition Team proposed a process and timeline to complete a *Comprehensive Strategic Plan* to the George St Church Council. Council approved the Transition Team proposal, with some amendments.

At the Annual Meeting Recommendation Session on 4 March 2018, it was anticipated that a next "Update Session" with the Congregation would occur on 3 June 2018. However, during the 10 May 2018 Council Meeting, it was decided that, in order to better accommodate the Next Goal Objectives and Timeline, it would be prudent to provide this written update to the Congregation instead, with a view to a next congregational Session on, or, about **15 October 2018**.

Next Goal: "To achieve *Vision 2023*, develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan by **15 October 2018**."

Objectives:

1. **Lead to Achieve Vision 2023.** Leadership to achieve *Vision 2023* will be provided by the Council, which is therefore responsible for the recommendations approved by the Congregation as contained in the approved Strategic Framework *Planning Category 3 - Governance and Polity*.
 - a. From **15 October 2018** onward, Council will lead Congregational Information Sessions, to occur at a minimum every 90 days, or more frequently, as necessary to achieve *Vision 2023*.

At appropriate times, to be determined and overseen by Council, Asset-Mapping or similar "Brainstorming Exercises," will be conducted with the Congregation, to continue improving communication, and fielding creative ideas, in support of the George St *Mission* and *Vision 2023*.
 - b. Discernment of Post-IIM "Ministry Needs," will begin **NLT 15 October 2018**.
 - c. M&P will invite NL Conference Personnel Minister to meet with the Committee as soon as possible, for an update on progress at George St, and to collaborate training for existing and any new members as necessary.
 - d. The Nominations Committee will develop "Expression of Interest Forms," that invite increased interest in George St *Vision 2023*, by **15 October 2018**.
2. **Establish a Strategic Working Group (SWG) by 7 June 2018:**
 - a. On **10 May**, Council decided the following:
 - i. SWG Core Composition will include: Designated Facilitator, Minister as Resource, Operations Manager as Resource, TT Member as a Resource, Chair/Vice Chair Council, M&P Member, Session Member, 2 JPMOC Board Members (1GS; 1 At-Large)
 - ii. The SWG is guided by the *Strategic Planning Framework* approved by the Congregation on **4 March**.
 - iii. Strategic decisions regarding **Planning Category 1 - Mission (Worship) and Outreach**, (see 4 March "Background") are central to achieving *Vision 2023*, and therefore, to the work of the SWG:
 - (1) In collaboration with current partners, and potential new interests, develop a strategic plan to ensure that George St UC becomes a modernized, multi-faceted and sustainable "hub" for social outreach by 2023.
 - (2) Recognize within George St UC, that serving the needs of the broader community is by Christian definition, a "worshipful" endeavour. But, also recognize, that the key to achieving *Vision 2023* is through diverse and mutually respectful relationships with partners. Including some who share our passion to support the broader community, but not necessarily our Christian perspective.

- iv. Strategic decisions regarding **Planning Category 2 - Infrastructure (Physical and Human Resources)** as presented in the 4 March 2018 “Backgrounder,” are key to ensuring that *Vision 2023* is sustainable, and are essential to SWG work. The SWG will re-imagine, and where practicable, consider the redevelopment of George St physical space in order to achieve *Vision 2023*.
3. **Heal the George St UC Community.** Healing within the George St UC community is essential to supporting the work of the SWG, and our achievement of *Vision 2023*.

Lead responsibility for **Planning Category 4 - Healing**, as presented in the 4 March “Backgrounder,” belongs to Session, which will achieve this objective, by:

- i. **Coordinating a “Week For Healing”:** Re-scheduled for **23-30 September 2018**, the “Week For Healing” will include:
 - ii. Opportunities for individual prayer and private conversation in a safe environment, with a capably trained and experienced pastoral listener
 - iii. A “Confidentiality, Privacy, Secrecy” Workshop
 - iv. Community-focused meditative, and discussion circles that invite forgiveness, understanding, and hope
 - v. A Prayer Vigil
 - vi. Worship
- ii. **Developing a comprehensive Pastoral Care Plan.** To meet the specific needs resulting from the challenges of recent years, the plan will ensure reliable general visitation, and welcome volunteers who wish to offer pastoral care within a structured, supportive, and supported environment.
- iii. **Developing and recommending** to Council an “Affirming Covenant”: Referred to forthwith as the, “**George Street United Church Holy Manners Covenant**” by **15 October 2018**, this covenant will be prominent in all that we say and do. It will affirm our Christian values that underly our church’s historical *Mission* and *Vision 2023*, to be practitioners of God’s love in the world. It will remind us, especially in times of change and challenge, to always uphold our commitment to love and respect one another, and all whom we meet.

Thank-You For Your Continued Enthusiasm and Commitment to the Future of Your Church!

Peace and Blessings,

From Your George Street United Church Council and Transition Team