

Weyburn Free Methodist Church – 2018 Transition Team Report

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Presented to Congregation: September 9, 2018.

It is our desire as followers of Jesus Christ to live the life that He calls us to as individuals and as a church family. God has placed each one of us here at this church in this community for a reason. The purpose of this time is for each of us to know the role Jesus calls us to.

In late 2017, the WFCM Board was notified that we would be entering into a time of transition as our lead pastor gave word that he would be moving on. The Board of Directors determined to follow LifePlan as we move forward through this time. In early 2018 the Board sought out individuals to make up the Transition Team. These individuals, with guidance from The Free Methodist Church in Canada, will guide the LifePlan process.

What is LifePlan?

LifePlan is a tool designed by the Free Methodist Church in Canada (FMCiC) as a way to help congregations move forward by asking not just leaders but the entire church family to take time to hear what God is calling them to do. It encourages us to pay attention to our community, our church family and the path the Lord wants us to take to serve Him.

Where We Are in the Process:

Research Phase

The Transition Team has focused on research into all those factors that make up our church right now to get a current and detailed picture of what is happening at the Weyburn Free Methodist Church and in the community around us.

Community Leaders Survey

Transition Team members interviewed prominent leaders within the community to see how WFCM can better serve the community. Those interviewed included: Marcel Roy (City), Marlo Pritchard/Rod Stafford (Police), Jeff Richards (Business Community), Brian Hopfe (Youth), Felicia Watson (Health)

Statistics Canada 2016 Census

Using the information gathered from the 2016 Census we developed a picture of the people in the community of Weyburn.

Local Church Demographics

A list of all current members and adherents was compiled. Average Sunday morning attendance was also gathered.

Ministry Map

The Ministry Map, an exercise in auditing the church's current ministries, was completed on June 8, 2018 with the assistance of Marc McAllister from FMCiC head office. This map uses a special graph to show where we place our resources and energies.

Congregational Survey

A survey – available in both paper and online format was made available in June/2018. This survey asked questions regarding where we are and where we want to be, highlighting priorities and focus areas.

Pastoral Survey

The current Pastoral Team was surveyed with the hopes of delving into their experiences as our spiritual leaders. The questions focused on our strengths and our opportunities. An exit interview of our departing Lead Pastor was also performed by members representing both the Board and Transition Team.

Where We Are Going:

Prayer and Discernment

As a church body we have determined to set aside time to ask God for direction during this transition time. The Board has made a commitment to set aside time each month to pray with the congregation. The Transition Team has placed prayer as a top priority as we go over the information that we have gathered expecting God to grant us clear direction and unity. We strongly encourage each person that calls WFMC their home set aside time to pray for the church leadership, for clear and concise discernment of God's will.

Dream Session

On September 30, 2018 at 3:00pm we will be coming together as one church family to share how God has spoken to each of us as individuals and as teams during our times of research, praying and discernment. We will be listening for shared dreams and visions that God has provided so that we may decide together what our priorities should be and where our resources should be focused.

Our Findings:

The research conducted by the Transition Team produced some very clear themes. The over-all picture of the Weyburn Free Methodist Church is that we are a reasonably healthy organization with effective leadership and the financial resources necessary to accomplish our vision. Our Ministry Map displays a well-rounded ministerial structure with a healthy balance of programs that spread from Weyburn to the rest of the world.

1. Spiritual Development of the Congregation

Congregational Survey: A clear priority from the survey indicated the congregation wanted to see more programming that was pointed inward toward the congregation with emphasis on developing relationships with Jesus, personal growth and Biblical teaching.

Questions to ask:

Where does this take place?

What would Sunday morning look like if we were meeting these needs?

What would the rest of the week look like?

Who will do this work?

Where does my responsibility lie?

2. Discipleship and Evangelism opportunities

Congregational Survey: The survey indicated that we have some difficulty in finding gifted people to take on leadership roles. Note that we are not taking away from the survey that the gifted people aren't out there – simply that they are looking for more opportunities to learn and develop under someone who has “been there”.

The survey also showed that many people think the ideal church should be more focussed on evangelism.

Questions to ask:

If there was more training/mentoring available would we see more people stepping into leadership roles?

Would I take opportunity to mentor or be mentored?

How could training and discipleship lead to more evangelism?

What does evangelism look like for you?

Is God asking me to take on a leadership role?

3. Enveloping the Periphery

Pastoral interviews and surveys: Our church is unusually blessed by the number of new people who show up on Sunday without an invitation. However, the casual drop in still struggles with becoming engaged and eventually becoming a part of this congregation. We as a church do friendly very well but seem to have difficulty moving from friendly to friend.

Questions to ask:

How do we intentionally connect with new people in a way that fosters the natural development of friendships?

What obstacles might new people face in making this their church family?

Are we looking at this from the right perspective – from the church waiting for people to come to us or should we be focusing on the friends we already have?

4. Caring for Those with Long-term needs

Pastoral interviews and surveys: There are groups of people we still struggle to care for in our congregation, specifically individuals with high care needs that are longer term or even permanent. This could include children with learning or physical disabilities, individuals with chronic illness or complex short term illnesses.

Questions to ask:

What resources do we have to offer to those individuals with special needs children?

What resources do we have to offer to individuals with high care needs i.e. Seniors that are struggling, individuals with chronic illnesses, individuals with life threatening health concerns?

What are our expectations of the pastoral team?

How is God calling me to help meet these needs?

5. Change is Inevitable

Pastoral interviews and surveys, Community Leadership Interviews and Congregational Survey: The face of Weyburn and our nation is changing. Multiculturalism, an aging population, cultural changes in regards to morality and people's regard for leaders are all factors in this change. The shape of church will change in the decades ahead.

Questions to ask:

Are we ready for changes within the church to meet the diverse needs of the community?

How do we embrace change and walk healthily through the inevitable conflict it will bring?

Passing the torch is difficult especially when new people want to change the program we've

worked so hard on. How do we pass the torch and respect the hard work already completed?

6. Mental Health

Community Leader Interview, Pastoral interviews and Survey: Mental health was consistently cited by our leaders as a top concern for Weyburn and area especially in the areas of drug abuse and suicide and depression.

Questions to ask:

What resources do we have as a church to contribute to the growing issue of poor mental health?

What community partnerships could we build to help meet these needs?

Knowing this issue will likely grow and may directly or indirectly affect you or your family, how do we equip individuals to cope?

For Your Consideration

The majority of respondents to the congregational survey identified that our church “is in reasonable health: however, we have some challenges that could seriously impact our future.”

Questions to ask:

What are some of these challenges?

How can we best meet these challenges?

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you. We look forward to hearing from you and God as we meet in September to share and discern His will for WFMC.