

Generosity Vision, Meeting 1 – September 16, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Attending by Zoom: Tom Lawrence, David Bennett, Chessey Brenton, Phil Estes

Absent: Tara Sintek

Discussion Notes

General thoughts and feelings about our context as it relates to Financial Discipleship at Manchester UMC:

- Tom – Consider/identify demographic of active givers? Where are they coming from (mindset, needs, activity)?
 - Tom – Focus on general fund is needed emphasis. Also need to include specific issues. “Give to get.”?
- Chessey – Life changed after COVID. Folks pulled in on spending. Cutbacks, pay cuts to save jobs. Playing catchup. Bummed that Saving Grace class canceled (due to lack of enrollment). Thought it would hit home with families. Promote more next time. Talk directly to families (invite). Especially to young adults and families. Don’t give up on it. Remind families of baby steps. Path to tithing. Bible a gift from you (the church) to kids. Gentle reminders, fall festival and other outreach efforts need your help to sustain.
- David – Place of needing a new read on folks’ ability to give. Sustaining the liability and vibrancy of the church.
 - Answer question of “What am I seeing about what ‘here’ looks like and ‘there,’ and how the church gets there.
 - Consider what’s going on in the lives and minds of folks. Folks giving can be slow to rise to a momentum toward greater success until we see economy improving. When economy slows giving may drop off more quickly?
 - What church is doing here is far more than survival.
 - Culture says batten down. In reality, there’s a wealth of life out there and benefits from becoming more generous.
 - So, who is this congregation now? Older, younger, convergent/divergent.
 - Embed folks in the ownership of the ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - Challenge of consumerism – thinking about what I get when I pay.

- Generosity represents a shift in how we think about life (from “get” to “give.”)
- Goal development informed by looking at where we are now ... where God wants us to go.
- A Bishop once talked about change. The technical we fix. Adaptive Change is a dialectic – move to learn and understand more. New learnings, new decisions. Adapt to new way of thinking and giving.
- Consider values that compel different generations to give.
- Phil – Check people trends – US Census, Barna.
 - Needs analysis – Spiritual, economic, poverty, etc.
 - importance of storytelling.
 - Discussion with small groups *helps with goal identification*
- David - agrees stories are vital. Bibles, Bicycles, etc. couldn't happen without the platform from which this comes. The core substance that generates, houses, and envisions all the ministry done. Lives are sustained! Relationships and environment for safety and health of relationships.
 - Go to small groups and talk to them. ASK: When did you start caring about Manchester, why did you not walk away. What sustained you? Face-to-face conversation. Need a recorder taking notes. Hear wounds, and joys; consider video recording conversations.

Recap

- How do we get to Goals? What will Generosity look like in five years?
- Reassess congregation, listening sessions, multi-generational focus; include ministry groups like children, youth, family, choir, choir leadership team. Worship team musicians, etc.
- Layout theological understanding and goal (financial discipleship)
- Explain “The Why;” why we give. Explain language of discipleship vs membership. It’s relational, not transactional. From I to We. A community committed to our faith, our God.
- Listening builds and multiplies ownership in the process and grows financial discipleship.
- Tools – text, email, phone calls; social media; worship messages; one-on-one conversations.
- Think high level goal attainment – quantitative and qualitative

- Goals informed by – Prayer, God’s call, listening sessions; historical/projected ministry spending plan numbers.

Next Zoom Meeting: **October 21, 4:00 p.m. Zoom details to follow October 14.**