



Report for
New Song

October 7, 2018



The Weekend Innovation Team (WIT) would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the New Song Church staff and NLI leadership team. It has been an honor to share in this time of prayer and discernment together exploring how God has blessed your congregation and the next innovations of your ministry.

Strengths

1. The Attitude and Behavior of the Congregation

The overall attitude of this congregation is one of its biggest assets. People told us this church is able to be 'real' about the Christian life. They told us they found the people to be authentic, and not hidden behind a mask of Christian perfection. They found this kind of community to be refreshing and most importantly, healing.

2. Passionate Leadership

This church loves their leaders! The clergy, the worship team, the counseling team, the staff, the lay leadership – all were described as energetic, excellent at their respective positions, full of the love of God, and willing to share that love. This church can go far with excellent staff and lay leadership.

3. Desire to Grow Deeper

We heard from many different people throughout the weekend, and most especially from the lay leadership interviews, that the people of this church want to know Jesus better, want to move ever closer toward God, and want to share this grace with others. This desire to go deeper is significant in that it can help empower all of these innovations.

4. Passion for Mission

Missions is a huge focus for this church, and we were very excited to hear how this congregation loves to walk alongside people in so many different ways. We are particularly excited about the community service award New Song received recently, and the ways their devotion to Hanover Cares and projects like Heart & Hands Days model service and passion to the surrounding community.

5. Worship

When we interviewed persons new to New Song, we heard that the sermons, music, and overall worship service were one of the most important reasons they came and joined New Song. Here they found energy, acceptance, and hospitality. The current members also praised the worship as well. The mystery worshippers, even if they were not always greeted, still found worship to be very good at New Song.



Concerns

1. Clarity and Focus

Symptoms of lack of clarity and focus include mixed communications, people going in many different directions all at the same time, and longer and longer meetings. Without focus and alignment around a clear vision the leaders burn out, the staff lacks coherent structure to do their jobs, and the congregation pulls in many directions, rather than focusing on a singular path.

2. Engagement of the Congregation

One of the biggest fears mentioned by lay leadership was that no matter what the future plans, there will not be enough leaders, nor will there be enough people willing to step forward to participate in the work of the future. There was a feeling that, like many organizations, 80% of the work is accomplished by 20% of the people. Without widening the scope of engagement, this congregation will struggle to accomplish any of these innovations.

3. Simplified Outreach and Missions

The congregation has a deep desire to reach out to the community and has many different missions and ministry projects with which to do so. Yet, many more people could be led to know the love of Jesus and the strength of doing life together at New Song. As vision alignment is done, developing a simpler strategy for missions and outreach will help reach new people and help New Song become known as a vital partner in the community.

4. Deeper and Wide in Worship

The crowded conditions at the two worship services lead to people literally being 'lost in the crowd' according to one mystery worshipper. The parking lot is so full that people (including visitors) literally are turning around and going home for want of a spot. Alternative additional worship possibilities need to be explored, until and unless there is a physical solution to these issues.

5. Busting at the Seams!

It is clear this church is out of room for worship, for children's ministry, for missional needs, and for new opportunities that have not yet been envisioned. Teenagers crowded in the pastor's office, children's hallways jam packed at transitions; this lack of space means New Song cannot engage new people, new groups, and new ideas. Meanwhile, there is still a large building debt from long ago building, and fixing this problem will incur more debt.



Next Level Innovations

To become a competent and compelling congregation in the twenty-first century is a very complex, messy, hard, culture-changing and long process. It requires a great deal of prayer, endurance, hard work, dedication, risk and tenacity. Bob Farr and Kay Kotan

1. “The Time has Come” A new vision for New Song.

“The time has come...the kingdom of God has come near...” (Mark 1:15)

When a church is clearly aligned around a vision, it is much easier for the staff, the leadership and the congregation to do the work of making disciples for the transformation of the world with clarity and purpose. The gifts of the church community are best stewarded when there is clarity of vision, and time and energy is not wasted. There is less burnout of leaders and more joy in the ministry.

We discerned that it would be essential for this church to have clarity around a fresh vision, and alignment with that vision, as it seeks to go to the next level of God’s calling. The time has come for a new vision for a new era in the life of New Song UMC.

This vision needs to be prayerfully constructed by New Song soon. It can take various forms, but needs to recognize the God’s time and season in which New Song finds itself. New Song is a remarkably healthy church, but it stands at a crossroads. Because of practical limitations such as building, finances, staffing, and pastoral load, the current state is not sustainable in the long term. This innovation presumes this new vision will be grounded in a congregationally owned desire to steward and multiply this current spiritual health into the surrounding community through evangelism and missional outreach – a strength we have already noted.

1. The Leadership Team, along with the pastors and NLI mentor will prayerfully establish a new vision for the church. Resources for the process can come from the mentor, or from District staff resources, as the team needs. This vision will:
 1. Come through prayer and discernment
 2. Recognize the strengths of New Song and challenge the weaker areas
 3. Encompass both the present congregation, and the future of the church as God calls to others to join this community.
 4. Allow New Song with clarity to say ‘yes’ to the best that God has placed before them, and ‘no’ to things that are not in alignment.
2. After developing the vision, the Leadership Team will develop an ongoing process for aligning church programming with the vision.
 - a. The team and the process will consistently ask the questions: *Does this align with the vision? Is this where God is calling us to prioritize our time and resources? Is vision in the driver’s seat?*
 - b. The Leadership Team will review this alignment process at least once a year.
3. The Leadership Team will begin work on the new vision and aligning process in **January 2019**. It will be submitted to congregational vote no later than **Easter, 2019**. This is a very quick time frame, however we feel this work undergirds all the rest of the innovations.
4. Starting in **May 2019** and completing by **July 2019**, the SPRT will use the vision to restructure the staff.
 - a. The staffing restructure should recognize the current challenges for the Senior Pastor with deliberate efforts to remove duties so that a focus can be placed upon visioning,



- preaching, leadership development and financial development. This will require re-assigning duties such as primary responsibility for congregational care to other staff.
- b. Care should be taken to recognize staff capacity and offer assistance from leadership and other laity. New Song has many gifts and talents that could help expand the ministry of the paid staff.
5. From **May 2019 to July 2019** the communications staff, in conjunction with the Leadership team, will establish a communications plan that aligns with the new vision. This will incorporate new print and social media documentation. District resources are available to assist in this process.
 6. From **May 2019 to July 2019**, the Leadership Team will develop and approve a new church administrative structure that aligns with the vision.
 - a. Considering resources such as Kay Kotan's "Mission Possible", and patterns from similar congregations, New Song will simplify its structure and committees, taking advantage of UM Disciplinary provisions to modify structure to better enable mission. The goal of the effort is to better steward the very strong volunteer base at New Song by reducing administrative meeting gatherings and thereby enable greater work and mission outside the building within the community.
 7. Beginning **May of 2019**, New Song will intentionally draw upon the Vision Statement at Staff meetings. Agendas will be grounded in the vision. Programs, new ministries and staff efforts will be filtered and pruned by the same vision. The goal would be to do fewer things and do them with excellence.

2. Mission and Focus

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36)

In listening and discerning with the staff and congregation, we heard that narrowing the breadth of mission opportunities in alignment with the vision developed in #1 above will allow New Song to have a greater impact in the community – taking missions and outreach to the 'next level'. One newcomer confessed, "I don't even know where to begin because there is so much going on." We also believe simplifying the focus of missions will increase the level of engagement of people not currently attending New Song, potentially encouraging them to serve side by side with New Song folks and ultimately join New Song.

1. By focusing on one mission per month, the entire congregation can share gifts and resources to have a greater impact than if there were several missional projects going on at the same time. Starting in **June 2019**, the Missions Team should review all missions done throughout the year and discern which are closest to matching the vision determined after innovation #1 above. Pick the eight missions projects that most closely align to the vision. We suggest using some of the following criteria for assistance:
 - a. Which of these missions bring us into relationship with other people, rather than simply resourcing them?
 - b. Which of these missions can be done multi-generationally, with our seniors, young adults, youth, and children?
 - c. Which of these missions allow us to partner with other organizations and churches to go even deeper into the life of our community?



2. When we asked people what kinds of missions engaged them the most, the one most often mentioned was the Heart & Hands. Assign four months of the year to be specifically for Heart and Hands ministry events (approximately one per quarter).
 - a. We were also told this was the mission that most people invited others to join them. *Encourage members to bring a friend and make these opportunities coincide with worship or as a weekend-long event.*
3. Put in place a missional calendar by **September 2019**, and experiment with this process over the next year and three months, until **December 2020**. Re-evaluate and determine if this ongoing pattern of a monthly focus has been effective.
4. The Mission Team should create a process to help missionaries reflect on their experiences. Here's an outline for that work:
 - a. Beginning in **January 2020**, experiment with writing, video, artistic interpretations or otherwise recording and sharing stories of people in mission. Include the missionaries, those who worked alongside them and those who may have received care.
 - b. Beginning with missions in **June 2019**, mission leaders returning with New Song teams should experiment with deepening discipleship from these events by holding post-mission meetings. Consider discussing the mission using questions such as:
 - i. *What was the experience of the mission like for you? What was the story you heard from those we met?*
 - ii. *What stories from scripture, our faith tradition, or from the church connect to these experiences? Where did you see Jesus in this mission?*
 - iii. *Based on our experiences and this reflection, what do we do next?*
 - c. Develop a better understanding of outreach to equip the people of New Song to share the story of how Christ's love has influenced their lives.
 - i. We suggest in the timeframe of **Lent 2019**:
 1. The Pastor and Pastor of Discipleship should develop a church-wide sermon series and study on an outreach topic. Some suggestions:
 - Phil Maynard's "Connect," "The Art of Neighboring" by Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, "God's Hospitality" by Amy Oden or other series as pastor decides.
 - District resources or ideas may be available for this series.
 2. Youth should be included in this series, and assistance with this is available from Rev. Jason Stanley in the Elizabeth River District.
 3. We recommend the children's ministry staff select Sunday school curriculum focused on outreach and service during this time period.

3. Engaging Disciples

"The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

Existing leadership and newcomers at New Song UMC recognize that 80% of the work is being done by 20% of the people. As one leader stated, there is need for "new blood" in the leadership. As such, New Song will focus on developing and discipling new leaders as well as identifying and cultivating the spiritual gifts of the congregation.

1. The Worship Design Team should develop a sermon series and church-wide small group focused on priorities and gifts for ministry. (**January 2019**)



- a. We suggest *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life* by Erik Rees to guide this series and the small group curriculum, and online assessment (The S.H.A.P.E. test) to engage the congregation in discovering their spiritual gifts. There may be others that you find work better for your context.
 - b. The sermon series could be three-four weeks focusing on spiritual gifts, heart/personality, and experience.
 - c. The small group study could start up to two weeks prior to the sermon series.
 - d. We recommend also using S.H.A.P.E. annually as part of the introductory classes at New Song to continue engagement and gift-sharing.
2. By **June of 2019**, Pastor of Discipleship, in conjunction with the Lay Leadership Team, should form a team to help develop and expand the use of the S.H.A.P.E. inventories to keep a spiritual gifts database.
 - a. These results should be shared to facilitate engagement of people by their gifts and experiences.
 - b. Consider incorporating storytelling into the sermon series by asking individuals to share how they have utilized their gifts for God's Kingdom.
 3. Leadership Training of current leaders (**June 2019**)
 - a. Provide a day-long training for the Leadership Team, staff, and any other chairs/leaders of teams in:
 - i. Planning: discerning what goals (such as SMART goals) need to be set, action needed, and establishing action plans.
 - ii. Organizing: who will be responsible for the different tasks as outlined in the action plan
 - iii. Influencing: how do you communicate the goal and motivate people to achieve the goal
 - iv. Measuring: evaluate if the task was completed
 - b. A recommended resource that may be of help is *Synergy* by Ann Michel.
 - c. This goal may be extended until the SPRT has completed the alignment of the staff to the vision, as necessary.
 - d. This process should be coordinated by the Leadership Team and can use the NLI mentor and/or District Resources as necessary.
 4. Develop a Mentoring Process in **March 2019**.
 - a. The senior pastor and Pastor of Discipleship will identify at least ten current leaders who will mentor new leaders.
 - b. The Leadership Team, using the spiritual gifts data, will identify ten potential new leaders to be mentored, in all areas of the church life.
 - c. The Pastor of Discipleship will organize a one-day mentor training using Conference resources (suggested resource is Rev. Lindsey Baynham).
 - d. By **September of 2019**, new leaders will have been identified and mentored.
 - e. If this process proves fruitful for mentors and mentees, consider making this an annual process, with a goal toward mentoring 8-10 new leaders per year.

4. Wide and Deep

"We are the ambassadors who represent Christ..." (2 Cor. 5:20a)

New Song Church had the big idea of being a church to "reach people not reached by existing churches". We have seen how God has blessed that vision. We encourage New Song to keep the



momentum and launch creative ways to be the church in your community, especially as the current worship services are approaching capacity.

1. Go Wide by **September 2019**.

- a. The Leadership Team will form a Go Wide Team based on recommendations from the Senior Pastor and the Worship Leader by **May 2019**. Care should be given not to over extend current worship people and resources, but instead to seek to expand and train new people into the worship area.
- b. The Go Wide Team will develop a new worship experiment that includes the key DNA from New Song: a love for all, authenticity, and excellence in worship
- c. We encourage the team to think 'outside the box' – worship outdoors, worship in the middle of a neighborhood, worship in non-traditional settings, worship that doesn't look like current New Song worship and yet leads people into a space to experience God and community.
- d. Seek to connect to the appropriate demographic mosaic groups which are growing in your area:
 - i. We suggest *Babies and Bliss* and *Flourishing Families* groups as they are the current projected growth demographics in the next 5-10 years.
 - ii. If you need assistance with developing connections to these demographics, we recommend reading Tom Bandy's book "Worship Ways," and seeking help from the District Team as needed.

2. Create a Worship Design Team to Go Deep by **January 2019**.

- a. This would include the Senior Pastor, Worship Leader, Tech Coordinator and those who are creative and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit as identified by the Senior Pastor.

3. The goal of the Worship Design Team would be to deepen the worship experience by adding experiential worship through creative elements identified by the Worship Design Team.

- a. In going deeper, the NLI team heard some call for expanding worship to include more children and youth in areas like music or creative worship opportunities. The Worship Design team should consider how or if this is possible.
- b. We recommend the Worship Leader and the Worship Team attend training every year for updated skills and practices. The District can provide opportunities and ideas for this kind of training.
- c. The team should meet at least quarterly to help develop worship plans and creative concepts and could meet as often as weekly to help disburse many of the intricate details that currently fall on the Senior Pastor and the Worship Leader.

4. Continue implementation of the First Impression Guest Welcome ministry.

- a. Ministry Resource Team should evaluate the First Impression Ministry by **February 2019**
- b. Make any adjustments necessary and implement those changes by **April 21, 2019** prior to Easter.

5. Pastor of Discipleship should develop a "First Friends" short-term small group to further the atmosphere of hospitality. These groups would connect new guests and church members to one another as they share the love and excitement of New Song Church. The "First Friends" small groups should be in implementation starting **April 2019** and be under the direction of the Pastor of Discipleship. (Contact Rev. Amanda Webber at Great Bridge UMC for further information about "First Friends".)

6. In **June 2019**, the Worship Design Team should consider the following concerns/suggestions heard or discerned during the NLI weekend:



- a. Mystery worshippers and congregation members commented on the congestion during transitions following Sunday Worship
- b. Several people and leaders pointed out that children and youth are not in the worship service, which means they will grow up without having worshipped, or having worshipped very infrequently.
- c. We encourage prayerful discernment of the Worship Design Team around possible experimentation with worship time changes to alleviate congestion in the gathering area and for the church body to dream big around the possibilities of the worship services to include multiple generations.

5. Making Space for God to Work

“Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” (Psalm 127:1)

How can we create a welcoming and functional ministry space in the original New Song UMC facility that serves the community now and in the future?

Nearly every person and group stressed that the current building is overcrowded and inadequate for the many ministries and missions of New Song. Lack of classroom space for small groups, children and youth ministries, missional programs, as well as practical necessities such as bathrooms, a bigger kitchen, storage areas and office space are badly needed. There is a community need for a preschool and after-school care as well as possibilities for a gym or family life center for all ages. Almost everyone who participated in the NLI weekend agrees that expanding the building would be a tremendous asset for the church and for the community served.

At the same time there is a debt on the current building that must be considered before any building improvements can be seriously pondered. Stewardship of the current debt while at the same time preparing for a better future is going to be critical. Financial generosity is a key Christian virtue that enables us to trust God with our resources, demonstrate financial wisdom, resist the culture of materialism and participate in the Christ-honoring work of God’s reign in the world. Churches that cultivate and expect generosity in the lives of their members attend to an essential element of the discipleship path. At the same time, church members are wise to expect thoughtful planning and the consideration for use of the resources they contribute.

NLI Recommendation – Launching a Building for the Next Generation*

1. **January – June 2019:** The Leadership Team in collaboration with the Trustees, should create a Generosity and Building Team (GBT) to organize a “Next Generations Campaign” that would address the debt as well as consider future building expansion as outlined in paragraph 2544 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.
 - a. The GBT should first develop a comprehensive plan to pay off the debt.
 - b. Research could be conducted to find potential grants and alternative giving.
 - c. This campaign should consider a “One for now, One for later” deal - for every two dollars paid in to the campaign, one dollar pays down debt and one dollar contributes to the Next Generation building.
 - d. GBT prepares with the Trustees a full needs analysis for a future building with priorities established and then reviews with Leadership team
 - e. It would be helpful for the congregation to see a vision for the future, through blueprints and a cost analysis, that will enable them to make the sacrifices necessary to help New Song UMC reach a new level of ministry in conjunction with a building that will allow for the many needs of the surrounding community.



2. **July – December 2019** the GBT should finalize and begin implementing a plan that would include debt repayment and building fund growth.
 - a. Finance Team will develop a plan for discipleship around tithing and generosity.
 - b. The Discipleship Pastor should continue the Financial Peace University program and other financial discipleship throughout this process.
 - c. GBT and Trustees should develop a model or drawings showing each phase of the building expansion.
 - d. The Senior Pastor should seek matching funds and other donations to begin the campaign.
 - e. The Senior Pastor and Trustee Lead should also be in contact with the District Board of Building and Location, as necessary.
 - f. The GBT should set dates for beginning each building phase.
3. **January – December 2020:** GBT should present the congregation with final building plans and continue the fund-raising campaign. GBT with Trustees should get bids for the building project and prepare to build.
4. **January 2021** (Estimated date): Building begins for the Next Generation of New Song.

*This is a rough outline of a very complex process of fundraising, debt reduction and building for the Next Generation. New Song can and should consult with the District, with other churches that have been through a building process (NLI can suggest some), with their Mentor (who has done this in other churches), and with experts in various fields employed in this process. The dates will probably change over time, but we encourage the congregation and various teams involved to persevere, be accountable, and see this through to the end, as New Song has proven it can do over the years.



Next Steps

New Song Church will hold Town Hall meetings within the next 30 days to discuss this report and recommended innovations. The dates for these town halls are as follows:

- **Thursday, October 11 at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Sunday, October 14 at 4:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, October 17 at 6:30 p.m.**

The congregation will vote on this report at an official church conference led by the district superintendent (or elder designated by the DS) on **Sunday, October 21 at 10:00 a.m.**

If the report and innovations are approved by a vote of 70% or more of members present and voting, the NLI process will continue as your mentor assists your leadership to implement these innovations.

If the report and innovations are rejected, the NLI process will be deemed complete, your mentor's ministry with your congregation will be concluded, and the resources of NLI will move on to other NLI churches.

Report Written by:

Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert, Rev. Larry Davies, District Superintendent Rev. Dr. Pete Moon, Maria Maxwell, Rev. Tim Craig, Rev. Lindsey Baynham, Rev. Jason Stanley, Wendy Howard, Kim Johnson



Proposed Innovations Timeline

