

Notes from Cheryl



Each year at our Annual Charge Conference—the meeting when we discuss the business of the church, how we did the year before and our plans and goals for the future.—the pastor writes a narrative report to summarize what should go on record as our vision and goals to meet our mission statement: *To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.* Here are some highlights from this year’s report.

Mission and Ministry

Vision: FUMC has a longstanding vision of *Connect, Grow, Serve*, which describes the structure for its ministries. Anyone is invited to participate in any of the three ministry areas.

Connect Team ministries include creating space for “connections” among members and guests, through public events, participation in citywide events The Connections team puts together monthly social opportunities, quick gatherings for people to reconnect or to meet and get to know newcomers and guests.

Grow Team’s task is to offer ways to nurture growth in discipleship by Bible study and Christian education. Our vision is to develop strategies especially to attract and nurture people ages 0 to 25 years of age, the age they are most likely to appropriate the faith, say yes to God’s call to discipleship, and acknowledge God’s grace in their lives. We interpret our church’s mission as creating space to build relationships, emphasizing children, youth, and young adults. Something new is an alternative group for young adults and university students by Zoom, led by a ministerial candidate and seminary student who is part of our church, during the Sunday School hour (which will also potentially reach those prospects at home). This class is set to meet initially Sunday December 10. We offer Sunday school for children during the sermon time in worship. A women’s study group meets twice monthly and a men’s breakfast group meets weekly at a local restaurant.



This school year we began an after-school program called M&Ms (Music & More). We pick up 13 students from elementary school, feed them a snack, rehearse singing in a choir, making a craft, and playing games. Children from other school districts attend as well. We hope this endeavor will plant seeds in the participants to become part of a church, to learn Bible stories and practice spiritual formation, so that the Christian faith will become part of their DNA along with developing a lifelong love of singing.

Serve Team raises money for missions beyond the budget with its Drop a Dollar program, encouraging offerings during worship to support such organizations as Wesley Campus Ministry at TAMU-C, Clothe a Child, the pastoral benevolence fund, and Community Thanksgiving Celebration. The Serve Team maintains a Blessing Table for those in the church building’s

surrounding neighborhood, including the University, who stop by our church in need of food and personal items.

Youth Ministry includes meetings every other week after M&M. The youth raise funds for Bridgeport Camp, participate in church events such as Fall Fest, and sometimes serve in worship.

Stewardship. Ongoing discipleship includes a year-round stewardship emphasis based on our membership vows to support the church through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

Little Ark Preschool and Daycare is a strong ministry of “Under-25-ers,” with connections to around 50 families with young children, plus a plethora of young adult workers. We invite families to attend worship and to participate in church-wide events.

Music. Our choir is second to none and does an excellent job of leading worship. Four University students participate as choral section leaders, and they are targets of our invitation to higher participation by young adults and University students. Our M&M children’s choir participates in church and community events and sings in worship several times a year.

During VBS this past summer, I realized that a large number of children were not familiar with even the most common stories of the Bible that I was raised on, such as the Wise Men visiting Jesus. I resolved to do what I can to tell those stories in worship so that our worshippers (especially those 25 and under) will build a sense of identity: who we are and to whom we belong.