



**CHURCH-WIDE  
MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT  
FOR**

**Newnan Presbyterian Church  
Newnan, GA**

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## BACKGROUND

Newnan Presbyterian Church has been a beacon of light to the town of Newnan for almost 200 years. Historical roots are seen everywhere in the church, where they value drawing upon the past while looking to the future. Church members describe their church family as “community,” “family,” yet “aging.”

Here is how NPC describes itself on their website:

- Who we are: ***NPC** is a community of believers committed to being open and caring as we worship in our historic location. Our Presbyterian church in Coweta County, GA, has been around for nearly two centuries.*
- Our Mission: *To glorify God as we seek inspiration through worship, study, and fellowship, and extend Christ's love to all people.*
- How We Worship: *We celebrate our faith with vibrant traditional worship on Sundays. Our midweek service is an intimate and reflective experience. We celebrate communion monthly and all are welcome.*

The membership of the church is 398 and on an average week, 105 people attend (virtually or in person) the church’s 10:00 AM worship service. The church also has an online presence through its website, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.

Serving as the church’s clergy are Rev. David A Jones II, Senior Pastor, who began shepherding the church in October 2017. Rev. J. Tyler Brock, Associate Pastor/Youth Pastor, began serving in June 2020. Rev. Darcie Jones is serving as the Children’s Minister.

The church has a 2022 budget of \$525,000 which is an increase over the previous annual budget of \$500,000 for 2021.

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
<b>Annual Budget</b>	487K	585K	523K	548K	497K	440K	417K	434K	470K	482K	500K
<b>Avg Attendance</b>	178	178	175	150	133	145	138	139	139	102	105
<b>Avg Membership</b>	471	475	471	456	446	390	384	397	394	398	398

NPC is a church that knows looking towards the future is important. Before this process, the members asked Holy Cow, a ministry company, to do a visioning process in 2015, where better signage and an increased focus on children’s/youth ministry were among the recommendations. Some of the recommendations from that report were accomplished; others were not. (Click here to read the 2015 report: [NPC 2015 Vision Report](#))

Ministry Architects was invited in by the church leadership (initiated by the Long-Range Planning Committee) to help NPC envision its next three to five years, especially as churches come out of the dynamics of the pandemic. This process includes an initial assessment of the church’s ministries and making recommendations about how it might move forward strategically over the next 24 months. Ministry Architects met with 11 focus groups, totaling 62 people.

## MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Churches that “pay these rents” with their ministry tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those churches that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

It has been Ministry Architects’ experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by volunteers, staff, members, and the congregation at large.

**Rent #1: NUMBERS**—A significant percentage of people need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church’s ministry. It is important for this target number to be clearly agreed on by the church leaders and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the ministry is typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

The consensus is that this rent is not being paid, for this reason: NPC has no clearly communicated goals for what its target numbers should be. Consequently, many individuals look towards NPC’s past or other downtown churches as their measuring stick for participation in the church.

**Rent #2: PROGRAMS**—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, the leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective programs that give people “something to talk about.”

This rent appears to be partially paid. There is a buzz surrounding the quality of worship, the music program, and Newnan Presbyterian School. However, many individuals had a difficult time naming other post-COVID programming that they were excited about.

**Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM**—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the staff, volunteers, and the congregation themselves are essential to building trust in the church.

The love for NPC exuded by its members, excitement expressed by the staff, and the commitment and dedication from its lay leaders suggest that this rent is being paid in full.

As the leadership of the church develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.”

## CHURCH NORMS

There are seven rules of thumb – “church norms” – that Ministry Architects has researched from consultant work across the country which will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

**1) Budget** —The average church budget settles around \$1,400 per attender. With a budget of approximately \$525,000 (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits), NPC has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly total worship attendance level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 375 attenders. With 105 currently attending every week, the ministry is experiencing the generosity of its congregation above most other churches of this size.

**2) Staffing**—We’ve found that most churches have the equivalent of 1 full-time staff member (40 hours per week) for every 75 people in average total worship attendance.

Considering the average worship attendance of 105 and all the positions giving time to the church's ministry, including:

- *The Senior Pastor*
- *The Associate/Youth Pastor*
- *The Choir Director*
- *The Children's Coordinator*
- *The Online Worship Pastor*
- *The Church Secretary*
- *The Financial Secretary*
- *The Preschool Coordinator*

NPC has the equivalent of 1 full-time staff for every 35 attenders. According to this rule of thumb, NPC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 225 worship attenders on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

**3) Payroll Percentage**—In a typical church, the percentage of the budget that goes to support the staff of the church (including salaries, continuing education, and benefits) tends to fall in the range of 45-55%. Of NPC's \$525,000 budget, 65% is dedicated to the staff of the church, about \$341,000. The staffing to budget percentage is above average compared to what other churches dedicate to staffing.

Note: this number may vary due to cost-of-living differences across the country.

**4) Facilities**—A church's ministry is also impacted by the physical layout of its campus and the constraints it may contain. Typically, parking and seating become constraints for churches who are looking to see growth. Consider the following norms:

- **Parking Spaces:** Most churches need *three parking spaces for every five attenders*. With 62 spaces available, the church has a capacity of 104 in-person worship attenders in a single service.
- **Seating Capacity:** Most churches will simply stop growing once the Sanctuary is 80% filled on a regular basis. With 300 total seats available, the church has an in-person attendance capacity of 240 in a single service.

Given these norms, NPC can expect to reach its capacity in the current one service structure at 240 people in weekend worship.

**5) Visitors' Retention**—For the average church, about 10-30% of first-time visitors will turn into regular attenders. Therefore, in order to grow by, say 10-30 people in a single year, the church will need to see about 100 first time guests in that year (including guests at regular services and special services like Easter Sunday.) In the past year, NPC saw an estimated 50 first time visitors and could expect to see their church add 5-15 regular attenders in the coming year with healthy guest enrolling systems and opportunities.

**6) Volunteers**—In an average church, 45% of the number of weekend worship attenders (adults and students, but not children) are serving regularly in a volunteer role. With 30 total regular volunteers in the church and an average worship attendance of 105, NPC estimates that 29% of its weekend worship attenders are serving regularly. This number seems to be below average for what normal churches experience.

**NOTE:** Normally this number is correlated to the amount spent on staffing; the more staff a church has, the lower the volunteer percentage becomes as more of the work is accomplished by paid workers.

**7) Involvement in Groups**— While the data for what's *normal* for churches in group involvement is not available, there are some targets worth noting. It's been observed that healthy churches have at least 40-50% of their adult attendance in some form of small group. Great churches have upwards of 80% of their adults in groups.

These groups can include Sunday school classes, small groups, Bible studies, youth groups, or men's or women's groups with fewer than 25 people. NPC estimates that 50% of their average adult worship attenders are engaged in groups on a regular basis. This number falls right in line with the target for healthy churches.

In addition to these church-wide norms, four rules of thumb –children’s ministry norms – will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

**1) 15% of the Worshipping Congregation:** In a typical church, the size of the children’s ministry tends to settle at a number around 15% of the worshipping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 105 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 16 children per week. The current weekly attendance of 5 children is below what could be expected from the ministry.

**2) \$1,100 per Child:** This is for salary, benefits, and program expenses.

**3) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 70 Children:** NPC has a children’s minister who works 10 hours per week. According to this rule of thumb, NPC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 17 children on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

**4) 1 Adult for Every 5 Children:** Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of spans of care, recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five children on an ongoing basis. With 2 weekly volunteers, NPC currently has a capacity for 10 children weekly. In other words, the team is about the right size to minister to the children who currently attend.

Similarly, youth ministries have four rules of thumb –youth ministry norms – that will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

**1) 10% of the Worshipping Congregation:** In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number around 10% of the worshipping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 105 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 11 youth per week. The current weekly attendance of 4 youth is below what could be expected for a church of this size.

**2) \$1,500 per Youth:** This is for salary, benefits, and program expenses.

**3) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth:** Considering all the positions giving time to the youth ministry, including the Associate Pastor, NPC has the equivalent of a half-time youth staff person. According to this rule of thumb, NPC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 25 youth on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for significant numerical growth.

**4) 1 Adult for Every 5 Youth:** Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of spans of care, recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five youth on an ongoing basis. With two weekly volunteers, NPC currently has the capacity for 10 students. This gives the ministry a capacity for ten youth weekly. In other words, the team is well equipped to meet the needs of the 4 youth who regularly attend.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a pastor or staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a staff of three *different* kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or group that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan. This assessment, its timeline, the Vision Summit (to be held later this Spring) and the 3-year goals from that summit serve as the blueprints.
- **The General Contractor:** A person or team who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project. In a church setting, this is usually the staff and key laity leaders.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as Newnan pursues a more sustainable model of ministry. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- In many churches, there is no person or group playing the role of the architect, especially beyond maintenance of the status quo. The ministry simply moves from one event to the next without a clear vision or stated outcomes.
- Sometimes paid staff are not given the time or training to do their important work as the “general contractor” of a complex ministry. They’re so busy swinging a hammer, they don’t have time to study the plan.
- The staff is often expected to serve in all three of these roles. This is a recipe for congregational dissatisfaction and staff burnout. Nobody’s happy any of the time.
- Some churches hire a laborer who is skilled at leading worship, building relationships or teaching a Bible study. These laborers often mature into an architect or a general contractor, but only if they are given permission, time, and training.

## **ASSETS**

### ***Strengths to protect in the current ministry***

#### **Dynamic Clergy**

Newnan Pres is so blessed to have the clergy team it does. Pastor David's arrival in 2017 came after a 31-year tenure with the loved former pastor and he brings a strong to desire to build bridges and empower others for ministry with his support. Pastor Tyler came to serve as the associate pastor with an emphasis on nurturing the youth of the church. Both pastors bring a millennial vibrancy to the church. An additional clergy blessing is

#### **The Church's School**

A sentiment heard repeatedly was the need for more families with children. Well, 90 children are coming to the church every Monday through Friday! Formerly known as Newnan Presbyterian Pre-school, the school's official title is now Newnan Presbyterian School due to the addition of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades (with plans for adding 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the fall of '22 and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grades to come after that). Different than some schools who simply rent a space from a church, NPS is connected to the church directly through supportive funding, coming under the umbrella of the Christian Education Committee and thus, the Session. What a blessing for the church to have such a convenient opportunity to connect with young families, showing them the love of God.

#### **History**

For nearly 200 years, NPC has been sharing and caring to the people of Newnan and beyond. Just walk the halls of the church; history is around every corner. Rooms are dedicated to saints that have gone before. The Sanctuary is in the "barrel vault" style and is one of a kind for the area churches (see [barrel vault churches](#)). To borrow a quote from "Hamilton" – "history has its eyes on you" and NPC is deeply rooted in the downtown's story.

#### **Superb Music Program**

When asked what the strengths of the church are, every group had a similar answer: Cliff Brock, Director of Music. "His skill playing the organ can't be beat," said one person. Another shared, "He works very hard at what we sing." Still another said, "Cliff is a world-class organist. We could hold concerts and he would fit right in with the very best."

#### **Spirit of Generosity**

One participant said, "When we see a need, we fill it." Many other shared similar sentiments. It's a culture that's been fostered through the years as exemplified by the four different endowment funds currently undergirding the legacy that NPC continues to leave. There's also a generosity of mission. NPC has many ways it has served the community through Summer of Service, the Christmas Feast, Tornado Disaster Assistance, helping local food pantries, and so much more.

#### **Diversity Niche**

The declaration that NPC is a diverse church was repeated many times in the listening groups. Commenters were quick to follow up that the diversity is not racial diversity, still the church has a richness of accepting others as God's children no matter where they are on the path of life. That diversity is exemplified socially-economically, political, and in acceptance of different sexual orientations.

#### **Clarity of Need**

Church attendance has been in decline in US churches for some time and NPC has not missed that trend. Differing thoughts for the reasons behind the decline abound, but one common thought is clarity in knowing that work must be done to move forward. Without abandoning the

past, the members seem to know that it's time to remember the future, taking the love and wisdom of their heritage forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Welcoming**

The congregation prides itself in welcoming everyone no matter who they are, how they're dressed, or where they've been. One participant said, "We notice visitors. We'll come up and introduce ourselves and try to make you feel at home." Another person said, "We're like a family and we've missed each other so much during the pandemic."

## CHALLENGES

### *Obstacles to moving the current ministry strategically forward*

#### **Tale of Two Churches**

A common theme that weaved itself in and out of listening sessions revolved around the subject of how the worship services should look and feel, and high levels of anxiety surrounded the online services. The two most consistently voiced concerns were online worship encouraging free-riders and NPC being bifurcated into two separate congregations. Interestingly, the latter fear is not new to NPC, as there was a similar tension between the 8:30 and the 11:00 services that were held in the 2010s according to several members. The following comments were made by listening session participants:

- “The church feels empty because too many people are online.”
- “The online services are so great and well done, sometimes I feel like I am there in person.”
- “I’m afraid we are losing the soul of the church with the online services.”
- “I love the online services because I can watch them while I work.”
- “Maintaining the online service, is going to make us all lazy.”
- “I go to church more often now than before COVID because of online.”
- “Will those going online be committed and give”
- “Our giving actually went up during the pandemic.”
- “I am afraid that we are going to become two separate congregations.”
- “I feel bad saying this, but sometimes I prefer going online.”

Ironically, it seems as though the fear of being two separate congregations, helps perpetuate the notion that there are two congregations, with those in person being the primary or “real” congregation and those online being secondary. This sentiment was also evident in the language used when describing the two forms of worship.

#### **History**

NPC’s historic building is a double-edged sword, in that it is one of NPC’s greatest assets, but it also has the potential to become a stumbling block. A theme found in the majority of the listening sessions was a fear of whether or not the church would have enough money to maintain the building. One listening group participant pondered, “How, can we use these historical spaces in creative 21<sup>st</sup> century ways?” This question encapsulates this challenge, as NPC needs to stop looking to its past and start looking forward.

#### **Less-Than Children and Youth**

Although participants mentioned their gratefulness for the great things done by the children’s minister and the youth pastor, a consistent perspective emerged from the listening sessions whenever the discussion veered towards children and youth ministry. Non-existent, inconsistent, invisible, and on life-support were some of the words used to describe these two ministries. There was also widespread agreement that this is not a new problem, as there have been at least six people leading the youth group over the past 10 years, sometimes with large gaps in between leaders. There is a heart for these ministries to flourish and a yearning for the vitality that they could bring to NPC. However, a clear dissatisfaction with the youth and children’s ministries over the past decade exists throughout NPC.

#### **Vision Vortex**

Imagine this scenario: The church advertises a big trip. The buzz begins and everyone plans on going! Bags get packed, snacks are ready. The day arrives and everyone gathers around the church bus. They load up, get seated, and the driver says, “So, where are we going?”

That's where the trouble begins. Great people are ready, generous resources are onboard, but no one programmed the GPS. Everyone had a different destination in mind...and the bus goes nowhere.

The ministries of NPC are much like this scenario. There are people ready to do amazing things for the Kingdom. Resources abound and are at the ready. The missing piece of the puzzle is the map with clear-cut mission, target audience (or audiences), values, three-year revolving goals with one-year benchmarks, and participation expectations should be. Without a clear-cut purpose for the ministries, staff members get tired and go un-checked, church members don't have buy-in, people go unchallenged, everyone has a different opinion, and less-than-desirable results occur.

### **Counting The Sheep and Calling Them by Name**

In the Bible story of the shepherd who discovered he had one sheep missing from his 100-sheep flock, the point for children's and youth ministry is this: every sheep was known, and every sheep was counted. When one came up missing, there was a plan put into place that went after the missing lone lamb.

The participation of every person needs to be tracked with contact info gathered so that first-time guests are followed up on and anyone who comes up missing is reached out to with caring concern. Here is a conversation that occurred in one listening session:

- "What ever happened to so-and-so?"
- "He hasn't come for about a year."
- "What happened to him?"
- "I don't know"
- "Neither do I."
- "Oh, he lives in my neighborhood."

What was missing from this conversation? No one reached out to this individual despite several people missing his presence and being aware of her absence. Counting the sheep is especially important since NPC (and the entire world) is in this liminal COVID-19 phase. With smaller churches rebuilding critical mass, the battle is won and lost one sheep at a time. Every person who does/does not participate carries more value than just in consideration to attendance. One member said, "If there is one positive thing we learned during the pandemic, it is that we need people." Counting every sheep is always important; however, calling them by their name is essential and life-giving, especially in the midst of this season.

### **Communication Conundrum**

Across the board there was dissatisfaction with how things were communicated. One notable example of this was last Sunday's service (January 16, 2022). One person said, "I did not even know we had a service last week, until right now," and several people in that listening session verbalized that they too were in the dark. Other people expressed dissatisfaction with how the communication for the listening sessions was given. While a number of people noted they were pleased with the communication methods, several were frustrated with the communication norms and desired more consistency and clarity.

### **Passing the Torch of Leadership**

NPC is filled with wonderful people, and they have a vibrant group of lay leaders that serve in many capacities. We heard from multiple leaders that it took them one or two years to learn the ropes for incoming officers. One leader noted, “I was given a title and a list of tasks, but no direction.” Members of both session and the diaconate yearned for better onramp training. They specifically expressed a longing for better transitions consisting of clear explanations about what the roles entailed as well as guidance on how the processes for the positions worked.

### **Missing Markers of Success**

NPC often relied on traditional markers of success to define the health (or lack of health) of the church: attendance numbers, the size of the ministries, and the amount of money given. When these indicators become the definition of success, they often end up becoming the goals of the church. This theme was common throughout the listening sessions, as one person put it, “We need butts in the seats, to keep the money coming, so the doors can stay open.” Ironically, both NPC’s annual budget and revenue has consistently gone up over the last five years (except for 2020), despite these perceptions. We are in an historically unique point of time that is the perfect time to redefine what is normal and what success looks like. Success that is more Christ-centered, service oriented, and community-focused.

### **Unrealistic Expectations: Keeping up with the Joneses**

NPC is located in beautiful and historic downtown Newnan, directly across the street from First United Methodist Church of Newnan and down the street from Newnan City Church. Additionally, Foundations recently bought the bank next door, and they are currently transforming it into their new sanctuary. Throughout the listening sessions we often heard how healthy Church X is, how vibrant Church Y’s youth program is, or how dynamic the family ministries are at Church Z. These descriptions were often accompanied with a sentiment of comparison. One member said, “The problem is, we do not have the inherent finances as compared to other churches.” The way NPC talked about their neighboring churches was similar to the way one would talk about a new car their neighbor, the Joneses, bought. In order for the ministries at NPC to grow and flourish, the time and energies being spent comparing ourselves to, worrying about, or competing with the churches down the street will need to be replaced with time asking, “What can we do at NPC?” or “How can we partner with them?”

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Reframe the next 12 months as a time of re-building infrastructure for the ministry as the church comes out of the pandemic. Name February 2023 as the target date for ministries that have sufficient infrastructure and support to provide long-term stability, while enjoying incremental successes along the way.
2. Present this report to the Session, requesting that they endorse a 12-month strategic vision process.
3. Invite a church prayer team to pray for this time of strategic development and share this timeline with them.
4. Charge the current Long-Range Planning Committee, who report regularly to the Session and the senior pastor, with focusing on the recommendations below. These non-anxious, goal-oriented people will free up the staff to focus on providing day-to-day ministry.

5. Ministry Architects has been hired to be responsible for the following:
- Chairing and leading the Renovation Team for the first 6 months of the 12-month timeline of momentum building.
  - Play the “coach” role during this renovation period. Ministry Architects will offer experienced direction for the building of an infrastructure for the work, providing ongoing coaching for the ministries’ staff members as well as the Long-Range Planning Team.
  - Working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report’s timeline.
  - Assisting the church in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of restructuring and fine-tuning the ministries.
  - An asterisk (\*) denotes any recommendations that are not currently included in the contract between Newnan Presbyterian and Ministry Architects.

\*An assessment of the school in order to create better ways to maximize its ministry to families.

\*A mini-assessment and timeline designed to focus on the children’s and youth ministry needs with specific doable action steps.

6. Address the current pressure points facing NPC:

**Pressure Point #1: Bring Back Fellowship Events**

Act on the deep yearning to bring back some of the things that allowed everyone to connect to each other prior to COVID. Consider resurrecting the following things in an ever-evolving COVID friendly manner:

- Reinstitute the pew pads on Sunday mornings.
- Restart Wednesday Night Suppers.
- Create sign-ups for Feast Groups.
- Plan a picnic service at the park.
- Develop ways to use the Covenant Garden on a consistent basis.

**Pressure Point #2: Count the Sheep and Call Them by Name**

Generate a plan and procedures to ensure that members of NPC are accounted for and ministered to. Suggestions for a quick start on these procedures include:

- Formulate an every-member contact plan, with a warm welcome, outreach, and “how can we serve you?” component.
- Create a contact plan for first-time visitors.
- Develop a plan for deacons to follow up with missing members.
- Train committee leaders and deacons to navigate the database

**Pressure Point #3: Define Measurements of Success**

This is an historically unique point of time that is the perfect time to redefine what is normal and what success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century looks like. NPC should maximize this time to recalibrate how they view success. Potential tactics include the following:

- Create short term goals for the next six months.
- View short -term success in terms of maintenance instead of growth.
- Change the language for how Newnan Presbyterian School is viewed by the congregation.
- Reorient NPC’s perspective to see how other churches in the city can become ministry partners.



- Identify two to three specific niches that NPC will be known for throughout the city.
- Experiment with new ministries and programs centered around the mission statement.

**Pressure Point #4: Children and Youth Ministries Re-Boot**

Identify a few quick wins that families with children and youth will appreciate. Examples include:

- Engage the youth on Sunday mornings in a consistent manner. This can occur concurrently to the Sunday service.
- Plan two to three special events that families would not want to miss. Ideas include things like a Mardi Gras pancake breakfast, an Easter egg hunt, a churchwide picnic, or a service project.
- Create an “Every Family Contact Plan” so that each set of parents knows there’s something fresh coming. This contact plan should include the families of Newnan Presbyterian School that operates in the church.

7. Build the long-term infrastructure required for long-term, sustainable church ministries, including the following tasks:

**Visioning:** Invite leaders/members to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of envisioning the future, facilitated by Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministries and support the church's vision:

- A Review of the Current Mission Statement
- Defined Core Values (the spirit at which everyone goes about the ministry).
- A Set of Three-Year Revolving Goals with One-Year Benchmarks

Vision Summits work best with a group representing pastors, staff, Session, the Diaconate, and other key ministry leaders. It may also be helpful to include an open invitation to the congregation.

**Sharing the Vision:** Upon completion of the long-term vision and goal-setting process, create a game plan that will outline the best ways to communicate the vision, values, and goals of the church's ministry (sermon series, guidebooks, small group curriculum, etc.)

**Focus:** Through the visioning process, explore the target groups for ministry. Instead of "being all things to all people," establish priorities for discipleship, outreach, and evangelism. After the Vision Summit, a "target database" has been created that names a clear target audience for each ministry in the church and major event.

**Evaluate Current Programs:** Evaluate the current programming with an eye toward retiring or combining the programs that inadequately reflect the current focus of the church. Create a prioritized list of all ministry programs at the church, along with the named target audience and determine how best to retire programs near the bottom of the priority list.

**Establish a Vision Team (This could also be the current Long Range Planning Team)** Upon completion of the church-wide visioning process, create a team that will help carry the vision forward and keep the congregation on task for meeting the benchmarks and goals. A Job Description has been created for a Vision Team that will help guide the vision process moving forward, and recruitment for this team has begun. A Vision Team has been recruited to carry forward the goals and benchmarks of the Vision Summit.

**Develop a Clear Mission Strategy:** After engaging in strategic visioning, develop a game plan that will clarify the ways in which the church will joyfully engage in outreach. Include ways the church will build relationships with other churches and the neighborhoods it serves. At the same time, create awareness and education opportunities among the congregation. An Outreach Strategy has been created that will help the church engage the community around it and be "good news" to its neighbors.

**Host a “Quick Start” Summit:** Invite the Renovation Team, key volunteers, and church staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the tasks outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first and builds momentum for the church’s renovation process (typically items in the first few months of the timeline).

**Volunteer Leadership Clarity:** Draft and/or update written job descriptions for all volunteer roles in the church. Work with leaders to ensure the job descriptions accurately match the work being done, clarify to whom each volunteer is accountable.

**Volunteer Development:** Provide sufficient training and development opportunities for all volunteers in a way that leaves them inspired to serve again rather than exhausted.

**Volunteer Recruitment:** Create a master list of ministry opportunities in every area of the church, from weekly, to monthly, to annual opportunities. Once all volunteer opportunities in the church have been identified, begin the recruitment process to ensure that all positions are filled by August 1 of each year. Develop an annual leadership directory that lists all committees and leaders for all committees and groups (Session, Committee Chairpersons, etc.).

**Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training and vision-casting event for all volunteers at the beginning of each year.

**Volunteer Alignment:** Do an audit of all volunteer teams and roles in the church and clarify their unique contribution to the church. Build a clear organizational chart for all volunteer teams and roles in the church and determine how best to align them for maximum impact in growing the church.

**Communication:** Review and revise current church communication practices to ensure that all congregants, regardless of age or technological proficiency, feel informed. Utilize as many forms of communication as possible including updating the church’s website, brochures, social media, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.

**Marketing and Branding:** Create a written game plan that will address how to introduce the church to the community around it in an inviting and welcoming way. Create an intentional strategy in order to be consistent with your marketing approaches (logos, graphics, etc.). Consider the following:

- Review Church Signage.

- Upgrading the website with an engaging section just for newcomers.

- Identifying communication channels for reaching out to those outside the church. family—social media, flyers and mailers, posters, the NextDoor app, etc.

- Identifying target programs for inviting newcomers.

- Designing a database growth process.

- Communicating regularly with others in the neighborhood.

**Internal Communications:** Create a protocol by which all decisions and important information are shared throughout the whole church community, ensuring that the church is not just communicating information, but that people are actually receiving it.

**Stabilizing Document Development:** Maintain and publish a 12-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month. (Example: October - Order candles for the Advent Wreath.)

**Attendance:** Continue to record attendance for all programs (worship, Sunday school, Bible studies, book studies, special events, etc.) and develop a written game plan to track attendance in a consistent way in order to identify MIAs.

**Leadership Directory:** Develop an annual leadership directory that lists all ministry teams and leaders for all committees and groups (Session, PW, Small Groups, Community Care Deacons, etc.).

**Ministry Manual:** Develop a Ministry Manual, including the most recent directories, a 12-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major church event.

**Database:** Numbers matter because people matter. Create a database of all of the people who are connected to your congregation. This database will be an important tool as you communicate and as you determine who is active. We recommend using categories that indicate the level of involvement of each person. For example:

**Active** are the families who are members of Newnan and have attended at least 12 times in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the ministry. They should show up in your printed directory, if you use one.

**Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to call them every time the doors are open at the church, but you'll want to regularly pursue these families, whether they ever show up or not.

**Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly worship and/or activities but are not official members of the church.

**Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow-up. But you'll want to keep their information for the occasional big event, to which you'll want to invite everyone you know.

**First Timers** refer to visitors who have attended worship for the first time. You'll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.

**Visitor Follow-up:** Carefully develop a game plan for welcoming visitors who visit the church. Craft a plan for following up with adults and families that have become loosely connected to the church. Ensure the database is regularly updated with information from visitors.

**MIA Follow-up:** Determine the approach to follow-up with people who are MIA. Create a database to track who have gone missing, the reasons they have gone, and who, from the staff, followed up with them. Create a culture of care for MIA church members.

## **PROPOSED TIMELINE**

*The following provides Newnan with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of a healthy, sustainable ministry. In light of re-orienting after the shutdowns from the pandemic, the timeline has been shortened to 12-months with place markers put in to make adjustments every three months. The renovations won't be completed in a year, but a remarkable start will have been made.*

*The timeline task list will be produced in 3-month sprints, with the next 3-month segment being written by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month in the previous sprint. Ministry Architects will produce a list of possible priorities and the LRPC will determine what the next set of priorities are. Ministry Architects will then produce the next sprint's timeline flow.*

### **February-April 2022**

#### **Outcomes:**

- This report has been presented to the Session for the strategic renovation of the church's

overall ministry and the Session has given full support of this plan.

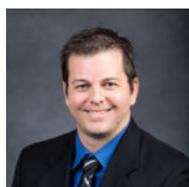
- A Quick Start has been scheduled for late February or early March. This can be virtual or in person; virtual will allow for more time flexibility for the two 3-hour sessions or four 1.5 sessions. Topics covered:
  - Defining New Measurements of What Success Looks Like. Participation goals are set as part of the definitions
  - Creating/Reviewing attendance tracking, first-time guest process, MIA follow-up, and the school families' connections
  - Children's/Youth Ministry Re-boot game plan, including the inclusion of the school
  - Burying The Pandemic excuses and starting fresh with a return to some pre-Covid practices like passing the fellowship pads, allowing the children to come up front for the message, and so on.
- The Renovation Team has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Summit. (This will likely be the LRPC.)
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the renovation process. They have received a copy of this report and timeline. (This should be recruited personally by the clergy.)
- A Quick Start Summit has taken place in which the renovation process was launched, and pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report have been addressed. The Summit tackled the items that needed to be done first to initiate the renovation process.
- A Church-Wide Vision Summit has been scheduled for Spring and a "save the date" email has been sent to the church leadership (staff & volunteers)
- A representative of Session and the senior pastor have met with Ministry Architects to draft an overall staffing strategy for the ministry.
- The renovation work, including the practice of equipping ministry as a biblical imperative, has been added to the preaching/worship calendar for the upcoming year through liturgy, sermons, and/or special presentations in worship. For example: 1) a liturgy to officially bury the pandemic period cutbacks and celebrating a fresh start 2) Periodic reports on the renovation work with celebrations.
- Volunteer recruitment guidelines have been developed to help guide current leaders in healthier volunteer recruitment practices.
- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all ministries has been implemented and/or fine-tuned. The first-time guests' follow-up and the MIA follow-up processes have been reviewed and re-worked as needed.
- Work on a plan for contacting all members/attenders of the church, whether active or inactive with a friendly check-in, asking how the church can serve them, and an invitation to an upcoming event.

## The *Ministry Architects* Team Serving Newnan Presbyterian Church, Newnan, GA



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Stephanie Caro has been involved in ministry to children, youth, and adults in the local church (both large and small) since...a long time ago. Her humorous, straightforward style keeps her busy presenting and coaching at conferences, training events, camps, mission trips, retreats, churches, etc. She is now Senior Consultant for Ministry Architects, which allows her to help churches assess, vision, and formulate their ministry game plans. Her books, *Thriving Youth Ministry in Smaller Churches* and *99 Thoughts for the Smaller Church Youth Worker*, were published by Group/Simply Youth Ministry. Her book, *Smaller Church Youth Ministry: No Staff, No Money, No Problem*, was published by United Methodist Publishing House. Her next book, *Ten Solutions for Smaller Churches*, comes out soon. Stephanie is a contributing author to several ministry resources like *YouthWorker Journal* and *Group Magazine*. Check out Stephanie's blogs at [youthministry.com](http://youthministry.com), [youthspecialties.com](http://youthspecialties.com), Princeton Theological Seminary, and others. Stephanie and her husband, Steve, live in Katy, and their 7 kids are grown.



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Brandon is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Providence College who specializes in the sociology of religion. His primary research interests focus on the intersection of race and religion in the United States as well as congregational studies. Brandon's research is published in numerous academic journals such as *Social Psychology Quarterly*, the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and *Sociology of Religion*. Brandon earned his doctorate in sociology from Baylor University in 2015, and his bachelor's from Texas Christian University. Brandon and his wife live in Providence with their two young children. He enjoys '80s culture, '90s music, cheering on the back-to-back AFC champion Chiefs, and relaxing with his family at a beach or park.



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Jeff Dunn-Rankin is a 19-year veteran of youth and family ministry at Christ United Methodist Church in Venice, Florida. As executive vice president of Ministry Architects, he has consulted with large and small youth and children's ministries from California to Florida and is a frequent speaker at events from the Group/Simply Convention to KidMin. Jeff co-wrote three books with Mark DeVries: *Before You Hire a Youth Pastor*, *The Indispensable Youth Pastor*, and *Training on the Go* (volume 2) (Group Publishing). Before beginning church ministry, Jeff was managing editor of the Charlotte Sun newspaper. Jeff is a graduate of the Sewanee: The University of the South and has a Masters in Business Administration from Vanderbilt University. He lives in Venice, Florida, with his wife Mary Lou, and they have two grown children.