

2020 Vision A Framework for the Future



**Los Altos United Methodist Church
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**This report is respectfully submitted by the members of the
2020 Vision Study Committee:**

Becky Everett, Chair, Study Committee; Chair, Children & Youth Working Group

Hal Hosfeldt, Chair, Pastoral Care Working Group

Brian Jones, Chair, Community Outreach Working Group

Kris Lockley, Chair, Worship & Music Working Group

Marv Patterson, Member at Large

Stan Scardino, Chair, Adult Ministries Working Group

Pastor Pat Stout, Staff Liaison

Robin Tenold, Chair, Administration & Staffing Working Group

Leslie Williams-Hurt, Member at Large

FORWARD

The congregation that gathers at Los Altos United Methodist Church took most of 2008 to dream. We set aside a number of decisions to take stock of “who we are,” “why we are here,” and “where are we going.” We pictured where God is calling our church to be in the year 2020. We received hundreds of responses to a variety of surveys, group interviews, and individual conversations. A team of leaders consolidated the responses and sifted through assumptions, positions, and common goals. What follows is a synopsis of their work. It is a very accurate picture of our present situation and those values that move us into our future.

At a time of rapid and significant decline in our denomination, LAUMC stands out as exceptional in so many ways. We are blessed with a talented and committed congregation engaged with their community and dedicated to making it and the world a better place.

A wise one once asked, “What would we do if we knew we couldn’t fail?” Vision 2020 has been a process to ask that question to each segment of our church. Their answers and their dreams say much about God’s work among us. It is a bright future indeed.

Rev. Dr. Mark S. Bollwinkel, Senior Pastor

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2008, our congregation became engaged in important discussions about the possibility of constructing an addition to our Children's Center building. These discussions highlighted the need for an integrated vision of the future for our programs and facilities so that we could anticipate with some confidence how specific proposals for changes and investments would impact all of our ministries. In response to this need, a long-range planning initiative, which came to be known as "2020 Vision," was launched in June 2008. The question posed to the congregation was, "If we could somehow transport ourselves to the year 2020 and look back, what accomplishments and growth would we want to see at our church?"

In the history of LAUMC, 2020 Vision was preceded by a number of other planning projects, the most recent two being "Our Vision Continues" in 1989 and the Building Study Committee Final Report of 1995. The challenge facing our new Study Committee was to determine how the needs and priorities of the congregation had evolved in the succeeding years and how we could best utilize our gifts and resources over the next 12 years to fulfill our mission of "Touching Heaven, Changing Earth." Not only was the Committee charged with articulating a vision but also with establishing a continuous process that would make visioning a vital day-to-day part of the church leadership and governance structure.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 2020 Vision project had four main phases: Organization, Listening, Analysis, and Recommendations.

Organization Phase

The first step in the 2020 Vision project was to organize a Study Committee with nine members representing a cross-section of leaders in the congregation, including a clergy staff liaison. The Study Committee assumed responsibility for developing the project plan, leading its execution, and integrating and prioritizing the final recommendations.

Second, six Working Groups encompassing the various ministries and constituencies at LAUMC (Adult Ministries, Children's Ministries, Worship & Music, Pastoral Care, Administration & Staffing, and Community Outreach) were formed. Six members of the Study Committee each took on the responsibility of leading one of the Working Groups. The Working Groups were staffed with volunteers with special interest and expertise in the particular ministry area to which they were assigned. Membership in the Working Groups varied from four to twenty-two. Their responsibility was to inventory existing programs, gather input from the congregation about the challenges, successes, and needs of their particular ministry, and to distill this information into themes and recommendations.

Third, a Steering Committee was created to assist with issue management and to provide a sounding board for project plans. The Steering Committee had six members including the chairperson and the staff liaison from the Study Committee.

A final critical element in the organization of the 2020 Vision project was the working relationship between the Study Committee and the already existing staff Vision Team. The Vision Team is comprised of seven members, including all LAUMC clergy and senior ministry directors, under the leadership of the Senior Pastor. With the combination of clergy, staff, and lay leadership from the two sources, under the auspices of the Administrative Board, 2020 Vision had the resources, support, and sponsorship it needed to succeed.

Listening Phase

The primary activity of the team throughout the project was to listen to the congregation. Opportunities for providing input came in many forms and were tailored to the needs and availability of each group. Special efforts were made to reach members of different ages, interests, and backgrounds in order to sample a variety of perspectives. The most fruitful communication channels were:

- ***One-on-one Interviews*** with clergy and staff; lay leaders; committee chairs; pastoral care givers and receivers; Scout leaders; ministry group leaders
- ***Discussions with Church Committees and Groups*** (e.g., Men's Breakfast; Children's Ministry Committee; Starfire & Lightshine Parents; Board of Trustees; Spiritual Life Team; Community Life Team; Worship Committee)

- *Email Messages* to 2020Vision @laumc.org email (~50 messages received)
- *Region Demographics Report* prepared by The Percept Group
- *Question of the Week Series* (July-August 2008; 8 weeks/8 questions; ~1200 responses)
- *Children’s Center Parents Survey* (November 2008; 14 questions; 172 responses)
- *Congregation Survey* (December 2008; web-based; 33 questions; 223 responses)
- *Study Committee and Vision Team Collaboration* (Three joint sessions: June 2008, December 2008, January 2009)

Analysis Phase

Once the many voices of the congregation had been heard, it was the responsibility of each Working Group and then ultimately the Study Committee to consolidate the various inputs and distill from them the most interesting ideas (“gold nuggets”) and recurring themes. There was significant consistency in the feedback received in a few areas, such as the general enthusiasm for greater participation in local hands-on mission work and the frequently expressed desire to see young adults better represented in the life of the church. These strong messages did much to guide the final deliberations of the Study Committee. In some cases, formal analytical processes were used to help groups identify the recommendations that had the greatest potential benefit.

Once the Working Groups completed their analysis, the Study Committee, in conjunction with the Vision Team, began the final process of consolidation in order to reach a common set of recommendations. As each Working Group reported its individual results, there appeared obvious areas of overlap where identical or related objectives were raised by two or more Working Groups. In these situations, the recommendations were combined and the joint sponsorship was noted. The process continued with prioritization of all the recommendations according to:

- Strength of congregation feedback (surveys, interviews, email)
- Degree of alignment with the vision, mission, and purpose of the church
- Dependencies among recommendations
- Urgency for implementation
- Availability of resources.

Recommendations Phase

After arriving at a final set of recommendations, the Study Committee presented its conclusions to an All Church Meeting on February 8, 2009, and released this written report in early March. Formal endorsement of the committee recommendations by the Administrative Board is expected at its meeting on March 30, 2009.

LAUMC: OUR VISION

Over the course of the 2020 Vision project, the Study Committee came to understand that a vision depends as much on lessons from the past and the present as it does on dreams of the future. In the book, Take the Next Step, author Lovett H. Weems of the Wesley Theological Seminary states:

“Change is not becoming something we never have been before. It is becoming more of what we have been.”

There is much about LAUMC that we can celebrate. Our challenge as a study committee was to explore and recommend ways to further our mission by directing our energy, leadership, and resources in ways that build on our strengths. Our vision for LAUMC is guided by the following elements:

- Our history
- Our core values
- Our strengths
- Cornerstones of Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Practice statements
- Recommendations for the growth and expansion of our ministries

Our History

The initial meetings of the 2020 Vision Study Committee were focused on answering the question, “Who are we?” Before we could begin work on recommendations for the future of LAUMC’s ministries, buildings, and facilities, we needed to reach a common understanding of what it is that powers this congregation and gives it a reason for being. We began by returning to the history of the “Methodist Community Church of Los Altos.” Thanks to the memories shared with us by long-time members of the congregation and to a document titled “United Methodist Church of Los Altos: A Brief History,” written by Nellie Hessee in 1973, we discovered the rich heritage left to us by our founders.

The church was founded in 1950 on our current site with a total of 116 charter members. The first regular worship service was held on a small platform overlooking Hale Creek under a canopy of oak trees, a location referred to as the “outdoor cathedral.” The goals stated by that first congregation and the name they selected for their new church clearly expressed the commitment they felt to community, youth, and service in the name of Christ.

“The goals of the Methodist Community Church of Los Altos are to build a church which will:

- *Dedicate itself to serving its community*
- *Make available to the community a center for spiritual, social, civic, and youth needs*
- *Grow with its community.”*

These values are still evident in the recurring themes revealed during the 2020 Vision investigation.

Our Core Values

As LAUMC has grown and expanded its ministries over nearly 60 years, people and programs have come and gone but our culture has emerged strong in particular core values. Values are the commitments that shape the way we do things, and they tend to stay the same over a long period of time. In some ways, they represent the guidelines and boundaries within which we carry out our mission. The Study Committee and the Vision Team conducted a special “Values” exercise during the 2020 Vision project as a way of building greater awareness and understanding of the often unspoken values that characterize us as a congregation. The following list resulted from that discussion:

- Building relationship with God; spiritual development
- Service to the congregation, the community, the world
- Inspirational worship and music
- Leadership in the community and denomination
- Nurture of our children and youth
- Care of our elders
- Welcome and openness to the community
- Social responsibility
- Generosity
- Education and learning
- Honoring our past
- Stewardship of the environment

There is now an opportunity for the congregation to continue the values process and identify the three to five values that are most essential to the life and work of LAUMC and then to define and prioritize these so that they can more easily be used to guide future decision-making.

Our Strengths

The Study Committee’s observations of LAUMC in action and our communications with ministry groups across the congregation gave us a strong sense of our church’s strengths and accomplishments. In fact, our recommendations for the future were very much influenced by the things we already do well at LAUMC. The following activities are representative of the strengths demonstrated every day by our congregation:

- Praise God through insightful and inventive worship
- Enhance worship with excellence in music and song
- Educate and inspire our children and youth
- Enrich the lives of elders
- Contribute through vital and active Women’s Ministries
- Reach out to the community with generosity and welcome
- Come to the aid of the poor and those in need

It became our goal to find ways that we can build on these strengths in the future by expanding particular ministries, adding resources in specific areas, and cultivating new or existing relationships with other churches or non-profit organizations that enable us to extend our reach into the congregation and the community.

Cornerstones of Our Future

With the perspective we gained from the study of our history, the 2020 Vision Study Committee turned its attention to what the future of LAUMC might look like. Foundational to this work were the four cornerstones of the church: Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Practices. The staff Vision Team, made up of LAUMC clergy and senior ministry directors, took responsibility for renewing these elements to ensure that they would inspire and guide our journey.

Vision, Mission, and Purpose

The power of vision can inspire what we do together with purpose and meaning. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of a day when his children would be judged by the "content of their character rather than by the color of their skin" did just that. John F. Kennedy's call for the United States of America to put astronauts on the moon did as well. Jesus' proclamation that a day was coming when the "blind would see, the lame walk, the prisoners set free, and those longing for a future of peace, justice and love would be satisfied" (Luke 4) began a movement that changed and is still changing the world 2,000 years later.

When a local church has a compelling vision of its future, mission for its present, and sense of purpose built from its past, great things can happen. Consider the following as statements of vision, mission, and purpose that can lead us during the next 12 years. Some of the words and concepts are quite familiar. Some of them describe deeply held values that are just now being articulated. These words are more than slogans, more than headlines; they describe "Who we are," "Why we are here," and "Where we are going":

Who are we?

A church doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God

Why are we here?

To become deeply committed Christians knowing, loving, and serving God

Where are we going?

Touching heaven, changing earth with head, heart, and hands

Practices

In his book, Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations (2007), Bishop Robert Schnase of the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church, challenges churches everywhere to embrace the power of five fundamental practices that demonstrate the health, vitality, and fruitfulness of all congregations:

- Radical Hospitality
- Passionate Worship
- Intentional Faith Development
- Risk-Taking Mission and Service
- Extravagant Generosity

He notes that “these simple practices, intensified by strong adjectives, have captured the imaginations of church leaders and have pushed them to a higher quality ministry.” The message of Bishop Schnase’s book so inspired the LAUMC Vision Team and the members of the 2020 Vision Study Committee that the five practices were adopted as the framework for our final study recommendations. Going forward they give us powerful tools for the implementation of our vision.

Recommendations

The 2020 Vision Study Committee offers the following set of recommendations using the framework of the five practices. They are intended to inspire and guide LAUMC’s efforts in our journey to 2020. The proposals are influenced by the history, values, and strengths of LAUMC, and they reflect our understanding of the interests and desires of the congregation as of the end of 2008. We expect, however, that the recommendations presented here are only the beginning and that new circumstances, unforeseen opportunities, and information from future investigations and reflection, should and will lead to changes and additions.

2020 Vision Recommendations

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Radical Hospitality. Out of genuine love for Christ and for others, their laity and pastors take the initiative to invite, welcome, include, and support newcomers and help them grow in faith as they become part of the Body of Christ. [Bishop Robert Schnase]

Congregation feedback to the 2020 Vision team included many references to a disappointing lack of growth and diversity in the LAUMC population. The challenge for us in the next decade is to create a culture of hospitality in which we actively invite and welcome newcomers to share in the life of the church. We need to reach out to age, interest, and ethnic groups that we currently under serve and learn how we can help them experience the love of Christ in their lives. What does hospitality look like? How can we as individuals and as a congregation be more welcoming to the newest members of LAUMC whom we have yet to meet?

2020 Vision Highlight:

The 2020 Vision Study Committee received enthusiastic response in favor of launching a ministry to welcome and include young adults and in so doing fill a gap that currently exists between our youth and adult ministries. Feedback also indicated a strong interest in revitalizing our men's ministry and more fully integrating the "Single Boomers" so that both groups can realize their potential for growth. Radical Hospitality can take many forms, but fundamentally it stems from an understanding of what it means to be a newcomer and from a commitment to creating an environment in which a stranger feels welcome. The congregation seems ready and willing to make Radical Hospitality happen at LAUMC.

Young Adults' Ministry

LAUMC has historically been a place of welcoming and joy for our youth, only to abruptly end that faith-based support when they leave to attend college or enter the work force. During the period of the 2020 Vision investigation, we found that many former youth members have attempted to maintain this feeling of support and community as they enter the world by forming satellite groups, as has already been done in Portland, San Francisco, and San Diego.

We recommend that LAUMC immediately form a study group, largely made up of the target participants, ages 18-34. The group's purpose would be to explore the formation of a ministry for young adults that would foster their growth and fellowship in the Body of Christ. We discovered through our investigation that successful young adult ministries at other churches were supported by dedicated pastoral assignments. We believe that we can begin a young adults' ministry at LAUMC with current staffing, but will need to consider full-time staff, shared staff with a partner church, and/or a pastoral internship in order to successfully grow this ministry. The "how" of establishing this foundation is a task for the study group.

We believe that a thriving young adult program will enable us to maintain the strong connection we have built with the youth of our congregation as they mature as young adults, and that it will be an important source of future lay leaders for LAUMC.

Men's Ministry

In the spirit of Radical Hospitality, the Vision 2020 Study Committee fully supports the current initiative launched by LAUMC men to expand the ministries for men's spiritual growth, service, and leadership development. Some of the resulting groups will have a natural affinity by age/interest and others will be of a more general nature. This growth will be self-funded, but will require some participation from the pastoral staff, including the Senior Pastor. The goal is to welcome more men into active membership, participation, and service at LAUMC and in so doing build a strong community of faith and fellowship.

A substantial number of activities are already underway or in development:

- Men's Breakfast: Monthly breakfast for men to gather and discuss topics of interest without a formal agenda
- Hiking: Wilderness hikes to encourage fellowship and a healthy lifestyle, inspired by hikes taken at the men's retreats
- Men's Musical Development: Occasions when men can gather to sing and develop an appreciation for chorale as a source of camaraderie and spiritual growth
- Men's Covenant Groups: The Senior Pastor will lead a "founding" group, members of which will in turn start new groups
- Men's Retreats: A continuing tradition of annual men's retreats with speakers and spiritual activities; introduction of special interest retreats (e.g., fathers and children; spouses) which may be of shorter duration
- Dads of Young Kids: Opportunities for fathers to share experiences, ideas, and activities with their young children
- Missions: Hands-on mission work in the local area (conceptual stage)
- Service Directory: An "Angie's List" of members willing to share their talents and experience with the congregation (conceptual stage)

Single Boomers' Ministry

We recommend the establishment of a ministry focused on single "baby boomers" who are divorced, widowed or feel marginalized because they are not "partnered" in a congregation that focuses primarily on couples and families. We currently have a successful grass-roots program of fellowship for Single Boomers through social activities. To continue to grow this constituency, pastoral support is needed.

Recommendations for expanding and developing this ministry include:

- Assigning a pastoral staff member to assist in developing programs.
- Making the Single Boomers' Ministry a standing committee that has a leadership group to ensure continuity.
- Allowing for staff support for communications, social and educational programs.
- Investigating partnering with other churches to spread costs, increase support, and build a larger constituency.

Campus Hospitality

We believe that visitors, newcomers, and new members should all feel welcome and comfortable in our congregation that espouses “Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.” To this end we recommend that our Hospitality Team continue and grow in its leadership of campus hospitality. We also challenge every church committee and team to explore and embrace their roles in extending hospitality through their ministries and ask each worshipper at LAUMC to make hospitality a personal and joyful responsibility. Hospitality opens the door to all the dreams for growth and vitality that we have for LAUMC.

Opportunities for us to demonstrate Radical Hospitality include:

- Inviting friends to worship services and events
- Welcoming community groups to the campus
- Offering new styles of worship and different worship days/times
- Installing a directory of campus daily activities & locations
- Sponsoring active formation of small groups
- Opening committees to new members through term limits and membership rotations
- Improving campus signage and maps
- Introducing nametags at worship services.

BOLD MISSION

Bold Mission is a life-long journey of faith for a large and growing segment of our congregation. Whether we are traveling to Mountain View, CA, to distribute warm winter coats or to Angola in Africa to deliver medical supplies, LAUMC has a long tradition of enthusiastic and generous mission outreach. Mission and service enable us to make a positive difference in the lives of others, locally and globally, whether or not they will ever be members of the community of faith. Relationships with those served, with those we serve alongside, and with God are all deepened through meaningful volunteer service. It is a goal of LAUMC to involve all church members in this important work.

2020 Vision Highlight:

Investigation by the 2020 Vision Study Committee revealed a strong desire within the congregation for more local, hands-on mission opportunities. Such opportunities would enable people to improve the lives of others in their own congregation and community without requiring major personal investments of time and money that many felt unable to commit to. Surveys also indicated a strong interest in mission work that could accommodate family groups.

Stepping Stones to Local Mission Outreach

While LAUMC supports and participates in a large number of valuable outreach activities, it can be daunting for new people to get involved. We recommend active steps to lower the barriers to new participants, and stepping stones on the path to growth for those already involved. Opportunities for initial participation should be short-duration projects that do not require large monetary outlays or long-term commitments. Opportunities should be available to small groups to participate collectively, and should be welcoming to newcomers, allowing them to contribute immediately. In addition, many opportunities for family participation should be included.

To facilitate this, we recommend the formation of a clearinghouse, potentially web-based, where volunteers and needs can be matched based on schedule/timing, age-appropriateness, and outreach area. Maintenance of this database would require volunteer or paid support to keep it “stocked” with an appropriate and broad set of opportunities. Opportunities should include global, local, and church volunteer needs.

Partnerships with Other Churches

We recommend that LAUMC grow in relationship with the larger local Body of Christ through enhanced partnerships with other churches. This process is already underway with Trinity UMC in Mountain View, and has led to a number of joint service opportunities and deepened relationships with Trinity clergy and congregants. Usually, the specific joint projects are not known in advance; however, God never fails to provide opportunities as our partnerships grow. These partnerships allow both churches to bring their own strengths to a joint effort, enabling projects that neither church could do alone.

Joint service projects clearly benefit the aid recipients. However, the experience of working hand in hand with another church benefits our own congregation, as we see the world with broadened perspective and as we deepen relationships with people who we might not otherwise meet. Such cooperation also demonstrates the kind of Christianity that we would like the secular world to see. Bringing Christ's larger church together to work side by side for the people he loves is what "Touching Heaven, Changing Earth" looks like.

Implementation of the Trinity UMC relationship is already underway and represents LAUMC's first significant church partnership. It is important to remember that relationship-building requires constant (if low-level) effort in order to succeed and thrive. This relationship-building effort will rarely be in urgent crisis; rather, it is vulnerable to slow neglect as other more urgent (but perhaps no more important) needs divert our attention. We must actively prioritize the investment we make in our partnerships in order to maintain their vitality and promise despite competing shorter-term initiatives.

Pastoral Care Infrastructure

LAUMC pastors and caregivers have a tradition of extending love, care, and comfort to people in the congregation who face personal crises due to isolation, disability, illness, death, or other difficult challenges. Pastoral care is a particularly important ministry in the outreach to our elders, whose mobility and transportation options often limit their access to spiritual, social, and service activities and jeopardize basic health and safety in the home. Pastoral care also gives us a way to build intergenerational ties within the congregation by matching younger and older individuals in care relationships that contribute to the spiritual growth of both giver and receiver.

The ministries of Angels on Call, Friendly Visitors, Stephen Ministers, Senior Health Chat, and support groups such as ACAP have grown in response to the various pastoral care needs of the congregation. In investigating these services, the 2020 Vision team saw an opportunity to reach and serve care receivers and nurture caregivers more effectively by sharing best practices among our various care ministry groups and recognizing where they have common needs and related services that can be managed cooperatively.

We recommend that LAUMC build a common pastoral care infrastructure that simplifies contact and communication for those in need of help, facilitates the matching of caregivers and care receivers, improves the coverage and effectiveness of our resources, and provides growth and support to caregivers. By improving productivity and enhancing program support, a shared infrastructure could help to avoid volunteer burnout by encouraging rotation to various roles and providing more opportunities for peer interaction, training, and rejuvenation. This approach would establish a more integrated community of caregivers that could sponsor creative training programs to refresh and enhance the "toolbox" of relationship skills that encourage and assist communication among people in all circumstances.

The success of this recommendation depends on recruiting and mentoring lay volunteers of all ages, who will design, develop, implement, and manage this shared framework of care services under the auspices of pastoral care ministry.

Community Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School (VBS) at LAUMC has been a favorite summer activity for decades. It is an intergenerational ministry that involves parents, grandparents, high school and college students, and retired elementary school teachers working together to bring stories of the Bible alive for children through drama, arts and crafts, music, reading, and play. When investigating possibilities for Bold Mission, the 2020 Vision Study Committee returned time and again to this “jewel” as an opportunity for outreach to children in the extended community.

We recommend that LAUMC offer Vacation Bible School at satellite location(s), possibly in partnership with another UMC, to bring Christian-based education and summer enrichment to children who would not otherwise experience it. This program would leverage all the programming and preparation already invested in VBS on the Los Altos campus, thus reducing the overhead of sponsoring an additional session. Fees could be subsidized to enable children from lower-income families to participate.

Satellite VBS sessions would offer leadership development opportunities to volunteers and interns who could then enhance and improve subsequent VBS programs and build a leadership pool for Children’s Ministries. This extension of VBS would also enable LAUMC to reach out to more children and families in our community and demonstrate commitment to Christ-centered Bold Mission.

Preschool Outreach

The boldest of our Bold Mission recommendations is to establish licensed satellite preschool program(s) in the community to serve children throughout the school year. We live in a region with a growing population of young children and a shortage of high quality preschools to give them a foundation for the future. The Children’s Center Weekday Preschool is another example of the strong Children’s Ministry programs at LAUMC and it is the one with the greatest community contact outside the congregation. The 2020 Vision Children’s Center Preschool Parents survey confirmed that teachers, staff, director, programming, facilities, and church sponsorship all have unanimous and resounding support from our preschool families. Demand for registration is high and consistently exceeds capacity. Opportunities for “Touching Heaven, Changing Earth” abound with the possibility of taking a successful program like this one out into the community.

The 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that LAUMC open satellite preschool location(s) for the benefit of children in local communities whose families have income

high enough to disqualify them from government assisted preschool yet insufficient to pay private school tuition. A subsidized preschool would enable LAUMC to demonstrate its commitment to the health and well-being of the community and the teaching of Christian values to children as part of a high-quality preschool education. This initiative would require a significant investment and commitment from LAUMC and would take our preschool program to a new level. It would open up great potential for Christian outreach to new families, church partnerships, and community leadership.

PASSIONATE WORSHIP

Worship is at the center of the life of the church. It connects people to God and to one another through preaching, music, prayer, Scripture, and Communion. “God uses worship to transform lives, heal wounded souls, renew hope, shape decisions, provoke change, inspire compassion, and bind people to one another. [Bishop Robert Schnase]

LAUMC has a long tradition of passionate and inspired worship that the congregation wants to preserve and expand in the decade to come. The 2020 Vision team quickly recognized that if we are to succeed in growing as a diverse and multi-generational congregation, we must be sensitive and open to the styles of worship that appeal to different groups.

2020 Vision Highlight:

One of the findings that strongly influenced the recommendations of the 2020 Vision Worship & Music working group was the realization that Creekside Crossings, the LAUMC “contemporary” worship service, may not be as contemporary as we thought! Perhaps we don’t attract young adults because we’re not responding to the needs of that generation. We need to “put our ears to the ground” again and consider new styles of music, message, technology, space, and location that will bring worship alive for the young adults that we hope will be a growing segment of our congregation.

New Worship Services

One of the most effective ways for LAUMC to achieve our goal of growth and diversity is to start new worship services that target the needs and interests of underserved groups in the community. The 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that we implement at least two new worship services in the next ten years. Further investigation is needed to identify specifics of timing, style, and location, and this should take into consideration feedback received by the 2020 Vision Worship & Music working group. Some of the top priorities expressed by the congregation were to:

- Add a worship service that targets the worship needs of the young adult population
- Add a worship service held on a day other than Sunday
- Explore contemplative worship opportunities.

Worship Space Plan

An important aspect of worship is the range of possibilities for the design of the worship space itself: the awe-inspiring majesty of a vaulted sanctuary, the intimacy of a candle-lit chapel, the natural beauty of a garden labyrinth, the spontaneity of a platform in the round with folding chairs. Seen through the eyes of different age groups, traditions, and styles, “God’s House” can take on many different forms.

The 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that we create and maintain a Master Plan for Worship Space at LAUMC that accommodates the evolving format of our worship services over time. This Plan will address the growing need for contemporary and flexible worship space as well as ensuring that worship space is accessible to all individuals regardless of physical abilities. It will not only consider the needs of current constituents but also those of the un-churched population in our community.

The challenge of managing our worship space plan over time will be to recognize if/when proposals for modification and remodeling should give way to bolder prospects such as opening new worship sites on satellite campuses or building a new worship center on the site of our current Sanctuary. The scope of the master planning process includes the responsibility to consider and anticipate this range of possibilities. We trust that as the practice of Passionate Worship evolves at LAUMC, so will our vision of “God’s House.”

Worship Arts Center

The positive impact of technology is felt across all forms of worship at LAUMC and has given us new capabilities to create, produce, and share worship arts that enrich the worship experience. In recognition of the talent and leadership of LAUMC staff and volunteers in the fields of music, art, video, photography, and graphics, the 2020 Vision team recommends that we establish a training site, staff, and studio for the development of contemporary worship arts. This Worship Arts Center would offer internships and other training opportunities for churches across the Conference. The products produced by the Center would benefit all the ministries at LAUMC as well as those of Christian churches around the country and the world. Eventually the Center would incorporate as a non-profit institution.

DEEPENING FAITH

Early in the visioning process, the 2020 Vision Study Committee discussed the mission and purpose of LAUMC and how a clear understanding of who we are must drive our vision of the future. Those discussions resulted in the drafting of the following statement:

LAUMC is a place where we journey and grow together, living out Christ's message through constantly deepening relationships with God, with each other, and with those in our community, locally and globally. [2020 Vision Study Committee]

As we built the framework for our 2020 Vision recommendations, we were guided by this goal of “deepening relationships.” Radical Hospitality encompassed our priorities concerning “relationships with each other.” Bold Mission expressed our commitment to building “relationships with those in our community.” Passionate Worship and Deepening Faith set the backdrop for nurturing our personal “relationships with God.” Deepening Faith speaks directly to the role of LAUMC in inspiring every individual in their journey of spiritual development, from childhood through adulthood.

The 2020 Vision Study Committee received many comments from the congregation recognizing the strengths and successes of LAUMC's efforts to promote personal spiritual growth through study, coaching, and worship. Our children and youth programs were unanimously applauded for their successes in creating “Disciples for Christ” who go out into the world as young adults bolstered by the experience of God in their lives received through Sunday School, children's choirs, confirmation, youth groups, and youth choirs. Our adult Bible study and Christian education programs were also celebrated for their variety, insight, and creativity.

2020 Vision Highlight:

Interestingly, when asked to consider possibilities for the future of Deepening Faith at LAUMC, a number of people in the congregation recommended that we look to the past and return to Wesley's concept of “small groups” as a means of building a stronger faith.

As Wesley and the early Methodists realized, growth in faith does not come easily or automatically, but requires placing ourselves in community to learn the faith with others. [Bishop Robert Schnase]

This was a reminder to the Study Committee to understand and honor our traditions, core values, and strengths as a foundation for our future.

Covenant Discipleship

The 2020 Vision team recommends full support from the congregation for the initiative currently underway to form Covenant Discipleship Groups within LAUMC. Covenant Discipleship is a small-group ministry (6-8 people) in the Wesleyan tradition. It is intended for people at a certain spiritual maturity level where they desire to deepen their daily discipleship journey. Groups meet weekly for one hour. The agenda is a covenant

written by the group based upon the General Rule of Discipleship: To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through a process of mutual accountability and support for practicing the basics of Christian faith, members “watch over one another in love.” Covenant Discipleship groups help to form people as dependable and mature disciples of Jesus Christ and leaders in discipleship. Covenant Discipleship groups with youth and with children are also possible. Each group has a “class leader” to help convene the group, although the covenant itself is the real leader. The class leaders can meet with a pastor on a quarterly basis for mutual support and care.

Christian Forum

In recognition of LAUMC’s leadership in the Conference and in the community, the 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that the congregation sponsor a local lecture series at LAUMC that brings international Christian and non-Christian voices to our area. It is important that we have the opportunity to learn about and debate issues of importance to Christian life in our country so that we can mature as Disciples of Christ. This program would benefit the congregation and the community by encouraging dialog between different religious and social groups about issues of the day. It would attract respected lecturers and bring new people to LAUMC. The program would be modeled after the popular Los Altos Community Forum lecture series held monthly in the sanctuary at LAUMC

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

As people grow in relationship to Christ, they grow also in the practice of Extravagant Generosity, offering more of themselves for the purposes of Christ and providing the resources that strengthen ministry and that help the church touch the lives of more and more people in the same way their own lives have been transformed by God. [Bishop Robert Schnase]

The congregation at LAUMC is blessed with many generous givers. In some cases the gifts are financial, in others they are of time and talents. All are needed to enable the church to meet its goals of ministry. The exciting future that 2020 Vision depicts for LAUMC will only be possible if we all learn what it means to be a “joyful giver.” Extravagant Generosity supports the other four practices (i.e., Radical Hospitality, Bold Mission, Passionate Worship, and Deepening Faith) and helps the church reach out to more people with the message of God’s love.

2020 Vision Highlight:

Our Senior Pastor proposed three goals for stewardship and service (see below) for the Study Committee to consider as a part of our 2020 Vision recommendations. Based on our renewed awareness of the values, priorities, and commitment of the LAUMC congregation, we whole-heartedly accepted the challenge while at the same time acknowledging that attaining these goals will require a concerted effort by “the many” rather than “the few.” We can measure our performance against these three goals to judge our collective success in reaching out to our community with our gifts and our service.

Goals for Stewardship and Service

The 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that LAUMC adopt the following goals, develop action plans for achieving them, and commit to regularly measuring our performance against those plans:

- By the year 2020 LAUMC will spend 50% of its giving on Operating Expenses and 50% on Missions (local, regional and global).
- By the year 2020 it will be an expectation of membership that 100% of members participate in at least one “hands on mission” event per year. (25% by 2012; 50% by 2016).
- By the year 2020, all LAUMC job descriptions will include the expectation that every staff member participate in “hands on mission” at least five days a year. Such participation can be local, in a program of their choice.

FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

LAUMC's congregation is blessed with the resources to support a myriad of important ministries because of the foresight and planning of the church's founders and stewards. It is the responsibility of today's generation of church leaders to honor this legacy by continuing to thoughtfully and prayerfully manage our buildings, facilities, staff, lay leadership, and governance into the future. The 2020 Vision Study Committee recognized this challenge and responded by grouping a number of supporting recommendations under the title, "Foundation for Growth."

The following proposals contribute to all of the preceding 2020 Vision recommendations by ensuring that the investments we make in our infrastructure are coordinated, complementary, and forward-looking. With a strong foundation for growth, LAUMC can move ahead confidently to accomplish the goals we have set.

2020 Vision Highlight:

It quickly became apparent to the 2020 Vision Study Committee that satisfying the requests we received from every ministry group for more space, enhanced technology, and additional staffing would be difficult with a land-locked campus during a period of economic recession. Our current limitations, however, only raised the priority of putting in place long-range master plans that guard against short-sighted and piecemeal development. No where is the need for collaboration across ministries more evident than in planning for the renewal and development of this foundation.

Master Plan for Campus Development and Renewal

LAUMC is blessed with an excellent location and facilities, but the buildings are aging and our needs are growing and changing. We will likely encounter numerous opportunities/crossroads in the near future requiring decisions about the evolution of our campus. The LAUMC site is a hub of activity for the congregation and the community so we need to carefully consider the impact of every decision we make concerning our buildings and facilities.

The 2020 Vision Study Committee recommends that LAUMC develop and maintain a long-range master plan for our campus that takes into consideration both the need for renewal of aging structures and the projected space requirements of expanding and developing ministries. Once this plan is in place, we will be able to quickly assess the impact any new requests for adding or repurposing space will have on other uses of the campus and on pending plans for renovating or replacing major components.

The master plan should include:

- An *inventory* of the current buildings and systems on campus and their anticipated useful life. As new construction adds buildings and systems, the expected lifespan of these assets should be tracked in a similar manner.
- A projection of major *space requirements* anticipated by ministry groups over the coming ten years; these projections should be updated every two years.

- High-level plans for 2-3 possible *scenarios* of campus renewal and development over the coming ten years; these plans should be updated as necessary to reflect changes in the ministry projections of major space requirements.
- *Policies and practices* for environmentally responsible construction and utilities.

Master Plan for Technology Infrastructure

Advances in technology offer LAUMC options for administration, communications, and worship arts that can dramatically increase the reach and effectiveness of our ministries and the efficiency of our operations. To realize the potential of new technologies, however, we must consider the collective needs and resources of LAUMC and design a technology “backbone” that will provide functionality, performance, flexibility, and reliability across our campus.

Requests for technology improvements, especially in the area of communications, came to the 2020 Vision Study Committee from every ministry area. The Committee’s recommendation is that LAUMC develop and manage an integrated campus technology master plan designed to support the growth of the congregation, expanded use of internet capabilities, and interconnection of campus communications and computing. Creation of this plan will involve soliciting and prioritizing needs from all campus groups and committees.

Church Vision and Governance Structure

In the same way that our buildings and technology infrastructure require long-range master planning, our vision for LAUMC must also be managed as part of a continuous process rather than a periodic exercise. Its impact must be felt in the priorities we set day-to-day, and it must evolve in response to changes in the life of LAUMC over time. To ensure that our vision remains vital and relevant, the Study Committee recommends that visioning and long-range planning become part of the basic governance structure of the church.

This recommendation encompasses a broad re-thinking of our committees and leadership framework so that decision-making responsibility is clearly assigned and communication channels connecting clergy, staff, lay leaders, and the congregation are effective and efficient. Specifically, leadership for 2020 Vision must transition from the Study Committee to a standing committee closely aligned with church management. It will be the responsibility of the new “vision committee” to:

- Ensure that responsibility for 2020 Vision initiatives is assigned
- Monitor and report the results of 2020 Vision projects vs. expectations
- Stay in touch with the priorities of the congregation
- Consider the impact of shifts in demographics and economic/political/social change on the future of LAUMC
- Conduct a formal bi-annual vision update.

Lay Leadership Development Program

Lay leadership is critical to the success of LAUMC’s ministries and programs but the 2020 Vision Study Committee learned from lay volunteers about barriers that keep them from accepting leadership roles. This recommendation was introduced as a response to those concerns.

Volunteers sometimes feel unprepared to perform in leadership capacities. This hesitation often reflects a lack of specific skills or experience. Our recommendation is to create “development roadmaps” for current and future leaders to help them build their skills and broaden their experience. These would include workshops on topics like meeting design, goal setting, planning, and decision-making. Roadmaps would have the option for “understudy” assignments in which a more experienced leader mentors a newcomer. Co-leader arrangements can also be incorporated to pair individuals with complementary skills. Another reported barrier to leadership is the fear of over-commitment when an individual feels “locked” into an assignment. Implementing 3-year term limits, job rotations, and succession plans would address this concern. The goal of Lay Leadership Development is to build a pool of lay leaders who have experience in a variety of assignments and bring stronger skills, confidence, and self-awareness to each role they accept.

Staff Internship Program

Our clergy and directors provide creativity, continuity, dedication, special talents, and education to the ministries of LAUMC. We are blessed to have ministry leaders who are recognized across the Conference and beyond for their contributions. The goal of the 2020 Vision recommendation for a Staff Internship Program is to expand the impact of our senior staff by giving them the opportunity to recruit and mentor interns for 6-12 month paid assignments. Interns would bring new energy, ideas, and capacity to our programs in the short term while developing their potential as church leaders in the long term, perhaps to fill future openings at LAUMC. Key areas where we have special strengths and opportunities to employ interns include: technology, music, youth programs, and pre-school education.

Campus Project Center

Of the many requests that were channeled to the 2020 Vision Study Committee for additional facilities on campus, the most often heard was for supplies storage and project workspace to support activities in the following areas:

- Children’s Center Weekday Preschool programming
- Sunday School curriculum
- Sanctuary decorations
- Church publications
- Youth group projects

While 2020 Vision strongly endorses the recommendation to create a Campus Master Plan, the Study Committee decided that the urgency of providing a “Campus Project

Center” justified bringing this recommendation forward for immediate consideration. The Project Center is more specific than the other recommendations included in the “Foundation for Growth” but it is in its own way a foundational resource for our ministries. Creating a Project Center on campus will enable children, youth, and adult groups to function more effectively and relieve the stress on volunteers and staff who keep our programs running. By fast-tracking the design and construction of a multi-function project center facility we will significantly improve the functioning of our campus as a whole.

NOT AN ENDING, BUT A BEGINNING

In spite of the progress made in our investigation and analysis of what lies ahead for LAUMC, our work on 2020 Vision to date is only a beginning. We hope our recommendations inspire the congregation to move ahead with enthusiasm, confidence, and commitment to reach new goals of ministry. There is much to be done.

Our next steps are to make progress in the following areas:

- **Communication** – The 2020 Vision project recommendations were presented to the congregation at an All Church Meeting on February 8, 2009. A “Town Hall Meeting” is scheduled for March 15, 2009, to give members of the congregation an opportunity to ask questions of the Study Committee members and to comment on the content of this report. There will be continued efforts to broadly communicate the findings of the Study Committee and to determine the level of support for the direction and priorities being recommended.
- **Leadership** - The Study Committee considers the recommendation to reorganize the church governance structure to be the highest priority. As part of that reorganization, we encourage the Administrative Board to take quick action to ensure that a leadership framework is put in place as soon as possible to guide the visioning process from this point on.
- **Startup** – The Lay Leadership Committee under the auspices of the Administrative Board will identify a standing committee or assign a taskforce for each of the recommendations to explore its high level implications, dependencies, and resource requirements. Collectively, these efforts will provide the new vision leadership with the information needed to project the timeframe for considering recommended projects.

We close this report with two important messages. First, to keep a vision relevant and moving ahead, it must be managed as part of a continuous and responsive long term planning process. It must be an element of day-to-day church governance and not the periodic task of an *ad hoc* committee.

Finally, no matter what governance structure is put in place to manage the visioning process, there is no ONE who is responsible for the success of our vision. There is no individual, no committee, no practice, and no change that on its own will enable LAUMC to realize the potential of our future. “We are the church together” and together we can touch Heaven and change Earth and praise God in the process!

APPENDIX: 2020 VISION RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY



2020 Vision Recommendations Summary

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

Ensure that LAUMC is a vital, diverse, and growing congregation that welcomes all people as children of God.

Young Adults' Ministry - Reach out, nurture and develop future leaders among the young adults in our community, especially those from our former youth programs, as they return from school to begin their careers (ages 18-34). Possible actions: recruit new pastor; create new worship service; open satellite campus; explore further use of technology for communications.

Men's Ministry - Men are an active part of the missions and life of the church and need more programs that address the needs of their various age groups. We want to develop men as leaders of the church by offering them the opportunities of an enriched men's ministry.

Single Boomers' Ministry - Establish a focused ministry for singles (40+) who are divorced, widowed or feel marginalized due to not being "partnered."

Campus Hospitality – Laity, clergy, and staff renew their commitment to invite, welcome, include, and support newcomers and help them grow in faith. Focus on those outside the congregation with as much passion as those who already belong.

BOLD MISSION

Transform lives by reaching out to meet the needs of the congregation and the community.

Stepping Stones to Local Mission Outreach - Lower the barriers for new people to participate in local hands-on mission work and provide stepping stones to growth for those already involved. Offer short-duration projects that are low-cost and don't require long-term commitments. Enable small groups and families to participate together and welcome newcomers.

Partnerships with Other Churches - Grow in relationship with the larger local Body of Christ through enhanced partnerships with other churches. These partnerships allow both churches to bring their own strengths to a joint effort, enabling projects that neither church could do alone.

Pastoral Care Infrastructure – Improve overall pastoral care effectiveness and support by identifying and sharing common processes, training, and resources across groups (e.g., Friendly Visitors, Angels on Call, Stephen Ministers, ACAP). Facilitate the development of spiritual growth path opportunities with various entry and exit points for volunteer caregivers.

Community Vacation Bible School – Reach out to the community by offering Vacation Bible School at satellite location(s). This would be an opportunity to partner with another UMC to bring Christian-based education and summer enrichment to children who would not experience it otherwise.

Preschool Outreach - Expand the reach of our preschool to children in surrounding communities who would otherwise not be able to afford this high-quality educational experience. A subsidized preschool in our region would enable LAUMC to demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of the community and the teaching of Christian values to children.

PASSIONATE WORSHIP

Explore, innovate, and show leadership in worship.

New Worship Services – Explore opportunities for at least two new worship services with timing, style, and/or location that target the worship needs of underserved groups in the community, e.g., young adults and those desiring more contemplative worship.

Worship Space Plan - Create a Master Plan for Worship Space at LAUMC that supports the evolving format of worship services over time. This Plan will address the growing need for contemporary and flexible worship space as well as ensuring that worship space is accessible to all individuals regardless of physical abilities. It will not only consider the needs of current constituents but also those of the un-churched population in our community.

Worship Arts Center - Establish an on-campus training site, staff, and studio for the development of contemporary worship technology, art, and music. This center would eventually incorporate as a non-profit agency.

DEEPENING FAITH

Nurture the spiritual development of every individual from childhood through adulthood.

Covenant Discipleship – Open a small-group ministry (6-8 people) in the Wesleyan tradition with a “covenant” based on the General Rule of Discipleship: To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through a process of mutual accountability and support for practicing the basics of Christian faith, members “watch over one another in love.” Covenant Discipleship groups help to form people as dependable and mature disciples of Christ.

Christian Forum - Sponsor a local lecture series at LAUMC that brings international Christian voices to our area. Demonstrate our community mission and openness to debate and dialog about the issues impacting religion in our day. Modeled after the Los Altos Community Forum lecture series.

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

Goals for Stewardship and Service – Adopt the following goals and develop action plans for achieving them:

- By 2020 LAUMC will spend 50% of its giving on Operating Expenses and 50% on Missions.
- By 2020 it will be an expectation of membership that 100% of members participate in at least one “hands on mission” event per year; 50% by 2016; 25% by 2012.
- By 2020 it will be an expectation of employment that 100% of staff members participate in “hands on mission” five days a year.

FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

Ensure a solid foundation for the growth of our ministries by developing and renewing our campus, staff, and governance.

Master Plan for Campus Development and Renewal – Study the anticipated useful life of current buildings and systems on campus and work with ministry teams to develop and maintain a long term plan for development of the site so that when major renovations or replacements become a priority we have already explored options and we understand the common needs and interdependencies of different groups.

Master Plan for Technology Infrastructure - Develop and manage a master plan for technology infrastructure on campus that addresses the needs of communications, performing arts, and office computing. Build and maintain an integrated technology infrastructure that is cost-effective, forward-looking, reliable, and enables the growth of LAUMC’s ministries.

Church Vision and Governance Structure - Provide for visioning and long-range planning within the basic governance structure of the church thus ensuring that plans for the future are kept vital and relevant and that our current decision-making is consistently guided by our long-term direction. Design and document an ongoing planning process and schedule.

Lay Leadership Development Program - Provide developmental experiences to strengthen current and future lay leaders for the church

Staff Internship Program - Recruit and mentor interns for ministry assignments as a way of bringing energy, ideas, and support to our ministries, developing potential leaders for future staff openings, and enabling LAUMC to share the expertise and experience of its staff members with the broader community. Key areas where we have special strength and a tremendous opportunity to expand include: technology, music, youth programs, and pre-school education.

Campus Project Center - Design and construct a multi-function project workroom and storage facility on the LAUMC campus. This facility is needed immediately to meet existing needs of LAUMC Children & Youth Ministries, including the Children’s Center Preschool. It should also serve the needs of adult groups that require space for preparation of study, decoration, and promotion materials.