

# A Recalibrated Vision for BAMF

## March 2010

Imagine our congregation as a train traveling on tracks.

If we're like a train, then we might ask four questions.

- ✦ Where is our train going?
- ✦ What two rails get us there?
- ✦ What fuel powers the engine?
- ✦ Who's driving?



**First, where is our congregational train headed?** For many years we've had a motto: "Called to be Christ's loving, healing, caring presence." This motto emphasizes being over doing—it conveys something static. It also doesn't say anything about where we are supposed to be Christ's presence—is it just in our church building? So we propose rewording our motto slightly in order to say where our train is going.

*"Live Christ's loving, caring, healing presence in the world."*

**Second, what two rails carry our congregational train toward this destination?** Since 1998 our congregation has had an excellent vision which calls us to embrace intimacy with God and intimacy and invitation with other human beings. We think those are the two rails for our train.

*One rail is our intimacy with God.*

*Another rail is intimacy and invitation in our relationships with other people.*

Our train needs both rails to get where we're going. The rail of deeper intimacy with God runs parallel to the rail of deeper intimacy with, and invitation to, other human beings. Our congregation's spiritual growth happens best when we use both rails.

However, we think that since 1998 our congregation has more often embraced intimacy and invitation *with other people*, but less often intimacy *with God*. Much of congregational life rightly focuses on human relationships (small groups, sharing, fellowship, meals, IHN, etc.). This is good. But in what ways are we teaching each other to pray in ways that give us life, or to find the particular spiritual practices that enliven our intimacy with God?

**Third, what energy fuels our train's engine?** We've already hinted at the answer.

*Our train runs on the fuel of formational practices such as worship, prayer, Scripture, communion, study, caregiving, hospitality, Sabbath, and many more.*

**Fourth, who's driving the train?** The conductor is Jesus Christ, through the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. All of us riding on the train have the privilege and responsibility of paying attention to the conductor, while the pastors and elders, along with the commissions and committees, have a special responsibility to do so.

## A Recalibrated Vision

In the next 3-5 years, we believe that BAMF is being drawn to a season of congregational life where we:

- Strengthen our intimacy with God.
- Playfully experiment with some of the more than 100 available practices of personal and congregational spiritual formation. These can be either new practices or modifications of practices we're already doing.
- Continue our intimacy with, and invitation to, other people.

## How Will We Know that We're Progressing on this Vision?

As in human relationships, our relationship with God is primarily about *fidelity* and *friendship*. As we grow in fidelity and friendship, the fruits of the Spirit will become more evident in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). Spiritual growth is an on-going adventure in God that never ends in this life—the tracks always lead us to greater fidelity and friendship. Although spiritual growth is hard to quantify, we suggest two mile markers.

- Within five years, at least half of the active members in the congregation (and we hope more than half!) will be able to name five spiritual practices that they do regularly.
- Of these five practices, at least one will include prayer, at least one will use scripture, and at least one will include service or mission to others.

### RECALIBRATED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

(1 Corinthians 3:11)

Our vision is to live Christ's loving, caring, healing presence in the world. In carrying out this vision, we will embrace both intimacy and invitation as primary values. This means we will:

1. Stress the importance of deepening our personal relationships with God and with each other. This includes the strengthening of our mutual caring and the depth of our spiritual interaction with each other. (Intimacy)
2. Strive to be an inviting, welcoming, hospitable congregation, seeking to share our faith in Jesus Christ with other people, while also inviting God into our lives in new ways. (Invitation)

We also commit to:

1. Participate in meaningful, vibrant worship.
2. Continue a high level of involvement in mission, both local and global.
3. Conduct dynamic children, youth, and adult nurture activities.
4. Encourage spiritual growth.

We recognize that the foundation of our life together is Jesus Christ. We further acknowledge that any growth as a church body will come as a result of building on this foundation in the power and wisdom of the Spirit.

*Approved at the June 14, 1998 congregational meeting. Revised by the elders, February 3, 2010.*