



CROSSROADS UNITED CHURCH

Our Visioning Journey, April 2016

Outrageous Optimism

Four years ago Crossroads United Church embarked on a Visioning Journey. After much information gathering, discussion, and debate, this final report summarizes the work of the Visioning Group.

Submitted by
The Visioning Group

THE JOURNEY ...

The Visioning Journey for Crossroads United Church began 4 years ago, shortly after amalgamation and the creation of our new church, Crossroads. In 2012 a Visioning Group was established by Council, and since then the Group has been blessed to have the involvement and commitment of many members of the congregation. The Visioning Group would like to express sincere thanks to those people who shared their ideas, talents, and time.

Over this 4 year period, the Visioning Group and its predecessors have completed the following:

- Informal discussions took place about visioning and how to best use the Visioning Fund
- In 2013 David Morris was engaged on a pro-bono basis, to conduct an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at Crossroads, and to provide a recommended course of action.
- David Morris subsequently delivered an Interim Report to Council on June 4, 2013.
- This Interim Report provided an excellent basis for the Visioning Group to have thorough discussions regarding:
 - who Crossroads is
 - what Crossroads does well
 - where Crossroads would like to be
 - what Crossroads needs to do to move forward

Based on the information and recommendations from David Morris' Interim Report, feedback from the congregation and Council, and discussions the Visioning Group has had, the Visioning Group has prepared the following which you will find in this report:

- Crossroads' Identity Statement
- Core Values that Empower the Life and Work of Crossroads
- Statement of Welcome (Banner Statement)
- Course of Action for Crossroads: Enacting the Vision

This Visioning Journey, although lengthy, has provided time for reflection and ultimately resulted in a renewed sense of purpose and optimism. Friends, it is with this positive spirit that we submit this final report.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Bill McAuslan, Debbie McCutcheon, Norman Rice, Allison Handelman, Kevin Guthrie, and Allan Baer.

CROSSROADS' IDENTITY STATEMENT

An Identity Statement helps clarify who we are and what we do. This helps guide our decision making.

Crossroads, a new church community formed by the amalgamation of two existing church groups, came into being because people were committed to new ideas and to finding common ground on which to build a new path and a new vision together. Building community, both within the church and the broader community, is at the heart of what Crossroads is and does.

Crossroads joyfully welcomes all people, wherever they are at on their spiritual path. We recognize people arrive at our door for a number of reasons, with a diverse variety of backgrounds and experiences. All are welcome to walk with us in discovering their own path of spiritual growth just as our community seeks its own growth.

As individuals, and as a congregation, Crossroads strives to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. We are committed to being a witness to social justice issues locally and globally, and to working towards positive change.

CORE VALUES THAT EMPOWER THE LIFE AND WORK OF CROSSROADS

The following three Core Values further articulate who we are, and have a basis both in scripture and in what happens at Crossroads. This helps guide our decision making.

1. Hospitality and Building Community

At Crossroads United Church we practice outrageous hospitality.

Hebrews 13:2

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

As a congregation formed through amalgamation, we pride ourselves on openness and inclusivity. Newcomers are warmly welcomed and invited to attend a newcomer's get-together. We constantly hear from newcomers how welcoming the congregation is. And we are now purposefully directing our hospitality to the broader community by offering a free pancake breakfast a few times a year, which so far has been quite successful, and we will be starting a weekly Crossroads Café in May 2016.

2. Spiritual Growth

At Crossroads United Church we seek a sacred connection in our day-to-day lives.

Jeremiah 31:33

“This is the covenant I will make with the people ...” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

At Crossroads, spiritual growth is evident in small groups, worship, music, and care for the environment. Members of the congregation lead and take part in a supportive Bible Study group as well as a Prayer group, and there are occasional short-term study programs led by one of the ministers. There are numerous opportunities for adults and children to take part in the regular service and even to develop and run the service for a few weeks over the summer.

Enhancing our worship service is a vibrant choir, singing a selection of both traditional and modern hymns and anthems. We are also very proud to offer alternative musical styles that include clarinet, guitar, and drumming. The latest musical opportunity for members to take part in is playing hand chimes.

Following the Creed of the United Church of Canada, “to live with respect in Creation”, we had solar panels installed in 2012. As a congregation we are also working to reduce our garbage and increase our recycling.

3. Outreach / Social Justice

At Crossroads United Church we commit to making a difference in our community locally, nationally, and globally.

Micah 6:8

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

The two congregations that formed Crossroads both had strong histories of outreach and this has continued. Members of the congregation are incredibly active in becoming involved in local outreach opportunities such as the Bread of Life, Basic Income Guarantee, West Kingston Refugee Partnership, and a Coupon program (proceeds go to local shelters), to name a few.

We also have an active Outreach Committee that has been involved in inter-faith opportunities, reaching out to the Islamic Society of Kingston, and supportive of Canadians for Women in Afghanistan. The congregation annually supports an outreach budget, administered by the Outreach Committee, to be given to a variety of charities, some of whom are invited to speak to the congregation about their work.

STATEMENT OF WELCOME (BANNER STATEMENT)

A Welcome Statement does just that – it welcomes individuals to Crossroads, both inside and outside the church. This is an important communication tool.

All are welcome! Come as you are, and join us on this spiritual journey.

COURSE OF ACTION: ENACTING THE VISION

Having our Identity Statement and our Core Values helps clarify who we are and what we have to offer, which leads us to the next step: articulating how we will put our thoughts into action, or how we will enact our vision. Below are some of the ideas the Visioning Group has gathered. A few of these ideas are already being implemented; other ideas still require a champion. If you have an idea, please share it with someone, you never know where it may lead!

1. Hospitality and Building Community

Objective:

Remember from our Core Values that at Crossroads we practice outrageous hospitality. Another side to outrageous hospitality is building community. So we want to engage in activities that are fun and inclusive, and where both the Crossroads community and the civic community can participate, (our space is yours!) – in effect we want Crossroads to become a community hub. Following are both some existing and new ideas that enact our Hospitality and Building Community Vision.

Enacting the Objective (and therefore the Vision):

- Weekly Crossroads Café
- Quarterly Pancake Breakfast
- Community Cooling Centre (install air conditioning)
- Ministry of Music

2. Spiritual Growth

Objective:

Our Core Values state that we at Crossroads seek a sacred connection in our day-to-day lives – not just during Sunday service. A sacred connection can occur through prayer, discussion, tending to the Earth ... we want to provide varied opportunities for spiritual growth and understanding to members of Crossroads, and to other interested people. Following are both some existing and new ideas that enact our Spiritual Growth Vision.

Enacting the Objective (and therefore the Vision):

- Small group ministry (individuals provide small-group learning / socializing opportunities)
- 7 day-a-week church (our doors are always open; there is always something happening at Crossroads)
- Additional church services (either weekly or monthly)
- Book club

3. Outreach / Social Justice

Objective:

Our Core Values state that at Crossroads we want to make a difference in our community at the local, national, and global levels. As a church community we need to be aware of what events are happening, where there is a need for compassion and action, and to then communicate that information. Then we can move forward and make positive change together, always being open to a variety of ideas, and ensuring that we are working with a range of people and organizations. Following are both some existing and new ideas that enact our Outreach / Social Justice Vision.

Enacting the Objective (and therefore the Vision):

- Refugee sponsorship (West Kingston Refugee Sponsorship)
- Become an Affirming church
- Develop a Community Garden

4. Communications and Activity Coordinator

Objective:

Crossroads United Church is a warm, welcoming, active, and engaged church – and will be even more so if we decide to embrace the three aforementioned Courses of Action. Yet many people don't know much about us – we think it's time that more people did know about Crossroads!

Enacting the Objective (and therefore the Vision):

- Hire a Communications/Activity Coordinator
- Develop and implement a Social Media plan
- Develop and implement a Marketing Plan

CONCLUSION

Change is made by taking that first step – and many steps can add up to big change. The Visioning Group is asking that you read over this report, discuss it, ask questions, and if it moves you, to embrace it, and step out onto a new path. The world is changing, and to remain relevant and meaningful, our church has to embrace new ways of thinking and create new opportunities. But the Visioning Group can not do it themselves; we need everyone at Crossroads to look within themselves and ask what they have to share, and then we can all take that first step together.