



## **YOUTH MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

*Healthy Systems, Innovative Change, For the Future of the Church*

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### ***Floris United Methodist Church of Herndon, VA***

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### **BACKGROUND**

Floris United Methodist Church is a vibrant, growing church, fully devoted to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Floris puts a high priority on loving and serving their neighbors. Therefore, Floris has made a life-changing impact within their community through service and caring for the poor. They have reached beyond their own community to love their neighbor abroad through missions and justice work in Africa. Its members describe their church family as “inviting,” “missions oriented,” and having “a desire to never be comfortable or grow stale.”

Floris UMC has been in existence for more than 125 years. At different periods, it has experienced rapid, vibrant growth. In 1993, the church moved into a brand new building to accommodate its growth in the ever-expanding Herndon community. Floris experienced such immediate growth after the move that the church made the difficult

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decision to build a brand-new building in April of 2006, completing the 800 seat sanctuary in 2010.

The membership of the church is around 3300 and on an average week, 1250 people attend one of the church's five worship services. The church is led by a tremendous and dynamic group of pastoral staff. Lead Pastor, Tom Berlin has been serving as lead pastor at Floris UMC for 21 years. Other pastoral staff include an Associate Pastor and Director of Worship, Barbara Miner, Associate Pastor, Ashley Allen, Associate Pastor, Nadeem Khokhar, and Associate/Reston Campus Pastor, Tim Ward. There is a total of 37 full and part time staff who work at Floris UMC.

The youth ministry at Floris UMC has faced its share of challenges the past few years, but with a great group of leaders guiding the process the youth ministry is moving quickly towards a much better place. Currently, there are about 450 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, about 100 of them participate in either Sunday school, small groups, worship, Crossroads (middle school programming) or Krew (High School programming). The youth ministry is described by some youth and parents as a "fun" and "welcoming" place, while others say it is an "underperforming" and "an ever changing" ministry.

The ministry is led by Student Ministries Director, Dan Yoon who has been at the church since January of 2018, along with Middle School Program Director, Pepe Miller who has been serving since 2017.

The church has a 2018 budget of \$4 million, of which approximately \$205,000 is dedicated to the youth ministry. This includes the program budget as well as the salary and benefits for the staff, consisting of the student ministries director, middle school program director, and Grow Ministries Coordinator, Danielle Light.

There are 18 adult volunteers involved each week in one of the major youth programs. Others help at special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

The facilities at Floris are large and beautiful with lots of shared spaces around the church. A favorite place for the youth to hangout is in "The Hangar." This room is complete with comfy couches, a ping pong table and other activities for the students to engage with. Sometimes the students have activities in the Fellowship Hall which has proven to be a great space for the youth to let loose and have fun as well.

Floris UMC is ready to take the youth ministry to the next level. While, there were a few discouraging years, the church has handled it all with grace and has bounced back from the former struggles surrounding the youth ministry. After making a few great hires they have positioned themselves to see the ministry thrive. Ministry Architects was asked to help guide the church as they take the next step in this process.

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Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the youth ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. Ministry Architects met with 47 individuals in seven focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

## YOUTH MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding youth ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Youth ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those youth ministries 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 youth, parents, staff, and the congregation at large.

**Rent #1: NUMBERS**—A significant percentage of youth 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 youth 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. Although the youth ministry has grown in the middle school program, the overall number of students involved weekly is still falling short of what seems to be expected at Floris UMC.

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

This rent appears to be paid. Even though some High School students expressed that they would like to meet weekly for Krew, there are plenty of activities for students to get involved in throughout the week and throughout the year.

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

Dan has brought a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the program in the short amount of time he has been here. Pepe’s leadership and the excitement amongst the middle school students suggest that this rent is being paid on time for middle school and appears to be paid. However, that’s not the case for High School. Enthusiasm appears

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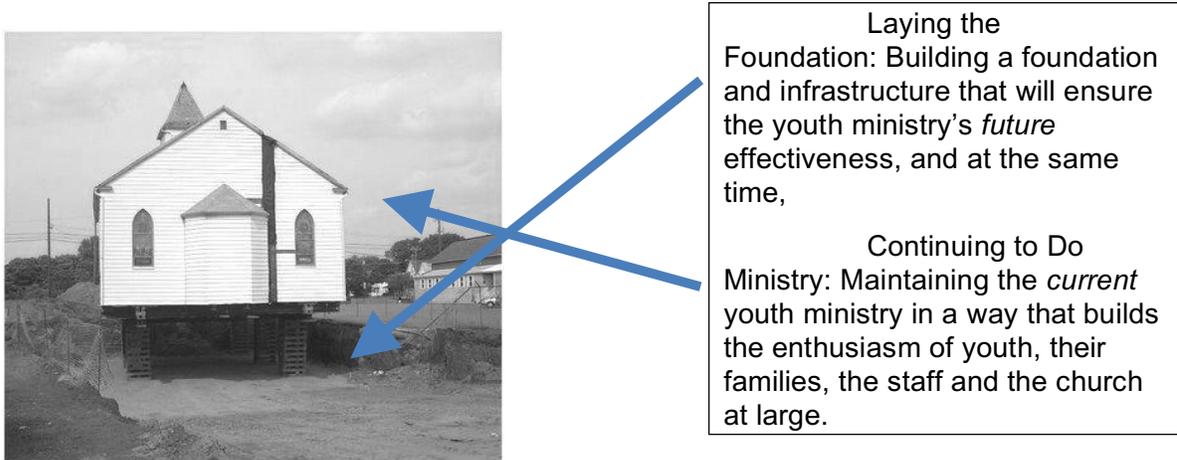
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to be less than hoped for regarding High School ministry revealing that this rent is currently unpaid.

As the leadership of the youth ministry develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the youth ministry faces parallel challenges.

Ministry Architects pictures the parallel challenge this way:



As the youth ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, five rules of thumb – “youth 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) 10% of the Worshipping Congregation**—In a typical church, the size of the youth ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshipping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 1250 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 125 youth per week. The current weekly attendance of 100 youth is slightly below what could be expected from the ministry.

**2) 20% Ceiling**—Ministry Architects has also discovered that in many churches, the youth ministry has difficulty growing beyond a level that equals 20% of the weekly worshipping congregation. Very few youth ministries seem to be able to break beyond this 20% level. Floris UMC might keep in mind, then, that the expected ceiling for this youth ministry is around 250 youth. The road to that level of participation is dependent on increased staffing, volunteers and budget.

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**3) \$1,500 per Youth**—With a budget of approximately \$205,000 (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits) dedicated to the youth ministry, Floris UMC has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 137 youth in some aspect of the church’s life. With 100 currently participating every week, the ministry is funded for continued growth.

**4) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—Considering all the positions giving time to the youth ministry, including Student Ministries Director, Middle School Program Director and Grow Ministries Coordinator, Floris UMC has the equivalent of 2.5 full time staff person. According to this rule of thumb, Floris UMC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 125 youth on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration allows room for some growth.

**5) 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 18 weekly volunteers, Floris UMC is currently at a ratio of 1 adult leader to every 5.5 youth, and provides the ministry with a capacity for 90 youth weekly. In other words, the team is too small to attend to the relational needs of the 100 youth who currently attend. The volunteer pool will need to expand if the church wants to sustain its impact with youth.

## **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF**

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single 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 organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **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.
- **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. The ministry is strong with volunteers who currently serve as the laborers in the youth ministry.

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

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- In many churches, there is no person or group playing the role of the architect. 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.
- The staff is often expected to serve in all three of these roles. This is a recipe for congregational dissatisfaction and staff burnout. As the systems are put in place staff tend to feel more satisfied and fulfilled in the roles they are serving.
- Some churches hire a laborer who is skilled at leading singing, playing games or teaching a Bible lesson. These laborers often mature into an architect or a general contractor, but only if they are given permission, time, and training.

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## **ASSETS**

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

#### **Small Groups**

Floris is situated in one of the busiest (traffic) areas of the country. This can make for a difficult commute to a church that is only a few miles away. While this can be a problem Floris UMC has made the most of it by investing deeply in small group ministries both in the youth and church wide. One parent talked about their child's group saying, "It is the thing he looks forward to the most about youth group." Another said, "Our small group leaders are the best, they really do love our kids." It is very clear that the small group ministry at Floris UMC is meeting the need of its members helping to make a large church feel much more relational and connected. One leader noted, "If you want to have discipleship here, small groups are going to be a great way of doing it."

#### **Confirmation**

Confirmation is the biggest ministry opportunity in the youth's catalogue. Each year somewhere between 40-70 students come out for the church's 8th grade confirmation class. One parent said, "It is amazing how many youth participate in confirmation." Another shared, "It is one of our biggest opportunities to re-engage youth since so many of them were not active before confirmation." While confirmation has been such a big draw for Floris UMC one volunteer cautioned, "We have got to do a better job of keeping them after confirmation." While that is a challenge, Confirmation continues to provide an opportunity for future sustained growth in the ministry.

#### **Desire for More**

When talking with the students it is evident that they really love and appreciate their youth ministry. They love their leaders, staff, and clergy. The problem is that they do not feel as though they are able to participate as frequently or with as much consistency as they would like. One youth said, "I really like Krew, I just wish we had it more often." This was expressed by a number of other youth, each wanting Krew to happen more frequently than once or twice a month. While there was a weekly on Sunday night students named that they wanted the big group gathering happening weekly. When asked, another student spoke for the whole saying, "We really want Krew to be an every week thing." It is clear the youth love their youth group and the community that it provides them, they just want more of it.

#### **Great Retreats and Mission Trips**

When asked what pieces of the ministry are off limits and needed to be protected the unanimous response was the retreats and mission trips. One youth said, "The retreats are my favorite part of the youth ministry." Another reiterated this point saying, "The retreats are the time when I grow the most, we have a lot of fun, small groups, and

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s'mores." Others also talked about the love for the youth group's mission trips saying, "The mission trips have to stay, they are really fun." When asked to go deeper it was clear that the youth of Floris UMC not only love them because they are fun, they also have a real love of serving others.

### **A Love of Service**

Ministries of compassion and mercy are a huge component of the DNA of the whole church. These opportunities for justice, advocacy and service are very important to the church as a whole. That same love and passion is also deeply rooted in the youth ministry. One leader said, "there are so many possibilities for our youth in this area, lots of untapped potential." A youth affirmed this saying, "We like doing service, I wish we could do more." Like several other elements of the youth ministry it is clear that service is definitely an area that has room for more opportunities and growth.

### **Primed for Change**

It seems that everyone at Floris UMC is ready for the next step, phase and incarnation of the youth ministry. Floris UMC is a church primed for change. One parent noted, "we have always been a church that is not afraid of change, we do not like to settle." Another said, "We believe that there is always something more we can do and do better." Staff and clergy also reflected this notion adding, "We are so excited for this report, we are ready to do whatever is needed, we are ready for this change." So often churches resist and argue against change but that is just not the case with Floris UMC. They are a church that is excited for the future not stuck in the past.

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## CHALLENGES

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

#### **Unimpressed with Attractional**

It was clear through the listening groups that the youth of Floris UMC are here not just for fun and games but for a deeper experience. The parents and volunteers agree that the goal they have in mind for the youth ministry is one that has depth and substance for their students. While everyone involved loves doing games and fun activities it was evident this alone was not their reason for being a part of the group. One youth shared, "The youth ministry is a place where I find community, that is the most important thing for me." Another volunteer mentioned, "Youth here are smart and want to be challenged." It is clear that the youth and their parents want a youth ministry with substance and depth at Floris UMC.

#### **Communications**

One of the major places of concern for youth, parents and volunteers was in the realm of communications. It was clear in the listening groups that none of these groups felt adequately communicated with and desire a greater level of engagement about expectations, programs, schedules, and information. When asked one youth put it this way, "In order to know what is going on you either have to be there or have a friend who was there last time, otherwise you really do not know." A volunteer talked about their frustrations saying, "It is difficult to volunteer when you do not know when the group is meeting and when it is not, there have been times where we have shown up for small group and the youth were on a retreat that we did not know about." Parents also expressed this concern focusing especially on calendaring and the inconsistent nature of the High School ministry meeting times.

#### **Lack of Team Community**

Floris UMC has a great group of volunteers. They are committed, full of energy and excited about the future of the ministry. They also have a deep care for the ministry and each other. This is so much the case that they actually want to spend more time with each other and develop a deeper sense of community. When asked, why one volunteer responded, "If we are closer to each other and know each other better we will be able to do ministry better together." Another volunteer expressed the desire to be able to get together to bond but to also share best practices and be able to ask questions of each other. The volunteers in the student ministry really do desire a more robust connection and sense of community with each other that will not only benefit them but the ministry that they love so dearly.

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## **Busy Kids, Busy Families**

The mantra of “busy kids and busy families” is well pronounced in the lives of the families at Floris UMC. While this is not unique to Floris it, along with one of the nation’s most difficult commuting situations, puts a serious time crunch on the lives of those who live in this area. One parent said, “It is so difficult to get here sometimes, we really want to make sure it is worth our while when we are there.” One of the youth talked about this and the inconsistent High School meeting times saying, “Because of how busy our schedules are and how spread out our meetings are it can be really easy to drop out of youth group.” This is complicated even more when one understands that there are two different county’s school systems that make up the group.

## **Lack of Leadership Training**

Alongside the desire for deeper community the leaders also talked about the real need for consistent and relevant training opportunities and requirements. They mentioned:

- Better and clearer safe sanctuaries training
- The ability to give real life examples and ask questions about safety situations and protocols.
- To give and get feedback on curriculum.
- Receive training on best practices and teaching methods.
- Have vision imparted on them so that they understand better where they are going.
- Be trained with a job description so they know what success looks like.

The desire for more training was echoed by all of the volunteers present and would be a welcome addition to the requirements to be a volunteer with the student ministry. As one volunteer put it, “I am tired of feeling like a glorified babysitter.”

## **Recruitment**

While there is a great group of committed volunteers many of them expressed the need for volunteer opportunities to be better communicated and done so in a more timely manner. Several volunteers talked about instances where they “received an email just days before a trip asking for volunteers or else the trip would not be able to happen.” Others talked about the frustration they felt because there are so many people who seem to be “willing but never asked.” What was clear is the communication to and recruitment of volunteers needs to be more intentional, better communicated and done so in a more timely manner.

## **Intentional Discipleship Plan**

As of now there is no intentional or deliberate discipleship plan for the youth of Floris UMC. Volunteers talked of “not knowing the long-term objective of what they were

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teaching.” Others added, “More times than not we have not even had curriculum.” This is not a new problem but one that has been around for much of the recent history of the youth ministry. There is also no cohesive umbrella plan that links discipleship for youth and children’s ministries. This has led to a sense of confusion about the goal of discipleship and the means by which to achieve it.

### **Confirmation Cliff**

Floris experiences a similar phenomenon as many churches with their confirmation program. As one parent noted, “Kids seem to come out of the woodwork for confirmation, and they seem to go right back in when it is over.” While this phenomenon is not unique to Floris, it is a very real problem that creates a sense of defeat and deficit among the youth, parents and volunteers. With the program happening in 8th grade, a traditional year of transition and loss, it also seems to compound and produce a more drastic drop off than if it were in an earlier or later grade.

### **Inconsistent High School Ministry**

One of the most acute problems facing the students seemed to be the lack of consistency in regards to the large group High School meeting frequency. While the middle school ministry meets on a consistent basis the High School has fluctuated from weekly, to twice a month to even once a month. Some students shared that “it is so hard to keep up with and even knowing which week you are meeting and which week you are off.” Others spoke of their desire to “just have a consistent weekly meeting so that if you miss a week it is not 3 or 4 weeks before you are with the youth group again.” This inconsistency has certainly hurt attendance and the commitment to the High School ministry program.

### **Lack of Vision**

It was very difficult if not impossible for the members of the listening groups to clearly articulate the vision and goals of the youth ministry at Floris UMC. While many could name programs that they were fond of, no one could articulate the “why” behind what they do. The parents and volunteers expressed a real sense of longing for clear direction and leadership from and through a concise vision. One parent said, “The program is rudderless.” Another talked about the difficulty of getting her daughter to go because, “I am not even sure what it is that I am trying to get her to go to.”

### **Competing Opportunities**

While there are many opportunities for the youth to serve in the church some feel that the youth “have become the workhorses of the church.” A lot of this concern comes from, what seem to be, competing opportunities, for the youth especially on Sunday morning. One parent said, “Between Kid Nation and serving in the SIM Program on Sunday morning our kids could come here their whole life and never have to actually

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attend a worship service.” It seems to be that the youth may have too many opportunities on Sunday morning to serve and very little accountability as to when they are participating as a part of the whole body during corporate worship.

### **Need for a Youth Council**

As many of the parents and volunteers talked about their frustration with decision making, input and communication, it became evident that they did not feel as though they have a clear and open channel through which to give appropriate and constructive feedback. It also seemed as though the youth ministry was missing a golden opportunity to give some parents and volunteers the ability to have more “skin in the game” through leadership and advisory opportunities through a youth council model. Currently there is not a youth council in place and could dramatically shift these feelings as well as provide much needed leadership help to the youth staff of Floris UMC.

### **The Desire to “Grow Young”**

In many of the listening groups there was a desire expressed, albeit it different ways, for the youth to have a more active and visible role in the life of the whole congregation, especially in the life of the worship services. There has been some progress made in this arena with the recent addition of youth to the contemporary worship band once a month. While this is a welcomed step there is a feeling that it is not enough. One participant talked about the need to “get beyond tokenism in regards to youth involvement in worship.” Others postulated that if the youth were more involved in the worship leadership, it might lead to a higher percentage of youth also attending the worship services. Either way there is a definite desire for the youth to not only be represented but to be a full part of the worshipping community of Floris UMC.

### **Transitions and Program Revamp**

The youth ministry has had a large number of transitions in the past several years. This has caused confusion, inconsistencies and a feeling of a “directionless program.” The current youth staff is very new, (the longest tenured staff being a year and the other two at six months and a month.) With all of the transition, lack of consistency and missing systems and structures, all parties involved in the listening groups desire a large overhaul of the youth ministry programming. This is not to say a loss of the DNA of the ministry or an abandonment of cherished programs, rather a desire to start fresh where programs are flailing and ask the all important question, “Why do we do what we do?” This will be a time of programmatic introspection and pruning of programs that have built up over years and years of addition without subtraction. From staff to volunteers to parents to youth all agree that it is time for the “new thing to happen.”

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reframe the next 18 months as a time of building long-term infrastructure for the youth ministry. Understanding that significant and immediate momentum will be built throughout the process of renovating the youth ministry, target December 2018 as the date when the youth ministry renovation will be complete.
2. Establish a Prayer Team to undergird this renovation process.
3. Present this report to the church council, requesting that they endorse an 18-month strategic design process for the youth ministry.
4. Establish a Youth Ministry Renovation Team, made up of at least three non-anxious, goal-oriented volunteers and [insert appropriate staff person here—ideally, the person on staff currently responsible for the youth ministry], who will work closely with Ministry Architects to ensure that the outcomes of this assessment are achieved. These recommendations include two overarching responsibilities:
  - I. **Addressing the immediate pressure points** facing the ministry as it transitions toward a thriving, sustainable youth ministry (e.g., keeping the trains running on time)
  - II. **Implementing the strategic, long-term** recommendations of this report (e.g., building a new railway system)
5. Partner with Ministry Architects to take responsibility for
  - I. Managing the renovation process, working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report's timeline
  - II. Assisting the youth ministry in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of renovating the youth ministry.
6. Address the current pressure points facing the youth ministry:

**Pressure Point #1: Volunteer Training and Recruitment** – “Enter into a recruitment process for the 2018-2019 school year insuring that the appropriate number of volunteers have been recruited for children and youth ministries.”

- Make a list of immediate volunteer positions that need to be filled.
- Using the church directory create a list of potential volunteers.
- Divide up this list of potential volunteers and begin calling them personally.
- Go back to step one until all positions have been filled.
- After all positions have been filled enter into a training season for all volunteers making sure that all have been trained and are up to date with Safe Sanctuaries certification.

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- Also train them in practical on the ground volunteer techniques and best practices.
- Make sure that each volunteer has their entire curriculum for that semester at least a month before the semester begins.
- Schedule 3 more meetings that will happen throughout the year for the volunteers to come together for dinner, discuss best practices, receive training, study a youth ministry volunteer book and fellowship.
- Make sure that volunteers are scheduled for the entire semester with the topics for each noted and that list along with the master calendar is up to date, available online to all volunteers.

**Pressure Point #2: Solidify Programming**– “Reexamine current programming options for youth ministries for effectiveness and meaningfulness.”

- Evaluate current program offerings through conversations with parents, volunteers, and youth to determine the effectiveness of each program.
- Begin a process of determine the programs that will need to be pruned, kept as is, bolstered or replaced.
- Find new curriculum and develop new flows for the appropriate programs in the children and youth ministries.
- Pay special attention during this process to concentrating opportunities, consolidating opportunities and making each opportunity as consistent and regular as possible.
- When developing each program for the ministry always ask “who is our target audience or what level of belonging sort of student are we trying to attract to this program. Keep in mind that different programs will have varying levels of attendance based on the depth of belonging that is required in order to be a part of that program in particular. i.e. If it is a deep bible study you might have less students attend than if it is more of an entry level event like a fun trip or youth group event. Remember, one is not better than the other they are just different and will meet students on different levels.
- As program is being developed it will also be important to keep in mind that not all programming has to be within the walls of the church. Think regionally with some small group programming.

**Pressure Point #3: Develop a Youth Council**– “Create a youth council of raving fans of the youth ministry who desire a deeper level of leadership and ownership in the youth ministry.”

- Identify six to eight individuals, both parents and non-parents, who have a deep love for and commitment to the youth ministry. These should be

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people who carry the DNA of the church and have “skin in the game” already.

- These should also be doers not just idea people.
- Ask these individuals to serve a three year term on the youth council where they will:
  - Provide feedback on the programs
  - Are ears on the ground for the ministry
  - Helps develop the annual calendar
  - Helps with recruitment of volunteers
  - Reviews the curriculum plan
  - Reviews the directories of youth and leaders
  - Projects a youth ministry budget
  - Serves as advocates for the youth ministry in the life of the congregation and in its organizational structures

**Pressure Point #4: Intentional Communication Plan** – “Develop an intentional communication plan that adequately communicates over multiple platforms the events, details, pictures and stories of the youth ministry.”

- Determine the most effective mediums for communication for students, parents, volunteers and the church as a whole.
- Isolate each of these demographics and develop an individual plan for what information each area needs and when they need it.
- Determine the daily, weekly and monthly flow of communication norms for each demographic
- Schedule each form of communication that will happen regularly
- Begin collecting stories and pictures from different areas of the ministry to use to tell the overarching story and persona of the ministry to those who are not a regular part of it.
- Develop a communications calendar for the year to adequately and appropriately communicate all standing events and activities in a timely and concise manner

7. Build the long-term infrastructure required for a long-term, sustainable youth ministry.

- **Host a “Quick Start” Summit:** Invite the Renovation Team, key volunteers, and youth staff to participate in a Quick Start Summit in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The Summit tackles the items that need to be done first, and builds momentum for the youth ministry renovation process.
  - Identify any progress in implementing the recommendations of this report.
  - Orient the Renovation Team to their specific responsibilities.

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- Assign Renovation Team members responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the report.
  - Calendar the dates involving Renovation Team.
  - Create a plan for concrete communication between the Renovation Team and staff to ensure that all parties feel they're "in the know."
  - Draft the following documents, finalizing them within no more than two weeks after the Quick Start Summit:
    - A finalized version of the calendar for all weekly programs and major special events through December 2018.
    - Results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth ministry. The job descriptions cover all current positions and also include additional, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.
    - A clear and complete list of volunteer needs in the youth ministry, including relational and behind-the-scenes, weekly events and special event leaders.
    - A broad "fishing pond" list of at least 75 possible volunteers to call about volunteer positions. The list includes people we are sure will say yes, and it includes people we think will never say yes (but we hope they will one day).
    - Reasonable participation goals have been established for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through December 2018 and clear lines of responsibility for filling those events have been established.
- o **Youth Visioning:** Invite parents and leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of visioning a new future for the youth ministry with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
- o A ministry mission statement
  - o A statement of values
  - o A set of three-year revolving goals and one-year benchmarks
  - o An organizational structure for the ministry
- o **Family Ministry Visioning:** Invite youth and children' parents and leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of visioning a new Family Ministry plan with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
- o A ministry mission statement
  - o A statement of values
  - o A set of three-year revolving goals and benchmarks
  - o An organizational structure for the ministry

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- o **Christian Formation Summit:** Gather a team for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing curriculum, milestones and special programming.
  - o Evaluate the upcoming curriculum to ensure its effectiveness.
  - o Develop a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for the youth ministry programming.
  - o Develop a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
  - o Determine how the curriculum selected will be communicated to volunteers.
  - o Decide what level of training will be required prior to full implementation.
  
- o **Control Document Development:** Complete and publish an 18-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 (like “September: nail down the date for next year’s High School mission trip”).
  
- o **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, an application and screening process for every volunteer is in place, and all adults working with any youth affirm a sexual abuse/child protection policy.
  
- o **Attendance:** Track attendance for all youth activities and develop an attendance system that allows for easy access to weekly participation numbers.
  
- o **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, leaders, and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the youth ministry.
  
- o **Schedule:** Tweak the weekly schedule for corporate youth group activities. There is a desire for families to be in church together without sacrificing their child’s involvement in the youth ministry. There is also a desire for Sunday night programming to come alongside the rest of the church.
  
- o **Communication:** Establish normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, youth, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the youth page of the church’s website, Facebook, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.

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- o **Youth Ministry Manual:** Develop a Youth Ministry Manual, including the most recent youth directory, a 12-18-Month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major youth ministry event.
- o **Fall Kick-Off/Parent Orientation:** Develop an intentional, family-based, incredibly fun Fall Kickoff event to launch the youth ministry in the fall of 2018. Use that event to cast the vision, share information, and build enthusiasm about the year ahead.
- o **Enlist an Experienced, Professional Coach:** Invite Ministry Architects to play the “coach” role during this renovation period. Ministry Architects would offer experienced direction for the building of an infrastructure for the youth ministry and provide ongoing coaching for the youth ministry staff members as well as the Renovation Teams.
- o **Multi Campus Assessment:** Invite Ministry Architects back to perform combo assessments of both the Loudoun campus and the Restoration campus for both youth and children ministry developing a cradle to college plan for both campuses.

## DEVELOPING AND NURTURING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- o **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan, including the professional and volunteer components, for the youth ministry that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth.
- o **Staff Development:** Provide mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff including coaching, reading and seminars.
- o **Sustainable Pace:** Help each youth ministry staff member develop a “rhythmic week” including a Sabbath and “balcony” time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).
- o **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- o **Volunteer Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with youth while others work behind the scenes. Create

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a clear and complete list of the volunteer needs. Create a “fishing pond” list of at least 75 possible volunteers to call on for weekly volunteer positions.

- o **Broaden Volunteer Definition and Opportunities:** Create additional, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program. Encourage volunteer involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.
- o **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer youth workers at the beginning of each school year.

## DEVELOPING CLEAR STRATEGIES AND NEW INITIATIVES

- **Parent Engagement:** Create a written process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2018-2019 school year.
- **Parent Support:** Sponsor and execute an encouraging parent support event and create mechanisms for engaging the majority of parents in the youth ministry in some way.
- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through December 2018 and take responsibility for filling those events.
- **Missions and Outreach:** Continue to build on the desire of youth and parents to make a difference in the world, as well as their local community. Develop a clear, focused calendar for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions. Evaluate the current mission trips for effectiveness. Create a plan for promoting and exposing the congregation to missions throughout the year.
- **Integration:** Develop a strategic plan for helping the youth become an integral part of the whole church, weaving the youth ministry into the fabric of the entire church.
- **Personal Connection Plan:** Develop a system for ensuring that every family in the current youth directory is contacted personally at least once a year in order to make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church’s directory.
- **Youth Contact:** Develop and implement processes for ensuring that each youth or youth parent in the church receives a contact from someone on the youth leadership team at least once a month

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- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new families, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. Document a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- **Non-parent Recruitment:** Create a game plan to target specific demographics in the congregation when recruiting volunteers.
- **Retention Plans for the Youth Ministry:** Create game plans for keeping youth involved in the youth programs after Confirmation
  - Continuing to engage youth who have gotten their drivers' license
  - Intentionally reaching out to missing-in-action (MIA) youth and reconnecting them with the life of Floris UMC Youth Ministries
- **Facilities:** Explore the possibilities for a renovation or redesign of the youth facilities to better serve the youth of Floris UMC. Propose options for the above to the church council or revision or approval. This should also include a proposal for the youth to have a dedicated youth space.
- **Building Bridges:** Develop a game plan for building bridges between the children's ministry and the youth ministry.
- **Ownership:** Create a game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded. Foster a culture that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting youth in their Christian faith.
- **Relational Strategy:** Develop a plan for the staff and volunteers to foster a relational atmosphere and build incarnational relationships with youth for deep and long-lasting impact in the ministry.
- **Family Ministry:** Plan one or two family events throughout the year focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- **Rites of Passage (or Milestones):** Develop a written plan for the processes, events, and privileges that will:
  - Welcome and connect the new 6th graders and their parents into the youth ministry
  - Welcome and connect the new 9<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents into the High School ministry.

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- Launch the church's High School graduates from the youth ministry, confident that they are surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults

## **PROPOSED TIMELINE AND OPTIONAL CONSULTING PROPOSAL**

### **PROPOSED TIMELINE - JULY**

*The following provides Floris UMC with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of sustainable, long-term youth ministry.*

*Many churches choose to use the services of Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 18-month transition, we are available to help.*

### **July 2018**

#### **Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins**

#### **Outcomes:**

- This report has been presented to the church council for the strategic renovation of the youth ministry and the church council has given full support of this plan.
- A Quick Start Summit has been scheduled for August.
- The Renovation Team for youth has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Summit.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the youth ministry. They have received a copy of the assessment report and timeline.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for August for the volunteers in the youth ministry.
- A Fall Kick-off for the youth ministry has been scheduled for September. A team of parents has been recruited to implement the Fall Kick-off.
- The church has partnered with Ministry Architects to serve as the architect for the entire renovation process.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the youth ministry staff and key volunteers have been provided.
- Pressure Point 4 has been addressed

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## August 2018

### Focus: Renovation Underway, Calendars, Volunteers, Database, Quick Start Summit, Leadership Launch

#### Outcomes:

- Work has begun on the 2018-2019 youth ministry calendar.
- A fishing pond of 75 potential volunteers in the youth ministry has been created.
- Results-based job descriptions have been written and distributed to the appropriate volunteers for the youth ministry.
- Work on the youth database has begun, collecting the most recent information for families and youth. All are categorized in a manner that will follow up on MIA families and youth. Each teen has been classified in the following categories:

**Active Youth** are the ones whose families are members and have attended at least once in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the group. They should show up in your printed youth ministry directory.

**Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to send them a facebook message every time the group gets together, but you'll want to regularly pursue these youth, whether they ever show up or not.

**Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly programs and/or activities but are not an official member 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 a program 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.

- A Visioning Summit has been scheduled for October and a “save the date” email/postcard has been sent to all families.
- 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 youth ministry renovation process.

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- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuaries Policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- Curriculum has been chosen for the upcoming school year.
- Pressure Point 1 has been addressed

### September 2018

#### **Focus: Calendars, Database, Communications, Visioning Promotion, Curriculum, Fall Kick-off**

##### **Outcomes:**

- Promotion of the Visioning Summit has begun.
- A database of all youth and their families has been compiled and each person is “tagged” with a category
- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices are being implemented.
- The 2018-2019 youth ministry calendar has been completed and distributed.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed youth and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants felt energized and enthusiastic about the coming year’s programs.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.
- Pressure Point 2 has been addressed

### October 2018

#### **Focus: Visioning Summit, Pressure Points, Budget, Compliance**

##### **Outcomes:**

- A Visioning Summit with all major stakeholders has occurred producing visioning documents for the youth ministry (mission statement, core values, goals and structure).
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the visioning process.
- All programs have adhered to the Safe Sanctuaries policy as laid out by the church.

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- A Christian Formation Summit has been scheduled for 2019. The Summit will facilitate a discussion of the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum.
- A detailed 2019 budget for the youth ministry has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- Each youth staff member has created a Rhythmic Week including balcony time and has begun to live into their Rhythmic Week.
- Pressure Point 3 has been addressed

## November 2018

### Focus: Participation Goals, Volunteers, Compliance, Attendance

#### Outcomes:

- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through August 2019 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- All volunteer needs for the 2018-2019 school year for the youth ministry have been filled.
- A volunteer application, an application process and a screening process for all weekly hands-on volunteers have been created and implemented
- Background checks have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy.
- Copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained. Permission slips for each offsite event in addition to standard medical release forms for the entire year have been created.
- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all youth ministry programs has been created and implemented.
- Reasonable participation goals have been established for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through December 2019 and clear lines of responsibility for filling those events have been established.

## December 2018

### Focus: Mid-Course Evaluation, Communication, Calendar

#### Outcomes:

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- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments necessary to improve the work being done.
- Work has begun on the summer calendar for 2019.
- The Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- Communication methods currently being used to promote the youth ministry and share the successes with the congregation have been evaluated and added to if necessary.
- Continuing education opportunities have been explored and calendared for the youth ministry staff.
- A process for engaging the majority of parents in the ministry in some way during the 2019-2020 school year has been written and implemented.
- Parent Support: An encouraging parent support event has engaged the majority of parents in the youth ministry in some way

## January 2019

### Focus: Christian Formation Summit, Calendars, Volunteer Training

#### Outcomes:

- Interested staff, volunteers, and parents have gathered for a Christian Formation Summit to discuss the learning objectives of each age level and how these might be accomplished utilizing available curriculum, milestones, and special programming. At the Summit, the team
  - Evaluated the upcoming curriculum to ensure its effectiveness.
  - Developed a long-range scope and sequence as well as a set of core competencies for the youth ministry programming.
  - Develop a clear plan for milestones and special events to shape the faith formation through the ages and stages.
  - Determined how the curriculum selected will be communicated to volunteers.
  - Decided what level of training will be required prior to full implementation.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A “check-in” with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.
- Work has begun on the 2019-2020 youth ministry calendar.
- The summer 2019 calendar for the youth ministry has been completed and

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distributed.

## February 2019

### Focus: Calendar, Volunteer Recruitment

#### Outcomes:

- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- The 2019-2020 youth ministry calendar has been completed through August 2019 including a Fall Kick-off.
- Volunteer recruiting seasons has opened.
  - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
  - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
  - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2019-2020 school year.
  - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
  - A written game plan for inviting specific, non-parent demographics in the congregation when recruiting volunteers has been implemented.
  - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the youth ministry.
  - Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2019-2020.

## March 2019

### Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Marketing

#### Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruitment has continued.
- Invitations have been sent out for the Family Ministry Vision Summit that will happen in June 2019
- Work has begun on major event notebooks – creating a template for the notebooks and collecting information on each youth event.
- Clear, internal marketing processes have been established that allow all church members to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the youth ministry.
- A plan has been implemented for ensuring that every family in the current youth directory has been contacted personally at least once a year in order to

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make a connection, express support, and clarify if there are any parents requesting that their sons and/or daughters be removed from the church's directory.

- A process has been implemented to ensure that each youth or youth parent in the church receives a contact from someone on the youth leadership team at least once a month
- A game plan has been written and implemented for welcoming new families, youth, and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. The plan has included a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.

## April 2019

### Focus: Database, MIA, Volunteer Thank You, Benchmarks

#### Outcomes:

- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- A volunteer thank you event has been scheduled and promotional materials have gone out to all youth volunteers.
- MIA youth have been systematically contacted.
- One or two family events have been calendared for the upcoming year. They have been focused on building family relationships and fun fellowship.
- The collection of updated information from each child and family has been completed and the database for youth ministry has been updated with that new information.
- A short-term team has met with the appropriate church committees to explore the possibilities for a renovation or redesign of youth facilities to better serve the youth of name of Floris UMC. Proposed options for the above have been sent to the church council for revision or approval
- A game plan has been written and implementation has begun to
  - Keep youth involved in the youth programs after Confirmation
  - Engage MIA youth who have gotten their drivers' license
  - Intentionally reach out to missing-in-action (MIA) youth and reconnecting them with the life of name of church.

## May 2019

### Focus: Fall Kick-off, Volunteer Thank You

#### Outcomes:

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- A Fall Kick-off team has been recruited to begin planning for the start of the fall youth ministry programs.
- A volunteer thank you event has taken place.
- A game plan for building bridges between the children's ministry and the youth ministry has been created.
- A written strategic plan for helping the youth become an integral part of the whole congregation, weaving the youth ministry into the fabric of the entire church, has been created.
- A game plan to encourage a culture where everyone feels valued and equally regarded has been created and implemented. It has fostered a culture that all adults, regardless of their station in life, feel passionate about raising and supporting youth in their Christian faith
- Building on the desire of youth and parents to make a difference in the world and their community, a clear, well publicized calendar has been created for involvement in local agencies, as well as, regional, and possibly international missions. Current mission trips have been evaluated for their effectiveness.

## June 2019

### Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Directory, Curriculum

#### Outcomes:

- A Family Ministry Vision Summit has been held.
- With the most recent information on youth and their families, a directory of all families and a directory of all volunteers have been created to be distributed at the Fall Kick-off.
- All major event notebooks have been updated by the event coordinators and given back to the youth staff to pass along to the next year's coordinator.
- The effectiveness of this past year's curriculum has been reviewed and decisions have been made for any necessary changes for the upcoming school year.
- A game plan for the staff and volunteers to foster a relational atmosphere and build incarnational relationships with youth for deep and long-lasting impact in the ministry has been implemented.

## July 2019

### Focus: Manual, Volunteers

#### Outcomes:

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- All volunteer needs for the 2019-2020 school year for youth ministry have been filled.
- The Youth Ministry Manual (both hard copy and digital) have been completed, including
  - Visioning documents
  - Directories
  - Volunteer directory
  - Volunteer training agendas and notes
  - Attendance records
  - Annual calendar
  - Results-based job descriptions
  - Game plans and new initiatives
  - Meeting agendas and minutes for Youth Ministry Committee/Renovation Team.
  - Christian Formation Plan and record of curriculum resources used for the current year
  - Budget and other financial documents
  - Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
  - Compliance documents

## August 2018

### **Focus: Leadership Launch, Preventative Maintenance Calendar, Reflection and Re-Assessment**

#### **Outcomes:**

- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- An online diagnostic has been completed to re-assess the youth ministry.
- Current pressure points have been named
- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the youth ministry that will help regularly deal with on-going “behind the scenes” ministry maintenance.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuary Policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.
- Begin the process of the multi campus combo youth and children assessment process for both the Restoration and Loudons campus

## September 2018

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## **Focus: Fall Kick-off, Major Event Notebooks, Compliance**

### **Outcomes:**

- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the safe church policy. Background checks have been completed on each volunteer.
- All youth programs have adhered to the Safe Sanctuary policy.
- Major event notebooks for each major event for the youth ministry have been handed out to this year's event coordinators.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed youth and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants feel energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.

## **October 2019**

### **Focus: Budget, Benchmarks, Curriculum**

#### **Outcomes:**

- All one-year benchmarks have been achieved. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.
- A detailed 2020 budget for the youth ministry has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.

## **November 2019**

### **Focus: Strategic Staffing, Participation Goals**

#### **Outcomes:**

- With the changes in the youth ministry, the volunteer staffing to meet the size and scope of the youth ministry has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.
- All game plans that have been launched in last 12 months have been evaluated and tweaked as necessary for impact and sustainability.
- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all youth ministry events and weekly programs through August 2020 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.

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- A game plan has been established for the Rites of Passage processes, events, and privileges that have:
  - Welcomed and connected the new 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents into the youth ministry
  - Welcomed and connected the new 9<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents into the High School ministry
  - Launched the church's High School graduates from the youth ministry, confident that they have been surrounded by a supporting church family and committed to live out their faith as adults

## December 2019

### Focus: Sustainability

#### Outcomes:

- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that included game plans for the current pressure points and items from the online diagnostic.
- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures during the renovation
- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- The staff and Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.
- The Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the youth volunteers and focusing on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, curriculum selection, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.

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