

First Baptist Church

WALLINGFORD, CT



114 N. Main Street • Wallingford, CT 06492
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FBC Strategic Planning and Vision: Final Report 2018

The FBC Strategic Planning team and Elders spent the last few months discussing and praying for the Lord's leading as it relates to a clear Christ-centered vision for First Baptist Wallingford. We set out with an objective of creating a vision that would be "inspirational, clear, memorable, and concise." Here is the vision for FBC:

***Because Jesus is the hope of the world,
and he loves everyone unconditionally,
we desire for ALL to have a personal relationship with him. . .
through the grace of God!***

The hope is that this vision will inspire, lead, and guide the ministries and people of FBC!

In addition, the FBC Strategic Planning team also worked over several months to develop a clear, Holy Spirit inspired strategic plan for our church.

This group poured over the 111 surveys submitted by church members and friends, as well as the SWOT (identifying the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis by FBC leadership and staff. These surveys and SWOT analysis were prepared and completed in September of 2017. Asking and trusting in the Lord for direction and wisdom, the Strategic Planning Committee has listed below the top objectives for First Baptist. This was developed by first consolidating survey and SWOT results into dominant themes for each area (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), and then filtering them through a further analysis to help the church take advantage of identified strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and countering threats. Most important, all of this review, analysis, and discussion was covered in prayer and the leading of His Holy Spirit.

This report has been submitted to the Coaches at FBC, who are the leaders responsible for the operations and implementing of many of these objectives. This body of leaders has assigned each strategic outcome listed below to a coach, group of coaches, elders, or ministry team to investigate and implement.

Here are a couple of crucial statistics from the congregational surveys to keep in mind as these strategic plans are reviewed:

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- 76% of surveys submitted came from people 45 years old and up (only 1 person 13-17 years old completed the survey). As is reflected in the overall makeup of FBC at this time, it is primarily older adults whose thoughts and opinions are reflected in the survey.
- 91% of those surveyed said they would be “willing to embrace change in the church’s worship, music, activities and programs if it attracted new people to the church.” Only one person said they would not be willing to do this.
- 83% said they were likely to continue worshipping at FBC over the next year, while 63% said they were satisfied with how things were going at the church. However, almost half (48%) said they had not invited friends, neighbors, or newcomers to a worship service in the last six months.

Strategic Outcomes

What FBC strengths can we use to take advantage of opportunities?

- praise/worship team is powerful strength and is much desired for worship. Opportunity is to build on dedicated volunteers with additional teams of musicians and singers, hire or find a worship leader, and have the praise band work with current music ministries to unify efforts.
- Elders or other church leaders shepherd a specific group of people in the congregation to help new members assimilate and feel welcome after their initial visits, follow up with people who we have missed in church for a week or two, pray for those in your care, help with retention, etc.
- take advantage of our many Christ-focused Connect Groups to engage more people in Bible Study, prayer, and personal connections beyond Sunday morning worship. Have Connect Groups become more purposeful and organized, develop more, and try and involve all in the church. Be a church OF Connect Groups, not a Church WITH Connect Groups.

What FBC strengths can we use to take counter external threats?

- take the strength of many long-time members and relationships and rebrand to signal a new beginning at FBC to counter threat of most denominational churches shrinking or closing. This rebrand could include outward focusing items like logo, colors, name of church, modernize worship, develop entrances and building to reflect vibrancy, and more, as well as internal things like mission and vision statements, bylaws, leadership model, etc.

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- develop a formal plan to connect with and “welcome back home” those members and friends who no longer worship at First Baptist. Take advantage of strengths of long-term friendships and connections to welcome back those who have left for a variety of reasons. Priority on first healing and having our “house in order” before reaching out.

What FBC weaknesses can be identified and turned into opportunities?

- an identified weakness was a lack of youth and young people interested in FBC, with many identifying a current worship experience that is sometimes less vibrant, low energy, and not connecting with younger (and older) people. The opportunities identified to counter this weakness were to continue to grow the presence of the praise band, identify a worship leader, and infuse worship with the vibrancy of the Holy Spirit.
- a weakness of losing long-time members and also not retaining visitors can be an opportunity to invest in the Elders’ shepherding model. Several people mentioned in the surveys not coming to church for months and no one noticed or contacted them. The shepherding model would help with new attendees connecting and with retention of current members.
- a clear weakness identified was not having praise band every Sunday as a major part of the worship service (especially in the summer and during breaks). An opportunity to develop teams of musicians and singers, and a potential worship leader, can help deal with this weakness.

Work to eliminate weaknesses to avoid and counter threats

- use Connect Groups and intentional strategies to eliminate cliques in church and allow new people to fit in and feel part of the close family-like atmosphere.
- summer worship has very low attendance and can lead to losing people. Move summer worship downstairs from children’s day to rally day (mid-June to early September) to utilize air conditioning, have worship area feel full and vibrant, and insure that praise band is able to be part of these worship services.
- fight impression that FBC is out of date, irrelevant, and shrinking like most mainstream denominational churches. Embrace and capitalize on change while maintaining current members and advantages of a loving, friendly, body of believers.

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Submitted by . . .

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