

# *Summary--Strategic Planning Retreat*

Holy Covenant MCC  
February 25, 2017

Twelve members of Holy Covenant gathered for the day to learn about strategic planning and to brainstorm about possible routes forward for HCMCC.

The morning was spent reviewing what strategic planning is and is not. It is just what it sounds like--planning that is organized and focused, with a specific goal in mind and intermediate steps along the way. Strategic planning (SP) lets organizations (like companies, churches, schools, community organizations, etc.) make systematic plans for the future, instead of reacting to whatever happens to them day by day. We do this in our everyday lives without really thinking about it. For example, we have health insurance so that we can get check ups and routine screenings on a regular basis. We don't know if our physicals will turn up anything, but we know we need them, so we have health insurance to pay for them. And then if anything is found that needs to be looked into or treated, we have health insurance to cover it. In the same way, strategic planning gives us a plan for the next few years--what do we want and need to do? What is likely to be happening? How can we respond? What resources do we have to respond? What opportunities are there for us?

Obviously, in order to know what might happen, and what resources we have, and what opportunities might be available, we need to do some research. Tom taught us about

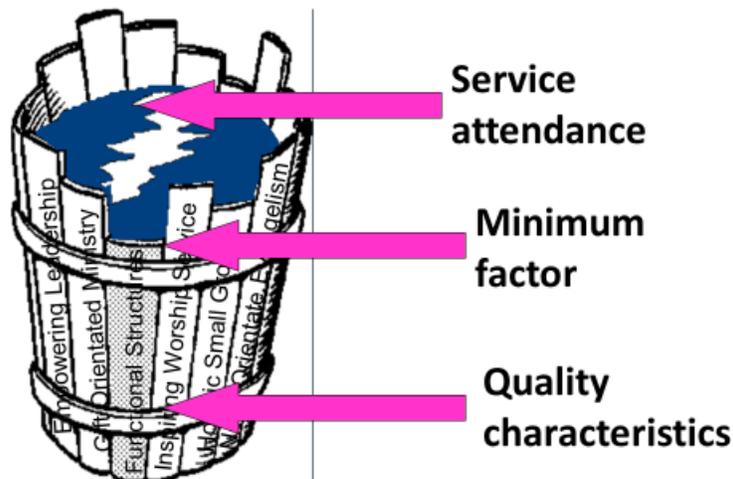
SWOT analysis, which is a fancy term for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis. Strengths and Weaknesses are resources within the organization--and something can be both a strength and a weakness. Our building is both a strength and a weakness, because we own our own building with no mortgage, so we don't owe any money on it, no one else controls the space, we do, we can use it as we like--but we must pay for the upkeep and maintenance and insurance and if anything needs to be repaired (like the roof last summer) we have to find the funds to fix it, and we are responsible for making it welcoming and clean and accessible. Opportunities and Threats come from outside the organization--the church--and are things we cannot do much about, except to use them to our advantage or to minimize them. They are things like the economy, a change to an anti-LGBT atmosphere in society, a large donation from a community grant, a bad winter storm, and so on. They affect us, but do not come from us and we cannot control them.

SWOT Analysis Grid

|          |          | POSITIVE      | NEGATIVE   |
|----------|----------|---------------|------------|
|          |          | STRENGTHS     | WEAKNESSES |
| INTERNAL |          |               |            |
|          | EXTERNAL | OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS    |

Once we know our strengths and weaknesses, and what may affect us from the outside, we can look at our various ministries and programs--which is what we did next. We used the image of a barrel filled with water. The staves, or slats, of the barrel, are the programs and activities of the church--worship, PADS ministry, Share Food Share Love, stewardship. and so on. Participation is the water in the barrel. The barrel can only hold as much water--participation--as the least activity. That's the one to work on, and bring up. And then the next lowest, and then the next, and so on.

## The minimum factor



This is how we decide what to focus on in strategic planning. Because, of course, nothing is perfect, and everything could use some improvement, but we can really only work on one or two things at a time.

But who's "we?"

At the end of the day, after the group had done some thinking--no holds barred, just free thinking, what we would like to do and see if we had no limits or barriers--about what they wanted to see or thought would be great to see in the church, there was a lot of discussion about how to make some of these things happen.

There were two categories of action items. One was things that really just needed someone to do them--we have the materials, or someone does, and we just need someone who has the time or the skill to do them. For example: someone to share cleaning tasks with Ray; to share coffee hour set-up with Steve and Jim; to repair the church sign, and so on. These are all concrete tasks with a beginning and an end, and many fall under Building and Grounds Ministry. Tom will be creating a list of these in association with the B&G Ministry, with a way for members to access the list and sign up for tasks--each will include needed materials (if any) time, and number of people.

The second category of items is more complicated and really the heart of SP. These were the programs, a hard look at the building, a deep discussion of the community and how we might be more involved in Brookfield and some others. These really require a small group of about three or four people to work together over the course of the next few months to carry out an in-depth SWOT analysis and brainstorm, then see where HCMCC can put our strengths and resources--and we have many!--to work in our church and community.

I will be part of that group; but we need more folks. The Board is busy with their work administering the church, and while they will be interested in the work of the group, they will not be the group. I would like to see two or three congregation members (you don't have to be members of HCMCC) join me and help plan the future of HCMCC. We will choose how often to meet in person--depending on the members' comfort level with technology, we can meet via Skype or FaceTime, and exchange information via Google Docs, if we like.

Note: The PowerPoint presentation is available on the church's website or in hard copy.

Thank you to all the folks who came! It was great spending a Saturday with you!  
Special thanks to Bruce Myers for providing the space, Steve Marz and Jim Baer for providing the lunch and snacks, Tom Menard for co-facilitating, and Barb Adams-Latsaras for PowerPoint skills!