

IBC MISSION STATEMENT

Making disciples of Christ and equipping them for the lifelong journey of connecting, growing and serving together in our community and the world.

IBC CORE VALUES

TRUTH – God alone is worthy of all honor, praise and worship. He is supreme and we glorify Him by following the teachings of the Bible – the divinely inspired Word of God that never changes. The only way to salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

MISSION – The Bible teaches us that we are to encourage others to follow Christ. We are committed to sharing the Good News of Jesus and to making Him known through worship, small group Bible study and a lifestyle that draws people to Christ.

GROWTH – We believe that healthy churches grow and change. We are committed to being relevant and using the most effective means to impact our community and the world with the message of the gospel.

EXCELLENCE – God deserves our very best. Every ministry of our church should display the excellence due our Lord and Savior.

GENEROSITY - In faithfulness to God and gratitude for His provision to us, we believe in giving joyfully of our resources to the ministry of the gospel, the needs of others, and missions around the world.

INREACH – In Acts 2 we are given the ultimate example of relational living. Believers need each other. We rejoice together in victories; we hold up one another when hurting; we encourage one another when we are struggling.

OUTREACH – We take seriously Jesus’ command to “Love your neighbor as yourself”. We follow the example of Jesus by meeting the needs of people and showing genuine compassion. We desire to make everyone welcome at IBC. **You matter!**

THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We have a vision that Immanuel Baptist Church becomes a church in Union County that attracts people of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and seasons of life. We want to be a church where guests feel welcomed and members feel loved and connected.

We envision a church where 100% of its members are fully connected in a small group Bible study where they are growing spiritually and intentionally serving one another. Every member would be equipped and encouraged to serve in church ministries and mission opportunities that impact the community and the world based on their gifts and passions. We see a body of believers who are passionate about its members growing into the likeness of Christ and lost people coming to know Christ. In this way we would be a church that reaches up and then reaches out from the overflow of our personal relationship with Christ.

We have a vision that our church relocates to the 48.4 acres we own on West Hillsboro. On this land a new church campus will be built that includes, but is not limited to, a worship center, classrooms for Bible study and training, and lots of recreational space. This land affords Immanuel many opportunities for reaching and ministering to the people of El Dorado and the surrounding areas. We will use all that God has given us for His glory.

We have a vision that our current campus at 701 South West Avenue transfers ownership through the sale of our campus to The Eagle Foundation, a faith-based, non-profit organization that has the vision and passion to meet identified needs of children. The location of our campus is strategically perfect for their larger vision for a ministry center to reach at-risk children and their families through education, neighborhood revitalization, and other methods that transcend boundaries with the over-arching goal of breaking cycles that keep children from reaching their potential.

MINISTRY PLAN

In order to pursue our Vision, achieve our Mission Statement and align ourselves with our Core Values, the following Ministry Plan is recommended to Immanuel Baptist Church.

I. EXISTING NEEDS IN THE CHURCH

1. ADULT DISCIPLESHIP STRUCTURE

Becoming like Christ is a lifelong process. Salvation is only the beginning. In order to make disciples we must offer excellent Biblical teaching for every age group and season of life and foster mentoring relationships and opportunities to grow in Christ.

Achievements: We have placed an Interim Director over Adult Discipleship and created a core leadership team to establish a new structure for adult Bible study and plan events for the year. We brought in a consultant from Little Rock (Chad Denmon of New Life Church) on three different occasions to guide us in the process of developing an updated model for Sunday morning Bible study. We have created four new classes for the fall semester. By offering more classes on Sunday morning the groups can become smaller. This will facilitate more intimate relationships and help teachers know and care for their members better. We have started offering fellowship and training events for our teachers. We hosted a Challenge Dinner for all teachers and their spouses before starting the fall semester. We held a Launch Sunday where adults were able to choose which class they wanted to attend rather than be assigned to a class simply by age.

Recommendations: We recommend that the church seek someone to function as a minister or director over adult discipleship once a new pastor is in place. This could be done through a staff position, a lay position or a ministry team. The leader would be responsible for establishing a cohesive plan for all adult discipleship including enlisting Bible study teachers, equipping volunteers and establishing procedures for inreach and outreach.

We recommend the topics of marriage, parenting, prayer, stewardship, evangelism and spiritual gifts be included in the discipleship programming.

2. CONNECTIONS

In an era where people are the most connected with social media, many of our members said they do not feel connected or cared for by their church. When members feel connected and cared for they are more likely to invite their friends who are seeking a church home or, perhaps even unknowingly, a relationship with Christ. As a church we should also seek to connect to those outside our church.

Achievements: We have created two areas on our campus that encourage people to connect. One is a coffee bar in the library and the other is a seating area in the main lobby. The Connection Team is reviving and hosting the church-wide fish fry in September. The Connection Team hosted a Connection Sunday where members were introduced to all the different ministries we are connected to in the community, state and around the world.

Recommendations: We recommend that the leadership of the church plan events that help members to connect to one another. The pastor, Bible study teachers and other leaders of the church should regularly encourage and inform members of the importance of connecting and meeting each other's needs based on the example found in Acts 2. We recommend that the church continue to strengthen its connection to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention by utilizing the resources available for training.

3. GUEST FRIENDLINESS

When you have been a member for a year or more it is easy to forget what it was like to be a first-time guest. Becoming guest friendly begins with each one of us doing our part to welcome and befriend others. To become a guest friendly church we must anticipate the arrival of guests before they step on our campus. Our campus lacks proper signage to show guests where to park, how to enter the building and where to go once inside.

Achievements: We had an information center desk built and placed in the main lobby. We painted and cleaned up the main lobby and added signage at the entrance. We also added signage to properly label the main office. The Connection Team has created a Guest Ministry Team and brought in a consultant from ABSC (Warren Gasaway) for guidance. This team is accountable for enlisting greeters, equipping church members to recognize visitors, and handling the administrative functions related to ministering to

and following up with guests. The Connection Team has created gift bags for guests with pertinent information.

Recommendations: We recommend that all outdoor and indoor signage be updated to ensure our campus is guest friendly. We recommend that the Guest Ministry Team create a clear procedure for following up with guests for a minimum of six weeks after their first visit. We also recommend that a parking lot greeting team be fully implemented and consistently active each Sunday morning.

4. COMMUNICATION

Even in an age where people are inundated with information, church members often note a lack of communication. Every ministry or event must be communicated several times and in different ways for our members and guests to be informed. In addition to communicating with members and guests, we must advertise and promote our church's ministries and services to the community.

Achievements: We have updated the church website to a more current format. We purchased advertising space on a billboard on North West Avenue. We asked an administrative assistant at the church to email the church prayer list and calendar each week. We have installed a television in the main lobby to be used to stream the weekly announcements. Additionally, the Connection Team handed out fans advertising our service times at several local events including baseball games and Showdown at Sunset.

Recommendations: We recommend that the church assign someone on staff the job of updating the website daily. We also recommend that leaders begin advertising events at least 4-6 weeks in advance. Larger events that only occur occasionally may need more attention. Church wide events that are significant to the life of the church (such as a vision casting Sunday or a renewal weekend event) would need to be advertised 2-3 months in advance. All avenues of free communication (email and social media) should be utilized. We recommend the staff research the use of an electronic service provider as an option for automated communication. We recommend the Media Team produce a video to be used as advertising at the local cinema.

5. MISSIONS/OUTREACH

Experts who study church growth and revitalization tell us that a healthy church is a balanced church. We have discovered that, while we have

become a more mission minded church, we lack balance in some areas of missions and outreach.

- a. Local missions/outreach – We currently spend most of our mission resources helping and evangelizing the lower income part of our community while having no strategy for reaching the middle class demographic.

We desire that our church look for ways to intentionally connect to those who visit our community through local events as well as church prospects.

Achievements: We enlisted a team to create “We Care Baskets” to deliver to CPAs in April. The same group created welcome gifts for all sixty-nine of the new 2015-16 public school teachers.

Recommendations: We recommend that the staff or a Missions Ministry Team create strategies for reaching all economic demographics in our area.

- a. Foreign missions – We currently give to foreign mission efforts through Operation Christmas Child and the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. We send one team each year to Guatemala.

Recommendations: We recommend these efforts be stressed and promoted by the Pastor and that members be encouraged to seek opportunities to carry out the Great Commission internationally.

6. ALIGNMENT OF OUR ACTIVITIES WITH OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, stated these as some negatives of activity-driven churches:

- Activity is not biblical purpose.
- Busyness can take us away from connecting with other believers and non-believers.
- An activity-driven church is often not strategic in its ministries.
- A congregation that is too busy can hurt families.
- An activity-driven church often has no presence in the community.

Recommendations: The antithesis of an activity-driven church is a purpose-driven church. In order to align our church’s activities around our mission and purpose we recommend that we intentionally use Sundays and Wednesdays to accomplish the following purposes:

Sunday mornings – CONNECTING – The purpose of Sunday morning is for believers to connect to God through worship and Biblical teaching and connect to other believers through fellowship and small group Bible study. It is the time when church members should welcome guests in hopes that they will want to connect to the body of Christ through salvation and/or membership.

Sunday afternoons – SERVING – The purpose of Sunday afternoon is for the church to accomplish its mission of serving together in the community and the world. There are unlimited ways we can use our gifts and passions to minister to our members who are in nursing homes, homebound, elderly, widowed, disabled, hospitalized or bereaved. There are unlimited ways we can use this time to reach out and serve in our community. Activities on Sunday afternoon already exist that allow for outreach and service such as prayer walking at the local schools, the church wide fish fry, and OCC special access shoebox packing. These and many more opportunities can take place on Sunday afternoons during daylight hours to allow everyone to use their spiritual gifts and natural talents to serve the Lord and reach lost people with the love of Christ. It will be a time for inreach and outreach.

Serving together on Sunday afternoons will create opportunities for families to serve together. It will be a time when Sunday morning small groups can serve together. It will allow different age groups to serve alongside each other.

With intentionality we can use Sunday afternoons to offer training in areas that apply to outreach and service such as:

- Evangelism
- Welcoming guests
- Sharing Christ and starting Bible studies in the workplace
- Discovering and using spiritual gifts

Sunday afternoon serving will still allow the evening time slot to be used for quarterly business meetings and continued fellowship when needed.

Wednesday evenings – GROWING – Wednesdays would be our intentional time for members and guests to experience spiritual growth through the study of the Bible in both topical and expository offerings. Wednesday evenings are already a time of discipleship for our children and youth. We want to add more options for discipleship for adults.

By allowing our purpose to drive our activities we will both simplify our calendar of events and ensure that we are accomplishing our mission statement and core values.

7. WORSHIP

Worship is a powerful and personal way in which we connect with God. In a changing world more and more people are connecting through contemporary worship music. In an effort to reach more people, we feel that we should offer two worship experiences as well as two worship times.

Achievements: We recommended and the staff facilitated the creation of two worship services on Sunday mornings – a classic service at 8:15 AM and a contemporary service at 10:30 AM.

Recommendations: We recommend that we continue to work toward an excellent presentation of classic and contemporary worship styles in order to accomplish our vision. We recommend that we improve the television broadcast of our Sunday morning service in regards to the audio quality. We also recommend that an emphasis be placed on the audio/visual element of our live worship services.

8. LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Team started with an objective to create a structure to support what would be our new mission and vision. Not knowing exactly what our new mission and vision would look like, we knew the structure and organization had to be flexible enough to accommodate the end result.

Achievements: The Leadership Team has revised the by-laws to include a new structure to align with not only what we are doing now, but also is flexible enough to allow us to adjust to how we intend to operate moving forward. One of the primary components in the new structure relates to lay leadership and the creation of a Church Council who will be there to assist and support the staff. Even though we as a church were assisting and supporting the staff before, the new structure will give us an organized and intentional method by which we can more effectively communicate, help the staff and better support our mission and vision.

In addition to the Church Council, another structure change was the development of Ministry Teams. The Ministry Team concept will replace what was once called committees. It will bring organization and accountability to groups that already exist and are actively serving.

Another key area addressed in the revised by-laws included some direct guidance for the Deacon body in regards to roles/responsibilities that will help them serve in the capacity to which they have been called and ordained.

Collectively, all these changes will help organize the lay leadership and provide a framework to support our new mission and vision moving forward.

Recommendations: The Leadership Team plans to work on developing/revising church policy documents and transitioning to the new structure by early 2016. The Team on Mission recommends that the church provide annual training and encouragement for our lay leaders and that each staff person seek annual training in their area of ministry.

9. CURRENT FACILITIES

We must be good stewards with all that we are given. As long as IBC is using the current facility we must take better care of ‘God’s’ house. Luke 16:10a reminds us, “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones.” Much of the original building is beyond repair and the modern building is showing signs of deterioration. What if the condition of a church’s building is a reflection of the heart of the church? In keeping with our core value of excellence, we cannot afford to have apathy towards our church campus.

Achievements: We enlisted a team of volunteers to clean and paint the main lobby and power wash the exterior walls at the main entrance. The Building and Grounds Committee, along with Andy Moore, have completed repairs to several leaking areas and had the original building power washed.

Recommendations: We recommend that the church invest in creating a welcome area at the Cross Street entrance. We recommend that the Building and Grounds Committee, working with our Property Manager, bring a checklist of projects that need to be completed in order to address areas that are cluttered, mildewed, in disrepair or need to be painted. If additional funds are needed to complete the projects, the church can vote to supply the funds. We would also like to see the grounds surrounding the church building be mowed weekly during the spring and summer months and landscaping trimmed as needed.

II. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CHURCH

Recognizing people, or groups of people, that God has already placed in our church will help identify two things:

1. Ministries we need to provide for our members

2. Doorways into our community

Some of those groups are the hearing impaired; college age and median age singles; young families, blended families, and single parents; senior adults, widows and the homebound; people with aging parents; adult men and women; school teachers, coaches and administrators; and parents of children with special needs. In each of these categories we have a number of members who would benefit from specialized ministry and also provide doorways into reaching others in our community in their same situation or season of life.

Recommendations: Staff and lay leaders explore opportunities to strategically minister to the above groups.

III. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Once we have looked at the existing opportunities that come from our own members' needs we must look at the community and see how God wants us to reach the lost and broken with the love of Christ.

1. Current opportunities:

- a) We affirm the year-round ministries we currently have for our community such as Laundry Love, feeding at Salvation Army and other short-term projects designed to help those in need. We recommend that the church seek outside training/equipping that would enrich those efforts in order to win the lost to Christ as we are providing practical help.
- b) We recognize a growing need both in our church and our community for Christian counseling. We recommend Immanuel consider such ministry in the near future.

2. Future opportunities at our current location:

Our team has spent a great deal of time analyzing, discussing, praying over and working through our relocation decision. Our conclusion is that

proceeding with plans to relocate our main campus to West Hillsboro is God's will for our church for several reasons. The basis of our conclusion is based upon two key drivers:

- The compelling need to better minister to and reach young families
- The need to better minister to our community in different ways to change the actual culture and help solve educational, physical, spiritual and practical needs of those currently falling through the cracks.

On any given Sunday at Immanuel, there are very few babies in the nursery. As mentioned in other parts of this Vision Statement and Ministry Plan, our church is failing to reach the demographic known as the millennials (who happen to be the ones having babies). Born in the 80's and 90's, millennials grew up in the digital age with smartphones and social media. They are more educated than any generation in history. By 2020, 46% of all U.S. workers will be millennials. That alone is a compelling reason to strategically structure our ministries to reach these people. The basic question for them is "How is this activity relevant to my family and me"? The clear message is this – the church that meets the needs of their family is where they will land. Who can honestly blame someone for choosing a church that is vibrant, "real", progressive, missional, intentional, and loving? Sounds like a place to "Connect, Grow and Serve" doesn't it? Sounds like the church in Acts 2 doesn't it? They are not looking for a watered down gospel. They are looking for genuineness and real life ministry with purpose – not just an activity. Not just busyness. They are looking for a place to share their life experiences – wins and losses – and not be judged. To be encouraged and help encourage. And to hear the unchanging and timeless message that redemption is available, failure is not final, and God loves them and theirs.

In El Dorado and across our nation, there is a tremendous need to reestablish the home as the primary training ground for character, morality, education and spiritual development. Children in our community who lack that kind of training at home desperately need mentors, tutors, and counselors to help them. We recognize that partnerships are essential to making a difference in a city with so many needs. We believe that The Eagle Foundation, a non-profit organization formed by Jennifer Wylie, has the vision and passion to meet the identified needs of children. Our campus is strategically located for Eagle's mission. The sale of our existing campus on South West Avenue to The Eagle Foundation would facilitate two things: expansion of our church's ministries by allowing us to relocate to West Hillsboro and expansion of The Eagle Foundation's ministries by allowing them to move into a neighborhood near at-risk families.

Eagle Foundation is currently acting as administration for Westside Christian School. With the support of Westside Christian school board,

they plan to relocate and expand the junior high and high school to our current campus. They have developed a vision to reach all children (both public and private) who have educational needs through their after-school programs, extended services to parents and summer programs.

The Eagle Foundation is excited to partner with us by allowing us to continue to warehouse Operation Christmas Child supplies and filled crates in our current location. Their excitement comes from involving their students in this ministry.

3. Future opportunities at our new location:

We believe the opportunities to reach and minister to this group, and all groups for that matter, more readily exist at the 48 acres on West Hillsboro. For example, acreage for a children's soccer league; acreage for youth archery (a growing trend right now); green space for children's play areas; an intentional facility design where parents are near their children during worship in case they are needed; a design where children's worship/gathering is on the ground floor (as required by law for children under 1st grade); acreage to camp, fish, play and spend time together with your family or other friends; a place to facilitate future growth that our team earnestly believes will occur to the El Dorado church that moves into the 21st Century.

The Team on Mission would like to recognize the following people:

Brian Ricker, chair of Team on Leadership, and his team: Sterling Claypoole, Keitha Davidson, Steve Elkins, Lou Anne Emrich, Patty Howard, Adah Mayhan, Jim Moore, Tim Murphy, Nelson Post, Adam Robertson, Jill Sellers

DeAnn Cates, chair of Team on Connections and her team: A. V. Beebe, Duane Hale, Tiffney Hughes, Brian Kennebeck, Janet Kennedy, Brian McLelland, Amanda Owens and Mark Smith

We would like to thank the following people who have been supportive and have assisted with the many projects that have been completed so far.

Ron Sanders and the church staff (ministerial, office and custodial), adult Bible study leaders and teachers, the Media Team, the Library Team, and the Building and Grounds Committee.

The Mission Team extends our most sincere thanks to our spouses and a special group of people who committed to pray for us throughout this process: Cliff and Marilyn McElroy, Glynn and Claude Calahan, R.C. and Martha Brown, Kathy Nielsen, and Bonnie Mears.