

RESHAPE

TRANSFORMING CHURCH INITIATIVE

Small Group Summary Log

Small Group Number: Composite

Small Group Date: November 8, 2021

Small Group Leader: various

Number Present: various

Primary Insights Generated This Session:

1. Before the recent volatile event, how would you describe our church's spiritual posture?
 - Relaxed
 - Complacent a bit
 - Withholding of finances
 - Concern over future of UMC
 - Some anger
 - Wait and see attitude
 - Prior to SHIFT, there was a larger element of a consumerism mindset
 - Some divisiveness
 - Waiting for the GC vote in 2019 & 2020, there was some hesitancy, some proactive discussion, some expectations/hopefulness of outcome
 - Hoping to resolve impasse
 - Before the Pandemic & Tornado volatile events, we described our spiritual posture as reactionary, relaxed, safe, and "status quo". During the Pandemic, we all believed that our church family came together with "hands outstretched" to help our neighbors & disciples in need, as well as rebuilding our church campus.

- The church was basically comfortable in its practice but was apprehensive in the face of the LGBTQ issues.
- The church was taking care of its members and outreach in the community.
- Loving body and no fighting in the congregation.
- Embraced visitors and welcomed them. Hospitality and welcoming spirit of the members.
- Met visitors' needs.
- complacent, comfortable, static
- groups were continuing but we felt like the spiritual posture was content and complacent. The services were stagnant, and the Wednesday nights continued to be the same. There was much drama with the vote of General Conference with divided sides.
- Slump.
- Folks entrenched, "my way or high way". Comfortable, even keel." Down" other than worship. Low membership roles.
- Complacent, we didn't see signs that we should have noticed along the way.
- On an even keel ... just plugging along.
- We made easy choices, not necessarily the right choices.
- Lukewarm ... sitting on a chair in the corner watching ... interested but not participating.
- Floating along on the lazy river, not noticing the approaching rapids.
- On a slow, steady jog ... moving forward but not very fast.
- Comfortable ... not grasping for greater.
- St. Mark has always had a posture of outreach to the community
- We were very alert and worried about an active shooter.
- We were anxious about the future of the Methodist Church.
- Caring, compassionate, and Christ centered and welcoming
- carefree
- some apathy
- some hope about the results of charge conference
- overconfident and comfortable
- Comfortable
- Active, but somewhat "reactive" (i.e.; we responded well to needs as they cropped up, but were unclear about any primary, shared vision or mission.)
- Comfortable/complacent

2. After moving to this point in the ReShape process, what is our church's current spiritual posture?
- Hopefulness for our future ministry
 - More generous
 - Still in waiting posture
 - Expectant
 - More proactive than perhaps before pandemic
 - Looking for opportunity for mission and ministry
 - More mission minded despite challenges and divisions
 - Somewhat more adaptable
 - Meeting the challenge to find ways to do the ministries that are important
 - Less desire to “just go back to the way things were”
 - People are more respectful that we are in this together – more accommodating
 - During pandemic, there was a period when consumerism was heightened – we want things the way we want them, and we will only participate if it's done how I like it
 - Our current church posture appears to be “wait and see”. We are hopeful, but somewhat uncertain about the success of the ReShape initiatives, and we are also concerned about our St. Mark future, given outcomes from Methodist general conference in September 2022.
 - Hopeful, expectant.
 - Didn't sit idly by - not passive but active in reaching out.
 - unsettled, uncertain, pondering, thinking, planning, “trying on new shoes”
 - we feel like the “spiritual climate” needs to go deeper. Our worship services are not as spiritual and seem rushed with no traditional things (liturgy, Lord's Prayer, blessing of offerings, etc.) that made a difference. We feel strongly that we need more “in-reach” and then concentrate on “outreach” because there is a lack of congregational care and connection with each other.
 - Ready to change. Upright future. Lots of us involved. Sharing. We need younger disciples and families to push us forward
 - Open Doors(coming in and going out), Open arms, open hearts ,open minds : still rings true for our group.

- Need to be sensitive and inclusive for the people who did not participate in a ReShape group. They may not understand some of the changes being recommended - or the why. We must also be sensitive to the people who did not get the changes they asked for or wanted.
- We're suited up and hesitantly moving toward the starting block, but uncertain of the course.
- Some of us are suited up and ready but some are still in the stands.
- We are now much more aware of what is going on in the church and empowered to speak.
- There is a lot of seeking but not a lot of answers. On shifting ground.
- The church "powers that be" seem even cooler than pre-pandemic. Maybe they were not expecting all of the responses that came out of the small groups. But the people of the church (especially in the small groups) seem to be in an expectant and hopeful posture.
- Outward focus
- Courage to set challenging budget target
- Sharing - \$ and knowledge e.g. caring ministry sharing flowers, communion
- Teaching – nourishment to the soul
- Apprehension pending General Conference
- We should be proud of our church
- Alert and looking where we are going from here.
- I am worried about the youth and am looking for a miracle from Maria.
- We are more aware of the result of the tornado.
- We can't wait to see what God has in store for us. We are open to what God will do with us.
- More people are ready to get to work, rolling up their sleeves.
- The church not being able to be used has affected how people feel about being there.
- Afraid that we are going to tilt the scales and not continue doing the things that are important to many.
- more flexible
- less confident or comfortable
- more humbled
- enduring
- resilient
- Questioning

- wondering...looking around for guidance...uneasy over unresolved UMC future
- Awakened/hopeful

3. What do you make of your answers to these two questions? Do you think our church is ready to move forward in a “reshaped” mission and ministry?

- We think we have an opportunity to move forward in a very meaningful way. We don't need to go thru this and then nothing happen. This is an opportunity for all voices to be part of our ministry plan moving forward.
- According to what it is.
- People are anxious to identify the re-shape initiatives and to move forward with the implementations.
- Right now, there is a strong need to do *something* to ignite, connect and energize the congregation and reach spiritually with our Lord. We are on hold and are just waiting to see what happens. The same goes for the “elephant in the room” General Conference information.
- We have more enthusiasm and energy and will be willing to try.
- There seems to be more people attending these small groups than are attending Sunday morning. There is a latent energy waiting to be released.
- People want to move forward, but the leadership doesn't appear ready/desirous of the changes people want.
- We are ready for changes but there may be some fallout.
- Some people say “don't fix it if it isn't broken” not knowing it is broken.
- We will all move forward together.
- We have the energy and excitement to move forward once we know the course. We know it will be a long-distance race.
- We do but it must be defined as to our next step
- Don't know what the rest of the groups are coming up with so we don't know if the church is ready for moving forward.
- There seem to be conflicting ideas coming from the groups. So, it will take some discernment to decide where we proceed.
- Communication will be key to the success of the project.
- We would hope that in light of a global pandemic forcing many of us to stay home would be the start to significant changes within the church.

- Now we know that church is more than a building.
- We have done things like this in the past and there was no real change.
- We have hopeful hesitancy about Saint Mark's readiness.
- There has been an ongoing concern about how to bring young people into the church, making changes could help bring them in.
- The choice that Saint Mark faces is the same choice that churches in general are facing, change or cease to exist.
- We say that we want young people, but when young people express their opinions we ignore it because their answers are not always convenient.
- The structure of power makes it hard for young people and parents to participate, therefore they are left out of decisions. For example, when worship committees set worship times.
- It is time to be the church that we say we are.
- Ready to receive input from committees and make needed changes
- We are waiting to digest priorities that emerge from ReShape. Wondering what it will be like to adjust to church life led by just one elder. Hesitant about the impact of looming General Conference decisions, which will likely become a far more volatile event than a pandemic that unified us in response!
- We are ready to respond to God's leading in a changed world.

Aligning our Structure

Organizational Structure:

- We do not believe we need to change our organizational structure to move forward at this point.
- We believe that SPRC has tried to be faithful in staff the church for current ministry needs, and for our hopes of growth in certain areas of ministry.
- From our previous small group sessions, we discussed the fact that the 41 member COS is a communication committee, but not a focused, effective decision-making group. We also referred to our 2021 Ministry Guidebook listing all our current ministries and committees. We all agreed that several of our ministries are fragmented and should be consolidated and streamlined.
- We are recommending a new, streamlined organizational structure for you to consider, with the Sr. Pastor as the CEO. The staff reports to the Sr. Pastor as the current structure. However, the ministries and committees could be streamlined into three organizational units, as shown below:

- Sr. Pastor (CEO)
- * Administrative: Trustees, Finance, Operations Mgr, Facility Mgr, Custodian, CDC
- * Ministries: Inside ministries and outside (outreach) ministries
- * H/R: SPRC, media, COS leader, communications, Stewardship
- each of the small teams has a staff member associated with it. Seems a bit complicated to those church members who are not part of a team. Would a member know who to go to with a question? There is a formal diagram of our structure.
 - Knowing, Showing, Growing
 - Need a Men's Group
- We reviewed St. Mark Ministry Guide and feel we have considerable overlap between committees and that they may actually incumber each other. The number of committees are excessive as is the number of members per committee. Having so many different committees may lead to unnecessary meetings. Efforts should be made to determine committees that support our mission and eliminate those that are not aligned with our goals.
- We do feel the global methodist church could also use some de-clutter.
- Streamline committees and get back to main focus.
- It seems that COS hears small group decisions but don't make decisions themselves.
- Open ministry team meetings to congregation so that those interested in what is going on can be heard or consulted.
- Make simple. Streamline
- We have 7 full-time and 7 part-time staff and NUMEROUS committees
- COS, UMW, Knowing/Growing/Showing/Admin
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it
- Hard to say with ReShape pending
- Lots of good things going on, we're open to new people
- Puzzled by Affirmation of Life – why did we need it – have Discipline, social principles, etc etc
- Puzzled by ReShape – why do it? What's going to come out of it? but like the small groups, we need to keep meeting as small groups
- Ours is large and involved and complicated. (See the Ministry Guide Book)
- Feels like a collective. A few decide for the many.
- **The mindfulness of who represents on committees. The mindfulness of how groups work, how often they meet (whether in person or on zoom), when they meet, etc.**

- Revisit the number of committees at St. Mark and combine any that may overlap.
- Are "growing", "knowing," and "showing" still viable? Or do we need to organize around more dynamic ministry priorities?
- Knowing, Growing, Showing

Leadership Roles:

- Our church needs to realize that we cannot be staff driven and that we will need all lay persons/disciples to use their gifts, skills, talents, and time to support ministry needs.
- We do have great lay leadership at Saint Mark.
- Leaders need to be vision casters instead of doing all the work.
- Each of the three units (Admin, Ministries, H/R) would have 2 leaders only; i.e. 6 leaders plus the Sr. Pastor and any staff that the Sr. Pastor would prefer to include. This group of 7-9 people would meet at least monthly or more frequently, to discuss issues: what is going right, what needs help, support or change, and make necessary decisions. It is clear to our small group, that the COS in its current form cannot lead the yet to be defined ReShape initiatives/programs effectively. A small group of leaders as proposed on the previous page working and getting leadership direction from the Sr. Pastor would clearly be more effective to lead future ReShape initiatives.
- Secondly, each ministry and committee should update or develop their charter, define their area of responsibility, and most importantly, establish their objectives for 2022. We do not need to wait until the ReShape initiatives are defined and presented in the Spring. Setting each ministry charter and objectives for next year now will certainly provide clearer direction as we begin 2022.
- The various ministries seem to do their own thing. The overall vision of the church is furthered by each group. The nominating committee trying to find people to chair committees might find a co-chair to work along with the chair to have a succession plan. Similar to a leadership training so it's easier to find people to fill the positions. Co-chairing is a good idea.
- We do not want our pastors to be only reactive to events in the church. We want proactive, strong, visible leadership from our pastors. We recognize that we all are leaders within our church and must work closely together to prioritize the needs of the church and not just focusing on our own agenda.
- The Book of Discipline states our roles.

- There needs to be a balance between the power of some people and our pastors.
- Leaders need to be energized and excited to get new things done.
- We all together. Learning together
- Shawna was everywhere during the pandemic. The leadership from the church was awesome.
- Some roles need to be redefined. So many roles have changed in the last 18 months.
- Volunteer leadership needs to play a stronger role.
- Continue to highlight and report on what groups are doing in the church. People who are not too involved need to hear what is going on.
- **There is this underlying assumption that the paid programmatic staff will figure things out. The nursery should not be a paid worker but rather volunteers, how can we say that we love kids if we don't volunteer with the kids. How can we support young families without prioritizing the nursery?**
- Leaders should work together to fulfill the missions of the church.
- Can we devise a plan for a subset of COS to do missional planning and implementation, leaving "policy" to the entire body?
- Leadership teams should encourage those whose hearts have been touched to witness to that, and to share their insights. New people should be given leadership positions.

Property and Facilities:

- We feel that the liability insurance requirements for outside groups who use our facilities will inhibit our ability to serve our community well. Could the church partner with outside groups to help pay the cost insurance.
- We have to be a welcoming and hospitable church. We do not want to operate from a “posture of fear.”
- We recognize that we were able to be “church” without being in “our space” for about 6 months, but the tornado makes us realize how important “our space” is.
- It is difficult to define any property or facility modifications, until ReShape initiatives/programs are better defined. For example, we may need to revamp some space for Stephens Ministry or Memory care if these ministries are restarted.
- In addition, we did propose to restudy the Parsonage sale decision when our Sr. Pastor should be reassigned. Also, we need to evaluate the relative

benefit of our CDC daycare function for St. Mark and our community, given the cost to maintain & upgrade the facility and curriculum.

- The additional space in the CDC could be rented out
- AA could find a home here
- A Youth program could use our facilities.
- After school tutoring
- Exercise classes
- Shower ministry
- Hosting Family Promise
- Ministry for the Homeless along with other churches in the community
Need an organization to support these ideas as well as maintenance and finances
- Grief share and divorce care
- “I doubt the gym was built to only be the contemporary worship area”. Our gym should also be used for promoting the health of our congregation: physical activities, sporting events in our communities, Saturday and Sunday free gym time, leagues (basketball, pickleball, volleyball, corn hole, etc). The gym space is limited by the worship stage that is very cumbersome to move and by the need to set up chairs for worship. Possible gym usage could be: after school tutoring sessions, teaching high school kids how to manage a checkbook and count change, lifestyle teaching sessions (cooking, sewing, crafting, job search with resume and filling out applications, etc).
- The CDC was discussed if this is a ministry in line with our mission or is this a place of employment? Since the CDC is a community wide testament of what is happening at St. Mark we feel the program, staff and their reputation should be of the very best quality we can have at St. Mark. It was thought the CDC would bring young, unchurched families to our church but that has not seemed to be the case. We question if we have daily staff involvement or church volunteers “popping in” to observe the activities. A question was raised if CDC children were invited to all activities of the children’s program? Could we send reminders home with the children on a regular basis?
- Some specific opportunities given for the facility use were: “Feed My Sheep” (meal provided for community), “Clothe My Sheep” (free clothing offered).
- It would be great to get the SMURF team back to help others in need. We have elderly and others within our congregation that could use SMURF help.

- We are also aware that there are many agencies in the community that we support. We could share information so our congregation could reach out to them to volunteer.
- Volume of people, up-down- the same- overtime. A "full house" for worship activities caused parking problems in neighborhood(partly solved). Campus building usage- multiple worship services. Use, other than Sunday (possibly Girl Scouts troops). CDC families more involved in St Mark worship and programs.
- Liability insurance requirements for outside groups who use our facilities could affect ability to let outside groups use facilities. This is a Conference Requirement but it discourages outside use
- There was a fear that we may not have enough folks to use the tremendous facilities we have
- Youth center sits unused 90% of the time, start a Coffee House with opportunity for local musicians to perform
- Why not have more basketball in the gym – like Cops on the Court?
- Need to revive youth ministry
- Celebrate service offers potential to attract new folks but the opposite is happening averaging about 30-45/Sunday
- Now have an online congregation we need to support and nurture
 - Many are watching recorded versions on their own schedule
 - Online worship should only be used by people that absolutely cannot get to church they're older they're out of town whatever. I believe that part of being a Christian is God wants us in his house singing praises and worshipping him not just watching some thing at our convenience.
- We were informed about the grounds care being bid out and the CDC needs (windows).
- We have a lot of space. Is it used appropriately during the week? Could it be used more for community outreach?
- Are we managing and utilizing our technology properly?
- Wish our church building could be more open and inviting.
- **There are some things that are out of control due to COVID related conference restrictions but people should use our building. Upkeep of a building that size is not cheap so it might as well be used, like opening up the showers to people who need showers because they are not being used much now. What is more important to us - the number of people who we are outreaching to or the number of people in the pews?**

- Revisit the reason the gym was added as an addition to the church. Is it being used for that purpose today?
- Our building is under-utilized by the community. But it is hard to plan until we are confident the pandemic is over.
- Property and facilities should be used to benefit not only the congregation, but the community at large, as well.

Ministry Support Plan (finances):

- We need to spend more money on real ministry and not just facility and administrative support.
- Spending money on technology has been important for outreach and worship ministry.
- Would like to see us create a “new ministry fund” in the budget to support new opportunities/ministries (like we did with livestream, tornado recovery).
- More money needs to be allocated in the budget to support service/missions.
- Why does our church not trust leadership and management of budget so that they will pledge to support ministry instead of giving to individual causes?
- We are hopeful that the Stewardship campaign will reach their goal and generate additional revenue for outreach ministries and other priority programs. Obviously, when the leadership team defines the ReShape “stop, start, continue” initiatives & programs, we will have the opportunity to also “reshape” our financial plan.
- The budget for more outreach opportunities needs to be in place to support the ministries. The support for our ministries is the budget. Might need to have a Ministry Support budget separate from the Church budget.
- Our budget should support our mission focus, “making disciples for Jesus Christ”. During this time of pledging we must focus on new missions and those that may need financial support. With the mortgage paid off we need strong consideration on how this money can promote our missions.
- We are not asking for lots of money for things we would like to reshape.
- We should be seeing more funds toward connecting and caring for our congregation as well as mission in ministry.
- Increasing mission budget supported unanimously.
- Pleased that much more put in the budget this year for ministry, concerted effort over last two years to cut the staff
- Luckily, we are strong in that regard.
- **The assumption that church staff will do everything leads people to think that they can treat the church staff poorly and even like a**

scapegoat. Going along with that, we assume that the staff can do everything while also downsizing the staff both in terms of people and hours. So is that setting the church up to flourish?

- With the mortgage paid in full, emphasis should be placed on supporting and promoting our missions and possibly expanding our missions.
- Remove "missional items" from the category of "if we end up with enough money." Make them prominent and compelling opportunities for enabling our ministry priorities. Don't apologize for occasional "special appeals" for funding. Lots of folks will respond to needs that deserve their support. Very few get excited about fully underwriting a "budget."
- The church budget should place missions and ministry first, not last, in priority.

Additional Observations by Small Group Leader:

- Great group dynamic. Initial responses to the assignment were confusion and misunderstanding, but as we worked through the questions more clarity was achieved.
- An update was given about the charge conference and I did share some of the words from the District Superintendent about general conference. Timing of the conference is not firmly set for next year as hoped since Covid restrictions for travel may impact those coming from foreign countries. Virtual conference is not an option due to time zones and language interpretation needed. Our DS stressed that the church would not be forced to make a decision immediately after the vote and that the church would be allowed time to discern the vote and its implications before making any decisions.
- A comment made after this information was reported completely hit home to me. A member of our group said that Jesus did not let the looming knowledge of His crucifixion deter Him from witnessing, healing and making disciples. We in turn should not let the knowledge of an upcoming vote determine our goals for the work here at St. Mark
- Our group very much wants the response from our pastors regarding General Conference. They understand it is all up for possible change but feel that communication from Todd and Shawna not only gives transparency but provides comfort during this transition time.
- The group acknowledges the monumental work ReShape is presenting to the Coordination team but are very eager to get some feedback very soon. A lag in getting even something back can keep us going forward. So what if the

holidays may make it difficult-we are used to holidays and they are going to happen but let's not lose this momentum. I am encouraged each week by the participation of this group and can't wait for us to get our hands dirty.

- Since it seems 150 people are wanting to be a part of this, why couldn't we take these people and use as a starting point to have small group home dinners, for example, to try and connect with each other.
- Hearing each other has heightened our awareness that we are not alone feeling things that needed to be spoken.
- We hope that feedback is not delayed, and ideas go to people who will get excited and energized to move forward.
- Please keep the congregation informed to the progress of General Conference. There is much uncertainty for the future.
- Some overall words that were expressed: uncertainty, complacent, stagnant, divided, on hold, fear, reconnect, take care of our own.
- This is a wonderful group of church members who are disciples excited to move forward with great opportunities for Saint Mark. It is a pleasure to be a part of this group.
- Another insightful session with some wonderful church members. Strong passion to get moving along. They have worked hard and contributed much. It was a joy to be with them. They are very eagerly awaiting and expecting to receive the plan our leadership team will soon present to the congregation.
- Our group is always prepared and complimentary of St. Mark's current stance in the community, but feel so much more can be done to utilize our facilities. The group understands there is a need for Trustees to charge for use of electricity and usage but it discourages groups who can go to other churches that don't charge and consider it an outreach and not an opportunity to gain a little on the budget.
- The group also understands the need to have liability insurance per the Conference and not the church for groups that are not sponsored by the church ie Newcomers, Young Voices of the Foothills, there have been other groups but no others were noted since pandemic. It is important to have liability but is there a way that the Trustees could offer a fee that would incorporate usage charge and liability to encourage outside use of the church that mostly stands empty during the week.
- The group remains very engaged and involved with the discussion and idea sharing. They are taking the idea of their having input into the decision-making very seriously.
- Christ's church can only serve if it reaches out to those close by, and addresses their needs.

Small Group Leader Needs or Questions:

As our time draws to a close the members in this group have consistently mentioned that we realize the task at hand but look forward in the near future to the outcome efforts of ReShape.

Date and Time of Next Small Group Session: