

Strategic Priorities Progress Report – March 3, 2023

Introduction

This is the first progress report on strategic priorities; a five-year plan. Three questions have been, and will continue to be, important for this stage of our implementation.

1. What is a sustainable pace?

The implementation of these strategic priorities is a marathon, not a sprint. We have been aware of the need to make a good start, but not to set a pace that is unsustainable.

2. Who can be involved?

More specifically, how can we include people in our community of faith in this work? The implementation of these priorities cannot sit primarily with the staff. This is, however, more than work-load management but a matter of Belonging. We want to help people find their place in God's mission here; to express their commitment to what God is doing and to deepen their sense of belonging. The next steps for many of our initial projects are increasing the number of people who are involved.

3. Where will the change be felt?

Implementing these strategic priorities will bring changes; some of which will be significant. We want to manage these changes as well as we can and this involves identifying where the changes will be felt by our community of faith. What values will be challenged? What will be lost (even as we seek to gain a new future)?

The following report outlines the actions taken and the next steps we want to take to advance these projects. This is a 30,000 foot overview of progress to date.

Spiritual Journey

1. Simple, accessible, relational pathways that everyone can follow Jesus.

a. Identify discipleship 'gaps'.

Action taken: A congregational survey was released (3-10 March) asking some initial questions of discovery.

Next step: Assess the survey and identify follow up steps (e.g., focus groups, working committees).

b. Develop a plan to strengthen the five discipleship contexts (God and you, you and few, you and a crew, etc.).

Next step: Audit each in the life of GBC, determine language to be used. Recruit to Life Group ministries (committee members, leaders, participants).

2. Establishing practices that embody our vision, mission, and purpose.

a. Develop and pilot 2-3 ways that encourage "talking" about Jesus.

Next step: Identify the parameters of the pilot programs we might develop.

b. Identify a set of 2-3 spiritual practices that best support our vision, mission, and purpose.



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Action taken: This was a question on the congregational survey. A short-list of eight were provided.

Next step: Begin to expand the identified spiritual practices into potential activities and work out a “schedule” of implementation.

3. Living openly as followers of Jesus; open to the Holy Spirit and to others.
 - a. Incorporate teaching on the Holy Spirit’s role in our lives as followers of Jesus in our community of faith.

Action Taken: Sermon series planned for May, questions to be determined, in part, from answers to the congregational survey.

Next step: Plan the sermon series and identify additional resources required (e.g., Life Group material, recommended books).

- b. Develop spaces for appropriate vulnerability about matters of faith.

Action Taken: Volunteer training in questions that get beyond the surface. Introduction of “stand and greet” in our Sunday morning services.

Next Step: To be determined.

Community Engagement

1. Increasing and expanding the points of entry into our community of faith.

- a. Continue to invest in and strengthen our Guest Services Team.

Action taken: Upgrade of our NBN service (to assist in check-in process) is in progress.

Next step: Recruit to the Guest Services Team. Assess if NBN upgrade is sufficient or whether we need further hardware upgrades at check-in.

- b. Complete an assessment of our ‘signage’ – internal, external, and digital as it pertains to welcoming.

Action taken: An assessment has been completed. Consultation has been undertaken about what can be done.

Next step: Prioritise the necessary “signage” changes.

2. Building bridges with our local community

- a. Develop a set of resources to help everyone identify where God is at work in their own contexts and take steps to participate with his work.

Next steps: Work with Reventure on faith-work integration design.

- b. Identify 2-3 ways in which we can strengthen our partnership with Hopefield.

Action taken: Rox has joined the Hopefield vision day and has begun discussions with their community hub coordinator.



Next steps: To identify small, specific ways people from GBC can be involved in Hopefield initiatives.

3. Equipping everyone to invite others to follow Jesus, in word and deed.
 - a. Identify 2-3 gaps in our evangelism training and prioritise our response.

Next steps: To be determined.

- b. Identify 1-2 additional non-proselytising ministries we can be involved in.

Next steps: To be determined.

Belonging

1. Developing and resourcing support networks for life-transition
 - a. Research how other faith communities are helping children, youth, and young adults navigate the journey of faith and recommend 2-3 actions we can take.

Action taken: A Faith-Transition Working Group has been recruited to begin this process.

Next steps: To be determined by the recommendation of the working group.

- b. Identify additional transition points that would benefit from additional support and prioritise 1-2 to develop.

Action taken: The first step will be a small part of the Faith-Transition Working Group.

Next steps: To be determined.

2. Clearing the pathways to belonging in our community of faith.
 - a. Clarify expectations of members.

Actions taken: An updated constitution is currently receiving legal advice. This includes a change to membership “terms” with provision to regularly renew the commitment to membership.

Next steps: To be determined after the updated constitution is accepted.

- b. Revise Pathways and clarify the next steps.

Actions taken: Pathways has been revised and a GBC Handbook has been drafted.

Next steps: Complete the GBC Handbook and run a full Pathways course (in June).

3. Continuing to strengthen our care teams and structures.

Next steps: To be determined.

Develop a comprehensive care strategy and prioritise the next steps of development.

Next steps: Appoint a working group to begin working on this project.



Resources

Restructure staff responsibilities: No progress.

Identify volunteer opportunities: No progress. Next steps: To develop a way to “audit” the assets (e.g., gifts, skills, experiences, passions, and availability) of our community of faith.

Develop a set of health indicators and metrics for these strategic priorities: No progress.

Outline a plan for leadership development: No progress

Address culture: The Leadership Culture Review Report has been received by the CLT. A sub-set of the recommendations have been adopted as places to begin. The report has been released separately.

Assess communication strategies: This was part of the “signage” assessment, but more needs to be done.

Begin exploring necessary work to upgrade our facility: No progress.

Finalise our constitution: In progress.

Next Steps

We will be seeking the involvement of our community of faith in the following areas:

1. Guest Services

We are looking for people who are passionate about welcoming to part of the team and for people who are interested in joining the leadership of this critical ministry.

2. Life Groups

We are looking for people who would be willing and able to lead a Life Group and for people to join Matt Willis and Nicole Jones who oversee this ministry.

3. Congregational Care

We are looking for people to be part of a small working group tasked with outlining a comprehensive care strategy (including researching what other faith communities are doing in this space) and making recommendations about how this might be implemented at GBC.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of these opportunities, you can contact Marjy Robertson marjy.robertson@gymeabaptist.org.au – our Serve Team leader – or one of the pastoral team.