



# YOUTH MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

## *7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry* *Centenary United Methodist Church/Central Presbyterian Church* *Terre Haute, IN*

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### **BACKGROUND**

7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry is a partnership between Central Presbyterian Church and Centenary United Methodist Church. Both churches are on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and thus the name: 7<sup>th</sup> Cents. They are also located on the campus of Indiana State University in downtown Terre Haute.

7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Group currently meets every Sunday. The first Sunday of the month, they meet right after worship, so the group can go serve somewhere out in the local community. On the remaining Sundays of the month, they meet on Sunday evenings at 6pm. One month they meet at CPC and then meet at CUMC on the opposite month.

Central Presbyterian has approximately 280 members with a weekly worship attendance of 150. Rev. Lant Davis is the pastor. Centenary UMC has 203 on their rolls with 130 in worship and Rev. Paul Wagner is serving as pastor. There are 36 youth on the rolls from 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade between the two churches. In any given week and counting them only once, there is an average of 19 youth participating in one of the churches' programs between the youth group (7<sup>th</sup> Cents), Sunday school and Sunday worship. The makeup of attendance at 7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Group between the two churches is 3 youth from CPC and 7 from CUMC.

CPC's annual budget is \$296,538 and CUMC's is \$290,700. The total budget for the youth ministry, shared equally by both churches, is \$10,000 for salary and resources.

The church is very blessed to have a much-loved youth director, Amanda Tramel. She has served since January of 2011 and is hired for 10 hours a week. She is also studying education at ISU and in her junior year. (The only other paid



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youth worker for the joint youth ministry was on staff from Feb. 2009 through August 2010 in a time that was described as “rocky.”) There are about 6 adults who volunteer on a weekly basis between the Sunday school classes at each church and the Sunday night youth ministry.

7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry has been participating in a year-long youth ministry training programming through the Center for Congregations in Evansville, IN. Both pastors, plus Amanda, Cheryl Moles (from CPC) and Phyllis Peters (from CUMC) have regularly participated in the training events and offsite coaching. It was through that connection, with the lead consultant already serving as coach since January of 2011, that YMA was invited in by both pastors to conduct a two-day assessment of the youth ministry. YMA met with 8 listening groups or one-on-one meetings for a total of 38 people, including 6 youth.

Words used to describe both churches: loving, caring, accepting, old, and friendly. Words to describe the youth ministry: consistent, growing, transitioning, needing a vision, fun.

## **YOUTH MINISTRY IN CONTEXT**

One lens YMA uses for understanding youth ministry is the idea of the “three rents.” Youth ministries that “pay these rents” tend to have much greater freedom to be creative, take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas.

It has been YMA’s experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by youth, parents, staff and the congregation at large. Those ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing and discouragement.

**Rent #1: NUMBERS**—A significant percentage of youth need to be participating visibly in some aspect of each church’s ministry. It is important for a target number to be clearly agreed on by both leadership committees. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the youth ministry is typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established. The youth ministry programs at both churches are a little “past due” on this rent.

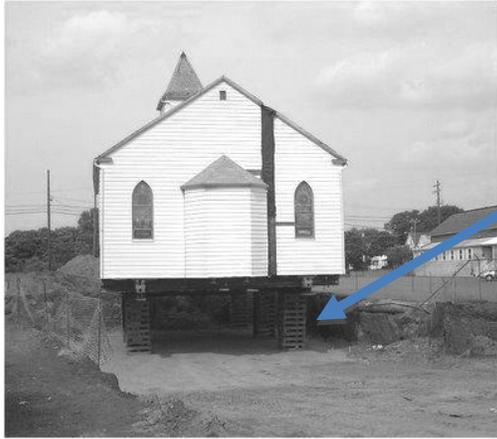
**Rent #2: PROGRAMS**—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, the church staff and volunteer leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective youth programs that give both students and parents “something to talk about.” This is a rent that is “paid well in advance” with much publicized, exciting events happening for the youth on a regular basis.



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**Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM**—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the youth, staff, parents and volunteers are essential to moving forward into a new era of youth ministry. This is a rent that is not only “up-to-date” but “next month’s rent has been paid, too!” The enthusiasm and willingness to do what it takes will move these ministries forward to all that God has intended them to be.

As the leadership of the youth ministry develops its long-range vision, it will need at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the youth ministry faces parallel challenges:



1) Laying the Foundation: Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the student ministry’s *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,

2) Continuing to Worship on Stilts: Maintaining the *current* student ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of students and their families.

This year and next, CPC/CUMC has the opportunity to do both: successfully revamp its current youth ministry and create a long-term infrastructure for sustaining an effective youth ministry that allows both staff and volunteers to thrive. As the youth ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, four rules of thumb – or what we call “Youth Ministry Norms” – will be helpful to keep in mind:

- 1. 10% of the Worshiping Congregation**—In a typical church, the number of youth participating weekly in the life of the church tends to settle at a number that is around 10% of the worshiping congregation. The combined average worship of both churches is 280, so a healthy measurement of weekly attendance would be to see about 28 youth involved in some aspect of the life of both churches.
- 2. 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 50 Youth**—According to this rule of thumb, CPC/CUMC is poised to serve about 12 youth on a weekly basis. With 19 youth participating on a weekly basis and 36 on the rolls, without additional investment in staffing in its future, CPC/CUMC is not likely to grow beyond the current number of youth its currently reaching.



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3. **1 Adult for Every 5 Youth**— YMA likes to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian nurture of more than about five students on an ongoing basis. With 6 volunteers serving on a weekly basis in face-to-face ministry, the youth ministry outreach is prepared to serve the needs of at least 30 youth. Bring it on!
4. **\$1,000 for Each Youth**—According to this guideline, the budget for effective outreach to the youth of both churches should be around \$19,000. With the current budget set at \$10,000, CPC/CUMC is significantly under-budgeted and is not poised for any increased outreach to the youth in either church nor in the community. It can come across as a negative expression of the churches’ commitment to its ministry and will need to be addressed should CPC/CUMC seek to expand beyond its current scope.

#### **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH MINISTRY STAFF:**

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. It has proved that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a re-design, is to build a leadership team of three different kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan. This usually takes the form of the Design Team or some form of a youth committee.
- **The Construction Foreman:** A person who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project. Amanda serves as the construction foreman in this case.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In youth ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to youth, or particular skills in planning and managing events, or a gift for teaching. The volunteer leaders such as the Sunday school leaders and Sunday night folks meet this need.

Many churches hire a staff person who may have gifts in a single area--for example: very relational with kids or someone who’s great at managing a facility. But no one can find someone who can “do it all;” some don’t possess the



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experience base or the skill set to oversee the complex components of a ministry. The result in these situations can be unrealistic expectations of the staff especially where infrastructure has not been established. This dynamic eventually leads to burn out and turnover.

## **ASSETS**

***Positive strengths of the ministry to protect and maximize.***

### **The Shared Youth Ministry Program is Alive and Well.**

Each listening group was asked to share thoughts on the plusses and downside of the shared youth group experience. No one could name any negatives, other than occasionally forgetting which church the group was meeting at! Parents, volunteers, youth and church members alike had nothing but positive comments to make. Let their comments speak for themselves:

“We’ve finally reached a critical mass!”

“I like the broader perspective my child is getting.”

“They really have bonded and enjoy each other.”

“I’m really enjoying meeting other people from the other church.”

“We loved the youth talent show. It was well-attended!”

“I’m glad to have met other parents I wouldn’t have known otherwise.”

“Our kids are finally excited to come!”

“If we forget which church we’re meeting at, it’s an easy trip down the block.”

“I like the financial benefit of sharing the cost.”

The two churches have been very effective in meshing the two ministries into one healthy system. The two pastors communicate clearly with each other regarding the ministry, both churches are welcoming to the other, Amanda worships regularly at both churches, and the students have become one group. One parent said, “I don’t even think they even remember who’s from what church anymore.”

### **The Youth Director!**

Each group was asked, “If you could tell Amanda one thing, what would that be?” Here are several of the many positive comments expressed:

“We don’t want to lose her!”

“Last summer’s mission trip was life-changing.”

“Thank you, Amanda.” (Repeated by many participants)

“She is doing a great job and we are very happy with her work.”

“She has really grown in her job over the past 10 months.”

“She is non-judgmental and accepts kids for what they are.”



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“She works way more than 10 hours a week.”  
“We love her.”

In addition, Amanda was commended for doing a very good job at effectively communicating to the church and its youth families. One parent shared, “Even though my children aren’t old enough to attend yet, I always knows what’s happening.” Another parent said, “We receive youth news in announcements, newsletters, emails, youth newsletters, website, facebook and so on. Any parent that says they’re not communicated with just isn’t looking.”

Another area that is to be commended is the administrative foundation which is present in the youth group ministry. There is a long-term youth calendar, a youth directory, current email addresses, a Facebook page, website visibility, attendance and awareness of who is participating and when, etc. These are all earmarks of a successful youth worker and is a refreshing change for what is normally found in many youth ministry assessments!

### **“We’re in this for the Long Haul!”**

CPC/CUMC is dedicated to making the youth ministry work for a long-term, sustainable future. Participants shared that it’s taken awhile to come to this point, where consistency and growth is happening in the youth program. Both churches carry the tone of wanting continued success to happen. This is evidenced by several things:

- 1) Faithful participation in the Center for Congregations training.
- 2) Bringing in YMA to be a part of the youth ministry “renovation” process.
- 3) Good turnout at the listening groups.
- 4) The willingness to share!

All these represent great steps in the movement towards a sustainable youth ministry and clearly communicates to families that the churches want to move towards clarifying their youth ministry direction, creating a deeper, sustainable model for the future.

### **Clarity of Need**

It is a plus that the leaders of the youth ministry realize that although great strides have been made, the youth ministry is not all it should be. This is a good thing! This desire to make the youth ministry outreach all that it can be was seen in the broad-based type of church members who came to participate in the listening groups. There was an equal representation from both churches. Well done, faithful servants!



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## **CHALLENGES**

### ***Obstacles to Moving the Youth Ministry Strategically Forward***

#### **Where There is No Vision, the Youth Perish**

Some of the muckiness around other challenges named in this report stem from a lack of clear vision. The current staff members, volunteers, parents, and youth are passionate about the youth ministry; they want to see marvelous things happen, and they are willing to work sacrificially. But an overwhelming majority seemed unable to articulate a clear picture of what the youth ministry would look like if it were sustainable and forward moving. Even Amanda herself expressed the strong desire for knowing where both churches want the youth ministry to go in the future now that the basics have been put into place.

When a ministry lacks a succinctly stated vision, anxiousness is often the result. Until this picture is broadly developed, agreed on, and pursued, the future of the youth ministry at CPC/CUMC will remain right where it's at now. Without an attainable and measurable target, all involved will become frustrated about what actually is expected of them and what they expect in return. Burnout will eventually happen with the youth director and the regular volunteers.

When a youth ministry is missing an easily repeatable vision with widespread familiarity, the ministry begins to turn inward, larger problems arise and repeating losses occur...and the ministry perishes. To use an architecture metaphor: you can't build a building if you don't have a blueprint.

#### **Where's the Discipleship Path and Who is Guarding the Gate?**

Though there are a few programs doing great work at speaking God's Word into the lives of the youth at CPC/CUMC, a clear cut spiritual overview is missing. Without an over-arching Discipleship Plan for what both churches want their youth to "know-feel-do" with their Christian faith upon graduating from the ministry as seniors, it runs the great risk of a "hit or miss" approach to giving its children all that God intends for them to have. Without a clearly expressed, well-known set of spiritual developmental milestones and how/when the youth will reach those markers, the possibility strongly exists that the students could miss the meaning of key points within their Christian education.

Another risk of working without a scope and sequence net is that it can leave volunteers with the responsibility of choosing their own version of what they think the youth should know. While this works sometimes, often it leads to fuzzy spiritual planning. At worst, it can lead youth down a spiritual path the church was not prepared for its students to go. Working without a defined spiritual theme plan between the two Sunday schools and youth on Sunday night leaves the risk of



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missed opportunity for spiritual growth, repeated topics or missed educational opportunities for the parents and the youth group. When parents were asked what their kids were studying, no one knew the answer other than parents that were present who teach Sunday school.

### **Where Have All the Senior High Youth Gone?**

Several parents with senior high youth said that, although they are delighted with what's happening, the current youth group age/grade makeup doesn't meet the need of their child. Since the group is in a re-birth stage, it is made up of largely middle school youth. One parent said, "My daughter has serious decisions to make and big stuff happening in her life. Her needs are not the same as a middle schooler." Another comment was, "What high school youth need to talk about and what middle school youth talk about are two different things."

Although some parts of the country can effectively deal with all youth ages mixed together all the time, the collegiate culture of the Terre Haute area does not seem to lend itself well to all youth events being always both ages. Until the youth ministry figures out a way to offer some way to meet the particular needs of the senior high youth, they will continue to exit the program. With the large upcoming middle school from CUMC about to graduate into high school age and an even larger elementary age group from CPC pushing forward behind that, it is imperative that CPC/CUMC develop a strategic plan for the future in this regard.

### **Volunteer Development**

Several adults expressed the thought that Amanda is SO sweet and kind, she is often afraid to ask for help and is apologetic when she does. A few adults said things like:

"I'd like Amanda to know she doesn't have to apologize to ask for help."

"We want to help. Just ask us."

"There are people waiting to volunteer. Put us to work."

There is currently no clear volunteer development plan in place, which is to be expected with a brand new ministry and leader. However, if a game plan isn't put into place for 2012, volunteers will stop wanting to step up, an opportunity for buy-in will be missed and the program will suffer.



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## **Terminal Uniqueness**

Some adults and parents in the listening groups suffered from a perception disorder YMA calls “terminal uniqueness” found in Mark DeVries’ book, Sustainable Youth Ministry. These parents tend to focus intensely on the “unique” challenging factors facing this youth ministry:

- Our kids are busy with soccer, football, baseball, dance, cheerleading, jobs, homework, lacrosse, quilting, scrapbooking, horseshoes, balloon animal making, halo, waffle ball....you get the idea.
- Our family is busy; we have lives!
- Our kids go to different/same/Christian/private/home schools.
- We don’t have enough money, volunteers, space, time, gas, Kool-Aid, iPads...(fill-in-blank).
- We’re not the big youth program in the town.

The fact is that none of these challenges or comparisons are even remotely unique to this church. Since the majority of these factors are present in almost every successful youth ministry in America, the churches can make the decision to keep their thinking about the youth ministry off the dead-end streets of explaining away why some youth don’t participate.

## **The Youth Ministry Meeting Spaces**

The conversation about youth space touched upon a slightly sore spot. There is currently no dedicated space for youth at CPC. In fact, the senior high youth Sunday school class is meeting in an office. One student shared this sentiment: “It makes us feel like we don’t matter. It isn’t just me; I know this is the feeling of several of the senior high youth.” When the 7<sup>th</sup> Cents youth meet at the CPC, they meet in the Fellowship Hall, which Amanda says is adequate, but leaves no ability for any permanency.

At the same time, while there IS a dedicated space at CUMC, it is in serious need of a “divine re-design.” Its current state gives off the air of “cast-off.” Contrary to a popular myth that youth like garish colors and old furniture, successful youth programs have found that an attractively decorated space is not only desirable, it lends itself to helping retain that illusive senior high age youth. There is a reason that Starbucks and Panera’s are so successful at having created relationship-building spaces and the youth room at CUMC might be able to learn a lesson from that example.



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## Recommendations

- 1) Reframe the next 15 months as a time of direction-setting and infrastructure building for the youth ministry. Target January 2013 as the date for a sustainable structure for this ministry.
- 2) Present this report to the Session and Administrative Council, requesting they approve the 15-month strategic renovation process outlined in this document.
- 3) Establish a Youth Ministry Design Team appointed by Pastors Lant and Paul, made up of 5 stakeholders in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cents youth ministry.
- 4) Charge the Youth Ministry Design Team with responsibility to meet at least monthly and to report at least quarterly to church leadership regarding the team's two overarching responsibilities:
  - I. **Immediate Pressure Points:** Work with the Youth Ministry leadership to address the immediate pressure points facing this ministry as they transition toward sustainability.
  - II. **Long-Term Infrastructure:** Establish a consensus and vision for the direction of the Youth Ministry and oversee the development of a long-term infrastructure.

### Renovation Team Task #1: Immediate Pressure Points

*(to be accomplished before any major changes in the Youth Ministry.)*

**Pressure Point 1: Schedule a Youth Ministry Vision Event to be held in the New Year** to make sure that the youth ministry begins to move in the right direction, not just any direction, or worse – no direction. Complete a two or three day visioning event open to any interested stake holders in the youth ministry. The results from this event would be a youth ministry mission statement, a statement of clearly defined youth ministry values (the attitude at which the ministry goes about its outreach), three-year revolving goals, one year benchmarks, next steps towards goals and a youth ministry organizational chart. This would bring about putting the church leaders and families on the same page and create a sense of unified direction. “A GPS/ Mapquest instead of just sputtering down the road.”

**Pressure Point 2: Appoint a Prayer Team to undergird this process.** This is no lightly suggested pressure point. Put together a team of people from all age-levels within the church to be committed to prayer over each step of this “re-design.” They will be charged with asking God for vision, clarity, wisdom and



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sense of purpose for each person hands-on in the design process throughout the program, whether established or new.

**Pressure Point 3: Continued Coaching/Mentoring for Amanda.** While Amanda is doing a wonderful job, with wisdom beyond her years, she is also young and inexperienced. For her and the youth ministry to continue forward movement towards sustainability, it will be important for her to receive coaching/mentoring from a youth ministry veteran. She is surrounded by many educational experts but help in navigating the tricky waters of church staff youth ministry is what would be the most beneficial to Amanda, the youth and the churches.

## Task #2: Long-Term Infrastructure:

Some of these recommendations are already in place, but are a good reminder for yearly review.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND STABILITY

- **Control Document Development:**
  - Develop and print an up-to-date youth directory, containing all the information necessary to maintain contact with all CPC/CUMC youth on the church rolls and additional regular visitors.
  - Develop and print an up-to-date parents/volunteer directory that contains names and contact information of all parents and volunteers serving in the youth ministry. This could be combined with the youth directory.
  - Create a calendar of major youth ministry events at CPC/CUMC through December of 2012 and make sure that information is available on the churches websites.
- **Attendance:** Develop an easily reportable process for tracking attendance at all weekly youth programs. Make sure visitor registration and follow-up is well-laid out.
- **Contacts:** Develop a schedule of contacting every family with youth in both churches, either by phone or face to face.
- **Compliance Documents:** Ensure that copyright licensing for music and videos has been obtained, screening processes and background check processes are in place for every weekly volunteer and every trip volunteer. Ensure that a written sexual abuse/child protection policy is adopted and



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affirmed in writing by all adults working in a hands-on way with the children/youth of the church.

- **Marketing:**
  - Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, youth, leaders and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the youth ministry.
  - Develop processes for communicating about upcoming events and weekly programs that allows participation targets to be regularly reached in the youth ministry.
  - Select normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, children, youth and volunteers, considering as many forms of communication as possible including updating church's website, church newsletter, bulletin, Facebook, Twitter, mass texting, phone tree, bulletin boards, etc.
- **Youth Ministry Manual:** Develop a 7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry Manual, including the most recent directory, an 18-Month Calendar, volunteer and staff job descriptions, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar and notes for every major ministry event.

## NURTURING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- **Strategic Staffing:** In partnership with the Personnel/Staff-Parish committees, propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan for the youth ministry which will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of youth.
- **Role Clarity:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the youth ministry.
- **Volunteer Development:** Establish the norm or ongoing, quarterly training of all volunteers, equipping them with necessary tools for success (e.g., copies of Group magazine, training events and an up-to-date youth ministry library).
- **Leadership Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team for 2011-2012, some of whom will do relational ministry while others work behind the scenes. Create a "fishing pond" list of at least 20 potential volunteers.
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all youth volunteers at the beginning of the school year.



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- **Student Leadership:** Develop a clear game plan for empowering students to serve in more significant ways in the youth ministry, to be launched by the fall of 2012.

## STRATEGIES AND NEW INITIATIVES

- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new youth and friend visitors to the church, so that they feel warmly welcomed at both CPC and CUMC. Develop a timely follow up plan to maximize the chances of their return to the programs.
- **Friendship Epidemic:** As the program continues its design, leverage any willing key student leaders to be a part of crafting an even more open and welcoming group. Equip them to develop a “friendship epidemic.” Train and support them as they create a climate of hospitality and friendship for new people coming into the youth ministry, one that is effectively focused beyond comfortable friendship clusters and reaches outside the CPC/CUMC youth community.
- **Missions:** Establish a focused calendar for involvement in local, national, and international missions. Evaluate the youth ministry’s current mission projects and trips, and create a plan for promoting and exposing the congregation to youth missions throughout the year.
- **Senior High Engagement:** Create a written process for engaging the majority of senior high youth in some way in the ministry in the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, plan an appropriate amount of outreach events designed to meet the need of the senior high youth according to what current staffing time allotted allows.
- **Measurable Markers of Effectiveness:** Determine reasonable participation goals for all major student ministry events and weekly programs beginning with January 2012 and take responsibility for achieving those targets.
- **Increasing the Church’s Reach:** Develop a clear game plan for deliberately increasing the number of families participating in the life of each church, with a particular focus on reaching out to families who are not currently involved.
- **Discipleship Path Plan Development:** Put together an event that brings all youth ministry interested parties together to determine the churches’ “know-feel-do” core competencies for spiritual growth. The event should produce:
  - 7 year scope and sequence
  - Spiritual purpose statement for each youth ministry program
  - a curriculum comparison chart



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- a yearly calendar of topics for Sunday school and youth programming
- a “Rites of Passage” plan including confirmation, grade transitions (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> and HS grads into college)



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## Proposed Timeline

The following timeline provides 7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry with a blueprint for the strategic launch of a sustainable, long-term youth ministry.

### **October/November 2011—Focus: Establish Renovation Process**

#### Outcomes:

- A Prayer Team is launched to strategically bathe the renovation process in prayer over the next 15 months.
- A 5-person Design Team has been recruited by Pastor Lant and Pastor Paul. The prayer team has met once.
- The Design Team has communicated and presented this process to the entirety of both churches and has begun to address the pressure points.
- Dates for the Visioning Retreat are coordinated and placed on the calendar for early 2012.
- Members of the Design Team have begun to recruit other members to serve on a specific task force to address their assigned pressure point.
- Amanda finishes up coaching process through the Center for Congregations program.

### **December 2011—Focus: Shore up the New Year**

#### Outcomes:

- Compliance documents have been checked and verified for accuracy and timeliness.
- A Volunteer Training Event has been calendared for the spring of '12.
- Volunteer needs have been addressed through the summer.
- Summer trip/event plans are finalized.
- A master list of necessary adult leader roles has been developed, along with electronic job descriptions for those positions for all of '12.
- A calendar of youth ministry events and programming has been completed and communicated through December of 2012.
- Members of the DT have recruited all members to serve on their specific task force and have met at least once.



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## **January 2012—Focus: Volunteer Development**

### Outcomes:

- A Volunteer Training Event is confirmed, a trainer/workshop leader recruited, and the date and time communicated to all potential volunteers.
- Volunteer needs have been established for the remainder of the year and a master list of necessary adult leader roles has been developed, along with electronic job descriptions for those positions.
- Work on control documents continues (meetings and special events calendar, youth directory and leader directory, volunteer job descriptions).
- A “Youth Space Divine Design” team has been recruited and charged with determining a budget-sensitive, practical plan to renovate the youth room at CUMC, and explore space needs at CPC.
- The dates of the Youth Ministry Visioning Retreat are advertised and people are personally invited.
- Summer trip/events info has begun to be advertised. Fundraisers are scheduled and communicated.
- Amanda begins to receive coaching from a veteran youth worker or YMA.

## **February 2012—Focus: Recruiting Season Opens!**

### Outcomes:

- Youth Ministry Visioning Retreat plans continue.
- The “Divine Design” team has reported their ideas and findings to the Youth Ministry Design Team. Plans are made to receive approval for moving ahead with plans.
- All volunteers for the remainder of the entire year are being recruited.
- Volunteer needs are effectively marketed throughout the church and a recruitment process implemented.
- Background checks have been completed on all volunteers that will be working with youth in any capacity throughout the year.
- Amanda continues to receive coaching.

## **March 2012-Focus: Plan the Work to Work the Plan**

### Outcomes:

- A Visioning Retreat has been held and a mission statement, core values, three year revolving goals, one year benchmarks, next steps, org chart, etc., have been created, established and presented to the Session/Board for consideration.
- The Prayer Team continues to bathe the process in prayer.



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- The Volunteer Training Event has been held and each volunteer is further equipped to embrace their particular leadership role.
- The Design Team begins to work on all documents needs for the Youth Ministry Manual.
- Signups have opened for summer trip and deposits taken. Fundraisers have begun.
- Amanda continues to receive monthly coaching.

### **April 2012—Focus: Moving Forward**

#### Outcomes:

- The DT has met with volunteers to evaluate current work load and determine that all volunteers are “in the right seat on the bus.”
- A calendar of special events and fund raisers has been established for January- April 2013.
- Rites of Passage have been reviewed and revamped for 2012/2013 school year.
- Plans for addressing the youth spaces are almost complete.
- All summer trip and event details are completed.
- A long-term game plan for meeting the needs of the Senior High youth in the fall has begun to be developed.
- Amanda continues to receive coaching.

### **May 2012—Focus: Summer Prep**

#### Outcomes:

- Design Team continues to review the goals established at the Vision Retreat and sees that the next steps towards one-year benchmarks are moving forward.
- DT has reviewed Vision Retreat documents and considered what additional volunteer needs may be needed for 2013.
- Bridges have been explored and built with other CPC/CUMC ministry team leaders so they can undergird this renovation process and explore ways to further involve youth in various ministries of the church.
- All summer details are in place, including trips, youth participation in VBS, special events, etc.
- DT and youth director have begun to address the fall-kick off needs.
- Amanda continues to receive coaching.



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## **June/July 2012—Focus: Summertime!**

- Fall kick-off plans continue
- VBS plans continue
- Summer ministry plans are held and enjoyed.
- Renovating the youth space at CUMC has begun with unveiling planned for fall kick-off.
- Contact data is updated.
- A new youth directory is prepared.
- Meeting the needs of the Senior High youth in the new school year continue to be addressed.
- Design Team takes a “half-way through” the process evaluative look and makes any necessary course adjustments.
- Amanda takes a break from coaching.

## **August 2012—Focus: Fall Kick-off**

### Outcomes:

- The youth ministry communication system has been reviewed and a revised game plan established for “marketing” the children’s and youth ministries to parents, kids, youth, the greater congregation and entire community, including a coordinated use of web resources, newsletters, emails, calendars, bulletin board, etc.
- All pressure points identified in this assessment have been effectively addressed.
- A calendar of all weekly programming, meetings, special events, camps and mission trips has been established through December 2013.
- All volunteer leaders are meeting monthly for spiritual encouragement, planning and troubleshooting.
- Fall kick-off is held and successes reported to both churches. Parents receive the calendar through Summer 2013, a current youth/volunteer directory, copies of all documents produced at the Visioning Retreat, and any other necessary control documents.
- Amanda resumes her monthly coaching.



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## **September 2012—Focus: Parent Engagement and Discipleship Planning**

### Outcomes:

- Deliberate discipleship plan continues to be explored and developed that allows youth and parents to understand where they are on their spiritual journeys and determines how the children's/youth ministry programs can help meet these individual needs. The best practice for this is over the course of three-four sessions.
- A momentum-building, parent-equipping event has taken place, involving at least 20 parents. "*Understanding Your Teenagers*" is great!
- Systems have been evaluated and created for better communicating specific opportunities and needs where youth could get involved and serve.
- A draft of a youth ministry manual has been completed including the visioning documents, revised position descriptions, church policies, the directory, the ministry budget, volunteer applications and processes, calendar, discipleship planning documents, etc.
- Major event notebooks have been drafted for each major event.
- A plan for further involving parents with youth ministries has been created and inviting them into fall ministry volunteer roles has happened.
- Coaching for Amanda continues.

## **October 2012—Focus: The One Year Mark**

### Outcomes:

- All major event coordinators for 2013 have been recruited and received the event notebooks plus any necessary coaching.
- An alignment check has taken place to ensure that all processes for re-culturing the youth ministry are functioning and that plans are made to re-establish those practices where the ball may have been dropped or revised plans constructed.
- The DT has completed a one-year progress report on the completion of this timeline (written report presented to the session).
- Amanda continues to receive coaching.

## **November 2012—Focus: Transition to Permanent Structure**

### Outcomes:

- The key volunteers in the new ministry structure receive specific coaching to ensure that systems are in place to maximize the investment of each volunteer giving time to the ministry.
- Each paid staff member and hands-on adult volunteer has a prayer partner actively supporting him or her in personal faith development and ministry effectiveness.



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- All control, compliance, and ministry manual documents are reviewed and updated as necessary for 2013.
- The key players in the new “permanent” ministry structure have been oriented to their roles and are enthusiastic about serving as a part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cents youth ministry team.
- Amanda receives her finally coaching.

**December 2012—Focus: Celebration, Further Training, Preventative Maintenance**

Outcomes:

- Current ministry volunteers have participated in a training event that allowed them to celebrate what God has done in the previous year, to affirm each other, to make recommendations for the coming year and train for future needs. All volunteer leaders have experienced a ½ day inspiring “leadership launch” event that clarifies their roles, inspires them to grow in their own faith, and equips them to serve the youth of the church, leaving them eager and well-equipped to serve in the coming year.
- The work of the DT is celebrated! A revised support system has been implemented to provide on-going support for the staff and volunteers of 7<sup>th</sup> Cents Youth Ministry to ensure sustainable, intentional, effective ministry.



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# Your Youth Ministry Architects Consultants

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Stephanie Caro has been involved in ministry to children, youth and adults in the local church since...a long time. Her humorous, straightforward style keeps her busy presenting and coaching at conferences, training events, camps, mission trips, retreats, churches, etc.

Her latest book was released in March 2011, "99 Thoughts for the Smaller Church Youth Worker" as a supplement to her 2010 release, "Thriving Youth Ministry in Smaller Churches", published by Group/Simply Youth Ministry. She is also a contributing author to several ministry resources in addition to her regular column "Smaller Church Youth Ministry" in Group Magazine. Check out Stephanie's blog at [smallchurchoyouthministry.com](http://smallchurchoyouthministry.com). Stephanie and her husband, Steve, live in Houston, TX. Their 7 children are all grown and gone - praise Jesus!

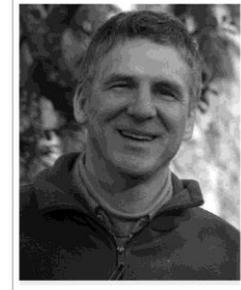
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Jeff has been Director of Youth at Christ United Methodist Church in Venice, FL since 1998. He had been an active youth volunteer for more than a decade with church and para-church organizations, including Young Life and First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN. Before beginning church ministry, Jeff was managing editor of the *Charlotte Sun*, the country's fastest growing newspaper in the 1990s, nearly doubling in circulation. Jeff is a graduate of the Sewanee: The University of the South and has a Masters in Business Administration from Vanderbilt University.

He currently lives in Venice, Fla., with his wife Mary Lou, and two children, Matthew and Katie.



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