

## **Looking Forward**

***“... to the city with foundations,  
whose architect and builder is God. ”***

**Hebrews 11:10**

**Report of the Vision Team  
Edenton Street United Methodist Church**

**May 2010**

**By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. *For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.***

**Hebrews 11: 8-10 (NIV)**

## Beginning the journey

In spring 2009, Edenton Street United Methodist Church had grown to 4,000 members, with nearly 1,000 children in preparatory member status. Sunday morning worshippers heard the soaring notes of a newly installed Le Tourneau organ, funded as part of a successful 2007 capital campaign. ESUMC's contemporary worship, The Gathering, was burgeoning – attracting established ESUMC members, but also reaching deep into the downtown Raleigh community to attract diverse, new worshippers. The church responded eagerly to missions and relief activities, sending teams to flood-ravaged communities in Mississippi and throughout Raleigh for the Great Day of Service. Participation in Disciple Bible Studies and other activities, such as a new Men's Bible Study and Urban Ministries, made the campus on the corner of Edenton and Dawson streets in downtown Raleigh a beehive of activity nearly every day and night.

Edenton Street is the antithesis of the mainline Protestant, downtown congregation. It is growing when many are dying. It is increasingly reaching out, while congregations in decline are characterized by an inward focus.

But in spring 2009, some of the congregation's leaders, as well as Senior Pastor Ned Hill, were experiencing a restlessness that could well be described as a moving of the Holy Spirit. Despite the growth and good work, despite the progress made toward previous vision statements, Rev. Hill and others were feeling a leading to go farther and deeper into God's will for Edenton Street.

In April 2009, Rev. Hill convened the church's officers and a handful of others to participate in a study based on the book, *Experiencing LeaderShift*. This study, co-written by one of the founders of Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago, encourages leaders of growing churches to help members explore their spiritual gifts so that they can be of maximum service. The study spelled out that some members are equippers and others are servants, and that a vibrant congregation must help

members discover how they can best be used by God. The goal is to convert those who consider themselves part of a church audience to active participants in the life of the congregation.

In addition, the group met with church consultant Charles Halley, executive pastor of Covenant United Methodist Church in Greenville, N.C. Halley told the ESUMC leadership group that most churches are driven by the desires of members – the consumer-driven church. He said that only a few churches have the courage to be driven by biblical principles – the God-driven church. “Who’s in charge of Edenton Street United Methodist Church?” Halley challenged the group. “Is it you? Or is it God?”

At the conclusion of the Leadershift series, Edenton Street leaders decided to appoint a group to review the church’s 1997 vision – “Sharing Christ From the Heart of Raleigh” – and seek God’s will about affirming or shifting direction. The only desire of the leadership group was to emulate Abraham, who was willing to leave a familiar, comfortable homeplace in search of “the city with foundations, whose builder and architect is God.”

## Discerning a vision

Church leaders compiled a list of members who might be well-suited to discern whether God had a new vision for ESUMC. They asked Ken Eudy, whose vocation included experience in facilitation and strategic planning, to chair the group.

The assemblage called itself the Vision Team. It was an affirmation that the task would require teamwork. The Vision Team did not want to be a “committee” in the traditional sense.

At every Vision Team meeting, there was a period of prayer, worship and listening, led by ESUMC’s director of contemporary worship, Stefan Youngblood. At many of those worship times, Team members were moved to speak a word of encouragement or to share a scripture passage. One example: “Forget about what’s happened; don’t keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I’m about to do something brand-new. It’s bursting out! Don’t you see it? There it is! I’m making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands.” (Isaiah 43: 18-19 *The Message*)

From September 13 through December 14, the Vision Team met every other Sunday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. These eight meetings focused on *looking forward*, discerning God’s will for ESUMC. There was the temptation at nearly every meeting to go from discernment to tactics. The team usually was successful in keeping focused on seeking God’s will. (A typical Vision Team meeting agenda is in Appendix C).

At the Vision Team’s first meeting, members heard from Cecil Harrison, who had chaired the previous two visioning efforts. They also heard from Mark Thomas, an avid student of ESUMC history. Thomas spoke about inflection points in ESUMC’s history, and how church leaders and members responded. Both speakers provided powerful reminders to approach the re-visioning task with respect for the accomplishment of Edenton Street leaders through the generations.

The team clearly wanted to seek God's will first. So when the Vision Team surveyed members of the congregation, the team asked ESUMC members, "What prevents you from doing what you believe God wants you to do?" (See Appendix D.)

At the Vision Team's first four meetings, there was no attempt to craft the wording on a vision statement. Meetings were filled with conversation, exercises, small group discussion and worship.

Unlike previous visioning efforts, this team did not break up into sub-committees; instead it functioned as a committee of the whole. It did, however, employ small-group discussion, especially when it came time to put ink to paper – or dry-erase marker to whiteboard -- in the second half of the fall meeting schedule.

As is often the case in vision-casting, the team's first pass was too long. The second edition was so short it lacked specificity and passion. A third version seemed to strike the right balance, and to incorporate many of the important concepts that Vision Team members had offered up in discussion.

As it came time to wrap up the committee's work, the Vision Team wanted to find consensus without taking a vote on a proposed Vision Statement. The team aspired to reach a consensus through discussion and reflection, which by God's grace, it did.

The Vision Statement that follows is a true group effort, bearing the fingerprints of all our members. If the Vision Statement deepens the meaning of sharing Christ from the heart of Raleigh, then glory be to God. If it falls short, then the Vision Team readily accepts responsibility.

## **Vision Statement**

In its work, the Vision Team agreed that a vision statement is aspirational. It's a statement describing where the organization wants to be in three to five years. It does not require that all the elements of the vision statement be true today; only that the vision is possible to attain within a certain period of time. Put simply, a vision statement describes the next destination in an ongoing journey in the life of Edenton Street United Methodist Church.

With that in mind, the Vision Team submits this statement:

**Edenton Street United Methodist Church, a community of faith...**

**...inviting all to encounter Jesus**

**...preparing believers to deepen their dependence on God**

**...caring for those who are hurting**

**...sending ordinary people into the world equipped to do extraordinary things.**

## **Making the vision a reality**

In January 2010, the Vision Team resumed meeting every other Sunday afternoon, focused on further exploring what it means to become a more inviting, preparing, caring and sending church.

Meanwhile, the Vision Team presented updates of its work to the Administrative Board at the board's January and March meetings. The Team also held a roundtable discussion open to the congregation, as well as a discussion with past lay leaders of the congregation.

At its March meeting, the Administrative Board unanimously affirmed the Vision Statement, awaiting a final report from the Vision Team.

In its 2010 meetings, the Vision Team prepared high-level recommendations that it believes will help the Vision Statement become a reality at ESUMC in the next three to five years.

Vision Statements and recommendations for implementation are the easy part. Implementing them is the challenge.

## Recommendations

Edenton Street was not only built on the backs of faithful servants, but also by servants who spent time on their knees. Through prayer and Bible study, God has guided the church, encouraged and sustained the congregation for nearly two hundred years. The following recommendations result from Vision Team spending time in prayer, study of scripture and worship. These recommendations will be unable to transform our congregation if we try to implement them apart from a renewed commitment to the historic spiritual disciplines.

Therefore we recommend that the leadership of the church, pastors, staff and congregation commit themselves to seasons of prayer, study of the scripture and worship before responding to each of the recommendations.

The Vision Team reviewed hundreds of steps ESUMC could take to be a more inviting, preparing, caring and sending church (They are listed in Appendix G). It became clear that certain committees, Sunday School and ad hoc fellowships are already making some of those steps happen.

For the sake of focusing our time and energy on a handful of achievable steps, we offer six recommendations that we believe will help Edenton Street United Methodist Church make its vision a reality.

1. Achieving our vision will require substantial involvement of laity in leadership and service positions. We do not believe that we should depend on paid staff to implement the Vision of the congregation. Therefore, we recommend establishing a **spiritual development initiative** that will (1) engage 100% of ESUMC members in ministry by identifying their spiritual gifts and passions, (2) better equip leaders to enroll and train members.

Other than continuously seeking God's will, we know of no more important element in fulfilling our vision than to expand and train the cadre of ESUMC leaders and servants to nurture our ambitious agenda.

Achieving our vision requires that we focus on leadership and training for those on our preparatory roles – this congregation's next generation of leaders and servants. The Vision Team recognized that how the congregation carries out this vision effort will depend, not just on the adults of our church, but also on how we equip those who will

follow. We must better prepare our young people so they can plan for the future visions of ESUMC, just as previous generations have done for 200 years.

2. ESUMC offers many opportunities for intentional faith development. However, we also must acknowledge that many of our members fail to deepen their dependence on God. They leave without ever encountering something that compels them to connect with other believers.

The Vision Team concluded that engagement will happen more readily and meaningfully in smaller groups, as it did with Jesus and his disciples. We recommend ESUMC **aggressively promote a network of small groups** around the principles of inviting all to encounter Jesus, preparing believers to deepen their dependence on God, caring for those who are hurting and sending ordinary people into the world equipped to do extraordinary things.

This may sound like another term for Bible study. It is not. Small groups can encompass DivorceCare, recovery groups, midweek "Sunday School" classes, or Habitat-like groups. It will be important to encourage flexibility for groups to find their own focus. However, we believe that certain elements, such as prayer, worship, scripture and fellowship, will be the organizing principle of every small group. As part of this recommendation, we expect that 100% of ESUMC members will belong to at least one small group.

3. ESUMC already is engaged in a multitude of evangelistic and missions projects. We have seen our congregation energized -- and The Gathering explode in attendance -- as we put more energy into caring for those who are hurting. One example: the Great Day of Service held in September 2009. We anticipate that ESUMC will continue to be involved in the projects we've historically undertaken.

But we also see the benefit of a congregation-wide endeavor. Therefore, we recommend that **within three to five years, ESUMC collectively adopt one audacious initiative for local outreach that will require participation from every segment of our membership** on an ongoing basis. The single initiative will bear the marks of inviting, preparing, caring and sending.

While other downtown congregations are engaged in versions of this vision objective, we believe ESUMC can focus on a service or mission not currently being offered. This initiative can become a focal point of every segment of our congregation.

4. Even though a 24-7, always-on world marks modern society, we're mindful that for many members, the world pauses on Sunday morning in Edenton Street's majestic sanctuary. But because of changes in our culture, the Vision Team believes that achieving radical hospitality and passionate worship requires us to take a realistic look at our worship services and make changes as necessary.

While we are experiencing exceptional growth in our contemporary worship service, participation in ESUMC traditional services is declining. **We recommend that a**

**representative task force of participants study the intersection of tradition and modernity to determine the way forward for our traditional services.**

The review would focus on how inviting the traditional services are to newcomers, to people who may have different backgrounds or who did not grow up in a religious tradition. In addition, the task force should reference the Passionate Worship principles outlined in the radical hospitality and passionate worship sections of *The Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*.

The review would include a study of visitor experience, and the ease with which visitors are able to navigate the ESUMC campus, the liturgy and music in the traditional service.

To be clear, the Vision Team affirms the centrality of traditional services in the life of Edenton Street. This is not an effort to eliminate them. However, we must acknowledge the reality of declining attendance, and seek ways to re-energize the traditional services.

In addition, the Vision Team achieved a strong consensus that a non-Sunday morning worship service is in our future. And we believe that this worship service may well take place away from our main campus. **We recommend that a separate task force be assigned to study the possibility of non-Sunday morning worship, and to explore the relative merits of on-campus and off-campus services.** The possibility of a non-Sunday, off-campus worship service would encompass every element of our Vision – inviting, preparing, caring and sending.

5. The world has changed since ESUMC initially adopted the vision of “Sharing Christ from the Heart of Raleigh” in 1997. In fact, the popularized Internet was in its infancy then.

We believe that technology will have an increasingly important and exciting role in every aspect of our vision. We are enthusiastic advocates of employing technology to invite, prepare, care and send.

For example, to enliven traditional services, we know that technology can be used powerfully but unobtrusively in the sanctuary. We believe that online Bible studies can prepare believers to deepen their dependence on God. We aspire, for example, to connect cancer survivors to an online spiritual network for encouragement, prayer and care. We’ve already seen instances where social media was employed to invite unchurched friends to The Gathering through text messaging.

We cannot even envision all the possibilities, but we are convinced technology can be deployed today, especially in rebuilding our youth program, that will help us make our vision a reality. **We recommend that the Administrative Board appoint a special task force that will take no more than 100 days to develop a prioritized list of recommendations for the use of technology to carry out Edenton Street’s vision.** The task force should have broad representation. At a minimum, membership should include representatives of: Trustees, ordained staff, youth, plus Finance, Evangelism, Communications and Music committees. **Furthermore, because technology is changing so rapidly, we recommend that a task force be convened annually for a single meeting**

**to review new technology that might assist ESUMC in making its vision reality. The task force will report to the Steering Committee.**

6. Finally, we aspire to be a church where members spend more of their time inviting, preparing, caring and sending. **Therefore, we recommend organizing our church structure, including administrative board, trustees, committees, initiatives and staff, around achieving our vision.**

This may well result in fewer committees and fewer meetings. For example, a smaller but more nimble Administrative Board and a revamped Finance Committee with a streamlined budget process may better serve ESUMC now and into the future.

The result will be to free up valuable time and energy to invest in leadership development, radical hospitality, passionate worship intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.

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In conclusion, the Vision Team considered dozens of issues that are not among the recommendations of this report. It's not because they're unimportant. The team attempted to focus on an achievable number of recommendations that can move the congregation toward becoming an inviting, preparing, caring and sending church. But as Paul wrote, "our knowledge is imperfect." We anticipate that the updated ESUMC Vision will be the catalyst for a multitude of actions, both spontaneous and thoughtful, that make the vision a reality, to the glory of God.

"And now to him who can keep you on your feet, standing tall in his bright presence, fresh and celebrating—to our one God, our only Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Master, be glory, majesty, strength, and rule before all time, and now, and to the end of all time. Yes." (Jude 24-25 *The Message*)

## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A**

### **Vision Team Members**

Page Billingsley

Kelly Busch

Amy Dameron

Christ Dillon

Ken Eudy

Ned Hill

Leigh Holloway

David Holoman

Leigh Krause

Ryke Longest

Beth Norris

Becky Ogburn

Jeffrey Phillips

David Rockefeller

David Smoot

Emily Stewart

Brenda Summers

Stefan Youngblood

## Appendix B

### Exercise: 2012 will be the year...

At its first meeting, the Vision Team engaged in an exercise designed to propel members three years ahead. The focus was on “seeing” ESUMC in 20102 and imagining that certain practices or programs that needed improvement or change, or that certain needs, all would materialize.

Vision Team members were asked to complete the sentence:

*“2012 will be the year that Edenton Street United Methodist Church finally...”*

- Has a new member class that fully describes the responsibilities of membership.
- Engages people who live downtown.
- Has an active college ministry that appeals not just to members who grew up in the church.
- Turns the corner.
- Reaches out to our state government neighbor.
- Offers non-Sunday worship.
- Has a parking deck.
- Has a diverse congregation.
- Offers youth program that attracts members and non-members.
- Engages a larger percentage of the congregation in long-term mission work.
- Fulfills the expectations of new members.
- Raises up future clergy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Spawns new worship communities.
- Has packed worship services.
- Has every member pledging.
- Has strong mentorship programs for high school students, young adults and confirmation classes.
- Offers stronger marriage enrichment components.
- Offers strong life transition components.
- Becomes a church where Melville Cox lives on.
- Becomes a 50/50 church.
- Sponsors outside missionaries.
- Provides greater communication about what’s offered at church.
- Sponsors small groups (which may or may not meet in homes).
- Has a fully engaged congregation.
- Has Sunday School at times other than 9:45.
- Has greater opportunities to interact with other members.
- Integrates youth into mainstream rather than segregating them into youth-only programming.

- Embrace modern technology for reaching this (younger) generation.

While this exercise was more tactical than strategic or visionary, it helped focus the Vision Team on issues about which we should be seeking God. As Will Mancini wrote in his book, “Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture and Create Movement,” churches don’t embark on updating their vision statements unless there are problems that should be addressed. If everything is moving at maximum speed with maximum results, there’s no need to fix anything.

**Appendix C**  
**Typical Vision Team Meeting Agenda**

10-11-09 Activity	Time	Responsible
Revelations, epiphanies, lightning bolts Five Practices – Passionate Worship Worship, prayer, listening Engagement	10 minutes	Ken Eudy
	30 minutes	David Smoot
	30 minutes	Stefan
		Youngblood
	5 minutes	Ned Hill
Input from our congregation	45 minutes	Brenda Summers
<i>Homework assignment – read Chapter 3, The</i>		Ken
<i>Practice of Intentional Faith Development</i>		
<i>Two Questions:</i>		
1. <i>What words or phrases will define Edenton</i>		
<i>Street in the next three to five years?</i>		
2. <i>What’s the big idea? -- thinking</i>		
<i>audaciously.</i>		

## **Appendix D**

### **Exercise: Congregational Discernment**

As part of the Vision Team's discernment process, each team member was asked to interview 10 ESUMC members, asking them the same set of questions. The interviews were conducted between late September and mid-October 2009. Aggregated answers are below:

#### **What type of person should be attracted to ESUMC?**

- Someone who wants all the bells and whistles
- Someone who wants a high profile, high church, bible study, all-inclusive church
- Middle-aged, well-off white people/Old Raleigh/Upper crust/White, educated, employed/historically affluent white group but growing and becoming more diverse (races, different points in faith walk)
- Music lovers
- Someone interesting in learning to spread the good news
- Someone interested in getting to know Christ better
- Someone not intimidated by a big church
- Young families/families with children/downtown young families
- People who want to do missions
- Everyone/Anyone seeking a relationship with Christ/All believers/ Want it to be for anyone; people who want to get closer
- People who are willing to get involved
- Old, ITB families at traditional service; more diverse at Gathering
- People who want to spend a lot of time on committees
- Someone who knows someone at the church

#### **What are some of the characteristics that describe ESUMC?**

- Loving
- Heart-felt
- Christ-centered
- Praying community
- Active, busy
- Encouraging
- Friendly/welcoming
- Comfortable/complacent
- Growing
- Big
- Proud (prideful), Well respected
- Diversity of age
- Wealthy
- Worshipful/serving/prayerful

- Hard to find a niche
- Great music community
- Faithful and giving
- Welcoming/open
- Affluent, white
- Children's ministries
- Wide variety of small group and Sunday School options
- Providing for all ages
- Caring
- Multi-dimensional
- Community
- Mission-based
- Strong preaching from pulpit for over 13 years
- Vibrant, active, friendly and personable
- Exciting, "happening"
- Hospitable
- Progressive
- Fearless
- Willing to take risks
- Christ-centered and Spirit-led, Scripturally-based

#### **What prevents you from doing what you believe God wants you to do?**

- Selfishness/Sinfulness
- Time/Commitments away from church/Wrong priorities/Poor personal planning/laziness/procrastination/Society/Devil
- Anger and sadness
- Lack of skills
- Fear
- Fear of what God may ask
- Determining what to do/not knowing how to get involved
- Discernment--what *is* God's will for me?
- Peer pressure (from youth)
- Not listening to God's call; self-directed
- Thinking someone else will do it, not taking ownership
- Getting lost in a big church, intimidated
- Hard for the church to identify members' gifts
- Long drive to church
- Too few Sunday School classes for older adults

#### **What are the characteristics of an ideal church?**

- Worshipping – rock-em-sock-em music
- Familiar hymns
- Christian elements to lead a spiritual life
- Clique-free
- Close-knit relationships/ Well-fellowshipped
- Stronger small group connections

- Mission-oriented
- Great sermons
- Self-deprecating/humility
- Congregational concerns
- Gospel- salvation-centered
- Budget around true evangelism
- Care for the poor
- Diversity
- Unified
- Comfortable and educated on sharing Christ's good news
- Passionate to invite everyone in
- Where my voice is heard
- Understanding the radical nature of being a Christian
- Puts faith into action
- Strong youth program, children's orchestra
- "Ours"
- Church overflowing with believers every Sunday
- Youth considered and treated like members
- Spreading
- Theologically deeper sermons and Sunday school lessons
- One where cross-section of ages study and learn together (as in Disciple Bible Study)
- One that responds to prayer concerns and volunteer requests promptly
- Small community but willing to plant new church when critical mass is reached
- Lots of families with similar interests, people of all generations linked together
- Where everyone "gets" each other (understanding)
- Has opportunities to gather for meals during week

**If you could change one thing about ESUMC, what would it be?**

- More contemporary music
- More invitational to community/homeless
- Overflowing youth program
- Stable, dynamic youth leadership--one who gets to know youth as individuals
- Weeknight service
- Worship on Saturday or Wednesday night/Alternate service
- More people at early church
- Confessions and Apostles Creed every Sunday
- More mission opportunities for younger kids
- Get members who have not been back before expanding
- Diversity – socioeconomic and race
- Everyone has a spiritual home
- Parking
- Expect more from each other
- Meals
- More of congregation active in faith development or advancing church's mission--missions, teaching, small group or Sunday school study, committee work,
- More young adult presence in contemporary service
- Singles ministry among young adults

- Communion offered on a more regular basis than once a quarter-- maybe in Sunday school or other ministries monthly rather than just in the large worship services?
- Baptisms performed only on special Sundays--maybe quarterly? This plus children's sermon plus offering seems to limit the length/depth of the sermon.
- Leadership intentionally equips lay volunteers to do the Lord's work
- Staff size is unwieldy, may need downsizing. Tough to manage when Sr. Pastor's main job is setting the Spiritual direction of the church
- Offer coffee shop, sports, etc., for college-age
- Host dinners for college-age members at breaks when they are returning to town
- Sunday School program for youth and adults needs improvement
- Committee system is too closed; same people just get rotated through one committee to another
- MS and HS youth need appropriate facilities
- Music program needs to be bigger and more inclusive of members, orchestra
- Every room should be used every day. If we can't put each room to use, we could open up to after-school tutoring, Boys/Girls Clubs, Social Services
- Need a gifted youth leader
- Should use new facilities more effectively, would like to see more family dinners
- Suggested that youth could develop increasing responsibility to point that they are staffing and serving family dinners in Kerr Hall, putting on entertainment, plays, etc.
- Address dropping attendance
- Always respond when someone inside the church expresses a need, would like to volunteer, needs to find a small group.

The answers to these questions were sobering. While Edenton Street has much for which to be thankful, it's clear that we have many opportunities to serve God more deeply.

## Appendix E

### From Discerning to Drafting

The following memo was shared with the Vision Team as we moved into drafting a vision statement. It was a recap of what a vision statement is and the issues we had discussed up to this point.

#### **MEMO**

**TO:** ESUMC Vision Team

**FROM:** Ken Eudy

**DATE:** October 31, 2009

**SUBJECT:** We are ready

Friends, we are ready to move from seeking the Lord's will about ESUMC's place in God's Galaxy to articulating that vision for people inside and outside our church's orbit. We have been discerning rather than deciding. But now, it's time for us to begin to put into words what God has put into our hearts.

In his book, "The Heart of the Matter: Changing the World God's Way," Charlie Halley defines vision this way:

*"Vision defines where we are going and describes the God-inspired calling of the church."*

Hard to put it more succinctly.

But just a little more definition. A vision statement reflect our ambitions. It's not necessary for us to have achieved all our vision proclaims. It does not have to include every belief or value. It should be an organizing principle for our programs, missions and worship. It should be a filter for what our church decides to do – and not to do.

A range of examples:

*"Changing lives, transforming the community and renewing the mainline church."* – Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas.

*"Intentionally follow Jesus."* – Covenant Church, Winterville, North Carolina.

*"To create a church that unchurched people want to attend."* – NorthPoint Church, Alpharetta, Georgia.

*"To be a spiritual reference point throughout Los Angeles, and a sending base to the ends of the Earth."* – Mosaic Church, Los Angeles, California.

*"Transforming cultures through the power of Jesus Christ."* -- The Crossing Church, Tampa, Florida.

*“Leading people to Jesus Christ whereby He is glorified  
Ministering to the total needs of men, women and families of all cultures  
Providing opportunities for empowerment and growth (spiritually, health-wise and economically)  
Developing a welcoming environment that encourages active participation by all disciples  
Supporting community members as we all work to surpass barriers and limitations” -- Wake Chapel  
Church, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

*“To live as disciples of Christ. We accept God’s call to know, experience and share God’s transforming love.” – Hayes Barton United Methodist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina.*

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To recap some of the issues we’ve discussed in our meetings:

“2012 will be the year ESUMC finally.....”

“In our church, do we have participants....or consumers? Do we come on Sunday morning to worship God...or to be entertained?”

“What did ESUMC’s Day of Service mean to you?”

“Are our members coming to ESUMC to fully engage in the worship and discipleship of Jesus...or are they checking the box?”

“Who are we *for*? Is ESUMC a church for everyone?”

Where are we on the continuum in practicing radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity?”

“Do cliques keep people who come to ESUMC from fully engaging? What do we do about it?”

“What do we do about the ‘middle door’?”

“What learning experience has changed how you live?”

“How does Edenton Street encourage people to have life-changing experiences?”

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In the coming days, I’ll send along some “strawman” vision statements for your review and our discussion on November 8. Meantime, feel free to draft your own version of the ESUMC Vision Statement.

We will spend most of our time next week trying out some of our statements. By the grace of Jesus, we are ready.

## Appendix F

### Exercise: Defining Words and Phrases

The Vision Team split into small groups to project themselves into ESUMC's future three to five years from now. The assignment was to capture the words or phrases that would help describe the preferred future for ESUMC – if we were aligned with God's will.

The words and phrases were grouped arbitrarily into four categories:

<p><b>Transcending characteristics</b>          alive          awake          spirituality          undergirded by prayer          clear in purpose          steadfast in love          connected to the source of life          Christ-centered          relevant          patient and obedient          responsible</p>	<p><b>Big picture/high altitude</b>          building community inside and outside of church          thinking outside the box          willingness to change (flexible, adaptable)          culture shift          visionary          reflects what the kingdom of God looks like          "5-talent" church (think parable)</p>
<p><b>Equipping for service and transformed lives</b>          supportive          retaining members encouraging and nurturing          spiritual gifts          launchpad (breaking out of cocoon)          equipping church          transforming lives          expecting (from one another, us from God, others from us)          growing</p>	<p><b>Looking outward</b>          open          50/50 (budget on internal/external missions)          available (not too busy)          open to whomever comes through the door          healing for those who are hurting          seeking out those who need Jesus the most          outreach          transforming lives          growing</p>

## **Appendix G**

### **What it means to be...**

**...an inviting**

**...preparing**

**...caring**

**...and sending church.**

After spending fall 2009 seeking to discern God's will for Edenton Street, the Vision Team began 2010 considering how the church could best implement the Vision Statement. We spent two meetings envisioning what an inviting, preparing, caring and sending church would look like.

The following issues were discussed by the Vision Team. Some members pointed out that many of these items already were being implemented. Other of these items found their way into the high-level recommendations in this report.

#### **....Inviting all to encounter Jesus**

- Take steps to build a membership that more clearly reflects Raleigh's demographics
- Achieve weekly participation in all ESUMC activities (worship services, Bible studies, missions, etc.) that exceeds our total membership
- Communicate expectations of membership to every ESUMC member
- Maximize the appeal and minimize the barriers for traditional services
- Study the intersection of the traditional services with the contemporary world
- Employ current, effective, and feasible technology in order to invite and welcome

#### **...Preparing believers to deepen their dependence on God**

- 100% of our members are engaged in intentional spiritual formation
- 100% of members explore their spiritual gifts
- Explore ways to extend worship into daily life
- Small groups; retreats
- Explore fellowship friends
- ESUMC children and youth are able pass a "spiritual SAT"
- Growth groups like ALPHA woven into ESUMC life
- Fellowship emphasis

- Intercessory prayer for individuals
- Emphasize leadership development
- Strengthen new member orientation

**...Caring for those who are hurting.**

- Create a Caring Portal – a clearinghouse for resources in Raleigh
- Develop programming and mission that focus on people in transition
- Stephen Ministry
- Build an environment that encourages honesty – it's okay to not be okay
  - Men in small groups, DivorceCare, Recovery Groups
- State of the art program for homeless
- Sharing praises and concerns digitally
- Equip members to care
- Re-energize Lay Shepherding
- Peace and reconciliation function
- Parish nurse
- People being empowered to exercise compassion.

**...Sending ordinary people into the world equipped to do extraordinary things.**

- Spread the responsibility
- All the congregation
- Everybody has a gift we help develop
- Intentionally broad without regard to qualification
- Find things that can make a difference downtown
- nothing big happens in Raleigh that Edenton Street is not a part of.
- Hearing God's call
- Puts onus on church body to train
- Invited, prepared first
- Help people understand how they can go into the world. What's possible?
- That's where new technology comes in
- Equipping, helping people recognize their gifts
- If there's a gaping need, offer Spanish classes
- Make people fulfilled
- Assess fruitfulness
- Making God famous
- A congregation, not an audience
- Create an alternative placement school
- Cultivate an attitude, a sense of initiative instead of conduct a project -- out of love, a reflection of God's love