Next Steps Committee Final Report

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Julie Warm, Chair
Kat Norris
Eric Sigler

Sue Storm
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Paul Rock, Staff
Tim Sweeny, Consultant
Members of Session  
Second Presbyterian Church  
318 E. 55th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64113

Re: Next Steps Committee Final Report

Dear Members of Session:

In the last five years Second Presbyterian Church has boldly stepped into a new era of Christianity in America. In 2009 the congregation initiated a $1.5 million campaign to improve our chancel and organ and realign our space to increase hospitality and expand mission giving. The following year we realigned our mission ministry and called a new senior pastor dedicated to a vision of 21st Century Christianity. Since then we have completed a strategic vision for the church; achieved remarkable progress towards key visioning goals; received a generous $1 million “angel gift;” and next year will celebrate our sesquicentennial anniversary. The convergence of these events, along with the ongoing challenge of our central mission—A people being transformed by Christ to help transform the world—invites Second Presbyterian Church to take the next confident steps into this new era.

The Next Steps Committee believes we should continue to move forward by embracing that which our congregation does best, improving identified weaknesses, and exploring visionary ideas to shape the world around us, our congregation, and those individuals that count themselves as part of the Second Presbyterian family.

This report, the result of significant research, congregation and community input, prayer, and discernment, represents our attempt to begin the process to define our next steps into this next era in the life of Second Presbyterian. The Next Steps Committee offers two fundamental recommendations to advance this aim:

- **Build on the success of God’s Purposes for Second (GPS)** by providing targeted ministry areas with the resources and professional staff necessary for continued growth.

- **Express hospitality through our facilities** with a space that better connects us with our neighborhood and welcomes guests with radical intentional hospitality.
The attached report elaborates on these two recommendations; and provides an in-depth look at the Next Steps Committee’s goals, structure and process, findings, and budgetary notes.

Acceptance of and implementation of the committee’s recommendations are left to the discretion and wisdom of Session.

Finally, the members of the Next Steps Committee, individually and collectively, were honored to serve on a committee asked to help imagine a vision for Second Presbyterian Church. Our thanks to Session and to members of our faith community for both their faith and prayers as we imagined, discussed, and deliberated.

Respectfully,

Next Steps Committee
Appendix A – Foundational Documents
The Next Steps Committee relied on several documents to ground its work, including:

- Angel Gift Donor Letter
- GPS Narrative Vision
- Development Task Force Report
- Angel Gift Task Force Report
- GPS Progress Report

Appendix B – Committee Minutes
Recorded minutes of the Next Steps Committee meetings

Appendix C – Congregation Input
Next Steps solicited input from the congregation, ministry leaders, Second staff, the former GPS team, city and neighborhood leaders and numerous committees. Outside of countless conversations, informal discussions, and lots of listening, the Next Steps Committee formally recorded input from several bodies and persons, including:

- GPS and Next Steps Meeting Notes
- SJP’s Committee
- Worship Committee
- Personnel Committee
- ECLC Ideas
- Children, Youth, & Families Committee
- Staff
- Postma input
- Tammeus input
- Wertz Family input
- Dickinson input
- Lausch input
- Sewell input
- Singelton input
COMMITTEE GOALS

The Next Steps Committee was created by Session in January of 2014 to accomplish two primary goals:

1. Review the 2012 strategic vision, God’s Purposes for Second (GPS)
2. Consider ways in which we might continue to be transformed by Christ to help transform the world.

The second task was enhanced by the generosity of the family that provided the $1 million “angel gift” ($100,000 of which went immediately to our Mission Endowment) to help us achieve our dreams. The Next Steps Committee was not charged with, nor did we presume, the challenge of spending or preparing a budget for the “angel gift.”

The intersection between the Next Steps Committee’s vision and the “angel donor” will be discussed in more detail in the budgetary notes at the conclusion of this report.

PROCESS & FINDINGS

Session member Julie Warm served as the Next Steps Committee chair, with staff support from Paul Rock. The diverse and talented committee consisted of George Wolf, Kat Norris, Ryan Unruh, Sue Storm and Eric Sigler. Tim Sweeny of Praxis Nonprofit Strategies served as its professional consultant. Meeting every other week, the committee members spent time clarifying their goals and process before beginning their investigation and analysis. The committee identified four strategies to complete its defined goals:

- Assess the effectiveness of Second Presbyterian’s current strategic plan, GPS, and determine areas of improvement.
- Capture ideas from established church ministries and committees on how they could expand and enhance their respective ministry areas.
- Seek input from external stakeholders on how they believe Second Presbyterian could expand and enhance its contribution to our community and city.
- Invite bold and visionary ideas from the congregation at-large and church staff.

As the Next Steps Committee pursued each of these strategies, it aimed to discover and discern the opportunities for Second to continue our vision of being a people transformed by Christ to...
help transform the world. Next Steps looked for ways to continue and celebrate our transformation, as well as opportunities for improvement.

The committee held countless conversations, participated in numerous meetings, and received dozens of ideas. From this outreach Next Steps learned more about the effectiveness of GPS, initiatives currently under implementation by Session and Deacons, neighborhood needs, congregational hopes, and staff insights.

**This input resulted in several key observations and findings of the Next Steps Committee, including:**

- The guiding themes of GPS—Nurture, Service & Mission, Learn & Grow, Radical Intentional Hospitality, Communications, Worship & Gather and Governance—remain critically important for the church.

- The ever-evolving GPS vision created in 2012 continues to produce valuable results for the congregation, especially in the areas of Service & Mission, Communications, and Nurture.

- Some congregational investments inspired by GPS show promising signs of producing long-term benefits but require more time and organizational support. Examples include: Children, Youth and Families ministry, Outreach and Hospitality and Stewardship/Development.

- Finally, some GPS goals continue to be desired but remain unrealized, such as an alternative form of worship and a comprehensive small group ministry.

- The church’s continued investment in GPS is a wise use of the “angel gift” money.

- The church has had tremendous success in re-engineering ourselves for radical intentional hospitality. Our facilities, however, still constrain us. The church has a unique opportunity to image a facility that fully supports radical intentional hospitality because of the confluence of two factors. First, the Building and Grounds Committee has identified structural problems, particularly around our bell tower, that will require significant cash investments in the near future. Second, the church’s 2015 sesquicentennial provides a natural milestone to think boldly about our future.
NEXT STEPS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Build on the success of GPS by providing targeted ministry areas with the resources and professional staff necessary for continued growth.

Congregation members, committee members, ministry leaders, staff, and church leaders repeatedly voiced to the Next Steps Committee the substantial and impressive progress made under the guidance of GPS’s strategic vision. Frequently cited improvements included: the transformation of our Deacons into a ministry team dedicated to pastoral care, a thoughtful narrowing and increased focus on mission partners, improved children’s and youth ministries, and tremendous advancements in communications. Clearly, the church is making noted progress in implementing goals consistent with GPS. Much of this progress is attributable to the union of visionary leadership with improved ministry structuring and intentional staffing. These elements go hand-in-hand. While members, Session and Deacons have corporately discerned God’s leading and have set the vision and strategy for our successes, staff have, in large part, been given primary responsibility for implementation as mission leaders in Second’s family of faith.

The Next Steps Committee also discovered critically important GPS goals that remain incomplete or unrealized. After considerable input from across the congregation, Next Steps suggests targeting investments to hire/maintain ministry staff to develop further these four areas: Communication and Engagement, Learning and Growing, Stewardship and Development, and Worship and Gather.
INVEST IN COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

GPS Guiding Vision for Communication:
“We will create a broad & effective strategy for communicating with members of the congregation & with our community”

NEXT STEPS RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Continue to improve the way we share the Good News with our neighbors.
b. Engage current and potential members more effectively in existing and new ministries at Second.

RATIONALE:

Next Steps saw clear evidence that we are making phenomenal strides as we work to engage with our neighbors and the world at-large. Even so, we were substantially behind in contemporary communication standards when we began the GPS initiative three years ago.

Our first recommendation—continuing to improve the way we share the Good News with our neighbors—recognizes the excellent progress made and endorses the continued focus on external communications such as targeted mailings, a dynamic website and skillful use of social media.

The second recommendation—engagement of members in existing and new ministries at Second—acknowledges that in order to build and sustain our growing faith community, we need to do a better job of intentionally communicating ministry opportunities to our members and connecting them with their interests and passions. In the words of a member of the original GPS team, “There are a lot of un-tapped resources in our church in terms of human capital. We need to capture people’s interests, involvements, and talents so we can connect ministry needs with those who have experience or passion for an area.”
INVEST IN LEARNING & GROWING

GPS Guiding Vision for Learning and Growing:
“We will offer consistently excellent learning experiences for people of all ages so they may understand what it means to be transformed as a disciple of Jesus Christ.”

NEXT STEPS RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Continue to support the growing Children, Youth and Families ministry and maintain the current staffing focus.
b. Bolster the adult faith development ministry.

RATIONALE:

GPS has ushered in dramatic growth in depth and breadth of both the children’s and youth ministries areas. Next Steps is delighted to recognize both the staff and the volunteers that have breathed life into this foundational ministry area. Our concern is that the growth in these ministries is still too new. In order to have more stable children’s and youth ministries, and lasting impacts on our church community, we need to continue investing in the staff members who help volunteers carry out the day-to-day implementation of these ministries.

Next year presents us with a unique opportunity to reboot the faith development ministry. Second Presbyterian will be hiring a new Associate Pastor, who will be partially responsible for leading and supporting our Faith Development ministries. Additionally, with the influx of families driven by the successful and growing children and youth ministries, the church has an opportunity to capture new adults who wish to learn alongside their children. Finally, we continue to have sophisticated, experienced and educated adults who appreciate faith development and adult learning, but might be open to a more contemporary variety of offerings. Session may want to consider a thorough audit of our various classes and offerings and determine important goals to help faith development to be even more effective in engaging, supporting, and developing the community.
INVEST IN STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

Development Task Force Guiding Vision for Stewardship & Development:
“IT is critical for a successful church stewardship program to fully appreciate and respond to …the generational, economic, and cultural tendencies and motivations for giving in the 21st Century.”

NEXT STEPS RECOMMENDATION:

a. Continue to explore and establish creative, up-to-date, and sustainable revenue strategies that will effectively engage the realities of the rapidly evolving philanthropic landscape.

RATIONALE:

This recommendation rests on the premise that our historic and foundational method of funding our mission (annual pledges) seems to be undergoing a societal and generational shift. Quoting the Lake Institute on Faith and Giving at Indiana University:

There is a decided change in giving patterns [in American congregations]. Church envelopes have long been the preferred way of giving but this practice is fading fast. Automatic banking, credit cards, church giving kiosks, and numerous forms of online giving challenge congregations to rethink their fundraising practices. In addition, amidst the current economic climate, many faithful members now do their giving via the performance of “in kind” services. Volunteerism is up!

There is a cultural shift occurring; from systematized pledging to impulsive giving. Traditionally many congregations based their annual budget on the pledge promises of their members. How does a church budget for the many givers who do not pledge? Younger people are generous but often “impulsive givers” who rely on their hearts and the need of the moment to trigger their giving.
We see these trends at Second. Table 1 below captures several elements of these giving trends, including a general decline in offerings and a general, although erratic, increase in one-time gifts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>$ Pledge</th>
<th>$ Received w/out Pledge</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$ Given</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Overall $</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>951,580</td>
<td>80,910</td>
<td>1,032,490</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>1,032,490</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>939,091</td>
<td>100,882</td>
<td>1,039,973</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>990,469</td>
<td>106,465</td>
<td>1,096,934</td>
<td>148,700</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1,245,634</td>
<td>19.8</td>
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<td>-Windows</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Pastor’ discretion</td>
<td>1,245,634</td>
<td>19.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>954,805</td>
<td>88,216</td>
<td>1,043,022</td>
<td>243,000</td>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>1,286,022</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>939,127</td>
<td>89,924</td>
<td>1,029,051</td>
<td>1,211,200</td>
<td>Angel gift</td>
<td>2,240,251</td>
<td>74.2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Tower</td>
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<td>2014 *</td>
<td>925,756</td>
<td>89,365</td>
<td>1,015,121</td>
<td>89,226</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>1,104,347</td>
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*expected

Next Steps senses that Second, as well as other faith communities, will begin to rely more increasingly on one-time gifts and bequests. Since funding directly impacts our ability to fulfill our mission, Next Steps believes that the church must continue to fund a staff position that can help the church maintain an innovative and robust stewardship and development program. This is not new. The 2013 Development Task Force Report made the following recommendation:

*Staff support is essential. Session must provide a minimum of 15-20 hours of staff time allotted for development work. This staff member would work in a coordinated effort with the senior pastor, Generosity team, Endowment committee and other Session committees. In addition, staff leadership is necessary to oversee and administer member engagement and assist in matching the desires and skills of members of Second Church with the volunteer needs of mission initiatives supported by the church.*

After two years of increased staff and committee focus on Stewardship and Development Session should consider the need to analyze our successes and determine if additional part-time help is necessary or if outside consulting would be beneficial to our stewardship and development efforts.
INVEST IN WORSHIP & GATHER

GPS Guiding Vision for Worship and Gather:
“That Second provide believers, nonbelievers, seekers & skeptics ample opportunities to attend & participate in excellent worship services.”

NEXT STEPS RECOMMENDATION:

a. Continue to develop and implement an alternative expression of worship that will appeal to the unchurched or formerly churched in our neighborhood.

RATIONALE:

Churches that have found success in the face of declining worship attendance have done so by expressing the gospel through less traditional, more accessible music, while maintaining excellence in worship. Second Presbyterian has the location, visionary support and now the resources to develop an intentional, new expression of worship that engages the unchurched and younger generations and introduces them to the transformative work of Christ in their lives and the world.

Second has contemplated and attempted contemporary worship in the past but recently we have not had the funding to give a large initiative like this the support required to build a self-sustaining ministry. This has changed with the identification and hiring of a talented worship leader. We look forward to our collective success.
NEXT STEPS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION


Express hospitality through our facilities with a space that better connects us with our neighborhood and welcomes guests with radical intentional hospitality.

The Next Steps Committee found a deep commitment to GPS and compelling reasons to continue pursuing the strategic vision it established. GPS, however, was never designed as a rigid master plan. The Next Steps Committee recognizes that the rate of change and flux in society is such that any healthy organization must keep its strategic documents living and active with dedicated committees intentionally reviewing, renewing and even re-doing our strategies and vision as the future unfolds, our ministry landscape evolves and plans are implemented, succeed or fail.

The first recommendation of the Next Steps committee—build on the success of GPS by providing targeted ministry areas with the resources and professional staff necessary for continued—affirms the wisdom, success, and continuation of GPS. The second recommendation of the committee takes an important component of GPS—radical intentional hospitality—and invites the church to think more boldly, envisions a built environment that radiates hospitality, and pushes the congregation courageously into its next 150 years.

GPS Guiding Vision for Radical Intentional Hospitality: “We will become a congregation known for our amazing hospitality to all whom we encounter or who encounter us on life’s path.”

NEXT STEPS RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Establish a Session subcommittee to explore and recommend possible building ideas in coordination with other interested parties, such as the Buildings and Grounds Committee and/or the Sesquicentennial Committee.
b. Consider hiring professional help to conduct a comprehensive review of our space to explore how our built environment can better connect us with, and offer hospitality to, our surrounding community.

c. Dependent on the findings of the Session subcommittee, explore the possibility of launching a congregation-wide effort dedicated to generating the enthusiasm, support, and resources necessary to create a relevant, engaging, hospitable environment for ministry and mission for decades to come.

**RATIONALE:**

Next Steps heard consistently that we should celebrate the work of Outreach and Hospitality. Together, we have transformed our procedures and attitudes to more closely align with our intentions of radical intentional hospitality. However, our infrastructure has not kept pace. We received many ideas concerning better or expanded use of our physical space, each creating its own excitement and energy.

Next Steps is recommending a comprehensive review of our space focusing on aligning our intentions for radical intentional hospitality with our built environment. We are recommending that this review go beyond a traditional space use study and focus on identifying ways in which our space might meet the needs of the neighborhood.

As explained in our findings, the church has a unique opportunity to image a facility that fully supports radical intentional hospitality because of the confluence of two factors. First, the Building and Grounds Committee has already identified structural problems, particularly around our bell tower that will soon require significant cash investments to resolve. Second, the church’s 2015 sesquicentennial provides a natural milestone to think boldly about its future.

And, as a tribute to GPS—Some of the “What If?” ideas suggested by the congregation:

What if...

- Calvin Center could welcome everyone, even those with physical limitations?
- Our entrances were welcoming from the parking lot and street?
- People could enter the church during the day without knowing the door combination?
- A warm, smiling face immediately greeted people entering the church instead of a narrow foyer and a handsome schedule of events?
- Faith members with physical limitations could be liturgists or choir members?
- We created an innovated partnership with Kansas City Parks and Recreation to co-use our facility?
- The rooms in the education wing were modular? Expandable? Contractible?
- We had the showers and other facilities to host visiting youth groups?
- What if . . . we could **really serve** the authentic needs of the community?
BUDGETARY NOTES

We will leave it to the relevant committees to appeal to Session for the funds needed to implement our recommendations. In brief:

• According to the “angel donor’s” direction, $100,000 has already been placed in the Mission Endowment.
• As a result of Session’s approval of the Angel Gift Task Force’s recommendations, roughly $102,000 will be spent from the Angel Fund at the close of 2014.
• After deducting the Mission Endowment allocation and all 2014 expenditures, approximately $798,000 will remain of the entire $1,000,000 “angel gift.”

Finally, we end with commentary on the intersection between the Next Steps Committee’s vision and the “angel donor.”

The founding of the Next Steps Committee was, at its core, about the strategic direction of Second’s future. The committee never intended, nor was asked, to develop a specific spending plan for its recommendations or the “angel gift” donation. That said, many of our recommendations have significant financial implications that would draw from the generosity of the “angel gift.” This is particularly relevant to the ongoing support of church staff.

The donor family has voiced an understanding that their gift will be used to fund operational expenses, including staffing and believes that our ministries are more successful when supported by talented and committed staff. The donor family, Next Steps, and Session also understand that a commitment of these resources for staff must be linked to defined expectations. For example, an investment in Stewardship and Development should result in future revenue growth (likely from revenue streams outside of traditional pledge income) and/or a new church model that allows for reduced operational expenses.

In the coming budget cycles, the congregation, led by Session, will need to find the right course as we seek to balance on-going operating needs with our vision to invest in God’s bold new directions for our community.