

THE DESTINATION: A FOCUS ON OUTREACH

God is calling North Park Reformed Church to faithfully and collectively embrace the next level of its mission, *Building a Community of Faith*. That expanded mission focuses on two key areas: Community Outreach and Youth Outreach.

In the 2015 congregational survey and follow-up focus groups, these two ministry areas ranked highest among North Park members as ministries people felt most excited about, most equipped for, and where the greatest need exists—even as there was some concern expressed about people’s ability to do the work.

Survey said: 2 Ministries of Focus

| Community Outreach | Youth Outreach |
|--|---|
|  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41% said Community Outreach interests them for greater personal engagement |  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67% said this is the area of greatest need ... BUT ... Only 25% willing to personally engage |


Equipping for Ministry

- 86% know their spiritual gift(s)
- ... BUT ...
- 33% don't know their ministry calling

Top 3

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Encouragement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Service | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Giving | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> |

TIE



Equipping for Ministry

- Significant majorities are willing to invest more time and money to advance ministry

79%




91%



To Summarize...

- Community Outreach and Youth Outreach are the primary areas of interest/concern
- People want to be engaged but aren't always sure how or where → Need clarity!
- Strong support for where we've been, desire to 'take it to the next level'

Building a Community of Faith



Through reflection, prayer and considerable discussion, the Consistory felt led to these definitions of our transformed ministry focus:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: We invite those outside the North Park family to come inside.

We do this through personal, one-on-one relationships; group caring, fellowship and missional activities; dynamic and Christ-centered preaching, teaching and worship; and external reputation and brand awareness.

YOUTH OUTREACH: We connect with and engage young people in the life of North Park.

We do this through clearly defined youth leadership; consistent parental involvement and support; strong congregational involvement; and Christ-centered activities that excite, educate and engage today's youth (preschool through college).

THE CHANGE: HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?

How does this differ from what we're doing today? To begin, there have been (and continue to be) dramatic changes in our culture. Call it the "new normal":

- Church no longer serves as the social center of community. People don't naturally turn to the church to connect.
- Youth are much more spiritually diverse. They may experience Christ in ways that are very different from "traditional" church (just as today's older Christians have spiritual journeys very different from those in past centuries).
- Technology = Easy access to broader ideas/perspectives.
- 'On-ramps' to faith are individualized, reflecting our increasingly individualized society.
- Trust in authority and institutions is declining.
- The church is seen as insular, judgmental and rigid. It's not viewed as a hospital for sinners or as a place of refuge for the hurting, but as a "country club" for self-righteous, morally superior people.

The result: Community Outreach and Youth Outreach that connect people to Jesus look very different now than they did even a few years ago. The "old way" of doing things simply doesn't work. Community outreach is more than opening the church doors on Sunday morning (or evening). Youth outreach and ministry isn't accomplished by simply hiring a youth director. To minister effectively, Christians must be humble, non-judgmental, open to new ideas and perspectives, forgiving of faults, and willing to engage by applying their gifts and relationships in ways that demonstrate the love of Jesus to the world.

But in every instance, **the Word of God is the cornerstone of North Park's ministry.** We embrace it, share it and live it without compromise.

THE PATH: WHAT'S NEXT?

Shifting our ministry to focus on these areas requires fundamental change in North Park's administration and ministry structure, budgeting, educational programs and member engagement. The shift toward Community Outreach and Youth Outreach will require a year-long transition. This will allow time for these important steps:

- Setting goals and objectives
- Assessing the spiritual gifts of North Park members
- Educating North Park members to apply those gifts
- Exploring youth leadership options
- Developing preaching and educational plans
- Revising budgets to reflect the new focus and generating resources where needed
- Helping the congregation adopt, grow and embrace this ministry focus

A FEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

If North Park pursues Community Outreach and Youth Outreach, what happens to our other ministry activities?

If there are ministry activities bearing fruit for the Lord, these should be encouraged and supported! At the same time, people involved in these ministries have the chance to think about how they can build upon that success by linking them to Community Outreach and Youth Outreach where it makes sense.

Besides what's been shared here, what specific changes will come from this focus on Community Outreach and Youth Outreach?

There will be new and exciting opportunities that emerge as individuals, groups and Ministry Teams start to develop ideas, set goals and launch activities. The hope is that we'll see more people involved, more educational and training options available, new ways of serving and worshipping and connecting with our community, and much more!

Haven't we changed enough? Why can't we just keep on worshipping, teaching and preaching the way we are?

God never changes. His Word is unending. But the world is changing dramatically. Throughout history, Christ's church has been most effective when it has recognized these changes and met people where they are most needy, most in pain, most in need of the love and forgiveness and acceptance of Jesus.

What if I'm not comfortable doing Community Outreach or Youth Outreach? Is there no place for me in the ministry of North Park?

Let's turn that question around: "How has God equipped YOU to do Community Outreach and Youth Outreach in your own, unique way?" Maybe He didn't give you the gifts to be a youth leader. But do you have the spiritual gift of prayer? Then pray diligently for the people who lead ministry! Do you have the spiritual gift of encouragement? Then send a card to a young person away at college! Do you have the spiritual gift of hospitality? Then host a small group with visitors in your home! For every gift God has given, He's also given you a way to apply it to His honor and to the edification of His church.

What if I don't want to participate in the spiritual gifts assessment?

Even if you already know your gift(s), you're encouraged to be part of the assessment. God may equip you with different gifts at different times in your life. If you're reluctant out of a sense of privacy, be assured that while the goal is to have a list of spiritual gifts on hand so ministry opportunities can be shared with people with whom there's a good fit, the list won't be publicly posted or distributed.

How do I get involved in ministry opportunities and/or the transition process?

Feel free to contact Pastor Paul, a member of Consistory or one of the Ministry Team Leaders so you can get plugged in to an activity.

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