

Our Faithful Journey

Feeding the Community, Body, Mind and Spirit



North Olmsted United Methodist Church in 2025

Our Blueprint for Community Ministry

Dear Members and Friends of NOUMC,

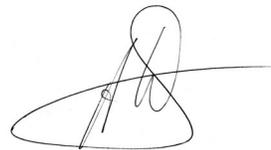
In September 2016, North Olmsted United Methodist Church celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Following this significant milestone, the church recognized that we have a responsibility, as stewards of the legacy left to us by the founders of the church, to ensure its vitality through a second half-century. It was recognized that doing so would require intentional effort and planning.

To that end, our long-term strategic framework, *Our Faithful Journey*, has been developed. *Our Faithful Journey*, rooted in our United Methodist doctrines and beliefs, is the result of a prayerful year-long process during which ideas from more than half of our active members were collected, reflected, discussed, and refined.

Our *Journey* is just that, a journey and not a destination. As we start down this road together, it is important that every member of our congregation understand the elements of the *Journey* and take them to heart. This small booklet has been prepared to help you learn about the *Journey* and how it will affect the life and mission of our faith community. Please take some time to read it, tuck it away for future reference, and reflect on how you can contribute to its success.



Mark Steiger
Pastor



Andrew Walsh
Chair, Long Range Planning Team

The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit. - Nelson Henderson

Overview

Our Faithful Journey seeks to transform NOUMC by 2025. It consists of five elements, which will be our focus from now until then (and possibly beyond).

- † We will instill the guiding principles deeply into the consciousness of the congregation and church leadership, so that they guide all actions in the church.
- † Each year, a small number of priority programs will be selected and executed. These are in addition to regular programs overseen by the various committees of the church, but will be prioritized with regard to attention, staffing, and funding.
- † The NOUMC committee structure will be reviewed and revised in 2018, to ensure the governance of the church is both efficient and effective .
- † The Administrative Board will establish key metrics and continually monitor them to enable the church to measure progress on the Journey.

New ideas will be collected and developed on an annual basis to inform the programs selected, to optimally support the ministries and mission of the church.

If you have interest, additional material referenced or developed as part of the long-range planning project are available for your review.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of *Our Faithful Journey* lay the foundation for the future of North Olmsted United Methodist Church. **These aspirational declarations serve as the foundation for our mission, and they articulate what we want to be known for.**

All future programs undertaken by the church should be evaluated by how well they support one or more of these strategic principles, and activities that do not should be avoided. While the membership and programs of the church will change and evolve over time, our principles will remain steadfast. In a sense, these represent the destination of the *Journey*, even if never fully reached.

We appreciate and invest in our youth

The future of our church depends on the vitality of its youngest members.

We seek to provide a vibrant set of programs and activities for our youth, to instill in them a love for Jesus, a strong sense of community, a deep-rooted set of Christian values, an understanding of how to use faith as a life tool for problem solving, and a strong desire to serve our neighbors.

We use innovative electronic tools to communicate with our youth and enhance their activities and experience in worship. We invest to enhance youth experience even if we do not immediately see the fruit of our efforts, knowing that these experiences will benefit them as they mature. We will maintain a relationship with our youth as they grow and form their own families.



“Let the little children come to me, do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” - Mark 10

***We actively serve our neighbors in the North
Olmsted community and the wider world***

We support Spirit-led missions that serve the needs of the children of God and that welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ.

Major portions of our activity and investment consist of outreach to our community, to targeted missions of NOUMC, and to supporting the worldwide reach of the United Methodist Church.

We connect with community leaders to identify needs in the community that we can serve best, and we are open to collaboration with other churches and organizations to expand and amplify the reach of our mission.



*“Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,
you did it to me.”—Matthew 25*

***We provide varied opportunities for people to
grow in their faith***

We offer worship and study experiences that resonate
with all generations within our congregation.

We offer multiple opportunities for study and group activities (within
the bounds of what is practical for a small community church). Be-
cause music is a deeply spiritual and communal experience for many,
we will maintain a rich music program.

Rooted in the Methodist tradition of innovative and bold interpreta-



"The mind of one who has understanding seeks knowledge." - Proverbs 15

***We welcome and nurture a diverse congregation
who become extended family***

All people are loved by God.

We seek to find the God-image common to all people, and not seek to mold them to our image. We welcome strangers, even when they do not look or act like us, because Christ told us to.

We specifically reach out to those in our community who may feel alienated by the church. We invite those with physical or developmental disabilities, because our building and the accepting nature of our congregation are well-suited to serve their needs.

We model that it is possible to be a Christian while fostering an understanding, tolerance, and acceptance for those of different faith or religious traditions.

We seek to be in dialogue with those of differing faiths and those of no faith in particular.



"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." - Galatians 3

***We foster lasting personal relationships, which
are especially important in a digital world***

The true value of church is most apparent when people
experience Christ through the care of others
as they face difficult times.

NOUMC is a place where all members have the opportunity to nurture
and be nurtured by others in the congregation in a way that forms fa-
miliar relationships that last a lifetime.

In challenging times we grow to love others in a way that lets us over-
look our flaws and see God through them.



*"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them
bear much fruit ..." - John 15*

2018 Priority Programs

Each year during our Journey, the church will select a small number (three to five) of priority programs to execute and be given priority attention by the Administrative Board.

While many good ideas arose during and after the development of *Our Faithful Journey*, the church only has the capability and resources to accomplish a limited number in any one year.

These programs do not all represent new ideas; many are built on the foundation of what makes NOUMC what it is today. To successfully prepare the path for the future, we all have to be willing to accept some changes to “the way things have always been.”

None of the changes contemplated will happen too quickly, and all will be consistent with the church’s core values. But some change is necessary for us to grow and thrive; please embrace them when you see them.

These priority programs will be overseen directly by the Administrative Board, given priority funding in the annual budget, and the progress monitored during each Administrative Board meeting. But the most important factor in our success will be the work and support of our members.

If you are asked to contribute your talents to one of these programs, please respond enthusiastically. Better yet, speak with Pastor Mark or any member of the Administrative Board if you would like to volunteer to help.

On the following pages are the five programs selected to be undertaken in 2018; these will be revisited at the end of the year and a new set chosen for the following year.

Reinvigorated Youth Program

Objective: Attract and retain more youth and young families to NOUMC, and develop the faith and learning opportunities of our youth, by adding new leadership and providing a rich set of youth-oriented activities and opportunities for service.

- † Hire and effectively onboard a new professional youth leader.
- † Implement a new Youth Council, to provide energetic oversight of the Youth Program.
- † Sponsor a targeted number of social activities and/or service projects during 2018.

Reinvigorated Adult Council

Objective: Re-establish a process for designing and implementing an active set of social activities and service projects for adults in the church. Focus on opportunities to learn, serve, and travel, while enabling members to build relationships with other members.

- † Hire a new part-time adult activities coordinator.
- † Survey the congregation regarding types of activities they would find most valuable.
- † Sponsor and coordinate multiple activities, learning experiences, and service opportunities each year, for all ages.

Strengthen Connection with Members

Objective: Significantly improve the way the church communicates with its members and the surrounding community, and continue the church's legacy of innovation and social nurture.

- † Implement a new comprehensive communication model for the church.
- † Hire a part-time social media coordinator.
- † Establish authoritative presence on primary social media platforms (for example, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Others TBD).
- † Develop more effective content for the roadside sign, building on earlier work conducted by the Communications work team.
- † Educate the congregation on optimal use of the digital platforms and encourage active participation.
- † Coordinate content pipeline with the Church Secretary, church calendar, relevant community calendars and events, and relevant member activities.

Electronic Display System in Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary

Objective: Supplement and enhance worship and other services in the sanctuary and fellowship hall through the installation and operation of new display panels. Enhance church's reputation for innovative services.

- † Provide the ability to display, text, visuals, and video (with sound) for a variety of purposes (announcements, visual aids for sermons, hymn lyrics, prayer requests, etc.).
- † Investigate, assess, purchase and install software and hardware needed to manage and display quality content. Begin in fellowship hall in 2018 and expand as the congregation becomes more comfortable with the new system.
- † Train multiple volunteers from the church capable of operating the new system.

Formalized Visitor Welcome Program

Objective: Establish a formal program to welcome and follow-up with new visitors to NOUMC. Ensure that visitors are identified and made to feel welcome during the service, including children and youth. Also ensure that effective and timely follow-up is conducted using quality materials and methods (in print and also emphasizing social media), in a manner that provides an authentic welcome without overwhelming the visitor.

- † Create welcome and follow-up process with materials to be shared during and after the visit.
- † Create and implement a training program for church members involved with the welcome program

Budget and Giving

Making *Our Faithful Journey* a success will require three things:

- † A faith that God will honor the work that we do and use it as an investment to bless future generations whom we do not yet know,
- † the energy of our people, who have always been eager to donate generously of their time and talents, will be the cornerstone of whatever efforts we undertake, and
- † some modest additional funding to acquire the resources necessary to start us down this *Journey*.

Our current estimate is that the additional staff and investments required will be between \$30,000 and \$40,000 annually. That is about 15% above 2017 giving levels.

The Administrative Board and Finance Committee, as always, will be looking at ways to trim some of our legacy expenses and bring in additional revenue to the church.

The bulk of the increase, however, will come from our existing and new members. That is why we are asking you to pray as you consider increasing your 2018 giving, to reflect on what NOUMC has meant to your family, and to think in terms of the seeds we are planting for the future of our faith community.

NOUMC Committee Structure

Achieving success with *Our Faithful Journey* will require that NOUMC evaluate and revise its governance structure. Currently, the church has at least twenty-three separate committees. This overly complex structure causes several challenges:

- † It can be unclear who has responsibility for certain activities.
- † Few committee members fully understand their responsibilities.
- † Some issues are covered in more than one committee, stretching thin the time of our most active members who may be involved in more meetings than necessary.
- † It is difficult for the nominating committee to find enough qualified people to fill all positions.
- † Some tactical matters that could be most efficiently handled at the committee level are instead elevated to the Administrative Board, consuming time and attention that could more productively be directed to strategic matters.

To address this, the Administrative Board has agreed to appoint a team to evaluate, revise and streamline the committee structure of the church.

The objective of this program is to define a new streamlined committee structure, and to clearly document the responsibilities of each committee, its authorities, and optimal number and skills of members. This will be completed in time for the 2019 nominating process (that is, the church will use the existing structure for 2018).

What *Our Faithful Journey* is not

As you reflect on how *Our Faithful Journey* will help our church evolve and thrive in the future, it is also worth noting the important things that were intentionally excluded from our long-range planning.

The *Journey* is not a capital campaign – It is assumed that the capacity of the church building and grounds is adequate, at least within the time frame of the *Journey*.

No major expansion to the building, parking lot, or grounds is anticipated. The church has ways to deal with significant increased attendance (adding a second service if necessary, for example) that would not require major building or real estate investments. Indeed, that would be a good problem to have. There may be, however, a need to make minor architectural changes to the church building (to make the entrances more welcoming, for example), but those are not expected to be substantial.

NOUMC will remain a community church – The church will not change its mission or focus; it desires to remain a community-based United Methodist Church. While the church wants to provide an innovative and attractive mix of worship and service activities, it has no desire to compete with non-denominational mega-churches.

We believe our membership will consist of families who value close relationships and intimate worship, steeped in the Methodist traditions of advancing justice, seeking peace, loving God and our neighbors.

The *Journey* does not change what we believe and teach – The theology of the church is outside the scope of *Our Faithful Journey*. What we believe and teach is important and the reason we exist.

What is taught at the church is best left to the responsibility of the pastor and church leaders.



NOUMC Mission Statement

For the glory of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will strive to love our neighbors as ourselves, sharing the great joy and comfort we receive from the teaching of our lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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