

## **Caledonia First Presbyterian Church**

### **2022 Coaching for Sessions and Leaders Grant Report**

#### **How was the grant utilized?**

All current members of the session and Board of Deacons were invited to participate in the coaching sessions. Six coaching sessions were planned for the leadership group and six individual coaching sessions were planned for our pastor, Rev. Vinod Gnanaraj. The first group session was scheduled for August 25, 2022, via Zoom. The final session was held on March,15, 2023. All other sessions were face-to-face meetings with our coach, the Rev. Dr. Betsey Crimmins. These sessions were held at our church in Caledonia.

Early in our discussion, it was decided that the purpose of this coaching is to guide our actions toward sustainable changes. We determined that we would begin the process by creating new vision and mission statements which reflect our hope for the future and are honestly attainable.

We wanted our vision and mission statements to offer our congregation inspiration, encouragement, hope and love. We wanted to gain a clear understanding of ourselves. To assist in this process, we conducted a survey of the congregation asking for their perception of our strengths and values. Members identified some strengths as loving, kind and helpful. Our music program was identified as a definite strength and a vital part of worship. We value loving kindness, ministry and message, and a family atmosphere.

A new Vision Statement was written. Our vision is "To be a Vibrant Church." Our new Mission Statement is in three parts. First, "First Presbyterian Church exists to continuously grow in our faith and in loving relationships with God and each other." Second, "We worship in a non-judgmental, benevolent, sacred, trusting and loving community of faith through prayer, study of the Old and New Testaments, music and song." Third, "We inspire our church to have the courage to convey God's word to all people within and outside our walls."

In order to live in this new vision and mission, we began to identify possible strategies and courses of action. The next steps are to determine timelines for action items, identify resource requirements, and develop a communications plan to make our vision a reality. The leadership group was collectively energized, excited, interested and involved during each coaching session. We were fortunate to have Dr. Crimmins as our coach. She was excellent. We learned a lot about ourselves, our expectations, and our dreams for the future.

#### **What were you hoping to accomplish?**

To provide motivation and direction to our leadership group. To bring a feeling of unity for a positive future for our church. To envision how to be a church in 2027. To seek out various ways to better serve as an elder and deacon.

#### **Who was touched by your project or program?**

All coaching session participants, elders, deacons, Pastor Vinod, and hopefully Rev. Betsey also.

**How did this grant energize or transform your congregation or community?**

It provided our leadership group with excitement and renewed energy and enthusiasm. We worked as a team to begin developing doable ideas to ensure a positive future. This grant has given us the encouragement to make this happen.

**What did you learn from this project and what are your next steps?**

We learned that in order for any of our new initiatives to be successful, communication between the congregation and all participants is essential. All church members need to be informed and involved. We recognize that our small size and aging congregation has challenges to manage. We recognize that some current activities can be let go, and some revitalized, as we look to becoming more relevant in our community. We learned that while we work to attract new membership, we must continue to nurture our current members. We also learned that we have much work ahead of us as we look to the future. We want to be relevant, caring, and generous. We want to be community-oriented, grounded in love, kindness, and faith, so that we can be good neighbors and be a positive influence for future generations.

Our next steps are to develop the responsibilities of our seasonal teams and committees as new ideas are considered. Action plans have to be developed to move our church in a positive direction. We have to explain to the congregation our new Vision and Mission Statements. We must inspire everyone to live into our ideas for the future.

**Where did you see God in this project?**

God was at work in the enthusiasm and increased energy as we explored ideas. Laughter was shared. God helped us to really listen to each other and hear all the views and ideas with an open mind. God empowered us to work cooperatively. He has encouraged us to move forward with renewed energy and enthusiasm as we work toward a faith-filled future.

April 6, 2023