



Future Story

presented as seven core values, May 19, 2013

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Identity |

Since we began our strategic visioning process over ten years ago, we have re-discovered who we are as The Baptist Church of Beaufort. We proudly hold to our historic Baptist beliefs that define who we are.

We as historic Baptists, believe in the one eternal God who revealed Himself to us as Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and Holy Spirit. Our eternal salvation comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. We believe in believer's baptism by immersion. Our sole authority for faith and practice is the Holy Bible, and we affirm the freedom and right of every Christian to interpret and apply scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We emphasize the soul's competency before God and the freedom and responsibility of each person to relate directly to God without imposition of creed, clergy, or government. We believe in the separation of church and state. We recognize the autonomy of the local church under 1) the Lordship of Jesus Christ, 2) the power of the Holy Spirit, and 3) the Holy Bible. We affirm that God calls His people to ministry, leadership, and service in the church, regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status.

We acted to make our Statement of Beliefs a prominent feature of our new member orientation, our ongoing discipleship for all members, and periodically in our worship services. This common sharing of our fundamental beliefs has brought us together with a unity that binds us to one another.

This expression of our faith was just an extension of the missions emphasis The Baptist Church of Beaufort has always had. Missions has been in our DNA for generations. Not only have we sent missions teams nationally and internationally, we have also begun to see our young people called into full time Christian service as missionaries and ministers, continuing the heritage of our church over the centuries. We know who we are. We are committed followers of Jesus Christ whose primary desire is for our community, our nation, and our world to know Him and love Him also.

Fellowship |

The focus of how we fellowship with one another is unity: unity within the church through personal relationships. Our goal is to develop and strengthen relationships as individuals, groups and intergenerational settings. This is accomplished through membership integration, discipleship training and ministry

opportunities. In addition, we provide intentional opportunities for fellowship through church-wide events such as Homecoming and Thanksgiving as well as picnics and socials. We also connect to one another by providing both an intentional time and space for gathering. As of 2013, we did not have a space for gathering on Sunday mornings, such as an atrium or lobby. Now we have that space set aside specifically to come together for the purposes of building personal relationships, between members as well as visitors and new members.

In 2013 our main time for congregational fellowship was our Wednesday night gathering. With an eye toward growing that effort of building up unity through personal relationships, we put extra effort into our Wednesday Night Fellowship and now provide both an excellent meal and attractive setting, with time set aside for interaction and places for relationships to form.

All of these efforts made to increase our unity through fellowship are coordinated by our ministerial staff along with our other Fellowship focused ministry teams and committees.

Ministry |

In 2013, we took a close look at how we were caring for our congregation (members and non-members), and ramped up to secure stronger bonds with one another in order to meet the needs of our body of believers with the compassion and love of Christ. We set out to be a congregation that looked for ways to care and to be cared for, especially in times of need and/or crisis. Through our spiritual gifts assessment as part of our assimilation process, church members share compassion and mercy by leading the way in providing heartfelt care and guidance. We provided new outlets for communicating needs and new ways of disseminating information to the appropriate groups so that our members now have a strong sense of being part of our church ministry in all seasons of life. All communication outlets and technologies are utilized so that no member remains invisible in some of life's darkest trials.

All this was, in part, accomplished by the inauguration of our church as a Stephen Ministry congregation, which revolutionized the pastoral care of our church. It developed a large group of lay ministers who were trained and equipped to utilize their spiritual gifts in an organized way, expanding the ministry base of our church and greatly supplementing the work of the pastoral staff. This became especially apparent with our deacons. The Stephen's Ministry program is based on equipping laypeople to become caregivers both inside and outside the congregation and provides the structure and training needed to provide compassionate care for those experiencing life difficulties. We realized as a congregation that one of our purposes was to care for one another in situational care and maintain relationships with ongoing mentor programs, just as Jesus taught us.

The concept of ministry in our church became alive. Prayer groups abound, intergenerational ministry is taking place with all generations in service to one another. We found that in 2023 we were known in our community as being a church where each member cared and was cared for with the richness that comes only from the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Assimilation |

During the visioning process in 2013, our congregation recognized the vital importance of addressing how we accomplish the task of assimilating folks into the life of the church. Assimilation is the tool by which visitors, new members, and new believers are incorporated into church fellowship and active participation in its missions and ministries. It also addresses the retention and productivity of existing members by promoting active involvement in ministry consistent with one's spiritual gifts and continually equipping and mobilizing members for ministry. As a result, in 2023, we find that many BCOB members have a better understanding of God's call in their lives and are finding ways to live out that call inside the church and out in the world.

We developed a plan to insure that every person who entered BCOB would find acceptance, friendship, opportunity, meaning, and value. We purposed that no visitor, and no new or existing member would be overlooked, misplaced, or lost, but would develop a circle of friends, join a Bible study or small group, understand their spiritual gifts, find meaningful ways to serve, and grow in spiritual maturity. A spiritual gifts database insures that lay leaders are equipped to recruit appropriately gifted workers from a cadre of assimilated church members.

The goals of the assimilation plan were threefold: (1) to lead people to faith in Christ and a commitment to church membership, (2) to guide members toward spiritual maturity, and (3) to equip and mobilize church members for missions and ministry and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. This process is approached systematically in the following ways:

- I. tracking and reaching out to visitors (an expansion of the pre-existing 'Grow Team'), insuring they find a Bible study, small group, and other "connect" opportunities
- II. BCOB 101, New Member Orientation and Understanding Church Membership: salvation, baptism, communion, tithing, church identity/history/Baptist distinctives
- III. BCOB 201, Growing in Spiritual Maturity and BCOB 301, Discovering My Ministry: spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts, and applying giftedness in ministry
- IV. BCOB 401, Fulfilling My Mission: evangelism skills, spiritual formation, missional engagement, the Great Commission

Our website provides information on class offerings and schedules.

Discipleship |

Once spiritual gifts were identified, lay leaders focused on recruiting disciples. Each discipleship opportunity was described on our website. Three Paths to Discipleship were posted:

- Lay leaders identified potential disciples from access to the spiritual gifts' database and contacted those whose gifts matched their program.
- Each opportunity on our website has a link to a BCOB web address for each program's leader. Interested disciples send an email of interest via the link.
- Contact a church staff member to relay your interest to the appropriate program leader.

Leadership opportunities abounded as volunteers served in rotating time frames. In addition to being a committee member, teaching or facilitating groups and/or becoming a leader or member of a missions or ministry team, deacon and usher mentoring programs were offered.

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Lay leaders completed job descriptions at the end of their service to provide continuity of leadership. These are kept on file. Another important aspect of discipleship was stewardship. Bible study lessons were developed and incorporated into lessons for ages 4 to adult in order to: differentiate between tithing and offerings, affirm the importance of both, and to underline God's plan for tithes and offerings.

Technology is used to recruit disciples, publish all discipleship opportunities and facilitate giving.

Worship |

As an outcome of all the changes implemented in 2013, worship at The Baptist Church of Beaufort is now defined by the substance of our hearts in adoration to God. We gather for corporate worship together at least once a week in our sanctuary and provide two opportunities on Sunday mornings. Everything we do in worship is an attempt at giving glory to God.

Our worship is made whole at its core through the teaching of the Bible and its proclamation. The use of worship arts also supports and enhances our worship and may include music, interpretation of scripture such as readings, art, prayer, silence, drama, and more. Intentional effort is made to provide consistent opportunities for congregational interaction and participation. The development of our corporate worship is guided each week by our ministerial staff which includes our Minister of Music and Worship Arts and a supportive worship planning team. In this way every effort is made to plan for an excellent and authentic worship experience.

Worship at The Baptist Church of Beaufort strives to be a timeless endeavor; one that celebrates both the past and present. We humbly accept that worship is not defined by how it makes us feel but rather how it shapes the call of Christ in our lives. While we stand on a strong foundation of what worship has looked like here at The Baptist Church of Beaufort in the past, we affirm that our worship heritage is no better or greater than any other. Recognizing that God is already at work in the world, we intentionally find ways to foster an environment where we are challenged by how Christians all over the world celebrate and glorify the one true God. As we are stretched and strengthened through our worship of God in Christ, God molds us into the image of Jesus, empowering us to go into the world and share His good news.

Administration |

Infrastructure

In anticipating the growth of the church and the need to better utilize space to enhance the new emphases of our church, we developed a master plan for our facilities and our campus. This plan included reconfiguring the existing space in 2013, and for building new space that contributed to and accommodated the growth we have experienced. The master plan created social spaces to answer the need for connection and interaction cited in our visioning process, and it tied our campus together in a way that was both aesthetically pleasing and functionally supportive. We developed strategies for the systematic maintenance of our facilities, including establishing an endowment fund and a grant writing strategy.

Staff

We also reconfigured our ministerial and support staff, both to focus our resources on the emerging emphases of our vision and maximize our financial resources in securing the broadest staff leadership we could provide. In the initial stages, this involved the development of a new alignment of full-time associates and part-time ministry specialists; but now, with the continued growth of our church and a diversified program of ministry, several of those part-time positions have grown into full-time.

Our first step was to call a Minister to Families who provided the leadership to a team of part-time ministry specialists able to focus on preschool, children (grades 1-5), and youth. This minister provides support for a holistic ministry to parents and young families with a strong emphasis on developing intergenerational ministries. Eventually, this focus expanded to include ministries to the particular needs of college students, singles and singles again, and other special demographic groups. Our Child Enrichment Center, for example, is now a viable outreach of the church, regarded as the best facility in Beaufort for the Christian education of toddlers and Pre-K, an excellent place of caring for babies, and a consistent channel for incorporating young families into the life of the church.

Initially, we utilized part-time ministry specialists for education, administration and senior adult ministries to provide leadership for such areas as discipleship, member integration and fellowship, but this quickly led to full-time associates whose roles comprised those duties. As our worship has become a centerpiece of our church, we also changed the job title of our Minister of Music to “Minister of Music and Worship Arts” to emphasize the broader duties of worship leadership. To this end a need also developed to hire a part-time worship technician.

In conjunction with becoming a Stephen’s Ministries congregation our deacon ministry was refined. We reduced the number of active deacons from 24 to 17. Some served on the caring teams and others in leadership. The wider deacon body is utilized to help with such duties as the Lord’s Supper and homebound communion.

Who is The Baptist Church of Beaufort? |

We are a 21st century church with 18th Century roots. We know who we are. We are committed followers of Jesus Christ whose primary desire is for our community, our nation, and our world to know Christ and to make him known.