



June 25, 2023

## **Missional Action Planning Steering Committee (MAP) Vestry Update: Affirmed by Vestry June 25, 2023**

### **Purpose of MAP**

Our motto at SPOTH during the Covid pandemic was “Adapt and Overcome.” This is precisely what we did by quickly and successfully transitioning to online worship and carrying on a vibrant youth Ministry for over 2 years. Now it's time to look ahead, plan for the future and develop a three-stage strategic plan – a Missional Action Plan (MAP) – that is being facilitated by David Krause, a coach from the diocese of Toronto. Our MAP is intended to help us focus our efforts and resources on what's most important to us as a church and keep us working together in our mission to share God's love within our church, community and world.

David has guided MAP committee members through its first two phases, which are mostly completed. Committee members include Andrew, Anna, Ben, Esther, Gary, Lou, Lynne, Stephen+ and Tracy. Phase One focussed on identifying the current state of SPOTH by interviewing Ministry leaders and building a SWOC table – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges. Phase Two saw committee members gather and digest significant congregational input. To finish Phase Two, the committee will gather external community input this summer. Phase Three will involve the actual writing and communicating of our MAP that reflects our church and where our congregation wants to see it in the future.

**Phase One: The Current State of SPOTH.** The MAP team interviewed 24 Ministry leaders, covering prayer, Mandarin, finance, worship, communications, education, greeting card, outreach, hospitality, property and our cemetery. The information was collated, analyzed and synthesized as follows:

- **Strengths:** Our people are our strength, and we work well together. We have a strong, capable leadership team.
- **Weaknesses:** There are not enough of us to share all the work and our church community is aging. We are not connecting with and bringing in enough younger members.
- **Opportunities:** We can grow our congregation by bringing children and their parents to church and should document current Ministries' processes to transition them to new leaders.
- **Challenges:** How do we move past the pandemic and return to normal – or begin a new normal? How can we connect with our local Unionville community to welcome more members to our congregation?

The MAP team sincerely thanks our many fellow congregants for sharing their time and thoughtful feedback both in writing and during the many focus groups and one-on-one interviews we conducted.

**Phase Two: Congregational and Community Consultations.** MAP team members consulted face to face with 35 congregation members either in person or online and we continue receiving written submissions. Every effort was made to ensure all feedback was captured to best help guide our work. External consultations will be completed later this year with Unionville community leaders.

Key findings tell us that SPOTH is a warm, inviting place of worship where personal connections first brought and now keep members here. As well as a vibrant element of our church, the children's Ministry is seen as its future.

Phase 3 work is underway as we write, seek vestry approval and communicate our MAP with our fellow congregation members. It's worth noting that a MAP is a living document that should continually be updated as our church and congregation change.



## **Phases 1 & 2 Background**

As MAP committee members interviewed parishioners over the past year, we heard many stories of how welcoming and warm our congregation is. We also heard a consistent desire for our church to rebuild and grow as we arise from the pandemic. We thank everyone who contributed to our conversations and shared their passion for our church. All perspectives were heard, noted and valued.

Our planning meetings were always notable for the respect expressed by the team for the diversity of views presented. With such a gifted and committed congregation, it quickly became clear that more ideas were being generated than could quickly be acted upon. Some of our areas of strength have not been identified for special focus, including our refugee sponsorship work and our youth programs.

As a congregation we highly value the following, which will remain top of mind as we continue our work:

- Worship and music
- Fellowship and hospitality
- Authentic faith
- Children's Ministry
- Scripture
- Reaching out to others

## **Our MAP's Three Overarching Goals and Accompanying Action Priorities**

After significant consultation with congregants and internal community members, followed by thorough discussion and reflection by committee members, we are pleased to have agreed on three overarching goals for SPOTH's MAP. It should be noted that we gathered an enormous amount of data and as such, cannot act on everything we learned at once. We are pleased to have found consensus, drawn conclusions and can share our key findings upon which our final Missional Action Plan will be developed.

### **1. Strengthening the Core** (Shoring up the foundation)

- Refreshing the Sunday Service
- Developing a Communication Strategy
- Re-igniting Our Fellowship

### **2. Broadening Our Outreach** (Expanding the circle)

- Reboot the small group ministry
- Sponsoring refugee families
- Cultivating community outreach, e.g., visiting retirement homes, hospices, hospitals
- Improving our community profile by partnering with other churches on events

### **3. Stewarding Our Future** (Planning for sustainability)

- Addressing the maintenance challenges of an aging church in a nearly 40-year-old building
- Encouraging and securing estate bequests from our congregants
- Generating alternate revenue streams through the rental of our parish hall and commercial kitchen
- Implementing a long-term financial strategy founded on our faith-based budget

To ensure we successfully achieve these three overarching goals, we have decided to prioritize all actions for 2023 on realizing the first goal of Strengthening Our Core. Completing the three specific priorities listed will best help us achieve this goal.



**First Priority to Strengthen the Core: Refreshing the Sunday Service**

We quickly pivoted to online worship during the pandemic by developing digital worship strategies, including online daily messages, worship videos, live-streaming Sunday worship and Zoom gatherings. Many diverse views were expressed about worship, music and our Sunday gatherings. Consensus is clear that we need to refresh our Sunday experience. This includes:

- Changing the form and style of liturgy
- Diversifying the music used as vehicle for worship
- Adding fellowship time, e.g., coffee hour
- Defining the role of youth in worship
- Enhancing communication during worship with bulletins and screens

This work is led by MAP subcommittee members Stephen+, Andrew Estabrooks with Nina Cotton, and others will be recruited.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Begin by</b>	<b>Success Indicators</b>	<b>Possible Future Work</b>
Promote Daily Messages to get the word out about Sunday services Print more service bulletins to ensure enough hard copies are available for everyone in attendance and encourage congregants to take them home and share with friends and family	April 2023	More bulletins out & fewer left each week	
Revive coffee hour twice/month and enhance with baked treats	April 2023	More attendees	Weekly coffee hours start in Sept?
What else down the road to keep this moving forward?	Fall 2023		
Create a Worship Diverse committee to investigate best worship practices around form and style of liturgy and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the congregation plans for experiments</li> <li>• Implement experiments and gather and assess feedback</li> </ul>	Sept 2023	Committee struck, begins work before end of Sept	
Develop a plan to encourage, gather and utilize more congregational feedback to best refresh the worship experience	Early Oct 2023	Committee begins work early Oct to collect and implement feedback to modify messaging & demonstrate we are listening and MAP is working	Late 2023, ensure initial changes made and continue seeking feedback
Diversify the music used as a vehicle for worship	2023	More congregants engaged in musical service during performances. Positive feedback	
Define the role of youth in worship	2023	More active, engaged youth	



**Second Priority to Strengthen the Core: Developing a Communication Strategy**

As a community, we love and are proud of our church. We must clearly communicate who we are to our changing community and review and update current communication activities to ensure we use the most effective tools across the digital and online Ministry.

This work is led by MAP subcommittee members Ben Cheung and Gary Guthrie, and others will be recruited.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Begin by</b>	<b>Success Indicators</b>	<b>Possible Future Work</b>
Create an integrating communications team to assess the effectiveness of current communications across both physical and digital channels	Fall 2023	Integrated action plan developed	
Review effectiveness of digital and online Ministry co-existing	Fall 2023		
How do we allocate resources to e-newsletter and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube?	Fall 2023	Social media selected	Hire social media person, ideally SPOTH member
What is our missional question: <i>Broadcast</i> what we are doing <u>or</u> <i>Attract</i> others in?	Fall 2023	Missional question answered	
Integrating best practices to continually strengthen the communication strategy	Throughout 2023		

**Third Priority to Strengthen the Core: Re-igniting Our Fellowship**

Fellowship – our personal connections – will help ensure our congregation is strong and vital. Covid has damaged our fellowship by preventing us from gathering in person, hence our need to re-ignite both our social and spiritual fellowship. We will rebuild social fellowship by increasing our connections through in-person gatherings and grow spiritual fellowship through small group Ministry.

This work is led by MAP Subcommittee members Tracy Nwonyimi & Lou Gizzarelli, and others will be recruited.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Begin by</b>	<b>Success Indicators</b>	<b>Possible Future Work</b>
Build our social fellowship by increasing connections with in-person gatherings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and assess effectiveness of current offerings: coffee time, tea social, hoe down, gala, dinners, farm gatherings, family events</li> </ul>	Summer 2023	Attendance, positive feedback, requests for more events	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop other social events with assigned teams to carry them out</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine and apply a fellowship metric aside from just attendance numbers</li> </ul>			
Grow our spiritual fellowship through small group Ministry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current small group offerings to identify congregational needs and recruit new leaders</li> <li>Start new small groups in the fall according to parish needs E.g., Parenting group, Employment group, New Canadians group. An age-20s group? Other?</li> </ul>	Summer 2023  Fall 2023		



### **Concurrent Planning to Address the Other Emergent MAP Goals**

As we invest our prayers and energy in our three priorities under Strengthening the Core of our church life, we will begin planning to address the other two goals that emerged from our investigation. And we will also engage with external local Unionville community leaders to identify what, if any, needs present themselves to us and how we can best meet them.

For now, a small task force led by Gary Guthrie will conduct community engagement, and the other two goals – Broadening Our Outreach and Stewarding Our Future – will be addressed later.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Begin by</b>	<b>Success Indicators</b>	<b>Possible Future Work</b>
Identify local leaders to begin community engagement to discern our broader mission in Unionville	Fall 2023	Names and commitments to meet with us from Unionville community leaders. Determine if there is a role for SPOTH within the greater Unionville community	