

PHASE 1: 2016 – 2019

THE FUTURE STORY // CONNECTED AND IN MISSION MAP SUMMARY

As we begin living into our Future Story, here is our map - a guide for this journey that we as a church are on toward becoming Decatur First – Connected and In Mission. Over the course of the last year and a half, we have through prayer and conversation felt God calling us to be a more missional church, to be a church where each person feels empowered to use his or her God-given gifts toward building holy community and boldly spreading the transformative love of Jesus. With that vision in mind, the Decatur First MapMakers have laid out this plan to help guide us. This document is a summary of the full map.

This map is a living document that will evolve as we discover our gifts and passions and how we can best serve God, each other and the greater community. Several new ministry teams are described in this map. Initially, the Lead Team will gather people with gifts and passions in the areas described to form an initial core for each of these teams, but as we continue to build relationships within the congregation and identify our own and one another’s gifts, these teams will grow and change. Our success depends on each person in our church family being called to connect and build our Future Story, and the staff will be empowered to play a key role in supporting this mission. The intent is not to prescribe everything that happens over the next three years, but to provide a starting point. As always, we will seek to follow God’s lead.

– The MapMakers, February 2016

FULLFILLMENT ACTIONS (ranked by priority)	FIRST 120 DAYS: – MAY 2016	16 MONTHS: – MAY 2017	40 MONTHS: – MAY 2019
RELATIONSHIPS: Foster deep and lasting connections across the church through the building of new relationships and the nurturing of existing ones. (p.1, ¶1; p.2, ¶2)*	_ Form Connections Ministry Team. _ Develop and implement at least one relationship exercise for the congregation. _ Identify existing groups within the church family, such as seniors, youth, families of young children and college students.	_ Create opportunities for members of existing groups to interact with other groups. _ Facilitate ways for people to be involved in a facet of the church previously unknown to them, including during and across worship services. _ Foster relationships through the regular planning of at least two “out of church” events designed to let members get to know each other.	_ Check the pulse of the congregation to ensure relationship building activities, worship building activities, etc. have been successfully incorporated into the church’s DNA and people feel more connected.

* Page and paragraph numbers refer to locations in the Future Story Narrative

<p>GIFTS: Discover, celebrate and deploy the tremendous gifts God has given us. (p.2 ¶3-4, p.4 ¶2-3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Form a Community Engagement Team. _ Meet to organize a church-wide census and gifts inventory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Administer the census/gifts inventory and build a database to make this information accessible. _ Develop a Roving Listeners-type program, aimed at engaging individuals in deeper conversations about their gifts, talents and hobbies and help them connect with others who share their passions. _ Support the formation of small groups based around shared interests, gifts and talents and encourage regular meetings. _ Begin to explore opportunities for missions to grow out of the gifts inventory/small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Gift-centered groups identify and execute projects that use their gifts/talents to help the congregation and the community. _ Community Engagement Team to focus on documenting efforts of these groups and communicating those regularly to the congregation. _ Aim to have a staff position responsible for serving as a “community engagement specialist” who will support these small groups, connect them with community needs and aggressively promote these opportunities both internally and externally. _ Expand the Roving Listeners program into the larger community as a way to raise the church’s profile and develop opportunities for broader connections.
<p>MISSION: Empower the congregation to engage the vibrant, growing and diverse community around us, using our gifts to serve as a beacon of hope and grace for Decatur and the surrounding area. (p.4 ¶1-3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Establish 1-2 mission projects a month to allow for hands-on engagement with existing organizations and projects in the Decatur area (staff led to begin with) with deliberate communication to the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Community Engagement Team to continue to offer hands-on mission projects and other mission opportunities, with a primary focus (for the time being) on partnering with established organizations. _ Begin to explore opportunities for missions that grow out of gifts inventory. _ Create ways to communicate and celebrate mission accomplishments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Work with church leadership to establish guidelines for congregation-initiated missions including starting and ending mission projects with support and celebration. _ Continue to connect like-minded folks with an eye toward mission and establishing a staff position for support of gifts and mission. _ Explore establishment of 501(c)3 for funding and resourcing mission projects.

<p>WORSHIP: Enhance our worship lives to connect, shape, touch and sustain us _ guided by developing relationships with God, ourselves and our community in our calling as a missional church. (p. 2 ¶7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Worship staff to provide recommendations to the Space Use Team for immediate and easy ways to implement changes to our worship areas. _ Worship leaders and planners to ensure sermons and worship experiences celebrate and reinforce themes of spiritual development, relationship building, gifts and our missional vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Current worship leaders look for easy, short-term or experimental improvements to our worship services to better reflect our missional and relational focus _ Develop Worship Team to help coordinate logistic work by those in worship positions and work with staff to develop and guide worship _ Create an ad-hoc group to evaluate current worship services and provide recommendations for new possibilities. _ Work with the Community Engagement Team to develop ways through the use of the gifts inventory to more fully involve laity in worship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Implement Worship Evaluation Team recommendations, beginning with those inside the walls and then expanding to include how we go beyond the walls with our worship life. _ Consider retrofitting or modifying worship spaces in order to more fully engage the worship life of the congregation into our missional future.
<p>STORYKEEPERS: Ensure we stay true to the Future Story with a commitment to transparency and regular communication to the congregation. (p.1 ¶1-3, p.2 ¶6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Form StoryKeepers Team. _ Conduct initial meeting, deciding on a process for evaluating how the fulfillment actions are proceeding, how they are meeting the goals of the Future Story, and how they are being communicated to the congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Decide on process for continuing to evaluate progress on the Future Story, communicate with the congregation, and modify the map as needed _ Keep the Future Story in front of the congregation and church leadership as a primary guide to the ministry and mission of the church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Continue this work, ensuring regular communication and celebration of successes along the way.
<p>COMMUNITY: Foster long-lasting connections within our church family and the greater community by meeting people where they are to fulfill their God-given potential and promoting our good works. (p.1 ¶3, p.4 ¶1-4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ The Community Engagement Team will reach out to staff and lay leaders to build a catalog of existing community outreach programs. _ Create a list of ways to promote our community engagement efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Begin promoting existing outreach programs, with the goal of raising our profile in the community and building a shared sense of mission within our church family. _ Through the gifts inventory process, document additional community outreach efforts that are already underway and begin promoting those both internally and externally. _ Work with the new gift-based groups to identify new opportunities for community engagement and make plans to begin promoting those both internally and externally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Assess progress of the gift-based groups, identifying any additional support/needs and begin promoting their efforts internally and externally. _ Identify the needs of the local community and develop a regular series of monthly workshops or seminars that will be open to the public, draw on the unique talents and knowledge of our church family and offer important assistance and support.

<p>YOUTH: Establish a dynamic youth ministry that inspires and builds lasting connections, providing a spiritual home of education, fellowship and service. (p.2 ¶2-4, p.3 ¶4-5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Continue the process of reconstituting the Youth Leadership Team to help plan activities and serve as liaisons to other committees as appropriate. _ Highlight opportunities for the congregation to volunteer with the youth ministry. _ Arrange for church leadership to attend a youth meeting so youth can become more familiar with the leaders of the church. _ Insure youth are specifically provided opportunities to participate in church teams as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Redevelop the Youth Action Team comprised of volunteers and parents to serve as a support system and sounding board for the Youth Director. _ Develop and communicate a clear vision for youth programs, with particular emphasis on spiritual education and development. _ Develop and execute plans to engage parents to become more involved in the youth ministry. _ Implement joint projects and partnership opportunities with the adult Sunday School classes. _ Offer training for youth volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Continue projects and partnership opportunities from previous months. _ Conduct a review to insure youth have been fully integrated into various church programs including ministry, worship, mission, etc. _ Look for ways to expand our ministries with children and youth in the wider community.
<p>CHILDREN: Build an enhanced Children's Ministry program to enrich the Christian education of our children. (p.2 ¶2-4, p.3 ¶4-5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Existing Children's Ministry Team to research and begin to incorporate a more enriching curriculum, such as Godly Play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Develop a volunteer system for parents and others in the congregation to become involved in Children's Ministry. _ Develop an enhanced summer program to increase attendance during those months. _ Establish and promote a Sunday morning coffee time for parents who are not in a Sunday School class. _ Work with key staff to explore further curriculum enhancements that will build year over year for children to develop a strong Christian Education. _ Develop a plan to enhance parental involvement, through family programs throughout the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Implement an enhanced children's church program during the 11 a.m. service to bring together Christian education and worship. _ Create a welcome center for new parents to provide information about the church and Children's Ministry. _ Look for ways to more fully connect children to all facets of church life – ministry, worship, mission, etc. _ Look for ways to expand our ministries with children and youth in the wider community.

<p>SPIRITUAL EDUCATION: Convey biblical principles, in a manner consistent with the doctrine of the United Methodist Church, and in a way that meets each member of our community wherever they are in their spiritual journey. (p.2 ¶3, p3, ¶5-6)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Establish a Spiritual Education Team. _ Survey the congregation about interests and principles they would like to discuss or learn more about. _ Begin to offer regular, dynamic and diverse educational opportunities. _ Make sure educational opportunities are well communicated to the congregation and community. _ Recruit volunteers to lead classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Utilize outside resources to offer online educational opportunities for our congregation. _ Develop and execute a four-week Summer Seminar, a shortened time of study for what is historically a period of low attendance.
<p>HOSPITALITY: Foster a culture where each person feels seen, welcomed, accepted and loved by our radically inclusive Christian community. (p.1 ¶2, p.2 ¶2, p.3 ¶4 & 6, p. 4 ¶1)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Create a subcommittee of the Connections Ministry Team to focus on hospitality. _ Hospitality Team will create and enact a reinvigorated welcoming process, with a goal of providing a personal sense of welcome to each person who attends each service. _ Hospitality Team will discuss with Space Use Team the need to create a space for fellowship before and after each service. _ Create a subcommittee of the Connections Ministry Team (CARE Team) to focus on providing care, support and love to members of our church family during trying times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Hospitality Team will implement improved process for welcoming newcomers and begin looking at other church operations and programs, with the goal of infusing Christian hospitality into everything we do. _ CARE Team will continue to grow operations and work with the Community Engagement Team to identify and recruit volunteers, with periodic evaluations and changes as needed.

<p>FACILITIES: Reimagine our facilities to foster relationships among the congregation and connections with the community, while supporting Christian education and our Future Story. (p.3 ¶2-4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Form Facilities Use team. _ Determine the current use of all rooms. _ Create space for our youth that is engaging and provides them a comfortable environment for fellowship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Make quick and easy changes to worship spaces to provide for more interaction within the congregation. _ Design a welcoming and inviting place for worship and a space for fellowship before and after each service. _ Develop a plan to redesign and use non-worship space (gym, Fellowship Hall, parking lot entrance, etc.) in a way that will engage the community and promote our missional focus, with a guiding principle of shared space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Evaluate how effective the changes to worship space have been on facilitating worship. _ Evaluate what impact the changes to non-worship space has made in engaging the community. _ Continue to look at how to use all space to be more efficient in terms of continued energy costs.
<p>CHURCH ORGANIZATION: Restructure our staff and laity leadership to align with the Future Story, empowering each facet of church life to be in mission and ministry in hands-on, nimble, creative and effective ways. (p.3 ¶7-8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ MapMakers assist the Nominating Committee in identifying and filling those lay leadership positions that are required by the Book of Discipline and/or a priority in light of our Future Story. _ Create an ad-hoc Church Organization Design Team to reorganize the current leadership structure. _ Encourage SPRC to prioritize the Future Story with respect to pastoral succession and staffing decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Complete new organizational plan. _ Implement a process for laity to come with ideas for a new mission or need for a new committee to outreach or other needs of the church that they have identified. _ Identify a member or members of the congregation with excellent competencies in Lay Leadership Development who could lead the way rewriting descriptions of leadership positions, recruitment and training for church leadership. _ SPRC with help from StoryKeepers to redefine the roles and responsibilities of pastors and paid staff in keeping with advancing our future story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Nominations Committee, with assistance of gifts inventory, continue to recruit leaders and ministry team members to advance the church's missions and ministries as the Future Story unfolds. _ SPRC continue to build a staff team that empowers the laity to be in mission and ministry.
<p>BUDGET: Align our church budget to meet the priorities set forth in our Future Story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Present the MapMakers recommendations to the finance team for consideration to ensure the budget is aligned with the Future Story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ StoryKeepers and Finance Committee to work together to develop metrics to align budget with Future Story goals. _ Ensure Space Use Team and Trustees are using Bassett House funds in alignment with the Future Story. _ Trustees to develop guidelines for use of bequests and extraordinary gifts that are in keeping with and supportive of the Future Story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> _ Review metrics to see if they are still aligned or need to be adjusted. _ Continue working with the Finance Committee to make sure the budget remains aligned with the Future Story. _ Ensure the Space Use Team and Trustees are using Bassett House funds in alignment with the Future Story.