

**Appendices: Reports from Surveys and Congregational Interactions**  
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## Joint Meeting with the Session and Board of Deacons

November 15, 2005

Members of the Visioning Task Force (VTF) met with the Session and the Board of Deacons over supper and then engaged the Elders and Deacons in a joint meeting to explore directions for the VTF and share concerns and hopes for the future of Bradley Hills. We asked the Session and Deacons to talk in mixed small groups about the following questions. This is what we heard.

### Where do you believe that we have connected well with our mission, vision and values?

Worship: Joyful  
Compassion: Memorial Services  
Open-minded: Children/Adults  
ATF/Accessibility  
Mission: Reaching out  
Faith in action  
Community  
BASE program  
Outreach, local and global  
Opportunities for involvement in congregational life  
Diversity in educational offerings  
Tackling tough issues respectfully

### Where do you believe we have room to grow?

Proclaiming "living" Christ  
Is there ownership?  
Children's attendance: is church school engaging?  
Corporate celebrations  
Adult education attendance  
Being open to new music  
Nurturing vital faith in adults and youth  
Concrete steps for hospitality: define and act on them  
Challenge new members to be involved  
No blue stickers (find a better way to identify visitors)

### Name three hopes or dreams for the Bradley Hills community in the next 5-10 years.

(The number of stickers following an item indicates how many participants identified the item as important when the group was asked to indicate preferences)

Retirement home  
Increase in diversity (4 stickers) -living the statement in our bulletin  
More young people and families (17 stickers)  
More commitment and connection of/with members (2 stickers)  
Increase in participation in church life (15 stickers)  
Strong youth program Sunday and during week (6 stickers)  
Reaching youth at risk and in community (1 sticker)

Accessibility, particularly Memorial Hall side  
Van (accessible) to help bring members to BHPC  
Acceptance of and involvement in Nursery School  
Revitalizing our building (education wing) (3 stickers)  
Attaining financial goals and reserves (1 sticker)

**Name three important challenges or concerns you have for the Bradley Hills community.**

(The number of stickers following an item indicates how many participants identified the item as important when the group was asked to indicate preferences)

Nurture active membership (7 stickers)  
Help people feel connected (14 stickers) (both new and long time members)  
Difficulty recruiting leadership/volunteers (5 stickers)  
Hunger for spirituality/commitment (8 stickers)  
Finding replacements for burned out volunteers (7 stickers)  
Securing financial base (5 stickers) – establishing reserves, etc., caring for an aging building  
Encourage stronger prayer life (1 sticker)  
Bethesda bias (2 stickers)

## Responses to Question Cards Placed in the Sunday Bulletins

The Visioning Task Force (VTF) sought initial congregational feedback in response to question prompts on index cards included in the bulletin over three Sundays – January 8, 15 and 22.

### 1. Question Cards Distributed during Worship in January

#### a. January 8: *From our list of Bradley Hills' Values, which value most inspires you personally?*

**68 cards were returned;** a few selected multiple values as reflected in the numerical count below. *Note, however, that Compassion was unintentionally omitted from the list of values on the response card!* Some common themes reflected in the listing of the values are reflected below.

**Community** (23) - Many drew a connection between community and other aspects of the Christian life – drawing closer to God and the Spirit and finding nurture in the community and being prepared for service and witness in the world through the strength of our congregational ties

**Open-Mindedness** (14) Respondents emphasized the value in being open and reaching out to those of different connections and beliefs. One noted that this value distinguished Bradley Hills from most churches.

**Integrity** (14) Respondents tied this value to the honest living out of one's core beliefs as followers of Jesus Christ, and that the church is a key anchor for this value.

**Joy** (12) The experience of the sacred in life, thankfulness for the blessings that God has bestowed on us, and the great goodness and grace of God are reasons for Joy.

**Honesty** (8) Like Integrity, Honesty is a need in a community and in personal life.

**Hospitality** (7) A couple respondents tied hospitality to other values such as community and open-mindedness. *This is the only value where a commenter, who felt the value was lacking in the congregation, listed it as an important need at BHPC.*

**Beauty** (5) Beauty was seen by one as a means of experiencing God without “over-thinking” things; another saw Beauty as important to spiritual nourishment/

**Quality** (1) Listed among several other values by this one respondent.

#### b. January 15: *What Does BHPC Do Best?*

**54 cards were returned. Worship and Community Service** drew the strongest responses, followed by comments that can be characterized within **Spiritual Growth and Development** and **Community and Hospitality**.

**Worship** drew about **37 comments** as either primary or secondary comments on the cards, with sermons/preaching and music noted as specific aspects of the worship experience that were appreciated by the respondents.

**Community Service** drew about **19 comments**. There was no particular differentiation among the comments, but a couple noted involvement across the congregation and particularly the youth mission trips as strength.

**Spiritual Growth and Development** also drew about **19 comments**, within a range of specific comments commending concrete activities such as adult education as well as more general or personal comments such as “encourages self examination”, “ supports me with love and spiritual nourishment,” and “applies Christian principles to everyday life.”

**Community and Hospitality** drew about **13 comments** focusing on the congregation’s relationship with each other, including member care, fellowship, and a sense of community, to welcoming others, whether specifically a warm welcome to visitors or general tolerance, open-mindedness and acceptance of others. *Two respondents indicated that BHPC could do better engaging with one another and being a friendlier congregation.*

**c. January 22: What are You Most Passionate about as a Christian?**

**52 cards were returned**, many with more than one response. Most responses could be clustered in these categories: **Relation to God and Living Christ’s Message; Mission and Social Justice;** and **Tolerance and Acceptance.**

**Relation to God and Living Christ’s Message** (23 responses) A yearning to connect to God by living one’s life as God calls him or her to do, being open to seeking, hearing and celebrating God, sharing spirit and shaping ourselves into disciples to become the living Christ, were among the responses. Others emphasized the desire to pattern ourselves on Jesus and his teachings and being open to the opportunities to live out Christ’s message. A number of these responses could just as easily have been placed in the Mission and Social Justice category, because of the connection the writer made with living out God’s love and promises in our work, service and witness in the world. One noted that “BHPC provides education, opportunity and support to me as I live this mission.”

**Mission and Social Justice** (19 responses): Respondents generally emphasized giving and sharing one’s resources with others, showing compassion for others, promoting social justice in the face of large disparities in wealth, were among the responses.

**Tolerance and Acceptance** (16 responses): Respondents here placed a strong emphasis on trying to promote respect for the views of others and reaching out across faith traditions to build ties with others. Our relation with BJC was noted as a positive example. “Loving one’s neighbor as oneself” was identified by several.

**“OPEN MIKE” with the VISIONING TASK FORCE  
following the CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

January 29, 2006

Although this session followed the annual meeting well into Sunday afternoon, about 25 persons stayed to listen or provide comments to the Visioning Task Force (VTF) in an unstructured format. The discussion included identification of perceived strengths at BHPC, some strong concerns, particularly in the children’s education area, and some general reflections on values or focuses for the future. Here are some general themes from the discussion:

**Authenticity:**

A couple speakers picked up this phrase from the day’s sermon: Saying what we mean and living what we mean. Being engaged in an open-minded viewpoint towards faith and a metaphorical understanding of the Bible (see Marcus Borg’s *Heart of Christianity*). Some saw such a viewpoint as being attractive to a broader age range.

**Mission and Social Justice:**

BHPC does mission well. It energizes us and is infectious. Many members travel and speak about our mission work during these travels. Look for ways for non-members to contribute to the mission projects of our church. Plan mission that is age-appropriate across the broad spectrum of the church. When we’ve done this, we’ve had tremendous turnout.

Care for creation was viewed as critical by one speaker, who noted that this value had been growing in the evangelical understanding of stewardship of creation. See, e.g., Brian McLaren, CONSIDER THE TURTLES OF THE FIELD, in *Sojourners Magazine*, found at <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0403&article=040320>.

We should have concern for creation in all we do. Look at the cost of energy. It would behoove us to live within the constraints of these costs and to keep environmental issues in focus. Some things are happening: e.g., the covenant congregational program for the Chesapeake Bay.

We should take up issues of science and medicine – a lot of ethical issues are involved. We should have the vision of setting leadership for these issues as we have done in the past, such as on the Human Genome Project. Take a stand, for example, on outrageous medical drug pricing.

**Church school:** Several speakers expressed grave concern with the attendance and health of our church school: declining attendance, greater difficulty in recruiting teachers, lack of parental involvement. An average of 15 children (age 3 years to 5<sup>th</sup> grade) is attending church school each week. How can we make our children excited to be here? How does our church school attendance compare with other churches in the area?

Holding church school concurrently with worship was viewed as worth trying, because some families indicate that they have only an hour to give on Sunday mornings. We may be

splintering the younger families through three groups: church school, Worship for Children, and TASTE (Tuesday afternoons). We have a problem recruiting teachers... but Dads can teach, older people/younger people can teach.

We should have a passionate vision to have more kids than grown ups here every week.

**Spirituality:** The Evangelism brochure, “Peace from the Inside Out,” is great and a wonderful

program offering here at BHPC. . How do we address spirituality in the course of all we do? Look at the reconciling force the church is to be in the world. How does it apply to the individual person, to the family?

**Engaging each other:** The Welcoming Task Force engaged people to tell their stories, heard each other, and brought Biblical understanding to the process. We should have more sharing of stories by members of this congregation, wherever we may be in contact with each other. We need to really listen to each other -- understand why we want to be living with Jesus Christ in our lives. Meaningfulness is an important word.

We need to structure the way we do business here so we are nurturing our teachers, our leaders, and our parents. Be involved in training people to do the jobs they do here. Be intentional in this and be nurturing so a spiritual element is built in.

We need to find a creative way to interact with each other that doesn't take so much driving (fossil fuels) and time away from families (which meetings do.) More use of technology and the web. Should we hold online meetings? We should build relationships through church based in part on chat rooms. Kids are tied to technology – we need to think in that direction.

**Engaging those outside our community:**

Where do we come from geographically? A strength may be in a message that transcends parish boundaries. What is this message?

Are we prepared to meet the challenges of a changing society, one that may see greater economic pressure and that has a continuing cultural war? There is a cultural war going on with the theological right. We can be a “beacon of light” standing against a darkening exterior.

See how we can engage the NIH community.

The emphasis in the mission/values statement on quality puts pressure on people. Quality is not a welcoming word.

**SYNOPSIS of SESSION DISCUSSION with VISIONING TASK FORCE  
at SESSION RETREAT, February 26, 2006**

Members of the Visioning Task Force met with the Session at their retreat. After an overview of the planning process and concepts of transformation (moving from traditional to missional understandings of our purpose and goals), we broke into four small groups to discuss one of the first four questions and to discuss the 5<sup>th</sup> question (our big holy audacious goal). The following reflects the reports from the group discussions and some general observations from the group as a whole.

***1. What does Bradley Hills do better than anyone else does (or among the best)?***

- Worship - in all aspects: word, music & musicians, other participants, number of members who participate in aspects of worship services
- Mission efforts - a strong core of participants
- Celebrations - sacraments, weddings, memorials, seasonal and liturgical holidays
- Leadership on Issues - examining social issues and taking a stand, e.g., sexuality, peace, science
- Partnership with others - the relation with Bethesda Jewish Congregation; other ecumenical relationships. Reflects values of tolerance and open-mindedness

***2. What are we most passionate about?***

- Mission
- Worship/Music
- Education [we have passion for it, but it is not what we are doing best]

***3. How are we as a community of faith being called to grow at this point in time?***

- Commitment (showing it)
- Seeing God in the world
- Discipleship
- Building on the gifts that we have
- Convey the love of God

[We reflected on the Session's work from the prior day with Doughty's *Walking in Integrity*, The Session identified Simplicity, Humility, Mystery, and Prophetic Living as capacities in which to grow. Several Elders emphasized again the importance of pruning to address the feeling of being overwhelmed]

#### **4. Who are our neighbors?**

- We don't need to be a traditional neighborhood church
- Our neighbors are not just next door - but the metropolitan Washington area
- Those who want a religious education for their children
- We are not representative of our neighborhood: they're younger and are ethnically, economically, and religiously more diverse
- Those who are in our building - groups and guests who attend events, hold meetings, etc., at Bradley Hills

#### **5. What is our big, holy audacious goal (BHAG)? What do you hope Bradley Hills will feel and act like in 15 years?**

##### *Group 1*

- Create an environment to build discipleship by nurturing our strengths and addressing our weaknesses

##### *Group 2*

- Become a Center for Spiritual Education, Reconciliation and Peace (within and without ourselves)

[Need to restructure governance to make Session spiritual shepherds of the congregation]

##### *Group 3*

- Be a place known for its passionate inclusiveness, knowing that God's love is for ALL, that fosters the ability to live life that acknowledges God's love is in all - demonstrated in living and doing,
- Being a Sanctuary for God's creation

##### *Group 4*

- Each member is so excited to be a part of this community that we invite others to join us and don't need advertising!
- Being a peaceful presence drawing people into our community
- Be strange, be uncommon
- Have a growing number of children and youth - a critical mass

#### ***Some General Observations from Our Discussions***

- Be Visionary  
    Missional  
    Connectional
- We need to SIMPLIFY - focus our resources and energies, achieve balance, potentially reduce programs
- Core pieces of our ministry are good and sound

- Love God” should be at the core - Jesus’ message was one of simplicity: Love God and Love Neighbor
- Session members to focus on more spirituality
- Focus ourselves with clear goals: “God’s pruning” of distractions and those things that stray too far from our articulated goals
- Take a hard look at governance structure
- Allow time for Lay Ministries to turn to goals
- No turf-holding
- Look for growing areas of congregation

**Visioning Task Force Meeting with the Bradley Hills Church Staff**  
**March 21, 2006**

Members of the Visioning Task Force met with most of the Bradley Hills staff: Susan Andrews, Scott Winnette, Sue Dixon, Karen Werner, Amy DeCourt, Mimi Miller, Debbie Chase, Farid Beltran. The purpose of the meeting was for VTF members to talk with staff about their vision for BHPC. The discussion centered around four questions.

***1. What does Bradley Hills do better than anyone else (or among the best)?***

- Provides a home for extraordinary diversity. We have diverse passions and diverse interests. This is both a blessing and a curse.
- A fully utilized building. The building is a tool for mission.
- We do a lot with the larger church. A lot of people are involved with the Presbyterian community and the Presbytery. We are a connected congregation.
- Giving money. Funneling financial resources to those in need.
- Intellectual, open-minded look at theology and issues. Willingness to discuss and explore (this could also be a weakness.)
- Pay attention to being decent and in order. We are “people of the book.” Pay attention to the Presbyterian paradigm.
- The 8:30 service is becoming more and more un-orderly. Spirituality may be about wanting to break out of the paradigm without losing our comfort.
- Member care. We take care of our congregation when they need it.
- We are not afraid to try new things. We are a creative congregation.
- We do mission well, but a broad definition of mission.
- Many things separate us, but mission brings us together.

***Looking at the list of what we do well, do we have passion in these areas?***

- We have passion in pluralism, diversity, and hospitality.
- We are passionate about the open-mindedness part.
- Presbyterians are not typically known for their passion.

***What do we do well as a staff?***

- Support each other.
- Empower others. Trying to see the gifts and talents of others and encouraging them to act on those gifts so they make a contribution.
- We communicate well with the congregation and amongst each other.
- Team ministry.
- Good problem solvers.
- We collaborate around creativity.

***2. What are we (staff) passionate about?***

- Preparing others to be leaders in worship on a weekly basis. Empowering (in music and education.)
- Doing everything well. This is a negative as well.

- Passionate that things go well. Being poorly prepared is distracting to the leader and to the congregation.
- The key word is preparation.
- Equipping and sending disciples into the world. A measure of effectiveness: how many people consider themselves ministers as they go about their daily lives?
- Creating sacred moments (in worship, Bible study, and mission.)
- Getting accurate/timely information to members of the church
- We are passionate about what this building looks like/feels like...hospitality.
- Welcoming people into the building. It is important that all volunteers feel welcomed and appreciated.
- That there be transparency, honesty, consistency in all things. Integrity. This has to be in place for people to trust the church.
- Open ourselves to the community. We bring them in and support them. (Examples: BASE, Friends Club)
- No expectations on the groups we invite in. They are just invited with no strings attached. We don't say, "What will they give us in return?" (This can be seen as a negative also.)
- Everyone on staff is passionate about doing their jobs well and we cannot do that if we have too much to do.

### **3. *Who are our neighbors?***

- BJC, Friends Club, Nursery School, BASE
- Do we do things with other nearby Presbyterian Churches? Do we think of other local churches as our neighbors?
- After all the energy is given to our relationship with BJC there is not much left to give to other groups.
- The National Center for Children and Families (a growing relationship.)
- We have an urban neighbor (Washington, D.C.) and all the problems of it (Angel Gift tree is a way we relate to this neighbor.)
- We offer space to some groups in the neighborhood.
- Evangelism sends cards to people who move into the neighborhood.
- All of the music groups who use our space.
- We have not had a huge impact on NIH.
- Suburban uses our parking lot, but this is not an intimate relationship.
- We have world neighbors through our mission work
- "Hidden neighbors" Domestic workers in this neighborhood including nannies, housekeepers, gardeners.
- The members
- Your accurate membership is everyone who walks through your door in a given week.
- We could build loyalty with people who use our building so they come back.
- We cast seeds (as Scott did during sermon last Sunday.) Some take root and some don't.
- Some people might just want to come here for worship only and don't want to volunteer.
- "Can I be honored here even if I don't volunteer?" How do we know who will be hurt if we don't ask them to serve and who will be hurt if we do ask them to serve? (Board of Deacons could help with this.)
- The church is so big. How does anybody know anybody else?

***4. What is our big, holy audacious goal (BHAG)? What do you hope Bradley Hills will feel and act like in 15 years?***

- Wonderful worship services. An inclusive church. A rainbow church.
- This is a church for every person and every person has a place here.
- “A church as just and generous as the grace of God.” (from the Covenant Network)
- BHPC has continued to become a witness for interfaith cooperation.
- Emotionally intelligent and spiritually alive everyday disciples. (How do we channel the intellectual gifts through the heart?)
- It seems to be so much about what we do and less about who we are. You do those things because of who you are. We need to remember why we do.
- Freedom to show spirituality. Need a place where we are comfortable showing this.
- A Sabbath oasis and sending church. People come here, get rested, get their seed bags filled, and then are sent out into the world to sow those seeds.

***What else do you want to lift up?***

- We (staff) work over and above. We do a lot with little compared to other churches. Some times there is considerable stress and burden of tasks placed on staff and resources. Big concern about more obligations placed on staff.
- We have to do less, better.
- The vision needs to be where the spirit leads us, whether or not current staff has the gifts to work within the vision. A nagging concern – what happens with the gap between the vision and gifts of current staff?
- There needs to be enough tangibility to the vision so it doesn't just become another big goal. We need to be able to say no to some things. We can't just keep growing. We need concrete goals and strategies.
- We can honor the information gathered from the congregation without putting additional stress on staff. The last task force took the ideas from the congregation and passed this information on to the appropriate lay ministries. Then it was up to the lay ministries to decide what, if anything, to do with these ideas.
- We need a framework for our vision. If a goal/project fits the framework then great; if not, then it is gone.
- Whatever the BHAG is, everyone needs to understand that it is our vision, our goal and our filter.

## VISIONING TASK FORCE OPEN FORUM

April 6, 2006

The Visioning Task Force (VTF) held an open forum for discussion of ideas and concerns related to the work of the task force and a vision for Bradley Hills. Members of the Visioning Task Force in attendance were Doug Adamson, Steve Burns, Jan Hauck, Ed Hummers, Bob Reutershan, Yoshi Sei, Becky Wagner, and Andy Wolvin. During our meeting we heard from Clarence (“Corky”) Hickey, Bonnie Holcomb, Dave Davis, and Vicki Petrides.

### *Corky Hickey’s Thoughts*

1. We need to better understand and define evangelism and then do it. Our evangelistic mission should be to reach in to our members.
2. We need to be more welcoming to our own people.
3. We need a vigorous and energetic cadre of volunteers. The word “volunteers” bothers Corky. Committed members should run the church. We need a better name for our volunteers.
4. We need a vigorous and energetic program for nurturing our volunteers. We need to keep our volunteers from burning out. Nurturing is now hampered by the way Session is structured. The Leadership and Development Lay Ministry gets overwhelmed by the nominating process. We need to think about restructuring this lay ministry, taking the nominating process out of their hands and forming a separate nominating committee. This would give the Leadership and Development Lay Ministry time and energy to focus on the support and training of volunteers.
5. Corky’s hope for the future is that we will have so many people in worship on Sundays we will need more parking.
6. BHPC should be greater than the sum of its parts. Now the whole is a bit diminished because the parts are lacking in integrity.

Most of Corky’s concerns stem from the Congregational Life Survey conducted in late 2004. We are lacking in spiritual growth. Attendance is low in Sunday services, in adult education, in children’s education. It has become very difficult to find volunteers to do the work of the church. Pledging is down. Perhaps an all-church conversation is needed about our life together, about spirituality, about belonging. Perhaps the Deacons could begin conversations with all the members, especially with those who never show up. A radical idea is to take all work off the pastors’ plate for several weeks to free the pastors to visit every church member/family in their homes. Corky recognizes that we work our staff very hard and the radical idea may not be a practical idea. Corky mentioned Scott’s annual report and his concerns that the adults at BHPC are not modeling lifelong Christian learning to the youth. Corky’s big, holy audacious goal (BHAG): We will reach back to our own members, inviting them back into the active fold, getting them more involved. If we do this, all else should fall into place.

### *Dave Davis’s Thoughts*

Dave came to BHPC from a mega-church in California, Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup> A number of years ago the average age of members was 60-65. The church committed to growing and attracting younger members. After a six year period the average age was near 40. Dave said the change in average age was due in part to the praise

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Rancho Bernardo visit [www.transformedlives.com](http://www.transformedlives.com).

service and a new minister. The church now has 2500 members and is described by Dave as very active. There are five services, including a praise service on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. The praise service attracts the most participants and is very popular with the younger members. The service is modern and includes a lot of singing and moving. It is informal but reverent, with children playing in the aisles. The traditional service at 11:00 on Sundays has the weakest attendance. The church is open-minded about change and embraces new ideas. They have a strong desire not to stagnate. Dave described the church as a seven day church and said there are many activities going on every night of the week. There are a lot of small groups: singles, baseball, Helping Hands (to assist elderly members with home repair,) a drama team for adults and youth, adult and youth choirs, dinners, and Comfort and Joy (a group for those grieving loved ones,) just to name a few. The youth put on a full play every year with approximately 100 participants. The Deacons do a lot to help new members get involved. Dave said that people will walk in the front door of BHPC and right out the back door if we don't find a way to get them involved. He said the demographics of the neighborhood in California were similar to those here and that people travel to attend Rancho Bernardo. The big difference he sees between the two churches is that BHPC seems to lack a desire to grow and change.

### ***Vicki Petrides's Thoughts***

Vicki moved here approximately two years ago from Naperville, Illinois. She and her family attended River Glen Presbyterian Church, which had about 250-300 "giving units" in its membership.<sup>2</sup> The big difference between River Glen and BHPC is that River Glen was the center of her family's social life. Vicki said that BHPC is well organized and the ministries are fabulous, but her family has no friends within the church. She suggested small groups as a way to help build relationships within the church. The pastor at River Glen was extremely involved in organizing small groups. He was diligent about getting members involved and helping them find friends within the church. Vicki feels the small group ministry at River Glen made the church cohesive. An example of the small groups at River Glen is the "Dinner for Eight." The pastor organized the groups and each group would meet for dinner once a month for four months. After that period of time the groups would generally disband and new small groups would be formed, but many friendships developed from these dinners. The pastor categorized the small groups as spiritual groups. The demographics of River Glen were slightly different from BHPC in that they struggled with being a very young congregation. A lot of the membership came from local neighborhoods, but not all. When Vicki joined River Glen she and her husband were asked to submit an offering of time and talent. She feels this helped to foster a welcoming environment. Vicki and her family checked out several area churches before joining BHPC. She said they joined BHPC because her oldest daughter loves the Worship for Children program.

### ***Bonnie Holcomb's Thoughts***

Last summer Bonnie attended a Peacemaking Conference at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico with Myla and Cathie Crouch. She shared with us the powerful impact this conference had on her and her recommendations for BHPC to become a center for reconciliation. Church and Society and Global Mission Lay Ministries have been discussing a reaffirmation of BHPC's commitment to peacemaking which was initiated in the 1980s. The Congregational Life Survey showed that BHPC is strong on mission, but weak in the area of spirituality. Bonnie feels that a focus on reconciliation could build on our strengths and help grow spirituality. A focus on reconciliation might also address what has become a natural divide: those members of the church who are active in mission but not focused on inner life vs. those who are in tune with inner life, but not focused on mission. Bonnie's recommendation to the task force is to consider having BHPC

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on River Glen visit [www.riverglen.org](http://www.riverglen.org).

become a center for reconciliation, a place where people can comfortably explore the depths of their needs. We would have to follow a series of intentional steps for this to happen:

1. VTF accepts this recommendation as a big, holy audacious goal (BHAG).
2. Session endorses the idea and provides direction for the lay ministries to establish activities of reconciliation. This would be part of the recommitment to being a peacemaking church. The PCUSA has many resources.
3. We could have a global thematic focus, with each group in the church focusing activities on the theme for the year.
4. The lay ministries could become involved by sponsoring workshops
5. We have a structure that is in the way of elders shepherding the congregation. Elders take on the commitment to guide the congregation spiritually, but they are too busy with lay ministries to do this. Bonnie recommends that we restructure so the Session focuses only on shepherding and spirituality. Past elders could chair the lay ministries.
6. Leadership and Development would be charged with training the elders to be spiritual leaders.

To become a center for reconciliation would be a realignment of priorities for the church. Reconciliation would be the lens and some activities would have to go, but the church would be more focused. It would take a year to move into this direction and we would need “buy in” from the congregation. Bonnie agreed to share her written notes with the VTF.

## YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS QUESTIONNAIRE May 2006

Scott Winnette distributed a questionnaire to the participants in the end of year youth event that included parents and youth. Eleven questionnaires were returned; 5 were by tone or marking submitted by adults. Unfortunately, the last question was rebuffed by a couple youth, with the comment to the effect “if I tell you my wish, it won’t come true!”

### **What do you like about Bradley Hills?**

1. Community, spirit, joy, activism (A?)
2. Fellowship and mission activities (A)
3. Scott Winnette, church community; youth activities and mission work (A)
4. It’s large, lots of kids
5. Youth activities; most of the atmosphere.
6. I like how generous the church committee is
7. Friendliness, community work, the people
8. Activities, friends, programs
9. I like the activities that are organized, especially bowling and trips away from church.
10. It has always been my home – but it currently doesn’t seem to be meeting my needs. I have been visiting other churches more often than mine in the last year (A)

### **What do you not like about Bradley Hills?**

1. Lack of organization, miscommunication (A?)
2. Need for more adults and youth participating in activities; fewer activities (A)
3. Need more active youth and families (A)
4. Too few toddlers
5. Lack of participation; lack of more mature activities for senior highs (discussion groups, serious movies, etc.)
6. I don’t like how we don’t do as much as a church, just in youth or adult groups
7. We did more last year for fun (like roller-skating and rock-climbing) – I want to do more of that; there should be more kids.
8. Not always enough people; didn’t do much in the way of activities or go many places.
9. The lack of numbers of youth
10. Current options for youth – no choir for teens; I want Sunday school during worship. (A)

### **If God granted one wish, what would it be for Bradley Hills?**

1. 500 new committed members. (A?)
2. More youth and adults commitment. (A)
3. More youth; get hipper; less controversy/discussion and more action .(A)
4. More toddlers.
5. Greater participation overall in youth activities (church school and group events) and all-church events.
6. Help make Bradley Hills pretty and very welcoming (the need is not for the people, but BHPC’s appearance).
8. I wish we could play more soccer
9. Bring more kids.
10. I would ask for Mr. Matt back – for the energy that he brought to the youth program.(A)
11. A full-time music and drama director for youth (A?)

## Deacons' Contacts with the Congregation May-July 2006

In an effort to survey members of the congregation who had not been as active or present in worship, the Deacons attempted to contact by telephone three or four names from his or her flock. The results of this effort were limited. In many instances no contact could be made because phone calls were not returned, or the person couldn't be reached, or there was little conversation. The results of the about 10 contacts that were made follow:

- One person said that she and her family have found spirituality in their home. She stated that she misses the church as a whole because she grew up attending church. She is very busy with work and belongs to two groups at work. She may return on her own to Bradley Hills Church and appreciates the flexibility of folks at Bradley Hills. She stated that she feels "guilty" for having the Bradley Hills news sent to her house when she does not participate in church. At one time she taught Sunday school. She knew that Susan was leaving. She was told about other opportunities at Bradley Hills, such as the book club which is less biblical but filled with interesting group discussions. She said she appreciated learning about this group.
- Another member expressed not so much a vision as a concern. Simply put, she feels that the church is too busy, trying to do too much, calling on the same people for the many tasks that have been decided upon, and that this leads to exhaustion on the part of many active members. She feels that calmer, quiet space and time is needed in her life and she unfortunately can't seem to find it at church. Her solution, therefore, is to distance herself to a certain degree from the church, which she considers unfortunate. This may be true for others.
- Another member is a teacher and is home now for the summer break. She wanted to know what would happen to Scott. She was hoping that he would not leave. She and her family really like Scott who was her son's confirmation teacher. She feels more akin to Scott since they have been going to Bradley Hills for the same amount of time as when Scott arrived. I think Scott might consider calling on these folks for their and his enrichment.
- A Deacon spoke with the mother of the member who we were trying to reach. She said that her son travels a lot in his job. He has moved to Arlington. He went to church last Sunday with the family. She feels having more activities for the young professional may help bring him to church more often.
- Another's response was that she hoped the congregation would open up more and be more accepting of new members and others by socializing more. She pointed out that some in the congregation have already started doing it in small groups or as couples meeting over dinner.
- This member is working on the last part of her dissertation and also lives far from church.. She said that she tries to come as often as possible.
- He said that he came to church two weeks ago and said he tries to make time to come whenever he can.
- Another couple think that they come to Church quite often. They were quite positive about the Church and its programs.