

Like a tree firmly planted...



to love our God!

Zebulon Baptist Church

2020 Vision Team Report and Recommendations

November, 2016

a fellowship of believers



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Introduction

Twenty-twenty vision means that one can see clearly at a distance of twenty feet exactly what one ought to be able to see at that distance. It is our hope that this 2020 Vision Document reflects 20/20 vision. This is not a 10,000 feet in altitude document with a grand perspective for the long term future of Zebulon Baptist Church. It is also not a one year, annual strategic plan. It is a document that reflects the good input of our congregation and of community leaders. It reflects the good work of a wonderful team of church members who have worked with our ministry staff for nearly two years as our 2020 Vision Team. It hopefully bears the marks of good intuition, careful analysis and hopeful prayer. The year 2020 is not too far away – it is a good “twenty foot distance” into our future. We hope our vision detailed in this document accurately reflects the vision of our people and of our God as we move forward in faith at Zebulon Baptist.

Our theme for this Vision Document is **“Like a Tree Firmly Planted...To Love Our God”**. Psalm 1 describes the blessed life as being *“like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season”*. Our 2020 Vision Team was drawn to visual images of trees as we considered our past, present and envisioned future at Zebulon Baptist Church. Our members and our community see Zebulon Baptist as that sturdy tree firmly planted in the center of our town. There is a confidence that this church can indeed yield the fruit of good ministry in every season. We are convinced that 2017 through 2020 can be a fruitful time of significant ministry for this congregation.

We also realize that the church of the 21st century faces great challenges. The reason for the church’s existence is not always apparent to those inside or outside the congregation. In this document we wanted to be clear about our very reason for existence – *“to love our God”*. Why all the effort for doing the many recommendations proposed in this document? Why should we be willing to give our time, energy, passion and resources to see this vision become reality? The reason is profoundly simple – to love our God. Our worship, ministries, and fellowship are all ways we experience God’s love for us in Christ Jesus and in turn, express our love for God. Jesus taught His disciples the greatest commandment is to love God with all our being, as well as to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. As followers of Jesus at Zebulon Baptist Church we desire nothing more than that the work called for by this 2020 Vision Document will be a true and meaningful expression of our love for God.

Psalm 1:1-3 – “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the pathway of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.”

Mark 12:28-31 – “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Refer to the song lyrics for *“Be Like A Tree”* and *“To Love Our God”* in the **Appendix** section.

Purpose of 2020 Vision Team

The 2020 Vision Team was nominated in the summer of 2014 to lead the Zebulon Baptist Church congregation through a process where we would evaluate programs and ministries, and recommend needed changes in order to be the congregation God wants us to be in the year 2020. In this process, we were to ask the congregation these questions:

1. What do we believe God wants Zebulon Baptist Church to look and feel like in the year 2020?
2. What is God calling us to do by the year 2020?
3. How can our church be prepared to respond to the changing landscape of our world, our culture, our community, and our congregation by the year 2020?
4. How can Zebulon Baptist Church be the best stewards possible so that we can be the church God is calling us to be in 2020?

We identified the following **key phases** for the process:

1. Defining the purpose of the team
2. Listening and learning
3. Interpreting data and exploring options
4. Determining best options and communicating with stakeholders
5. Writing the vision
6. Communicating the vision
7. Building consensus
8. Adoption
9. Implementation
10. Ongoing analysis and supervision

Members of the Team

The members of the team represented a cross section of the congregation, including life-long and new members, and with diverse ages and backgrounds. The Executive Committee and ministry staff were also a part of the team.

Team Members

Bridgette Alford
Nelle Carroll
Tyler Hopkins
Donald Horton, Sr.
Gerald Lanier
Linda Leonard
Clayton Maynor
Chris Perry
Megan Possiel

Joe Turlington
Sheri Hester, Chair

Executive Committee and Staff:

Alice Driver
Trey Hocutt
Shannon Speller
Jennifer Asbill
Barbara Glasgow
Jack Glasgow

Timeline of Work

The 2020 Vision Team began meeting in November 2014. Our first task was to agree on our purpose, and discuss the timeline for our work. We did not want to rush the process of discerning from church leaders, the congregation, and community leaders what the vision for Zebulon Baptist might be for the year 2020. We decided to target presenting the plan to the congregation in November 2016, giving us two years to gather information and form the plan.

In January 2015 we enjoyed a session with Leary Davis, who gave us some valuable information about strategic planning processes and best practices. We each talked about our vision of the church through a series of different images and reflections.

From May to July, 2015, we met with all three Deacon groups as well as Sunday School leadership to get their thoughts on their group's work as well as their vision for the church.

In August 2015, we held Generational Listening sessions for the congregation. The sessions were divided into Builders and Bridgers, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. From the responses, the group looked at commonalities, contradictions, and what seemed to be important across all groups, and found many common themes that are included throughout this document.

We met with town leaders in September 2015, and listened to some of the work going on in Zebulon, as well as area trends and challenges. We then met with area school leaders in January 2016, and heard of ways we could make a big impact with teachers and students by providing encouragement and support throughout the year. We started immediately to give more support to schools through providing teacher luncheons as well as funds for students who may need clothes or supplies.

After all the listening sessions, the group met several times, including a time of retreat, to dissect and further discuss all the feedback. We grouped the common themes we heard into different recommendation areas, represented in this document.

Overview of Our Vision

The Vision Statements are grouped in different areas of ministry as follows:

Age Group Ministries: In this area, the team addresses feedback we received related to all of our age groups, from nursery to senior adults. You will see recommendations related to our preschoolers, juniors' education space, potential new ministries, and ministry to our senior adults.

Worship Ministries: We received a lot of feedback that our style of worship is something that is much valued at ZBC. The vision statements reinforce our passion for inclusive and meaningful worship, and outreach efforts, resource needs in this area, and special worship opportunities we may consider over the next several years.

Deacon Ministries: Our unique Deacon Board structure works well. In this section, you will see recommendations related to the work of the Congregational Care Deacons and Ministry Team Deacons.

Spiritual Formation Ministries: We have a strong Sunday School that could be even stronger. The vision statements reflect opportunities for expanding the outreach for Sunday School by making newcomers feel welcome and educating new and existing members about the educational opportunities available for them and their families.

Core Values: We did not hear anything in the listening sessions that changes our Core Values. We believe the church should reaffirm its commitment to our stated Core Values as written. A copy is available on our website.

Identity and Partnership with CBF: Our congregation believes strongly in its partnership with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and we believe that partnership should be communicated as part of our church identity. We also see continued opportunities to participate with CBF in national and international missions.

Communications: In this area you will see recommendations to expand the role of the current Website Study Group, to include looking at all the ways the identity and work of Zebulon Baptist Church could be shared on the web, in the community and the surrounding area.

Missions: Our congregation continues to have a passion for missions. This area discusses ways that more people could be involved in local missions, participation with CBF for national and international missions, and how we give to missions.

Facilities: We are blessed with a wonderful campus. While we do not envision any major immediate changes, you will see a recommendation for renovating the Juniors Education space and naming a study group in the future to look at longer term needs.

Staff: We did not hear any feedback that would drive major staffing changes. This area does provide a statement for evaluating staff as needed.

Finances: This area provides vision statements related to stewardship emphasis, and educating the congregation on alternative ways to give.

Transportation: We heard from several groups of the need for different transportation that is safer and more efficient for our youngest and oldest members. The vision for this area includes mini-buses instead of vans in the future.

Capital Campaign: Our next Capital Campaign will kick off in the fall of 2017. This section discusses some ways to celebrate the accomplishments of the past campaigns, as well as recommendations for projects to include with the next campaign.

**Vision Statements:
Age Group Ministries, Worship, Deacon
Ministry, and Spiritual Formation**



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Age Group Ministries

Our congregation is committed to excellence in ministry to children of all ages and their families, to youth, and to senior adults. These vision statements reaffirm, strengthen and broaden our age group ministries. They include improvements to facilities, the potential creation of new ministries, and envision strong partnership and ministry in our community.

Ministry to and Programs for Age Groups: Preschoolers to Youth

In 2020 we envision our ministry to preschoolers, children, juniors and youth to continue to be effective in nurturing the faith of our young, meeting the ministry needs of our church families and attracting youth and families to our church.

We envision that the current age divisions we utilize for effective ministry to children and youth and our current strategy for staffing in these areas will serve us well in the year 2020.

The basic programs of worship, Bible Study, missions, music, and discipleship will continue to be effective in the year 2020. We will continue to be guided by a philosophy that nurtures children in a safe, loving and affirming environment so that they know God's love for them and for all of the human family and so that they are challenged without coercion and manipulation to follow Jesus as a disciple and to participate meaningfully in the life of the church. To quote Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann, we are focused on the goal of leading "beloved children to become belief-ful adults".

We recommend that no changes be made to staffing, programs and age divisions between now and 2020.

Juniors Education Space

By 2020 we envision the ministry to our Juniors, (Grades 4-7), taking place in more spacious, attractive and functional space in the southeast corner of Building B. To improve the educational environment for our Juniors we recommend that the Administrative Deacons develop a plan immediately for remodeling the rooms in the Juniors area in time for this remodeling to be considered by the time of our next capital campaign in the Autumn of 2017.

Additional Ministry for Preschoolers

We envision that by 2020 our church will have initiated a needed new ministry for preschoolers. We envision several forms that this new ministry might take:

- Weekday Preschool Education
- Mothers' Morning Out
- Two by Twos – a weekly parent/child or caregiver/child ministry that was done at Zebulon Baptist in the previous decade

We recommend that the Moderator appoint a group to study the possibilities for this new preschool ministry by 2018 and that this group bring its recommendations to the congregation by 2019.

Additional Ministry to Children, Youth and their Families

We envision that by 2020 our congregation's impact on the children and youth of our church and community will have increased. We encourage the congregation to make it a priority that our ministries to children and youth are well-planned, effectively communicated, and carried out with excellence. We envision a church with a reputation for showing great love for children, youth and their families. We encourage support for parents to be an integral part of our youth and children's ministry. We furthermore encourage the congregation to effectively minister to children in our community by making this a clear priority evident by our local mission activities, partnerships, and allocation of mission resources, particularly through the Missions Ventures funds provided through our capital campaigns.

We recommend that the Moderator appoint a group to study the possibilities of new ministry to the children and youth of our community by the year 2018, with their recommendations made to the church by 2019. We envision several possibilities for this new ministry that includes:

- Tutoring Ministry (at church, in schools, or at other locations)
- After School Ministry (with both spiritual and academic focus)
- Summer and "Tracked Out" Ministry
- Nutrition/Feeding Ministry

Partnership with Local Schools and Educational Ministries

We envision that partnering with local schools and other ministries that work with children and youth will be a local mission priority of Zebulon Baptist Church in 2020. We envision that in 2020, Zebulon Baptist Church will be identified as a leader in community ministry and in partnerships with others to bless the lives of children and youth. We recommend that immediate attention be given by the Ministry Team Deacons to decide how this priority can best be carried out – whether existing ministry teams can sufficiently address this priority of partnership with the schools and other local ministries, or whether a new ministry team should be created, solely devoted to this purpose.

Ministry to Senior Adults

We envision Zebulon Baptist Church to be a healthy, intergenerational fellowship in 2020, a true "cradle to the grave" congregation. We envision our church continuing to value ministry to and with our Senior Adults. In other places in this vision document you will see recommendations that have ministry to older adults in mind related to better transportation options, ideas related to congregational care and enhanced sound quality in the sanctuary. We are hopeful that between now and the year 2020 we will be responsive to ministry ideas that will improve our overall ministry to our older members.

We recommend that in order for church leadership to hear the needs and concerns of older members, the annual "Pastor's Coffee" continue to be held in the first quarter of each calendar year. At a breakfast and conversation time, Senior Adults will be kept well informed concerning life in the church and know that staff and lay leaders have heard their voices. We envision that this forum for conversation will be the best strategy for the development of any new ministries for Senior Adults the congregation may consider by 2020.

Worship Ministries

The planning process, with its extensive listening sessions, discovered great appreciation for our congregation's worship style and traditions. In the vision statements that follow we call for continuing this worship tradition and improving worship and increasing participation in worship. There are also four exciting worship emphases recommended for our church family to enjoy between now and 2020.

Worship Involvement and Outreach

In the listening phase of this visioning process no one idea was expressed more consistently and fervently than that our church maintain its tradition of excellent worship focused on the seasons of the Christian year. The music and preaching ministries, the celebrations of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the observance of our "high and holy days", along with the good work of the worship teams, were greatly affirmed. In 2020 we envision Zebulon Baptist Church continuing to provide inspiring worship for members and guests. It is our recommendation that the worship style and practices of the congregation continue as they have up until now, that persons will continue to be blessed by the worship of Zebulon Baptist Church. At this moment in our history we reaffirm our core values related to worship.

At the same time, we want the ministry staff and lay leaders to be vigilant in their efforts to present our worship in the best possible way. Between now and 2020 we encourage efforts to grow our choir ministry so that we have an even more excellent Sanctuary Choir in that year. We believe that valuing tradition and being open to innovation are not mutually exclusive – we encourage creativity in the planning and conducting of worship on Sunday mornings, evenings and at other times and we encourage the congregation's openness to creativity and innovation.

We recognize that busy lives and the many options that everyone has for filling their Sundays is a challenge for all congregations. We encourage active participation in worship on a regular basis for every member of our congregation. We envision that in 2020 trends toward less regular attendance can be turned around, particularly if we continue some of the things that we believe can make a difference for our members' commitment to worship:

- The work of the Outreach Team to include more persons in intentional hospitality
- The willingness of the Pastor to preach some sermons on the Sunday School texts
- The inclusion of young choirs in worship
- Striving for excellence in care through our nursery volunteers

We recognize worship as a great strength of our congregation. Therefore, we recommend that we tell our worship story well to our members and to the larger community and use it as a way of connecting persons with Zebulon Baptist Church.

Worship and Music Ministry Needs

We envision that several things are likely to be needed by the year 2020 in our music and worship ministries. These include enhancement of our sound system, the purchase of new hymnals (our current hymnals are out of print) and perhaps the purchase of new choir robes and stoles (most of the robes were purchased in 1993).

We recommend that the needs for worship and music ministry be identified and explored so that donors could provide for these needs to be met. We also recommend that a detailed analysis of what is needed for effective sound in the sanctuary be ready for consideration in the first capital campaign of the 2020's.

Special Worship Opportunities

The congregation has been greatly blessed by special worship initiatives over the years. We recommend that the church experience special worship events by the year 2020 that include:

- A Revival/Renewal Week
- A Holy Week Observance of Services
- A Lay Renewal Weekend
- A Small Group Book Study that Concludes with the Author Preaching

Deacon Ministries

Our church employs a creative and unique deacon ministry structure that provides leadership and ministry for our congregation. In this section of vision statements, you will find reaffirmation of our approach to deacon ministry along with recommendations for study and discernment regarding improvements in the areas of congregational care and ministry teams.

Structure of Three Separate Deacon Boards

We envision that Zebulon Baptist Church in 2020 will continue to be well served by its elected leadership structure that carries out ministry through the work of three deacon groups: Administrative Deacons, Congregational Care Deacons and Ministry Team Deacons.

We recommend that the church continue to embrace this structure for deacon ministry. We also recommend no changes to the current work of the Administrative Deacons.

Congregational Care Deacon Ministry

We envision that Zebulon Baptist Church will continue to be a caring, ministering congregation in 2020. We recognize that the current approach to ministry utilized by the Congregational Care Deacons has seen excellent ministry done by deacons and many strong relationships established between members and their deacons. We also recognize that recruiting enough deacons for this task has proven challenging, that the care

received from Congregational Care Deacons is often uneven, and that this ministry calls for a set of skills and gifts that many in the congregation feel that they lack.

We recommend, therefore, that the Chair of the Congregational Care Deacons and Moderator appoint a study group by the year 2018 that will evaluate the effectiveness of the ministry of the Congregational Care Deacons and explore options for enhancing the ministry effectiveness of this important group. They will report to the congregation their findings and recommendations for any change by the year 2019. We recommend that this group look at other models for providing congregational care that have proven effective. We recommend that at least these two changes be examined:

1. Doing this ministry by forming smaller groups of persons with similar gifts and ministry passion – examples: hospital ministry, homebound ministry, nursing home ministry, bereavement ministry, etc.
2. Doing this ministry by having each Sunday School class have from its own membership a Congregational Care Deacon who will minister to the members of the class and their families.

Ministry Team Deacon Support and Outreach

We envision the importance of the various Ministry Teams of our congregation being vital to the health and ministry excellence of our congregation in 2020. Therefore, we believe that the congregation must be fully informed of the work of its Ministry Teams and specifically invited to get involved with the work of Ministry Teams. The population of every Ministry Team with committed volunteers is essential for ministry success.

We recommend that beginning with the 2017-2018 church year, the Ministry Team Deacons be given opportunity to tell the story of their work and invite the congregation to participation so that each Ministry Team has a healthy roster of serving members. We further recommend that by the November Conference of each church year from that time forward the Ministry Team Deacons will publish for the congregation's awareness the roster of each Ministry Team.

Spiritual Formation Ministries

Discipleship through spiritual formation ministries is vital to the health of our congregation. These vision statements affirm the priority of spiritual formation and focus on better support for teachers and for parents and better communication and welcoming of newcomers to our spiritual formation ministries.

Sunday School and Small Group Ministries

We envision a robust and innovative teaching ministry at Zebulon Baptist Church in the year 2020, a ministry that embraces and advances our adopted core value, *We value our call to encourage spiritual growth and fulfillment in every member.*

For this vision to become reality the church must continue to offer an effective ministry of Sunday School for all ages. The Spiritual Formation Team and Sunday School Director, working in partnership with the assigned

ministry staff of the church, should work with great energy toward the goal of a Christian education ministry that is excellent.

We recommend that the following ministries be continued for the reasons that they are a high priority of our congregation and are essential to the spiritual growth and maturity of our members and guests:

1. A Sunday School ministry that offers opportunities for Bible Study for all age groups. An intentionally recruited, well-trained, supported and affirmed faculty is essential for carrying out our vision for Sunday School. We encourage the continuation of regular teacher training opportunities, as well as the use of one curriculum for Bible Study in all of our adult classes.
2. The continued ministry of small group and special Bible studies offered to our church that include, but are certainly not limited to, Wednesday Night Study for Adults, Tuesday Morning Ladies' Bible Study, Annual Winter Bible Study, Grief Ministry Support, seasonal book studies, and spiritual retreats.

Sunday School – Greeting, Guidance, Outreach

We envision that Zebulon Baptist Church in 2020 needs to be a welcoming and hospitable place for visitors and guests, as well as members.

We recommend that the leadership of our Sunday School initiate specific strategies for welcoming, directing, introducing and following up with all of our guests at Zebulon Baptist Church who attend Sunday School. We also recommend that the work of the Outreach Team be closely coordinated with our Sunday School ministry to achieve the goal of maximum participation in Sunday School.

Sunday School and Other Educational Opportunities – Information and Support for Parents

We envision a greater desire among parents in 2020 for their children and youth to receive intentional spiritual formation. Parents need to believe that bringing their children regularly to Sunday School and other discipleship activities makes a difference in the spiritual lives of their children.

We recommend that staff and lay leaders prepare a document for parents that outlines our educational philosophies, specific learning goals for each group, and how parents can be involved in effectively encouraging spiritual formation in their children. We further recommend that our teaching ministry include support for parents of all ages as they endeavor to provide spiritual leadership in their homes.

Annual Guide of Church Activities, Programs, and Ministries

We envision that in 2020 Zebulon Baptist Church will have become an identifiable and trusted resource in our community as a center for offering retreats, conferences, workshops and small groups that encourage the spiritual formation of members and guests alike. We envision that our campus will be better utilized to provide opportunities for Christian growth and discipleship and introduction and exploration of the Christian faith.

We recommend that in order to inform persons of the various offerings of the church in spiritual formation, that an annual guide be published and distributed that details what is to be offered by our congregation in the coming church year. We recommend that the first guide be ready by the 2017-2018 church year. We envision that year by year the offerings will expand, so that by 2020, we are a more vibrant place of ministry promoting authentic spiritual formation resulting in Christ-like character, service and maturity.

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**Vision Statements:
Core Values, Identity & CBF,
Communications, Missions**



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Core Values

The Core Values Statement of Zebulon Baptist Church will continue to articulate for members, guests and others the theological beliefs valued by our congregation. In turn, these core values will direct the leadership of our congregation to provide leadership consistent with our core values.

Affirmation of and Commitment to Statement of Core Values

For the past twenty years Zebulon Baptist Church has utilized “A Statement of Core Values”. The Mission Statement at the front of this document reads, “Committed to worship, ministry, and fellowship under the Lordship of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” The values enumerated in the document are grouped under the headings: “We Value Christian Worship”, “We Value Christian Ministry”, and “We Value Christian Fellowship”. We envision that in 2020 the church will continue to be well-served by this Statement of Core Values and the threefold emphasis that commits this church to worship, ministry and fellowship.

We recommend that the congregation reaffirm its commitment to its core values with the adoption of this 2020 Statement of Vision. The core values of the church should guide our clergy and lay leaders as they plan the ministries of our church. Among the many things our church can choose to do and support, we also recommend that we remain focused on doing the things that enhance and strengthen our worship, our ministries, and our fellowship. We further recommend that between now and 2020 our leaders would plan a church wide emphasis on these core values through a combination of sermons and small group discussion.

Identity and Partnership with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF)

Since the beginning days of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina (CBFNC) our church has been blessed by our partnership with other Baptist Christians and congregations through CBF.

Communication of ZBC Identity and Distinctions

The identity of Zebulon Baptist Church has been shaped by its heritage, traditions, core values and ministry practices. Words and phrases used by those both in the church and those outside to describe Zebulon Baptist’s identity include: open, inclusive, progressive, moderate in theology, full of grace, Christ-centered, liturgical, affirming of women in ministry, missions-minded, a priesthood of believers, diverse, Baptist in decision making, a church of second chances, and engaged in the community. We envision that this identity is exactly the identity our church needs to embrace and communicate in 2020. We believe that a congregation with our unique identity is needed in Zebulon and the surrounding area, that there will be people who need a church with our heritage, traditions, core values, and ministry practices.

We recommend that the congregation claim its identity between now and 2020 by communicating the distinctive elements of our identity to our members, community and beyond. We should clarify and communicate our identity more effectively than ever before. Our website, publications, advertisements, and other communications should be clear about Zebulon Baptist Church's unique identity. Our outreach and growth will be positively influenced by our clarity of identity and willingness to offer our distinct ministry to others.

Continued Partnership with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and Baptist World Alliance

Since 1991 the primary mission partners of Zebulon Baptist Church have been the congregations of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. It is through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship we are linked to global missions and ministry. Through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, we enjoy connection with congregations in our area and throughout our state who share our values, practices, and mission priorities. We envision that our CBF identity will serve us well into the year 2020 and beyond. In addition to our CBF affiliation, we also celebrate our support of the Baptist World Alliance, linking us in fellowship and partnership with Baptists all over the globe, particularly in our commitment to provide food for the hungry. We envision in 2020 our church continuing its practice of communion offerings that feed hungry people, here in our own community and through the BWA, throughout the world.

We recommend that on our website and in our publications, marketing, branding and advertisements that we be open about our partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. Primarily through CBF, and secondarily through the BWA, we will fulfill our commitment to the Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples. We also recommend that through 2020 our budget, mission trips, missions support and missions education will continue to reflect the priority of our mission partnerships through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Communications

Communicating the Zebulon Baptist story of mission and ministry must be done creatively and effectively. The vision statement below and the action it recommends affirm this as a priority of our congregation.

Communications Study Group

The rapid changes in communication make it difficult to envision and predict the form and shape communication will take by the year 2020. However communication has changed and will continue to change, Zebulon Baptist Church will need to be effective in communication when 2020 is here. We envision that excellence in communication will include our website, printed media, social media, and a willingness to use branding, marketing and advertising that effectively communicates our identity and the story of our ministry. Narratives shape impressions – we envision the skillful telling of the ZBC story in 2020 will enhance our outreach, growth, congregational health, and our reputation in the community. We envision that in 2020

our staff and lay leaders will need to be skillful narrators who effectively utilize the best practices for church communications.

The Administrative and Congregational Care Deacons jointly appointed a Website Study Group some months ago. We recommend that in order to ensure that communications receives the priority consideration that it deserves, that this group expands its size and scope and that it gives immediate consideration and considerable effort to recommending the changes our church needs to make in communications. At the beginning of 2017 the Website Study Group should be populated by an eager group appointed by the Moderator and Congregational Care Deacon Chair. Their name should change at that time from the Website Study Group to the Communications Study Group. They should be given reasonable financial resources to get the support they need in consultation with experts in the various aspects of church communications. This group should bring recommendations forward for the consideration of the congregation that will enhance all aspects of our communication. We also recommend that when new ideas or needed changes to improve communication are identified that these recommendations be brought to the congregation's attention as soon as possible, as opposed to waiting for a comprehensive report that includes all of their recommendations. We expect the Communications Study Group and the Administrative Deacons to work cooperatively in bringing recommendations for improved communications to the congregation that are both adequately funded and fiscally responsible.

Missions

Missions is at the heart of our congregation. Through mission and ministry we demonstrate our love and obedience to God. The desire to increase our mission impact on our community is great among our members. These vision statements recommend actions that will enhance our mission through 2020 and beyond.

Local Mission Partnerships and Opportunities

The year 2020 is one in which we envision the mission impact of Zebulon Baptist Church on our community to be great. We envision the continuation and maturation of existing ministries will be an important component of our local missions impact, ministries that include our food pantry, Christmas benevolence, mission days like Grace in Action, ministries to the homebound and those in nursing homes and assisted living, the community garden, and local missions assistance. We envision that our emerging ministry in partnership with local schools will have significant impact on our community. (See Age Group Ministries, Recommendation 5) We envision a comprehensive missions program that utilizes the gifts and passions of the entire Zebulon Baptist family. Our vision is that every member has the opportunity and encouragement to engage in mission, ministry and service to our community.

We recommend that our ministerial staff work in conjunction with the existing ministry teams devoted to missions – Partnership Missions, Local Missions, Health and Wellness – as well as any new ministry teams to be created as needed for mission and ministry, to plan and promote a comprehensive program of local mission engagement. By 2020 we also recommend that an annual guide promoting mission and ministry opportunities be published and distributed so that the ZBC family is fully aware of the ways to engage in

serving God by serving others through our missions program. We further recommend that this guide be made available in September to highlight the opportunities in the upcoming church year.

Mission Ventures Funds for Local Mission Activities and Needs

In 2020 we envision that our congregation will continue to provide funds for local missions over and above our budget gifts through the Missions Ventures portion of our capital campaign. While we encourage continued support for mission trips using these funds, we envision that the greater impact of these funds in 2020 will be on our local mission and ministry.

We recommend that the Congregational Care Deacons allocate these resources to support work and ministry going on in the Zebulon community done by our own mission teams as well as ministry done by other established agencies that we want to support with our human and/or financial resources. We also recommend clear communication between our ministry teams and the Congregational Care Deacons so that they are made aware of the funding needs for important local ministry.

National and International Mission Opportunities

Many members of our church have enjoyed transformational experiences on church supported mission trips. We envision that between now and 2020 there will be opportunities for engagement by our adults and our youth in mission projects with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionaries at home and abroad and with local opportunities such as those offered by Habitat for Humanity.

We recommend that the Congregational Care Deacons allocate funds for these mission opportunities so that limited financial resources will not prevent anyone from participating on a mission trip. We also recommend that the purpose of a mission trip be understood by the congregation as primarily for the purpose of transformation of those who participate. Participation in a mission trip should heighten awareness of the mission work of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and expose participants to a different culture where the gospel is being lived out in faithfulness. The mission trip participant should return home with a new passion for supporting our church, its partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a prayerful heart for the people they have met, a desire to minister on our own local mission field, and a deeper desire to follow Jesus with faithfulness and devotion.

Missions Giving and Budget Allocations

In 2020 we envision that the best motivation for both participation in missions and giving to the church will be the perception that our gifts of time, energy and money are making a positive difference in our community and throughout our world. A compelling story of the difference we are making for the Kingdom of God and in the lives of persons is essential to church health and vitality.

Our congregation currently gives 10% of its undesignated receipts as a tithe to our cooperative mission partners. The large majority of these gifts are directed to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. But, this 10% is not our only support of missions. The allocations for the work of our ministry teams are in a different section of our budget. The allocation of

Mission Ventures funds is in addition to our tithe to mission partners. Designated gifts to local benevolence, ministry at Christmas, and the CBF Global Missions Offering at Christmas and at Vacation Bible School are in addition to this 10% in the budget. The full story of our mission giving is so much larger than the 10% of the budget given to mission partners.

We recommend that by 2020 our congregation will receive in September each year a full report of our mission support in the previous fiscal year. This report should tell the story of the dollars spent along with testimony of how these expenditures have made a difference, a genuinely positive impact on our community and beyond. Distributed in September, just before the beginning of a new year in budget and ministry, this report should enhance giving and stewardship in our congregation. Along with the annual guide to upcoming mission opportunities described in Missions Recommendation 1, this should be an effective way of communicating how the church has made a difference through its ministries in the previous year and how it will provide opportunity for missional engagement in the year to come.

We also recommend that the Budget Committee and the Administrative Deacons consider gradual increases in the missions component of our budget from the current 10% to 15% by the year 2020. If they believe this is fiscally responsible and recommend these increases, we further recommend that the missions portion of the budget include all mission expenditures, adding the money we spend for missions through our ministries and ministry teams to the money we direct to our mission partners.

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**Vision Statements:
Resources – Facilities, Staff, Finances,
Transportation, Capital Campaign**



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Facilities

Zebulon Baptist Church is blessed with a marvelous campus in a highly visible location that provides a great setting for ministry. We desire to see these facilities maintained and improved in the coming years even as we begin to envision facility needs in the decade to come.

Renovation of Juniors Education Space and Fellowship Hall Updates

Zebulon Baptist Church will engage in a new Capital Campaign in the Fall of 2017 as the four year period of The Faith Challenge comes to an end. We envision that as in past campaigns, the new campaign may encourage the congregation to provide funds for needed renovations. In our process of listening and discernment we have identified two priorities for consideration in the 2017 campaign – the renovation of the Juniors education area in Building B, and the need for new carpet and paint in the Fellowship Hall.

We recommend that with the adoption of this vision document the Administrative Deacons will get plans and cost projections for the consideration of these two projects by the congregation, so that these projects may be included in the 2017 campaign.

Building Survey Team for Future Needs Assessment

Zebulon Baptist Church is blessed with excellent facilities on a beautiful campus. The worship, educational, operational and fellowship ministries of the church are well served by these facilities. We envision that in 2020 the building footprint of the church on the campus will remain unchanged; there seems to be no immediate need for new construction between now and 2020. By 2020 we do envision that the church may be ready to look at the possibility of further building. By that time indebtedness will have been greatly reduced. We envision the church will need to look at the possibility of providing new education space in the decade of the 2020's, space for missions, for better storage, for preschool facilities well-suited for any new ministries that may be recommended, and a long term look at the potential acquisition of additional properties adjacent to the church. As our Sanctuary will be thirty years old in 2023, the church will need to be prepared for expenditures related to that building that may include a new roof and new windows. The Glasgow Building will be twenty years old in 2023, and an analysis of internal or external renovations needed for that building is also envisioned.

We recommend that by 2019 the Moderator appoint a Building Survey Team to begin a careful analysis of the building and property needs of the congregation at that time. Their recommendations should be ready to present to the church by late in 2020 or early in 2021 so that the Capital Campaign in the Fall of 2021 will be designed to address any new building, property acquisition or renovation plans adopted by the congregation.

Staff

Our congregation calls a ministry and support staff that serves our congregation well. The vision statements that follow express our commitment to call and support an effective ministry staff and also our faith that God will lead our congregation well in future staff transitions.

Staffing Strategy

We envision that in 2020 our congregation will be well-served by the staffing strategy currently in place. We are confident that any needed changes in the ministerial or support staff of the church will be effectively addressed by the Administrative Deacons and shared with the congregation. We do envision that the ministry staff of 2020 needs to be very effective in the use of technology for excellence in communication.

We recommend that the Communications Study Group bring to the congregation specific strategies for providing the training and support the staff will need in order to attain the excellence in communications we envision. We also recommend as vacancies on the staff arise that the search teams commissioned to find new staff members to recommend to the congregation intentionally seek office workers and ministers who exhibit excellence in the use of technology for effective communications.

Senior Pastor Succession Plan Upon Retirement

Our Senior Pastor has served on the staff of Zebulon Baptist Church since 1977 and in the role of Senior Pastor since 1981. We envision that questions regarding his retirement are certain to be in the minds of our members. We envision that Jack Glasgow will still be the Pastor of Zebulon Baptist Church in 2020. However, we do believe that plans for an effective process of pastoral succession need to be in place when the time for his retirement comes.

The Senior Pastor is supervised by the three Moderators of the congregation – Moderator, Past Moderator and Moderator Elect. They have been using a process for the past two years to evaluate the issue of retirement. This process was mutually agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and Moderators. Beginning with Jack Glasgow's 60th birthday, the Moderators evaluated whether or not his retirement in two years would be in the best interest of the church or if they believed extending his pastorate indefinitely would be best. They shared their decision with him. At both his 60th and most recent 61st birthdays their decision was that extending his pastorate would be in the best interest of the church. The Senior Pastor is also charged with revealing his intentions concerning retirement on each birthday – does he plan to retire in two years or is he open to continuing indefinitely? On both occasions Jack Glasgow has shared his intention to continue beyond two years. This process is designed to monitor both the Senior Pastor's intentions and the best interests of the church on an annual basis. And, barring some unforeseen circumstances that require quicker decision making, this process gives the Senior Pastor and the congregation and its leaders two years to react appropriately to an announced retirement.

We recommend that this process continue for as long as it needs to be in place. We believe that the Senior Pastor giving a two-year notice of his retirement intentions will be of great benefit to the church as the

congregation puts together the plan of succession for hiring a new Senior Pastor. Bringing this evaluative process into the open gives members of the congregation an awareness that their own thoughts and feelings on this matter can be shared appropriately with the Moderators. We look forward to the continuing ministry of our Senior Pastor without anxiety over the time that his departure from the church staff takes place. A healthy and open process of dialog and evaluation is in place and if at all possible a two-year announcement of retirement plans will be given so that the church can move forward with great confidence in its future.

Finances

Congregations face challenges in receiving the resources needed for effective ministry. These vision statements in this section challenge us to combine commitment with creativity in casting a vision of ministry that will be fully funded by the gifts to God by the people of God. Thanks be to God!

Stewardship Emphasis and Additional Opportunities for Giving

The stewardship challenges of congregations are great and we envision those challenges will be present in 2020. For the many recommendations in this vision document to come to fruition, the stewardship of our congregation must increase. We are grateful for the financial health enjoyed by the congregation because of generous giving to our ministry budgets and capital campaigns.

We recommend that emphases on tithing and generosity be ongoing between now and 2020. These emphases should focus on stories of ministry impact, testimonies of personal blessing, explanations of why money is needed and how it is used and practical information on the various ways of giving to God through the church. We also recommend that the Administrative Deacons evaluate options for how money can be given to the church and increase the options available to the congregation for giving by 2020.

Alternative Giving: Designated Gifts, Endowment Fund, Estates

We envision that in 2020 persons will continue to want choices and options in their giving to God through the church. While we envision that the congregation is best served by giving our tithes and offerings through the two main streams of financial support, our ministry budgets and capital campaigns, we also know that there are donors who want to give for designated causes.

We recommend that the Administrative Deacons identify giving opportunities that would benefit the congregation that can be shared with potential donors who wish to make a designated gift to the church. These giving opportunities should be published and made available for the consideration of donors. We also recommend that the church be open to funding budgeted events and ministries through designated gifts as desired by a donor. Approval and recognition of these gifts should be at the discretion of the Administrative Deacons. We further recommend that the congregation encourage faithful stewardship in giving through wills and trusts. The Endowment Trustees should take the lead in promoting the stewardship of estate planning and giving and should plan at least one intentional promotion of planned giving for the congregation by the year 2020.

Transportation

There are good options to explore as we provide transportation for our church in the years to come; transportation that is safe, reliable and comfortable for all ages.

Future Transportation Fleet to Include Mini-Buses

We envision that by 2020 our transportation fleet will transition from the three fifteen passenger mini-vans we currently own to some mix of vans and fifteen passenger mini-buses. Ideally we would like to see the church using its recently donated gift of a new van and two purchased mini-buses by 2020. At the least we would envision one less van and one new mini-bus serving us in 2020. Listening to our members made it clear that this transition would increase safety in our transportation and be more accessible for senior adults and children.

We recommend that the Administrative Deacons consider options for the purchase of one or two fifteen passenger mini-buses in early 2017. Working in conjunction with the new Capital Campaign Team, a recommendation to purchase one or two mini-buses will be brought to the congregation for consideration as part of the 2017 campaign. If for some reason the purchase of a mini-bus is not recommended or approved in 2017, the Administrative Deacons will continue to encourage the congregation and potential donors to consider the purchase of a mini-bus by 2020.

Capital Campaign

Our congregation funds its ministries through two main revenue streams – gifts to the ministry budget and gifts to our capital campaign. November of 2017 will be the time for a new commitment to giving through a capital campaign envisioned below.

2017 Capital Campaign Includes Renovations and Celebration of Successes

Zebulon Baptist Church has used capital campaigns as an important revenue stream since 1992 as funds were first generated for the building of a new Sanctuary. Since that time the congregation has purchased the shopping center property, renovated and furnished that property, and done renovation work to Building B and the Sanctuary. Indebtedness fell just below a million dollars in the late 1990's and then rose with the purchase of the shopping center. At the conclusion of the renovation work and the opening of the Glasgow Building in 2003, indebtedness reached its height of over 2.5 million dollars. With the current Faith Challenge Capital Campaign, the congregation has seen indebtedness fall below one million dollars once again. Our total debt is now less than it has been since the building of the Sanctuary in 1993 and should be in the vicinity of seven hundred thousand dollars at the conclusion of the four year Faith Challenge in November of 2017. Since 2005 the capital campaigns have included funds for Caring for the Campus and Mission Ventures. Important work and ministry has been accomplished because of the availability of these funds. We envision

that a new capital campaign in the Fall of 2017 should include funds for continued debt reduction, Caring for the Campus and Mission Ventures, and up to three new needed projects for the church. This campaign will be essential to the vitality of the congregation in 2020. We envision that with this effective campaign in place, the indebtedness of the congregation will be greatly reduced and the congregation will be in an excellent fiscal position to pursue its goals with sufficient resources.

We recommend that with the adoption of this Vision Statement the Moderator will have appointed co-chairs to lead the 2017 Capital Campaign. Their charge will be to build a team to lead our church in committing resources to reduce indebtedness, fund Caring for the Campus and Mission Ventures, and initiate up to three needed projects that will require new spending. These three projects are the renovations to the Juniors education space, refurbishing of the Fellowship Hall and improved transportation. The team will work with the Administrative Deacons in developing the plan and deciding which of these projects will be included in the new campaign. We also recommend that the duration of the new campaign be four years, providing needed resources through the Fall of 2021. We further recommend that the 2017 Capital Campaign retell the story of building, renovation and expansion of the past twenty-five years and celebrate all that we have fully completed through our faithful giving as we stand ready to make new commitments to continue forward. Finally, we recommend that prior to the campaign the Administrative Deacons will offer and encourage opportunities for private financing of the remaining indebtedness to the congregation by the summer of 2017.

Ongoing Oversight of the 2020 Vision Statement

The many recommendations of this vision document are assigned to various deacon groups, ministry teams, and other leadership groups in our congregation. However, we envision that if these goals are to be realized in 2020, there will need to be ongoing coordination combined with short term strategic planning.

Therefore, we recommend that the 2020 Vision Team continue to serve the congregation through the year 2020. They will assist the congregation by evaluating the progress made in the accomplishment of our goals and make the congregation aware of this progress by giving at least two reports each year to the church in quarterly conference. One of these annual reports will be at the Summer Quarter Conference and will include an annual strategic plan highlighting the upcoming ministries of the church. The 2020 Vision Team will work with the ministry staff of the congregation in developing this annual strategic plan.

Conclusion

This 2020 Vision Document is now in the hands of the Zebulon Baptist Church congregation. It is time for you to prayerfully reflect on what you have read here. On November 6 you will have the opportunity to attend one of two sessions to hear and see a presentation by the 2020 Vision Team and to ask your questions and share your thoughts about the recommendations. Once again grouping by generations, we are going to invite the Builders and Bridgers (born 1945 or earlier) and the Millennials (born 1982 and after) to the first session at 4:30 in the Fellowship Hall. The Boomers (born 1946-1964) and Generation Xers (born 1965-1981) are invited to the second session at 6:30. A week later this document will be on the agenda of our Fall Church Conference. We hope that you prayerfully consider this document. We also hope this work inspires you to faithfully envision a bright future over the next several years for Zebulon Baptist Church. Our vision is clear on one thing – for this church to be all that God calls us to be will require the faithful commitment of us all.

What an excellent vision for Zebulon Baptist Church – like a tree firmly planted...to love our God!



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Appendix

Timeline of 2020 Vision Statement Recommendations

Year	Months	Action	Who
2017	Jan – March	During 2017: Special worship opportunity	Staff
		Identify best method for partnerships with local schools and educational ministries	Ministry Team Deacons
		Jan - June: Develop plan for remodeling rooms in Juniors' Education space to present for Fall 2017 Capital Campaign	Administrative Deacons
		Sunday school strategies for greeting, guidance, outreach	Sunday School leadership, staff
		Decision for best way to reaffirm core values	Staff, Moderator, Spiritual Formation Team
		Website Study Group transition to Communications Study Group	Study Group, Moderator, CC Deacon Chair
		Identify options for purchasing 1-2 mini-buses, for inclusion in Fall 2017 capital campaign	Administrative Deacons
	April – June	Communication and website recommendations presented to congregation	Communications Study Group
	July – Sept	Sunday School and educational opportunities information document	Sunday School leadership and staff
		Ministry team deacons prepare to tell / share their story	Ministry Team Deacons
	Oct – Dec	Recommendations for 2017 Capital Campaign	Leadership and staff
		Publish annual guide of Church activities, programs and ministries	Staff, Deacon and Sunday School leadership
		November: Ministry Team Deacon opportunities for service	Ministry Team Deacons

Year	Months	Action	Who
2018	Jan – March	During 2018: Appoint group to study children and youth community ministries	Moderator
		During 2018: Appoint group to study preschool ministry possibilities	Moderator
		During 2018: Special worship opportunity	Staff
		During 2018: CC Deacon Study group	Chair of CC Deacons and Moderator
	Oct – Dec	Publish annual guide of Church activities, programs and ministries	Staff, Deacons, Sunday School leadership
		November: Ministry Team Deacon opportunities for service	Ministry Team Deacons
2019	Jan – March	By Year End 2019: Preschool ministry recommendations	Preschool ministry study group
		By Year End 2019: Children and Youth Ministry recommendations	Children/Youth Community ministry study group
		During 2019: Evaluate and recommend music and worship resource needs for capital campaign	Admin Deacons and ministry staff
		During 2019: Special worship opportunity	Staff
		By Year End 2019: Recommendations for CC Deacon Ministry	CC Deacon study group
		Building Survey Team Appointed	Moderator
	Oct – Dec	Publish annual guide of Church activities, programs and ministries	Staff, Deacon and Sunday School leadership
		November: Ministry Team Deacon opportunities for service	Ministry Team Deacons
2020	Jan – March	During 2020: Special worship opportunity	Staff
		All year and into 2021: Building Survey team recommendations to the congregation	Building survey team
	July – Sept	Annual Guide to Missions and Ministry opportunities	Staff, Deacons
	Oct – Dec	Publish annual guide of Church activities, programs and ministries	Staff, Deacon and Sunday School leadership
		November: Ministry Team Deacon opportunities for service	Ministry Team Deacons

Like a Tree Firmly Planted... To Love Our God: Songs and Scriptures

Like a Tree

Psalm 1:3

We are like a tree planted by the river
its leaf never withers, for it grows in the richest sod.

We are like a tree planted by the river
That flows from the throne room of God.

Sturdy and strong, for secure is its root
And in due season, it sends forth its fruit.

Be like a tree planted by the river
its leaf never withers, for it grows in the richest sod.

Be like a tree planted by the river
That flows from the throne room of God.

And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of
water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf
does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.

- Psalm 1:3

To Love Our God

To love our God, the reason we live
To love our God, the highest call
Nothing satisfies our soul
Gives life meaning, makes us whole
For this purpose we were made
To love our God!

- Mark Hayes

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" And Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself".

- Matthew 22:36-39