

Platte Woods United Methodist Church Healthy Church Initiative
Questions and Answers
Pastor Steve Breon

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions about the HCI process. Thank you for your service and your interest. We value your input and invite your participation.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Are the pastors still on the appointment system

Yes. We will continue to work with the bishop and district superintendent to provide pastoral leadership

2. Does the pastoral staff agree with the HCI report?

The pastors support the report.

3. What happens to other items brought up in the focus groups that did not make it into the detail of the prescriptions?

The prescriptions reflect issues that were heard with the greatest frequency in the focus groups, interview and conversations throughout the Healthy Church Initiative Weekend. As always, there is the possibility of other issues surfacing, which would then be evaluated.

4. I understand the vote for HCI is all or none. Can we change or add items to vote on?

The HCI process calls for an up or down vote on the document as presented. As noted in the earlier question and answer, there is always the possibility of other issues surfacing. This is not meant to be the end-all for our efforts to be an outwardly focused church of full participants in the life of grace, but instead to be a specific document to help propel us forward at this stage in the life of PWUMC.

5. What are the results of the other churches that have been thru this HCI process?

HCI is a new and unique effort in Missouri Methodism. Of 26 churches that have participate in a consultation weekend 20 have requested follow-up work. That indicates progress. One church reports going from 280 to over 400 in worship in three years. PWUMC is one of just a handful of large churches to be part of this process, and it is our hope that our experience can benefit not just our local church, but others throughout the Conference.

6. Who is going to do all this work listed in the prescriptions? What are we going to do to not burn out the 20% of folks now who are doing 80% of the work?

This is an all-church effort. A key component is “leaders developing leaders who develop leaders who develop servants.” New levels of leadership promote a broader base of those doing the ministry. As this process unfolds, we expect the energy and enthusiasm from those involved to spur others to participate as well.

7. Do we have to stick strictly to the timeline or can we make adjustments as we progress to make sure we are doing things in the correct order and complete some steps before we tackle another? How flexible is the timeline once we vote for HCI?

The timeline is for accountability and to ensure continued progress. It should not be seen as etched in concrete, but rather as achievable goals.

8. *How much help will the Coach and the Consultants be to us or to you? How much will they work with us or be here on site to assist us?*

The coach will work with the senior pastor, staff and leaders over an 18-month period. This will consist of on-site visits spread out over that time. The greatest assistance the coach provides will be in helping the senior pastor lead the process. Our coach has vast experience in what we are seeking to do and I would anticipate his work to be very helpful.

9. *What will all this cost us?*

The cost for the coach is around \$10,000, of which the Missouri Conference will pay \$8,000. We have included \$25,000 in our 2011 budget for HCI, which could be used to study other churches. It is too early to anticipate other costs that might be associated with a sanctuary remodel, new services and the “front door” component. Any costs are controlled and managed by our church.

10. *What is a postmodern?*

This is a topic books are written about, and space prohibits an in-depth response here. For our purposes, postmodern people can be defined as those 35 years of age and younger. Just like any other generational group, they have numerous characteristics that reflect the ways they think and how they see the world. While many churches, including PWUMC, currently offer styles of worship and study that appeal to “moderns,” our goal would be to add offerings that also appeal to this large group of individuals.

An interesting book written in 2000, “Post-Modern Pilgrims” by Leonard Sweet, would be a good introduction to some of the concepts of postmodern thinking.

11. *If the only growing churches are “nondenominational” why do we think a Methodist church will give them what they want? How do we know postmoderns want what we will offer? We are asking them to change habits from spending Sundays at Chiefs and soccer games, etc.*

All across America we can find mainline denominational churches, including United Methodist churches, that are growing and moving forward in mission. It is a misnomer to think that only “nondenominational” churches are growing. A number of church thinkers see the probability of the currently growing churches leveling off, with a resurgence in mainline churches that effectively proclaim and live the gospel. In addition, it could be noted that many growing churches are offering worship styles that are appealing to postmoderns. By adding offerings for this group, we would expect to grow and bring more disciples to Jesus Christ.

12. *Why is the “postmodern” group more important than any other unchurched group?*

Our belief is that ALL people are important – to God and to us. We would not cease our efforts to share Christ with other groups but are merely seeking to develop more fruitful means of reaching out to the “postmodern” person.

PRESCRIPTION #2 — Staff Alignment and Leadership Development

13. Who will make up the Nominations Committee and Leadership Board? Who picks the members of the Leadership Board?

The Lay Leadership Team nominates the church leadership and the Church/Charge Conference (annual church business meeting) votes leadership into office. The Lay Leadership Team is nominated (with nominations from the floor invited) and approved by the Church Conference. Currently members are Jay Kimball, Chris Evans, Todd Andrews, Steve Stokes, Rich Cummings and Laurie Price.

14. What are the requirements to be on the Leadership Council? How long are the terms?

Church membership is the requirement for serving on the Leadership Council. It will be expected that people exhibit a deep spiritual commitment to Jesus Christ and are “full participants” in the mission and ministry of PWUMC. People will serve three-year terms as is the current practice on other church committees.

15. What will those people do who no longer serve on those old committees?

People will move from administrative areas to ministry/mission opportunities. The possibilities are nearly endless.

16. How does this method of leadership conform to the Book of Discipline?

The structure conforms to the 2008 Book of Discipline, para.244.2 and 247.2. We have a one-page explanation available (please contact Mike Cole, mcole@plattewoodschurch.org, if you would like a copy).

17. In regard to the “governing board” who would replace Ad Council, Finance, etc., how many would be staff? How many would be from the congregation? How would they be chosen?

The Leadership Council consists of lay members of the church. The senior pastor and chief operations officer also will be part of the council. The Leadership Council will be nominated by the church Lay Leadership Team and voted on at a Church Conference.

18. How much extra workload will there be on the pastoral staff? Will that be a problem?

The workload seems to me to be different, not necessarily more or less. However, evaluation of pastoral staff and ministry expectations are part of the process, which is meant to ensure a sustainable pace.

PRESCRIPTIONS #3 and #4

Creating an Inviting Atmosphere and Assess & Strengthen Worship Experience

19. *Would you consider pads for the backs of the pews as an alternative to replacing them?*

Any remodeling of the sanctuary will be determined by a building committee that will be elected by a Church/Charge Conference. It would be inappropriate to speak for this future committee, but be assured that many ideas and thoughts would be considered in this process.

20. *Is the capital campaign date of 2012 a mistake, or will it really be that long before we begin that effort?*

The as-yet-to-be-established building committee must first develop any plans to be brought to the congregation for a vote. This could take several months, but a “deadline” of fall 2012 is established by this prescription.

21. *Do the Prescriptions have to be followed exactly? Such as, burning the pews?*

The Prescriptions are not a “checklist” of things to do but strategies to develop more fruitfulness in our ministry. The prescriptions will be continually evaluated as we move forward.

PRESCRIPTION #5

Strengthening Ministry With Children, Youth and Adults

22. *Will there be a strong voice for the children and youth programs on the Leadership Council?*

The Leadership Council will be charged to govern the church in ways that will continually hold the staff and congregation accountable for our values, mission and vision. Children and youth are central to our values.