

# Vision for the Future of SFBC

*By Angie Buysse*

Most of you are aware that for the past 11 months, there has been a Long-Range Planning Team working in earnest to help guide the future of SFBC. While the team was made up of six laypersons appointed by the Diaconate (Jim Segaar and Angie Buysse, Co-Chairs; Karin Zaugg Black, Larry Green, Deepty Gulati and Cherry Johnson), recommendations for the future were built on input from nearly half of the membership. It has been an exciting journey and the results offer opportunity for renewed purpose and direction!

The team has finished a thorough analysis of the current state of SFBC (membership, attendance, finances, assets, neighborhood, and community), completed research on regional and national church trends, and conducted 15 focus groups within the membership. In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, 90-minute focus groups using Zoom teleconferencing were offered in June and 125 members participated. Focus group participants took this responsibility very seriously. They showed a lot of care and were highly engaged in offering their concerns, questions, dreams, and hopes for the future.

Based on the research and focus group input, and in keeping with SFBC mission and values, the team developed recommendations grouped in three categories:

- Immediate priorities that must be undertaken in the next 2-6 months
- Longer term recommendations
- Guiding principles which clarify and direct how the recommendations are executed

Jim Segaar and Cherry Johnson have done an outstanding job summarizing the focus group input and documenting the overall project findings and recommendations. The team has presented these results to both the Executive Committee and the Diaconate. These documents are now available to all members at [www.seattlefirstbaptist.org](http://www.seattlefirstbaptist.org) – look for the long-range planning link on the home page. The proposed recommendations are quite extensive and will require more planning and discernment over the coming months.

[How can you be involved?](#)

- One of the guiding principles that resulted from the focus groups is the need for all to commit to being bold and innovative in the interest of thriving into the future. Commit to being bold and innovative.
- Take the time to review the documents available online. If you have questions or concerns, reach out to the Diaconate leadership (President Harriet Platts, Vice-President Jim Ginn or Secretary Sandra Jones).
- The Diaconate will be organizing various work groups to begin defining and executing some of the identified next steps. If you are interested in participating, contact Harriet, Jim or Sandra.
- There will be congregational engagement discussions scheduled in September to review findings and recommendations and continue to finalize the future plan. Mark your calendar for a September 16th or 20th session, if interested.

We are all living in uncertain and concerning times. Some may feel that now is not the time for one more change. Take comfort and faith in Jeremiah 29:11. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

May it be so.