

Jason Wells

Strategic Planning

Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church

## **Introduction:**

Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church was started in 1998 with a group of believers coming together as one in the Charleston and Bloomer communities. Cornerstone currently has a membership of 75 with average weekly attendance at 55. During the week, Cornerstone holds three regularly planned services. These services include members and visitors of all ages (4 to 91) with activities for all. For each worship service technology is utilized within the worship center as a tool for members and visitors to connect directly to the service. Cornerstone is looking to evaluate and expand their worship center technology as a means to support the people. The ultimate priority for seeking to use a strategic plan process is to ensure the needs or issues faced will be corrected. Members and guests come in various ranges, it will be critical to ensure each “type” of member/guest is able to fully participate within a worship service.

## **Stakeholders:**

The stakeholders of Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church will include all members who are on the membership roll. Each member brings a different quality and need to worship. The membership ranges in age from 5 to 99 years in age. Some members also face loss of hearing, vision, among other disability needs.

For the purpose of this project, the church’s planning and steering committee which includes the following members: Jody Crimm, Jimmy Cook, Russell Sparks, Sandy Jarrett, Leslie McKinney, and Debbie Phelps. The committee represents a vast range in daily use of technology and beliefs regarding technology. Each committee member plays a critical role with their personal vision of technology and church in general. Also, each member represents a department within the church, allowing each department to be represented. Key members involved would be Jody Crimm, the head of technology, Jimmy Cook, the pastor, and Russell

Sparks, the church treasurer. Their role will be highly critical as they have a much better idea of what needs to be done, the route church leadership is seeking and finally what can be done realistically regarding budget allocations. Mr. Jody Crimm was a key player in the addition of the current television screen technology that is being used presently. The final critical piece of the puzzle from all stakeholders and committee members is their desire to better serve those around them.

### **Technology Vision:**

Cornerstone's steering and planning committee was assigned to the task to develop and approve the technology vision. The committee met in session on Thursday, October 8, 2015 to discuss and outline the official vision. At the time of the meeting, committee members were asked to note several general thoughts or ideas about the main goal/purpose was. After a few minutes, ideas were shared and discussed. Next, the discussion transitioned into how we could utilize our ideas into a vision for the use of technology. Various points were discussed and debated on specific wording. For example, the word that raised most discussion was "involvement" with concern this may not address every need related to technology. However, in the end, it remained in tacked as it will cover all aspects within the technology department of the church or each individual areas. At the close of the meeting the technology vision statement below was approved.

Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church will seek to increase church involvement from members and guests by utilizing advanced but relevant technology.

Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church will center their evaluation upon technology that is utilized within the worship center. The purpose of having the focus in the worship center is to ensure all members and guests are involved and participating to the fullest possibility.

### **Long Term Needs:**

The overall long term technology need is to ensure all members/guests are able to participate and be involved in the worship service. The long term need (overall) noted in discussions was to involve those with vision and hearing problems. One stakeholder who was not serving on the committee made mention to committee members that technology as a whole should be more inclusive to those who have certain needs. In connection with the overall vision, both members and guests should be able to be involved by having visual and audio access to the worship service at the time of service, not later. In the end, the ultimate goal will be to better serve members and guests.

### **Technology Vision: Questions to Ask**

Upon working with Cornerstone and the steering committee, the first task was to determine what technology equipment was available for use and how it was being used. Three overview questions were formed to use in assessing this information.

1. What technology is currently on hand?
2. How is it being used and how often?
3. What needs are not being met?

To answer these questions, interviews with the steering committee, member/guest survey, inventory list and service observations were used. These data collection methods involved the



## **Cornerstone Service Observation**

1. What technology devices were present?
2. How were they being used?
3. How many members/guests were utilizing the devices or programs?
4. What is the general overall feeling in the service (Participation and Inclusive)?
5. Could the current technology programs/devices work in other situations to meet the vision/goals?
6. In testing the devices/programs, will they support carrying out the long term goals and technology vision?

### **Technology Evaluation: Data Collection**

To start the data collection process, an inventory list was compiled of items within the worship center. As a result, there were 36 technology items within the worship center. Following the completion of the inventory, a brief survey was edited and provided to members and guests. Surveys were conducted on October 21<sup>st</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>. Committee members determined to send ten surveys to members to the group that are home bound. Mr. Jody Crimm, technology director, was interviewed to help determine what was being used and how often. Mr. Crimm is able to provide information on the computer software, screen usage, and audio ministry to the committee. Below is an inventory of the main items connected to the worship center and their role as outlined by Mr. Crimm.

### **Worship Center Technology Inventory**

Two Worship Center TV Screens	Used to show films, clips, music lyrics, scripture, and other worship service items.
One HP Laptop Computer	Used to run the worship center screens and as work station for the technology team.
Microsoft Office Programs	The programs are used to develop bulletins, flyers, and other documents used for record keeping.
Media Shout	Media Shout is the official program used to display messages, lyrics, scripture and news on the screens during the service.
Share Faith	Provides the official backgrounds, videos, pictures, and other items that are shared during the service.
One Projector	This projector is used throughout the church and is moveable.
One Projector Screen	The projector screen is moveable and used for many events not included in the worship center. However, it remains assigned to the worship center.
One HP Printer	Used to print bulletins, notes, messages, and other paper documents needed for the crew and church staff.

One CD Burner and Duplicator	Copies sermon audio from the recordable discs for members and guests. A CD library is kept of previous messages.
Three CD Players with Recorder	Devices are used to record the services, play audio CDs for special music, and audio sound from the computer system.
Five Microphones	Microphones are used during the service for audio quality
One Microphone Headset	The headset is used by the pastor and guest speakers.
Sound Board and Monitors (Times Three)	They are used to help control sound levels.
Two Internet Routers	The routers provide internet service (wireless and connected) to the worship center floor.

Upon following up with the committee members, a total of 67 member and guest surveys were completed. Overall, members rated the church a 9 ½ on current use of technology in the worship center. Guests who submitted the survey rated the use of current technology at 7 ½ on the scale.

**Evaluating the Findings**

The steering committee members met the evening of October 25<sup>th</sup> to start to review and evaluate the findings. For the inventory list, it is critical to note there were 36 technology items within the church (clarified the numbers) and only those shared above are directly tied in some capacity with the current use in the worship center. Each item was determined to be weekly,



with the exception of an additional projector. Member and guest survey responses were discussed in detail. A concern or barrier to mention would be that guests only see the particular service attending. Mr. Sparks noted it correctly when it was mentioned that if they attended a Wednesday evening service, the technology use would be more limited than on a Sunday service. The idea of prior knowledge was connected to members or guests. In reviewing the surveys 93% of both members and guests favored the music lyrics shown best. The second best choice was for the sermon cues (verses) to be shown. In the end, it was clear the current technology is positive for a vast majority of members.

### **Technology Needs: Questions Asked**

Now, it is clear the technology is being accepted and the normal use, it is time to move forward to focus on how to improve. Two main questions were narrowed down to focus on needs. They are:

1. What needs should be present to accomplish the ideal goals and objectives for the worship service?
2. Do all members and guests have the access needed to be involved in the service?

In order to know how to improve, the critical focus should be on what we have to have and what members and guests need to participate in the worship service. The steering committee sought observations and member interviews right at the conclusion of the services for feedback. In doing so, it provides with immediate feedback following the service. Questions used during the feedback interviews are found below.

## Interview Questions

On a scale of 1 to 10, how high was your overall participation tonight?

Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Check the any of the following items that hindered you from participating during the worship service.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screens          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision Ability                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Seating Arrangement   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing/Sound/Audio            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, Please Explain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Clip Usage | <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of Social<br>Media |  |

Check the any of the following items that assisted in you participating during the worship service.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screens          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision Ability                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Seating Arrangement   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music            | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing/Sound/Audio            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, Please Explain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Clip Usage | <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of Social<br>Media |  |

Comments or Other Feedback:

### **Technology Needs: Data Collected**

The interviews were completed on Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, following the close of the mid-week service. There was an attendance of 35 members, with guests included. Of that number, ten members and two guests noted issues seeing the hymn books, Bible, and other small print items. A total of six members commented on hearing issues throughout the service. The committee members noted a few concerns when it was noted that some felt they were just “there” in the service and not able to participate due to hearing or vision problems. Ms. Phelps noticed that some members had issues hearing even while being seated close to the front stage. The members disconnect was evident for some within the service. A concern that was noted in committee discussion was the limited time for interviews directly following the service. This was a concern from the start; therefore, interview questions were shorten to allow a more narrow focus of opportunity.

### **Technology Needs: Needs Found**

The steering committee discussed and reviewed the various feedback statements along with prior observations. While meeting, it was found that the primary area of needs sound be improving visual sight and hearing of the services. This came as a result of a majority of members and guests noting those issues. On the night in question of interviews and observation, 18 of the 35 in attendance noted either one of these issues.

### **Action Plan: The Gap**

The steering committee of Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church will oversee various actions to ensure continued improvements upon members and guests worship experience. The

question remains, how divides the organization? In reviewing the data collected in both the technology evaluation and needs assessment, there seems to be a portion of membership and community population that has been placed on the back burner. This is not a sign of disrespect in any manner but one that has been overlooked. This population group is one that has above and beyond needs to ensure they enjoy the same worship experience as those who are currently fully participating. The committee discussions prove an understanding that it will never be a “perfect” experience; however, striving to include everyone is the goal.

### **Action Plan**

#### **Hardware/Software**

The ultimate goal will be to meet for Cornerstone will be to add an additional TV screen for choir use and assistive hearing devices. The needed equipment and wiring to add the hardware to the current system will be purchased. At this time, no additional software will be required of the hardware that is in question for purchase.

#### **Staff Development**

Staff and volunteers will research on the best assistive hearing devices that works best to meet the general needs of providing service audio directly to members. Staff will be trained on how to operate the devices. An additional volunteer will be added within three months projects start in order to ensure the volunteer selected are involved in all trainings.

#### **Facilities and Maintenance**

On maintaining Cornerstone’s facilities, devices to add an additional TV screen for the choir will be added. The devices will include: hardware to hang TV screen, cables to connect into the computer, and the addition of an electrical outlet. The technology booth in the worship center will be expanded as needed at the completion of both projects.

**Financial Planning**

The steering committee will meet to approve items needed for the projects and submit requests for final approval. Current budget allocations will be expanded for the approve projects. Projects will be completed individually to help ensure funding is secure.

<b>Items Needed</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Price</b>
Samsung 65” TV (Best Buy)	1	\$1300.00
2 Year Protection Plan (Best Buy)	1	\$170.00
Assistive Listening Devices	1 Package	\$1500.00
Wiring and Accessories	TBD	\$150.00
Labor	TBD	\$500.00
	<b>Total:</b>	\$3620.00

\*Prices for the TV screen and listening devices are based upon preliminary research. Steering committee members asked for a general estimate for budgeting purposes only. An official amount will be finalized as the projects are carried out.

**Timeline**

Cornerstone will utilize the following timeline for the implementation of the projects.

<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Project Details</b>
December 2015	Presentation to the steering committee on the suggested routes for improvement. Also, any final questions will be answered.
January 2016	The committee selects the starting project (hearing assistive devices) and will assign contact roles once the project has been formally approved. A project timeline will be developed also by the committee to help pace the project and track progress.
February 2016	Formal research on various hearing devices by the technology team (Jody and Russell).  The team will present comparisons to determine one product that will best meet the overall needs of members and guests.

March 2016	The committee's selection will be presented for final approval and purchase. The devices will be installed and tested.
April 2016	The committee will conduct the first evaluation of the hearing assistive devices. The committee will start dividing tasks and project pacing charts for the TV screen for the choir section project.
May 2016	The technology team (Jody and Russell) will select a new TV screen for choir use for the committee to review based upon set criteria. The committee will review and select one to be sent for final approval.
June 2016	Upon approval, the screen will be purchased and installed. Third month evaluations will take place on assistive hearing devices.
July 2016	The first month evaluation of the new screen addition in the worship center.
September 2016	Third month evaluation will occur on the new screen addition.
January 2017	Evaluation will occur on both the screen and assistive hearing devices this month. A report update will be provided to the church and

	steering committee. This will be under the direction of the technology team.
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## **Evaluation**

Cornerstone Free Will Baptist Church plans to evaluate the overall general success of the action plan based upon the success of incorporating the improvements to the worship center. These additions will have a correlating affect upon the members and guests who attend a worship service or Bible study. Various methods have been selected by Cornerstone's steering committee which include observation checklists, progress charts, and focus group questionnaires. The primary goal is to ensure that all plans have been followed through and both projects were successful in their implantation.

## **Evaluation Methods**

In order to evaluate the progress of Cornerstone's strategic plan, both internal and external teams will be utilized. The internal evaluation will be conducted by the steering committee. Mr. Russell Sparks will be in charge of conducting all internal evaluations. The internal evaluation process will include: observation, charts, and a focus group. Observations will be completed once the projects are completed. In using observations, the team will be able to see and note the difference relating to members and guests within the worship experience. Mr. Jimmy Cook will oversee the observation process and ensure the observations will be submitted. Observers will include the committee team and three additional members present on the day observations will occur. Charts will be used to keep a record of the completion and project status



reports. Mrs. Debbie Phelps will oversee the project charts as her experience in the business setting will help ensure they are completed correctly. Finally, a focus group will be used for the addition of the hearing assistive devices. The group will consist of three members who have been determined as a need for the hearing assistive devices. Mrs. Leslie McKinney will oversee the focus group. The focus group's intent will be to determine success of the devices in relation to the worship service experience. The focus group will use a questionnaire to perform their evaluation. In addition to the internal evaluation, an external evaluation will take place. The primary method for the external evaluations will be observation. The evaluations will be conducted by five persons from the community who have attend Cornerstone at least one time for a service or special event (ex: Fifth Sunday Signing). Mrs. Sandy Jarrett will be placed in charge of the external observations. Mrs. Jarrett's knowledge of the community and those attend weekly will assist in working with this team. The observation team will utilize the same observation checklist as with the internal evaluation. The results will be compared at their completion.

### **Evaluation Instruments**

On the pages that follow, the instruments used in the methods above are included.

Instruments Included:

- 1) Observation Record Checklist
- 2) Project Process Chart
- 3) Focus Group Questionnaire

**Observation Record Checklist**

<b>Question / Statement</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Members/Guests are using and participating in the service.		
Additional screens are being utilized by members and choir.		
Assistive hearing devices are present and in use.		
Technology's role is present in the service.		
General improvements have increased in attention and participation.		

How would you rate the overall connection in the service?

Low    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    High

Additional Comments:



### Focus Group Questionnaire

1) On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the assistive hearing devices?

(Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High)

2) On a scale of 1 to 5, how easy was the use of the devices during the services?

(Difficult) 1 2 3 4 5 (Easy)

3) On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the improvements to the enjoyment of the service with the devices?

(No Improvements) 1 2 3 4 5 (Much improved)

4) On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the overall use of technology use within today's service?

(No Improvements) 1 2 3 4 5 (Much improved)

5) What was your impression of the assistive hearing devices?

Additional Comments:

## **Evaluation Timeline**

The evaluation will be completed at various stages and points over the course of a year. The year of evaluation period will start at the completion of each project. Evaluations will occur directly at the end of the project, three month, six month, and one year intervals. Mr. Jody Crimm will be directly responsible for ensuring evaluations have been completed. However, as noted earlier, tasks for completions of the various evaluations have been assigned. These committee members will be required to report back with their findings from either the internal or external evaluations to Mr. Crimm. Committee members will be given one to two weeks following the evaluations to finalize findings. All evaluations and projects will be complete by January 2017. Following the completion of all projects and evaluations, the technology department will be asked to review technology apportions each fiscal year. This allows for more flexibility in adding newer or additional technology in the future.

Overall, at the conclusion of the evaluation progress, committee members hope to find the projects have been a large success into the overall member/guest participation. Upon doing so, the committee will have completed a successful strategic planning task which allowed for team work, patience, and corporation throughout the process.