



## **Vision for A God-sized Impact**

*“In ministry with the city for an impact on the city”*

**“Promote the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because your future depends on its welfare.”**

**Jeremiah 29:7**

### **Initial Purpose of Impact! Harrisburg:**

Operating on the premise that “Staying as we are is not being a fruitful Church nor is it being faithful to Jesus’ Great Commission,” the purpose of *Impact! Harrisburg* will be to explore together, with a sense of urgency, a bigger, comprehensive vision to reach new and more diverse people in and around the city of Harrisburg rather than just a focus on individual congregations, buildings, and survivability. This is an initiative to dream bigger than any current individual congregation in the urban area could dream alone. This is an opportunity for each church to assess their congregation’s ministry potential and to unlock resources through our connection with and through one another. This is the time to apply adaptive solutions and design thinking in order to be faithful in reaching new and more diverse people in new ways in and around Harrisburg for Christ. People from the ten participating churches will have the opportunity to collaborate in order to be a greater witness in and around Harrisburg.

### **Discerned Purpose moving forward of Impact! Harrisburg:**

*Impact! Harrisburg* will organize our body of believers to explore ways to strengthen our ability to bring new people to Christ in and around the City of Harrisburg. **Staying as we are is not an option**, as facts indicate that congregations in most of the churches are decreasing, and few new people are being drawn into Christ’s fold. The initiative calls upon the church’s faithful to think beyond individual preferences to envision a united effort, building upon our strengths and eliminating obstacles to the goal of effective ministry.

“ . . . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” *Hebrews 12:1*.

### **Mission:**

Mission of the United Methodist Church: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Mission of *Impact! Harrisburg*: To cultivate a holy and inclusive community across our city that loves Christ and neighbors, constantly inviting new people on board and empowering them to find their place in the mission.

### **Discerned Vision of Impact! Harrisburg:**

Vision: A dynamic creative city-wide movement to be a multi-site diverse community of believers who meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors, invest in the lives of our neighbors, and offer hope to our neighbors

Vision Preparation: As the current individual churches of The United Methodist Church in and around Harrisburg, we will unite in faith, community and collaboration so that we may have a God-sized impact in and around the city of Harrisburg.

### **Values of Impact! Harrisburg:**

- Following Jesus out the doors
- Souls matter to God
- Kids deserve hope
- Constant learning/trying new things
- A church (faith community) that mirrors the diversity of our city
- Seeing Jesus in one another
- Teams of clergy and laity

## Strategies for Vision

*Vision: A dynamic city-wide movement to be a multi-site diverse community of believers who meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors, invest in the lives of our neighbors, and offer hope to our neighbors.*

*Key strategies include:*

- Multiple locations
- Relationship building
- Designing ministry intentionally
- Prayer season before starting anything
- Partnering with allies

*Recommended pastoral leadership of a new multi-site Harrisburg faith community:*

- To facilitate a new unified faith community tentatively named “*Impact Church*”, we propose a new diverse pastoral leadership team of three pastors be formed. This new pastoral leadership team could be comprised of current United Methodist pastors in Harrisburg and/or newly appointed pastors. Bishop Park, with input from his appointive Cabinet and Kay Kotan, will be responsible for determining the persons best equipped to serve the new unified Harrisburg faith community.
  - It is the hope and desire of the *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team that an intentionally diverse pastoral team be named that considers age, gender, ethnicity, skillset, and passion for the city of Harrisburg and surrounding communities. Persons who are creative, strategic, community-minded, and willing to invest in the life of Harrisburg and surrounding areas should be considered.
  - We recommend the new pastoral leadership be made known on or before the unified worship on April 21, 2019 (Easter) to assist in the transition to one unified faith community. If possible, Bishop Park will announce the new pastoral team.
  - The new pastoral leadership team may begin meeting before July 1, 2019 to prepare for their new roles and to begin connecting with important city stakeholders (i.e. Neighborhood groups, Homeowner groups, Community leaders, City government leaders — Mayor, City Council) to begin their work of learning and community building in and around Harrisburg.

*Proposed Staffing Needs:*

- We propose a team of three pastors be determined by Bishop Park to share in the leadership of the new faith community, “*Impact Church*”, in Harrisburg.
- An Administrative/Executive staff member should be considered for supervising and handling the administrative, financial, and potential building needs of this new faith community.
- As an ongoing part of this ministry, and to allow this new faith community to be a church that seeks to multiply leaders and churches from its inception, an opportunity to train new leaders, perhaps college or seminary students as ministry interns, should be considered as early as September 2019.
- We propose that, from out of the membership of the new faith community, three lay persons with diverse gifts be appointed to serve on the leadership team that will complete the team. These persons will be recommended by the new unified faith community.
- By January 1, 2020, a simplified accountable structure of governance will be in place.

*New Vision and Strategies:*

- Under the direction of the new leadership, the team will determine a new, clear vision for this new multi-site faith community in and around Harrisburg.
- An official new church name and strategic locations for the first sites will be determined between July 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019 under the direction and leadership of the new pastoral team. Primary focus will be given on how to connect new people to Jesus Christ in the various communities and neighborhoods in and around the city of Harrisburg; such as uptown, midtown, downtown, Allison Hill, and Penbrook.

*Strategic Partnerships:*

- To shift from having siloed ministries across the city of Harrisburg and surrounding areas, the new leadership of the new faith community will be encouraged to connect with strategic partners throughout the city. This is to reduce the amount of duplication that currently exists within the current ten churches. Examples of some potential partnerships are the YMCA at Camp Curtin, the Neighborhood Center, a United Methodist ministry in the city and the Central Food Bank.

*Success indicators of Impact! Harrisburg:*

- Stories of lives transformed
- Worship in multiple locations
- Volunteers who are serving others
- New people connecting with Jesus
- Signature ministries/teams
- Connected and engaged to the city and surrounding areas of Harrisburg

## Strategies for Vision Preparation

*Vision Preparation: As the current individual churches of The United Methodist Church in and around Harrisburg, we will unite in faith, community and collaboration so that we may have a God-sized impact in and around the city of Harrisburg.*

The following strategy is in keeping with ¶419.9 of the 2016 edition of The Book of Discipline which states, “The superintendent, in consultation with the bishop and the cabinet, shall work to develop the best strategic deployment of clergy possible in the district, including realignment of the pastoral charges when needed and *the exploration of larger parishes, cooperative parishes, multiple staff configurations, new faith communities, and ecumenical shared communities.*” (emphasis added)

### *Consolidation and Unity:*

- To achieve a greater impact for God in and around the city of Harrisburg and be better stewards of God’s resources by consolidating resources in order to expand our witness for Christ and expand our ministry, we propose all ten buildings will be closed by **Easter 2019 (April 21)**.
  - On March 17, 2019, following the regularly scheduled worship service, each of the remaining nine congregations (Grace Penbrook has already voted to close December 31, 2018) will gather individually for a Church Conference to vote to close their building and to merge into a new unified Harrisburg faith community. This action is being structured in this way to give the congregations an opportunity to vote to discontinue with dignity and to leave a legacy for a new vision to reach new, younger, more diverse people for a new day in and around Harrisburg.
  - Each church is recommended to have a Ministry Celebration on Palm Sunday April 14, 2019 to thank God for the ministry that has occurred in that space in the past, and to give praise for the new ministry beginning in and around Harrisburg.
    - Rev. Jason Mackey in collaboration with the *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team will craft a service that congregations are encouraged to use but each church is invited to celebrate in its own unique way.
  - The *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team will develop a Lenten series to be shared in each of the congregations in preparation for April 21, 2019. The series will be shared between March 10th and April 14, 2019.
- In a spirit of unity, the nine congregations in *Impact! Harrisburg* will combine in a celebratory Easter service on April 21, 2019 at Twenty-Ninth Street United Methodist Church.
  - Bishop Park and Rev. Barry Robison will participate in this holy service of new life and unity.
  - Twenty-Ninth Street United Methodist Church will become the *interim* location for a new unified United Methodist faith community in and around the city of Harrisburg with the intention of becoming a faith community with multiple new locations throughout the city and surrounding area; such as midtown, downtown, uptown, Allison Hill, and Penbrook.
- As of April 22, 2019, properties of seven of the churches (Derry Street, First Harrisburg, Grace Penbrook (if not already divested), Riverside, Rockville, St. Mark’s, Trinity Penbrook) will be under the direction and leadership of the Susquehanna Conference Board of Trustees to care for and divest. When divested, proceeds will be deposited in the Harrisburg District Urban Property proceeds account (designated to *Impact! Harrisburg*) from which they shall be made available to fund the new faith community until it becomes self-sustaining.

- Special investigation, discernment, and consideration will be given to all property associated with Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell and Grace Harrisburg due to the historical nature of these buildings. A collaborated team made up of the district superintendent, cabinet, Harrisburg Resource Team, Equipping Vital Congregations office, and the new pastoral leadership team will work together in consulting with the Conference Board of Trustees and the district Building and Location committee in this investigation. These properties will be under the care of Conference Board of Trustees during this investigation.

*Local Church Conversations:*

- Members of the *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team will be trained and dispatched to facilitate at least one town-hall meeting in each of the nine congregations with the current pastoral leaders in attendance and offering support. These conversations will be conducted between January 1<sup>st</sup> and February 28, 2019.
  - Items for discussion: vision and strategies of *Impact! Harrisburg*, Church Conference instructions, laity participation in process, and how to celebrate their ministries.
- Specific instructions and support will be given to each of the pastors to work with the *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team.

*Feeding, Clothing, and Education Ministries:*

- The *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team proposes all ministries related to feeding, clothing, and education be paused as of April 14, 2019 in their current buildings with the following exceptions:
  - The preschool at Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell UMC will be authorized to remain in their current arrangement to complete the 2018/2019 school year.
    - Following the completion of the 2018/2019 school year, the preschool will be encouraged to partner with the Neighborhood Center in providing space for the 19 preschoolers and be under the Center's leadership and ministry.
  - The soup kitchen at Camp Curtin Memorial Mitchell UMC will be encouraged to partner with Camp Curtin YMCA (next door neighbor to church). The Executive Director of Camp Curtin YMCA is willing to partner with this ministry. This would remain an interim ministry of the new unified faith community in Harrisburg.
  - Investigation will be undertaken of ways to continue the Central PA Food Bank distribution site at Derry Street UMC. The new unified United Methodist faith community's leadership shall consider a similar interim partnership for the ministry of Derry Street.
  - Other community-oriented ministries will be suspended pending discernment review of the new unified United Methodist faith community leadership.

*Pastoral Responsibility:*

- An interim leader chosen by the district superintendent shall be in place to serve as chief organizer during the April 21-June 30, 2019 timeframe, to organize, give leadership, and be an administrative presence during this interim period.
- *Worship* – worship will be held at the *interim* location of Twenty-Ninth Street United Methodist Church until new locations are secured. Under the leadership of the interim leader, a worship and preaching schedule for the nine Sundays between April 28<sup>th</sup> and June 23, 2019 will be created. Rev. Barry Robison will be the preacher on June 30, 2019 to assist with the pastoral transition that may occur.
  - We encourage interim worship teams and choirs be formed for this ten Sunday period that intentionally connects persons from each of the ten churches in leadership.
- *Pastoral Care* – The interim leader will organize and determine how to best care for funerals, weddings, and other pastoral needs.
- *Finances* – all financial resources, accounts, and procedures will also be combined into one unified system. An interim treasurer and interim financial secretary will be selected by the district superintendent to carry out the necessary financial aspects of this new faith community. These persons will be determined by April 1<sup>st</sup> to be ready for the new unified faith community which begins on April 21, 2019. These persons will be accountable to the district superintendent and interim leader.
- All pastoral appointments and concerns during this interim period will be facilitated through the Harrisburg District Superintendent and Bishop Park.

*Prayer Team:*

- An intentional prayer team will be created to pray once a month together beginning in January 2019 and will continue throughout the entire year.
  - Any community leader and congregation member in Harrisburg city or the surrounding area who wishes to be on this team will be encouraged to gather and pray for God's leading. All of the current Harrisburg city pastors are expected to participate in this prayer team.

*Communication:*

- Bishop Park met with pastors of the ten United Methodist Churches in Harrisburg on December 7, 2018 to communicate his and the cabinet's support of *Impact! Harrisburg* and the future vision.
- On Saturday, December 8, 2018, the *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource Team, under the leadership of Rev. Barry Robison, Kay Kotan, and Rev. Jason Mackey gathered all pastors and congregations together at the Camp Curtin YMCA for worship and sharing of the *Impact! Harrisburg* vision and plan.
- The Susquehanna Conference's Communication Team will be the contact for any public inquiries about the *Impact! Harrisburg* process and vision.
- The *Impact! Harrisburg* Resource team in conjunction with the Conference's Communication Team will facilitate and/or notify community groups that may be impacted by the closure of these buildings.

*Building Closing Procedures:*

- Pastor, local church trustees, and custodian must meet with conference trustee representative to tour the properties being transferred to the conference between March 17<sup>th</sup> and April 14, 2019.
- Each church must provide a detailed inventory of furnishings and contents. Information must be provided to the District Superintendent by April 7, 2019. This is to be done by local church trustees.
- Each church shall communicate in writing with any tenants or ministries using their facility about the impending closure of the building. This conversation shall be done no later than February 1, 2019 with the understanding that they will not be authorized to be in the building as of April 1, 2019 with the exceptions noted above. This includes persons living in the parsonages, other churches using the facilities, ministries, schools, and organizations.
- By April 20, 2019 all keys to all properties must be given to the Closed Church Property Manager at the time when the properties are transferred to the conference. Pastors will need to communicate that no access to their buildings will be allowed after the keys are officially transferred with the exceptions noted above. Pastors must report to the interim leadership any persons who are not obliging and cooperating with this agreement.
- Local church trustees should close safe deposit boxes and give contents to district superintendent by April 20, 2019.
- Pastors will provide the District Superintendent an updated membership list with contact information immediately following the Celebration of Ministry service on April 14, 2019.
- All bank accounts will be closed, and monies will be transferred to a new account by May 1, 2019. This shall be done by each local church treasurer. All bank statements and necessary documentation must also be transferred to the interim financial secretary and treasurer.
- Immediately after the Celebration of Ministry service on April 14, 2019, a change of address form must be submitted transferring all mail to the new unified faith community's address. For now, this will be the Harrisburg district office.
- Between April 14<sup>th</sup> and 21, 2019, each pastor, custodian and representatives from the local church trustees will meet with the Closed Church Property Manager and the assigned conference trustee(s) to officially transfer all church-owned property to the conference board of trustees or the Harrisburg district office.
- After April 14, 2019, the district superintendent will arrange for Conference Archivist to go through each building.
- The conference board of trustees in conjunction with the local congregations will make the properties presentable. The District Superintendent will negotiate with the conference trustees a standard policy for removal of items by parishioners. Any items left can be given to other churches, Mission Central, ministries and/or left for faith communities that may be potential buyers. The district superintendent is responsible for the removal of all United Methodist items.
- Conference Board of Trustees and local church trustees will work together to end their local incorporation.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

Operating on the premise that “Staying as we are is not being a fruitful Church nor is it being faithful to Jesus’ Great Commission,” the purpose of *Impact! Harrisburg* has been to explore together, with a sense of urgency, a bigger, comprehensive vision to reach new and more diverse people in and around the city of Harrisburg rather than just a focus on individual congregations, buildings and survivability. This is an initiative to dream bigger than any current individual congregation in the urban area could dream alone. This is an opportunity for each church to assess their congregation’s ministry potential and to unlock resources through our connection with and through one another. This is the time to apply adaptive solutions and design thinking in order to be faithful in reaching new and more diverse people in new ways in and around Harrisburg for Christ. People from the ten participating churches now have the opportunity to collaborate together to be a greater witness in and around Harrisburg.

### **What is the mission of *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

*Impact! Harrisburg* will organize our body of believers to explore new and innovative ways to strengthen our ability to bring new people to Christ in the City of Harrisburg and surrounding areas. **Staying as we are is not an option**, as facts indicate that congregations in most of the churches are decreasing, and few new people are being drawn into our fold. The initiative calls upon the church’s faithful to think beyond individual preferences to envision a united effort, building upon our strengths and eliminating obstacles towards the goal of effective ministry.

*“ . . . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Hebrews 12:1.*

### **When did *Impact! Harrisburg* begin?**

*Impact! Harrisburg* began in the summer of 2018 with organization of a regional Resource Team and meetings with representatives designated from the Harrisburg area churches. The initiative has developed in two phases:

#### **Spring-Fall 2019**

Vision: A dynamic creative city-wide movement to be a multi-site diverse community of believers who meet the physical and spiritual needs of our neighbors, invest in the lives of our neighbors, and offer hope to our neighbors.

#### **Summer 2018-Spring 2019**

Vision Preparation: As the current individual churches of The United Methodist Church in and around Harrisburg, we will unite in faith, community and collaboration so that we may have a God-sized impact in and around the city of Harrisburg.

### **When will *Impact! Harrisburg* end?**

*Impact! Harrisburg* will be an ongoing faith movement to energize and equip Harrisburg area churches for effective ministry and evangelism. A definitive date for the end of this mission is not envisioned.

### **What compelled organization of *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

In August 2018, the Harrisburg District Superintendent Barry Robison sent a letter to ten congregations in Harrisburg alerting them to the facts of a steady decline in attendance at churches in and around the City. In a city of almost 50,000 people, average attendance at all churches in and around Harrisburg totaled fewer than 400 people, or less than one percent of the population. Staying as we are is not being a fruitful Church nor is it being faithful to Jesus' Great Commission.

### **Has a similar initiative been successful with other churches?**

Harrisburg is unique, but similar initiatives have succeeded in revitalizing the United Methodist Church in other parts of the country. In California, UMC churches have refocused on their mission of evangelism and have reorganized into more powerful and effective ministries for Christ. We also have seen similar efforts closer to Harrisburg recently in Carlisle.

### **How many churches are involved in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

Ten churches are involved in the *Impact! Harrisburg* initiative, including those within city boundaries as well as immediately adjacent to the city. Grace Penbrook started in this process and has voted to close as of December 31, 2018.

### **Who has been involved in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

A Resource Team and church teams of pastors and lay people from within the Susquehanna Conference, along with those who have a love for Christ and the city of Harrisburg have been involved. Pastors and laity from each church have also been involved.

### **How will decisions be made in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

Bishop Park, District Superintendent Barry Robison, the Equipping Vital Congregations Director Kay Kotan, the Conference Board of Trustees, and the forthcoming new leadership team will be working collaboratively on this movement to reach new people for Christ.

### **What role do the churches have in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

The majority of the churches involved acknowledged their inability to be an effective congregation moving forward. This was determined through self-identification of demographics, financial resources, facility concerns, membership and worship attendance. People from the ten congregations will be actively involved in joining the new faith community to make new disciples of Jesus in and around Harrisburg.

### **What will happen to my church's ministries?**

The mission of *Impact! Harrisburg* is to reinvigorate ministries for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and for ministering to the needs of our communities. Some ministries will be consolidated with those of other churches for a more powerful outreach, and some ministries will be turned over to community organizations that are providing similar services. Ongoing church ministries such as small groups, bible studies, music groups, etc. will be coordinated and communicated under the interim leader.

### **Have Pastors been involved in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

Yes, pastors of the Harrisburg area churches have been directly involved, meeting with members of the Resource Team, *Impact! Harrisburg* gatherings, providing information and offering their insights on the future.

### **What input will individual church members have in *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

The support of church members is essential to the success of this movement and were represented in meetings with the Resource Team and were engaged in prayer and in joint worship services during the initial stages of *Impact! Harrisburg*. The faithful are being asked to remain in fervent and continuous prayer to ensure God's will is carried out in this important project.

### **Are community and elected officials in the City aware of *Impact! Harrisburg*?**

Yes, community and elected officials will be informed of *Impact! Harrisburg* and public announcements will be made to inform all who are potentially impacted by any decisions.

### **Are there specific timelines regarding all assets involved with the *Impact! Harrisburg* initiative?**

Yes, there are some timelines for the first phases of the initiative. They include:

#### **February 1, 2019**

- Each church shall communicate in writing with any tenants or ministries using their facility about the impending closure of the building. This conversation shall be done no later than February 1, 2019 with the understanding that they will not be authorized to be in the building as of April 1, 2019 with the exceptions listed in the strategic plan. This includes persons living in parsonages, other churches using facilities, ministries, schools, and organizations.

#### **April 7, 2019**

- Each church must provide a detailed inventory of furnishings and contents after the local church votes to close the building and merge. Information must be provided to District Superintendent by April 7, 2019. This is to be done by the local church trustees.

### **March 17-April 14, 2019**

- Pastor, representatives from the local church trustees, and custodian must meet with conference trustee representative to tour the properties being transferred to the conference by April 14, 2019.
- Pastors will provide the District Superintendent an updated membership list with contact information immediately following the Celebration of Ministry service on April 14, 2019.
- Immediately after the Celebration of Ministry service on **April 14, 2019**, a change of address form must be submitted transferring all mail to the new unified faith community's address at the District Office of the Susquehanna Conference.

### **Between April 14 and 21, 2019**

- Each pastor and local representative of the church board of trustees will meet with the Closed Church Property Manager and the assigned conference trustee(s) to officially transfer the all church-owned property to the conference board of trustees and/or the Harrisburg District
- After April 14, the District Superintendent will arrange for Conference Archivist to go through each building.

### **April 20, 2019**

- All keys to all properties must be given to the Closed Church Property Manager at the time when the proprieties are transferred to the conference. Pastors will need to communicate that no access to their buildings will be allowed after the keys are officially transferred. Pastors must report to the interim leadership any persons who are not obliging and cooperating with this agreement with the exceptions stated in the strategic plan.
- Local church trustees must close safe deposit boxes and give contents to District Superintendent by April 20, 2019.

### **May 1, 2019**

- All bank accounts will be closed, and monies will be transferred to a new account of the new united faith community by May 1, 2019. This shall be done by each local church treasurer. All bank statements and necessary documentation must also be transferred to the interim financial secretary and treasurer.

### **Where is the money going?**

All financial resources will be invested in the Harrisburg District Urban Ministries account to be designated for and benefited of *Impact Church*.

**Will *Impact! Harrisburg* involve financial commitments?**

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to give our tithe (10%) to further God's kingdom. As you continue to worship, please continue to support your church in order to make disciples for the transformation of the world. Your financial giving is a spiritual discipline as you live out your faith with *Impact Church*.

**Will *Impact! Harrisburg* help bring people to Christ?**

**YES!** The entire mission of *Impact! Harrisburg* is to refocus our churches on the central mission of making disciples for Christ for the transformation of the world. There is no doubt that we will bring new people to Christ by reorganizing our efforts, uniting our ministries and consolidating our resources to expand our witness of Jesus Christ in the city of Harrisburg and surrounding areas.

**Will *Impact! Harrisburg* better equip us for evangelism?**

Yes, this is the specific focus of *Impact! Harrisburg* -- to refocus our efforts on effective evangelism. Resourcing and equipping will be provided and will become a key focus on the new faith community.

**Is there a plan for notifying the community?**

Yes, the Susquehanna Conference Communications Team has a well-considered plan to meet with key elected officials and with community leaders to explain the rationale for *Impact! Harrisburg* and the actions that will result from implementation of the initiative. City officials, including the Mayor of Harrisburg, are aware of this initiative and will be thoroughly briefed.

**What happens to my pastor?**

All currently appointed pastors will be accountable to the interim leader and the District Superintendent and appointed to the mission congregation of *Impact Church* throughout the current appointment year.

**What happens to the staff?**

All paid staff persons in all ten churches will end their employment by April 14, 2019. Interim staff will be considered as needed.

**What happens if a congregation does not vote to close their building and/or merge into a new unified faith community on March 17, 2019?**

Resolutions will be brought to the floor of the 2019 Annual Conference to close those churches.