

# The Great Report

## Summary Version

*What it might look like if we tried to truly live out  
Christ's Great Commandment & Great Commission:  
To Love God, Love Neighbor, Love Self and Go Make Disciples*

*(This is a very abbreviated version of the Great Report. If you have questions, we encourage you to read the full report where prayerful and thoughtful rationale for, and details surrounding, all recommendations can be found)*

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### **A Note from the Strategic Visioning Team:**

#### **A few things this report will do . . .**

- Reaffirm our identity and foundation as people loved, forgiven and transformed by God in Jesus Christ and committed to continuing the work of Christ in the world
- Establish a vision, core values and new mission statement for Second for the next 3-5 years
- Provide an analysis of current ministries, programs and structures
- Offer recommendations for adapting current ministries or attempting new ones, so that our mission, vision and core values are advanced across all of our ministries, including those that don't yet exist
- Offer recommendations for new leadership structures
- Reaffirm our commitment to meeting each person on their journey of faith and helping them grow as a disciple of Christ

#### **A few things this report will not do . . .**

- Provide magic answers to the many challenges that have confronted Second and the larger church for decades
- Recommend that we leave our denomination; rather, we should seek to *lead* our denomination
- Provide specific recommendations on staffing, stewardship or investment practices
- Provide a detailed action plan and timeline. We leave implementation to Session and the congregation over the next 3-5 years

We are thankful for the opportunity to provide both a pastoral and prophetic voice to this congregation we love. Thank you for your prayers and partnership and feedback throughout this process. We are so grateful for you and look forward to all that is to come. With Hope and Courage in Christ,

*Susan Vann, Andrew Lee, Christie Nesbitt, Kristin Riegel, Jeff Schroeder,  
Carol Taylor, Darcie Tramp, Caroline Willis, Paul Rock*

## Why This Report - and Why Church?

We live at a time when even professional football has become polarizing. In a society where nearly half of Americans report feeling sometimes or always alone and over 130 people every day die from opioid-related overdose. Today, African-Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of whites and anxiety and suicide rates among adolescents continue to rise. In addition, many struggle to find a work-life balance, care for children and aging parents and be part of something bigger than themselves.

At Second, we do not have easy answers or quick fixes to the many problems facing our world. What we do have is Jesus. And love. And one another. And a commitment to be part of Christ's reconciling and transformative work in the world. We believe the need for a strong, loving, inclusive, empowering, forgiven and forgiving community that displays greatness through service, admits mistakes, invites respectful dialogue and works for reconciliation and mutual edification is more important than ever.

We know that fear grows where love is not boldly lived out. Hateful and divisive rhetoric become the vernacular when grace and hope go unproclaimed. Atrophy and regression become our direction when leaders don't provide clarity, vision or a way into a confusing future.

The Jesus we follow at Second, the gospel we study and teach, the religion we practice, the love we share, the community we demonstrate is deeply needed today. God is calling us to be servant leaders, the community of grace, love, justice and reconciliation we hope for in our world.

**Our church matters.**

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## Who We Are - Core Values

Through congregational surveys and dozens of one-on-one interviews, we listened and learned what people value most about Second. Five main themes emerged, which we used to develop a set of five core values:

### **Relationships**

We value deep and meaningful relationships with one another. Friendships, connections and a sense of community are important. We value relationships with our neighbors, including those of different backgrounds and life experiences. People know we are followers of Christ by the way we love each other and others.

### **Openness and Inclusiveness**

We value being open to different ideas, perspectives and life experiences. We are open, welcome and affirming of people with different physical, mental and emotional abilities, sexual orientations and gender identities, racial/ethnic backgrounds and theological and political beliefs. Following the example of Christ, we seek to welcome all people, letting them know they are loved and valued.

### **Faith in Action**

We value putting our faith into action by working alongside communities, locally, nationally, and internationally. We feed the hungry, care for those who are sick and provide hospitality. We are involved in peacemaking and social justice. We value working with others to build a more just, loving world for all people because this is what our faith in Christ moves us to do.

### **Spiritual Growth**

We value learning and spiritual growth. We ask questions, include room for doubt and seek to grow in our relationship with Jesus and one another. Spiritual growth and faith formation happen through worship, classes and small groups as well as through putting our faith into action. We meet people wherever they are on their journey of faith and support them to take the next step.

### **Risk-taking**

We value risk-taking. When the living God nudges our collective conscience and we feel compelled to address injustice, admit a failure, or set out on a new adventure, we like to think we're a church that listens and responds. Second has a history of making bold moves and statements which challenged the accepted norms of the times. While such risks don't always result in "success," we value being a community that is not afraid to be re-formed by Christ and take risks to live the gospel in bold ways.

## **Who We Want to Be: Vision**

The five emphases of our vision come from the hopes and dreams that bubbled up from the congregational surveys, focus groups and multiple conversations we had with all of you. Subsequent recommendations in this report are intended to help Second live into the five emphases of this vision.



### **Greater diversity**

We understand diversity as a gift from God, and that we are a predominantly white church. We commit to engaging in anti-racism work as a community, including re-evaluating our leadership structures and ministries so we can become a more just, inclusive and loving church. We will intentionally seek to listen to, learn from and work alongside people of different life experiences, races/ethnicities, gifts and theological and political beliefs. We commit to affirming and supporting people of all gender identities and sexual orientations and mental, physical and behavioral abilities.



### **Greater engagement with the local community**

We commit to stepping outside of our church building to engage with our neighbors and the community with greater intention and frequency. We seek to be a church that is known for loving others, living our faith and being part of making Kansas City a more just and loving community. Rather than expecting people to come to us, we will go out and meet people where they are. We will adopt a posture of listening and learning. We will seek ways to serve and care for our neighbors in Kansas City.

Our successful capital campaign established that we want to create space for all people. We seek to be a congregation known for both extending Christ's love beyond our walls and welcoming all inside.



### **Growth in numbers**

One of the primary dreams people had for our church was growth. We have experienced personal growth, authentic relationships and transformative community at Second and want others to experience the Spirit of Christ and the gift of our community, too. As a church, we can no longer expect

to grow by assuming people will come to church when they move into the neighborhood. We must be willing to step out of our doors to meet people where they are. We commit to doing things and making changes that will help us grow, and actively inviting people to experience Christ in and through Second.



### **Nurturing Relationships**

We are committed to nurturing real, authentic relationships and transformative community in our congregation. We will create more opportunities for people to get to know one another, share meals, tell stories, pray and worship together. We will offer more small groups and opportunities for people to connect and build deep relationships. We commit to faithfully accompanying one another through the seasons of life, sharing in one another's joys and sadness, sorrows and successes.



### **Spiritual Growth**

We commit to creating opportunities for people to learn, ask questions, express doubts and grow in their faith. Recognizing that faith is a journey, we will create opportunities that support, challenge, and encourage people in different seasons and stages of life and faith. We will offer classes, workshops, Bible studies and small groups that offer people opportunities to learn, ask questions, engage with scripture, pray, and put their faith into action individually and as part of a community. We commit to nurturing the faith, questions and gifts of our children and youth.

## **New Mission Statement**

"A people being transformed by Christ to help transform the world" has served as Second's mission statement for the last seven years. Session asked us to take a fresh look at the mission statement. After much prayer, discernment and conversation, we felt a new statement was needed to express more fully why Second exists based upon our core values, strengths and hopes.

This New Mission Statement draws on the Great Commission, in which Jesus calls us to go, baptize and make disciples of all people, and the Great Commandment, which Jesus said summed up the law and the prophets: Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself:

**We exist to Love God, ourselves and others - whoever, however and wherever they are - with a love that transforms us all.**

We do this by

- Working alongside others in our city to build a more loving and just community
- Inviting people to find purpose and connection through sharing our own stories and God's story
- Allowing people to question and empowering people to take risks
- Encouraging spiritual growth through learning, action and reflection
- Being a community that names and celebrates the gifts of diversity

# Executive Summary of Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations that are shared in far greater detail in the full report. Each recommendation is intended to help Second live into its vision and embody our core values.

## **Leadership and Structures** *(Church/Governance/Building)*

- **Support The Open Table** | Continue to encourage, support, and house The Open Table, providing administrative, staffing, and building resources.
- **Launch Two New Worshipping Communities by 2020** | In concert with Heartland Presbytery, other non-profits, and 1001 New Worshipping Communities, launch two more expressions of church by 2020.
- **Increase Staff Diversity** | Seek to hire people of color into key leadership positions
- **Adopt a Hybrid Mode of Congregational Leadership** | On a three-year trial basis, adopt a leadership model utilizing both standing committees and a new Seasonal Leadership Team that engages members for specific seasons and tasks (this model/idea is explained at length in the full report).
- **Utilize technology to Collaborate** | Second opens Zoom account (or similar) to help committees, and groups use web based tools to more easily facilitate meetings for those unable to be physically present
- **Community Partnerships and Events** | Empower our Outreach and Mobilization Team to make a quarterly report to session on events and partnerships that utilize our new building in new ways.
- **Simplify Room Names** | Rename Witherspoon Room *The Community Room* and Westminster, *Pillar Hall*. The existing names, while Presbyterian, are confusing for visitors and members alike.
- **Support ECLC** | Continue supporting ECLC and provide ways for it to grow. Continue to develop and increase opportunities for crossover activities where ECLC families are invited to Second events.
- **Second Cafe** | Host a non-profit, pay-what-you-can cafe in The Community Room in collaboration with Thelma's Kitchen on 31st and Troost.
- **Trolley Trail Water & Bike Maintenance Stop** | Host a water and basic bike mechanic stop on our front porch staffed by volunteers during peak hours in the summer months.
- **Front Porch Concert** | Host a front porch concert and invite the neighborhood. Have drinks, snacks and chairs set up in the parking lot. Invite people inside to explore our new facilities and have other musicians playing in the sanctuary and Calvin Center.
- **New Chapel Seating** | Replace the pews in the chapel with chairs, so the space can become more flexible and used for different events while still serving as a Chapel.
- **Theater/Concert Offerings in Calvin Center** | Make use of our stage and kitchen in Calvin Center to host bands or theater groups from UMKC, the Conservatory or the neighborhood
- **Expand Relationship with Cultivate KC** | In the spring and fall, partner with them to use our front porch for a produce and herb exchange and market.
- **Rent Space for Family Events** | Using tools like the Nextdoor app, begin advertising our new Community Room as a space where families can hold events (birthday parties, etc.) for a fee.

## **Faith Formation**

### ***Children, Youth and Families***

- **Change Sunday School Format and Schedule** | Change the structure/format of Sunday School to be more reflective of families' schedules, needs and commitments on Sunday mornings. Provide

opportunities for families to be in and out of church in 90 minutes if necessary. (See “Worship Services” in Appendix)

- **Parenting Classes** | Offer one parenting class per semester and offer opportunities for parents to connect with others during and after the class.
- **Infant and Toddler Spirituality** | Develop and launch early Christian education program for infants and toddlers. Explore programs that use special classroom settings, songs, sounds, stories, finger play and toys to teach about God’s love.
- **Christian Faith Practices at Home** | Offer classes, workshops, and events to teach parents how to model their faith and facilitate religious learning at home.
- **Youth Group Partnerships** | Partner with a youth group from another church and meet once a quarter to make and share a meal together.
- **Sex Education** | Offer sexuality education for children, youth and adults annually.
- **Partner with Kansas City Interfaith Youth Alliance** | Deepen relationship with Kansas City Interfaith Youth Alliance to help youth learn about other faith traditions, engage with youth from different faith backgrounds, and serve the local community. Partner together on a minimum of three initiatives a year.

### **Adults**

- **Utilize Technology** | Intentionally utilize technology to offer classes, workshops and events that focus on bible study, Christian theology, ethics, and spiritual disciplines throughout the week.
- **Launch a Podcast or Video Series** | Create a podcast or use Facebook Live to offer short reflections on scripture, Christian spiritual practices, and ethics.
- **Integrate PW Circles into Faith Formation** | Integrate the Presbyterian Women’s Horizons Circles into faith formation at Second.
- **More Experiential Learning** | Offer workshops, retreats, and trips that incorporate action and reflection as well as hands-on servant leadership and community building (fellowship).
- **More Diversity in Presenters** | Intentionally invite speakers of different theological, racial/ethnic, and religious backgrounds to speak and lead at Second.
- **Offer Foundational Theology Classes** | Offer Bible 101, Church 101, Theology 101 classes on a regular basis. Some of these classes could take place outside of the church building.
- **Space for “Spiritual But Not Religious” Individuals** | Intentionally create programming that invites people who are “spiritual but not religious” to explore different Christian spiritual practices and beliefs.
- **More Small Groups** | Commit resources and staff and/or lay leadership time to ensuring that thriving small groups/ministries exist for people of all ages.

### **Outreach and Mobilization**

- **Long-Term Local Partnerships** | Establish three to six mission partners and develop 3-5 year partnerships which include extended funding for initiatives that align with Second’s mission priorities.
- **Offer Multicultural Worship Opportunities** | Once or twice a year, offer opportunities to worship, learn with and serve alongside people in different neighborhoods throughout Kansas City.
- **Host Social Justice Events at Second** | Volunteer to host at least six public meetings, town halls, rallies or similar gatherings each year, where the larger community can gather to learn, organize, share feedback and/or network with one another.
- **Environmental Impact Task Force** | Re-deploy a task force to assess the environmental efficiencies of our building, educate the congregation about environmental issues and make recommendations to the Session on ways Second can reduce its environmental impact.

- **Anti-Racism Training Opportunities** | Offer yearly anti-racism classes and trainings for Second members and the larger community.
- **Be the Church Quarterly** | Make Be the Church a quarterly event, perhaps evenings and Saturdays.
- **More Local Volunteer Opportunities** | Provide monthly opportunities for people, including youth and families, to meet, learn from and serve with our Mission Partners. Incorporate a time of learning, service and reflection into each event.
- **Develop and Launch Social Enterprise at Second** | Develop a social enterprise to address a need in the larger community. (*Social Enterprise defined as: a revenue-generating business model that addresses or supports a humanitarian cause through its operation.*)

#### *Invitation and Connection*

- **More Social Media Marketing** | Devote more resources to boosted social media advertising and targeted marketing efforts. Direct fewer resources toward direct mail.
- **Redesign Second's Bulletin** | Redesign Second's bulletin to give it a more modern look and to make its content more accessible, especially to visitors.
- **Progressive Evangelism Training** | Offer classes, workshops and trainings for people to learn about how to articulate and share their faith in authentic and meaningful ways.
- **Use New Front Porch for Neighborhood Events** | Utilize our new front porch to show movies, hold potlucks or offer events and activities. Use these events to meet and get to know our neighbors.

### **Hospitality and Engagement**

- **Develop "Connector" Team** | To intentionally look for and welcome guests each week. Their role will be to connect, introduce, gather contact information and invite visitors to an upcoming event.
- **Better Visitor Follow Up** | Add phone calls from staff, volunteers, Deacons or dedicated team of hospitality people. Build better visitor profiles in the church database from these interactions.
- **Welcome Packet for Groups Using / Renting Second's Space** | Create a "welcome" card, packet or script for any group using our space to distribute to participants.
- **Diversity in Decor, Exhibits, Advertisements** | Include quotes, photographs and artwork in our building that connotes inclusion and diversity.
- **More Small Group Offerings** | Organize twice-yearly small groups for visitors, guests and new members to get to know, serve, study and learn with others.

### **Deacons & Pastoral Care**

- **Gatherings at Retirement/Assisted Living Facility Communities** | Organize fellowship gatherings for members who live at retirement/assisted living facilities.
- **Home Communion** | Better publicize home communion in the bulletin.
- **Grief Ministry & Support** | Send cards and grief resources to people 6-8 weeks after the death of a loved one. Reach out again on the one-year anniversary of a loved one's death.
- **Follow Up With Those Who Miss Worship** | Reach out to members who haven't attended worship or other church events in more than two months.
- **New Prayer List** | Create a digital prayer list or prayer notification, so congregation members can be reminded to stop and pray for members of the congregation.

## Worship

- **Specialize Worship Service Offerings** | Change our two Sunday worship offerings so that they provide a more distinct approach to worship. One more traditional and the other more casual to connect with and appeal to a community that is less and less churched.
  - **Change Worship Service Times** | Adapt our Sunday morning worship schedule to better accommodate the needs of contemporary schedules and life. (*See options on p. 57* in full report)
  - **Change Sanctuary Layout and Seating** | The rigid seating and layout of our sanctuary is functionally limiting. Remove 2-3 pews in the front and back to create more flexible space.
  - **Promote Interaction in New Spaces** | Use our new creative space on the second floor for gathering together before and after services for coffee and conversation.
  - **Multicultural Music Exchanges** | Establish a relationship with another congregation of color and have regular pulpit and/or choir or youth exchanges.
  - **Regular Interfaith Dinners and Events** | Continue twice yearly interfaith dinners and conversations.
  - **Improve Tower Entrance** | Redesign our tower and narthex entrance to feel more welcoming.
  - **Diversify Musical and Artistic Elements of Worship Culturally** | Introduce music presentations, selections and liturgies from different cultural backgrounds to create a welcoming environment to all.
  - **Eliminate Paper Usage in Worship** | Go paperless: Utilize digital projection, Second Pres App and oral announcements to eliminate need for bulletin and printed Order of Worship.
  - **Worship Opportunities Outside Sunday Morning** | Offer worship services outside during summer.
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## Where we go from here

Everyone involved at Second should read through the full report and highlight the recommendations and ideas that intrigue and excite them. A form will be made available around the church building and online (a link contained in each Second Helpings for 3-4 months) where people can fill in their name and contact information and which idea they are interested in. Those names will be shared with staff and committee chairs who can follow up about how to get involved with a team or as a collaborator to make things happen.

Each existing committee of Session and the Deacons, should spend considerable time at their fall meetings considering the report and what aspects impact and excite them. At the December meetings they should bring recommendations to their boards about which recommendations they would like to focus on for 2019.

The January 2019 Elder and Deacon Retreat will focus on this report and its recommendations and set forth a structure and timeline for carrying out its various ideas.

We recommend Session appoint a Great Implementation Team that would meet quarterly to assess progress and report to the Session with a scoresheet similar to the GPS report. This will help keep the Session and congregation on task and on track.