

# THE VINEVILLE PAGE

Helping us all grasp the big picture of where we are and what our challenges are as we face the future.



## The Nuts and Bolts of the Immediate Future

Issue #4

**O**pportunities almost always come disguised. Sometimes they are disguised as challenges which call forth our best strength, energy, commitment, and imagination. On other occasions they come to us as by-products of change where fresh new possibilities result from different circumstances.

Earlier this year, a process of strategic planning was yet another impetus to action, revealing in fresh ways the opportunities which abound. Perhaps the most significant effect of the Strategic Planning Process is that it helped a wide segment of our congregation think specifically about what Vineville needs to insure its future. A number of persons have approached staff in recent months asking for opportunities to do specific things. *When the need for a more focused outreach plan was voiced*, a handful stepped forward and asked to make it happen. *When additional support for the children's area was identified* as a critical component of our renewal, two new staff positions were created and a number of new volunteers stepped up and assumed responsibility for specific areas of children's ministry. *When our weakness in the area of advertising and marketing was identified*, momentum which was slowly building resulted in a strategic team being put together who are now writing articles for publication, conversing with a publicity firm, and developing a list of contacts who will help us get our message out.

These things, however, are but the tip of the iceberg in terms of initiatives and decisions which are shaping our future. A newly formed *Women's Enrichment Ministry* is focusing on outreach and discipleship. There is deliberate work

taking place to develop a ministry of prayer. The dream of an international mission trip to Zimbabwe took shape and is changing from dream to reality. June Smith's dream of a Church Bazaar to fund mission and property needs also came to fruition in God's own time.

Our Missions Team is utilizing the concept of partnership to do some of our best work. We have sent missions teams to *Morningstar*, a Baptist Treatment Center in Brunswick which serves needy or abused children. We are partnering with the Mercer Baptist Student Union (now Baptist Collegiate Ministries) in a trip to Mississippi to clean out debris and rebuild homes. We have provided monetary support to the *Macon Center for Racial Understanding* which is led by some of the most prominent leaders in Macon and is one of our best hopes of building bridges of understanding in the racial divide in our community. We have also worked with two other smaller church congregations to facilitate their ministries to children. [By the way, did you know that a Spanish Mission uses our facilities every Sunday for worship?]

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The greatest disguised opportunity will come in early 2007. Significant funds will be required to purchase a new mini-bus, rework wiring in the Landrum Building, waterproof the Sammons and Landrum Buildings, rework our front parking lot in an appealing way, and take care of a

number of items high on the Properties Committee's long to-do list. All these items will be discussed and clarified and presented to the congregation in our November conference.

At present, we have a search committee looking for a *Minister to Students and Children*. While there have been numerous applicants, the Search Team has not yet discovered a person they believe would best

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meet the needs of the youth and children. While none of us desire to prolong the search, we are committed to find a person who will best fit our present and future needs. It is our greatest goal to make our Youth and Children's areas strong and healthy. Any thought of looking for an *Associate Pastor* will wait on calling a *Minister to Students*. The *Minister to Students* may have special talents and gifts which affect what gift-mix we will require in an additional minister.

If I were a man who believed in wishing, these are the gifts for which I would wish:

- A Minister to Students and Youth
- Someone to assume overall leadership in Adult Education and Discipleship. It would be wonderful to have a knowledgeable person who could provide additional support for our teachers and think creatively about our *Christian Life and Service Seminars*.
- ALL our Younger Families to sit downstairs during worship so they can be seen.
- A sense of ownership that would seize you (*yes, you the reader*) so deeply that your level of commitment would sharply rise in attendance, giving, serving, studying, worshiping, praying, inspiring, and leading.
- A loan from Wachovia interest free.

Well, at least four of the five is possible. However, since I don't think wishing works, I will find comfort in dreaming and praying for God to work in receptive hearts.

## THE VINEVILLE PAGE

is a publication of



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SEPTEMBER 2006