



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Building Sustainable Ministries . . . One Church at a Time
www.ministryarchitects.com

Haymount United Methodist Church Fayetteville, North Carolina

Sunday, June 14, 2015

Dave Sippel, Vice President of Connections
Aqueelah Ligonde, Staff Consultant

dave@ministryarchitects.com

aqueelah@ymarchitects.com

BACKGROUND

Haymount United Methodist Church of Fayetteville, NC is an invitational congregation that is committed to “transforming members and non-members into authentic disciples of Jesus Christ.” The vision and ministries of the church are shaped by several key spiritual values including: a complete dependence upon God, a sharing of ministry by laity and staff, a commitment to openness and celebration of diversity, and a focus on outreach and social awareness. Over the past 60 years, Haymount United Methodist Church has sought to be a community of faith where members could feel spiritually enriched and nurtured. The church is alive with God's Spirit and direction, and excited to see all that the future holds!

Haymount UMC is known in the community for its worship services, music programs, local and global missions, preschool, children's ministries and more. Church members describe the church as “welcoming,” “diverse,” “active,” and “unified.”

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

The children's ministry offers several weekly gatherings, including Kids Konnect Sunday school, Cherub and Rainbow Kids choirs, and Sunday morning Kids Worship. Many children and families attend either 8:30 AM or 11:00 AM traditional worship services or the 9:45 AM Contemporary Service on Sunday mornings. There are several special events and activities, as well as trips and camps that have happened in the past. The children also have the opportunity to participate in scouting programs.

The church has dedicated space and other areas available for children's programs, including nursery and classroom space, which is shared with the church preschool. The church preschool enrolls about 160 students with 26 staff for half-day school. The children also use the fellowship hall for weekly activities.

The church has also shown a willingness to support the ministry financially and clearly wants this group to feel like a valued and important part of their faith community. A current volunteer from the church said that she wanted to become a volunteer after observing the loving way volunteers cared for her firstborn son when she first arrived at the church.

The membership of the church is around 2,000 and an average of 500 people attend one of the church's three worship services on Sunday mornings. Currently, there are 166 children from birth through 5th grade on the rolls of the church. During a typical week, around 76 children participate in Sunday school (Kids Konnect), Kids Worship, or Rainbow Kids and Cherubs choirs. The children represent different schools in the area, mostly in the immediate neighborhoods, but some of the families travel about 15-20 minutes to the church campus each week. Most of the parents and volunteers describe the children's ministry as a welcoming place. Some parents and volunteers shared that the age groups that feel the most successful are those with consistent teachers and volunteers. Although, everyone understands that finding and maintaining consistent volunteers is not always an easy task.

The church has a 2015 budget of \$1,600,000 and, the children's ministry has a 2015 budget in the neighborhood of \$66,000. This total includes the program budget for children and salaries/benefits for one part-time coordinator, as well as part-time support from the DCE and the music department.

After three years, the most recent leader of the children's ministry stepped down. The Christian Education Director (DCE) is working alongside a newer member of the church who is now serving as the ministry coordinator. There are also approximately 25 adult volunteers involved each week in Sunday school, Kids Worship, and Choir. Others help out occasionally, with Minecraft, VBS, and special events or behind the scenes throughout the year.

Ministry Architects was invited to do an initial assessment of the children's ministry and to make recommendations about how it might move strategically forward. After a successful assessment and relationship with the youth ministry was established Ministry Architects was asked to return to do an assessment for the children's ministry, especially in light of the staff transition. Ministry Architects met with 16 individuals in 6 focus groups or one-on-one meetings. What follows are the findings gleaned from those conversations along with recommendations and a proposed timeline for the future.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IN CONTEXT

One lens Ministry Architects likes to use for understanding children's ministry is the idea of the "three rents." Children's ministries that "pay these rents" tend to have much greater freedom to be creative,

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

take risks, and experiment with innovative ideas. Those children's ministries that fail to pay these rents often find themselves mired in distrust, second-guessing, and discouragement.

It has been Ministry Architects' experience that though these three rents, in and of themselves, do not ensure an effective or faithful ministry, they are often the most immediate evaluation tools used by children, parents, staff, and the congregation at large.

Rent #1: NUMBERS—A significant percentage of children need to be participating visibly in some aspect of the church's ministry. It is important for this target number to be clearly agreed on by the church leaders and the staff. Ironically, when target numbers are not established, the children's ministry is typically *more likely* to be judged by numbers than if the target numbers are clearly established.

The consensus is that this rent is being partially paid. The summer trip to Camp Rockfish is very well attended year after year. However, attendance for Sunday school is low especially for the Kindergarten, 1st, 4th and 5th graders. Many volunteers and parents feel that the low attendance is due to the conflict between the three worship times and Sunday school.

Rent #2: PROGRAMS—In order to “earn the right” to experiment with changes, the children's leadership needs to provide the church with a few visible, effective children's programs that give both children and parents “something to talk about.”

This rent also appears to be partially paid. The children's choir is visible, and has a strong tradition within the church. One issue that was raised was that not all children want to sing and therefore, there is a small group of children who do not participate due to lack of interest in singing. Kids Worship is well-attended, but Sunday school is struggling with consistency for both children and volunteers. Even with the issue of consistency, Sunday school is seen as important and positive for children's ministry across the board.

The leaders of Haymount UMC will need to proceed carefully to make sure that this rent is paid. Changes to the weekly schedule are being considered even while the Sunday morning curriculum is in transition. Changing the senior pastor, coordinator, weekly schedule and the curriculum at the same time is too much. Volunteers, parents and children will lose the anchor that is keeping them connected to Haymount UMC.

Rent #3: ENTHUSIASM—The joyful enthusiasm and positive attitude of the children's staff, volunteers, and the children themselves are essential to building trust with the leadership of the church and with the parents.

This rent is past due with the congregation. Issues with timing conflicts around Sunday school and worship, lack in consistency of volunteers, and low numbers of volunteers, suggest that this rent is not being paid on time. However, a lot of joy and enthusiasm is found around special events and activities such as Camp Rockfish, Advent season, and Fall Festival.

As the leadership of the children's ministry develops its long-range vision, it will need, at the same time, to be attentive to these “three rents.” In this sense, the children's ministry faces parallel challenges.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

Ministry Architects pictures the parallel challenge this way:



1. **Laying the Foundation:** Building a foundation and infrastructure that will ensure the children’s ministry’s *future* effectiveness, and at the same time,
2. **Continuing to Do Ministry:** Maintaining the *current* children’s ministry in a way that builds the enthusiasm of children, their families, the staff and the church at large.

As the children’s ministry leadership steps into this parallel process, four rules of thumb –“children’s ministry norms” – will be helpful to keep in mind. These are not necessarily targets for success; they are simply what an average church typically experiences:

1) 15% of the Worshiping Congregation—In a typical church, the size of the children’s ministry tends to settle at a number that is around 15% of the worshiping congregation. A church with an average worship attendance of 500 could expect an average weekly attendance of around 75 children per week. Though many wonder about decreasing attendance, the current weekly attendance of 76 children is right on target for a church of this size.

2) \$750 per Child—With a budget of approximately \$66,600 (including program budget, staff salaries, and benefits) dedicated to the children’s ministry, HUMC has the capacity to effectively reach and maintain a weekly participation level of somewhere in the neighborhood of 88 children in some aspect of the church’s life. With 76 currently participating every week, the ministry is well funded for the current ministry with some room for future growth. It is worth noting that the budget is heavy on the staffing side. Any increase in funding should be directed at program supplies, resources, etc.

3) 1 Full-Time Staff Person for Every 75 Children—Considering all the positions giving time to the children’s ministry, including 1 part-time coordinator, part-time support from the DCE, and part-time music ministry support, HUMC has the equivalent of 1 full-time staff persons (not including paid nursery workers). According to this rule of thumb, HUMC has the capacity to sustain the engagement of about 75 children on a weekly basis. The current staff configuration is aligned well to the current needs of the ministry. Administrative support will be needed to grow beyond the current ministry capacity.

4) 1 Adult for Every 5 Children—Ministry Architects likes to think in terms of “spans of care,” recognizing that, realistically, most volunteers cannot effectively oversee the church’s Christian

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

nurture of more than about five children on an ongoing basis. With 25 weekly volunteers, HUMC would seem to have the capacity for about 125 children weekly. The current team appears to be providing room for significant growth beyond the 76 children that currently attend. This number contains several people that serve on a rotational basis. Several of these leaders will need to move toward a weekly commitment to sustain current participation levels.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE STAFF

When a ministry is based solely on the giftedness of a single staff person, instability is a predictable result. Ministry Architects has found that the most stable approach to staffing a ministry, particularly in the early stages of a rebuild, is to build a team of three *different* kinds of people:

- **The Architect:** A person or organization that designs the building plan and ensures that the building is done in compliance with the agreed-upon plan.
- **The General Contractor:** A person or team who manages the flow and sequencing of work, manages the building process according to the agreed-upon blueprint, and ensures that the appropriate number of “laborers” is in place for each stage of the project.
- **The Laborers:** Those people charged with specific gifts and responsibilities for particular aspects of the work. In children’s ministry, a laborer might have particular skills in relating to children, in planning and managing events, or in teaching.

Each of these roles is important as HUMC pursues a more sustainable model of children’s ministry. As the church moves forward, the following observations will be helpful to keep in mind:

- In many churches, there is no person or group playing the role of the architect. The ministry simply moves from one event to the next without a clear vision or stated outcomes.
- Sometimes paid staff are not given the time or training to do their important work as the “general contractor” of a complex ministry.
- The staff is often expected to serve in all three of these roles. This is a recipe for congregational dissatisfaction and staff burnout.
- Some churches hire a laborer who is skilled at leading singing, playing games or teaching a Bible lesson. These laborers often mature into an architect or a general contractor, but only if they are given permission, time, and training.

ASSETS

Strengths to protect in the current children’s ministry

Clarity of Need

There seems to be an across-the-board consensus that the children’s ministry is not all that the children, the parents, the volunteers and the staff would like it to be. Although, the children’s ministry was described as warm and very valuable to the church, there were components of organization and communication that were lacking structure and integration within the ministry.

Throughout the listening sessions, there was a shared expression of the need for more volunteers and more engagement in Sunday school within the various ages. There was a strong need expressed toward military families and how they transition into the ministry. There was also a strong response in how the children’s ministry and church as a whole communicates. Ranging from signage to how data is captured, it was clear that communication processes and procedures could be stronger and more effective especially for visitors, military families, and new comers. There was an expressed need for a children’s ministry that is consistent and sustainable even through times of transition.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

Memory Making Events

Camp Rockfish and the Fall Festival are two of the events that bring great joy to the children, parents, and volunteers. Children look forward to this week away at camp. One parent of a 5th grader told us “My daughter loves Camp Rockfish so much that she would go every week of the summer if possible!” Almost everyone agreed that Camp Rockfish is where children, teens, and adults willingly and enthusiastically participate each year. One leader said, “We never have a problem getting people to go to Camp Rockfish. It’s always full”.

Fall Festival is a tradition at HUMC that families joyfully participate in. It is a great time in the life of the church for everyone to come together to kick off the new season.

Children’s Ministry Space

Although the children’s ministry space is shared with the church preschool it is very well maintained. It is clear, when entering the rooms that these spaces are age appropriate for children. There is ample space for the different age groups to meet each week, even with a thriving scout program, adult and youth classes. Spaces are being updated which testifies to the commitment to the ministries on behalf of the church.

One of the fun aspects in some of the rooms is the decoration. From Biblical scenes as the backdrop for students learning time to colorful posters and signs on the walls, there is attention paid to making the rooms interesting. There are also beautiful murals in the hallways created by teachers from within the congregation. One leader told us that they are used as conversation pieces for the children during the Sunday school time.

Poised with Promise and Potential

It is clear that the staff and volunteers of HUMC love their children. Great care, hopefulness, and expectancy were prevalent in each focus group. It was generally stated that the children’s ministry as a whole is a valuable part of the church, but that it lacks some structure and organization that keeps it from running as smoothly as it could run. There seemed to be a common interest in moving forward, together. There was also a common interest in helping the children to grow from stage to stage throughout their life in the church.

One parent of a 1 year old and 3 year old said “I am excited for my 3 year old to move into the children’s ministry. I am excited about him being in Kids Worship, Sunday school, and the Fall Festival, and joining all the other traditions of the church.” She could see that the ministry is on a good track and sees, even with young children, the promise of what the ministry will be.

Transition Brings Refreshed Direction

Even though the children’s ministry and the church as a whole are going through significant staff transitions, most participants don’t seem to be in a panic. The sense is that most parents, volunteers, and staff see this as a way to open new doors, and take what they have to build up the ministry in a fresh way. The transition of key staff people has allowed people to seek and have a passion for a refreshed and re-energized direction for the children’s ministry.

Beloved Traditions

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

There seems to be a good culture of tradition in the congregation. Throughout the listening sessions, adults told us of the wonderful memories they had developed with their families for generations. Some of those events happen during the Advent season such as wreath making and making ginger bread houses. One of the great traditions happens at Mother's Day with the song "Happy Mommy's Day." This song was written 23 years ago, and each year children sing this song to the moms in the congregation. One leader said, "I think some people come to church just to hear the kids sing this song every year. It really means a lot to people to have the kids carry on this tradition." Fall Festival is another tradition that has been a great point of celebration for families, and a significant milestone as children grow in the church.

We love our DCE!

When one volunteer was asked about the leadership, she quickly answered, "We love Dorothy! And the kids love her too!" The love for the DCE was a common thread throughout the volunteers and parents. They spoke of how she takes the time with some of the older children to allow them to help in Kids Worship. One parent wondered, "How does she do that with all the things that are happening around her?" It seems like children and adults alike have a great respect and affection for the DCE and that is a great asset for the children's ministry.

Children as Leaders

There is a great amount of promise when it comes to growing some of the older children as leaders. Already, in Kids Worship, some of the 4th and 5th graders are in leadership roles. They seem to love helping out, and they do so with sincere and open hearts to serve. This is something that can be significant as these children grow to be teens, and eventually adult leaders in the church. One of the 5th graders said: "I really like helping in Kids Worship, it's a lot of fun!"

Many of the parents seemed to beam when they talked about how the older children enjoyed helping in Kids Worship. They saw this as a great opportunity for the children to learn accountability and what it means to serve, and love to serve, in your church.

CHALLENGES

Obstacles to moving the children's ministry strategically forward

Volunteer Support

The volunteers at Haymount UMC will need a few things in order to feel more effective and valued as they lead and disciple the children of the church. These needs fall into three key areas:

- **Training and Preparation** – Volunteers experience training in the area of child abuse protection, but they are not consistently being trained on new teaching techniques and learning styles. One volunteer said, "I am not sure what we do for new volunteers. I haven't seen any training offered." The orientation process is also inconsistent. New volunteers are more likely to stay engaged if they feel well equipped for their work.
- **Supplies and Resources** – One weekly volunteer shared, "My room is used by other groups. It's hard to plan for your lesson when the room is shared." Some volunteers feel like they have what they need, while others bring their own supplies from home. Some classrooms are shared with the church preschool. This work quite well most of the time, but Sunday school teachers do find supply cabinets locked from time to time. Storage is also needed so that teachers have quick access to their supplies from week to week.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- **Restoration and Renewal** – Sunday school runs year round at Haymount UMC. One of the teachers said, “Some weeks I am by myself. There is no help.” The week-to-week teachers need an opportunity to rest and be restored. They love the children, but the commitment they have made can pull them away from adult Sunday school and even worship.

Who’s in Charge?

The leadership structure of the Haymount UMC children’s ministry has created some confusion. Greater clarity will be needed as the ministry moves forward. One volunteer noted, “The youth ministry coordinator and children’s ministry coordinator positions sound the same, but they are not.” A newer member added, “Who is in charge of the children’s ministry? It’s a little confusing.” Sunday school, Wednesday nights and special programs must be carefully coordinated and supported. New parents can become confused and disengaged if they are receiving mixed messages.

Where Are We Headed?

The volunteers, leaders and staff of the children’s ministry are certainly very busy. Their hard work and busyness may not lead to the outcome that people are hoping for. The church’s mission statement is, “To transform members and non-members into authentic disciples of Jesus Christ.” The children’s ministry volunteers are not able to articulate this mission, and there are no goals that ensure movement towards the goal. Familiarity with the mission will be essential to maintain unity and drive among the volunteers. Measurable goals will ensure that busyness translates into momentum.

Communication and Signage

A volunteer stated, “It can be really confusing around here. It is not easy to find what you’re looking for.” Haymount UMC’s communication systems could use some improvement. Improved signage is also needed on the large campus that has several parking areas and points of access. Comments regarding communication are included below:

- “The website is terrible. It is not mobile friendly, and it looks outdated.”
- “When families come to town they might find it hard to get connected.”
- “I still don’t know what Euangelion is.”
- “There is a lot going on. I am not sure we communicate it very well.”
- “We use a lot of insider language, and that can be confusing to visitors.”
- “This is a big building. It is easy to get turned around.”

Volunteer Recruitment

Staff, volunteer, and parents all agreed that there is a great need for more volunteer recruitment and training. Parents felt that the current volunteers were great, but that without more volunteers they would soon burn out and become overwhelmed. It seems like many of the parents volunteer on a bi-weekly or once a month basis. But, there are still some parents who do not participate. Some people felt that maybe those who did not come to volunteer feel inadequate or even intimidated. One volunteer/parent said, “Maybe some people feel like they need to know everything in order to volunteer with the children, just in case a question is asked that they can’t answer”.

Currently, almost all of the recruitment efforts are done by the DCE. With one person doing all the recruiting there is not a lot of room for the numbers to grow because one person cannot reach the masses of people within the congregation. The current volunteers did feel like potential volunteers were asked in advance and also sometimes in emergencies. But, the issue is the actual commitment of people to follow through.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

Another issue brought up by one of the parent/volunteers was that maybe the worship times were a roadblock for some people. They noted, "There could be an issue with timing on Sunday mornings." People want to go to the service they like and maybe that conflicts with the time they are being asked to volunteer.

Although there are adequate numbers of volunteers for the children's ministry, there is a consensus that more volunteers are needed, especially in the older age groups. Not only are they needed, but they need to be consistent volunteers who are trained and committed.

Climate Change

A key volunteer said, "We are not good at sharing good news and celebrating the good stuff." Another added, "We can be really negative. People tend to dwell on the flaws and missteps that come along with ministry." This has created a climate that will not be conducive to ministry growth and sustainability. Change is needed in two key areas:

- **Enthusiasm** – Leaders, volunteers, and parents expressed a desire to leave the negativity behind. A parent said, "We have mission moments, but maybe we need to share joy moments." A climate of enthusiasm can create the support and unity that undergirds change. It's time for an infusion of joyful expectancy.
- **Visibility and Integration** – Children need to be seen and heard at Haymount UMC. Leaders, parents and volunteers would all like to connect with the children's ministry, and see them more often. They enjoy the choirs, but not every child will join the choirs. One leader said, "I want this ministry to be strongly connected to the church. These are our children. We are all stakeholders in this ministry."

Visitor Support and First Timer Process

Everyone wants volunteers to have a warm, welcoming first visit to Haymount UMC. They also want to make sure that these visitors become engaged with the congregation as members. There is some uncertainty about whether visiting families are getting this kind of welcome. A focus group participant shared, "People come here, and then they are sometimes gone within just a few months." The Fayetteville community is impacted by a strong military presence and families come and go as members of the military follow their orders and assignments. Each summer leads to new faces and families moving into homes on and off base. Haymount UMC will need to develop a system to welcome these families.

Scheduling Issues

Families expressed a desire out some quirks in the weekly schedule at Haymount UMC. The two areas of primary concern are Sunday morning and Wednesday evening.

- **Sunday mornings** – The decision to have worship at 9:45 AM and 11:00 AM has impacted the Sunday morning experience for children. It is more difficult to find volunteers, and there is less interaction with the pastors on Sunday mornings. Parents that would like to keep their family together on Sundays find it difficult to do so. Sunday school numbers have also gone down since the worship schedule changed.
- **Wednesday evenings** – Wednesday evenings used to be respected and protected as a night the families traditionally spent at church. As one volunteer shared, "Wednesdays are not sacred anymore." Another added, "There are sports. The kids have homework, dance and karate. They are also tired at the end of a school day." Numbers are down on Wednesday evenings as families are stretched by activities and family pressures.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

Lost in Transition

Parents expressed a desire to make significant improvements in two key areas of transition within the children's ministry:

- **4th and 5th Grade Engagement** – Parents feel like the oldest children in the elementary program may not be getting what they need. Kids of this age are not quite ready for youth group, but they certainly have outgrown the ministry to “little kids.” This age group needs special activities and more challenging lessons. The crafts and silly games that 1st and 2nd graders play just won't cut it with this group. A parent said, “We're losing them before they ever get to youth group.” Another parent said, “There aren't many new 6th graders in the youth group. I think we lost them.”
- **Kindergarten and 1st Grade** – This group just needs a little TLC. They are in transition from the nursery into elementary school. They are ending their time in the Cherub Choir. They're dealing with similar feelings that the 4th and 5th graders are having. Too young to be in the Rainbow Kids choir, but too old to sing with the “babies.” One parent added, “We have not been able to find a steady teacher for their class. They are going to get lost without someone to shepherd them through this time.”

Check-In/Attendance/ACS

Attendance is being taken at Sunday school each week, but this attendance is not being entered into the ACS database. It will be hard to follow up with visitors if this information is not being carefully handled. It also is nearly impossible to follow up with children that haven't been in attendance recently. A newer parent added, “There must be some digital way to do check-in. We should look into that.”

Where Did They Go?

There is not an intentional plan to follow up with families that have become loosely connected to Haymount UMC. The database does not contain data to enable the running of attendance reports, and there is not a plan for the use of that data anyway. A volunteer shared, “We lose people all the time. We don't have a plan for reaching out to those families.” Another added, “I left for a few years, and I was never contacted by the church.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Reframe the next 18 months as a time of goal setting and infrastructure building for the children's ministry. Target January 2017 as the date for achieving sustainable structures for the children's ministry knowing that incremental successes will be seen throughout the renovation.
- 2) Establish a Prayer Team to undergird this renovation process.
- 3) Present this report to the Church Council requesting that they endorse an 18-month strategic design process for the children's ministry.
- 4) Establish a Children's Ministry Renovation Team, made up of four to five volunteers who report regularly to the Associate Pastor. These non-anxious, goal-oriented people will free up the staff to focus on exceptional day-to-day ministry, while the Renovation Team focuses on the recommendations below. These recommendations include two overarching responsibilities:

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

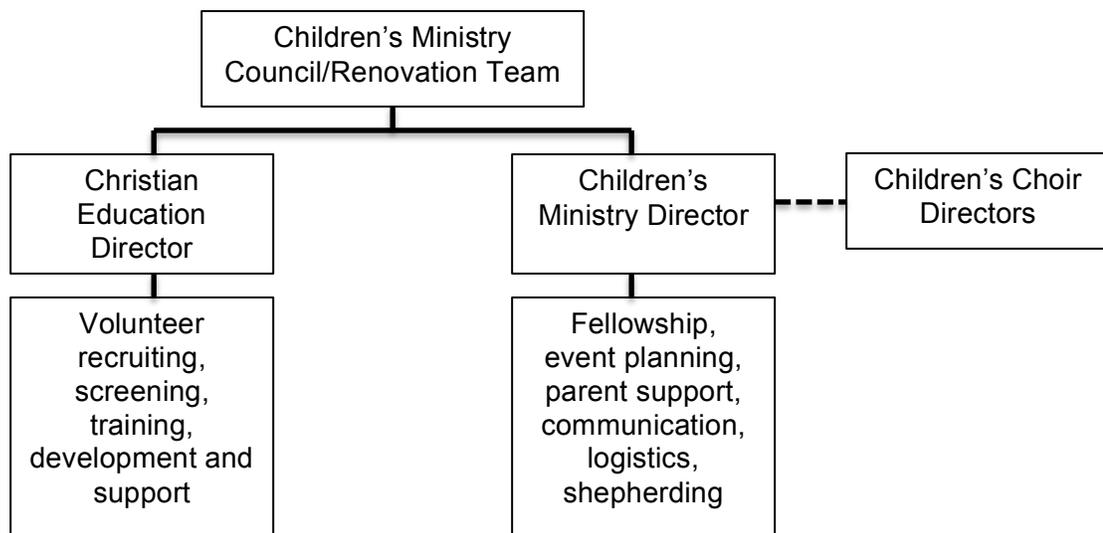
DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- I. Work with the children’s ministry leadership to **address the immediate pressure points** facing the ministry as they transition toward sustainability.
 - II. Establish a consensus for the direction of the ministry and take responsibility for **implementing the strategic, long-term changes** recommended in this report.
- 5) Engage the services of Ministry Architects to take responsibility for:
- Working with the staff and volunteers to ensure the achievement of the outcomes outlined in this report’s timeline,
 - Assisting the children’s ministry leadership in overcoming the obstacles that are certain to arise in the process of restructuring and fine-tuning the children’s ministry.

RENOVATION TEAM TASK #1: Address the Pressure Points
(Accomplish these urgent tasks first to create a healthy climate conducive to change.)

Pressure Point #1: Clarity in Leadership and Structure

Develop a new organizational chart for the children’s ministry. Create new job descriptions that reflect this reorganization. Communicate these new responsibilities to volunteers and parents. Consider the following model for reorganization:



This configuration is enough to maintain a group of 75 children per week. Haymount UMC should consider providing administrative support to sustain continued growth in the children’s ministry.

Pressure Point #2: Attendance and Database Update

Use a roster to track attendance for all children’s activities. Enter this attendance into the ACS database on a weekly basis. Develop a classification system in ACS to distinguish regular attenders from visitors.

Pressure Point #3: Sunday Evening Program Design and Prep

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:
DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

Consider creating a new opportunity for children on Sunday nights. Align this program with adult and youth ministry programming to create a night for families. Design a program around the purpose of fellowship. Recruit an appropriate number of volunteers to sustain the program. Vigorously promote the new program leading up to a kickoff in January of 2016.

Pressure Point #4: Curriculum Distribution and Training

Hand out copies of the new Orange children's ministry curriculum to key leaders and weekly Sunday school volunteers. Give them time to review the curriculum and supporting documents. Schedule two curriculum orientation sessions in July of 2015. Ask teachers and leaders to attend at least one of these two sessions.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE AND STABILITY

- **Host a "Quick Start" Retreat:** Invite the Renovation Team, key volunteers, and children's staff to participate in a Quick Start Retreat in which the renovation process is launched and the pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report are addressed. The retreat tackles the items that need to be done first, and builds momentum for the children's ministry renovation process.
- **Visioning:** Invite parents and leaders to participate in a multi-session, on-campus process of visioning a new future for the children's ministry with Ministry Architects, resulting in the following documents which will direct the ministry:
 - A ministry mission statement
 - A statement of values
 - A set of three-year revolving goals
- **Control Document Development:** Complete and publish an 18-month calendar, create major event notebooks to help event planners succeed, and generate a preventative maintenance calendar that schedules behind-the-scenes activities for each month (like "September: nail down the date and theme for next summer's Vacation Bible School").
- **Marketing:** Establish clear internal marketing processes that allow parents, children, leaders, and the broader church to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's ministry.
- **Communication:** Establish normative processes for effective and timely communication with parents, children, and leaders utilizing as many forms of communication as possible including updating the children's page of the church's website, Facebook, mass texting, mail, e-mail, etc.
- **Signage Update:** Invite a guest family to visit Haymount UMC on a Sunday morning. Ask them to provide feedback about access, signage, parking and the greeting that they received. Create some new signage, handouts and procedures to meet the needs of visiting families.
- **Children's Ministry Manual:** Develop a Children's Ministry Manual, including the most recent children's directory, a 12-18 month calendar, results-based job descriptions for staff and volunteers, compliance documents, budgets, game plans, a preventative maintenance calendar, and notes for every major children's ministry event.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- **Fall Kick-Off/Parent Orientation:** Develop an intentional, family-based, incredibly fun Fall Kickoff event to launch the children’s ministry in the fall of 2016. Use that event to cast the vision, share information, and build enthusiasm about the year ahead.
- **Enlist an Experienced, Professional Coach:** Invite Ministry Architects to play the “coach” role during this renovation period. Ministry Architects would offer experienced direction for the building of an infrastructure for the children’s ministry and provide ongoing coaching for the children’s ministry staff members as well as the Renovation Team.

DEVELOPING AND NURTURING STAFF AND SERVANTS

- **Strategic Staffing:** Propose a clear, appropriate long-term staffing plan, including the professional and volunteer components, for the children’s ministry that will provide the church with significant capacity to sustain a thriving ministry to its targeted number of children.
- **Staff Development:** Provide mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the children’s ministry staff including coaching, reading and seminars.
- **Sustainable Pace:** Help each children’s ministry staff member develop a “rhythmic week” including a Sabbath and “balcony” time (that is, time to look at the big picture and make strategic plans).
- **Leadership Development:** Complete results-based, written job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions in the children’s ministry and create a structure for the ongoing training of all volunteers at least quarterly.
- **Supplies and Storage:** Recruit a volunteer to create an inventory list based on the supplies required by the new Orange children’s ministry curriculum. Acquire these resources and distribute them to several easily accessible locations on Sunday morning. Include a visit to these storage locations as part of volunteer orientation and training. Provide a secure storage option in the Kindergarten/1st Grade Sunday school classroom.
- **Summer Support for Weekly Volunteers:** Recruit and train a team of summer Sunday school teachers to give the regular teachers a break for restoration and renewal.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** Build a fortified volunteer leadership team, some of who will do relational ministry with children while others work behind the scenes. Create a clear and complete list of the volunteer needs. Create a “fishing pond” list of at least 75 possible volunteers to call on for weekly volunteer positions.
- **Broaden Volunteer Definition and Opportunities:** Create additional, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program. Encourage volunteer involvement in both visible and behind-the-scenes opportunities.
- **Leadership Launch:** Schedule and implement an inspiring leadership-training event for all volunteer children’s workers at the beginning of each school year.

DEVELOPING CLEAR STRATEGIES AND NEW INITIATIVES

- **Parent Support:** Sponsor and execute an encouraging parent support event and create mechanisms for engaging the majority of parents in the children’s ministry in some way.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- **Systematic Storytelling:** Introduce a strategic plan for sharing “joy moments” with the congregation. Encourage ministry leaders to gather these stories so that they can be shared in a timely and consistent manner.
- **Programming with a Purpose:** Consider the following changes in programming to create momentum and better meet the needs of children at Haymount UMC.
 - **Weekly schedule**
 - Sunday school (Focus on Biblical instruction.)
 - Sunday evening (Focus on fun and fellowship.)
 - Wednesday evening (Choirs and other artistic opportunities.)
 - **Kindergarten/1st Grade**
 - Recruit a dedicated, consistent Sunday school teacher for this group.
 - Create leadership opportunities and other artistic options on Wednesday evenings.
 - **4th/5th Grade**
 - Recruit a second dedicated teacher to support Sunday school.
 - Plan quarterly fun outings for this group.
 - Create a worship milestone or rite of passage to celebrate the movement from Kids Worship into the 11:00 AM worship service.
- **Integration:** Develop a strategic plan for helping the children become an integral part of the whole church, weaving the children’s ministry into the fabric of the entire church.
- **First-Timer Process:** Develop a process for welcoming new families, children and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed. Document a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- **MIA Game Plan:** Once the database has been fully updated develop a plan to follow up with children and families whose attendance has become sporadic in recent months.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

PROPOSED TIMELINE

The following provides Haymount UMC with a timeline that can serve as a blueprint for the strategic launch of sustainable, long-term children's ministry.

Many churches choose to use the services of Ministry Architects to provide coaching and experienced troubleshooting through this infrastructure-building process. If the church would like Ministry Architects to provide more specialized consulting in certain areas, particularly for the 18-month transition, we are available to help.

July 2015

Focus: Starting Right and Work Begins

Outcomes:

- This report has been presented to the Church Council for the strategic renovation of the children's ministry and the Church Council has given full support of this plan.
- A Quick Start Retreat has been scheduled for August.
- The Renovation Team for children has been recruited and the first meeting has been scheduled to take place during the Quick Start Retreat.
- A prayer team has been recruited and charged with praying for the children's ministry. They have received a copy of the assessment report and timeline.
- A new children's ministry organizational chart has been approved. New job descriptions have been written to support this reorganization. Job descriptions have been submitted to the SPR Committee for approval.
- Copies of the new Orange curriculum for children's ministry have been distributed to volunteers/teachers. Two orientation events have been scheduled in August.
- The supplies required to fully roll out the new Orange curriculum have been listed and acquired. Storage has been fitted and located for these items. A new storage option has been allocated for the Kindergarten/1st Grade classroom.
- Any immediate volunteer needs for the children's ministry have been determined and slots have been filled.
- A Leadership Launch has been scheduled for August for the volunteers in the children's ministry.
- Work has begun on the 2015-2016 children's ministry calendar.
- Mechanisms for on-going education and coaching for the children's ministry staff and key volunteers have been provided.

Ministry Architects Option: 1-day offsite

August 2015

Focus: Renovation Underway, Calendars, Volunteers, Calendar, Quick Start Retreat

Outcomes:

- Ministry Architects has been hired to serve as the architect for the entire renovation process.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- A Quick Start Retreat has taken place in which the renovation process was launched and pressure points outlined in the Assessment Report have been addressed. The retreat tackled the items that needed to be done first to initiate the children's ministry renovation process.
- The ACS database of all children and their families has been updated and each person is "tagged" with a category.
 - **Active Children** are the ones whose families are members and have attended at least once in the past year – plus visitors who have become a regular part of the group. They should show up in your printed children's ministry directory.
 - **Member Inactive (MIA)** are still a part of the flock. You may not need to send them a Facebook message every time the group gets together, but you'll want to regularly pursue these children, whether they ever show up or not.
 - **Visitor Active** are those who regularly attend weekly programs and/or activities but are not an official member of the church.
 - **Visitor Inactive** are the ones who may have visited, but you are confident they will never become a regular part of the group. This group requires no follow up. But you'll want to keep their information for the occasional big event to which you'll want to invite everyone you know.
 - **First Timers** refer to visitors who have attended a program for the first time. You'll want to have a process for capturing their information on their first visit and follow up with them within one week of their visit.
- A Visioning Retreat has been scheduled for October and a "save the date" email/postcard has been sent to all families.
- Two Orange curriculum orientation events have been held.
- The 2015-2016 children's ministry calendar has been completed.
- All volunteer needs for the 2015-2016 school year for the children's ministry have been filled.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuaries policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.

Ministry Architects Option: 1-day onsite, 1-day offsite

September 2015

Focus: Calendars, Communications, Visioning Promotion, Fall Kick-off, Curriculum, Calendar Outcomes:

- Communication norms have been determined and those best practices are being implemented.
- Curriculum has been chosen for the upcoming school year.
- The design for new Sunday evening programming has been finalized. Volunteer needs have been clarified and recruiting has begun.
- Results-based job descriptions have been written and distributed to the appropriate volunteers for the children's ministry.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they are trained to implement the curriculum.
- Visioning Retreat promotion has continued.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- The 2015-2016 children’s ministry calendar has been distributed to all children and their families. The calendar has been publicized and major event dates are on the church’s calendar.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

October 2015

Focus: Visioning Retreat, Pressure Points, Compliance, Budget

Outcomes:

- A Visioning Retreat with all major stakeholders has occurred producing visioning documents for the children’s ministry (mission statement, core values, goals and structure).
- One-year benchmarks have been assigned to each three-year, revolving goal developed in the visioning process.
- All programs have adhered to the Safe Sanctuaries policy as laid out by the church.
- A volunteer application, an application process and a screening process for all weekly hands-on volunteers have been created and implemented.
- Promotion of the new Sunday evening program has begun. Information is going out to parents and volunteers using every available means of communication.
- Background checks (or other screening methods) have been done for all weekly hands-on volunteers.
- All paperwork for any new weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policy.
- A detailed 2016 budget for the children’s ministry has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- All pressure points have been addressed.

Ministry Architects Option: 3 days onsite, ½ day offsite

November 2015

Focus: Participation Goals, Continuing Education, Attendance, Major Event Notebooks

Outcomes:

- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children’s ministry events and weekly programs through August 2016 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.
- Continuing education opportunities have been explored and calendared for the children’s ministry staff.
- Volunteers for the new Sunday evening program have been recruited, screened and trained.
- Promotion for the new Sunday evening program continues.
- A process for tracking and recording attendance in all children’s ministry programs has been created and implemented.
- Work has begun on major event notebooks – creating a template for the notebooks and collecting information on each children’s event.
- The worship planning team is aware of the need to create space on Sunday mornings for “Joy Moments” in the worship services.

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

December 2015

Focus: Mid-Course Evaluation, Communication, Summer Calendar

Outcomes:

- Work has begun on the summer calendar for 2016.
- The Renovation Team has met monthly and decided how often they will meet for the remainder of the 18 months.
- Final promotion of the new Sunday evening program continues with a special emphasis on Christmas Eve promotional opportunities.
- The Renovation Team has completed a 6-month mid-course evaluation of the renovation process and made any adjustments necessary to improve the work being done.
- Communication methods currently being used to promote the children's ministry and share the successes with the congregation have been evaluated and added to if necessary.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

January 2016

Focus: Christian Formation Retreat, Calendars, Marketing, Volunteer Training

Outcomes

- Clear, internal marketing processes have been established that allow all church members to be exposed to the successes and good news surrounding the children's ministry.
- The new Sunday evening program for children has kicked off with excitement, full volunteer support, and resources to build off of the initial momentum.
- Changes and improvements have been made to enhance weekly programming and better meet the needs of children.
 - **Kindergarten/1st Grade**
 - A dedicated, consistent Sunday school teacher for this group has been recruited.
 - Leadership opportunities and other artistic options have been created on Wednesday evenings.
 - **4th/5th Grade**
 - A second dedicated teacher to support Sunday school has been recruited.
 - Quarterly fun outings for this group have been added to the calendar.
 - A worship milestone or rite of passage has been created to celebrate the movement from Kids Worship into the 11:00 AM worship service.
- A mid-year training event has taken place in which all volunteers received support and training in their specific roles. A "check-in" with each volunteer has taken place to evaluate how the volunteer has been doing in their role and addressed any concerns.
- New, non-threatening opportunities for adult involvement in the program have been created. Parent involvement has been encouraged, both visible and behind-the-scenes.
- Work has begun on the 2016-2017 children's ministry calendar.
- The summer 2016 calendar for the children's ministry has been completed and distributed.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

February 2016

Focus: Volunteer Recruitment, Calendar

Outcomes:

- The 2016-2017 children's ministry calendar has been completed through August 2017 including a Fall Kick-off.
- A guest "mystery shopper" has attended HUMC to provide insight into the signage and welcome that visiting families encounter.
- "Joy Moments" are being gathered and shared in morning worship on at least a quarterly basis.
- Each children's staff member has created a Rhythmic Week including balcony time and has begun to live into their Rhythmic Week.
- Volunteer recruiting seasons has opened.
 - Volunteer job descriptions have been reviewed and updated as needed.
 - Names of potential volunteers have been added to the fishing pond.
 - All volunteer needs have been determined for the 2016-2017 school year.
 - The volunteer needs list and the potential volunteers list has been merged.
 - Current volunteers have been asked to evaluate and possibly renew their commitment to the children's ministry.
 - Recruitment has begun for hands-on weekly volunteers, event coordinators and behind-the-scenes volunteers for 2016-2017.

Ministry Architects Option: 1-day onsite, ½ day offsite

March 2016

Focus: Database

Outcomes:

- An encouraging parent support event has engaged the majority of parents in the children's ministry in some way.
- Feedback from the Sunday morning "mystery shopper" has been compiled, and a signage request has been submitted to the Trustees committee.
- A strategic plan has been created for helping the children become an integral part of the whole congregation, weaving the children's ministry into the fabric of the entire church.
- A game plan for welcoming new families, children and guests to the church so that they feel warmly welcomed has been implemented. The plan has included a timely follow up plan to ensure their return to the church.
- Summer Sunday school teachers have been recruited to give a break to the regular, weekly Sunday school teachers.
- A plan has been created to systematically follow up with children and families whose attendance has become sporadic in recent months.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

April 2016

Focus: Database, MIA, Volunteer Thank You, Benchmarks

Outcomes:

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- 50% of the one-year benchmarks have been accomplished.
- A volunteer thank you event has been scheduled and promotional materials have gone out to all children's volunteers.
- MIA children have been systematically contacted.
- Summer Sunday school teachers have been trained and oriented to the Sunday school curriculum.
- The collection of updated information from each child and family has been completed and the database for children's ministry has been updated with that new information.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

May 2016

Focus: Recruitment, Fall Kick-off, Volunteer Thank You

Outcomes:

- Volunteer recruitment has continued.
- A volunteer thank you event has taken place.
- Regular, weekly Sunday school teachers end the year with a party to celebrate their gift to the children of HUMC. Summer teachers are poised to take over for June, July and August.
- A Fall Kick-off team has been recruited to begin planning for the start of the fall children's ministry programs.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

June 2016

Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Volunteers, Curriculum

Outcomes:

- All major event notebooks have been updated by the event coordinators and given back to the children's staff to pass along to the next year's coordinator.
- The effectiveness of this past year's curriculum has been reviewed and decisions have been made for any necessary changes for the upcoming school year.
- All volunteer needs for the 2016-2017 school year for children's ministry have been filled.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

July 2016

Focus: Manual, Directory

Outcomes:

- With the most recent information on children and their families, a directory of all families and a directory of all volunteers have been created to be distributed at the Fall Kick-off.
- The Children's Ministry Manuals (both hard copy and digital) have been completed, including
 - Visioning documents
 - Directories
 - Volunteer directory
 - Safe Sanctuaries policy

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- Volunteer training agendas and notes
- Attendance records
- Annual calendar
- Results-based job descriptions
- Game plans and new initiatives
- Meeting agendas and minutes for Children's Ministry Council/Renovation Team.
- Christian Formation Plan and record of curriculum resources used for the current year
- Budget and other financial documents
- Recruiting template, with a record of all the volunteer needs for the year
- Compliance documents

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

August 2016

Focus: Compliance, Reflection and Re-Assessment, Leadership Launch

Outcomes:

- A review of the renovation process has been completed.
- An online diagnostic has been completed to re-assess the children's ministry.
- Current pressure points have been named
- All children's programs have adhered to the Safe Sanctuaries policy.
- All paperwork for hands on, weekly volunteers has been updated and is in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policy. Background checks have been completed on each volunteer.
- All volunteers have experienced a Leadership Launch, lasting 2-4 hours that clarified their roles, inspired them to grow in their own faith and equipped them to serve. The Safe Sanctuaries policy was reviewed and adopted by all volunteers.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

September 2016

Focus: Major Event Notebooks, Participation Goals, Fall Kick-off, Curriculum

Outcomes:

- Major event notebooks for each major event for the children's ministry have been handed out to this year's event coordinators.
- Curriculum has been distributed to all teachers/volunteers and they have been trained to implement the curriculum.
- A Fall Kick-off has taken place that welcomed children and parents into a program they can get excited about, introduced parents to a format and structure they can feel confident about and provided a forum for receiving information from families. All participants feel energized and enthusiastic about the coming year's programs.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

October 2016

Focus: Benchmarks, Budget, Strategic Staffing

Outcomes:

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today

- A detailed 2017 budget for the children’s ministry has been completed and submitted to the appropriate group.
- All one-year benchmarks have been achieved. Goals have been re-upped and new one-year benchmarks have been established.
- With the changes in the children’s ministry, the volunteer staffing to meet the size and scope of the children’s ministry has been evaluated and a game plan to meet those needs has been created if necessary.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

November 2016

Focus: Preventative Maintenance Calendar

Outcomes:

- A preventative maintenance calendar has been created for the children’s ministry that will help regularly deal with on-going “behind the scenes” ministry maintenance.
- Reasonable participation goals have been determined for all children’s ministry events and weekly programs through August 2017 and steps to accomplish those targets have begun to be implemented.

Ministry Architects Option: ½ day offsite

December 2016

Focus: Sustainability

Outcomes:

- A timeline for the next 12 months has been created that included game plans for the current pressure points and items from the online diagnostic.
- Game plans have been put in place to sustain the processes and procedures during the renovation
- Ongoing coaching has been secured and a sustainability plan has been put in place.
- The staff and Renovation Team have celebrated what God has done with their 18-month investment.
- The Renovation Team has transitioned their role to providing support and accountability to the children’s volunteers and focusing on strategic issues such as three-year goals and one-year benchmarks, curriculum selection, calendars, and volunteer recruitment.

Ministry Architects Option: 2 days onsite, ½ day offsite

MINISTRY ARCHITECTS EXISTS TO:

DESIGN sustainable, deep-impact ministries, one church at a time
BUILD the competence, joy, and longevity of ministry professionals
CONSTRUCT bridges to the best ministry resources available today