

The Long Range Planning Task Force (LRPTF) was elected on May 27, 2007 to work with the staff of Central Baptist Church of Bearden and LifeWay consultants to develop a vision plan for our church. The minutes from the May 27, 2007, Called Business Meeting read as follows: “An arrangement has been made with consultants for a long range planning design for our church family. They would look at the demographics, the strengths and weaknesses of our church. We have a Master Plan Facilities Team for our church who bring this recommendation to establish a Long Range Vision Ministry Team to work with an outside consultant in order to know what our long range goals should be.”

Prior to the Called Business Meeting on May 27, 2007, staff ministers were asked to recommend men and women who were active and involved in their particular ministry and demonstrated a commitment to the health and growth of Central Baptist Church. From that list of recommendations, the following individuals were elected and agreed to serve.

Charlie Barker Chairman
Cliff Helton Secretary
Elaine Williams Secretary
Kim Bennett (resigned)
Dean Buchanan
Buddie Carroll
Marsha Dance
Troy Degges
Russ Ford (resigned)
Angie Johnson
Charme Knight
Ron Leadbetter
Janet Morgan
Kevin Sims
Betty Sue Sparks
Lisa Stockton
Roy Wyatt

The ministerial liaisons included Tim Clark prior to his departure and currently, Robert Bowman. LifeWay consultants include Barry Sneed and Doug Merritt.

The initial task of the LRPTF was to facilitate and help administer the LifeWay Church Health Survey. Subsequent work included careful review of the Demographic Trends, Church Data, Primary Ministry Areas and Integrated Church and Community Data as well as the tabulated results of the Church Health Survey and a Facilities report provided to us by LifeWay. The LRPTF has held weekly meetings, participated in a weekend retreat, a staff retreat, and conducted smaller scale independent surveys of members and staff. In addition, the LRPTF members engaged in individual study of books, hosted a workshop with guest speaker and author Milfred Minatrea, studied the organization and ministry of other churches as well as current and past trends in ministry. We began the

process of identifying our current reality by looking at our strengths and weaknesses as identified by the information gathered before envisioning a direction and purpose for our future. With the exception of a short break, for focused prayer, the LRPTF has worked diligently towards a plan that includes a clearly defined mission and vision for Central Baptist Church of Bearden, as well as steps towards fulfillment and ideas and suggestions to help us accomplish our purpose and vision.

Our task has not been taken lightly. We have made mistakes, and at times lost our way. In light of past and impending ministerial staff changes, the process has been challenging. Group members have not always agreed, but have remained faithful in their commitments to God, to the church body, and to the group. Central Baptist Bearden is a unique body of believers with many different viewpoints. The work of the LRPTF has focused on bringing balance between caring for and equipping members, and fulfilling Christ's command to share the gospel with individuals in our families, workplaces, neighborhoods, and around the world. We have sought clarity regarding our congregation's calling from God and how we might best be committed to that calling with a renewed sense of purpose, resolve and faithfulness.

We want to thank the members of Central Baptist Church for your prayers, support, questions and emails. All of your ideas and suggestions have been reviewed and considered and several have been incorporated into the report or were influential in bringing us to this point. Many other suggestions will be valuable in the future as various committees, teams or groups work toward fulfilling our vision to become a community of empowered believers who practice Loving God, Loving People, Leading People to Christ and Living His Mission.