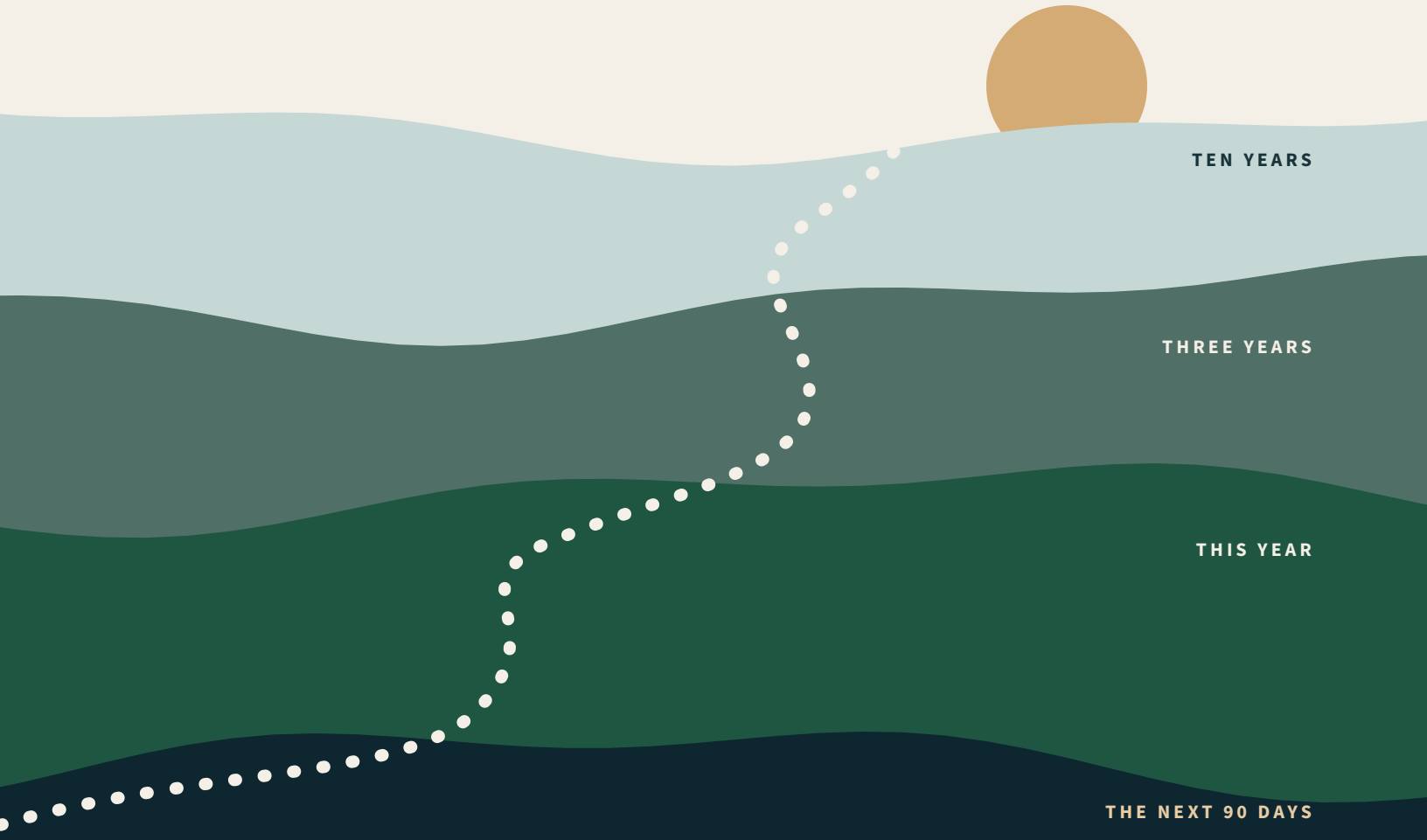
MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · 2027

The Way Ahead

Vision Team Workbook



PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

For the Vision Team
Including the Local Board of Administration
January–June 2027

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · VISION TEAM WORKBOOK

The Way Ahead

Six months of prayer, listening and discernment about where God is leading Pathway – A Wesleyan Church. Bring this book to every session.

1 Leaders discover

Four sessions, January to early March, on our story, values, mission and vision.

2 The church weighs in

Three town halls in March and April, with you hosting the tables.

3 Decide and launch

Testing the drafts in May, the LBA's decision, and Vision Sunday on June 6.

This workbook belongs to _____

My prayer partner is _____

"Thus far the LORD has helped us."

1 SAMUEL 7:12 (NIV)

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A letter from Pastor Bart

DRAFT · PASTOR BART TO EDIT

Dear Vision Team,

Every Sunday we worship in a building named for a stone. Samuel set it up after a battle Israel had no business winning, and he called it Ebenezer: "Thus far the LORD has helped us." He didn't name it "From here on we've got it handled." The stone looks back and forward at the same time, and that's what I'm asking you to do with me between now and June.

Pathway has a lot to be thankful for. Three congregations became one in 2016. We came through a pastoral change and an interim season that went well because people in this church stepped up. More of us are in the room on Sunday than a year ago. But if you asked ten of us what Pathway is for and where it's headed, I suspect we'd get ten good answers, and they wouldn't all match.

Our website says we "Learn, Love, Live & Lead the Way of Jesus." I like those words. I'm less sure we've ever decided what they ask of a person on a Tuesday, or how a ministry would know whether it's helping. Part of our work is deciding whether those four words still belong, and if they do, tying them to what we actually do.

I'm not bringing finished statements to our sessions. I have hunches, and you'll hear them, but a church's values are found by looking honestly at what it already does, and a vision nobody helped shape is a vision nobody carries. Mostly, I'm asking you to pray. If this process produces good statements and no new dependence on God, we'll have wasted six months. If it teaches us to listen to Him together, the statements will take care of themselves.

This workbook is yours. Write in it, argue with it, bring it every time. The pages at the back marked for the LBA are working tools for the board; everyone's welcome to read them.

Grateful to be on the road with you,
Pastor Bart

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Bring it every time

Everything you need for the six months is in here: the plan, every session, copies of what the church will see and room to write.

What's inside

- **Part one** describes the whole process: what we're making, how we'll pray, who does what and the calendar. Read it before Session 1.
- **Part two** is the fourteen days of prayer that come before our first session.
- **Part three** has a section for each of our eight sessions. Sessions 1 to 4 and 8 are Vision Team sessions. Sessions 5 to 7 are town halls for the whole church, where you'll host a table. Each town hall section includes a copy of the sheet everyone else will receive.
- **The appendixes** hold a copy of the Life Group listening sheet and the sources. The pages marked FOR LBA USE are the board's working tools.

In every session

1 Before you come

A short reading or question, so we can start where we left off.

2 In the room

Scripture, silence and prayer, then teaching and table work, with worksheets to fill in.

3 Between sessions

A prayer focus for the next two weeks and something to notice or bring.

When you can't come

Each Vision Team session is offered at three times. If you can't make any of them, read the session in this workbook, watch the short recorded summary in the Vision Team's group space at pathwaywes.com/my-groups, and fill in the worksheets on your own. Then tell Pastor Bart what you'd have said.

A word about what you write

Your workbook is your own. Nobody collects it. When we share survey results or stories in the room, they stay with the people they belong to: nobody guesses who said what, and nobody repeats someone else's story without asking.

Notes

PART ONE

The road ahead

What we're making, how we'll pray, who does what and when. Read this before Session 1, and come back to it whenever you lose the thread.

> *"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."*
> PROVERBS 16:9 (NIV)

1 · AT A GLANCE

Six months, three circles of people, one direction

We start with the people who lead, widen to the whole church, then decide and launch with the new fiscal year. Prayer runs underneath all of it.

8
sessions: five for the Vision Team, three town halls for the whole church

14
days of prayer before we meet, and a prayer focus between every session

3
times each Vision Team session is offered, so busy people can make one

June 6
Vision Sunday, the first Sunday of the 2027–28 fiscal year

DEC–JAN 9
Get ready
Surveys, three weeks of prayer and a sermon series

JAN 10–MAR 6
Leaders discover
Sessions 1–4: story, values, mission, vision

MAR 7–APR 18
The church weighs in
Sessions 5–7: town halls, Life Groups, a prayer drive

APR 19–MAY 23
Draft and decide
Session 8, church comment, prayer and fasting, LBA decision

JUNE
Launch
Vision Sunday and a four-week series

What we'll have by June

PIECE	THE QUESTION IT ANSWERS	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Mission statement	What has Christ sent us to do?	One sentence, short enough to fit on a business card and repeat from memory
Core values	Why do we do what we do?	Four to six values we live now, plus one or two we're reaching for, each with a sentence and a Scripture
Vision	Where is God taking us?	A sentence to remember, a one-page description that opens with a paragraph anyone could retell, and one focus for the first year
Our path	How does a person grow here?	A few steps in order, each with a ministry, a next step and a way to count it. This is where LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD may land.

2 · WHAT WE'RE MAKING

Four pieces, four questions

Churches get tangled when one statement tries to do every job. Each piece below has its own question, its own form and its own test.

WHAT HAS CHRIST SENT US TO DO?

Mission

One sentence that says what Pathway is here to do. For every church the core is already set: Jesus told His followers to make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20). Our part is to say it in words our neighbors understand and our members can repeat.

Lasts: decades. **Test:** broad, brief, biblical and centered on making disciples.

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

Core values

The few convictions that already drive Pathway's decisions, whether or not anyone has written them down. Four to six we live now, and one or two we're reaching for, clearly marked so nobody mistakes a hope for a description.

Lasts: years; changing a value takes years, not months. **Test:** true of us today?

WHERE IS GOD TAKING US?

Vision

A picture of Pathway and our five towns about ten years from now, if God keeps doing what we believe He has begun. A vision that would fit any church on any road isn't ours yet.

Lasts: until it's fulfilled or the Lord redirects us; the yearly focus renews each June.

HOW DOES A PERSON GROW HERE?

Our path

The steps a person takes at Pathway, from a first Sunday toward maturity in Christ, with the ministry that helps at each step. A church named Pathway ought to be able to show someone the path.

Test: can a guest tell where to start and what comes next?

Three books, three meanings of "vision"

Our resources don't use the word the same way, and it's better to say so now than to argue about it in February. Aubrey Malphurs (*Advanced Strategic Planning*) calls vision a clear, challenging picture of the future as you believe it can and must be, often a page or more, meant to be preached. Will Mancini and Warren Bird (*God Dreams*) warn against the one-page vision only the pastor uses and the lofty one-liner nobody repeats; they connect a ten-year picture to steps for the next 90 days. The *Church Vision Checklist* builds a short "process vision statement" out of what a church hopes every member will do.

We'll take something from each: a sentence people can remember, a description leaders will use and a first-year focus with a number attached. The checklist's process statement overlaps with what we're calling our path, and that overlap is the question LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD raises.

What isn't on the table

Our doctrine. Pathway's beliefs come from the Articles of Religion of The Wesleyan Church, and nothing in this process rewrites them. We're asking how we'll live out what we already believe, here, in these years.

3 · PRAYER AT THE CENTER

We're asking God before we ask each other

Planning isn't the opposite of prayer, but it can crowd prayer out. These are the ways we'll keep that from happening.

The early church planned. It also prayed before it planned and kept praying while it carried the plan out. When the church at Antioch sent out Barnabas and Saul, it happened while they were "worshiping the Lord and fasting" (Acts 13:2). When Paul's own plans pointed toward Asia and then Bithynia, the Spirit stopped him twice, and the gospel went to Macedonia instead (Acts 16:6–10). Good planning that God redirects isn't failure. It's what we're asking for.

So we'll treat this as discernment: asking what God is already doing and how Pathway can join Him. That takes listening, and listening takes time we'd rather spend talking.

WHEN	HOW WE'LL PRAY
December 13–19	Pastor Bart's week of prayer for the process, on his own.
Dec 27–Jan 9	Fourteen days of prayer for the whole Vision Team, using the guide in Part two.
Every session	Scripture, then three minutes of silence to listen before anyone talks. Each session closes with prayer in pairs.
Between sessions	A prayer focus for the next two weeks, at the end of each session in this workbook.
January through June	Each Vision Team member has a prayer partner from the prayer chain or the Midweek Prayer Group who prays for them by name. The Midweek Prayer Group prays for the process each week.
Saturday, March 20	A prayer drive through the five towns, alone or in pairs, for anyone in the church.
Holy Week	No vision meetings. We let the cross and the empty tomb set the frame for everything else.

WHEN	HOW WE'LL PRAY
Sunday, May 16	Pentecost. The whole church prays over the drafts.
The day the LBA decides	A day of prayer and fasting for the Vision Team and anyone who wants to join.
Sunday, June 6	Vision Sunday. We pray over the statements and commission the people who will carry them.

About fasting

John Wesley fasted regularly and expected Methodists to do the same; for him it was an ordinary means of grace, not a stunt. Fasting here is an invitation, not a test of commitment. Skip a meal or two and spend that time praying. If you have a health reason not to fast from food, fast from something else, or pray instead. Nobody keeps track.

✝ What we'll pray for, all the way through

- **Clarity:** to see Pathway as it really is, and what God wants it to become.
- **Courage:** to say what we think and to change what needs changing.
- **Unity:** people from all three congregations, and the newest among us, pulling together.
- **Our five towns:** the people near us who don't yet know Jesus.
- **Time and provision:** room in busy lives, and whatever this will cost.
- **Those leading:** Pastor Bart and the LBA, to listen well and decide well.

4 · OUR FOUR WORDS

LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD: keep, reshape or retire?

The words are good. The open question is whether they describe how people grow at Pathway, and whether our ministries are built around them.

LIVE | LEARN | LOVE | LEAD

Where they stand today

The current website lists them as *Learn, Love, Live & Lead the Way of Jesus*. Learn is about knowing Jesus' life and patterns. Love draws on 1 Corinthians 8:1 ("knowledge puffs up while love builds up") and the

greatest commandment. Live points to Galatians 2:20 and James 1:22, being doers of the word. Lead points to Matthew 28:18–20, sharing our faith so others meet Jesus.

Notice the order. Whoever wrote these meant them as steps: the Love paragraph opens, "Learning the way of Jesus is only the first step." So the website runs Learn, Love, Live, Lead, while most of us say LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD. That's a small thing, but it tells us the words were written as a path and are mostly spoken as a list. The question for us is whether we live them as one.

What they have going for them

- Short, memorable and familiar to some of us.
- Each one is rooted in Scripture, and Lead ends where Jesus did, with the Great Commission.
- Love sits at the center of our Wesleyan tradition. John Wesley described Christian perfection as loving God and neighbor with all the heart.
- They fit our name. Our kids' ministry already speaks the language of the trail: Crawlers, Hikers, Navigators.

What they're missing

- An order we all use, so a person knows where they are and what comes next.
- A clear doorway for each word: the ministry where that step happens.
- A way to count anything, so we'd know if people are moving.
- Use. Our ministries don't plan or describe their work in these terms.

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger's research in *Simple Church* found that churches where people grow tend to have a process that is **clear** (people can describe it), that **moves** people from one step to the next, that every ministry is **aligned** with, and that the church **focuses** on. In Session 3 we'll put our four words through that test. Three outcomes are possible: **keep and define** them as our path, **reshape** them or **retire them with thanks**. Any of the three is a good result. The one we're trying to avoid is keeping the words on the website without them meaning anything on a Tuesday.

A note on "the Way of Jesus"

Before believers were called Christians, the church was known as "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14). That's a real connection to our name. Whether the tagline stays is a separate decision from the four words, and we'll weigh both.

5 · WHERE WE START

Two surveys come first

Before anyone drafts a word, each of us tells the team two things privately: how ready Pathway is to move, and what actually drives us now.

Change Readiness · before we begin

Seventeen statements about Pathway as it is today, each rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), in four groups: leadership and direction, looking outward, how we work together, and culture and track record.

The total runs from 17 to 85. Items 1 to 3 (leaders, vision and values) are added on their own because they count most.

- **68–85, Ready:** good footing for significant change.
- **51–67, Mixed:** change can happen with work.
- **17–50, Not yet:** build agreement and trust first.

Core Values Audit · step one

Twenty-two values, from worship and Scripture to heritage and unity, plus room for two of your own. Each is rated twice on a 1-to-4 scale: how true it is of Pathway today, and how much it should be.

Then you list the top five values that drive Pathway now and the top five that should, name the biggest gap and why it's there, and name a value we say but don't yet live.

Values rated high today are actual values. Values rated higher for "should be" are aspirations.

How the results get used

WHEN	SURVEY	WHAT WE LOOK AT
Session 1	Change Readiness	The average total and its band; items 1–3; each group's average; and the items where answers were spread widest. A 1 and a 5 averaging 3 tells a different story from two 3s.
Session 1	Core Values Audit	The top five "today" and top five "should be," as a first look.
Session 2	Core Values Audit	Everything: averages, the gaps, how often each value made someone's top five and the written answers without names.
Session 5	Core Values Audit (if the LBA agrees)	The whole church takes it at the first town hall, so we can compare how leaders and the congregation see Pathway.
Session 8	Both	Do the drafts match what the surveys told us? Each value we call "actual" should have scored high for today.
Spring 2028	Both	We retake both a year after launch to see what changed.

Keeping answers safe

Both surveys are anonymous unless you sign your name. Online, the LBA sees only totals and averages, and only after three people have answered. Paper copies go to Pastor Bart, who enters them so they're counted with the rest. In every session, the rule is the same: nobody guesses who said what.

6 · HOW WE'LL WORK

Commitments for the process

How we go about this will shape whether people trust what comes out of it.

We'll pray before we plan

Section 3 describes how. The short version: prayer comes first in every session, and we don't move to the next stage without it.

Leaders first, then the whole church

The Vision Team works through the material first so we can host the wider conversation instead of hearing about it secondhand. Then everyone who calls Pathway home gets a real chance to speak before anything is decided.

Same session, several times

Each Vision Team session is offered three times within a two-week window: Sunday after worship with lunch, a weeknight and a Saturday morning. If a time draws fewer than three people, we'll drop it next round.

We'll find our values, not invent them

Malphurs is blunt about this: a leader can't install values in a congregation. They're already there, and the job is to discover them. Our long-time members will see some of them more clearly than a pastor who arrived in 2025.

We'll decide in a reasonable time

Malphurs recommends meeting every three to four weeks; wait longer and a team forgets where it was. Our sessions are two weeks apart, and the LBA decides in May. Good enough and owned beats perfect and stalled.

We'll keep the words plain

The statements should make sense to someone who has never been to church. When the right word is a church word, like holiness, we'll use it and explain it.

We'll tell the truth about where we are

If something is a goal, we'll call it a goal. If the readiness survey says we aren't ready for a big change, we'll slow down rather than pretend otherwise.

7 · WHO'S INVOLVED

Everyone has a part, and the parts are different

WHO	THEIR PART
Pastor Bart	Leads the process, teaches and facilitates the sessions, keeps the record and writes the final drafts. Shares his own hunches last, after others have spoken.
Local Board of Administration (LBA)	Approves the plan in December, takes part as members of the Vision Team, hears an update at each meeting and decides on the final statements in May.
Vision Team	About 15 to 20 people: the LBA, ministry team leaders, Life Group leaders, Trailblazers leaders, our prayer coordinator and two or three people others listen to who don't hold a title. Attends the sessions, hosts tables at the town halls and prays.
Writing team	Pastor Bart plus three: one LBA member, one ministry leader and one person with a good ear for words. Two weeks in April to turn everything we've heard into drafts.
Prayer partners	One person from the prayer chain or the Midweek Prayer Group for each Vision Team member, praying for them by name through June.
Hospitality	Lunch for Sunday sessions and town halls; dessert for weeknight town halls.
Tech Team	Slides for town halls and Vision Sunday; a short recorded summary of each Vision Team session.
Everyone at Pathway	Comes to a town hall, talks it over in their Life Group or answers online or on paper. Prays. Comments on the drafts in May.

My part

- [ ] Pray for this work every week, and for my prayer partner's requests.
- [ ] Come to Sessions 1 to 4 and 8, picking whichever time works each round.
- [ ] Host a table at one or more town halls (Sessions 5 to 7).
- [ ] Say what I think in the room, including when I disagree.
- [ ] Invite three people to the town halls.

8 · THE CALENDAR

From December to June

Write in the time you'll attend each Vision Team session in the right-hand column.

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	MY TIME
Get ready		
By Dec 20	Take the Core Values Audit and Change Readiness Inventory.	
Dec 13–19	Pastor Bart's week of prayer.	
Dec 27–Jan 9	Our fourteen days of prayer (Part two).	
Sun, Dec 27–Jan 31	"The Way Ahead," a six-week sermon series that walks the whole church into this season.	
Leaders discover		
Jan 10–23	**Session 1.** Thus far: our story and where we stand	
Jan 24–Feb 6	**Session 2.** What drives us: core values	
Feb 7–20	**Session 3.** What we're sent to do: mission and our path (Ash Wednesday is February 10)	
Feb 21–Mar 6	**Session 4.** Where God may be leading: vision	
The church weighs in		
Sun, Mar 7	**Session 5.** Town hall 1: Thus far. Repeated on a weeknight that week.	
Sun, Mar 14	**Session 6.** Town hall 2: Our five towns. Repeated on a weeknight.	
Sat, Mar 20	Prayer drive through the five towns.	
Mar 21–Apr 4	Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter and the Sunday after: no vision events.	
Sun, Apr 11	**Session 7.** Town hall 3: What could be. Repeated on a weeknight.	
Mar 7–Apr 11	Life Groups use the listening sheet; answers online or on paper through April 18.	
Draft and decide		
Apr 19–May 1	Writing team drafts the four pieces.	

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	MY TIME
Sun, May 2	**Session 8.** Testing the drafts. Repeated on a weeknight.	
May 9–16	Drafts shared with the church for comment. May 16 is Pentecost: we pray over them together.	
Week of May 17	Day of prayer and fasting; the LBA decides.	
Sun, May 23	If the LBA wants it, the members affirm the statements after worship.	
Launch		
Sun, Jun 6	**Vision Sunday**, a Communion Sunday and the start of the new fiscal year.	
Jun 13–27	The series continues: our values, our path, this year's focus.	

9 · AFTER JUNE

Keeping it alive

The Church Vision Checklist puts it plainly: a neglected vision statement is worse than none. Writing the statements takes six months. Keeping them alive takes every week after that.

From ten years to the next 90 days

Mancini and Bird's Horizon Storyline connects a long vision to next week's work. We'll use a simple version of it.

HORIZON	HOW MUCH	WHAT IT DOES
The vision	About 10 years out; one big idea	Gives the whole church a destination worth the effort
Three-year emphases	Up to four	Tells leaders where to put money, time and people
This year's focus	One, with a number attached	Gives every ministry one shared priority for the year
The next 90 days	Up to four action steps	Names who does what by when; the LBA reviews them each quarter

The rhythm

HOW OFTEN	WHAT WE DO
Every week	Some piece of it is said out loud on Sunday and appears in the bulletin and newsletter, with a story of it in action when we have one.
Every quarter	A five-minute vision moment in worship, and a time of prayer for the year's focus. The LBA reviews the 90-day steps.
Every year	Vision Sunday on the first Sunday in June, with the new year's focus. One year after launch, the Vision Team checks whether our values were on target.
Every newcomer	The new members class, volunteer training and leader onboarding teach the four pieces.

How we'll know

Attendance and giving tell us something, but they aren't the measure of a church that makes disciples. Once our path is settled, we'll count each step with the Attendance screen we already use, and we'll collect stories alongside the numbers. The question for each ministry becomes: is anyone taking the next step here?

PART TWO

Getting ready

Before we meet, we pray. Three weeks in all: one for Pastor Bart on his own, December 13 to 19, then two for the whole Vision Team, December 27 to January 9. The sermon series "The Way Ahead" begins on December 27 too, so the whole church starts these weeks with us.

Before Session 1

- [ ] Take the Change Readiness Inventory and the Core Values Audit by Sunday, December 20, at pathwaywes.com/leader-surveys or on paper.
- [ ] Read Part one of this workbook.
- [ ] Learn who your prayer partner is and send them one request.
- [ ] Pray through the fourteen days that follow, ten or fifteen minutes a day.
- [ ] Choose your time for Session 1 and write it in the calendar.

DECEMBER 27 TO JANUARY 9

Fourteen days of prayer

Read the passage, pray about the day's focus, then sit quietly for a minute or two. Write down anything you sense, notice or remember. Some days you won't have anything to write, and that's fine.

Day 1 — Sun, Dec 27

Thanks. 1 Samuel 7:3–12. Thank God for specific ways He has helped Pathway thus far: people, moments, rescues. This morning the sermon series "The Way Ahead" begins.

Day 2 — Mon, Dec 28

Holding plans loosely. James 4:13–15. Ask God to keep us from presuming we know the future, and to make "if it is the Lord's will" more than a phrase.

Day 3 — Tue, Dec 29

Clarity. Proverbs 16:9. Ask God to show us Pathway as it really is, without flattering or discouraging us.

Day 4 — Wed, Dec 30

Listening. 1 Samuel 3:1–10. Pray Samuel's words: "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then stay quiet longer than feels comfortable.

Day 5 — Thu, Dec 31

Honesty. Psalm 139:23–24. Ask God to search Pathway, and you, for anything that grieves Him.

Day 6 — Fri, Jan 1

Something new. Isaiah 43:18–19. Ask God what He might be starting that we haven't noticed yet.

Day 7 — Sat, Jan 2

Courage. Joshua 1:6–9. Pray for courage to say what we think, and to change what needs changing.

Day 8
Sun, Jan 3

Unity. Ephesians 4:1–6. Pray for people who came from West Berlin, The Bridge and Gateway, and for those who came after, to pull together.

Day 9
Mon, Jan 4

Our mission. Matthew 28:16–20. Thank Jesus for the job He gave His church and the promise that came with it.

Day 10
Tue, Jan 5

Our five towns. Matthew 9:35–38. Pray for Saranac, Lake Odessa, Clarksville, Ionia and Lowell, and for people there you know by name.

Day 11
Wed, Jan 6

Those who are far off. Matthew 2:1–12. On Epiphany, pray for people who are searching and don't know where to look.

Day 12
Thu, Jan 7

Love made complete. Mark 12:28–34. Ask God to make Pathway a people who love Him with everything and love our neighbors as ourselves.

Day 13
Fri, Jan 8

Those leading. James 1:5. Pray for Pastor Bart, the LBA and the writing team, for wisdom and for ears that hear.

Day 14
Sat, Jan 9

Willing to be redirected. Acts 16:6–10. Tell God you're willing for Him to close doors we want open, and open ones we didn't plan on.

Notes

SESSION 1 · VISION TEAM

Thus far: our story and where we stand

We look back before we look ahead. Tonight we tell Pathway's story together, high points and hard times, and see what the surveys say about how ready we are to move.

January 10–23, 2027 · 90 minutes · Conference Room

I'm coming on _____

Before you come

- Finish both surveys and the fourteen days of prayer.
- Read 1 Samuel 7:3–12 and Part one of this workbook.
- Think of two or three moments in Pathway's story you'd put on a timeline. If you're new, think of what you've seen since you came.

Open: Scripture, silence, prayer

> *"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the LORD has helped us.'"*
>
> 1 SAMUEL 7:12 (NIV)

After twenty years, Israel turned back to the LORD. Samuel told them to get rid of their foreign gods. They gathered at Mizpah to fast and confess, and while Samuel was still offering the sacrifice, the Philistines attacked. The LORD thundered against them, and the stone went up afterward. It marks a rescue, and it marks a people who had turned back to God. We meet every Sunday in a building named after it.

✝ Three minutes of silence

Ask God to remind you of a time He helped Pathway, or helped you through Pathway. Write it down.

Why we're doing this, and how

Part one has the whole plan. Tonight, mark anything you want to ask about.

Four words we'll use the same way

WHAT HAS CHRIST SENT US TO DO?

Mission

One sentence, in our words, about the job Jesus gave every church.

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

Core values

The convictions that already drive our decisions, plus one or two we're reaching for.

WHERE IS GOD TAKING US?

Vision

A picture of Pathway and our five towns about ten years from now.

HOW DOES A PERSON GROW HERE?

Our path

The steps from a first Sunday toward maturity in Christ.

In your own words: what's the difference between our mission and our vision?

The "thus far" timeline

Write one memory per sticky note, with a year if you know it, and put your notes on the wall. Then walk the wall in silence and read everyone else's.

COLOR	WHAT IT'S FOR	WHAT I'LL PUT UP
Yellow	High points, times we saw God at work	
Pink	Hard times and losses	
Blue	Turning points, decisions that changed our direction	

The wall has five eras: before 2016 (with lanes for West Berlin Wesleyan, The Bridge and Gateway Wesleyan), 2016, 2017–2020, 2021–2024, and 2025 to now.

At your table

Where do you see God's help on this wall?

When we were at our best, what were we doing?

What have we been afraid of?

What the other tables noticed

What the surveys say

Totals and averages only. Nobody's answers can be picked out, and nobody guesses who said what.

Change Readiness Inventory

MEASURE	RESULT
Average total (17–85)	
Band: Ready (68–85) · Mixed (51–67) · Not yet (17–50)	
Items 1–3: leaders, vision, values (3–15)	
Strongest group	
Weakest group	
Where we disagreed most	

Core Values Audit: a first look

Top five today

Top five it should be

What surprised me, and what didn't

Close

✝ Pray in pairs

"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps." (Proverbs 16:9, NIV)

Pray for the person next to you by name, and for Pathway. Write down who prayed for you, so you can pray for them this week.

Between sessions

✝ Prayer focus for the next two weeks: clarity

Each day, thank God for one memory from the wall. Then ask Him to show us what that moment says about who we are.

Before Session 2

- Read Acts 2:42–47 slowly, twice.
- Write down one story of a time Pathway was at its best. What were we doing, and what made it good?
- Notice where Pathway's time, money and Sunday mornings actually go.

Notes

SESSION 2 · VISION TEAM

What drives us: core values

Every church has values, written down or not. They show up in what we do without being told, what we pay for and what we argue about. Tonight we look for Pathway's.

January 24–February 6, 2027 | 90 minutes | Conference Room

I'm coming on _____

Before you come

- Read Acts 2:42–47 twice.
- Bring your story of a time Pathway was at its best.

Open: Scripture, silence, prayer

> *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."*
> ACTS 2:42 (NIV)

Luke doesn't say the first church believed in teaching, fellowship and prayer. He says they devoted themselves to them. You could see it in how they spent their days, what they ate and with whom and what they did with their possessions (verses 44–47). That's how values look from the outside.

+ Three minutes of silence

Ask God to show you what Pathway truly loves, the good and the not so good.

_____

_____

What a core value is

A core value is a conviction that already drives what a church does, whether or not anyone has written it down. Malphurs calls them constant, passionate, biblical beliefs that empower and guide a ministry. A few

things follow from that:

- **Actual and aspirational aren't the same.** An actual value is something we do now. An aspirational value is something we believe we should do but don't yet. Both belong in the conversation; mixing them up costs us credibility.
- **Values are discovered.** A leader can't install a value. We're looking for what's already here.
- **Values cost something.** If we wouldn't give anything up for it, it isn't a core value.
- **Not every value is good.** Churches can value comfort, the way it's always been done, or the people who've been here longest. Naming those is part of the work.

Where to look for a church's real values

The calendar. The budget. Who gets thanked from the front. What people complain about when it changes. What we do without anyone asking.

Core Values Audit results

Fill in as we go. Gap is "should be" minus "today." The biggest gaps are where we'll spend our time.

VALUE	TODAY	SHOULD BE	GAP	IN TOP FIVES
Worship				
Scripture				
Prayer				
Holiness				
Evangelism				
Discipleship				
Fellowship				
Family				
Next generation				
Welcome				
Our community				
Compassion				
World missions				
Every member serving				
Generosity				
Developing leaders				
Teamwork				
Excellence				
Creativity				
Heritage				
Grace				
Unity				
Other:				

The biggest gap, and why it's there

A value we say but don't yet live

Stories at our best

Tell your story at your table. Then ask what the story shows we value.

THE STORY	WHAT WE WERE DOING	WHAT THAT SAYS WE VALUE

The Acts 2 check

Malphurs compares a church's values with the Jerusalem church's. Where do we see each of these at Pathway, and how strong is it?

IN ACTS 2:42–47	WHERE WE SEE IT AT PATHWAY	STRONG · SOME · WEAK
Teaching (v. 42)		
Fellowship (vv. 42, 46)		
Worship and prayer (vv. 42, 46–47)		
Generosity and service (vv. 44–45)		
Reaching others (v. 47)		

Our candidate values

Every value we've named goes on a sticky note. We combine the duplicates, then everyone gets dots. Write the list we end with, and mark each one A (actual: true of us now) or G (a goal we're reaching for).

#	VALUE	A OR G
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

A value we'd rather not admit to

Is there something that drives Pathway that we wouldn't put on a poster?

✝ Close: pray over the list

Read the list aloud. Thank God for the values that are true of us. Ask Him to grow the ones we're reaching for, and to free us from any that don't honor Him.

✝ Prayer focus for the next two weeks: one value a day

Pray through our candidate values, one each day. Where do you see it at Pathway? Where is it missing?

Before Session 3

- Read Matthew 28:16–20.
- Think about this: what do we hope every person at Pathway does, at the least?

Notes

SESSION 3 · VISION TEAM

What we're sent to do: mission and our path

Jesus already gave His church its mission. Tonight we find our words for it, decide what we hope every person at Pathway does and put LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD to the test.

February 7–20, 2027 | 90 minutes | Conference Room

I'm coming on _____

Before you come

- Read Matthew 28:16–20.
- Think about what we hope every person at Pathway does, at the least.
- Ash Wednesday is February 10. Session times that week avoid that night.

Open: Scripture, silence, prayer

> *"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"*
>
> MATTHEW 28:18–20 (NIV)

✝ Three minutes of silence

Ask Jesus two things: what He wants from Pathway that He wants from every church, and what He might want only from us.

_____

_____

Our mission is already given

Malphurs defines a mission as a broad, brief, biblical statement of what a church is supposed to be doing. The "supposed to" is settled: make disciples. A church can have a noble mission that isn't that one, and it will drift. Our job is to say the Great Commission in words people in our five towns understand and our members can repeat.

The hard word is "disciple." It's the right word, but many people hear it as church talk. Some churches say "follower of Jesus" or "fully devoted follower of Christ" to make the meaning plain. As Wesleyans, we'd also want the words to point toward holiness: a disciple keeps growing in love for God and neighbor until Christ's character shows.

The mission test

Two statements Pathway has used. Do they pass?

TEST	"AT PATHWAY CHURCH PEOPLE ENCOUNTER GOD'S LOVE THROUGH REGULAR MEN & WOMEN WHO PUT THEIR FAITH INTO ACTION."	"LEARN, LOVE, LIVE & LEAD THE WAY OF JESUS."
Broad: do all our ministries fit under it?		
Brief: would it fit on a business card?		
Biblical: does it fit Scripture?		
On target: is making disciples at its heart?		
Memorable: can you say it with your eyes closed?		

Our word for "disciple"

Circle the ones that would make sense to our neighbors, or write your own.

follower of Jesus · Christ-follower · disciple of Jesus · fully devoted follower of Christ · growing follower of Jesus · people who love God and neighbor · _____

Draft a mission sentence

Work in pairs. Keep the "how" out of it; that belongs to our path. Write two or three tries.

Pathway exists to

_____

_____

_____

_____

What we hope every person does

The Church Vision Checklist asks for a church's "minimal viable involvement": the least we hope every member does. It's a floor, not a ceiling, and it isn't a test of who's a real Christian. The checklist names two dangers: turning it into a numbers game and turning it into a new law.

COULD BE ON OUR LIST	YES / NO	RANK MY TOP FOUR
Worship with the church most Sundays		
Belong to a Life Group or another small group		
Serve on a ministry team		
Give regularly		
Pray daily, and pray with others		
Read Scripture		
Share faith and invite others		
Serve our community		
Other:		

Notice

Compare your top four with LIVE, LEARN, LOVE, LEAD. Do they line up? That's the question on the next page.

Worksheet: our four words

Fill in what's true now, not what we wish were true. Blank boxes tell us something too.

WORD	WHAT IT MEANS, IN ONE SENTENCE	WHERE IT HAPPENS AT PATHWAY NOW	THE NEXT STEP A PERSON TAKES	HOW WE'D COUNT IT
LIVE				
LEARN				
LOVE				
LEAD				

Then talk it through

1. The website puts them in order: Learn first, then Love, Live and Lead. Is that how people actually grow here? If not, what order is? Did your table agree?
2. Which word has the clearest doorway? Which has none?
3. Is anything missing? Worship, prayer, serving, generosity and reaching our neighbors are candidates. Is each one a step on the path or a value?
4. Where on the path does a person learn to reach someone who doesn't know Jesus yet? If the answer is "nowhere in particular," what would change that?
5. Do our words describe what we expect of every member, or the stages people grow through? Which do we want them to do?
6. Would a guest understand these words without explanation? Would a ten-year-old in Hikers?
7. Do we keep "the Way of Jesus" with them?

Our table recommends

- [ ] Keep and define
- [ ] Reshape: _____
- [ ] Retire with thanks

Close

✝ Pray in pairs

Jesus ended the Great Commission with a promise: "surely I am with you always." Thank Him for it. Pray for the people in our towns who need to hear about Him.

Between sessions

✝ Prayer focus for the next two weeks: our five towns

Pray each day for one town, in order: Saranac, Lake Odessa, Clarksville, Ionia, Lowell, then start again. Pray for people there by name.

Before Session 4

- Read Ephesians 3:14–21.
- Drive through one of the five towns this week and notice who's there: who's out, who's alone, what's new, what's closed.

SESSION 4 · VISION TEAM

Where God may be leading: vision

Tonight we imagine Pathway and our five towns ten years from now, and ask what God might be asking of this church in particular. Then we decide what to ask the whole church.

February 21–March 6, 2027 · 90 minutes · Conference Room

I'm coming on _____

Before you come

- Read Ephesians 3:14–21.
- Bring what you noticed driving through one of the five towns.

Open: Scripture, silence, prayer

> *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."*
>
> EPHESIANS 3:20–21 (NIV)

✝ Three minutes of silence

Picture our five towns. Ask God what grieves Him there and what delights Him.

What a vision is, and isn't

A vision is a picture of the future we believe God wants, clear enough to see and worth the effort to reach. It's specific. "Grow and reach more people" could be any church's; a vision belongs to one church in one place. It's also held humbly. James warns against announcing what we'll do next year as if the future were ours (James 4:13–15), and Paul's well-laid plans were redirected by the Spirit more than once (Acts 16:6–10). We're asking what God is doing, not what we'd like Him to bless.

Mancini and Bird's Horizon Storyline breaks a vision into four distances: a picture about ten years out, up to four emphases for the next three years, one focus for the coming year and up to four steps for the next 90 days. Tonight we work on the farthest one.

What is God asking of Pathway in particular?

Consider what God has put in our hands: our location in the middle of nowhere, yet close to everywhere; our land and buildings; our people and their gifts; our history as three churches that became one; our partners near and far. Then try George Barna's three questions, which every vision has to answer, and one of our own.

Whom is Pathway called to serve?
What purpose has God called us to serve in their lives?
What makes Pathway distinctive in our area?
What could Pathway do that **nobody else is positioned to do**?

Twelve starting points for vision

Will Mancini and Warren Bird found that most church visions follow one of twelve patterns in four families. Rate each one quickly, then choose no more than two.

STARTING POINT	IN A SENTENCE (OUR PARAPHRASE)	FITS US 1–10
Advance: "Take it"		
Geographic saturation	Take responsibility for bringing the gospel to everyone within a defined area around us.	
Targeted transformation	Aim at one specific people, place or problem, and pray and work for dramatic change there.	
People-group penetration	Reach a group of people unlike most of us who don't yet have the gospel.	
Rescue: "Save it"		
Institutional renovation	Renew something God cares about that has declined: marriages, families, a church.	
Need adoption	Adopt a specific need near us or far away and keep meeting it.	
Crisis mobilization	Be ready to rally people and resources when disaster strikes.	
Become: "Grow it"		
Spiritual formation	Grow together toward the maturity of Christ in ways we define clearly.	
Presence manifestation	Seek God's presence and renewal, expecting it to spill far beyond us.	
Obedient anticipation	Wait, pray and listen, because God hasn't yet shown the next step.	
Overflow: "Multiply it"		
Leadership multiplication	Raise up and send out leaders for whatever God calls them to.	
Cultural replication	Reproduce our kind of ministry in new places: a new church or a second site.	
Anointing amplification	Extend the reach of one person's unusual gifting.	

My top two

How many leaders would back it today? The church?

Starting points and families from Will Mancini with Warren Bird, *God Dreams* (B&H, 2016), chapters 6–10. Descriptions are Pathway's own paraphrase.

A picture idea

Put your table's top two together in one sentence.

Pathway will

It's 2037

In small groups, describe what we'd see if our mission were being fulfilled here. Be concrete: who's in the room on Sunday, what's happening on a Tuesday night, what people in Lake Odessa or Ionia say about Pathway, what's different in your own life.

WHAT WE SEE

What we'll ask the church

The town halls start next. What do we most need to hear from people who haven't been in these sessions?

Close

✝ Pray in pairs

Pray Ephesians 3:20–21 back to God for Pathway. Ask Him to keep us from dreaming too small, and from mistaking our own plans for His.

Between sessions

✝ Prayer focus for the next two weeks: the town halls

Pray for the people who will come, by name if you can, and for the ones who won't come but should be heard. Pray that the conversations would be honest and kind.

Before the town halls

- Read the host notes in Sessions 5 to 7 of this workbook.
- Tell Pastor Bart which town halls you can host.
- Invite three people personally. Write their names here, and pray for them.

Notes

SESSION 5 · TOWN HALL 1 · FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

Thus far: our story and what we value

The first conversation with the whole church. People add to the timeline, tell stories of Pathway at its best and vote with dots on the values we found in Session 2. You'll host a table.

Sunday, March 7, after worship, with lunch

Repeated on a weeknight that week

Ebenezer Center

I'm hosting on _____

Your role as table host

You aren't there to explain or defend anything. You're there to help six to eight people talk honestly and to write down what they say. These notes apply to all three town halls.

Before and during

- Arrive fifteen minutes early. As people sit down, pray for each of them by name, silently.
- Learn everyone's name. Introduce newer people to the table.
- Hear from everyone once before anyone speaks twice.
- Ask for stories: "What did that look like?" "Tell me more."
- Write down what you hear, in their words, not your summary.
- Watch the time and move to the next question when it's called.

When it gets hard

- If someone shares a hurt, thank them. Don't argue the history and don't let the table argue it.
- If someone needs follow-up, tell Pastor Bart privately afterward.
- If one voice takes over, turn to someone quieter: "What do you think?"
- If you're asked what's been decided, the honest answer is "nothing yet."

How the town hall runs

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Lunch at the tables (Sunday) or dessert (weeknight)
0:10	Welcome, 1 Samuel 7:12 and prayer, led by Pastor Bart
0:20	What the Vision Team has heard so far; how today works
0:30	Add memories to the timeline wall
0:40	Table conversation, using the questions on the sheet
1:00	Each host reports one or two things their table kept coming back to
1:05	Dot vote on the values wall; sheets turned in to hosts
1:15	What happens next, and closing prayer

On the weeknight, the table conversation is shorter and the whole event runs about an hour.

If the LBA approves it

Everyone is invited to take the Core Values Audit on paper before they leave, or online that week, so we can compare how the congregation and the leaders see Pathway. Have extra pencils at your table.

Host report: Town hall 1

Fill this in right after the town hall and give a copy to Pastor Bart (a phone photo of this page is fine), along with your table's sheets.

Which offering _____ People at my table _____

What my table kept coming back to

Stories of Pathway at its best

Values I heard underneath them

Words and phrases worth keeping

Where people disagreed, or something surprised me

✝ Pray afterward

Pray for each person at your table by name. Thank God for what they shared.

Copy of the loose sheet Handed out at Town hall 1 · March 7, 2027

PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

Town hall 1
Sunday, March 7, 2027
Ebenezer Center

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · TOWN HALL 1

Thus far

Our story and what we value. Since January, Pathway's leaders have been praying and asking where God is leading us. Today it's your turn.

1 Remember
Add your memories to the timeline on the wall.

2 Tell
Share one story at your table about Pathway at its best.

3 Choose
Put your dots on the values that describe us.

Add to the timeline

Write one memory per sticky note, with a year if you know it. New to Pathway? Write what you've seen since you came.

Yellow
High points, times we saw God at work

Pink
Hard times and losses

Blue
Turning points

At your table

Tell about a time Pathway was at its best. What made it that way?

What does Pathway care about most, judging by what we do?

The values on the wall

These are the values the Vision Team found in January and February. Put a **green dot** on each one that's true of Pathway now and a **blue dot** on each one we should grow into. You have five of each color.

The value I'd most hate to lose

A value we say but don't yet live

ANYTHING YOU DIDN'T GET TO SAY

Your name (optional) _____ Leave this sheet with your table host or at the Welcome Center.

✝ Pray this week

"Thus far the LORD has helped us." (1 Samuel 7:12, NIV)

Thank God for the people and moments that brought Pathway this far. Ask Him to show us what He wants us to keep, and what He wants us to let go.

What happens next

Sunday, March 14	Town hall 2: Our five towns
Saturday, March 20	Prayer drive through the five towns
Sunday, April 11	Town hall 3: What could be
Through April 18	Answer the four questions online (link in the newsletter) or on paper at the Welcome Center
May 9–16	Read the drafts and tell us what you think
Sunday, June 6	Vision Sunday

Notes

SESSION 6 · TOWN HALL 2 · FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

Our five towns

We look outward: who lives within a short drive of Portland Road, what they need, and who no church is reaching. Then we pray for them by name, and on March 20 we pray our way through the towns.

Sunday, March 14, after worship, with lunch

Repeated on a weeknight that week

Ebenezer Center

I'm hosting on _____

> *"Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*
>
> JEREMIAH 29:7 (NIV)

God told the exiles in Babylon to build houses, plant gardens and pray for the city where He had sent them. If He asked that of them in a foreign city, He can ask it of us in Saranac, Lake Odessa, Clarksville, Ionia and Lowell, where we already belong.

How the town hall runs

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Lunch or dessert
0:10	Welcome, Jeremiah 29:7 and prayer
0:20	What we heard at Town hall 1; everyone puts a dot on the big map where they live
0:30	Table conversation: the questions on the sheet
0:55	Reports from each table
1:05	Everyone writes three names to pray for; prayer for the five towns
1:15	The prayer drive on March 20, and what happens next

Host notes for this town hall

- Look at the map before you sit down. Where are our people clustered? Where are the empty spaces?
- Push gently past general answers. "People need hope" is true; "the young families on our road don't know anyone" is something we can act on.
- Help tables think of people in a season of change (a move, a new baby, a lost job, an illness, a death) and of what people choose instead of church. Listen for reasons, not complaints.
- The question "If Pathway closed, what would our towns miss?" can land hard. Let it.
- Mention the prayer drive, and invite people to go in pairs.

Host report: Town hall 2

Which offering _____ People at my table _____

Needs people named

Who isn't being reached

What people choose instead of church, and why

What our towns would miss if Pathway closed

✝ Saturday, March 20: pray the five towns

Where I went, with whom, and what I noticed and prayed for:

Copy of the loose sheet Handed out at Town hall 2 · March 14, 2027

PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

Town hall 2
Sunday, March 14, 2027
Ebenezer Center

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · TOWN HALL 2

Our five towns

Pathway sits in the middle of nowhere, yet close to everywhere. Today we look at the people who live within a short drive of Portland Road and ask what God might want from us here.

1 Find yourself
Put a dot on the big map where you live.

2 Look around
Talk at your table about the people near you.

3 Pray
Name a few neighbors to pray for this month.

> *"Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*
> JEREMIAH 29:7 (NIV)

At your table

Who lives near you? Who's in a season of change: new to the area, a new baby, a lost job, an illness, a loss?

What do people in Saranac, Lake Odessa, Clarksville, Ionia and Lowell need that they aren't getting?

Who in our towns isn't being reached by any church?

What do people around here choose instead of church on a Sunday morning? Why?

If Pathway closed, what would our towns miss?

✝ Three people near me I'll pray for this month

First names are enough. Pray for them by name, and ask God for one chance to show them kindness.

Saturday, March 20: pray the five towns

Drive or walk through your part of the five towns, alone or with a friend, and pray as you go. Pray for the schools and the people who work there, the farms and businesses, the homes where someone is lonely or sick and the churches already serving there. Then tell Pastor Bart what you noticed.

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT THE VISION TEAM TO HEAR

Leave this sheet with your table host or at the Welcome Center. Town hall 3, "What could be," is Sunday, April 11.

SESSION 7 · TOWN HALL 3 · FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH

What could be

After Easter, we bring early ideas back to the church: two or three mission sentences and the picture ideas from Session 4. People react, imagine 2037 and tell us what worries them.

Sunday, April 11, after worship, with lunch

Repeated on a weeknight that week

Ebenezer Center

I'm hosting on _____

How the town hall runs

TIME	WHAT HAPPENS
0:00	Lunch or dessert
0:10	Welcome, Ephesians 3:20–21 and prayer
0:20	What we heard at Town halls 1 and 2, and from the Life Groups
0:30	The early ideas: mission sentence options and picture ideas, on the screen and on a half sheet at each table
0:40	Table conversation: imagine 2037; what we'd need to see; what worries us
1:05	Reports from each table
1:15	What happens next: drafts in May, Pentecost prayer, Vision Sunday; closing prayer

Host notes for this town hall

- Say it plainly: nothing is decided. The drafts will be written after we hear from today's tables.
- Watch for the difference between "I don't like the wording" and "I don't think this is where God is leading us." Both matter, and they need different responses.
- Count how many people at your table were drawn to each mission option.
- "What would you need to see?" gives us ways to measure progress. Write those down carefully.

Host report: Town hall 3

Which offering _____ People at my table _____

MISSION OPTION	DRAWN TO IT	WHY, IN THEIR WORDS
A		
B		
C		

What my table saw in 2037

What we'd need to see

What worries people

✝ Prayer focus until Session 8: the writing team

Pray for Pastor Bart and the three people writing the drafts, April 19 to May 1: for clear heads, honest ears and the right words.

PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

Town hall 3
Sunday, April 11, 2027
Ebenezer Center

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · TOWN HALL 3

What could be

The Vision Team has been listening since January: to Scripture, to God in prayer and to you. Today you'll hear early ideas for Pathway's mission and vision. Nothing is decided yet, and your reactions will shape the drafts.

1 Listen
Hear the draft mission sentences and picture ideas.

2 Imagine
Picture Pathway and our towns ten years from now.

3 Respond
Tell us what grabs you, and what worries you.

The early ideas

The draft mission sentences and picture ideas are on the screen and on the half sheet at your table.

The one that grabbed me

The words that didn't land

At your table

Imagine it's 2037. What do you see at Pathway and in our towns?

What would you need to see to believe it's happening?

What worries you about it?

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT THE VISION TEAM TO HEAR

✝ Pray this week

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20–21, NIV)

Ask God to keep us from dreaming too small, and from mistaking our own plans for His.

What happens next

Through April 18	Answer the four questions online (link in the newsletter) or on paper at the Welcome Center
Sunday, May 9	The drafts go out in the bulletin, the newsletter and online
Through May 16	Tell us what you think of them
Sunday, May 16	Pentecost: we pray over the drafts together
Sunday, June 6	Vision Sunday

SESSION 8 · VISION TEAM

Testing the drafts

The writing team has turned everything we heard into drafts of the four pieces. Tonight we read them aloud, test them, pray over them and say honestly where we stand.

Sunday, May 2, 2027, and a weeknight that week | 90 minutes | Conference Room

I'm coming on _____

Before you come

- Read the drafts. They'll come to you as a separate insert a few days before the session; tuck it in here.
- Read Acts 15:1–31, the Jerusalem council.
- Pray over each draft once before you mark it up.

Open: Scripture, silence, prayer

> *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."*
> ACTS 15:28 (NIV)

The Jerusalem council faced a hard question. They prayed, listened to testimony about what God had been doing, searched Scripture and argued honestly. Then they decided and sent a letter. They didn't wait until every question was settled, and they didn't pretend the decision was only theirs.

✝ Three minutes of silence

Read each draft slowly. Where do you sense the Spirit's "yes"? Where do you sense a check?

_____

_____

How we'll respond

For each piece, mark one of three:

1 I support it
It's right, or close enough that I'd stand behind it.

2 I can live with it
I'd word it differently, but I won't stand in its way.

3 I can't yet
Something's wrong, and I can say why.

A "can't yet" isn't a veto, and it isn't disloyal. It tells the writing team where to look again.

Mission and core values

Mission

- [ ] Broad enough that every ministry fits under it?
- [ ] Brief enough for a business card?
- [ ] Biblical?
- [ ] Making disciples at its heart?
- [ ] Can I say it with my eyes closed?

My response: 1 · 2 · 3

Core values

- [ ] Each one true of us today, or marked as a goal?
- [ ] Each "actual" value scored high for today on the audit?
- [ ] Shared, not one ministry's or one person's?
- [ ] Would we pay a price to keep it?
- [ ] Balanced between caring for each other and reaching out?
- [ ] At least one only Pathway would say?

My response: 1 · 2 · 3

Vision and our path

Vision

- [ ] Clear? Would a guest understand it?
- [ ] Challenging? Does it ask something of us?
- [ ] Can I picture it?
- [ ] Possible, with God's help?
- [ ] Would it fit any church on any road? (It shouldn't.)
- [ ] Must it be? Would we grieve if it never happened?
- [ ] Does the description open with a paragraph anyone could retell?
- [ ] Does the first-year focus have a number?

My response: 1 · 2 · 3

Our path

- [ ] Can a guest tell where to start?
- [ ] Does each step lead to a clear next one?
- [ ] Does it send us toward people who don't know Jesus yet?
- [ ] Does each step have a ministry where it happens?
- [ ] Will every ministry use the same words?
- [ ] Can we count how many people are at each step?
- [ ] What will we stop doing because it doesn't fit?

My response: 1 · 2 · 3

Mission and vision tests adapted from Malphurs (*Advanced Strategic Planning*, chapters 4 and 5, and *Developing a Vision for Ministry*) and Barna; path test from Rainer and Geiger's four elements of a simple church, with the outward test from Warren and from Rainer's post-COVID follow-up.

Words that don't land

Note any word or phrase you'd change, and what you'd put instead.

PIECE	THE WORDS	WHAT I'D SUGGEST

From here to June

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS, AND HOW YOU CAN PRAY
May 3–8	The writing team revises. Pray for them.
May 9–16	The church reads the drafts and comments. Encourage people to respond.
Sun, May 16	Pentecost. The whole church prays over the drafts.
Week of May 17	A day of prayer and fasting, and the LBA decides.
Sun, Jun 6	Vision Sunday. We pray over the statements and commission the people who will carry them.

✝ Close: pray toward Pentecost

Pray that the Spirit who sent the first church out from Jerusalem would send Pathway into our five towns, and that we'd be willing to go.

My part after June

Where will I help carry this? A ministry I lead, a group I'm part of, a person I'll invite?

APPENDIXES

For reference

A copy of the Life Group listening sheet, the sources behind this workbook, and the LBA's working pages.

APPENDIX A

Life Group listening sheet

Life Groups use this sheet for one meeting between March 7 and April 11. It's also at the Welcome Center for anyone not in a group, and the same four questions are online through April 18. If you lead a Life Group, this is yours to use.

PATHWAY
A Wesleyan Church

For Life Groups
Use one meeting between
March 7 and April 11, 2027

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES · LISTENING SHEET

Four questions

Pathway's leaders are praying and asking where God is leading us. Before anything is written, we want to hear from every Life Group.

For the group leader

- [ ] Give one meeting between March 7 and April 11 to these questions. Thirty to forty minutes is enough.
- [ ] Open in prayer. Ask God to help the group speak honestly and listen well.
- [ ] Read Acts 2:42–47 aloud if you'd like a place to start.
- [ ] Ask one person to write the answers on the back of this sheet. Names aren't needed.
- [ ] Hear from everyone once before anyone speaks twice. Stories help more than opinions, and disagreement is welcome.
- [ ] Close by praying for Pathway and for our five towns.
- [ ] Give the sheet to Pastor Bart by Sunday, April 11, or email the answers to office@pathwaywes.org.

Not in a Life Group?

Answer the questions yourself and leave this sheet at the Welcome Center by Sunday, April 18, or answer online through the link in the newsletter.

✝ A prayer to open with

Lord, you've helped Pathway this far. Help us remember honestly, see our neighbors clearly and hear what you want for this church. Make us willing to follow. In Jesus' name, amen.

Group _____ Date _____

1. When has Pathway been at its best?

2. What does Pathway care about most, judging by what we do?

3. Who in our towns needs what Pathway has?

4. What would you love to see God do here in the next ten years?

APPENDIX B

Sources

This workbook draws on eight resources. The wording, session designs and surveys are Pathway's own. Summaries of the last four are in the Vision Team reading packet.

- Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013). Definitions of mission, vision and values; the mission and vision tests; values discovery; team size and timing. Pathway's Core Values Audit and Change Readiness Inventory are built on his chapter 6 and appendixes.
- Will Mancini with Warren Bird, *God Dreams: 12 Vision Templates for Finding and Focusing Your Church's Future* (Nashville: B&H, 2016). The twelve starting points; the Horizon Storyline; the warnings about vision statements.
- Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*, updated ed. (Nashville: B&H, 2011). Clarity, movement, alignment and focus; the path test.
- *Church Vision Checklist*, ChurchEquip learner guide (Church Answers). Three weeks of prayer; minimal viable involvement; key influencers first; embedding the vision.
- Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015). The difference between mission and vision; the vision audit, including "can be" and "must be."
- George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life and Ministry*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014). Three questions every vision answers; a one-paragraph core; knowing our community.
- Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). The five purposes as a check on our path; people in transition.
- Thom S. Rainer, *Simple Church in a Post-COVID World* (Church Answers, 2021). The Great Commission in every step of the path.

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Notes

FOR LBA USE

The board's working pages

The Local Board of Administration (LBA) sponsors this process, approves its plan and decides on the final statements. These pages are the board's tools. Everyone on the Vision Team is welcome to read them.

L1 · FOR LBA USE

What the LBA decides, and when

December: before the process begins

DECISION	WHAT WE DECIDED
Approve the plan, with any changes to its shape or dates.	
The Vision Team invitation list. Besides the LBA, who? Who are the people others listen to who hold no title?	
The weeknight with the fewest conflicts with Navigators (Tuesdays), Life Groups and the Midweek Prayer Group.	
The survey closing date. Suggested: Sunday, December 20.	
Prayer partners. Ask our prayer coordinator to pair each Vision Team member with someone who will pray for them through June.	
Widen the Core Values Audit? Offer it to the whole church at Town hall 1.	
An outside facilitator? A district or Church Answers colleague could lead the values session so Pastor Bart can take part.	
The current website language. Leave "Learn, Love, Live & Lead the Way of Jesus" as it is until June.	
Budget: meals for Sunday sessions and town halls, printing and launch cards.	

Along the way

DECISION	WHEN, AND WHAT WE DECIDED
Pace. If the readiness survey lands in "Not yet," stretch the leader phase and move Vision Sunday to the fall?	January
Who adopts the statements? The LBA alone, or the LBA followed by the members' affirmation on May 23. Check what The Wesleyan Church's *Discipline* asks of a local church.	By April

DECISION	WHEN, AND WHAT WE DECIDED
Vision Sunday. June 6 is planned. Pentecost, May 16, is the alternative if the calendar tightens.	By April
Adopt the four pieces (L3).	Week of May 17

L2 · FOR LBA USE

What could go wrong

Problems we can see coming, and what we'll do about them.

THE RISK	WHAT WE'LL DO ABOUT IT
The readiness survey says "not yet"	If the leaders' average falls in the 17–50 band, we stretch the leader phase, spend more time on trust and two-way communication, and move Vision Sunday to the fall. A later launch with our leaders together beats an on-time launch without them.
Only the usual voices speak	Table hosts draw people out, response sheets catch what isn't said aloud, and Life Groups and the online form reach people who won't come to a meeting.
Old loyalties surface	Pathway grew out of West Berlin Wesleyan, The Bridge and Gateway Wesleyan. The timeline makes room for all three stories, and we listen for values each one brought with it.
The pastor's ideas get rubber-stamped	Pastor Bart shares his hunches last in each session. Drafts come from what the team and the church said, and the record shows where each phrase came from.
Prayer gets squeezed out	Silence and prayer come first in every session, and the session doesn't start without them. The LBA asks at each meeting how the prayer side is going, not only the schedule.
We polish words forever	The writing team gets two weeks. Session 8 tests for clarity, not perfection. The LBA decides in May.
It becomes a plaque on the wall	The weekly, quarterly and yearly rhythm, a first-year focus with a number, and 90-day steps the LBA reviews (L4).
Meeting fatigue	Twenty gatherings in six months is a lot for one pastor. Drop any session time that draws fewer than three people, record a summary, and ask an LBA member to co-lead table work.
People worry we're changing what we believe	We say early and often that the Articles of Religion stand. This is about how we live it out here.

L3 · FOR LBA USE

Adopting the statements

The week of May 17, after Pentecost and a day of prayer and fasting.

Before the meeting

- [ ] Each board member has the final drafts, the summary of the church's comments and the Session 8 responses.
- [ ] Board members fast and pray on the day of the meeting, or the day before, as they're able.
- [ ] The decision is on the agenda as its own item, with enough time that nobody feels rushed.

The meeting

1. **Pray** before any discussion. Read Acts 15:22–31.
2. **Hear the record.** Pastor Bart summarizes what the church said and how the drafts changed because of it.
3. **Take each piece in turn:** mission, values, vision, our path. For each, every member says "support," "can live with it" or "can't yet, because…"
4. **Decide.** Adopt each piece by motion, with any final wording changes.
5. **Pray** over what's been adopted and over the people who will carry it.

A suggested motion

"That the Local Board of Administration of Pathway – A Wesleyan Church adopt the mission statement, core values, vision and discipleship path as presented [with the following changes], to take effect on June 6, 2027, and that the board review the vision's first-year focus and 90-day steps each quarter."

Our record

PIECE	ADOPTED ON	CHANGES MADE AT THE MEETING
Mission		
Core values		
Vision		
Our path		

L4 · FOR LBA USE

The quarterly vision review

Twenty minutes at one LBA meeting each quarter, starting in September 2027. Copy this page as needed.

Quarter _____ Date _____

✝ Open in prayer

Thank God for any evidence of the vision in action since the last review. Name it specifically.

This year's focus

THE FOCUS	TARGET	WHERE WE ARE

The last 90 days

ACTION STEP	WHO	DONE · PARTLY · NOT	WHAT WE LEARNED

The next 90 days

ACTION STEP	WHO	BY WHEN