

*January*  
16, 2006

**To:** The Congregation of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church  
**From:** The Session

We are pleased to offer an "Actionable Vision Statement" for the congregation of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church. This Statement is a description of what our members hope Brownson Church will look and feel like in 2015. To support this Vision, Guideposts were developed which reflect the common themes that emerged throughout the 6-months planning process. We have adopted both the Vision Statement and the Guideposts which are reproduced on pages 2 and 3 of this letter.

These documents are the result of 6-months work by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC), but their content comes from conversation with and participation by a much broader church community. The LRPC had discussions with the Session, Division Chairs and professional staff to help them assess the "current reality" of the church and to hear each group's interests, concerns and dreams for the future. Most importantly, under the guidance of Larry Peers from The Alban Institute, a 3-day All Church Conference "Hearing God's Call, Shaping Our Future" was held in October, with over 125 Brownson members participating. Copies of previous congregational handouts relating to the Long Range Planning process as well as copies of the full documentation from the All Church Conference and the LRPC are available in the church office for review.

Using the Statement and Guideposts, we have already begun formulating and executing plans to move us toward 2015. We now have a framework to guide Brownson's progress toward the future. Some of the actions underway include Ministry Volunteer Teams, additional church staff, movement toward defining future facility needs, and changes in some worship services. See our attached Strategic Action Plans and how they relate to the Guideposts.

One very obvious conclusion that the LRPC reached in this look at our current reality and at our vision of the future is that radical change is not needed to move Brownson forward from where it is today to its desired future. This process has strongly affirmed that the qualities of life at Brownson that have attracted members over the years are ones that the congregation wants to carry forward. The Actionable Vision Statement suggests conscious evolution rather than revolution. It is possible that action plans we might adopt will feel revolutionary to some but this is the nature of change, and change is part of this process.

As we imagine Brownson Church in 2015, in many ways it looks much as it did in 2005. Brownson is a congregation committed to and practicing the following: 1) excellence in worship, 2) growth in numbers, and 3) commitment of our money and time in outreach.

The major difference we see for Brownson in 2015 is the coming to fruition of some long term dreams: 1) a strong children's ministry, 2) a strong youth ministry, and 3) a Christian formation program for all ages and stages that deepens our faith, honors our Reformed tradition yet still is "always being reformed".

We are committed to communicate important information to the congregation. A report and update on the Long Range Plan will take place after both worship services on Sunday, January 29, 2006. In addition, follow up conversation sessions will be held Thursday, February 9, at 7:00PM and Sunday morning, February 12, at 10:00AM in Fellowship Hall. We hope to see you there.

In His name,  
The members of the Session

## Actionable Vision Statement For Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church

### **Overview: Vision Description:**

2015 finds Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church (BMPC) as a "Church Alive". It is an ever growing church, expanding in its reach into the minds and hearts of its family of members<sup>1</sup>, widening its impact on the local and global communities, and deepening its development of faith among its members. Members of all ages and stages of life look to the church for encouragement and support.

All of us, adults, youth, and children, are generous through the work of the church, are active participants in the life of the church, and are committed to individual and collective pursuits of Christian understanding. Worship remains the cornerstone of Brownson's existence, is steadfast in its reformed traditions and roots, and is continuously reinventing itself in form and delivery to meet the changes of the times and members.

Brownson Church in 2015 is very much a contemporary church in that members find in this church community worship, learning, fellowship and faith development that has a clear and strong impact on the way in which they view their lives and the world around them, and on the way in which they lead their lives.

Brownson Church in 2015 is also very much a traditional church in that its members hold true to beliefs that have been at the core of Christian faith for two thousand years:

- The head of the Church is Jesus Christ. (The Book of Order)
- Our chief end in life is to glorify God and enjoy God forever.  
(Westminster Shorter Catechism)
- The two greatest commandments are to love God and to love neighbor.  
(Matthew 22:37-39)

Brownson members seek to live and witness in the church and in the world as called by God, clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience and love.  
(Colossians 3:12, 14)

(Session adopted 11/20/05)

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, the term "members" is an inclusive term meaning all attendees, all who are associated with Brownson; not just "confirmed" members.

## **Vision Guideposts**

To support the Brownson Actionable Vision Statement, guideposts were developed which reflect the common themes that emerged throughout the Long Range Planning process.

- **Brownson Church challenges its members to develop a deeper personal faith.**
- **Brownson Church members act on a strong commitment to lead, support and participate in Christian outreach and mission locally and worldwide.**
- **Brownson Church believes that raising our children and youth as children of God is the responsibility of every member of the congregation.**
- **Brownson Church engages all members, at every age and stage, in active and meaningful education, with a high level of membership participation.**
- **Brownson Church embraces membership growth and supports and encourages active participation by members.**
- **Brownson Church preserves, educates and shares its Reformed tradition and identity while honoring openness in our expression.**
- **Brownson Church fosters ministry through music and the arts as an integral and important expression of faith.**
- **Brownson Church is a spiritually nurturing and caring congregation.**

(Session adopted 11/20/05)

## Session Strategic Action Plans:

Using the framework of the Actionable Vision Statement and Vision Guideposts, the Session has begun formulating and executing these plans to move us toward realization of the Vision. They are worded in such a way as to make their connection to the Guideposts obvious.

- **Ministry Volunteer Teams** -- In service of achieving "active participation by members" and "a high level of membership participation", and in line with a change within successful mainline churches who are moving from a "board culture" of meetings and hierarchy to a "ministry culture" of mission and service by teams of individuals, we will promote the birth and growth of Ministry Volunteer Teams that can operate within and beyond the current Session/Division structures of Membership, Outreach, Worship, Christian Education, Stewardship, and Administration.
- **Additional Church Staff** -- In service of the staff contributing to the "spiritually nurturing and caring" nature of Brownson and "embracing membership growth", we will add to our staff in 2006 by 1) calling a half time Parish Associate or Associate Pastor to perform Pastoral Care, 2) hiring a Church Administrator (up to % time), and 3) continuing one paid Disciples I teacher. Additional staff will be added thereafter as needs and circumstances warrant.
- **Future Facility Needs** -- Believing "that raising our children and youth as children of God is the responsibility of every member of the congregation", and in service of engaging "all members, at every age and stage, in active and meaningful education", and of embracing "membership growth and supporting and encouraging active participation by members", we will ask building design experts to provide ideas and plans for meeting the present and anticipated future facility needs for educational and music programs in our church family.
- **Worship Services** -- Using worship as one of the great enduring strengths at Brownson, and in service of "engaging members of every age and stage" and "developing a deeper personal faith", we will experiment with a worship service including familiar elements from an "earlier time" at our 8:45AM service beginning January 1, 2006.