



# New Start Initiative Newsletter

DECEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

## What is your vision?



*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11*

The Bible is filled with stories of God directing people through visions and dreams. There is Abram, Moses, Jacob, David, Isaiah, Joseph, Jesus, Peter, Paul and even Mary, just to name a few. These "visionaries" were people of action. They listened deeply to the spirit at work in their lives and trusted God's message. And, although the message may have seemed frightening, they dared to speak it out loud and act on it. They didn't wait for a community vote or take a year to build an action plan. They simply put one foot in front of the other, trusting that God would guide them.

Have you noticed in the Bible that during times of spiritual revival visioning was abundant and likewise during spiritual decline there was an absence of visions?

I wonder about our time -- have our visionary eyes lost their focus?

Can we hear God speaking to us today in the same fashion that God spoke to Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men? Is there a vision in our midst waiting to be born into this season of new possibilities?

I have a hunch that if each of us talked to a random sampling of attendees in our local churches and asked them, "What do you think God's vision is for this church?," they would point to a common vision.

I believe firmly that God continues to speak through each one of us, giving us pieces of the bigger vision for our communities. If we just took a few hours to listen to each other as we speak that vision, I think that we would be amazed with a palpable sense of the Holy. We might even hear the angels sing!

## Special Dates:

DECEMBER	
17	TREASURE VALLEY PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE SESSION
28	NEW MEDIA LEARNING DAY
JANUARY	
14	WILLAMETTE VALLEY PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE SESSION
21	TREASURE VALLEY PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE SESSION

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## Continued.....What is your vision?

But, the vision is just a first step. Like those visionaries we read about in the Bible, the next step is to act on our visions. In order to do this, we need to ask some key questions:

- Do we trust that God goes before us preparing the way even in valleys of fear and uncertainty?
- Do we have a plan that will help us take those first steps as well as a team of people to walk with us?

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE  
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The New Start Initiative Team offers a simple, yet powerful, visioning process to help churches listen deeply to God's vision for their communities, as well as providing assistance in developing doable action plans. If God is calling your church to birth a new faith community the New Start Initiative Team is ready to help you take those next steps.

## What's Brewing With People Reaching People?

by Rev. Joyce Sluss

The coffee is flowing and it is at more places. It's at the new Sunday community meal at Veneta UMC. And it's also in a great new coffee shop called Jubilate at Tigard UMC and out on the sidewalk with homemade muffins at Hillsboro UMC. And coffee is just a taste of the new ministries that are beginning to brew because of the dreams and visions of lay people.



People Reaching People is the series of monthly classes currently taking place that are giving lay people permission to envision new opportunities for ministry and the tools to make them happen. Participants are excited about seeing their communities with new eyes. They are learning what their own gifts and talents are and how to surround themselves with team members who will compliment and augment those gifts. They are learning how to find help and resources for their new ministries. They are letting the Holy Spirit run freely through them.

Fresh, new ways of being in ministry are sure-fire ways to bring new life and vitality into any congregation. The participants in People Reaching People are doing just exactly that. It's not too early to begin looking at those in your own pews to see who might be a part of the next round of training in September 2012. It's all very new and very, very exciting. Join us.

(Joyce Sluss, a deacon serving at Woodburn UMC, is one of our teachers in the Willamette Valley People Reaching People training. We meet the second Saturday of the month at Morningside UMC in Salem. Currently there are 10 people in our class who will graduate in May 2012.)



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## Ready Set Go!

Most of us wouldn't think of leaving on a journey without preparation. Tickets purchased? Check! Suitcase packed? Check! Passport, some cash and credit cards? Check! If we're traveling to a new place, some decisions will be needed on where to go, what to see and where to stay. How will I get around? Do I need reservations ahead of time? Now image you are traveling with someone else. In fact, image you're traveling with 10+ other people. This changes things a lot. When you travel with a group, a shared understanding is needed of where you're going, how you'll spend your time, how to pay for the trip and, of course, why you're going. We wouldn't think about leaving on a trip without preparation and yet, strangely, sometimes we expect our churches to get moving without a destination chosen and plans put in place to achieve them.

As Beth talks about in her blog, all new ventures start with visionaries and a vision. Someone has an inspiration for something new; a passion for an exciting future or an important mission. The key to making a vision a reality is to build a team that shares that vision and a plan that turns that vision into a reality. Clear articulation of the vision, the goals and the plan are critical to build support for the vision and getting everyone working together. The dangers are many for the new venture. Initial excitement is lost if people don't see action and short-term wins. In the long-run, it is all too easy to "drift" away from the original mission or to get trapped in activities that don't really make a difference.

What if you're interested in starting a new faith community and need help getting started? The New Start Initiative Team can help you build a strong plan and put actions in place that will keep your plan "on track" and moving forward. First, as part of the visioning process, it is important to describe a future that can both inspire others and keep you on track. A shared description of the problem you are trying to solve and the opportunity you see help to support the vision you describe. Once you have a solid vision statement and future state description, it's time to get specific about the goals you want to accomplish. The NSI Team can help you develop these specific, actionable goals and measures. Measures are important to make sure your team agrees on what success looks like. Measures also help you know where you are making progress fast enough and in the right direction. An action plan pulls all these important components together.

Now you're ready to start your trip together. You know where you're going, when you're leaving, who's going with you, what you'll do, how much money you'll need and ultimately, what a successful trip looks like.

Two things are left to do. First, put a plan in place to review your progress. The New Start Initiative encourages you to review your progress on a regular basis in what we can "learning cycles". Plan, act, assess and adapt. Then do it all over again. Plan, act, assess and adapt. Things never work out perfectly according to plan. Never. Never. But that's ok because we learn from our experience, adapt our plans accordingly and then resume our action. In this way, our team stays together and stays on course to our ultimate goal. Final thing to do?? Celebrate and enjoy the ride.



Lynn Egli

*Lynn Egli is a New Faith Communities Consultant and a retired Director of New Business Development and Vice President of Finance for Hewlett Packard*

“WHAT IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN STARTING A NEW FAITH COMMUNITY AND NEED HELP GETTING STARTED?”



## Becoming Who He Is

We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you would like to receive more information regarding the New Start Initiative or either the Willamette Valley or Treasure Valley People Reaching People sessions, please contact Beth Estock at [bethestock@yahoo.com](mailto:bethestock@yahoo.com)

by Mira Conklin

Before you get to know him, Antonio seems incredibly serious and reserved. He is short and strong, with dark hair and kind eyes, and came to Oregon several years ago to work and send money home to Mexico. His weekday mornings are spent crafting drawers for a local cabinet-making shop, and from there he drives across town to a recycling center for a second daily shift. Last year, at a Community Table Food Pantry distribution day where he had been a guest for several months, I asked if he'd be willing to help carry groceries out to the car for some women. After he shlepped food all morning, I thanked him and asked if he'd like to come a bit early the next month and help again. He did, and he has been back every month since then, bringing (strong) friends with him to man the carry-out station.

**Please visit our website at [umoi.com/nsi](http://umoi.com/nsi). Information is updated regularly.**

When some folks began to gather monthly for La Cena / The Supper, a bilingual dinner gathering with spiritual practices, he showed up and ate quietly, listening to the stories shared around the table. Church members and community members, Spanish-speakers and English-speakers eat together and share around the table. We reflect on scripture or themes in English and Spanish, pray and sing together, or engage in hands-on, creative expressions of worship. It was difficult for me to tell if Antonio was enjoying himself or not because he didn't say much and he didn't always smile, but he kept showing up. Slowly, here and there, he began to open up, sharing about his work, his family, and his faith. When he offers his quiet voice to the mix, people listen raptly, because when Antonio opens his mouth, he has something to say. More recently, Antonio has offered feedback that has helped me make decisions about the direction that La Cena would move next, and he has agreed to be part of a newly-formed leadership team. I have even seen him get silly with the kiddos!



Just a few weeks ago, when a group from the Wilder Hispanic Mission was visiting Cornelius with pastor Jorge Rodriguez, Antonio shared that he had been participating before with a church nearby, but that he got involved in La Cena because it's a place we can share honestly, and because he likes to engage with English-speakers as well as Spanish-speakers. He also feels good that he is helping those in his community in a significant way through the food offered at La Cena and at the Community Table Food Pantry. He spoke seriously, but I could not stop smiling.

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### **Continued....."Becoming Who He IS"**

Through his participation in La Cena, I have seen that Antonio is in the process of growing into the person he is created to be as God moves through him – he is a person with the heart of a servant, who is loving and dedicated, who wants to grow in his relationship with God and make life better for those in our community. This gathering has been a place where Antonio has grown, and where he has inspired those of us who gather with him to also live fully into who we are created to be as we seek to love God and love our neighbors.

(Mira Conklin, Hispanic Ministry Developer for the Western District, leads La Cena out of Cornelius UMC. This ministry received a \$12,000 grant from the New Start Initiative Team this year.)

### **New Media Learning Day Saturday January 28, 2012 in Portland, Oregon**

*'Equipping Churches and Leaders to Understand and Use New Media in Ministry'*

'Culture has shifted from the postmodern age into a new age defined by media.' Understanding and harnessing the power of new media is critical for communicating the Gospel in the Media Age.

*New Media Learning Day provides hands on and practical training in the use of new/social media for churches and leaders.*

**Saturday January 28, 2012** | 9:30 am to 4:45 pm | @ Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, Portland, Oregon | Cost: \$ 79 | **Register Online** at <http://www.missiocenter.org/newmedia>

### **Mark your calendars for the New Church Leadership Institute West**

March 13-16, 2012 at Portland First UMC

This is a training for potential church planters who are discerning a call to start a new faith community and for leaders of existing churches interested in reaching the mission field with new faith communities. We will learn about creating multicultural communities as well as how to establish a house church network. We will hear from church planters in the West who are creatively reaching our spiritual but not religious mission field. Cost is just \$250 which includes 3 meals and excellent training from nationally recognized successful church planters.

### **New Start Initiative Team**

Chairperson:	Rev. Peg Lofsvold
Staff:	Rev. Beth Estock Lynn Egli
Micro-Grant Chairperson:	Rev. Lee Hunefeld
Treasurer:	Rev. Bill Mullette Bauer
Lay Leader:	Cesie Delve Scheuermann
Other Members:	Rev. Lisa Payton Christy Dirren Rev. Jeff Lowery