

blueprint

September 2011



Looking Forward.....

Village Green Community Church

The Bigger
Story: Are
You Open?

We celebrated our 40th Anniversary as a church in November of 2010. For 40 years Village Green has served the Westmount community with a passionate desire to see lives transformed with the Gospel.

Stated at that memorial service was what we called the “VG Big 3”: Community, Life Groups, and Missions. These have been part of the church’s historic DNA and one of the reasons for its endearing impact. This legacy continues to this day and is part of the future vision for the church.

Prior to the Anniversary service, we spent almost a year in prayer and consultation with many in the church. Through that collaborative process, a new Mission Statement was forged that we feel reflects the heart of Jesus for His church: a statement that reflects succinctly the Great Commandment and the Great Commission; to Love God, Love Others, Change the World.

We also introduced our Operational Code, represented by the acronym BRIDGE:

- Biblical
- Relevant
- Inspiring
- Dynamic
- Grace-filled
- Excellent

Though we took time to celebrate in November and introduce these new statements, we knew that there had to be more.

With the growth that we’ve experienced over the past 3 years we posed a question for all to consider. The question being this: Are you open to God writing a bigger story for Village Green? Though we have lots to celebrate, we sense that God is just getting warmed up!



The Current
Reality: Are
We Ready?

In 2002, the church reclaimed the space used by the public library for our present worship centre. Some nine years later, those who committed to the expansion of the church have seen their prayers and expectations realized. The present reality is that we are close to outgrowing our present facility in its current form.

Our growth has enlivened us to consider what the implications mean for the future. After all, we can ignore what is happening, which would be tragic, or we can seek to partner with what God is doing.

The growth is coming in many forms, whether it's in the auditorium on a Sunday morning or the increase in our nursery downstairs, or in the number taking part in our Life Groups; we are experiencing numerical increases in every area of the church.

And it's not just numerical growth; it is happening spiritually as well. In the place where it really

matters; hearts and lives are being changed. Week after week we hear how the church has affected the trajectory of someone's life toward hope, toward healing, toward Jesus. Many of you are making a real difference in someone's life.

We are at an important juncture, one that will determine the future effectiveness of the church. We are presently at the most difficult growth barrier for any church to push past. The decisions made in this season will have consequences down the road. They will either allow the church to continue to grow, or actually cause it to shrink, the choices we make now are that important.

Are we ready to make a greater difference in the community around us, and in the world beyond?



Changing the
World by
Opening
More Doors

It's not purely about the numbers or even the size of the church, it's ultimately about the size of God and the mission He has called us too.

Our mandate, priority, and passion, is to continually be reaching out. If our purpose is to be a church solely designed for those who already attend, then we shouldn't do one more thing. But if we want to be a dynamic church that reaches out, then we must be pro-active with the growth that we are experiencing.

What if we could open more doors into our community? What would it take?

Imagine:

- Having a full functioning kitchen where we could feed our neighbours, hold community events, or expand our Soup Sundays.
- Having dedicated rooms for youth that they could call their own and feel a deeper connection with the church.

- Having more space for Kid's Connection, as well as room for resources and storage.
- Having greater capacity for Day Camp, rather than sending kids away every year because of room limitations.
- Having the ability to share more space with LINC yet still have room to facilitate church events.
- Having space for staff to work.

All of these scenarios and more are limited by our current facility. At our Leadership and Staff Retreats in April, we acknowledged these limitations and made the following decisions.

1. That we are committed to the Westmount area.
2. That we are committed to this corner.
3. To implement a plan for facilitating greater growth.



Phase I:
Making More
Room for
the Kids

Due to these fundamental decisions, we had to ask how we can better utilize the space that we have.

In order to remain true to our mission statement and honour the desire to remain faithful to this community, a road map was created to help us navigate these realities; a map framed in four-phases, each one targeting an area of need.

The greatest area of stress at the present is downstairs in our Kid's Connection. Each group we asked recognized that it was priority one. Without some upgrades and improvements, we would soon be in difficulty considering the growth there, especially with the number of babies being born. This became Phase I of our road map.

If you have been downstairs during the month of August you will notice that the work has already begun. We are making some changes which we feel will help us manage this area better, as well as improving the over-all appeal to newcomers, visitors, and members alike.

Phase I consists of:

- The wall between the kitchen and Room 205 (also known as the Green Room), to be removed. It will be replaced by a sliding door that allows us the versatility of a large classroom, or two when needed.
- A reformatting of classrooms to suit the size and needs of each age group, especially the nursery.
- A total overhaul of the washrooms. The odour and conditions are less than appealing. Both are being redone.
- A computerized check-in center to improve safety and monitoring of each child.
- We are always in need of storage, so cabinets are being designed to add storage, while minimizing classroom intrusion.
- The kitchen to be re-modified for versatility and better functionality.
- Upgraded lighting and a fresh coat of paint.

The renovations and upgrades happening downstairs are only a piece of the overall road map. It alone won't get us to where we need to be. When considering the many options downstairs; modular units being one of them, the consensus was that whatever we did, it needed to complement the larger mission of the church.

Earlier, we asked you to just imagine. To wonder aloud what we could do with expanded facilities? It's those thoughts that bring us to Phase II.

This Phase consists of building an addition to the south section of our present facility. This added wing will greatly enhance our capacity to reach more people as well as giving us needed space to further our ministry initiatives.

From our perspective this is not a "dream fulfillment," or a "nice to have option." Frankly, we are not interested in investing in bricks and mortar, or plunging ourselves into raising money if we didn't feel that it was mission critical.

We are presently working out the details of the build; alongside our Logistics Team, Building Team, Elders and Leadership. We are also consulting with industry experts and others who have experience with these types of projects to help us navigate it as best as possible.



We will be presenting a comprehensive plan answering questions such as; what are we building, how are we raising the money, and what are the costs? Also, we are developing a communication plan so that we can keep you informed every step of the way. The goal is to begin work within 1-2 years.

With regards to the addition we will also be looking at environmentally responsible options, and possible new revenue streams that will help alleviate the overall cost of the project.

Phase II:
Making More
Room
Overall

Phase III:
Extending
Our
Reach

Last fall after one of our parental dedication services, a visitor came up to me after the service and asked me a very peculiar question. He said, “Where are you going to be next year?” Perplexed by the comment I asked him what he meant? He told me that he had visited the church from out of town each year for the last few years. As he looked around, he couldn’t help but feel that we were growing so much, that by this time next year we would be asking ourselves that very question.

Those words seem prophetic today. But building a new addition is in no way the culmination of our mission, but a tool for expanding it. Anything else would be short-sighted. We remain committed to the core values that have sustained the church for 40 years. Community, Life Groups, Missions, each continue to be an integral part of who we are and will continue to be so for many years to come.

This is why Phase III is so important. It keeps us mission focused and intentional about steps beyond the addition.

As we continue to grow, other options that will allow us to extend our reach become available for us to consider

1. Multiple services. Duplicating what happens on Sunday and allowing us to reach more.
2. Alternate services. What about a Saturday service? And with a full function kitchen we could host a meal as part of it?
3. A Video Venue or Church Plant. What if we were to start services in a new location?
4. An Internet Campus. A way to reach that was unimaginable a mere 10 years ago.
5. Greater missional impact locally. Community BBQ’s, pizza lunches for Saunders students, an expanded Benevolence program, movie nights, the list is endless.
6. Greater missional impact globally. Water projects, micro-financing, supporting nationals in leadership, the potential here is also limitless.
7. Greater opportunities to volunteer. Not only does it transform us personally, but makes us part of changing the world.

Phase IV:
A Wide
Open
Road

Admittedly, many aspects of that list are ongoing and could be realized at any time. It's all part of our desire to maximize every opportunity we can to see people come to faith in Christ

And it's also recognized that we are not naïve enough to believe that just because we build it they would come. But what we do believe is this: We serve a big God. Jesus commanded us to reach out and that He would build His church. We are simply giving Him greater room to work. We cannot expect to see a harvest unless we sow the seed well.

One practical way we saw this evidenced was in the parking lot expansion. Though some thought it unnecessary, our growth would have stalled without it.

This brings us to Phase IV. It would have been wonderful to talk about some of the hopes that have been imagined for this phase, but it's simply too far

out for now. We suspect that by the time we begin to frame this phase we are looking at 4-5 years down the road, and with the speed of change all around us, this is simply too far for us to gage at this point.

It does stress a very important principle though, that we want to be deliberate in everything we do. We want to be effective for the sake of the Gospel and it takes conscious evaluating of our systems so that our ability to *Love God, Love Others and Change the World*, is never compromised.

We could easily coast and maintain what we presently have, much of which is wonderful. But we are not the only ones sensing that it's time to expand. As many of you know we rent our facility to the LINC program who have been made aware of what we are planning. Not only are they excited about the changes, but it allows them to expand too, which means the potential for greater revenue for us.

A Journey
of
Amazing
Potential

Thank you for taking time to read this blueprint. It has covered a lot of ground. We are talking about taking some big steps and making some big changes. But without a doubt, for all of us here at Village Green, it's the continuation of a journey filled with amazing potential.

Being mission critical is vitally important for any church bearing the Name of Jesus Christ. At the time of this writing the world around us is in turmoil. England is experiencing riots, the U.S. is reeling from a credit downgrade and Africa is once again a focus of humanitarian aid. Those are just a small sampling of the reality being played out before us on the world stage.

Locally, London holds the second highest unemployment rate in Canada, while Westmount continues to experience one of the highest rates of immigrants within the city. The needs are evident all around us.

I know that some of you reading this right now will

feel this is over-dramatic and that these scenes are part of the continuing reality that is ever with us. The places and names may change, but the core problems are timeless.

That may be true, but we cannot become desensitized because they are prevalent. Though we cannot take on every valid cause that comes before us, we can maximize what we do have and what we believe God has uniquely shaped us to be as a church.

As you consider what you've read, take time to pray. In the days that lie ahead there will be ample opportunities to get involved. Pray and ask God how you can become part of this amazing journey; because God is leaving His mark on Village Green.

We want to close the same way we started, by asking, "Are you open to God writing a bigger story for Village Green?"

