

Pastor's Reflections

Imagining our future. As part of a Sabbatical experience, one of the things both pastor and church are supposed to be doing is reflecting on and imagining the future of the church. Presently, our church is in the midst of a number of transitions (periods of change).

As we heard a couple of Sundays back, our beloved Director of Music, Ed Sagi, is retiring effective the end of the calendar year. Ed is so revered and respected in our church family, it's hard to imagine Sunday morning church without Ed's multi-talented presence.

Also, with the continued success of our Growing Place expansion, sometime in the next two years or so, we anticipate having the financial resources to hire a part-time Youth Director for our junior and senior high youth. Obviously, there is a whole process of planning and envisioning lying ahead before this can become a reality. Still, put simply, if our Growing Place expansion is successful, this can happen.

Each of these transitions offers new possibilities for our church. With all of this in mind, given our 70% Hispanic demographic in Miami Lakes, how do we imagine our future? In other words, with what kind of a music program? And what kind of a youth program? And what other program emphases as well?

What kind of a future? In life and in the church, it's important to be able to imagine what our lives will look like in five or ten years.

In the past three weeks, we have been doing some sweeping home improvements at the Frantzes. It all started with concerns over mold, caused by water leaks and having wall paper on virtually every wall of our house (it turns out that wallpaper and moist climates eventually compute to mildew and mold).

The cure, it turns out (which is what we've been in the throes of), has been to strip the wall paper, repair the mold infested areas, and then skim coat and paint (one coat of primer and two coats of paint) the entire interior of our house. Also, we've (we, being the work crew) had to replace the entire kitchen, which means no sink and no normal use of the kitchen for this same three-week period. (For those of you who have been this route before, you know about the dust, the plastic over all the furnishings and the total disruption in your life.)

However, for the good news—which is the point in all of this: it's been an exciting opportunity to imagine and create an essentially new house, a house that we can see ourselves living in five to ten years from now.

It's the same in the church. In many ways, our challenge is simple. On the one hand, we have to take care of our core membership and friends (those who have been sustaining

our church over the years), while, on the other hand, doing our best to address the needs of those who are new to our church, many of whom (not all) are younger and Hispanic.

Together, we are a beautiful ethnic and generational blending of God's people. In many wonderful ways, we *are* the diversity that is America.

With the Search Committee for a new Director of Music now beginning to meet and with very good prospects for an expanded youth program a couple of years away, again, how are we thinking about our church? What kind of a future do we imagine and hope for?

Focus groups for the Director of Music search process. One of the stages in our Director of Music search process will involve as many as possibly three (the committee still has to sort this out) *focus* gatherings where you, the members and friends of our church, will be invited to share (we envision different locations for these *focus* gatherings) your hopes and dreams for our music program.

The members of the Search Committee for the Director of Music position are Elliot Auerhahn (chair), John Brett, Jan Pye and Monica Reina.