

END OF YEAR REPORT: NICHOLASVILLE STEERING TEAM

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE NICHOLASVILLE MISSION

In 2019, the Presbytery of Transylvania hired the Phila Consulting Group to help work alongside a team of discerning members in order to pursue planting a potential new worshipping community in Nicholasville, Kentucky. The team consisted of Beth Garrod-Logsdon, Rachel Mathews, Sylvia Carter, Susan Bradish, Jim Dougans, Philip Lotspeich and Phila Group consultants Brian Clark, Shannon Kiser, Gary Mears, and Dan Carlton. Over a period of 8 months and 6 face-to-face meetings, the team worked to discern a potential mission in Nicholasville. Meeting in local nonprofits and community rooms, walking the community, connecting with local leaders, working networks and existing connections, and following the Spirit of God, the team then identified a theological identity, a vision for the mission, a potential mission plan, and a missionary leader for the mission. In October, 2019, the team had several meetings/interviews with Jeff Shaver. At the end of 2019, The Discernment Team unanimously recommended Jeff Shaver as the Mission Developer for the Nicholasville Mission. A Letter of Intent was drawn up and shared with Jeff Shaver, and he responded affirmatively.

With the Mission Developer in place, in 2020 the “Discernment Team” then transitioned to the “Nicholasville Steering Team” with Susan Bradish and Sylvia Carter remaining on the team for a limited time while Beth Garrod-Logsdon, Jim Dougans continue their involvement in the Nicholasville Mission. In 2020 two new members were added to the Steering Team including Jay-T Silence and Lisa Culpepper.

OUR GOALS FOR 2020

In 2020 the Nicholasville project was still considered to be in early formational stages. Following closely to the Mission Plan created by Phila Consulting, the goal for 2020 was to pave the way for our official “Year 1” by 1) beginning initial brainstorming 2) forming relationships, 3) pursuing partnerships, 4) considering business options, and 5) implementing mission experiments in the Nicholasville community.

BEGIN INITIAL BRAINSTORMING

In 2020, the Steering Team met 10 times (8 over Zoom) in order to further discuss creating a church-business hybrid in Nicholasville Kentucky, recognizing that many church plants in Jessamine county do not survive simply because many congregations are unable to financially support themselves longterm. Furthermore, since the goal of the Nicholasville Mission is to engage with people who are resistant to church or disinterested in existing churches, the Steering Team continues to feel that a business could be the very best way to connect in a non-threatening, natural setting. In 2020, consideration was given to many possibilities including a for-profit fitness center, a secular non-profit mission, and a drug rehabilitation house for women. Throughout 2020, God has continued to grow our understanding of Nicholasville, including its many beauties and overwhelming needs.

FORMING RELATIONSHIPS & PURSUING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2020, the Nicholasville Steering Team felt the need to grow in relationship, not only with the city and people of Nicholasville, but with each other. Over the span of 3 months, the Steering Team spend several sessions participating in the StrengthsFinder (now CliftonStrengths) assessment by Gallup. Administered by Philip Lotspeich, much insight was given to our team regarding our own unique strengths as individuals as well as the kinds of personalities we might find it beneficial to add to our team in the future.

In 2020, while COVID-19 has certainly impacted our ability to create new relationships with the people of Nicholasville, God’s grace has prevailed nonetheless. In August, the Steering Team approved of Jeff Shaver joining the *Leadership Jessamine County* program with the hopes of growing both Jeff’s knowledge and relationship with the area of Nicholasville. Since joining, Jeff

has spent over 40 hours with the program touring Jessamine County, meeting various leaders and influencers, visiting non-profits in the area, and growing in the knowledge of Nicholasville, Kentucky.

In August, the Steering Team was introduced to a young Christian woman named Lindsey Bonds who is in the initial stages of starting a rehabilitation center for women. Since meeting her, Lindsey has been a wealth of information to the Steering Team in regards to the major drug addiction that's seen in the Nicholasville area. And since she personally knows many women and families affected by the crisis of opioids, Lindsey has made it her life's mission to help minister to that need. Since meeting her in August, Jeff and Lindsey has spent 4 Zoom sessions discussing the topic of addiction in Nicholasville and the potential possibilities for the future.

CONSIDERING BUSINESS OPTIONS

Throughout the brainstorming phase of 2020, much time was spent discerning whether a “for-profit business” or a “non-profit mission” would be better suited to exist alongside our potential church plant. While many churches have been planted successfully by first starting a business (usually a coffee shop, etc.), few examples exist of church plants that began as a non-profit mission. Broadstreet Ministry, however, is one of those few positive examples. In May, 2020, former pastor of Broadstreet Ministry, Michele Ward agreed to be a resource as the Steering Team discerns which model best fits the context of Nicholasville and is viable in sustaining a new worshipping community in the long run. Throughout 2020, much consideration, brainstorming, and prayer has taken place discerning how best to connect to the life and people of Nicholasville.

IMPLEMENTING MISSION EXPERIMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

An example of a “mission experiment” might be forming a Bible study group that meets at a coffee shop or teaching a fitness class at the YMCA. In other words, implementing mission experiments is about taking little risks in order to see what might be successful (or not) in meeting a need or creating connections and relationships with the people of Nicholasville. With this in mind, nothing has been more affected by the Coronavirus than the ability to meet new faces and personally connect with the people of Nicholasville. For the Nicholasville Steering Team, this has certainly been the most frustrating part of 2020. However, all things considered, we believe that more “boots-to-ground” types of experiments will exist in 2021.

OUR GOALS FOR 2021

While the Nicholasville Mission in 2020, was considered to be in early formational stages, we expect to officially enter into “Year 1” of the Mission Plan prepared by the Phila Consulting in early 2021. With the Mission Developer (Jeff Shaver) moving from 10-15 hrs/week to 20-30 hrs/week, the primary focus for the year will be to further develop relationships, gather information, and move toward a definite business plan. Further goals include conducting 2-3 experiments in developing the mission and forming a core group of 4-8 people.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Though 2020 has certainly been a difficult year, we look back with thankfulness and forward with excitement as to where God continues to leading us. As we grow in understanding the vast needs of Nicholasville, Kentucky, we are also growing in appreciating its rich history and beauty. With eyes that see redemptively, our hearts continue to ache for those in the Jessamine county who need to know the love that Christ has for them. And as we continue in showing Christ's love to Nicholasville through the Nicholasville Mission, we are thankful for all the support, and prayers that has come our way in 2020.