

God's Vision for Whatcoat – Our Eyes Have Seen the Glory

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Bonnie Dyer, Rita Fry, Charlotte Fraser, Jane Maroon,
Tim Stark, Dee Waud, Chris Glenn, Sondra Satterfield

Tom Cahall, Feb. 15

The time is the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019. The Saints of Whatcoat have continued to gather for worship with increased numbers. The many children are gathered around the music ministry each are enjoying sounds of Christ some are dancing others are singing the joy. This eliminates traditional Sunday school. The older youth are found filling the front room of the Simpson Center. The technology for the older youth is overwhelming to most of the congregation, but is super cool for the older youth. They can experience Christ in the state of the are world of sight and sound delivering a profound message of Gods Love. The newly decorated fellowship hall looks like a coffee shop with small tables for the gathering of small groups to share their experience, strength and hope with each other. The smell of coffee fills the air. This is very viable using the elevator for those who have an problem with stairs. The congregation gathers for worship on Sunday around these activities. The Simpson Center has grown to THE recovery resource in Kent County. The celebration of recovery for all people. The expansion of daytime meeting, recovery retreats, and small groups. The involvement of lay people is paramount. The pursuit team which will passionately pursue Jesus must be dedicated and truly passionate. The admin board will be transformed to meet these new ideas. Outside the walls we should look into all community activities which we can support and participate as helpers and volunteers. I feel this should be a local Kent County outreach. Our purple "T" shirts should be well known as here comes the helpers working for Christ.

Julie Lewicki, Feb. 20

2/15: light of Christ burning within us, growing brighter as we pass it on to others- light by light- picture of candlelight service on Christmas Eve- we each pass on the light. Flame grows brighter and stronger and spreads light wildfire, burning brightly and consuming us as we share his love. The song " Pass it On" was a part of this vision as I heard it.

2/16: a vision of the doors of the church flung wide open with sunlight and wind streaming in and out then the doors/ walls disappear as we go out into the community reaching out in a grass roots way.

2/17: Others Being taken under the shelter of our wings that are outstretched wide. We are mentors and follow others identifying new people even from the parking lots, door. Increase in fellowship groups and small groups held in church and others houses.

2/18: picture of a plug/ cord going into a socket- getting people plugged in- mentoring and teaching others - guiding them to become more involved- using different ways to reach targeted groups(young people, seekers, etc) with different types of services, arts, etc.

2/19: being transformed from the inside out- identifying spiritual gifts in others and how they can use them. Following people that are new or who have been absent from church for a while a Committee to track people. But also going out into the community to meet people where they are at.

2/20: sharing our testimony and teaching others- more opportunities for bible studies, groups , activities to reach out to the youngest to the oldest. More direct opportunities to help others grow and learn more about Jesus.

Ann Spence, Feb. 21

Sunday School (finding Jesus) increase participation, building

Bible studies (pursuing Jesus)

Support groups (AA, Recovery, Nar-Anon, etc.)

Focus on older youth (13-20) activities for them, cooperate with Young Life, Christian Athletes, other churches, have a facility and staff

Bob Contino, Feb. 22

Vision: To create disciples for Christ who joyfully engage in Christian Action and Spiritual Growth.

Drew Boyce, Feb. 22

What could Whatcoat look like in the next 3 years following the mission.

Welcome all to passionately pursue Jesus and share His love with others.

As I meditate on the mission and how it could inspire I see two fronts. Welcoming and growing the saints of Whatcoat and then providing them opportunities to share Gods love through service.

Welcoming and passionately pursuing Jesus. I see a vibrant small group ministry. This is the heart of growth where passion for Jesus can be stirred. This could include Sunday School but I think that "life groups" on other small groups outside the normal Sunday meeting time is key. I see all kinds of groups centered around their passions and interests. I see these groups living life together, not only growing Spiritually but also serving the community together. I see a real focus on family where there are opportunities for families to connect and share life. For this to happen there needs to be a focus on building a core group of leaders that are willing to pour themselves into others. As part of the process I see mentors and disciples, a Paul and Timothy scenario. I see this as the only way to self sustain small groups. I realize there are several small groups that continue to play a vital role in creating genuine fellowship and opportunities for growth. These include Methodist Men and Whatcoat Women, Youth Group, Prayer Group, and other life group and need to be supported with strong leadership.

I also see worship moving folks to a passionate relationship with Jesus. I see dynamic experiences that provide practical teaching and encouragement in the Way. Where folks would be changed by what they see and hear. That they would never be the same and each day they would fall more and more in love with Jesus.

As I see how we share God's love I see us building on our existing relationships. I see us increasing our partnership with Foster Angel. I see us participating in feeding the homeless, supporting Operation Christmas Child, school supplies for kids, supporting Fellowship of Christian athletes and Young Life. I see a more focused outreach for VBS where we partner with the preschool to share God's love. I also see us looking at the Preschool as more of a ministry. I see us involving them more in the worship service and looking for other ways that they can connect with the Church.

I also see us sharing God's love with others in new ways. I see many things happening in our facilities as well as the surrounding community. I see before school and after school programs in the Simpson Center and in the church. I see classes on finance being offered for the community. I see short term mission trips being housed in the Simpson center to help with construction projects in the community. Partner with the town on old Camden days and Christmas caroling, homecoming parade. Community worship service. I see the church and our facilities becoming a focal point for town activities.

I see growth in our ministry to additions and see this as a key to fulfilling our mission. I see more opportunities to partner with AA, NA, CR, EMB, Doyle's group, Healing the

addictive personality, etc. As we welcome these groups into our spaces I see opportunities to make more personal connections and to link the "higher power" with a life changing relationship with Jesus. I see an expansion to every day of the week between the two facilities. I see this as Whatcoat's connection with the community and our contribution to the larger church network.

Building a stronger church community. I see improved partnerships and coordination with the other local churches so that each ones strengths can be leveraged for the whole community. Food? Clothes? Services? Addictions? Financial support? Each church has strengths that can be utilized to meet the needs of the community.

Doyle Tiller, Feb. 23

To be of one body created by God through his spirit and faith in Jesus Christ, every member will be empowered to fulfill their own personal life mission for Christ and in doing so will transform the surrounding community of Camden. They will be in passionate pursuit of a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ. They will hunger for the message that our committed and dedicated leadership provides everyday our doors are swung open at Whatcoat. Our membership will maintain that "Sunday High" feeling every day of the week and share his love with all we encounter.

We will minister and counsel the troubled souls that may enter our path and turn no one away. Our Simpson Center will hum by the Energy and Love that will flow in and out of that center. We will also guide the faithful, to a higher plane of enrichment, striving to be more like our Savior in every way. Humbling ourselves before him, trying to discern the path he has chosen for us to follow.

We will be committed to innovation, creativity, and excellence with forms of dynamic worship that will capture the attention of our youth but will be well grounded on the cornerstones of our faith that are so important to our elders of faith. We will be that light, that prayer blanket, that protects our family from the cold and the dark never fearing because we know Jesus and his love walks among us.

We will see miracles happening before our eyes that can only be explained by Gods Grace and Spirit being poured out all over house of the lord.

Bo Gordy-Stith, Feb. 23

I celebrate the following visions God has given me in the past few days as Whatcoat's pastor (some of these I see with earthly eyes; some with the eyes of my spirit):

- A young (9 year old) acolyte hugs and reassures an adult after worship in order

to comfort them

- We welcome back to involvement in the choir an older man with dementia
- We gather in a nursing home for a service of healing for patients there – a worship service that involves children, youth, adults, and elders
- We make our space accessible for all ages and abilities – every room is clean and well-maintained.
- We expand our Library into a Prayer Chapel; prayer warriors cover our church and community without ceasing
- Our VBS-like children’s discipleship formation program connects with the Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Preschool (reading support, adopt-a-grandparent)
- We offer mid-week worship and fellowship supporting particularly persons in recovery
- Every member is involved in personal and corporate mission and ministry to share the love of Christ in practical ways with our neighbors.
- We offer ongoing classes/groups in all aspects of Discipleship Training (Spiritual gifts identification and development, spiritual disciplines, servant leadership, mission and ministry, evangelism, training and teaching, worship, community involvement/investment, mentoring/coaching, caring ministry)
- We are active in working with other Camden/Dover Christians, concerned neighbors, and area educators, police, elected officials and other public servants in addressing community issues (Our state Representative, Lyndon Yearick, is sponsoring a town hall meeting in the cafeteria of the Star Hill Elementary School on March 1 from 6-8 pm. In the future, we will sponsor this kind of gathering of our community leaders and neighbors, as well as be active participants.)
- Our church sponsors partnerships with local businesses and civic organizations to promote the Kingdom of God in Camden
- We are a 7-day-a-week church living our faith by loving and serving our neighbors
- Our worship is profoundly connected to God and to our daily life (collaborative, representative interpretation and response/invitation). Our worship expands to include many forms of expression of God’s Word - and invites community members to help us express Christ’s calling to love and serve our neighbors...
- We find ways to reach out to those in recovery - serving as hosts and inviting them into contributing roles (Habitat for Humanity, serving other hurting people in our community)
- Our music ministry reaches out into the community, fostering goodwill, supporting the cause of Christ, participating in servanthood ministries, and inviting people to passionately pursue Christ, particularly in service to our

neighbors

- Whatcoat becomes a leader in community partnerships and volunteer "matchmaking"
- We practice an active partnership between our youth and young people and our older Boomers and elders, in which young and old share in wisdom (new and old), mutual encouragement and support, and inspiration.

Kris Knarr, Feb. 24

My vision:

Making disciples...people who know Jesus as their Lord, Savior, Best Friend and who want to be like Jesus to take Him into the world and just love others. Then others also see Jesus in each of you that they too want to be like Jesus and be guided by Jesus.

- Intergenerational ministries!
- Make new friends & Keep the old!" Minister to each other

This starts by caring about the least of these...the children....so as I envision Whatcoat I see....

Children leave and go with their friends/adults and teachers at 10:30 Sunday morning...a gathering time of singing and movement....leads into separate age-appropriate classrooms each with at least 2 teachers and 1-2 "helpers." The teachers work together when possible, but also allow having a Sunday off now and then. The teachers are supported with LOTS of support from the Education Chair in the way of time, meetings, and materials! Teachers are encouraged to send postcards, emails, texts, whatever to keep in touch with individual children to encourage them to understand the love of Christ and then "pass it on!" Relationships are started and foundation work is laid so that children will know that there are others in their world who care for them. That Jesus loves them coming from people "with skin on!"

As the week goes on.... Some children are able to attend the Pre-school Program which is Christ-centered.

There is a before and after school program...for the most part consisting of a safe place for parents to drop off their children in case of late opening or early closings of the area schools. Children would be encouraged to work on "homework" or read, or be more "study-hall" oriented. Some "tutors/teachers/study-coaches" would be there to answer questions that children may have had from their school day. This would hopefully be an avenue for the "more-mature" folks from the church family to share time/knowledge and genuine caring to the younger folks.....bridging the generational gap."

Some older folks may read to or listen to a child read..... A former business man may talk to youth....even more visionary would be those who have them sharing talents and skills such as woodworking, knitting, baking, etc.....

On Monday morning...early-'ish....8-9:00 with coffee... a prayer group gets together to ask for God's leading in their outreach...then they brainstorm who was in church and needs a "hand-up" this week? ...a meal prepared?...someone who needs a ride to a doctor's appointment? ... a babysitter for an hour or two?..... & Who wasn't in church? who needs a phone call?...a card sent (maybe signed by the group and prayed over!!)?..... a visit?.....

All these "duties" divided up so that those who came for coffee end up with a "mission(s)" for the week. One man may be driving the other guys around for just this week, or helping with the outside ladder work of an elderly widow..... Some of the same people may be there every Monday to get an "assignment," while others who have a few vacation days may only be able to help out this week only on Wednesdays! This is an outreach that hopefully would be a witness to others in our community as to how we do love and take care of each other....

This could break up into smaller groups of:

- birthday card makers and senders!!
- Prayer shawl knitters and delivers
- Cooks/Bakers and deliverers
- Drivers for those who need it
- Unlimited!!!!

On different days and times....Bible Studies ...

Men's...Women's...Couples....Parents....

Studies on different topics....Financial topics...Parenting....

Folks on Sunday leaving church to have Sunday Brunches at local restaurants to have a presence there.... Inviting others to their homes for pot-lucks...

Bonnie Dyer, Feb. 24

Mission Statement:

- 1) Loving God with all our heart and our fellowman as ourselves (Luke 10)
- 2) Loving and serving God and our fellowman
- 3) Telling the old, old story of Jesus and His love

Rita Fry, Feb. 24

We believe God has called us to share God's love with the unchurched of our

community by providing diversity in worship, recovery ministries, and small caring groups.

Charlotte Fraser, Feb. 24

We see every member or Whatcoat being fully equipped to fulfill "The Great Commission."

Jane Maroon, Feb. 24

I envision Whatcoat three years from now as growing, spiritual, friendly church.

More activities in both adult and children's Sunday school, active growing youth group involved with spiritual and serving projects.

Small groups and regular Bible study classes...for spiritual growth, accepting, relational
More special events to bring the whole church (both) services together

Activities to invite other local churches for special events.

Mission projects within our church, locally and out of state for youth and adults

Group activities for young adults (married/single) and older people (couples, widows, widower

Tim Stark, Feb. 25

It all started with my first visit to AA. I knew I needed help and that seemed like a good place to start. I knew I was missing something but didn't know what it was. Then I met my sponsor George. He walked me through the 12 steps and that's when I started looking for God. Something greater than what I already knew. Something that was missing in my life.

It's hard when you don't know where to start looking for something that you can't see. George suggested going to the church that let us use their building to meet. It seemed reasonable, so Sunday morning I got up early and headed to church. I don't know what I was expecting, but it wasn't that. People said hi to me, were friendly but didn't invade my space. It was different than what I remembered from my childhood. I kept my distance because I was not sure if I wanted to dive in here.

I went back again. Someone actually remembered my name. His name was Henry. He welcomed me back and asked me if I wanted some coffee. Well who doesn't I said. After about a month of this, Henry asked me if I wanted to come to lunch with him and some friends after the service. This was a bit uncomfortable since I lost my job (hence the reason for hitting bottom). I told him I would like to but had plans. Maybe next week he said. I agreed and went home.

The following week Henry asked again. I was kind of afraid of that. I decided Henry was an ok guy and told him I didn't have a job and thus money was tight. Lunch would be out of the question. I could see the concern in his eyes. He asked what he could do to help. I joked get me a job. He said he would work on it and that he would pray for me this week. I'm not sure what that would do for me but said thanks.

The next week Henry introduced me to Ralph. Ralph helps people write their resumes 3 nights a week when he gets off of work. He wanted to meet with me Monday night to help me. So Monday night I met with Ralph. Now there is a guy who knows how to write things. I actually would have hired me after he got done helping me. It's amazing how much better I felt about myself just by hearing him write my history. Actually started to think this might actually work.

Then came the interviews. Thanks to Ralph I started getting interviews. They were the opposite of the resume process. They made me feel useless. I had a bad day. I got frustrated. Fell off the wagon. George picked me back up again, dusted me off and said its day one. Lets start over.

This day one was a little easier because of Henry and Ralph. I had something to look forward to on Sunday. Just the friendly conversations helped. Sunday Henry asked me out to lunch again but this time said he was paying. I tried to say no, but he said don't deny me giving you a gift. If you feel bad about it just give it back to someone else when you are able.

I find it hard to believe that I would ever be able to give back but said ok. Lunch was great. I think Henry and I are forming a pretty good friendship. During lunch I asked Henry how could I start giving back. I have time since I am not working but don't have many other resources. He mentioned the church has a food program that runs out of the same building that AA meets in. They need help during the week getting the food set up for the Saturday distribution.

He introduced me to Susan. She runs the food program. Boy is she high energy. She put me right to work unpacking and sorting food. She asked me to come back on Saturday to help with the distribution. I said I don't have anything else going on. Saturday was eye opening. I know I have it bad but I realized I don't have it as bad as some. I think this will be a regular thing for me to do.

Today was a great day. I am now a stock person at Redners grocery store. I am earning money. It was weird how it happened. They were dropping off food for the distribution and as I was helping I was talking to the guy from Redners. He said they were looking

for help and would put a word in for me. It worked. I know it's not a high paying job but I am working. Sunday came and I took Henry out to lunch. My treat I said since I got paid. That made me feel really good.

Today was a tough day. At AA George asked me where I was with my higher power. We talked about what I was doing and was I just going through the motions or really changing. I didn't know what to say. So on Sunday I talked to Henry. He asked what I felt when I was in the church and involved with the programs. I said I feel like a part of things. He said that's the love of God. That's what we share and why we do what we do.

That was the first time I had heard it put that way. I was looking for that life changing moment with the angels singing and I missed it. The God thing was there all along in the actions and time spent with others. I realized I was showing the love of God without realizing it. I realized that when I helped others I didn't judge them I was just happy to help. All of a sudden I understood how God loved me. Being a guy it is hard to admit it but I started to cry. Henry pulled me aside and said I am happy for you. You now see how it feels. Now spread it. That's what we do here.

Dee Waud, Feb. 25

I see a problem with building separate "Churches" within Whatcoat. I like the combined services and we need more small groups so people can meet other member.

I see a church where everyone can feel welcome and all services are welcoming to everyone. I think we need to be ready to help slowly transition from one type of service to another as they age. That may mean a little more tradition in the contemporary service and a little more contemporary in the traditional service. And it may mean another set of services to attract younger members and families.

The new service could be a different time and/or location. I have seen Seeker churches where this is done, but I don't see how they transition from Seeker to member to true disciple. That is the problem and small groups that cross the different groups, plus special activities that include everyone should help.

Communication is the major factor in the future of this church. We get weekly small newspapers that have church info in them and they are free to receive. The Bridge radio channel has programs sponsored by different churches and reaches a lot of people in the area. Postcard mailings for special activities could be sent. There also

needs to be information on all groups that is available to church attendees. I have been amazed to find out that many adults did not know that we had Sunday School for adults! There should be a communications team that gets ALL the information and passes it out as needed by whatever method is helpful.

And we need programs (some of which we have) that are worth bragging about. And we need our attendees to want to brag about their church!!!

Chris Glenn, Feb. 25

Vision for Whatcoat:

Outreach and fellowship for 20-30 year olds

More small groups

The Simpson Center being used more

Sondra Satterfield, Feb. 25

My vision for Whatcoat:

After passionately pursuing Jesus and serving others for 5 years, I would see at minimum an increase in our membership, particularly for Sunday services. We are already known for having a welcoming, loving congregation and "come as you are" atmosphere. So I would see that as only continuing to grow as others seek a place to worship and to call their church home.

As part of the church family growing, we will be seen as helping, serving and loving one another. The word family has lots of implications – people who stick together, defend one another, disagree and argue with one another, and includes both healthy and unhealthy relationships as well as healthy and unhealthy boundaries. All of that is also found in a church family...yet after 5 years of passionately pursuing Jesus and loving one another unconditionally, as Jesus loved us, I would love to see all the impurities of our church family being minimized. We would take on the best parts of a healthy family, allowing others to join the family and be grafted in, as all of us once were when we accepted Christ. We would enjoy unconditional love and acceptance, a place of physical and emotional safety where we are free to be our imperfect Christian selves as we grow in Christ and to be able to work out differences of opinion and expressions of faith. When any one of us stumbles, we are met with love and compassion and treated with respect as we heal, learn and grow from our mistakes and as relationships are restored. We would also be continuing to grow in our knowledge of Christ, increasing our faith, fervently praying for one another, corporately worshipping and fellowshiping with one another

We would also be a family who realizes that anyone and everyone is our neighbor. Passionately pursuing Jesus means being His disciple, learning from Him, following Him and doing as He did. For me, I see that as continuing to grow and develop outreach to whoever is identified as “the least of these” – the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the prisoner, the orphan, the widow, the downtrodden, the low of spirit, etc. anyone who is in need of food, clothing, shelter, a sense of belonging/acceptance and the love of Jesus. Whatcoat would be a place for someone to call or visit, regardless of what their issue might be, because we would be known for being able to meet the need ourselves, or be able to point them in the direction they need to go if we can't meet the need directly. We would also follow up with them, with their permission and as is possible, to provide ongoing prayer and outreach if possible. There are so many directions this could take to be the hands and feet of Jesus, and His eyes and ears as well! We would have so much compassion and love oozing out of our hearts, that we would be a magnet for God. We would have done our homework with preparation and planning, with God's guidance, that we would be able to respond in some way to anyone who called upon us. So all of this would include those reaching out to us and us reaching out to our “neighbors” no matter how close in physical proximity they are to us...shut ins, schools, homeless shelters, nursing homes, prisons, substance use agencies, pregnancy centers, group homes, 3rd world countries, wherever. I know we cannot help every single soul, throughout all the earth, yet we could be a part of reaching many in some way, as we become aware of the needs. God will show us the needs to meet if we have our eyes and ears open, and He will supply us with being able to meet the needs.

That's it in a nutshell from me. I could go on and on....