

Becoming Faithful Disciples

Priority Teams' Summaries flowing from our Strategic Vision
November 15, 2015
First Congregational Church of Western Springs

WORSHIPER OF GOD † STUDENT & FOLLOWER OF CHRIST
WITNESS OF FAITH STORIES † NEIGHBOR TO ONE ANOTHER
AND TO THE WORLD † FORGIVER OF TRANSGRESSIONS
PROPHET & ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
GENEROUS STEWARD OF RESOURCES



BECOMING FAITHFUL DISCIPLES

Five Key Priorities

for exploration, planning and change...:

Team 1 Spirituality

Enrich our Theological Perspectives

Sacrament Workshops-

What makes us a Christian Church? The sacraments are what make the church relevant. They need to be practiced, offered and explained in the context of a loving, authentic, and inclusive community.

Passover Seder-

By celebrating our Hebrew heritage we deepen our spirituality. We can learn a new spiritual practice by drawing parallels between the symbolism in the Seder story and our Christianity today.

Team 1 Spirituality

Sharing our Faith Stories

Writing Workshop-

Your spirituality is a very individual thing that needs time for personal reflection and space to express itself with creativity. Before we can share our stories we must know them. Small groups led in mapping, journaling, focused free form, and dialogue writing, can connect us to the holy spirit and anchor our souls. Then people could share their story if they choose.

Team 1 Spirituality

Explore new ways to deepen our
faith

Lectio Divina-

Learn a new way of reading the scriptures with silence, breath, and meditation. This can be done individually or in groups. God speaks to us through scripture. Lectio Divina provides reflection, response, and rest. We gradually transform from within with this authentic prayer by letting go of our own agenda, and opening ourselves to what God wants to say to us.

Team 1 Spirituality

Integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our Congregational lives

Retreat- Women, Men, PF, Mom retreats at Tower Hill.

Labryinths- Continue to encourage and enhance.

Sunday School Teachers- Personally invite and encourage more members to this great ministry.

PF and Plymouth Place- repeat small group gatherings, growing in faith and sharing together.

Reflection- List of available places and times in our church for private quiet time and personal spiritual growth.

Team 1 Spirituality

Discernment

Discernment Leadership Training-
Committee chairpersons would learn how to bring
the practice of discernment to their small groups.
Daily Reflections- UCC devotionals link, biblical texts
used for sermons announced prior in Gatherings.
Meditation Workshop for Personal Discernment-
Drawing, Writing, Sculpting, and Walking with bible
verse and prayer from the book Grounded in God.

Team 1 Spirituality

Enrich our Worship Experience

Youth Service- Similar to the Peace service last year. Youth give reflections, play music, select topic for worship.

Confessions for Youth- a vital component to personal spirituality and discipleship.

Intentionality for Youth- Mantra for the week reinforced on youth platforms to promote daily reflection.

of Faith

Spiritual Gifts/Interests Tools

GOAL: Explore new opportunities for helping members identify their gifts and call to ministry, at every age.

- Develop recommendations on specific assessment tools and other resources to help members explore their gifts/interests/talents/abilities to serve God.
This initiative has overlap with other teams' recommendations of assessments/tools.

Team 2: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith Discernment Awareness

GOAL: Practice discernment in all forms and forums of decision-making.

- Develop a working list of practices, actions and opportunities for discernment at FCCWS.
- Enhance guidelines for committees around the use of discernment.
- Ensure lay leadership practices discernment. *This overlaps with a plan from Team 1, and it will be addressed as part of spiritual vitality in general.*

Team 2 : Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Leadership/ Governance

GOAL

Evaluate and adapt where appropriate our leadership and governance structures and practices to become more efficient, transparent, collaborative, and meaningful.

Team 2 : Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Leadership/ Governance

- Instill a sense of ministry for all who participate, by providing a structure within which that can happen. (A satisfactory experience).
- Assure that the congregation and those within the governing structure are knowledgeable of what is happening in/within the church.
- A lay committee on leadership & governance structure is instituted which would provide continuity (of knowledge) of (a) ministry, (b) operations, (c) programs to ensure engagement and participation of the congregation.

Team 2 : Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Lay Leadership Development

GOAL: Develop means and actions to strengthen lay leadership.

- Create a framework/process for strengthening the development and advancement of lay leaders. (This includes recruiting, orienting and training, supporting, promoting, coaching volunteers to participate in leadership roles in the church.)

Team 2 Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Clergy/ Staff Reviews and Planning

GOAL: Create a process for leadership succession planning for paid staff, both lay and clergy.

- Provide a framework to conduct an organization review and talent reviews on clergy and paid staff
- Develop a clear set of human resources guidelines and practices for the church's staff.

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Overarching

GOAL: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations

- Make a Conscious Connection that by serving others we serve Christ
- Participants gather in prayer before missions and share stories after missions to deepen connections and experiences

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Volunteer Opportunity Tool

GOAL: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations

- Create a Volunteer Opportunity Tool to connect members to social missions
- Online Tool / Database comprehensive; searchable by interest, age, need, volunteer talent, time of year, etc.
- Tool can be leveraged/shared with other Team Initiatives (overlap)

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Volunteer Coordinator System

GOAL: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations

- Create a Volunteer Coordinator System
- Personal Connections key to inspire and engage members and foster growth/increased participation
- Hire / Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator
- Provide Training & Educational Resources to volunteers
- Conduct Volunteer Matchmaking Sessions

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Ongoing Assessment: Partner Organizations

GOAL: Take a deliberately strategic approach to assess the needs of our neighbors and world to discern where our congregation 's passion for justice can be called into action

- Survey Tool to Partner Organizations
- Assess the needs of organizations; intent of church members determine where their passion can be called into action

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Ongoing Assessment: Unknown Needs

GOAL: Take a deliberately strategic approach to assess the needs of our neighbors and world to discern where our congregation 's passion for justice can be called into action

- Ask in as Many Ways as Possible
- Multi-faceted approach to uncovering needs

Team 3 – Put our Faith Into Action in the World

Ongoing Assessment: New Missions & Projects

GOAL: Take a deliberately strategic approach to assess the needs of our neighbors and world to discern where our congregation 's passion for justice can be called into action

- Empower Members to Start New Initiatives
- Tools and resources to take action

Team 4 Priority: Nurturing Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Goal: Ensure that all pledge campaigns effectively engage the generosity and support of all members

Add a dedicated Stewardship Committee

Include a time/talent ask in the annual pledge campaign

Individually thank donors and ask what church can do for them

Include giving guidance in pledge campaign
materials

Team 4 Priority: Nurturing Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Goal: Increase financial transparency and talk openly about our resources, our needs and our aspirations

- Create bottom s up budget process

- Provide more transparency on where dollars are going.

- Provide more color and detail on impact of dollars

- Present budget/financials in new/supplemental format

- Provide visible and repeated tracking of budget to actual

Team 4 Priority: Nurturing Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Goals

- Define and communicate more clearly the meaning of membership
- Continue to love nurture, teach and support our current members that they may deepen their faith
- Actively invite and welcome new members into our congregation

Team 4: Nurturing Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Connect/ Ask

Contract professional church website firm to
oversee all social media

Add membership heading to website

Add our all-church survey/ activities to website

Add young adults to email list

Assign sponsor sooner

Team 4: Nurturing Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Encourage Committees/Groups to

Identify new member liaison

Provide Sunday School teacher with kids
schools/town

Add social adult fellowship to Families in Faith

New Members

Identify 1-2 areas to become involved

Pair new with sponsors at church

Have new member class participate in service
project together

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

Goals:

- Increase and enhance our communication with one another and those who do not yet know us
- Create ongoing and regular opportunities for open conversation among and between members
- Develop and introduce new standards for genuine and transparent communication
- Promote use of the latest technological methods of communication

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

Five Action Plans:

- Church Technology Committee
- Group Communications Liaisons
- Forums
- Social Committee

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

CHURCH TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

- Committee of 6 – multi generational (to include at least one PF'er or high school student)
- Manage the church's technology budget
- Lead continuous review of latest technological methods
- Work closely with the church's IT provider and give support to the church staff member responsible for technology
- Advantage: Constant, growing, effective, intuitive use of technology church-wide

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

GROUP COMMUNICATIONS LIAISONS

- One person on each church committee and on each church group
- Collaborate and communicate with the Church Technology Committee and vice versa
- Communicate with the church Office Manager (keeper of the all church calendar)
- Advantage: Facilitate the disseminations of information between and among committee and group members. Greater transparency and information. Increased awareness and therefore, greater participation and community.

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

FORUMS

(An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages)

- Each church committee and each church group would have their own Forum
- Each Forum would be accessible on the church website and each Forum would be accessed easily and have the same look and feel
- Advantage: Allow members a way of communicating internally. Allow those from outside the membership of that committee or group a way of learning what that committee or group does

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

- Ensure regular / ongoing opportunities for continued shared fellowship and service
- Encourage regular smaller ongoing events for members to get together
- This group would also encourage and coordinate events hosted by other groups and committee
- Advantage: Encourage regular all-church activities

Team 5 – Deepen Our Connections

MOMENTS FOR PASSION

- A chance for church members to share what the church and/or a committee or group means to them
- A few moments during the church services, monthly
- Advantage: Inform the congregation about groups and committees and increase transparency, therefore, greater participation

Go Make of All Disciples let us sing together

Verses below:

"Go make of all disciples:" we hear the call, O Lord,
That comes from you, our Father, in your eternal Word.
Inspire our ways of learning through earnest, fervent prayer,
And let our daily living reveal you ev'rywhere.

“Go make of all disciples:” baptizing in the name
Of Father Son and Spirit from age to age the same
We call each new disciple to follow Thee O Lord
Redeeming soul and body by water and the Word

Go Make of All Disciples let us sing together

"Go make of all disciples:" we at your feet would stay
Until each life's vocation accents your holy way.
We cultivate the nature God plants in ev'ry heart,
Revealing in our witness the Master Teacher's art.

"Go make of all disciples:" we welcome your command;
"Lo, I am with you always." We take your guiding hand.
The task looms large before us. We follow without fear.
In heav'n and earth your power shall bring God's kingdom here.

Amen.