

Strategic Vision Action Plans, 2016

Group 1	Explore and Develop Our Spirituality	In Brief
1.1	Daily Reflections	Daily devotions on email
1.2	Place for Reflection	List places for daily reflection
1.3	Yeast, Leaven Meditation Workshops	Meditation workshops
1.4	Contemplative Services	9-15 times a year
1.5	Spiritual Life Assessment and Pledge	Assess, pledge, progress
1.6	Sharing Faith Stories Small Groups	Lectio Divina inspired
1.7	Passover Seder	Seder every three years

1.8	Workshops on Sacraments	Baptism, Communion, 3 yrs
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1.9	Youth Centered Service	Deepen faith for youth, PF enabled
1.10	Spiritual Writing Workshop	Expand faith, writing workshops
1.11	Discernment Leadership Training	train all lay leaders to use discernment

Group 2	Life as a Renewed Community of Faith	
2.1	Assessment Tools	Tools for members explore gifts/talents
2.2	Leadership and Governance Structure	Evaluate and adapt leadership/governance structure
2.3	Practice Discernment	Research ways to improve
2.4	Lay leader Development	Research ways to improve

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2.5	Org Reviews	Review and develop process for succession, improvement
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Group 3	Putting Our Faith into Action in the World	
3.1	Making Conscious the Connection	Improving the service and mission experience
3.2	Volunteer Opportunity Tool (web)	Make it easy to see, participate in mission
3.3	Volunteer Coordinator System, New Members	Make it easy to see, participate in mission
3.4	Survey Tool Partner Orgs (Mission)	Assess needs of partner orgs
3.5	Ask in as Many Ways as Possible	Multi-faceted ask - who is in need?
3.6	Empower Members to Start Own Initiatives	Train, encourage members to address unmet needs

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3.7	Hire a Volunteer Coordinator	Increase attention, focus with dedicated person
3.8	Training for Volunteers	Make them better sheperds
3.9	Volunteer Matchmaker Sessions	Live sessions adding 3-2

Group 4	Nuture Our Congregation's Vibrancy	
4.1	Connect and Involve New Members	Encourage, track involvement of new members
4.2 & PP	Communication and Outreach Plan	Communicate more clearly the meaning of membership
4.3	Stewardship Ideas	More robust stewardship efforts
4.4	Budget Proposal	Increase financial transparency, openly discuss needs

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Power Point	Who We Are	marketing campaign
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Group 5	Deepen Connections	
5.1	Ongoing, Open Forums for Communication	More, better communication between members, groups
5.2	Moments for Passion	Member testimonials during worship regarding church groups
5.3	Communications Liasons	Facilitate dissemination of information
5.4	Social Committee	Promote ways for increased interaction
5.5	Technology Committee	Increase use of tech, social media

ACTION PLANS (Detailed)

Team 1 Priority- Explore and Develop our Spirituality

August 5, 2015

Initiative Name : Tentative: Daily Reflections (Ref 1.1)

- GOAL**
- Experience, learn, and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our personal and congregational lives
 - Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith
- Who is included?** -Those on church e mail list
- What are specifics?** Daily posts on the e mail site consisting of a message of a spiritual nature. It may vary as to content.
1. A daily devotional such as the StillSpeaking UCC devotional or a link to it can be posted daily. This could be discontinued during the Lenten season so as to not interfere with the much loved Lenten Devotions.
 2. The Biblical texts used for the sermons can be included in the Gatherings when the sermon topic is announced .
- Is it measurable?** Feedback can be collected orally and possibly in written form after a year.
- A. How do we determine success?** Since spirituality is difficult to measure a look at the feedback to determine success.
- B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time?** Feedback as to the content should show ways to expand and amend the posts
- How is it attainable?**
- A. People/Resources required?** Would require the leadership of the staff to approve or change selection of Devotions.
- Posts could be done in the same manner as the Lenten Devotions. (They could be eliminated during Lent as the devotions serve a similar purpose)
- Budget Resources required:** None unless it is necessary to purchase material for the posts.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? Provides one way for development of personal spirituality by providing material for
by making it convenient to access spiritual materials for personal reflection.

Action Plan

Team 1 Priority – Explore and Develop our Spirituality

October, 2015

- Initiative Name:** Places for Reflection in our church (Ref 1.2)
- Goals Addressed:**
- Experience, learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our personal and congregational lives
 - Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith
- Who is included:** Everyone
- Specifics:** List of places where people may go to find time for quiet reflection in our church. This can be posted on the bulletin board and also occasionally in Gatherings
- Measurable?** Yes, when it is accomplished.
- Attainable?**
- A. People Resources—Someone to make a list of available places and post it.
 - B. Budget none except for paper, and possibly posting on church site.
- How is it relevant?** Gives individuals information about places in the church suitable and available for spiritual thought.
- Can it be implemented in a timely way?** Yes
- How does this help us become Faithful Disciples?** Provides opportunity for quiet time and spiritual growth.
- The places may include : The Chapel , The Sanctuary, The Labyrinth, Grounds of the Church
- Issues or Challenges :**
- The church is a busy well used facility. All of these places are sometimes busy and unavailable for quiet reflection or prayer. Individuals will have to search to find one that is available. It is not understood by all members that these places are available for private use during the day if not scheduled otherwise.

Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team __1__

Team: Spirituality

Date: October 7, 2015

Initiative Name: Yeast, Leaven, Culture Meditation Workshop for Personal Discernment (Ref 1.3)

Goals* Addressed:

Learn the practice of discernment and integrate God's Spirit in all we do

Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith

Experience, learn, and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our own personal and congregational lives

Who is included? Adults

What are the specifics?

This workshop would feature meditation exercises using the activities of writing, drawing, walking or sculpting. The participants would take the circumstances of their daily lives into meditation with them. The biblical focus of the meditation would be the following verse from Matthew 13:33. *The Kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.* The group would read the bible verse together, then begin the activity of their choice. The bible verse should be repeated over and over or one or two words should be used throughout the activity. What is God telling me about the circumstances of my life? The walkers would have a prayer ring or clinging cross to hold in their hand as a reminder of Christ's presence. They could walk the whole time or choose to sit and let God's words take root. The Drawers would use 3 pieces of paper and some coloring pens to create their images. Then finish the first, reflect on it and then chose to continue on that page or go to the next page. Enough time should be left so that all three parts could be looked at together. The clay molders would have a lump of clay on a plate and a chopstick for etching. They would express their feelings in clay. Press it, pound it, roll it, shape it, and feel it. Stop and gaze at it. Try to experience this as a prayer. Pause often; be still so that God may mold you. The writers could write a hymn, story or a stream of consciousness passages as a way to meditate on the text and the circumstances they brought to the meditation. The length of time for the activity should be determined by the group.

A second alternative would be to choose one activity at a time for a series of workshops.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? Did the participants feel that the experience enriched their spiritual growth?

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? As mentioned above you could choose a single activity rather than have so many to choose from. You could use the Labyrinth for the walking part. Using a bible verse to be read before the walk begins.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: A small action team with a staff member on it could facilitate the experience.

B. Budget resources required: You would need art supplies, paper, clay, coloring pens, pens, writing paper, and perhaps prayer rings or palm crosses. A budget of \$300.00 should cover the cost.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? It matches with the first 5 bullet points for the Spirituality Group.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, it would only require a small action team that would be willing to implement the plan.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? It gives an opportunity to practice discernment. It is one path to communicate and listen to God. It is one opportunity to deepen our faith.

Issues or challenges: To schedule the workshop at a time that would allow for the greatest positive response.

I used the book *Grounded in God* by Suzanne G. Farnham, Stephanie A. Hull, and R. Taylor McLean as a resource for this workshop.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team 1- Spirituality

- Team:** Explore and develop our spirituality
- Date:** October 12, 2015
- Initiative Name:** **9:15 am Sunday Chapel contemplative service 9-15 times per year: Potentially repeated at 5:15 PM. (Ref 1.4)**
- Goal* Addressed:**
- 1) Create new ways to explore and deepen our spirituality together
 - 2) Seek new ways of sharing our faith journeys in community with one another and the world
 - 3) Experience, learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in or personal and congregational lives.
 - 4) Continually enrich our worship experience, experimenting with different types and styles of worship.
 - 5) Develop means and actions to strengthen lay leadership development for all ages
- Who is included?**
- 1) All church members above age 12 who wish to participate.
 - 2) A core of 3-4 members to design the programming for the 9-15 contemplative services in the chapel each year.
 - 3) Minister staff to provide feedback on scheduling and on themes for the contemplative services.
 - 4) If there is interest from PF adult leaders and PFers, it is possible to offer a repeat of this service at 5:15 pm the same Sundays.
- What are the specifics?**
- Major goal: create a regular worship opportunity that is:
- 1) integrated into members existing habits to gather on Sundays
 - 2) Distinctly focused on small, intimate contemplative practices such as Taize, Lectio Divina, Ignatian Daily Examen and Centering Prayer.
 - 3) Potentially attractive to a younger demographic that is, according to national statistics, are not attending church as frequently as prior generations
 - 4) Potentially attractive to those members who are not always invigorated by the well-established pattern of the Sunday sanctuary service.
 - 5) Member-led with feedback from minister liaison on themes for worship.
 - 6) Holds the opportunity to create a new fellowship community among regular attendees.

Our normal Sunday worship in the sanctuary is wonderful and satisfies hundreds of people, yet there are members of our congregation that draw closer to God's spirit more readily in contemplative settings. Over the past decade, our church family has been introduced to a number of contemplative practices that a small but clusters of members find satisfying. These practices include Taize service, Lectio Divina, Centering Prayer, the labyrinth walks and the Rest within the Rush Advent series.

There is evidence that these practices satisfy a need. One example is the past two years of 8 am Easter services in the chapel have drawn more than 25 attendees.

This Action Item proposes to offer a regular contemplative worship service while taking advantage of member's habits of gathering on Sunday mornings. Those participating in the contemplative worship would begin in the Sanctuary for the opening hymn and announcements, then retire to the chapel when the children are called forward for first steps. Following a 45 minute contemplative service, those in the chapel would rejoin those who attended the Sanctuary service for the post-service fellowship.

This format will allow those interested to choose (or experiment with) the contemplative service, while keeping a connection with the larger community in the Sanctuary service. A wonderful potential linkage to the Sanctuary service may be reading the weekly pastoral prayer in the contemplative service.

Our chapel is a very suitable spot for a gathering of 6-25 persons. 9:15 to 10 am Sundays should be a time for relative quiet in the hallways outside the chapel, but for the passing period for Sunday school.

The intention is for these services to be member-led, with ministers as a resource for developing themes for the services. It is not realistic to add this new service to the minister's already full set of responsibilities, but the ministers do have insights on the themes for the sanctuary services and knowledge of other resources for worship planning.

The intention is for these contemplative services to be offered 9-15 times per year. The dates should be established in consideration of other events on the church calendar, perhaps some on dates the choir is not performing, to allow choir members to participate.

Also, this worship format may be attractive to young adults and adolescents. A meaningful number of young college graduates are involved as PF leaders and come to our church on Sunday evenings. If there is sufficient interest (5-8 people) the contemplative service could be repeated at 5:15 or 5:30 pm for PF adult leaders, PF members and other members of the church and community. This action item may be a response to the Pew Center research that identifies an increasing percentage of the US population seeking a spiritual connection, but who feel that "church" won't satisfy their need.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? A successful outcome will be if two years after starting these services, there are (a) at least 3-4 members actively involved in planning and programming these services and (b) an average of at least 8 members are attending each service and (c) attendees outside the core planning and programming group are participating in the design and format of at least half of the services.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2, 3, etc.? The format can be expanded to more than 9-15 weeks. The format of contemplative services could either offer a changing variety of new formats, or settle into two or three repeating formats. New attendees could "try it out" within the context of their regular habits of visiting 1106 Chestnut Street.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

1. Requires at least 3-4 members actively involved in planning and programming these services.
2. requires some advising from minister staff on themes and formats.
3. Requires coordination in scheduling the chapel space.
4. Requires coordination in communication through Gatherings, weekly emails and announcements during the Sunday sanctuary service.

5. Potentially this Action Plan item could be supported by the Christian Ventures committee

B. Budget resources required: Minimal

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

This action item addresses two elements of our mission:

1. To worship together in wonder and faith
2. To share our stories of faith with one another.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Yes, the first chapel contemplative services could be implemented within 25-30 days after endorsement from the Strategic Planning committee. One church member has indicated willingness to participate in the 3-4 persons that plan and program these services.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

This action item addresses these elements of discipleship

- Worshiper of God
- Student and follower of Christ
- Witness of faith stories

Issues or challenges:

Issues and challenges include:

- Maintaining energy and commitment among the 3-4 person planning and programming group.
- Will this format meet the needs of members or draw new membership to the church?
- Will there be some stigma or resistance to a "competitor" to the Sunday sanctuary service?
- Will PF adult leaders and PF members be willing to spend more time on Sundays to add this service to their current investment in PF?

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team 1- Spirituality

Team:	Explore and develop our <u>spirituality</u>
Date:	October 9, 2015
Initiative Name:	Annual Spiritual Life Assessment and Pledge (Ref 1.5)
Goal* Addressed:	1) Create new ways to explore and deepen our spirituality 2) Seek new ways of sharing our faith journeys in community with one another and the world 3) Learn the practice of discernment and integrate God's Spirit in all we do as a faith community.
Who is included?	All church members above age 10, with a focus on youth and adults. Minister staff to support explaining this initiative to the congregation

What are the specifics?

Major goal: create an expectation among members that regular and life-long spiritual reflection and development are a normal elements of membership in FCCWS.

Three part method: Assessment, pledge, and focused period for progress during Lent..

Part 1: Assessment: In an annual cycle paralleling the annual financial pledges, provide members a "spiritual assessment inventory" and ask them to discern areas for spiritual growth over the following year.

Part 2: Members make a pledge to themselves for activities to grow spiritually in the following year. Make this pledge in written form (generally anonymously) and submitted with financial pledge.

Part 3: During Lenten period, minister staff, newsletters and weekly emails will ask congregation to (a) consider again their pledges for spiritual development and (b) their progress or blockages to progress.

Implementation will need a small 3-4 person task force to choose (discern):

- A spiritual assessment tool for our members, modifying one or more of the scores that are available on-line (one that appears reasonably appropriate is from the web site of St. Peter UCC in Havertown, PA)
- To assist members to create their own spiritual growth plan, provide an initial inventory of potential paths and methods for growth (examples: committing to a regular time of reflection; attend Adult Ed monthly lectures, deepen volunteer work, attend parenting seminar, attend Bible study, etc.)

For two or three weeks during the annual pledge season at Sunday worship, provide envelopes and stamps for members to address to themselves. Insert spiritual development pledge in envelope, collect them in Sunday offering with the pledges to be mailed back to congregants just prior to the Lenten season.

The expectation of responsibility to make a pledge for spiritual development can be reinforced by references to the expectation in various church small groups and fellowship groups. For instance, a gathering prayer that mentions something like “All of us seek in our paths, to more clearly follow your teachings”

Furthermore, during one or more Sunday Lent services, a church member (or minister or child) could speak about what they found important for them to work towards and speak to their current spiritual development pledge

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

(1) Number of members that return a “spiritual growth pledge” - perhaps 40% -60% of Sunday worship attendees

The following two criteria are not reasonably measurable.

(2) The number of new people joining Bible studies or attending Adult Ed seminars – asking why they came.

(3) Whether this initiative seems to create some chatter between members that opens up greater sharing of our faith journeys.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

The general thrust of this initiative can be modified with any number of permutations in the future.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

Implementation will need a task force to create (discern):

A spiritual assessment tool for our members, modifying one or more of the scores that are available on-line (one that appears reasonably appropriate is from the web site of St. Peter UCC in Lancaster, PA)

To assist members to create their own spiritual growth plan, an inventory of potential paths and methods for growth (examples: attend Adult Ed monthly lectures, deepen volunteer work, attend parenting seminar, attend Bible study, etc.)

Will also require some pulpit/ lectern time at Sunday services during pledge and Lenten seasons

Will also require some mentions in Gatherings and weekly emails during pledge and Lenten seasons

B. Budget resources required:

Will require roughly \$350 per year for stamped envelopes provided at services for members to self-address to have their spiritual development pledge return to them.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

This proposal addresses the following statement in our strategic plan: “We seek additional opportunities to deepen our spiritual journey and continually integrate our faith into all aspects of our lives”

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

A truncated version of this can be prepared perhaps for the 2016 January semi-annual meeting, but definitely prior to Lent 2016. A full version can be implemented for the Fall 2016 pledge cycle.

Issues or challenges:

Given the wide range of views within our congregation, with various conceptions of spirituality and God, good thinking will be needed to develop an assessment tool that resonates with a wide range of the congregation. Perhaps different assessments would be appropriate for children, youth and adults.

Very Preliminary Start to what the Spiritual Assessment Inventory might be

Here is a preliminary version of what is envisioned for the Spiritual Assessment Inventory. Will be modified substantially with input from others.

The following statements can provide you an opportunity to examine your spiritual journey as a follower of Jesus. Consider the current state of your life with respect to each question. Ask whether you are “highly satisfied”, “OK, but could improve” or “highly dissatisfied” with your current state. Your answers will help identify areas that are ripe for your spiritual growth over the next year.

After completing this assessment, you will have excellent input to outline your plan for spiritual growth over the following year. We are hopeful you will share portions of your assessment and your growth plan with people you trust and admire ask them to hold you accountable to your plan and keep you in their prayer.

Relationship to Self:

I feel good about who I am and I have a reasonable balance of (a) personal accountability and (b) forgiveness for my normal human shortcomings and frailties.

I feel hopeful and have positive outlook for my life.

I can readily identify my life’s most important commitments. I make commitments and follow through.

I can clearly state a purpose for this stage of my life. I find this purpose fulfilling.

My purpose for this stage of my life is consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

Relationship to Others

In my daily life, the way I treat and view other people is consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

When I harm another person, I am quick to confess and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. I forgive others when their actions harm me.

I am known as a person who speaks words of kindness to those in need of encouragement.

My emotions are appropriate for the circumstances I encounter frequently in my life. When I am angry, I can control what I say so as to not hurt others or myself.

There are a number of people in my life that understand me at a deep level, who respect my values and what is important to me.

Relationship to Community and World

I help others and expect nothing in return.

My lifestyle choices are substantially influenced by their effect on the world and its peoples. My lifestyle choices are substantially influenced by the teachings of Jesus.

My principal occupation and the way I conduct my work are congruent to my life purpose and with the teachings of Jesus.

I participate in service work for the poor and needy, both in my community and in the world, to an extent appropriate for my talents and resources.

Relationship to God and the Teachings of Jesus

My life has regular and consistent rituals that allow me to reflect on the actions of my daily life in the context of my life purpose, my values and the teachings of Jesus. Such rituals would include worship, prayer and meditation.

I use prayer throughout my day, prayers for thanksgiving, confession, praise and requests.

I can clearly articulate what God/ the Eternal Being/ the Divine Spirit means for me.

I am regularly engaged in additional learning to enrich and deepen my view of God/ the Eternal Being/ the Divine Spirit.

I have a strong knowledge of the teachings of Jesus.

I am regularly engaged in additional learning to enrich and deepen my understanding of the teachings of Jesus.

I use the teachings of Jesus as a guide for my daily life.

Spiritual Health vs. Spiritual Atrophy

- Hope
- Positive Outlook
- Forgiveness, Self-Acceptance
- Commitment
- Meaning and Purpose
- Clear Values
- Sense of Worth
- Peace

- Emptiness
- Anxiety
- Self-Judgement, Condemnation
- Apathy
- Loss of Meaning
- Conflicting Values
- Needing to prove oneself
- Hurried or harried

- Worship, Prayer, Meditation

- Without rituals that touch me.

Table taken from **Seeking Your Healthy Balance** by Donald and Nancy Tubesing, with grateful acknowledgement to Deb Stankiewicz for identifying this resource for our committee.

Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team __1__

Team: Team 1 Priority: Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world.

Date: July 30, 2015

Initiative Name: *Everyone Has A Story to Tell-God Is Still Speaking to Us through The Scriptures (Ref 1.6)*

Goal* Addressed:

--Create ways to explore and deepen our spirituality together and enrich our theological perspectives.

--Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world.

Who is included? School age to older adult

What are the specifics? Provide structured small group opportunities for individuals of different ages to share their faith through the process that is Lectio Divina. Lectio Divina invites us to both receptivity and action. "**Lectio Divina**", a Latin term, means "divine reading" and describes a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us. There are various ways of practicing Lectio Divina either individually or in groups. Silence, breath work and meditation are part of the process. This is a form of praying and sharing the scriptures that can be used as an individual spiritual practice, as well as, in small groups. It is a catalyst for sharing one's faith stories and for deepening individual faith. It works best when there is a degree of intimacy and/or connection between group members with the end result often being an increase in that intimacy and connection.

According to THE ORDER OF CARMELITES - www.ocarm.org, the fundamental process is as follows:

- "The first stage is **Lectio** (reading) where we read Scripture, slowly and reflectively so that it sinks into us. Any passage of Scripture can be used for this way of prayer but the passage should not be too long.
- The second stage is **Meditatio** (reflection) where we think about the text we have chosen and ruminate upon it so that we take from it what God wants to give us.
- The third stage is **Oratio** (response) where we leave our thinking aside and simply let our hearts speak to God. This response is inspired by our reflection on the Word of God.
- The final stage of Lectio Divina is **Contemplatio** (rest) where we let go not only of our own ideas, plans and meditations but also of our holy words and thoughts. We simply rest in the Word of God. We listen at the deepest level of our being to God who speaks within us with a still small voice. As we listen, we are gradually transformed from within. Obviously this transformation will have a profound effect on the way we actually live and the way we live is the test of the authenticity of our prayer. We must take what we read in the Word of God into our daily lives."

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? Success could be measured by continuity in participation and feedback from participants.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2, 3, etc.? Lectio Divina groups could be developed around the various topics involved in the individual development of theological perspective such as: relationship with God; loving self and neighbor; human dignity/equality; suffering/meeting adversity/dying well. They could also be developed for the ages/stages and challenges of life through which faith grows such as: growing into through childhood, adulthood; middle age; old age; parenting; marriage; grief; chronic illness.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Designated leaders/team from staff or lay member
- Leaders should be trained in and experience the Lectio Divina process prior to leading small group
- Consistent meeting time, duration (length 1-2 hours), cycle 6-12 weeks

B. Budget resources required:

- Written scripture handout with Lectio Divina process instructions
- Comfortable meeting room with table/chairs
- Light refreshments such as water/coffee

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? Implementing this initiative touches on all of the bullet points in our charge.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Definitely! Training of facilitators could be done in a few meetings. Plans could be developed such small groups as soon as Spring of 2016.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- By **witnessing** to one another about our personal faith and personal lives and how God speaks to us about those lives through scripture.
- Sharing our lives in the context of scripture allows us to become **students and followers of Christ**
- Because of personal sharing, such groups can become naturally supportive allowing us to be **Neighbors and companions to one another**

Issues or challenges:

- Already busy lives often cause members to opt out of additional gatherings/meetings
- Discomfort in sharing of personal lives or personal faith might deter some from joining

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team __1__

Team: Team 1 Priority: Explore and develop our spirituality

Date: June 18, 2015

Initiative Name: Passover Seder (Ref 1.7)

Goal* Addressed:

- Create ways to explore and deepen our spirituality together and enrich our theological perspectives.
- Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world.
- Continually explore ways to deepen our faith.
- Experience, learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our congregational life.

Who is included? Children 2nd grade and older, members and nonmembers, families, singles

What are the specifics? A Passover Seder meal every 3 years on Palm Sunday (making sure it does not coincide with spring break) to celebrate our Hebrew heritage as a church community.

Is it measurable?

- A. How do we determine "success"?** Attendance over time is measurable especially as multigenerational people participate
- B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?** A review of numbers, recipes and customs is easily tweaked to update. Expansion would be limited to the number of people who can be served in Plymouth Hall.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Requires marketing communication online, from the pulpit, bulletin boards, etc. This event will require reservations.
- Requires a designated point person or small committee to recruit volunteers.
- 5 to 6 volunteers to prepare food, some the day before.

- 5 to 6 volunteers to set tables (youth and/or older children can do this)
- Elementary aged children to prepare Seder plates perhaps during the 10:30 Sunday school hour.
- Overall leader (could be Alan Becker who has done this before and does a good job of drawing parallels between the symbolism in the Seder meal/story and our Christianity today. Clergy could also fill this role.
- 5 volunteers for clean up.
- Staff to put up and take down tables and chairs.

B. Budget resources required:

- Cost of food may be covered by a free will offering with any profit going to a designated charity.
- Additional janitorial services ?
- 12 Haggadah booklets (one per table)\$20 to \$25 each. These could be reused many times.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? By celebrating our Hebrew heritage as a worshipping community, we cover the first 4 bullet points of Team 1's charge.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, if the next Palm Sunday does not fall during Spring break. It could be done on another Sunday but it works very well as an intro to Holy Week.



How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- Enriches our theological perspective
- Enhances our faith experience by sharing a great story of our faith (the Exodus)
- Provides an opportunity to experience and learn a new spiritual practice

Issues or challenges: None that are significant.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Action Planning Tool - TEMPLATE

Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team __1__

Team: Team 1 Priority: Explore and develop our spirituality

Date: June 20, 2015

Initiative Name: *Family/Multi-generational Workshops on Sacraments (Ref 1.8)*

Goal* Addressed:

--Create ways to explore and deepen our spirituality together and enrich our theological perspectives.

--Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world.

--Continually explore ways to deepen our faith.

--Experience , learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our congregational life .

Who is included? Children 2nd grade and older, members and nonmembers, families, singles

What are the specifics? 2 to 3 hour workshop sessions, one on baptism and one on communion with different age level activities for part of each session. Each session would include a simple meal. Ideally, these two specific topic workshops would run on a three-year cycle with a Passover Seder making up the third program of the cycle.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? Difficult to determine because the potential target audience for these ongoing programs will likely change every three years.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? A review of numbers and content would be necessary to better identify what works best and kept on file for the next time a program shows up in the rotation.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

--Requires marketing communication online, from the pulpit, bulletin boards, etc. This event will require reservations.

--Requires a designated point person or small committee to recruit volunteers.

--2 to 3 volunteers to supervise children's part of program.

--2 to 3 volunteers to set tables (could be done by children).

--Clergy staff to help develop curriculum with a small committee of volunteers.

--1 clergy leader for each workshop.

3 volunteers for clean up--

--Staff to put up and take down tables and chairs.

B. Budget resources required:

--Cost of food may be covered by a free will offering with any profit going to a designated charity.

--Additional janitorial services ?

--Communion wafers, supplies to make/bake unleavened communion bread, grape juice.
(No supply needs come to mind for baptism workshop).

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? These programs touch on all of the bullet points in our charge.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Plans could be developed and implemented for either workshop by Spring 2016.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

--Enriches our theological perspective

--Enhances our faith experience by sharing Bible stories and current practices with the sacraments.

--Provides an opportunity to better understand things we practice in church.

Issues or challenges: Finding time and talent to develop curriculum. Staff would need to be involved to make certain that UCC and 1st Congo traditions are highlighted appropriately.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal* for Priority Team 1

Team: Explore and Develop our Spirituality

Date: 9/28/15

Initiative Name: Deepening faith for our youth (Ref 1.9)

Goal* Addressed: Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith

Who is included? Middle and High School Ages

What are the specifics?

Youth centered service – Youth playing the music, giving the reflections, selecting a topic they are passionate about (fellowship? Community?) Perhaps involving youth not directly related to the church to play music. Similar to the peace service last year. Non-traditional music mixed in with more Christian specific songs. This could be valuable simply in having them define what worship actually is in their own minds. Depending on the interest it could also be intergenerational if the youth want that. All would be welcome at the service itself, not just youth. We could also expand it into other forms of artistic expression including but not limited to poetry, spoken word, paintings/drawings or dancing. Perhaps factoring the spectrum activity into the service could also serve not only to promote vulnerability for youth but for adults who may be unfamiliar with such as activity.

Confessions for youth – Writing confessions on a piece of paper and burning them. This would emphasize vulnerability with one another and vulnerability before god. Simply the act of writing something down can help release the burden of guilt. This could also be in conjunction with a labyrinth walk as a time for reflection afterward. In order to warm the youth up to the idea we would start with very ‘light’ confessions and people would be welcome to share them after writing them down. We would then move to a more medium level of intensity and people would still be able to share if they wanted to. The adults and officers would model the degree of intensity expected. The final round will be the ‘heavy’ round in which no one shares their confession and the slips of paper are burned. This activity will promote an awareness of our brokenness as people and that a major part of the Christian community is we love and accept each other in spite of this brokenness.

Intentionality for youth- Foster intentionality through utilizing the platforms in which youth prefer. At the end of the PF meeting, in addition to a short prayer/reflection we can additionally add a mantra of sorts for the week (ex. Be still and know that I am God, God give me strength, through you all things are possible, I’m third, etc.) This mantra will be reinforced on several platforms by both the adults and officers (groupme, facebook, Instagram, email) throughout the week to promote daily reflection. This will ideally remind the PFers to be intentional about a short simple phrase and how it plays out in their lives. The following meeting individuals in the group will be invited to share what the phrase did for them over the past several days. Furthermore, the mantra can be a question to invite reflection and due to the sometimes inconsistent nature of the meetings the phrase or question may last longer than one week so that everyone is able to reflect on it that wishes to.

Is it measurable? Yes, these events either happen or they don't.

A. How do we determine "success"? I believe 'success' for this year would be simply integrating these activities into the annual schedule for PF. Following the events the adult leaders as well as the high schoolers can reflect on what worked, what didn't and how we can improve these activities for the following year.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? By constant communication between the officers, Tilden and the adults to see what is adding to the overall PF experience and what is not. From there if it is successful we can continue to expand it but if it is not then we can revise what was in place based on feedback.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

Mike Tilden, PF adults and officers. Laura, Mike and Grant can work together on implementing these things.

B. Budget resources required:

No funding would be needed unless we need some for the youth service.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

From the mission statement: To Worship God together in wonder and in faith, To connect the stories and truths of scripture with our daily lives, to open our lives to the transforming power of god's love, to be generous and thoughtful stewards of all of God's gifts, and to welcome all people as children of God.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

The weekly prayers can be implemented in the coming month, the confession exercise in the coming month although it may work better later in the year. The youth service may need some time for planning and recruiting.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

Worshipper of God, Witness of faith stories, forgiver of transgressions, generous steward of resources

Issues or challenges: The primary challenge I see is youth buy-in. If they do not have passion about the activities they will not be successful.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Conversation Points

Faith: strong belief in god or in doctrines of a religion based on spiritual apprehension (grasp, understanding) rather than proof.

Etymology: to trust

This is a complex issue at our church because everyone's faith looks different, part of our church's draw for many is that a 'strong' belief is not required.

It is our nature to demand proof for things. It is how our legal, medical, political and economic systems are set up. So how do we be more open to spiritual understanding?

Perhaps we do this through letting ourselves be vulnerable, through confession or at least being honest with God and ourselves. We can also be more open to spiritual understanding through being intentional in how we live our lives.

Action Planning Tool

Initiative to Accomplish Goal * for Priority Team 1

Team: 1 Spirituality

Date: 8/18/2015

Initiative Name: Know Your Story- Spiritual Writing Workshop (Ref 1.10)

Goal* Addressed: Enhance the faith experience of those seeking God by sharing our faith stories and journeys with one another and the world. Who is included? 16 and older

What are the specifics? small groups (less than 9 people) writing workshops held at church Is it measurable? Yes

A. How do we determine "success"? Self-evaluation of participants who completed the workshop.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? Add more groups, add an online option for those who can't attend in person, have an evening for people to read their stories aloud- sharing with others.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Meredith Onion- similar to her previous mapping, Kathryn Price- similar to her previous writing groups, Katherine Pershey- could assist future writers.

B. Budget resources required: None, people could bring their own journals or computers for blogs and teachers could be volunteers. Cost of rental space could be church or off-site destinations that are free, like outside in nature.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? You have to know your story before you can share it.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? YES, Once the leaders were prepared with training the workshops could begin.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? By exploring our Faith Stories

Issues or challenges: Motivating leaders, Getting Participation with already busy people, getting people see the benefit to devoting time

Discernment Leadership Training Workshop (Ref 1.11)

Goals addressed:

- A. Learn the practice of discernment and integrate God's spirit in all we do
- B. Continually explore new ways to deepen our faith
- C. Experience, learn and integrate a variety of spiritual practices in our own personal and congregational lives

Who is included? Church council and staff

What are the specifics?

Use the book *Grounded in God* as a resource for learning the practice of discernment. There would be a series of workshops that will plant the seeds for the branching out of practice of discernment throughout the committees of the church. Over time as people in the community become accustomed to using silence, reflection, non-coercive discourse and consensus, the spirit of discernment takes hold and develops its own momentum. The beginning workshop would be part of an overall fall leadership training with new church leaders/committee chair persons. Part one would focus on discernment listening guidelines. Part two would help prepare a group to practice discernment around an issue.

Is it measurable?

How do we determine success? Did the participants feel that the experience enriched their spiritual growth? Did they learn any practices that could be shared with their group or committee?

How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time – in period 2, 3, etc.? You could choose one topic to discuss before a meeting rather than choosing to cover a group of topics during a half-day workshop.

How is it attainable?

- A. People resources required and point person/team required: A small action team with a staff member on it could facilitate the experience.
- B. Budget resources required: It would be helpful to have additional copies of the book *Grounded in God*.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? It matches with the first five bullet points for the Spirituality Group.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, it would only require a small action team that would be willing to implement the plan.

How does this help us Become Faithful Disciples? It gives us an opportunity to practice discernment. It is one path to communicate and listen to God. It is one opportunity to deepen our faith.

Issues or challenges: To schedule the workshops at a time that would allow for the greatest positive response.

Action Plan 2.1

Team Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Initiative 2.1 (overlap 3.2, 3.3)

Provide 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 Team 3 Goal 1.*

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

Who is included? Congregation – Older elementary through elders

What are the specifics?

Capture current snapshot of how our members are using their gifts/talents within and outside (not necessarily linked with Congo) our church.

Research comprehensive databases at other churches or other organizations, and processes in place to utilize them.

Interview clergy & staff.

Research spiritual assessment tools used by other churches or businesses.

Gather testimonials: "How do you live your life as a child of God?"

Assemble information and prepare proposal/recommendations to steering committee.

Is it measurable? The proposal/recommendations would be measurable. The next project would be implementation.

A. How do we determine "success"? If a recommendation were accepted and implementation was started.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? Depends on the interest of the clergy & congregation.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Requires a committed team of people to coordinate many moving parts. This initiative must be compared/discerned with Team 3's work. There may be church members who may be ideal candidates to help move this along.

B. Budget resources required: Not sure – if it's something we can modify in our own ACS then it might just be volunteer power. Perhaps an intern for some period at \$10-\$15 per hour.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? Becoming faithful disciples.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? If timely means 2-4 years, then yes. If less time, that depends on available financial and human resources and the priority this goal is assigned.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? Perhaps it will help members identify what discipleship is to them.

Issues or challenges: Too many time-consuming high-priority projects, lack of interest, poor communications to create inspiration, lack of an advocate(s), lack of financial or human resources.

Action Plan 2.2

Team Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Initiative 2.2 :

--A sense of ministry for all who participate, by providing a structure within which that can happen. (A satisfactory experience).

--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.

--A clear set of human resources guidelines and practices for the church's staff.

Goal* Addressed: (*Revised goal from original*): Evaluate and adapt where appropriate our leadership and governance structures and practices to become more efficient, transparent, collaborative, and meaningful.

Who is included? A temporary Leadership & Governance research team, comprised of Mark Cloghessy, Zada Clarke and former & current moderators, and clergy if interested and have the time.

What are the specifics?

L/G team would gain understanding of our current church governing structure(s) & practices & compare/evaluate others.

Identify current best practices & trends, experts in the field of NFP leadership & governances. Use an interview/survey document for external research. Key areas: Executive Committee, Staff, Church Council, Leaders of Committees, Ad Hoc/Lay Committees, Individuals

Summarize learning & make recommendations to clergy & church leadership.

Obtain a current HR Guidelines Manual from another UCC church to use as a template for our church's guidelines.

Is it measurable? Yes.

A. How do we determine "success"? Project is completed within at least one year and recommendations are considered and either accepted or rejected. HR Guidelines are published.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? Not sure. As new learning/experiences occur, modifications would be made.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Internal.

B. Budget resources required: Don't anticipate any cost for research. It's possible an expert in NFP leadership/governance may charge a fee. Legal counsel would be required to ensure HR Guidelines were appropriate and enforceable.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? In a tangential way, yes. If the church isn't managed effectively to support discipleship efforts, our mission statement can't be effectively implemented.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Depends on the committee's interest and availability. If positive – 6 – 8 months of research.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? See relevancy, above.

Issues or challenges: Too many time-consuming high-priority projects, lack of interest, lack of an advocate(s) to implement accepted recommendations (if any), lack of support by congregation and/or clergy for possible changes to current governance structure.

Action Plan 2.3

Team Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Initiative 2.3

-A working list of practices, actions and opportunities for discernment at FCCWS.

Enhanced guidelines for committees around the use of discernment.

Ensure lay leadership practices discernment.

Goal* Addressed: Practice discernment in all forms and forums of decision-making.

Who is included? All clergy, lay leadership, committees, congregation.

What are the specifics?

Create a more robust definition/descriptor for what the “future state of discernment” means to us (here at First Congo).

Perform a Gap Analysis on what we define as the future state of discernment and what exists today.

Create a “Quick Hit List” of actions to build discernment practices

Is it measurable? Yes.

A. How do we determine "success"? Discernment activities are evident in most church activities

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? Not sure. Lay leadership & clergy would confirm discernment activities are taking place.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Internal advocates to help lay leadership with processes of discernment.

B. Budget resources required: Some to none.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? It's believed discernment will help with all areas of church leadership and decision making.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? It can be done immediately.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? Helps to live the mission statement.

Issues or challenges: Individual discomfort with the use of the practice.

Action Plan 2.4

Team Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Initiative 2.4

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.)

Goal* Addressed: Develop means and actions to strengthen lay leadership development

Who is included? All who seek to (use their spiritual gifts and) get involved in a leadership role at the First Congregational Church of Western Springs.

What are the specifics? This is a multi-part endeavor to assess where we are in our development of lay leaders, discern where God wants us to be, and discern how to fill in the gaps.

1. Identify the range of current lay leadership roles at First Congregational by interviewing elected, appointed, and ad hoc leaders for the current year; interviewing select staff about their view of lay leadership development and opportunities, and reading our new member materials.
2. Determine what lay leader orientation/training/coaching there is at First Congo to develop and support leaders of all ages, from youth to young adult and older adult, in governance roles, mission roles, teaching, worship, visiting, and other areas.
3. Catalog and assess what gaps there are in training and what opportunities there are to improve training and orientation for those taking on leadership roles within the current structure
4. Identify and explore 3-6 other congregations local or regional, vibrant churches (various denominations) to contact and interview about their range of established and newer lay leadership roles -- and the needs they seek to meet, their "success", the training and staffing and other resource requirements and their lay leadership programs - as well as unmet needs in our church family and with our community neighbors.
5. Analyze where there are unmet needs that for First Congo could address by developing a new lay leader ministry (for example, social action and policy, hands-on healing/visiting,)
6. Develop a set of recommendations and time frame and resource requirements for such new lay leader programs and practices and for orientation/training/education and communication about them on a continuous basis.
7. Determine who/where to house and staff the programs or practices associated with implementing and sustaining the lay leadership development recommendations.

Is it measurable? Not sure. Yes when we have the following:

1. an inventory of current lay leadership orientation/development/training offered
2. recommendations of new areas of lay leadership within First Congo

How do we determine "success"? Very hard...better trained/more "satisfied" leaders? more people choosing to get involved in leadership roles/? new leadership opportunities offered? more people visited/served by lay leaders?

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time?

--In subsequent time periods, we can identify what, if any, additional lay leadership opportunities and training/orientation/coaching we want to offer.

How is it attainable?

- A. People resources required and point person/team required: Need 2-3 volunteers to implement this plan and make recommendations for improving and increasing our lay leadership offerings. Perhaps 3 months to complete.
- B. Budget resources required: None up-front; in phase two, depending on what additional lay leader areas we choose to pursue, money may be required for training materials. Can be volunteer- (lay-) led.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

Helps us evaluate where we are participating in community, living and working to love God and our neighbor in this.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, interviews and research could be done by 2-3 people within a few months.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"¹?

Expanding and deepening the lay leadership roles of those active at First Congregational Church can potentially help us become more faithful disciples as follows:

- using more lay leaders in Sunday worship,
- using more trained lay people to study and lead Bible or book studies on the teachings of
- training people to become comfortable as witnesses of our faith stories,
- using more lay people to do healing/hospital and home visits,

--using more lay people to establish and further mission/outreach needs (loving our neighbor)

--learning how, where to advocate for social justice,

--training and sensitizing all of us to increase our collective time, talents and financial resources in serving God as followers of Christ.

Issues or challenges: People willing to take on the task and make recommendations to staff and leadership

Action Plan 2.5

Team Priority: Live as a Renewed Community of Faith

Initiative 2.5

Provide a framework to conduct an organization review and talent reviews on clergy and paid staff

Goal* Addressed: Create a process for leadership succession planning for paid staff, both lay and clergy

Who is included? Paid staff

What are the specifics?

Step 1: Conduct interviews with FCCWS church clergy and staff to identify:

- a. our current succession plans for clergy, staff
- b. how organization/talent reviews are conducted

Step 2: Conduct interviews with external sources (other churches as identified by steering committee/consultant) as to

- a. how organization/talent reviews/plans are conducted

Step 3: Perform a “gap” analysis on our leadership and succession plans/structure AND seek to discern whether this is working well for FCCWS

Step 4: Create new processes/criteria as needed, as a guideline* for future plans, including:

- a. staff and clergy planning
- b. recruitment and placement
- c. interviewing (both hiring and exit)
- d. shadowing/mentoring
- e. assimilation of new hires

*This is not intended to be a full-blown succession plan template, as we believe clergy and lay leaders (Exec) are already equipped to deal with leadership vacancies and needs. It will be a guideline for ensuring transparent, effective transitions for vacancies and new hires.

Is it measurable? Yes. A set of guidelines will be developed and then used by staff and lay leaders for new hires, annual reviews, assimilation.

How do we determine "success"? Accountability will continue to rest with Exec. unless an HR committee is instituted.

How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2, 3, etc.?

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required? 2-3 volunteers with HR background

B. Budget resources required: none initially

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? keep ourselves vibrant by planning for future clergy/staff needs

Can it be implemented in a timely way? yes

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

Issues or challenges:

Staff and clergy and lay leaders may choose not to accept the recommendations. Overcome this by including them in the development of the recommendations.

¹ A faithful disciple is a:

Student and Follower of Christ

Witness of Faith Stories

Neighbor to One Another and to the World

Forgiver of Transgressions

Prophet and Advocate for Social Justice

Generous Steward of Resources

*"Goal" throughout the document refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision.

Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action In the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Making Conscious the Connection that by Serving Others we Serve Christ (Ref 3.1)

Goal Addressed: #2 Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice.

Who is included? Any individual or group that is engaged in service, mission and outreach on behalf of our church.

What are the specifics? As we seek to help our members identify their gifts and their call to ministry, we believe it is vital that a conscious connection between our Christian faith and the chance to serve others in mission and outreach is created.

Thus, we suggest these actions:

- a) Before individuals or groups undertake a mission experience that they, gather in prayer, or study the Bible together, read a litany in unison, share in Communion or simply join hands and express their gratitude for the opportunity to do God's work in the world.
- b) After serving together or returning from a mission experience, we suggest that participants gather to discuss how the experience has changed them, shaped their faith and deepened their connection to Christ.
- c) We suggest that members share their stories with the church in worship or with any of the myriad small groups of our congregation, and encourage others to "go, in the name of Christ, to the side of those in need."

Is it measurable? It is measurable by anecdotal evidence.

A. How do we determine "success"? We determine success when members begin to comment on how, by framing their mission experience with the language and rituals of our faith, their experience was a deeper and more meaningful one

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2, 3, etc.? This model will always be fluid as groups and individuals will find new ways of preparing spiritually to serve and, after serving, to reflect on the meaning of their experience, and how it has shaped their faith.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: The clergy, volunteer coordinator and mission/outreach ministry should pull together resources, assemble them and make accessible to everyone engaged in service through the church.

B. Budget resources required: No budget impact

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? Without the Christian foundation of our mission and service, we would simply be a secular social service organization. As important as those organizations are, it is essential that, as a Christian church, we remember to claim our faith as the motivating factor for our work in the world.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, it can begin immediately

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? Mission and outreach is the heartbeat of the church. Faith with our sleeves rolled up, is an essential component of Christian discipleship. Yet, as central as mission is to the life of the church, too often we forget to prepare for or reflect on our service experiences with the language, worship and rituals of our faith.

Issues or challenges: The biggest challenge might end up being some members' discomfort with leading prayers or spiritual experiences, as the clergy will not be able to be present at all such moment

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: 10/28/15

Initiative Name: Create a Volunteer Opportunity Tool (interactive tool on the church website) (Ref 3.2)

Goal Addressed: #2: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations

Who is included? All adults and children of our church who would like to get involved in “hands on” volunteer services.

- **What are the specifics?** We would like to create an online tool where people interested in volunteering can see what others are already doing at the church, and join in. This tool will allow people to explore volunteer programs by topic (social justice, education), volunteer demographics (women/ men/ teens/ families), type of organization in need (local/regional/international), special volunteer talents (cooking, teaching, building, gardening), and much more. We surveyed clergy and church staff to create a spreadsheet, which lists 80+ church-related current social mission projects.

The tool will include contact information for the church volunteer currently leading the group, so potential volunteers can get connected. The site will also have a section to describe how church members with a “passion” can start their own volunteer group; will have follow-up to help support such people with “fresh ideas”. A committee will review final project listings with an eye on current social problems to see if we have any gaps to fill; if we find gaps, we will brainstorm how to fill them, and what interest there is in new initiatives.

Is it measurable? Yes. We could start by surveying our church community and asking about their current involvement in church volunteer activities. Once the tool is implemented and marketed, we could use another survey to determine if volunteerism has increased. We can ask for feedback on the tool also.

A. How do we determine "success"? If the number of individuals or households that participate in church-sponsored volunteer activities increases over a one to two year period, that would be considered a success. An increase in the number of non-members also participating would be success.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? Yes. We would like to start with the 80 existing organizations that church members are already involved in, but over time, we would love to see the number of organizations we are supporting grow, based on increased interest in volunteering.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Engage a professional to assist, if the project proves too time-consuming for a skilled volunteer to get it done.

B. Budget resources required: Find a volunteer church member with database and website skills to help us create this tool, and/or talk to other volunteer organizations that have already created a similar tool. If we do not have a volunteer with the proper skill set, a professional should be hired. Exact budget will need to be determined.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? We will work for justice and well-being in our neighborhood, greater community and the world. We will continue to honor our congregation's commitment to empowering poor and marginalized people by emphasizing different local volunteer opportunities and encouraging volunteerism.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Once the tool is created, we already have a list of organizations our members are currently working with.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

It allows us to put our words of faith into action by serving others as Christ did.

Issues or challenges:

Our biggest challenge is creating or finding the technology to create this tool. The second challenge will be marketing that tool so that it is used effectively.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: 10/28/15

Initiative Name: Create a Volunteer Coordinator System: *Engage new members in our congregation's mission and outreach opportunities (Ref 3.3)*

Goal 2 Addressed: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations.

Who is included?

- New members
- New member sponsors
- Mission and Outreach Committee
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Welcome Committee

What are the specifics?

- Mission and Outreach to present volunteer opportunities during new member meetings
- Sponsors will have a discussion with their new member to assess:
 - *What does it mean in our church to serve others in our community, nation and world? How are we more connected to God through service of others?*
 - *How can our congregation help new members? – Any current needs that our new members might have*
 - *How can our new members contribute to our congregation's mission and outreach efforts? – What passions, skills and interests does each member have? How can we use those skills and interests to benefit our congregation and our mission and outreach efforts? What activities or volunteer opportunities would they most like to be involved in?*
- Mission and Outreach committee and Volunteer Coordinator will provide easy ways for new members to commit to volunteer opportunities, by providing sign-up sheets during new member meetings (for more information, or for specific volunteer opportunities)
- Sponsor and volunteer coordinator will serve as continued points of contact for each new member, following up with a phone call after new member meetings to answer questions and provide additional information about volunteer opportunities. The sponsor and volunteer coordinator will also follow up after each new member completes a volunteer activity to reflect on the experience, encourage continued participation, and gather feedback to continually improve our volunteer coordination.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- New members will leave new member meetings with a comprehensive understanding of our church's mission and outreach opportunities, and will have access to:
 - New member brochure: Full list of volunteer opportunities
 - Mission and Outreach contact information
 - Volunteer coordinator contact information
 - Training in online assessment tool and bulletin board sign-up options
- All new member needs and skills will be documented by the Volunteer Coordinator, and provided to the Mission and Outreach Committee
- Each new member will walk away with an individualized list of suggested volunteer opportunities based on their skills and interests
- 75% of new members will take part in some type of volunteer opportunity within their first year as a member

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- Create a sponsor/new member service day where both parties can share in a one-time volunteer opportunity together
- Develop a new member "satisfaction" survey that provides an opportunity for new members to provide feedback and suggestions for how to make our mission and outreach education/volunteer matching better
- Encourage new members to present a Moment for Mission during worship, or give a reflection during a Mission and Outreach committee meeting about the recent volunteer opportunities they've become involved with

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Sponsors: gather information about new members, provide follow-up before and after volunteer service
- Volunteer Coordinator: record information about new members, provide follow-up before and after volunteer service
- Mission and Outreach Committee: Provide education about our current volunteer opportunities

B. Budget resources required:

- Printing costs: volunteer opportunity brochures, sign-up sheets
- Volunteer Coordinator compensation for time spent documenting new member volunteer interests

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

By providing educational materials and easy ways to become involved in volunteer opportunities, we are "better equipping our members for the works of peace and justice." Implementing these tasks would also ensure that we are engaging *all* church members in serving our community and world, and is a strategic way to engage new members into our family of faith.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Mission and Outreach presentations at new member meetings can begin immediately, as well as a more focused conversation about volunteer opportunities between sponsors and new members. The Volunteer Coordinator's responsibilities would be a secondary step, as this position would likely be approved and filled next year.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- "To increase our love of God by increasing our love of neighbor": Show our love of new members by including them in our church's life in fellowship and in service, share with new members how we express our love of neighbor through volunteer opportunities and outreach
- "To share our stories of faith with one another and our community:" Allow Mission and Outreach committee and sponsor to share stories of faith with new members, tell how we as a congregation and individuals give back to our community, and in turn allow new members to share their stories of how they turned their passions and interests into an opportunity for mission
- "To be generous and thoughtful stewards of all of God's gifts:" Better discern what our new member's God-given gifts are, and utilize them to benefit our congregation, community, nation, and world

Issues or challenges:

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Hire/Appoint a Volunteer Coordinator (Ref 3.4)

Goal 2 Addressed: Better equip our members for peace and justice

Who is included?

Volunteer Coordination Committee (to be formed); Clergy/staff liaison; Mission & Outreach Committee; Executive Committee; Finance Committee; Volunteer Consultant (optional)

What are the specifics?

- Based on Volunteer System plan, determine paid/unpaid status of Volunteer Coordinator
- Develop Volunteer Coordinator job description
- If paid position, research marketplace for full or part time status
- Secure financial resources for position and other volunteer system elements
- Recruit for position

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- Consensus agreement by all committees to hire/appoint a volunteer coordinator
- Approved job description
- Recruit volunteer coordinator
- Congregation approves funding for this position

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- Based on Year 1 activity, re-evaluate and adjust, as necessary, the volunteer plan, coordinator's job description and budget
- Expand coordinator's role in community relations with other local churches and non profit organizations

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

Same as above

Point persons: Volunteer Coordination System Chair or Co-chairs & Clergy/staff liaison

B. Budget resources required:

- Funds to fully support an approved volunteer coordination plan (incl salary, office space and computer, lots of donuts & coffee)
- Volunteer Consultant, if needed

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- Fosters discipleship among church members
- Creates pathways for church members to express Christ's message to serve others

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Yes, with appropriate resources

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

By providing people in need with opportunities to change their personal situations

Issues or challenges:

- Determine fit with Mission & Outreach Committee's plans (probably not a big challenge)
- Recruiting the most appropriate Volunteer Coordinating Committee champions/leadership
- Securing financial and other resources

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Provide Training and Educational Resources for all volunteers participating in church and community activities (Ref 3.5)

Goal 2 Addressed: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice

Who is included? Clergy/staff liaison; Volunteer Coordination Committee; Mission & Outreach Committee

What are the specifics?

- Identify/recruit core group of church members and non-profit leadership as “shepherds” to ensure church volunteers are welcome and receive appropriate orientation and training for their volunteer activities
- Develop manual for “shepherds” to guide volunteers
- “Shepherds” conduct periodic follow-up with volunteers regarding their volunteer experience

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- Develop approved orientation, training and education resource plan and manual
- Develop system to follow-up with volunteers to gain feedback about their volunteer experiences
- Develop methods to share feedback with church and community organizational leadership about volunteer experiences

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

Same as above

B. Budget resources required:

Volunteer tracking software

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

Encourages discipleship

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Yes, coordinated within volunteer plan and timetable

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

Gives church members an opportunity for personal development

Issues or challenges:

Recruiting and training "shepherds" to nurture volunteers

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Conduct volunteer matchmaker sessions (Ref 3.6)

Goal 2 Addressed: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations.

Who is included?

- All potential volunteers, but especially those who prefer a personal, rather than computerized, invitation to get involved
- Representatives from mission organizations that we support
- Church members who are currently involved in volunteer organizations
- Team 3 representatives
- Volunteer Coordinator

What are the specifics?

- Not all people are computer savvy or self-starters when it comes to signing up or volunteering
- “Live” sessions will be scheduled (by the Volunteer Coordinator) for after church or on special evenings at least once each quarter. In such sessions, a committee member will be available to show how the website works.
- “Live” sessions will highlight a group leader and/or past volunteers to generate enthusiasm for specific projects (one topic per meeting)
- Sign-up sheets for the given volunteer opportunity will be available for meeting attendees

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine “success”?

- We will have an organized schedule of (at least) quarterly volunteer matchmaking meetings
- This schedule will be easily accessible to church members in the worship bulletin, on the education building bulletin board, on the website, and in Gatherings.
- Meetings will be well-attended (10+ attendees at each meeting)
- Attendees will walk away with:
 - Printed information about the volunteer organization
 - A better understanding of our online volunteer search tool
 - Contact information of the church member who presented and/or the featured volunteer organization

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2, 3, etc.?

- Have more frequent matchmaking sessions (1-2 times/month)
- Encourage featured church members to not only present at these meetings, but to recruit potential new volunteers
- Partner with the Sunday School teachers/children on their 1-2 special theme projects each year
- Choose a mission “theme” for each quarter/year – homelessness, poverty, education, youth, etc.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Team 3 Representative: Available at each meeting to present on how the website works, answer any general questions
- Mission and Outreach presenters: One for each meeting (church member or representative from volunteer organizations)
- Volunteer Coordinator: Schedule quarterly meetings

B. Budget resources required:

- Cost of printed materials/sign-up sheets for each meeting

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- “Better equips our members for the works of peace and justice” by making mission and outreach more accessible to those who don’t have access or prefer not to use the church website to search for volunteer opportunities
- Allows quality, face-to-face interaction between church members and the organizations we support – strengthens communication and educates our church members about available volunteer opportunities in a personal way

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

- Meetings can start as soon as this winter, assuming the following details are in place:
 - Volunteer Coordinator is hired/appointed – create a schedule of meetings
 - Online Volunteer Coordination tool is created
 - Team 3 Representative is chosen and trained in online Volunteer Coordination tool

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- *“To increase our love of God by increasing our love of neighbor”*: Love our neighbors by providing face-to-face education for our church members about current needs in the community/world and what we can do to help
- *“To share our stories of faith with one another and our community”*: Allow church members and organizations we support to share their stories of service, with the goal of involving more volunteers

- *“To follow Christ to the side of all who suffer and despair”*: Create a system that communicates the needs of those who suffer and despair in a conversational, informative way

Issues or challenges:

- Challenge: Coordinating which volunteer group presents each month, ensuring all organizations have an opportunity to ask for volunteers, should they have the need

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 1 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Survey tool to partner organizations (Ref 3.6)

Goal 1 Addressed: #1 Assess the needs of our neighbors and the world

Who is included? All partner organizations, church staff and committee chairs involved with mission work, any church members who wish to contribute time and talent to the development and analysis of the survey tool.

What are the specifics? The tool will be designed to assess the needs of partner organizations with the intent of helping church members determine where their passion can be called into action.

The survey can be used to detail the Online Volunteer Opportunity Tool and face-to-face volunteer “matchmaking” sessions both contact points for service and need.

The survey will assess:

- Description of partner organization’s specific needs
- Training/orientation provided by the partner organization
- Skill set desired from volunteers
- Time commitment requested of volunteers
- Recommended ages suggested for volunteers
- On-site or off-site opportunities for volunteers

Is it measurable? It is measurable by the number of survey responses.

A. How do we determine "success"? We can determine success by the number of satisfied church members who were able to make successful “matches” using the Volunteer Opportunity Tool or the face-to-face “matchmaking” sessions.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

In order to remain current with the specifics of our partner organizations the survey could be revised and distributed to partner groups bi-annually.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: The initiative would require a small team of church volunteers to develop the survey, analyze the results and format the results into a usable form for use in other initiatives such as the Volunteer Opportunity Tool. Input would be desirable from other church staff and committees. We recommend that at least one member of the committee has experience working on previous church surveys. Perhaps we could draw on members who produced the Church Assessment Tool or the (bi-annual?) congregation member survey.

B. Budget resources required: If all work can be done by church volunteers budget requirements should be minimal. If a volunteer can not be found to format the survey results it may be necessary to hire an outside resource for the job.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? The survey will help to specify the needs of our partner organizations and it will aid in better matching the interests, concerns, abilities and passions of our church volunteers with the needs of mission partners.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? As long as questions are kept to a minimum the survey could feasibly be developed, distributed and analyzed within three to four months(???)

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? As Christians we are called to put our faith into action in the world. The survey will help church members to match their desire to follow Christ with the specific needs of our partner organizations.

Issues or challenges: We see two challenges:

- Keeping the survey short to promote participation from our partner organizations.
- Analyzing the results and putting the data into a format usable for the Volunteer Opportunity Tool and the volunteer matchmaking sessions.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Initiative to Accomplish Goal 1 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Ask in as Many Ways as Possible (Ref 3.5)

Goal 1 Addressed: Assess the needs of our neighbors and the world

Who is included? All church members, neighbors, friends and family

What are the specifics?

Inquire on a regular and multi-faceted basis (via emails, letters, handwritten notes dropped in the offering basket, post message on bulletin board, call a member of the pastoral staff, stand up during Joys and Concerns, have lay persons make phone calls e.g. sponsors to new members) who is suffering and in need.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? Needs can be counted, as can the number of different persons sharing

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? We can ask members what other ways needs can be

Identified. We will also want to include a reminder to make sure there is intention in what we are doing.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: An IT person/webmaster to design a drop down box for sharing a need, facilities manager to allocate space on bulletin board, bulletin designer to list primary person on pastoral staff to share the need, ushers to pass out paper slips "I need help with..." for offering.

B. Budget resources required: funds for web design (cost unknown), paper slips (minimal)

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? As we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, we will better be able to do so as we learn of additional needs in church family, neighborhood, city and world.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, it is relatively straightforward and can be implemented immediately. Several of these sharing activities are already being done today.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? It is impossible to address a need, heal a wound, say a prayer, comfort one in need if we're not aware of the situation.

Issues or challenges: None

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Initiative to Accomplish Goal 2 for Priority Team 3

Team: 3 Put Our Faith Into Action in the World

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Empower our members to start their own initiatives if they see a need that is not currently being addressed (Ref 3.6)

Goal* Addressed: 2: Better equip our members for the works of peace and justice, in collaboration with partner organizations.

Who is included? Any individual or group who feels passionate about a cause or social mission, and compelled to start their own initiative.

What are the specifics? As we try to better equip our members to engage in social justice we realize we can only help those who we know need help. We would like to empower our members to feel that if they see a need not already being addressed by one of our current social mission programs, they can start their own project or initiative to address the need they see, or the passion they have.

Is it measurable? Yes, we can track who uses the tools or connections, and if any new programs, projects or relationships with partner organizations start up as a result of it.

A. How do we determine "success"? Success is defined by members knowing that this program exists, and using the tools and resources when considering starting a new initiative.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? In the short term it could be a list of resources as well as a connection to others who have started projects or organizations in the past. Or how members have best partnered with new organizations. If the need grows this could tie in with the volunteer coordinator's tasks.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Very little; someone to gather online resources needed when starting an organization, non-profit, or a project check list, as well as compiling a list of members who have started projects or organizations in the past.

B. Budget resources required: Very little. The volunteer coordinator, mission/outreach team or anyone involved in social justice organizations could share resources useful in starting a new initiative. A list could be compiled of people who have started projects or organizations in the past so connections could be made.

We would want to communicate to the congregation that there's a Mission/Outreach Reserve Fund that could be used to respond to new initiatives. We recognize that things change over time and there are new needs. This allows for timeliness of response.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? It addresses the goal about better equipping our members for works of peace and justice. The new missions could be brand new, or new partnerships with organizations. It helps us make a conscious connection that by serving others we are serving Christ.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes, it can begin immediately. There are a lot of online resources addressing all facets of start-ups that could be compiled rather quickly. A list of involved members, or members who started their own initiatives could also be formed for those who are more comfortable talking with people versus a strictly online approach.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"? It fits with how by servicing others we are serving Christ. It empowers our members into action and to fill a void they may see. It allows them to get involved and not fear starting something new – as others have done before and can help guide them.

Issues or challenges: Making sure members know that this exists. Helping members feel confident that if they feel compelled to start a new program they will be supported by the church.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Team: #4, Nurture Our Congregation's Vibrancy

Date: September 2015

Initiative Name: To connect and involve new members into the church family (Ref 4.1)

Goal* Addressed:

#1 Define and communicate more clearly the meaning of membership and our goal of becoming faithful disciples...

#2 Continue to love nurture, teach, and support our current members that they may deepen their faith

#5 Actively invite and welcome new members into our congregation

Who is included? Everyone!

What are the specifics? See our notes.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

By tracking the involvement of new members and asking if they are satisfied.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

Should be addressed at all times, by all groups, and amended as needed.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

Research and choose a church website firm to oversee our website/social media.

Someone to administrate the online survey when people sign up for an area to participate in.

Someone to collect email addresses of college age-young adults.

A person or group to collect devotionals/quotes/blogs, etc. to be sent.

Every group/committee should assign someone who would be the new member liaison. That person would:

-plan for ways to include new members;

personally invite new members;

-welcome/mentor new members when they do come/participate

B. Budget resources required: ?? \$\$ for website/social media person

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

Nurturing members and seeing that they are involved and feel connected keeps the church vibrant.

Makes more faithful disciples

- of those of us who do the nurturing and
- of the new members who are becoming involved in the life and work of the church.

Can it be implemented in a timely way? Yes.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

Reaching out to include others and getting them involved as part of our church family helps make us more faithful disciples.

Becoming involved and giving of your time is part of being a faithful disciple.

Issues or challenges:

Finding/hiring a professional for our website

Obtaining email list of college-age, post-college, young adults

Creating short devotionals/quotes, blogs, etc., to send to young adults

Creating service projects for new member classes

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Team 4 Priority: Nurture our Congregation's vibrancy

Date:	October 27, 2015
Initiative Name:	<i>Communication and Outreach Plan (Ref 4.2)</i>
Goal* Addressed:	Define and communicate more clearly the meaning of membership and our goal of becoming faithful disciples through ongoing faith formation, prayer and worship for members and nonmembers alike
Who is included?	All ages, members and nonmembers, families, singles, community
What are the specifics?	Develop a strategic outreach and communication plan to help realize the true vibrancy of our congregation.
Is it measurable?	yes

A. How do we determine "success"?

Success can be measured in a variety of ways such as:

- Increase in number of annual visitors to our church
- Increase in number of members and nonmembers participating in church activities and sponsored events
- Increase in church membership
- Increase in annual pledges
- Increase in member retention
- Increase in number of grown children that come back to the church

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

See attached presentation

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Requires full or part-time outreach minister
- Requires a lay person outreach team of two or three members
- Requires computer software CRM with communications plan features

B. Budget resources required:

Annual budget for full-time or part-time outreach minister (This could also be a volunteer position, but we think a paid position will be more effective)
Group of 2-3 talented and willing church members to lead the communication outreach effort

Church already has CRM software
Training on and set up of CRM software

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

This initiative is needed for the long-term vibrancy (spiritual and financial) of our congregation.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

Yes, this project can be implemented at a base level in 1 to 2 months.

Issues or challenges:

NOTE: See slide presentation in complete SVI packet (PDF).

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Team: 4 cont'd

Date: 10/15

Initiative Name: Stewardship Ideas (Ref 4.3)

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

Who is included? All members

What are the specifics? Changes to pledge campaign

1. Consider adding a dedicated Stewardship committee. Responsibility is currently housed within Finance Committee which may be comprised of individuals more financially rather than sales or marketing oriented.
2. Include a time/talent ask in addition to financial support in the annual pledge campaign. Develop a more robust way to reach out to people after the information is received to engage more people in church activities.
3. Consider reaching out to donors thanking them for their donations (time, talent, etc) individually and ask what more the church can do for them.
4. Include a giving guidance in pledge campaign. Compare our giving levels to that of other vibrant congregations? (Can Susan help us here?) Make the levels of giving within the church more transparent? Can we/ do we want to ask for a set %?

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"? Increased involvement of our members time talent and treasures

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.? To be reassessed after each Stewardship campaign

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required: Staff member – perhaps Jeannette, addition of a dedicated Stewardship committee

B. Budget resources required: probably requires staff time – yes, likely one point person on staff and one to oversee coordination

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission? Increasing the support of our members is central to our mission

Can it be implemented in a timely way? yes

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

Issues or challenges:

More educated and targeted giving campaign may be uncomfortable for some members.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



FORUMS

Team #5: Deepen Connections

Team: Deepen Our Connections

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: FORUMS (Ref 5.1)

Goal* Addressed: Create ongoing and regular opportunities / forums for open conversation among and between First Congregational Church members.

Who is included? Church Groups Communications Liaisons and oversight by the First Congregational Technology Committee

What are the specifics? Team#5 recommends a TEST of Forums as there has not been enough time for our team to do this. We also feel that the Technology Committee, we are proposing in one of our Action Plans, should be involved in this test.

It is our recommendation that Forums would be limited to a test group of church groups/committees. It is recommended that the “test” groups be the following: Thursday Morning Book Group, Music Committee, Men’s Breakfast, Mom’s In Faith, the Staff and Team #5.

The thought is that Forums would create regular, open, transparent two-way conversations with church members who are involved in the Group or Committee. Forums would also allow church members who are not members of the groups, to see what the others groups are doing.

Ideally, all Forums would be set up and accessed on the website. It would be important for all Forums be accessed in the same way so members/users don’t have to learn new technology for each group/committee. It would be very important that the use of Forums be as easy and as intuitive as possible.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- More well informed church members
- Fewer conflicts on the church calendar
- More sharing and crossover among committees and groups
- Better informed non-group and committee members, resulting in more participation

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- Eventually, some or all of the Forums would be opened to those outside of the First Congregational membership.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Requires the oversight of the church’s Technology Committee and the group’s and committee’s Communications Liaisons as the monitor of the Forum.

B. Budget resources required:

- Budget monies will be required initially to pay for the set-up of the Forums to ensure:
 - Highest quality look

- Highest quality functionality
- Create Forums that work the same for each Group or Committee

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- Creating Forums that allow Group and Committee and Staff members to communicate more easily and more transparently should encourage greater participation among church members.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

- Yes. It is a matter of finding the right IT partner to set-up the Forums.
- From there the church Technology Committee and the Group Communications Directors will have to take over to train and inform the congregation how and when to use the Forums.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- The more we communicate among the members of the congregation, the more the message gets out and the more our members participate. Thus, deepening their connections within the church, the community and our neighbors in the world.

Issues or challenges:

- Monitoring the Forums
- Keeping them updated, active, correct, and vibrant

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Moments for Passion
Team #5 Deepen Connections

Team: #5 Deepen Connections

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Moments for Passion (Ref 5.2)

Goal* Addressed: Create ongoing and regular opportunities for open conversation among and between First Congregational Church members.

Who is included? Church members and those attending Sunday morning church services.

What are the specifics? Include a “Moment for Passion” during morning worship for church members to share or give a “testimonial” with regard to their participation in a church group or activity. This may also be an encouragement for others to join in as well (similar to those that have been given at Annual Meetings in the past). Examples might include Kaleidoscope, PF, Women’s Book Group, Rummage, etc. The goal would be to make it less of an announcement of details and more of a testimonial about what the group or committee has meant to that member.

This could be an opportunity for those in attendance at the church service to learn more about the various groups/committees and how they impact the members.

Rotate Sundays among the church’s committees and groups.

Pastors may wish to create guidelines i.e. timing, content, format, etc. to ensure this is not intrusive to the overall service.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- More well-informed church members
- Increased participation in a church group or activity

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- Start as a monthly part of worship and expanded to weekly or bi-weekly
- Rotate among the interested church groups and committees

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Requires someone to coordinate the schedule. It would be necessary to explain to each group, committee, and /or event coordinator, what a “Moment for Passion” is and give each a chance to volunteer for a week.

B. Budget resources required:

- No resources required

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- Creating excitement about groups and activities and giving opportunities for a testimonial to be shared - i.e. "I found God through my experience in ____ because of _____ and it has affected my spiritual growth and connection to our community of faith by _____."

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

- Easily

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- Greater communication among the congregation, getting the message out and encourage members to participate and deepen their connections within the church, the community and our neighbors in the world.
- Strengthen our own faith, which will help us spread the word of God.

Issues or challenges:

- Scheduling and identifying a point person to make the "ask" and not having it turn into a sheer announcement but keeping the focus on HOW involvement in the activity is making a difference!

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Group Communications Liaisons

Team #5: Deepen Connections

Team: #5 - Deepen Connections

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: **Group Communications Liaisons (Ref 5.3)**

Goal* Addressed: Facilitate the dissemination of information between and among groups, committees and the congregation at large.

Who is included? One (non-staff) member from each church group/committee, etc.

What are the specifics? One member of each church group/committee will be named "Communications Liaison" and will be responsible for informing other group members (internally), other church groups, office staff, and the congregation at large (externally) about events and activities within their group.

Would report regularly into the Church Technology Committee regarding communications needs / successes/etc. of the committee/group.

Depending how active the various Group / Committee is, we could look into giving each Liaison the rights to make changes on the church website. This kind of access would have to be assessed carefully.

In addition to each of the organized Church Council committees (Outreach, Adult Christian Exploration, Diaconate, etc.), the groups identified to assign a Communications Liaison include the following: M&M's, PrimeTime, Mid-Ships, PF, Jrneys, Kaleidoscope, Woman's Society, Thursday Morning Book Group, Men's Saturday Morning Breakfast, Mom's in Faith, Friday Morning Book Group, Bible Study, Watercolor Class, Families in Faith, Moms of Teens, Choir, Bells, Drums, BYO (Bring Your Opinion), Green Team, Congo Hoops, Preschool, Spirit Worship Band, and others that we have missed.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- More frequent/comprehensive communication
- More cross-group participation
- Fewer conflicts on the church calendar
- More sharing among groups members and the congregation
- Better informed non-group members (about the group - who are the members, what is the group doing, etc.)

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- Expanded to include groups outside of the church

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Requires a Communications Liaison from each church group / committee be appointed.\
- Communications Liaisons should direct newsworthy items/web content to the Office Manager (Meg) for input onto the site/calendar, Gatherings, weekly emails, Facebook page,etc. Just uploading content to the group or committee's site doesn't mean it will get in front of the membership on the all-church calendar.

B. Budget resources required:

- May require funding to pay for additional staff hours if communication needs increase significantly.
- This may also require hiring a part time IT and /or PR - Marketing Consultant to maintain the website and help keep the website updated, vibrant, and useful.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- Deepen connections through detailed (welcoming) information about the groups in the church and the activities of those groups.
- As a result of greater transparency and information, increase awareness and participation.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

- This could be implemented very quickly.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- It increases information, communication and visibility among all of the church groups, creating more openness and, therefore, greater participation.
- Provides more detailed information for the group's members as well as those outside of the group who might be interested in joining, thus greater inclusion.
- Creates more well informed and more active members, creating more sharing.
- Increases community.
- Appeals to a wide cross section of members and eventually could expand to non-members.

Issues or challenges:

- Making sure the Communications Liaisons are diligent in getting appropriate member news visible and current.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision



Social Committee
Team #5: Deepen Connections

Team: #5 - Deepen Connections

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Social Committee (Ref 5.4)

Goal* Addressed:

- Develop and introduce new standards for genuine, open, transparent communication (through shared fellowship/service).
- Create regular / ongoing opportunities for open conversation (through shared fellowship / service).

Who is included? Committee of 6 to 9 multi-generational members nominated. Three year terms.

What are the specifics?

The Social Committee would encourage regular all-church activities. This committee would not run all the events, although they may run some. Instead, this committee would come up with ideas and encourage the groups and committees of the church to sponsor events. This committee would also help them promote the events.

For example, encourage PF to host a Movie Night in the summer.

Is it measurable? Through attendance, yes; but the intangible benefits would be difficult, if not impossible, to measure.

A. How do we determine "success"?

- New relationships forged among members
- Existing relationships strengthened
- Increased sense of community among members, which may result in an increased greater commitment to church and a richer faith life
- Opportunity to serve side by side with other members (in other church groups) and enjoy fellowship at the same time.
- Help promote more inter- generation events.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- The events could included "spiritual" conversation starters, opening or closing prayer.
- Members of the community or a sister area church could be invited / included.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- Committee volunteers, possible custodial help, help with communication. Close coordination with the master church calendar would be important.

B. Budget resources required:

- Could be self-funded through nominal fee for each event / guest.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

- As a family of faith, our members place great value on being in fellowship with others as well as serving those in need. By facilitating more all-church events, members will hopefully get to know each other better, draw closer to each other and become more engaged in the life of the church as a result of those strong connections.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

- This could be implemented very quickly.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

- Creates more well informed and more active members, creating more sharing.
- Increases community.
- Appeals to a wide cross section of members (and perhaps others outside the church).
- A way to engage others in a pleasurable, meaningful way.
- A way to increase inter-generational participation.

Issues or challenges:

- Adequate volunteer support
- Working around our already busy calendar
- Determining success (What success looks like to some does not look like success to others)

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

Church Technology Committee

Team #5: Deepen Connections

Team: #5 - Deepen Our Connections

Date: October 28, 2015

Initiative Name: Church Technology Committee (Ref 5.5)

Goal* Addressed: Promote, across all areas of the church, increased strategic use of the latest technological methods of communication

Who is included? A nominated committee of 6. Three year terms.

What are the specifics? The goal would be to identify a **multi-generational** committee members (to include at least one Pfer whose term is flexible and/or negotiated) with experience, interest, and/or passion for technology and communications.

Review various social media and communications applications to keep the church current and using the most effective types of communications which engage the most members.. Team #5 identified Forums as an effective way for groups and committees to communicate. Given the lack of enough time for Team #5 to plan, initiate, and test Forums, we suggest that Forums be one of the first initiatives the Church Technology Committee look into.

The Committee would work closely with the church's IT provider to ensure the church has the most effective, efficient and cost effective technology for communication, including effective backup of the church website and confidential member information.

The technology committee would also be responsible for the audio visual function and equipment for the church.

Continue to improve and assess better ways of using technology to facilitate communication with and among church members. Create the easiest and most intuitive ways of communicating within and among church committees and groups.

Is it measurable?

A. How do we determine "success"?

- Fewer technology issues / headaches / problems
- Additional support for church staff responsible for technology
- Oversee the IT providers
- This committee would have more in-depth experience in technology to better understanding and assess the church's IT providers capabilities and offerings
- Avoid unnecessary and lengthy website down time
- Avoid unnecessary and lengthy Internet connection downtime
- More smoothly running audio visual across the church: Sanctuary, Seim Room, Plymouth Hall, etc.
- Regular and knowledgeable communication between the Technology Committee and each Group's Communications Liaison.

B. How can it be revised/amended and expanded over time--in time period 2,3, etc.?

- At the recommendation of those on the Technology Committee who have a deeper understanding of current trends and technology, their responsibilities might increase over time.

How is it attainable?

A. People resources required and point person/team required:

- The first step is for the Nominating Committee to assemble a committee of 6 (who are interested in technology and have experience in technology) to sit on the Technology Committee.

B. Budget resources required:

- It is our understanding that the current budget for Technology at First Congo is \$18,000. It is expected that this committee would take over that budget.
- There may be additional budget requirements to hire a consultant/s to help the Technology Committee assess what we are currently using in terms of technology/audio visual and advise what we should be thinking about going forward. More budget requirements / requests may come from that analysis. In addition, Team #5 has gotten permission for a small budget to test Forums.

How is it relevant to our priorities/mission?

A Church Technology Committee would be highly relevant to Team #5's priority to "Deepen Connections". This committee of technical people would have the knowledge and interest to investigate, initiate and support the best ways for our members (groups, committees, etc.) to communicate and be more transparent. The hope is that greater transparency and communication within and among the groups and committees of the church would create greater participation and involvement.

Can it be implemented in a timely way?

The nominating committee could create a committee of 6 members immediately.

How does this help us "Become Faithful Disciples"?

We become "Faithful Disciples" as we interact with our fellow church members and those outside of our church. Communication and transparency is the key to this interaction.

Issues or challenges:

Finding church members to become members of this committee who have either the knowledge and/or expertise and/or the passion for creating useful, intuitive, technology for all church members.

*Goal refers to one or more specific bullet points under each Priority in the Strategic Vision

