

United Church of Chapel Hill
Strategic Planning 2009



PLANNING UPDATE 2.0

Coordinating Team formed

The Coordinating Team that was announced in the last update has now met and begun its work. We reviewed our role and the timetable to assess our ability to conclude the task by the end of the year. We committed to try to finish by Thanksgiving if we can. We then reviewed the essential elements of strategic planning and talked at some length about creating an inclusive and transparent process. Finally, we looked over the tasks and made some commitments as to the areas upon which we would each concentrate. To remain flexible we do not have fixed meeting dates, but will meet as needed.

Steps in the process

The Strategic planning process will entail 6 major steps.

1. The Environmental Scan: A 360-degree objective look inside and outside the church of all relevant data and trends. It will look at what's happening in the US and North Carolina in regard to social, demographic and religious trends, as well as what's happening in the UCC specifically that could impact our church. It will then look inward at our church in almost every dimension of our congregation: membership, demographics, worship, education & youth, finances, property, etc. The Scan will ensure that the planning process is based on solid facts and avoid false assumptions about what is happening.
2. A review of our Core Belief statements. We have existing Mission and Value statements but there are a couple of versions that have to be reconciled and, perhaps, slimmed down (one of our mission statements has over 70 words in it!).
3. The Vision. We will host a special open session in April or May during which all members of the church are welcome to join the Church Council in sharing our visions for the church over the next 5 years. The results of this workshop will be given to Cameron to develop a draft Vision Statement for the Council to consider.
4. Goals and Objectives. Once we have Mission, Values and Vision in place, we will be ready to help the Council begin the hard work of translating the vision into concrete Goals (general conditions that must be true if the vision is to be realized) and Objectives (measurable steps for each Goals) for the next five years.

5. Strategies and tactics. With the Goals and Objectives in place, the process will shift to the staff to examine how they might go about achieving them. By looking at specific strategies we can estimate the cost and the sequencing. Failure to take this necessary step can lead to frustration and disappointment – particularly if there is no money to pay for what we want to do. It may also require that we recognize that some of the things we are doing now are no longer helping us achieve our vision.
6. Review, feedback and adoption. The last step attempts to put the pieces together and look at them as a whole. Here's where we double check ourselves to ensure our priorities are straight, that we have the resources to accomplish what we want to do and that we have the infrastructure to make it happen. Only then can we make the decision to move ahead.

Building on the work already accomplished

We shared with you that we would make every effort to build on previous studies that were developed over the last 5 years. The Coordinating Team has secured copies of all these studies, read them thoroughly, and already begun to incorporate their findings and recommendations in our work.

How can you help along the way

In the coming days there will be two things you can help with. 1) This week a “*United Church Timeline*” will be put up. You are invited to look it over and put your initials on the date you joined the church. It will be fun to see how many of us are “old timers” and how many are “newbies”! 2) Soon we will begin a United Church “**Story Book**.” This unique document will be required reading for every member of the Church Council as they undertake the strategic planning process. You are invited to tell your story and have it included in the Story Book. Each of us will have the chance to speak to the question about what makes our church unique in a personal way. “What is one defining instance where United Church shaped me or moved me?” It could be a sermon, a Bible study, a work of music, a pastoral visit, a dynamic of a small group or committee, a mission trip, a fellowship dinner, a fundraiser, or a justice commitment or demonstration. Who knows?! There are countless short stories that make a church into a church, and we should not go about charting a future without a sense of who we are. *How would you tell yours in one or two of paragraphs? Stay tuned for more details.*

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