

## UCCH SWOT Analysis

After four months of research, broad input and study, the UCCH Church Council spent several hours in retreat on August 24th seeking to identify the key internal strengths and weakness, as well as the external opportunities and threats, that will shape our strategic planning for the next five years. They met in small groups and in plenary session to hear reports from the groups, discuss the insights, and then vote to rank priorities. `The "Driving Questions" named in the Environmental Scan provided focus to this exercise. These are the ranked conclusions.

### **Strengths (Internal)**

#### ***A. Broad & Deep affirmation (repeatedly named)***

- Progressive theology (*includes social justice*)
- Excellent leadership team (*talented and dedicated, high quality*)
- No debt
- Music program
- Facilities (*modern building, accessibility, solar panels*)
- Open and Affirming

#### ***B. Strong support (reported by one group, but receiving genuine enthusiasm from all)***

- Strong youth & children's programs
- David's leadership (*new space for La Mesa is a strength, but also a weakness*)
- Skills and talents of membership (*high levels of education and experience*)
- We recognize the desire for diversity of people and ideas (*open to and seeking "WOW" ideas*)

#### ***C. Good support (reported by one group, but generally affirmed by all)***

- Excellence in worship (*esp. Music*)
- Commitment to racial justice
- Generosity & congregational responsiveness (*e.g. IFC fundraising*)
- Many leadership roles (*multiple chances for involvement in shaping direction*)
- Large size (*being a church of nearly 900 gives us opportunities and resources others don't have*)
- Commitment to extravagant welcome
- Support of all worship styles
- Breadth of programs (*due to size - many places for involvement*)
- History of social justice & community relationships
- We have multiple communication tools

#### ***D. Modest support (named by one group)***

- History of going through ONA (*clarifying our values and taking a stand*)
- Education program
- Different faith backgrounds (*also challenging*)

## Weaknesses *(Internal)*

### *A. Broad & Deep affirmation (repeatedly named)*

- Communication
- Do we have the budget and human resources to support the growth we envision? Our desires often outstrip our resources (*we're eager to say "yes," but we lack focus, which leads to competition for resources*)
- Racial & class makeup of church & reflecting the lack of socio-economic diversity in our community
- Spiritual side of our church life isn't emphasized like social justice is

### *B. Strong support (reported by one group, but receiving genuine enthusiasm from all)*

- Configuration: We have good people, but not sure we have the right deployment (*of both staff and volunteers*)
- Complacency (*individually and as a group with who we are; we think we're strong so we don't need to worry about changing or being more involved*)
- Ambiguity in governance (*who's in charge of what? The Council's role?*)
- Lack of trust in leadership
- Space conflict with La Mesa (*they want/need more space, but it interferes with fellowship*)
- Lack of clarity on what it means to be diverse (*how diverse are we or really want to be?*)
- Declining children's participation
- Siloed (*"Balkanized"*) groups in church that are narrowly focused and don't communicate as well as they should to create a community of the whole

### *C. Good support (reported by one group, but generally affirmed by all)*

- Dependency on pledges (*both an issue for diversity of revenue and decline in plate giving*)
- Budget is "top heavy" on staff expenses (*impacted by part-timers and generous benefits*)
- Volunteer fatigue (*are we burning out our volunteers?*)
- Missing personal connections (*sense of community*)
- Our membership is drawn from a wide geographic area (now & previously), which makes commuting to church an issue
- Insufficient staff for children/youth programming
- 20-year-old building seems new, but will face significant maintenance issues

### *D. Modest support (named by one group)*

- It's hard to coordinate (and understand) multiple roles of staff and lay leaders
- We are not yet effectively welcoming, despite our written and verbal commitments

- Internal conflicts
- Rebuilding our pastoral leadership roles after the transition (*also an internal opportunity*)

## **Opportunities (External)**

### *A. Broad & Deep affirmation (repeatedly named)*

- Diversity in our community/region that can help us become more diverse
- The unchurched, Millennials, and Gen Z are looking for many of the things (programs and values) we have
- UCCH's social justice positioning as a "hub" for progressives
- We are the "exception" to many of the national trends in churches

### *B. Strong support (reported by one group, but receiving genuine enthusiasm from all)*

- Know and celebrate our work outside the church
- Develop and expand connections to sister churches
- Proximity to universities and our existing connections
- Current and envisioned contemporary worship

### *C. Good support (reported by one group, but generally affirmed by all)*

- We have many opportunities for involvement and leadership that other churches don't offer

### *D. Modest support (named by one group)*

- Great positioning for Millennials (with smart changes we can create a "WOW!" that will attract them)
- Tap into external resources (fundraising)

## **Threats (External)**

### *A. Broad & Deep affirmation (repeatedly named)*

- Lack of trust in religious institutions – esp. Millennials
- Fear: broadly an issue in society, but especially in the Latinx community, combines with fear of political blowback for progressive positioning & action

### *B. Strong support (reported by one group, but receiving genuine enthusiasm from all)*

- Our desires often outstrip our resources to engage the community.
- Decline of mainline churches
- Need to examine place of "tradition" – works for some, but not others
- Lack of affordable housing in our area (impacts issues of class and diversity)

### *C. Good support (reported by one group, but generally affirmed by all)*

- We need to capture the opportunity for diversity – our community is more diverse than we are, but we may be sending the wrong messages