

Strategic Goals as Discerned  
By Members of Christ Congregational Church  
Saturday, January 20, 2007  
(in order of numerically weighted priority)

Introduction: 90 people participated in selecting and prioritizing 6 strategic priorities from 26 goal options reported by the Strategic Planning Task Force in late December. Following a reading of all 26 goal options, with opportunities for members to ask questions, and a period of meditation, Roy led the group through an inter-active decision-making process. For each goal option, individuals “voted with their feet” by selecting a space on the floor depending on whether they rated the goal as a top, middle or bottom priority. People had opportunities to speak about why they took a certain position and to attempt to sway others to their point of view. From each of the 3 categories, there was a range of top, middle and bottom goals. Using a mathematical formula, all the goals were then rated numerically.

In the afternoon, the SPTF met with members of the Executive Council to develop possible action steps for the congregation and Council to consider. As the group reviewed the numerical rankings of the goal options and considered the discussion from the morning, the SPTF and Council members opted to take 4 goals dealing with membership that all fell within a range of 10 points (166-176) and combine them into one goal. Doing that elevated the goal dealing with Social Witness, which had been in the smallest category (“Building on Our Strengths”) of 5 goals, to a higher weighted number. Considering how important justice and witness have been in CCC’s history and the importance many new and current members place on having mission opportunities, the group decided it was important to include a justice and witness priority. They deemed CCC could handle 8 priorities over the next 3-5 years.

In order of numerical ranking, the 8 priorities are:

1. Have a robust ministry to and with families with young children so that at least 100 children participate in Sunday church school on average and there are at least 2 family activities each month throughout the school year.

**Possible Action Steps & Suggested Stakeholders/Responsible Parties:**

- Conduct a survey of families with young children to ascertain their needs and preferences for Christian Education for their children, including scheduling of worship and Christian Education opportunities on Sundays. This survey should include additional stakeholders, including Board of Christian Education, Board for Church Life, Board of Outreach & Engagement, Worship Committee, and Rev. Sandy Dodson. **Board of Christian Education – working with other stakeholders**
- Broaden the teaching pool for church school by
  - ~ Considering alternative formats for church school (*e.g.*, shorter-term commitments, pairing experienced teachers with teens or other adults; inviting “guest” teachers to share particular knowledge, skills or talents);

~ Involving more senior adults, non-parents and teens.

**Board of Christian Education working with Sandy Dodson**

- Increase the number of family activities:
  - ~ Continue with annual events planned by Church Life (*e.g.*, Halloween Party, etc.) as there is interest;
  - ~ Offer service projects that young children can do;
  - ~ Offer outdoor activities
  - ~ Offer a retreat weekend for families with younger children.

**Boards of Outreach & Engagement, Social Witness, Christian Education**

- Encourage participation in worship by children and teens through handing out bulletins, collecting the offering, reading Scripture, etc.

**Worship Committee, Ushers Committee, Youth Leaders**

2. Commit financial resources to maintaining and improving the Retreat House property and enhance its capacity to be a site of spiritual renewal for people of all ages. [NOTE: By the end of calendar year 2007, the Retreat House Task Force will present to the congregation, for its approval, a multiple-step plan for Retreat House building restoration and repairs, property enhancements and fundraising options.]

**Action steps to be recommended and reported by Retreat House Task Force and Retreat House Committee.**

3. Secure sufficient trained staff, volunteers and funding to develop a ministry of music and arts that educates and empowers people of all ages to use their talents in the worship and arts ministry of CCC, including involvement in corporate worship of children's, youth and intergenerational choirs and instrumental ensembles by September 2008.

**Possible Action Steps & Suggested Stakeholders/Responsible Parties:**

- Invite Nae to present an initial proposal;
- Discover and engage the talents and resources within the CCC community;
- Promote and encourage broad diversity in performance and performers;
- Convene a meeting with a broad range of stakeholders (children/youth, seniors, parents, potential performers, listeners, etc.) and invite suggestions;
- Encourage liturgical dance and movement.

**Director of Music, ministerial staff, volunteers interested in promoting and participating in music and the arts, Worship Committee**

4. Coordinate, improve and fund CCC's use of technology over the next five years with a plan that includes audio-visual equipment, office equipment, and computer technology to increase outreach, improve operations, and use volunteers' time more productively.

**Possible Action Steps & Suggested Stakeholders/Responsible Parties:**

- Purchase Church Management Software;

- Develop and implement a plan to evaluate, upgrade and obtain office equipment (copier, folding machine, telephones, etc.) to meet the growing needs of Church staff and members;
- Create congregational email lists;
- Develop and implement a 5-year plan to improve audio-visual capability in the areas of communications, equipment and worship, to include multi-media capacity in the sanctuary;
- Update the Church's web site and make it more interactive;
- Develop and implement a 5-year plan for improving software, hardware, networking and web-site capabilities;
- Within 2 years, complete the Technology Policy & Procedures Manual

**Technology Committee, staff & volunteers, Board of Trustees**

5. Increase racial and cultural diversity by implementing the recommendations of the Anti-Racism Audit and the Anti-Racism covenant.

**Possible Action Steps & Suggested Stakeholders/Responsible Parties:**

- Invite Nathan Harris to work with boards to help CCC implement its anti-racism audit better. [Nathan Harris is affiliated with the Potomac Association and is a consultant on racial justice and anti-racism issues.] **Responsible Party: Executive Council, Moderator**
- Invite a wide range of racial and cultural groups to share their performance and visual arts with CCC **Responsible Parties: Director of Music, Arts Committee**
- Intentionally seek out minority business for church contracts and work and minority populations for staff recruitment. **Responsible Parties: Church Administrator, Personnel Committee, Board of Trustees, Anti-Racism Task Force**
- Increase anti-racism sensitivity activities and education **Responsible Parties: Board for Christian Education, Anti-Racism Task Force**

6. Dedicate adequate staff time and financial resources to enhance and grow CCC's youth ministry to engage at least 75 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders with a vibrant program that focuses on Christian education, social activities and community service work.

**Possible Action Steps & Suggested Stakeholders/Responsible Parties:**

- Focus Sandy's portfolio on children & youth **Sandy, Senior Minister, Personnel Committee, Board for Christian Education**
- Establish a priority for the interim minister to clarify staff roles for the staff and for the congregation **Interim Minister, staff**
- Help Sandy do a great job by protecting her time and by providing her with the resources she needs, including committed volunteers. **Sandy and congregation**

- Include the concern for a refocusing of Sandy's portfolio and obtaining needed support from the congregation for the youth ministry of CCC in the search for an interim pastor. **Interim Search Committee**
- Ask Sandy to bring in the stakeholders and involve them in planning and implementation of this ministry. **Sandy**

7. Membership: To strengthen CCC membership within the next 2 years, CCC will

(a) build a substantive program for prospective new members that explores what it means to be a member of CCC and the UCC, including expectations for commitments of financial support, time and talent; **Board of Outreach & Engagement**

(b) create an adult education program that allows prospective and existing members to explore their Christian faith in depth and to deepen their covenant with CCC; **Adult Education Committee of the Board for Christian Education**

(c) establish a means by which current members welcome and assimilate new members and maintain contact with all members, especially those less active or shut-in; **Boards of Outreach & Engagement, Deacons, Church Life; Referral & Service Committee; Called To Care.**

(d) streamline and/or eliminate some programs and/or strengthen successful programs/activities to encourage a community life that is more simplified, spiritual and fun. **Self-evaluation by all boards, committees and the Executive Council.**

8. Justice & Witness: Develop and/or deepen partnerships that reflect CCC's commitment to social justice and that provide a range of hands-on service and advocacy opportunities for all age groups to both existing and new organizations. Engage at least 10% of the congregation in these activities each year. Within the next three years we will:

(a) Strengthen or start partnerships with 2-4 direct-service organizations serving the broader Silver Spring community (*e.g.*, Shepherd's Table, Senior Connection, MUSST, Richard Jaeggi's Long Branch project); **Boards for Social Witness & Outreach & Engagement**

(b) Participate in Rebuilding Together throughout the year (four additional weekend work parties per year); **Board for Social Witness**

(c) Implement hands-on service projects to areas of need in other parts of the US or the world, including investigating joining already existing programs within the United Church of Christ and Church World Service; **Boards for Social Witness and Christian Education**

(d) Strengthen or start partnerships with 2-4 local, national or international advocacy organizations; **Board for Social Witness**

(e) Identify and participate in 1-2 family-friendly service project opportunities per year that parents and their young children/elementary-school-age/middle-school-youth can do together as a family; **Boards for Christian Education and Social Witness**

(f) Identify and participate in individual service opportunities, such as telephone ministry to shut-ins, grocery shopping for shut-ins, etc. that may involve a large number of people (including shut-ins) as providers. **Called to Care, Referral & Service Committee, Board of Deacons.**