

# **A 20/20 Vision Planning for St. John's UCC**



1 John 4: 7, 9, 11 – 12

7. Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.... 9. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.... 11. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. 12. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

*A prayer for St. John's United Church of Christ...*

May we be motivated by kindness and compassion,  
with heart and mind working in harmony.

May we be committed to Christ and daily discipleship,  
Inviting others to share in our joy and experiences with God. Amen

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Consistory has accepted this document from the Planning Committee and a basis for strategic planning and work of the Search Committee.

## **Planning Committee Members:**

John Bryner, Harold Collier, Gloria Crum, Connie Evans, Ginny Harriger  
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# INTRODUCTION

## to 20/20 Vision

### from Planning Committee

This brief Strategic Plan was accepted by the Consistory as a working document, that is, a process to plan for the future.

Planning moves from our history and shared values toward what we want St. John's to be ten or more years in the future. In this sense it is not like planning for next year, which is limited by time and resources. Long term goals generate excitement and draw us into a new future. They prompt us to ask: What would we have to do over the next decade to reach these goals?

Therefore the Plan begins with a **Vision Statement**, which expresses what we believe St. John's Church can and should be. It is immediately followed by a Statement of **Shared Values**. We are very optimistic about the future because we find strong faith and love present among our members. We want to name and celebrate these values. They are part of the foundation for our planning.

As the committee thought about the future, it asked specific questions about the programs, worship and congregational life we share. From these discussions we developed **Goals** for the future. Because these goals are based on the current faith and life of the church, they are possible; because they ask us to grow, they require new commitment and work.

Since the Goals are long term ideals (not things to be completed in a year), they require **Strategies** which indicate what we need to do over several years. Sometimes it is hard to embrace a general goal unless we can imagine how we might get there! Thus, this report includes examples of strategies to achieve goals. In some cases, several stages over several years will be needed. The strategies listed here under each Goal are illustrative and have not been adopted by Consistory. There is, however, strong support for the strategy that the church move to the system of a Senior Minister.

We invite you to become involved in the discussion with the Ministry teams, the Planning Committee, the Consistory or Pastor. The process must be filled with open discussion, prayer, and love for one another. We ask you to join in this process so that God may draw us together in our faith and hope for St. John's Church.

# A 2020 Vision

St. John's United Church of Christ in 2020, a congregation...

- That is united in prayerful commitment to Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit in advancing the mission of God's church, and that honors and is supportive of the diversity of ways in which members, in worship and actions, express that commitment in their respective faith journeys
- That is characterized by mutual trust and by full and free communication and sharing of information, ideas, and concerns
- That nurtures the Christian life for persons of all ages and invites new persons to the fellowship of Christ.
- That provides worship experiences that stimulate and nurture Christian faith and deepen understanding of, and commitment to, Christian discipleship
- That provides education that enables persons of all ages to increase their knowledge of the Scriptures and to deepen their understanding of Christian faith and discipleship
- That provides an engaging youth program serving members and attracting new ones
- That is characterized by caring for, and providing help and support to, each other and that practices joyful and supportive fellowship
- That is alive to needs and conditions of social and moral concern in both the local community and beyond, and that, by addressing them, lives out its Christian faith in action
- That provides a variety of opportunities for participation in outreach in the local community
- That actively supports Christian missions and outreach in our own and other countries
- That joyfully and generously gives – in time, talent, and treasure – in support of Christ's mission and the ministries of St. John's, with the result that it not only meets its expenses throughout the year, but increases both its benevolence giving and its reserve funds

**Shared Values:** a faithful and effective congregation names and celebrates its shared values.

1. We affirm God's love and grace:  
We are blessed and bound together by love and grace.  
Therefore, we accept one another as we are accepted.  
Therefore, we honor and respect one another in the face of differences.
2. We believe that the Christian life is:  
Rightly described as a journey through changes in our lives and the world.  
A process of growth where we are nurtured by God and one another.
3. We believe the goal of the Christian life is discipleship.  
The giving of our time, talent and treasure.  
A way of life where we respond to the needs of others.  
Learning how to affirm, celebrate and proclaim good news.
4. We insist on being a congregation which cares about one another.  
Therefore we shall create systems and programs for care of those in need.  
Therefore we must have ways of staying in touch with one another.  
Therefore we engage in fellowship and nurture our relationships.
5. We affirm that we are a religious community where God is at the center.  
Therefore we engage in worship.  
Therefore we listen, pray and grow together regarding God's will.
6. We are a multi-generational church and want to continue to be one.  
Therefore we have programs for all ages.  
Therefore we care for all ages and include all ages in decision making.
7. We value music—all kinds for all ages—in all aspects of our church life.  
Therefore music shall be used and celebrated in worship.
8. We are proud of our buildings as they witness to our faith and life.  
Therefore we will care for them.  
Therefore we will use them in creative ways to fulfill our mission
9. We affirm good governance:  
Wherein the congregation, through God's grace, makes informed decisions  
Consistory, committees and pastoral leadership work together.
10. We are committed to sharing the faith with others and welcoming them into our life.
11. We affirm and celebrate the heritage of St. John's Church.

# GOALS

## 1. Offer joyful and meaningful worship

- Offer joyful and meaningful worship in many forms for all ages.
- Recognize planning and leadership for worship as a major responsibility in the pastor's job description.
- Provide worship/fellowship other than at Sunday morning for all ages.
- Envision worship for spiritual growth and mission
- Be open to new physical configurations for worship
- Provide excellent leadership and budgetary support for all music programs.
- Coordinate worship for children and youth with the general goals of worship.

## 2. Strengthen education for all ages.

### Short Term

- Establish that the Pastor and Christian Education Ministry have oversight over both the Church School and the youth program
- Include the Youth Director, as well as the Supervising Pastor of the Ministry, in the membership of the Ministry
- Establish that, re: Christian education, the pastor is responsible for:
  - Providing leadership and guidance to the Christian Ed. Ministry
  - Providing guidance to, and supervision of, the Youth Director
  - Providing training for Church Schoolteachers and mentors annually
  - Guiding and participating in the Confirmation Program
- Provide a minimum of two classes for adults each week

### Intermediate Term

- Under the leadership of the Christian Ed. Ministry:
  - Review the curriculum for all classes, pre-school through high school
  - Determine the pros and cons of alternative forms of adult education:
- Structured curricula using available published materials?
- Focus on specific topics, with topics changing during the course of the year, as currently

### Long Term

- Following the calling and installation of the new pastor, determine the staffing most appropriate to providing leadership and guidance re: all age levels of the Church School and re: the youth program, including the camp.

3. **Continue and strengthen our efforts as a congregation to care for each other.**
  - Engage in a **Lay Visitation Program** of those shut-in, in crises, and grieving.
  - Initiate the practice of individuals **Sharing Joys and Concerns** in worship.
  - Sustain and encourage **Fellowship Time** before and after worship services.
  - Seek to identify the **Call and Ministry of Each Member** in our mission for Christ.
  - Establish new **Small Groups** for new and old members to develop and nurture relationships
  - Initiate a **Prayer Ministry Group** that prays for all St. John's ministries.
  - Develop a **Code of Christian Conduct**, which encourages dialogue and discussion regarding issues that may divide.
  - Engage in regular **Fellowship Events** that develop and nurture relationships.
  
4. **Educate, Strengthen and Broaden the Mission Programs of St. John's Church.**
  - A. Develop and keep current an intentional plan for Mission.
    1. Create an inventory of all current mission programs (internal and external)
    2. Survey the needs of the community, giving special attention to our location in a suburban setting.
    3. Engage the congregation in dialogue regarding our responses to the needs of a growing and rapidly changing community as well as global needs.
    4. Create study groups to make proposals for the best use of our resources.
    5. Seek action by Consistory and Congregation; celebrate the initiatives.
    6. Establish the means to carry out mission proposals.
  - B. Share Information regarding mission ministries in worship and by means of printed materials.
  - C. Integrate mission programs into the educational and youth programs.
  - D. Coordinate mission programs and needs with the Stewardship Programs.
  - E. Celebrate and support the Nursery School as an outreach to the community in light of our mission
  
5. **Develop a generous Stewardship Program that fully supports the mission of our church through the giving of time, talent and treasure.**
  - A. Improve our Stewardship ministry education program by connecting our faith with the giving of our time, talent and treasurer.
    - As Disciples of Christ, we recognize that our use of time, talent and money reflects that which we value most. The giving of our resources must be based on the giving of ourselves to the cause of Christ.
  - B. Raise the level of financial commitment to the church for Mission and Ministries
    - Create a Mission Funding Plan. Evaluate existing programs, study new opportunities, and create financial guidelines that are in keeping with the congregation's mission goals.
    - Ask for a commitment to fund mission and ministry. Encourage scheduled giving.
    - Create a culture of thanksgiving. Thank people often and in variety of ways
    - Tell our mission stories & combine giving and serving

- C. Conduct a Capital campaign as part of the Stewardship ministry to enhance the church's properties.
  - Using biblical foundation
  - Simple method for members to make a commitment
  - Prominent Publicity and frequent progress updates
  - Emphasis on giving thanks.
- D. Prepare a Planned Giving program to expand unrestricted and restricted funds through:
  - Wills and Bequests
  - Life income giving – Gift Annuities
  - Trusts – Charitable Remainder Trusts
  - Insurance Policies – Church as beneficiary

**6. Continue to support and develop excellent Camp Programs.**

- Integrate planning for the camp into the total plan for the church.
- Support the Camp through the Stewardship Program.
- Coordinate the programs of the Camp with programs of the church.

**7. Continue to use our varied musical gifts to enrich worship and all aspects of our church life.**

- At St. John's, music represents one of the spiritual gifts we bring to worship, fellowship, education and mission endeavors. We wish to celebrate our diverse musical expressions in worship and use them in all of our ministries for the glory of God. Our long range goal is the development of an integrated music program.

**Means:**

Short Term

1. The Pastor and Music Director will work with the Christian Education Ministry, Youth Director, Senior Choir and Praise Team to create a music program for St. John's and its ministries.
2. Begin with the youngest children who have an interest and involve the parents encouraging them to participate along with the children.
3. Utilize our musical groups and talents as outreach into the community and to heighten awareness of our music program.
4. As an integral part of worship, we need to celebrate the many talents and utilize the variety and uniqueness of those talents in all our worship services.

Intermediate Term

1. Establish a music program for the 1<sup>st</sup> thru the 9<sup>th</sup> grades utilizing the adult musical talents that are available in the church from all age groups to assist in the program.
2. Utilize all of our talents and equipment to their fullest for the glory of God.
3. Draw on the many musical traditions that are a part of our shared experience and encourage new forms, lyrics and expressions of the emerging twenty-first century church.

Long Term

1. Weave music throughout the ministries of worship, education, mission, evangelism and stewardship.
2. Be a church that is an example of the multitude of ways music may be used to further our Christian journeys of faith.

**8. Good Government**

- A. **Faithful and effective governance:** the organizational system should be faithful to our values and mission and effectively enable us to move forward. Toward this end:
  1. Consistory and Ministries must develop systems which allow the congregation to make informed decisions.
  2. Consistory, officers and ministries need to develop more effective means of communication, discussion and integration of programs.
  3. The Senior Pastor must have responsibility as head of staff and oversee the integration of programs and planning.
  
- B. **Excellent Communication:**
  1. Develop multiple ways to communicate with the congregation regarding official business, planning and programs: monthly news letter, bulletin boards, special reports, mailings, Wednesday open meetings, etc.
  2. Improve written communication between consistory, ministries and staff regarding proposals, programs, assessments and financial matters.
  3. The Senior Pastor should oversee all programs of communication.
  
- C. **Lay Participation:** Good governance requires full use of the time and talents of the members in leadership and supportive roles.
  1. Develop an effective plan for cultivating new leaders for consistory and ministries.
  2. Make effective use of the special knowledge and experience of laity regarding all aspects of governance, business systems, the physical plant, and programs of the church. Such efforts are intended to expand the leadership circles within the congregation, as well as provide effective support the pastor.

**9. Increase our knowledge of the heritage of St. John's Church and the faith and history of the United Church of Christ.**

- A. Celebrate the heritage of St. John's Church in youth and adult programs.
- B. Through education and participation in the life of the United Church of Christ, increase our understanding of its faith and history.

**10. Develop and Maintain a Staffing Plan**

- A. Develop a Comprehensive Staffing Plan.
  - In the short term, the Planning Committee, with membership from Church and Ministry and the officers of Consistory, shall present to the Consistory a Comprehensive Staffing Plan. In the long term, this responsibility may be reassigned, as deemed appropriate by Consistory.
  - To assure coordination with the Consistory, make the Chair of Church and Ministry a member of Consistory.
  - The Church and Ministry Committee shall prepare job descriptions for all positions included in the staffing plan, to be submitted to the Consistory.
- B. Include in the Staffing Plan the position of Senior Pastor.
  - The Senior Pastor shall have responsibility for all staff and shall work with Church and Ministry regarding annual goals and evaluation of all staff.
  - In the short term, a Search Committee shall begin the process of calling a Senior Pastor in the spring of 2007.
  - When a person has been called, the Planning Committee and Senior Pastor shall make proposals regarding the most appropriate way to meet other staffing needs. The number and part time/full time status of such additional persons shall be determined according to need and the availability of funds.