



# The First Church in Oberlin

## 2016 Planning Process Implementation Phase (5/13/2016)

### FIRST CHURCH STATEMENT OF COVENANT

In the love of truth, and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of humankind.

We seek to know God's will and to walk in God's ways, made known or to be made known to us; to proclaim the gospel to all the world; and to work and pray for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of one human community.

And we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

### FIRST CHURCH VALUES STATEMENT

First Church is a gathering of people whose loyalty to Jesus and understanding of the Christian faith may take many forms. We seek to welcome all regardless of faith understanding, ability, sexual or gender orientation or expression, age, race, ethnic identity, or social and economic standing. In loving acceptance of one another we seek an inclusive wholeness nurtured by worship, learning, celebration and service—all part of a faith pilgrimage. We hold discipleship above orthodoxy and inquiry above correctness. We acknowledge that our understanding of the Ultimate is crucial, yet limited, and our discipleship required, but never perfect.

## FIRST CHURCH VISION STATEMENT

Drawing on our heritage, we will grow by being an intentionally inclusive, multicultural, just and loving community that practices relevant and inspiring worship, mobilized to collaborate with our wider community by opening our doors to be a central gathering place that is dedicated to healing brokenness in our relationship with God, each other and the Earth.

### CONGREGATION APPROVED STRATEGIC GOALS AND TOP PRIORITIES: 1-2 years.

- 1. Enhance and expand quality worship experiences.**
  - A. Reimagine and reconfigure the Meeting House for 21<sup>st</sup> Century (especially the front), with careful attention to its heritage, historic status and feel.
  - B. Create a flexible secondary worship/performance space/chapel.
  - C. Explore new experiences in worship.
  
- 2. Increase number of congregants and the quality of their experience.**
  - A. Teach ourselves about our heritage.
  - B. Learn how to share the mission, values, and vision of First Church.
  - C. Increase the visibility of First Church.
    - 1) Develop better signage.
    - 2) Utilize marketing resources of the National UCC office.
  - D. Review the term “membership” as defined in the Constitution.
  - E. Embrace the technological opportunities of our time.
  
- 3. Increase collaboration in the wider community.**
  - A. Increase collaboration and enrich relationships with College, Conservatory, and other community organizations.
    - 1) Tap into full range of resources and opportunities.
    - 2) Form task groups to prioritize relationships.
  - B. Increase cooperation among churches in Oberlin: bible studies, youth activities, learning, social, and service opportunities.
  
- 4. Increase facility use for community outreach and partnerships.**
  - A. Make the space as usable flexible and accessible as possible.
  - B. Make facilities more welcoming and warm aesthetically.
  - C. Be open to offering First Church for shared use in the community.

5. **Improve the environmental sustainability of facilities inside and out.**
  - A. Have Green Team establish priority list.
  - B. Ensure architectural design reflects commitment to being a Green Justice Congregation.
  
6. **Identify top ministry priorities.**
  - A. Identify top 3 and focus congregational resources.
  - B. Compile and evaluate data from prior studies of the congregation.
  - C. Develop internal communication plan to share in the church.
  
7. **Assure financial sustainability.**
  - A. Create new sources of income.
    - 1) Partner with agencies to seek grants to learn and teach about our heritage.
    - 2) Partner with agencies to seek money in order to fund others' use of First Church at no charge.
    - 3) Engage in a community-wide Capital Campaign (e.g., Partners for Sacred Places).
    - 4) Expand for-fee rental opportunities.
    - 5) Make buildings more financially self-supporting.
    - 6) Increase congregational giving in all forms.
  - B. Review and Improve structure of job responsibilities of all personnel
    - 1) Paid staff
    - 2) Committees and constitutional structure
    - 3) Volunteers

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**Implementation Structure:** Using the First Church internal decision-making structure, an Implementation Team will be commissioned by and accountable to Executive Council. That team is charged with taking the Vision Statement, Strategic Goals and Top Priorities from paper to reality, bringing it to life. The chair will report at least bi-monthly to Council.

**Implementation Team:** Up to 9 people will be commissioned. The Moderator will serve *ex officio*. Taking the plan as a whole, their overarching task is to orchestrate the understanding/internalization and implementation of the plan in the First Church Congregation. They will,

- Assign Tasks/Priorities to Task Forces/Groups and Standing Committees
- Serve as leads on task groups or as an interface with appropriate committee chairs where priorities/tasks are assigned.
- Encourage and monitor steady progress on priorities and tasks.
- Meet as a whole monthly, then bi-monthly, then quarterly to review progress, discuss issues, and prepare briefings and decisions for Executive Council.

- A chair of the Implementation Team will be appointed. His/her role is to,
  - Drive the implementation process; take primary ownership of it and its management; be the person who has command of what is happening, who is doing what, and what the status is of the many pieces and parts; maintain accurate records to share the whole picture and its details with others
  - Ensure that the entire plan is understood as a whole and remains in clear focus at the Implementation Team level
  - Be the faithful guardian of the Vision Plan, Strategic Goals, Top Priorities by understanding them and being able to articulate what they mean and what they don't mean
  - Run/facilitate efficient, participatory, positive meetings
  - Communicate with Executive Council on at least an every-other month basis
  - Be on the lookout for decisions that need approval by others (Standing Committees, Executive Council, Minister, etc.)
  - Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of implementation on First Church Implementation Matrix document.
  
- Task Group chair responsibilities are to,
  - Recruit an appropriate number of participants
  - Run/facilitate efficient, participatory, positive meetings
  - Devise specific ideas and/or plans for how to implement priorities/initiatives assigned to the task group.
    - Some plans/ideas for accomplishing priorities/tasks may need to be approved by other committees of First Church (e.g., Executive Council, Standing Committees).
    - Task groups are not empowered/authorized to spend money. Requests for spending should flow through normal church polity and process.
  - Communicate progress, outcomes, etc. to Implementation Team.

**TASK GROUP AND STANDING COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES:** To implement the Vision Plan, top priorities and initiatives have been broken down and delegated to task groups and standing committees. The main job of the Task Groups and Standing Committees is to find ways to accomplish the specific priorities/initiatives: to figure out 'how.' In some cases, the Task Group or Committee itself might actually implement the proposed idea/activity/action (after receiving appropriate authority to do so). In some cases, the Task Group or Committee might create or propose a particular action/activity/idea to be implemented by a different group of Congregants.

All Committees and Task Groups are strongly encouraged to keep the Strategic Goals front and center when discussing activities, plans, etc. For example, they should routinely ask themselves when meeting, "...will this help First Church..."

- **Enhance and expand quality worship experiences?**
- **Increase the number of congregants and the quality of their experience?**
- **Increase collaboration in the wider community?**
- **Increase facility use for community outreach and partnerships?**
- **Improve the environmental sustainability of facilities inside and out?**
- **Identify top ministry priorities?**
- **Assure financial sustainability?**

The particular Q&A surrounding an activity, idea, or plan may not pertain to all Strategic Goals, and that is perfectly OK. But by and large church activities should be measured and aligned to these goals.

**1. Architectural Design Task Group:** In addition to the priorities/tasks below, this committee is responsible for being the main interface between First Church and the architects contracted to create a Facilities Master Plan, 2016.

- Reimagine and reconfigure the Meeting House for 21<sup>st</sup> Century (especially the front), with careful attention to its heritage, historic status and feel.
- Create a flexible secondary worship/performance space/chapel.
- Make the space as usable flexible and accessible as possible.
- Make facilities more welcoming and warm aesthetically.
- Ensure architectural design reflects commitment to being a Green Justice Congregation.

**2. Identify Top Ministry Priorities Task Group**

- Identify top 3 and focus congregational resources.
- Compile and evaluate data from prior studies of the congregation.
- Develop internal communication plan to share in the church.
- Review and Improve structure of job responsibilities of all personnel
  - Paid staff
  - Committees and constitutional structure
  - Volunteers

**3. History and Heritage Task Group**

- Teach ourselves about our heritage.
- Partner with agencies to seek grants to learn and teach about our heritage.

**4. Building Review Task Group**

- Make buildings more financially self-supporting.
- Partner with agencies to seek money in order to fund others' use of First Church at no charge.
- Expand for-fee rental opportunities.

## **5. Community Collaboration and Partnerships Task Group**

- A. Increase collaboration and enrich relationships with College, Conservatory, and other community organizations.
  - i. Tap into full range of resources and opportunities.
  - ii. Prioritize relationships.

## **6. Technology Task Group**

- A. Embrace the technological opportunities of our time.

## **7. Continuing the Conversation Task Group.**

- A. This group will have three primary purposes:
  - i. Keep the Congregation informed of activity and progress of all Task Groups and Committees with respect to the implementation of the Vision Plan.
  - ii. Create methods for continuing open Congregational reflection on the content of the Vision Plan, including the Values Statement, Vision Statement, Strategic Goals and Top Priorities/Initiatives.
  - iii. Create mechanisms to help the Congregation internalize the Values Statement, Vision Statement, and Top Priorities.

## **8. Standing Committee Assignments**

### **A. Worship Committee:**

- i. Explore new experiences in worship.

### **B. Witness and Membership:**

- i. Learn how to share the mission, values, and vision of First Church.
- ii. Increase the visibility of First Church.
  - 1. Develop better signage.
  - 2. Utilize marketing resources of the National UCC office.
- iii. Review the term “membership” as defined in the Constitution.

### **C. Green Team:**

- i. Have Green Team establish priority list.

### **D. Outreach and Service:**

- i. Increase cooperation among churches in Oberlin: e.g., bible studies, youth activities, learning, social, and service opportunities.

### **E. Fellowship:**

- i. Increase cooperation among churches in Oberlin: e.g., bible studies, youth activities, learning, social, and service opportunities.

### **F. Youth**

- i. Increase cooperation among churches in Oberlin: e.g., bible studies, youth activities, learning, social, and service opportunities.

## **Timeline:**

- 5/10/16 Executive Council review and approval of a.) proposed implementation process dated 5/4/2016 and, b.) consulting SOW dated 5/6/2016.
- Recruit Implementation Team chair(s): May
- Begin consultant coaching of chair(s): May
- Inform Congregation of Implementation Plan: May.
- Recruit the Implementation Team: May/June.
- Conduct first Implementation Team meeting: June/July.
- Report progress to Executive Council: June 28 and August 6 meetings.
- Create Task Groups: Summer 2016.
- Begin Task Group work: Summer 2016/early fall 2016.

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**Executive Council**



**IMPLEMENTATION TEAM**

**Architectural  
Design Task  
Group**

**Identify Top  
Ministry  
Priorities Task  
Group**

**Continuing  
the  
Conversation  
Task Group**

**Technology  
Task Group**

**Standing  
Committees**

**History and  
Heritage  
Task Group**

**Building  
Review Task  
Group**

**Community  
Collaborations &  
Partnerships Task  
Group**