



PLYMOUTH congregational UCC

2020/2021 STRATEGIC PLAN



Respectfully submitted June 14, 2021, by the
Strategic Planning Committee of Leadership Council

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
Fort Collins, CO

INTRODUCTION

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ is a vibrant church in Fort Collins, Colorado with 118 years of history. Throughout the years, Plymouth has endured two global pandemics – the 1918 influenza pandemic and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. During these difficult and challenging times, many experienced first-hand that a church is not just a building; it is so much more. The Holy Spirit moves through us no matter our physical location.

Plymouth's Leadership Council took the courageous and daunting step of forming the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) in October 2020. The SPC was tasked with discerning what the Holy Spirit is calling our church to do in the next several years. While some might question a strategic planning process during a global pandemic, the Leadership Council felt it was imperative to emerge from the pandemic prepared and primed to act on our beliefs and values.

Comprised of six Plymouth members and Senior Minister Hal Chorpenning, the SPC team spans several generations in age, has diverse family compositions, and ranges in membership with Plymouth from a year to multiple decades. The priorities of the SPC, from the very beginning, have been to be transparent in the planning process, intentional in listening to the Holy Spirit and the congregation that we represent, and to put together a plan that expresses the passions and needs of our 700+ member faith community.

For eight months, the SPC worked diligently with congregational consultant John Wimberly. Through many hours of listening to the congregation, reading survey results and emails, and asking questions and challenging the status quo, the SPC developed a strategic plan purpose statement, four supporting goals, and prioritized strategies to accomplish each goal. The following Strategic Plan, to be managed by Leadership Council, outlines action steps for Plymouth's robust and engaged congregation to take in the next three to five years.

The key to success of a strategic planning process is congregational support and input. The SPC collected 54 survey responses, hosted two congregational conversations, completed 11 focus groups with 71 members and 8 staff, and assembled 21 participants for the Strategy Creation Teams. Including SPC meetings, leadership retreat, and meetings with Leadership Council, over 325 hours, all on Zoom, have been dedicated to putting together this plan. Leadership Council is encouraged to ask for continued congregational engagement and involvement on Strategy Implementation Teams to execute the Strategic Plan and bring its purpose to life.

It is with great joy and excitement that the Strategic Planning Committee of Leadership Council for Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ presents the final 2020/2021 Strategic Plan. This is a roadmap to transform the ministry of Plymouth, to be driven by the Leadership Council, and requires congregational support and action. We are honored to have served the church in the discernment and development of this plan. Now, let's make it happen!

Sincerely,
Heather Siegel (chair), Judy Barth, Hal Chorpenning, Larry McCulloch, Nic Redavid, Marilyn Votaw, and Jackie Wray

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Purpose Statement:

Plymouth's purpose for the next three to five years is to embody beloved community with God, each other, and our neighbors. We will enhance our communications and deepen engagement within the church. We will be a visible force for social, racial, and environmental justice. This focus will help Plymouth's already vibrant community look to the future and grow in numbers and in spirit.

Goals:

- I. **To be a welcoming community in which all can worship and experience the transformative power of God.**
 - A. Create a full-time, ordained position for Campus and Community Ministry. This person will lead Plymouth's efforts to engage local college communities, beginning with CSU and expanding to FRCC and connect Plymouth with social, racial, and environmental justice groups in our community.
 - B. Increase support for and engage the Millennial and Gen-Z generations, beginning with families with children, through ideas such as expanding childcare offerings, "plug and play" volunteer opportunities, a monthly "parents' night out," and a week-long summer program. This strategy may need additional staffing.
- II. **To create radically different church communication to reach all generations within and outside the church.**
 - A. Create and implement a marketing communications plan to improve messaging and media within and beyond the congregation.
 - i. Redevelop the website with two goals in mind:
 - a. To be an intuitive, easy-to-navigate hub where current members and regular attendees can become more deeply connected and engaged.
 - b. To market ourselves to the wider community, especially potential visitors.
 - ii. Suggestions to accomplish the above two goals include adding:
 - a. An interactive calendar with all church events—make it easy to find and make sure it has links to everything needed to participate (specific, clickable links with detailed, up-to-date information, registration, contact persons, etc.).
 - b. Buttons to sign up for ministry team listservs and connect with leadership council, board chairs, and ministry team leaders
 - c. A tab with New Member information: History of the church, diagram of governing system, lay leadership job descriptions, etc.
 - B. Develop simple and interactive communication systems to build and promote peer-to-peer connections.

III. To grow: Deepen engagement, spirit, and impact.

- A. Create a staff function for robust membership engagement, such as designing a new member onboarding program and creating a volunteer recruitment/care/management plan. This may involve realignment of current staff responsibilities and/or the addition of staff.
- B. Create a strong, hands-on, and comprehensive Environmental/Creation Justice Ministry that connects internal and external groups. Emphasis should be placed on time-specific projects with clear outcomes (e.g., install new roof with solar panels in 2022).

IV. To develop and effectively allocate resources for ministry: staffing design, finances, facilities and equipment, and volunteers.

- A. The Leadership Council should create a new permanent process for reviewing resource allocations (staff, money, building, volunteers) that first funds strategic initiatives, and then considers the current legacy line items. To some degree this is the inverse of our current process and is intended to minimize fiscal and staff constraints present in our planning process. This new process should:
 - i. Begin in the summer of 2021 to align the 2022 budget with the Strategic Plan.
 - ii. Reassess and repeat at least twice per year with a two-year planning horizon to phase in changes and new strategies.
 - iii. Allow for pausing or ending current efforts when they fall outside the Strategic Plan, if funds are not available, while also encouraging Leadership Council to explore additional financial stewardship approaches.
 - iv. Identify barriers to transparency and offer educational opportunities for the congregation to understand the new process.
- B. Reshape staff design to achieve the Strategic Plan. Rewrite staff job descriptions to fit strategies and inform budgets. Reassign current staff when feasible.