**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF FORT COLLINS**

**A Colorado Nonprofit Corporation**

**2021**

**LONG-RANGE PLAN**

Adopted by Church Council

October 27, 2020

**Vision:** First Church:An inclusive, deeply relational community inviting all people to experience God’s presence today

**Mission:** Discover God’s Love Inspire Hope Grow in Faith

Serve with Joy

Purpose: In accordance with the 2019 Vision Team Charter, the Vision Team (VT) has prayerfully discerned the ways in which God is calling us to bring the love of God to as many people as possible and bring its findings for consideration by the full council. The VT has categorized and documented each vision/plan in this LRP document. The VT has also recommended which church resources/umbrellas should be involved with implementing each vision/plan. A priority level (1 through 4) was assigned based on the urgency for the vision/plan to be implemented (1 being within the year and 5 being within the next 5 years).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, First Church will consider how to not just reopen, but RESTART the church. This is an opportunity to do things more effectively and efficiently. First Church should consider “What does faith look like in times like these?” “What is most important for us right now?” “What is God Calling us to be?” More specifically, the following areas might benefit from a restart:

**Vision 1**: Ensure high-quality online and face to face services.

1. Idea: Number of Sunday services (during social distancing times as well as long term). Specific consideration should be taken for short term circumstances of social distancing as well as long term schedules.
2. Make online ministry a priority considering the strong response to First Church’s online ministry during COVID-19.
3. Idea: secure finances to enhance technical capabilities
4. Suggested church resources/Umbrella involvement:
5. Vision Team (VT)
6. Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)
7. Worship team
8. Church Council
9. Faith Formation
10. Administrative Technology Resources Committee (ATRC)
11. Finance

**Vision 2**: More focus on community outreach (community defined as local to the church as well as Northern Colorado)

1. Idea: The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted people in the community that First Church has the potential to support. In addition, there is continued need for support in the community that the church is already supporting.
2. The following are possible new or previously supported community outreach areas on which First Church can focus:
3. Lower income people and families the pandemic has highlighted as being at higher health risk due to poverty
4. Continue to bring awareness of discrimination of all people of color.
5. Suggested church resources/Umbrella involvement
6. Faith Formation Umbrella Groups
7. Mission Umbrella Groups
8. Congregational Care Umbrella Groups

**Vision 3**: Develop spiritually mature individuals through discipleship and education.

1. Create, implement, and promote inclusive, diverse faith-building opportunities to reach all age groups.
2. Suggested church resources/Umbrella involvement:
3. Faith Formation Umbrella Groups
4. Welcoming, Hospitality, Discipleship Umbrella Groups

In addition to issues that have come to light due to the pandemic, First Church should also continue to work toward previously established long-term goals, which focus on critical areas of the church.

**AREAS OF FOCUS – INITIATIVES/GOALS**

**1. Music and Worship Ministries**

*(Potential Committees Engaged: Worship Design Team, Music Committee, Staff Parish Relations Committee, Children and Family Council, Youth Council, Welcoming, Hospitality & Discipleship, Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, Visioning Team, Marketing and Communications Advisory Team, Community and World Mission, Administrative Technology Resources Committee)*

Recognizing the importance of the music and worship ministry components for all

congregants, it is deemed especially important that the best possible use be made

of First Church staff, resources, and facility seeking to meet the needs and interests of as many people as possible.

**2. Outreach and Service Ministries**

*(Potential Committees Engaged: Community and World Mission, Adult Faith Formation, United Methodist Women, Staff Parish Relations Committee, Committee on the Status and Role of Women, Northern Colorado Faith Library, Marketing and Communications Advisory Team, Youth Council, Visioning Team, Nominations**, Church and Society, Welcoming Hospitality & Discipleship, Congregational Care Committee, Pre-School, Parents Day Out.)*

Continue to make the outreach and service ministries a focus area of high priority at First Church.

A. Support this commitment with (1) staff and volunteer leadership, (2) volunteers, and (3) funding as needed. Commit to define and adopt methodologies that provide more support to local, regional, and global ministries that support the vision and mission of First Church.

B. Recognize and strengthen the outreach and service ministries the church already conducts. Be open to initiating new outreach ministries, perhaps asking organizations within the congregation to identify specific outreach or service activities which will assist in building a stronger community.

C. Support outreach initiatives such as serving the Latinx community, the African American Community and Eastside park.(See Vision 2 as this issue relates to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

D. Build upon our commitment to be a reconciling congregation that welcomes people of diverse age, color, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic status, and physical or mental ability.

**3. Nurturing and Education Ministries**

*(Potential Committees Engaged: Adult Faith Formation, Northern Colorado Faith Library Board, Senior Council, Children and Family Council, United Methodist Women, Status and Role of Women, Staff Parish Relations, Marketing & Communications Advisory Team, Congregational Care,* *Youth Council, Nominations, Visioning Team, Columbarium, Church and Society.)*

**A. Nurturing**.

1. Continue and expand commitment to provide needed nurturing support systems to our congregants. Systems to consider include those that provide support for numerous common life events that encompass both the joys and trials of life, and especially the transitioning events that impact each of us. Sympathetic listening, caring support, individual counsel and advice, when sought, are key elements in those systems.

2. Recognize the unique needs of each age group and consider classes/events specific to those needs. Define specific programs and initiatives that are service-based, and which contribute to the success of the church and the community in general.

3. Explore how to best utilize and advertise our new Faith Community Nursing Program.

4. Partner with community agencies to determine the educational and/or nurturing needs in the community and help to meet those needs.

5. Continue to provide spiritual nurturing to people of all ages.

**B. Education***.*

1. Continue to maintain and expand a strong “cradle to grave” education program that fulfills the church’s educational Mission.

a. Utilize technology to expand the reach of our programs

b. Pursue new and enhance existing education-based working relationships with internal and external entities by:

* Having a presence in Interfaith Council, the World Wisdoms Project, etc.
* First Church groups will foster a lifelong learning environment.

2. Emphasize and enhance our educational ministries for: (1) children, (2) youth, (3) young adults and (4) all other adults. To ensure that we follow the Safe Sanctuary Policies of the Mountain Sky Conference:

a. There should be well-qualified and trained staff and volunteers leading and providing needed support for each of these separate groups.

b. Our educational programs should stay dynamic, fresh, and meaningful for the participants.

c. The church’s Community Service Programs, such as Pre-School and Parents’ Day Out, should continue to be of excellence.

3. Commit to maintain and build on the Northern Colorado Faith Library capabilities to enhance learning by ensuring a suitable level of funding and staffing which will provide such value.

**4. Growth and Retention**

(*Potential Committees Engaged: Marketing Communications Advisory Team, Nominations, Worship Design, Visioning Team, Senior Council, Youth Council, Children and Family Council, Community and World Mission, Staff Parish Relations, United Methodist Women, Welcoming Hospitality & Discipleship, Northern Colorado Faith Library)*

A. Recognize that growth and retention is not defined just by numbers of church members, but by the deepening of the faith of our congregants, with a shift in focus/perspective to discipleship and individual growth through means of an intentional discipleship program.

B. Consider processes for recognizing the services and contributions of volunteers and staff.

C. Using all means possible, systematically market our church, our programming, and our image using a unified and coordinated church-wide approach to how we tell our story.

D. Commit to enhancing the growing small group ministry. Evaluate the interests of people in the 30 – 55 age range and active retirees who have frequently expressed a need for more and better social groupings.

E. Strive to ensure everyone (new members, long-term members, all age groups, etc.) feel welcome before, during and after Sunday services as well as at all church events. Effort should be made to enhance feelings of inclusion during coffee hour in Fellowship Hall.

**5. Leadership, Facilities, and Financial**

(*Potential Committees engaged: Board of Trustees, Staff Parish Relations, Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development, Administrative and Technology Resources, Finance, Stewardship and Generosity, FUMCFC Foundation, Vision Team, Committee on the Role and Status of Women, United Methodist Women, Memorial Gifts Committee, Marketing and Communications Advisory Team, Church Council.)*

**A. Leadership/Organization.**

1. Implementing the new initiatives will require spiritually mature, well-trained, task-focused, and strongly motivated staff and volunteers. New ways will be needed to attract, organize, train, motivate, and retain these people in the many ministries of the church.

2. Develop processes/methodologies which:

a. Enhance First Church’s ability to recruit and train persons for effective leadership positions in the church. Generate a procedure for training volunteers.

b. Strengthen and improve the Human Resources management function.

c. Improve committee leadership transitions with desired outcomes to include:

(1) Consistency in performance of committee functions.

(2) No loss of knowledge about the committee’s work.

(3) No reduction in committee momentum.

d. In response to congregational input, commit to enhancing communications tools and their use for dissemination of information to all church congregants. These communications tools include up to date, effective media and marketing capabilities to communicate more effectively with the congregation and community.

**B. Facilities.**

1. The Site Facilities Master Plan (SFMP) was adopted by the Church Council on November 11, 2014. Proposals to use, alter or build on church facilities and grounds (other than standard maintenance) should be discussed with the VT and approved by the Church Council prior to implementation. The VT will review the proposal to verify compliance with the SFMP.

2. The Board of Trustees will develop procedures to include an SFMP review in its planning for facilities upgrades and alterations, and maintain records of property boundaries, easements, property attributes, and all “as-built” plans to provide continuity in land use planning.

**C. Technical.**

Integrate and implement the Church Technology Plan developed by the Administrative and Technology Resource Committee to fund, install, and maintain the full range of technical infrastructure, equipment, and software capabilities that are essential to supporting and delivering the range of ministries and activities envisioned in this long range plan. Fully utilize all available platforms to enhance visibility of church opportunities, activities, etc., and consider how committees can have an up to date technological footprint for communications. This issue is even more critical now for maintaining high quality online worship and communications. (See Vision 1 above.)

Included should be installing or maintaining:

1. A superior church web site.

2. Effective installations of current, up-to-date audio/visual equipment throughout all church facilities.

3. An all-church electronic records retention and retrieval system, permitting both staff and church committees to access needed information promptly, while maintaining needed confidentiality and ensuring continuity of information over time.

4. Support of effective and up to date communication capabilities, in all appropriate forms, for congregants, staff, and the public, such as:

* Networking capability
* Streaming video, and Wi-Fi connectivity
* Social media in common usage or evolving, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
* Telephone (Utilize voice over internet protocol technology)
* Online giving platforms
* Church apps
* Continuing on-line meeting capabilities as well as hybrid meetings (some online and some in person participants)

5. Availability of up-to-date hardware and software for all staff and volunteers.

6. Effective data storage and access, utilizing technology of “the cloud.”

**D. Financial**

1. *Financial Management*

Strengthen the capability of the church to manage and coordinate its financial policies and functions in an effective way. Recognize and build on the concept that financial management for the church includes, first, enhancing the church’s revenue streams, and second, accurate accounting, financial controls and effective, transparent reporting to the congregation.

2. *Revenue Generation*

a. A key, on-going function for the Finance and Stewardship committees and the Church Council is to ensure the church can finance the initiatives defined in this long-range plan. New ideas and different approaches may be required to produce the required revenue streams.

b. The Finance and Stewardship committees should build upon what has been learned by Horizons Stewardship in 2016 and continue to adopt best practices from stewardship consultants.

c. Develop a strong culture of generosity within the congregation that supports the mission and commitments of our church through members’ prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Recognize that financial generosity is an important attribute of deepening discipleship and engage in cooperative programming with discipleship and faith formation committees.

d. In fundraising, the Stewardship and Generosity Committee should consider and ask for gifts from *all three* “Pockets of Giving” – the earned-income, the capital, and the estate pockets. This will require:

(1) Communicating our vision and missional priorities;

(2) Developing and utilizing a financial plan that seeks monetary support from key donors, members of administrative committees, lay leaders, and the general congregation; and

(3) Cultivating estate and planned giving through a congregants’ will or other investment beneficiary designations.

**OTHER FOUNDATIONAL/GUIDING STATEMENTS**

**Mission of The United Methodist Church:**

The mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches and extension ministries of the church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs. *(Book of Discipline 2016, Paragraph 120)*

**Our Commitment as part of the Reconciling Ministries Network**:

In the Spirit of Jesus Christ, First United Methodist Church of Fort Collins commits to offering a community in which persons of diverse age, color, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity, economic status, and physical or mental ability are all welcomed and affirmed. To all who have known pain of exclusion or discrimination from church or in society, we ask forgiveness and offer a place or respite and welcome.