

A Framework for Planning

Calvary United Methodist Church

January 2017

Mission

A written statement that incorporates the goals of the church, the broader goals of the denomination and the ultimate goal of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

Calvary United Methodist Church seeks and invites all to become disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and our world.

The mission statement does not change from year to year and it most likely will never be fully realized. It is aspirational but does not tell us how the church might go about accomplishing this mission.

Operational and Strategic Planning

Operational planning looks at what the organization needs to be doing over the next year. Long range planning or strategic planning looks at a longer future horizon, typically 2 to 3 years.

Vision (also called “*a strategic plan*”)

The vision is a written statement that tells why God put our church right where it is, with the people we have, in the season we’re in, surrounded by thousands who need Jesus’ love. It is unique to each individual church. The church’s vision is not a to-do list. The vision is intended rather to give broad direction to the leaders of the organization and focus energy to maximize the effectiveness of the church in accomplishing its mission.

The vision is to be reviewed and updated regularly. Prepared by key church leaders, it covers a two- to three- year planning horizon with specific areas of focus, goals and actions steps that the church will take in its particular context.

Goals, Action Steps

Goals are written statements that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-specific (SMART) and directly related to accomplishing the church’s vision.

These are mileposts to chart a journey toward a commonly desired future.

Action Steps are those various activities and decisions that will be taken to accomplish the goals.

Policies and Procedures

A policy is a written statement adopted by the governing body of the church (typically the Church Council) that defines the church’s position with respect to

broad objectives that the church has approved. Further, it is a long-term directive dealing with matters of church-wide importance. A policy acts as a guide for consistently carrying out goals and actions over time. Procedures are a series of steps to follow to accomplish some desired end.

A Plan to Plan

The time has come for Calvary United Methodist Church to engage in an intentional process of planning and discernment about its future. Specifically, the time has come for the church to prayerfully consider three questions:

1. Who are we now?
2. Who is our neighbor?
3. What is God calling us to do and be at this time?

We will be using the book, *Holy Conversations*, by Gil Rendel and Alice Mann (Alban Institute, 2003) to guide us in the planning process. This is an excellent resource with many different tools that can be used to guide the process in the local church. The process is designed to take six months.

A proposed outline for the process:

January –February 2017

Focus Question: **How do we get started?**

- Senior Pastor presents “A Plan for Planning”
- Church Council and Senior Pastor select a Vision Team of 5-7 members based on established criteria
- Assemble Vision Team and appoint the chair.
- Establish Planning Timeline with meetings, tasks and reporting
- Order book: *Holy Conversations*, 8 copies

March

Focus Question: **Who are we now?**

Task for the Church:

To commit to prayer and Bible study for the next 4 months (Feb. –May)

Tasks for the Vision team:

- Bible study on images of the community of faith in the Bible
- Assess current church systems
- Read history of Calvary Church
- Talk with key long-term members about the history and highlights of Calvary Church
- WOTS Up analysis
- Ministry Assessment Tool

April

Focus Question: **Who is our neighbor?**

Vision Team

- Bible study on loving our neighbor
- Demographic study using MissionInsite
- Interviews with community leaders including school administrators, town leaders, civic groups, etc...
- Neighborhood walks/drives

May

Focus Question: **What is God calling us to do and be?**

Vision Team:

- Read selected articles about culture, church and ministry opportunities facing us today.
- Learn about the practice of prayerful discernment in an organization.

June

Focus Question: **What have we learned and discerned so far?**

- Open forum for congregation to share what we are learning and to gather additional comments and feedback. This may involve using tools from *Holy Conversation* or other sources.
- Open Forum for community to refine the team's understanding of threats and opportunities present in the community.
- Discussion with Church Council of what is emerging from the vision team's process.
- Possible Church Council vision/planning retreat

July

Focus Question: **How will we use what we've learned so far to further God's work here?**

- Provide the Church Council with a written report of the findings and recommendations made by the Vision Team. (The Strategic Plan)
- Share the report with the Church Council
- Disband with celebration

Building a Vision Team

The Vision Team will be responsible for working through a process of research, discussion, prayer and discernment about what God's future for Calvary United Methodist Church. The process will take approximately six months and involve updates and a final written Strategic Plan which includes findings and recommendations to the Church Council.

Size

- Ideal size is 5 to 7 persons, including the Senior Pastor
- Maximum size is 9 persons, including the Senior Pastor

Qualities represented in a good vision team

- People open to what God is calling our church to be and to be about in the future
- People who understand the church's current strengths and weaknesses
- People who have credibility in the congregation
- People who look to the future with hope and optimism
- People who are creative and can consider new perspectives
- People willing to engage in open and honest discussion and take in new information from variety of sources
- People who love their church and want to see it be a vital and faithful community of faith for years and years to come
- People willing to put in time, energy and prayer into the effort of discerning what God is calling us to do and be.
- People who can communicate effectively with others through the written word
- People actively participating in the life and ministry of the church
- Other qualifications?

Qualities that are not well suited to Vision Team

- People who have a particular interest or outcome that they wish to push in the process
- People that are hurt or angry about the church or certain leaders/staff
- People that are too busy to be part of the vision process
- People who are so tied to current ways the church operates that they find it difficult to consider alternatives
- People who are focused on managing the details of ministries rather than stepping back to look at the big picture.
- Other qualities not well suited to the Vision Team?

