

First CHRISTIAN

C H U R C H



Journey of Faith 2014-2016 Strategic Plan

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the strategic plan for First Christian Church is to provide a roadmap for the next three years on our journey of faith. It is the vision and plan of where we intend to go and who we desire to become as disciples of Jesus Christ. The plan will guide the actions of our staff, leadership, and ministries.

The staff and ministry leaders will create more detailed action plans to implement the strategic plan in their areas of responsibility. Each year, the elder board will evaluate the progress of the plan for potential changes or adjustments.

MISSION STATEMENT

We **Engage** and **Embrace** all people as we seek to **Embody** Christ.

GUIDING VALUES OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CHRIST-CENTERED

We believe in God as three persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As a Christian community of faith, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we center our lives on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

A BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

We are a community shaped by the sacred scriptures found in the Bible. Through these writings, we are inspired to embody the call to be God's partners to our world.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

God has first loved us and calls us to love and serve one another. This love is an action in which we seek to embrace all people wherever they are on the journey of life.

FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

Jesus' call continues to compel us today: "Come, follow me!" Therefore, we seek to follow Jesus in every part of our lives.

A MOSAIC OF GOD'S COMMUNITY

God's community is a beautiful blend of generations, ethnicities, and cultures. We seek to embrace all of God's people and celebrate the gifts that each person brings to our community of faith. As a community of his followers, we proclaim our unity in Christ through communion. As followers of Christ, we proclaim his work in our individual lives through baptism.

INTRODUCTION

In order to accomplish our strategic plan and live out our values, the Journey of Faith is organized around four primary pillars: Worship, Grow, Care, and Serve. We believe that we fulfill our call to be disciples of Jesus Christ when we:

- **WORSHIP** God as a community and in our personal lives;
- **GROW** in our faith as we gather in growth groups and practice personal disciplines to help us connect deeply with God;
- **CARE** for one another so that no one has need; and
- **SERVE** those who consider FCC home through our ministries, as well as serve those beyond the walls of the church through local and global ministries.

We have identified four strategic priorities for 2014-2016 that will serve as the basis of the plan, including personal growth, serving both locally and globally, and celebrating the multigenerational mosaic of our congregation.

All ministries require support in the form of time, talent and treasure. Success of the ministries and activities described in this document depend on the church leadership's –

and the congregation's – ability to recruit, organize and manage the volunteers that make these ministries run.

The 3-year vision described in this document requires a permanent, purposeful system for managing volunteers. FCC must create, maintain and manage an inventory of people and resources within the church. Ideally, this will include congregant's skills, interests, strengths, work experience, education, etc. This will be managed and maintained by church staff with support of the congregation.

WORSHIP

Through worship, we engage with and are engaged by God.

The mission of the Worship ministry is to invite visitors, regular attenders, and members to experience God in corporate worship through music, the arts, and the spoken word.

WORSHIP ORGANIZATION

Purpose: To organize our services so they facilitate an atmosphere of worship, in whatever form that takes, by thoughtful and prayerful planning that enables worship leaders, support teams, and participants to understand and carry out their roles.

3-Year Vision: Continue to support both services with servers, musicians, scripture readers and other participants while developing innovative ways to enhance the worship experience of our congregants.

Approach:

- Recreate and launch the Worship Advisory Team with the purpose of facilitating communication between staff and the congregation and helping staff to establish and carry out the priorities of the Worship Ministries.
- Develop a Media Creation Team who will develop multiple mediums of artistic worship, such as video, flash media, and PowerPoint.
- Recruit and train a minimum of 3 people able to fill each of the needed Worship Ministry roles (sound board, technology, band members, accompanists, etc.).
- Implement a visitor strategy to connect and follow-up with visitors.
 - Develop a greeters' team trained in hospitality principles.
 - Place strategic partners in worship services to meet and introduce new attenders.
 - Encourage early arrival to worship services so all have the full experience of fellowship leading into worship.

ARTISTIC WORSHIP

Purpose: To develop an atmosphere that fosters the creative energies of the artists among us, welcomes the creative arts in worship, and uses them to engage all congregants. Artists, both staff and lay people, are those who have a passion for the musical arts, visual arts, and the written arts.

3-Year Vision: Engage the congregation in a variety of worship experiences using music and imagery for the purpose of enhancing the worship experience. Provide special worship services that give congregants and opportunity for community worship outside the normal Sunday services.

Approach:

- Develop a yearly evaluation of each type of worship experience (9 am, 11 am, special services, and sacred services) in order to enhance the worship environment and service to have a greater impact on people's experience in their encounter with God.
- Develop and launch quarterly 'Worship Nights,' a gathering of prayer and praise using our variety of styles to help bridge the gap of our unique services and bring more connection to the whole body.
- Continue to find artistic ways to celebrate our sacred days that invite the congregation into an EPIC (Experiential, Participatory, Image Driven, Communal) experience.
- Continue to invite the congregation to use their artistic gifts to bring us into worship.

WORSHIP THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Purpose: To establish an understanding of stewardship as part of our lifelong worship, integrate Biblical teaching and training, and develop the congregation as good stewards of their resources.

3-Year Vision: Raise the awareness of our congregation to the financial needs of the church so they understand how their offerings are used to support the various ministries of the church.

Approach:

- Launch a planned giving arm of our congregation (an endowment) to help ensure the ministries can continue into the future.
- Preach quarterly inviting all Christians to follow the path of stewardship in their lives.
 - Find willing participants to share their experience of being prayerful stewards.
 - Connect people with the impact of their giving in the congregation, community, and around the world.

- Research and share the trends in giving to non-profits to develop a strategy to touch each generation and their giving trends.

GROW

Individually and in community, we seek to grow in our knowledge of God, demonstrate our faith by our actions, and faithfully obey Jesus Christ as his disciples.

The mission of the Growth Ministries is to nurture the faith of the body of Christ at FCC from infancy through adulthood, from the seeker to the mature disciple, so that all may mature to faithfully serve and follow Jesus as Lord.

GIVING TREE PRESCHOOL

Purpose: To offer a loving and hospitable Christian preschool for 3-5 year old children.

3-Year vision:

Approach:

- Strengthen the connection between FCC and Giving Tree by establishing a functional advisory board engaged in normal communication with the Giving Tree Director and quarterly meetings (or monthly as needed) to facilitate administrative support.
- Charge the advisory board with the responsibility of developing a three-year vision for Giving Tree to include developing specific goals by September 1st, 2014. This vision must address the current limitations of the Giving Tree facilities and resources.
- Develop events and activities that serve the needs of Giving Tree students and parents and strengthen their relationship and interaction with FCC. These could include, among others:
 - Parenting classes that involve FCC parent and grandparent volunteers.
 - Grandparents' Day where FCC seniors come to read to students and interact with them.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Purpose: To engage and embrace children to help them begin their spiritual journey and involvement in the church by creating opportunities for fellowship and Biblical learning.

3-Year Vision: Create a vibrant Children's Ministry that provides a safe and encouraging opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth for children based on their ages and interests. These opportunities will include, but are not limited to:

- Sunday Morning Programs: Nursery, Children's Church, Sunday School

- Wednesday Night Programs: Kids Group!
- Music Programs: Choir, Chime Ensemble, Musicals
- Weekday Programs: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Fantastic Fourth & Fifth Graders
- Summer Programs: VBS, Summer Camps, Kids Out on the Town

Approach:

- Create curriculum for the Wednesday night and Sunday morning programs that incorporates various learning styles and topics by involving children and parents in the planning process.
- Expand volunteer teams to give Children’s Ministry the ability to provide age/school grade-specific activities and programs.
- Investigate and evaluate FCC’s and the community’s need for a Special Needs Ministry and how to implement it.
- Maintain an online presence via Facebook and FCC’s website that provides both an introduction to Children’s Ministry and weekly updates on programming.
- Implement annual training sessions for volunteers and staff to ensure we are following the best practices and keeping safety as a high priority.
- Empower the Children’s Advisory Team to provide active leadership and guidance on Children’s Ministry programming.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Purpose: To engage and embrace the students and parents/guardians of Lawrence and the surrounding areas, teaching them to embody Christ in their world.

3-Year Vision: To provide a safe, positive, faith filled environment that invites students to ask questions and provides them with opportunities to grow in their faith through biblical teaching, growth groups, worship, and service and seeks to communicate well with and provide support to the parent/guardians of each student.

Approach: Provide engaging events, growth opportunities, parent/guardian support and the empowerment of the Youth Advisory Team.

Engaging Events

- Provide events that allow students to connect with each other, the Church, and our adult sponsors in positive, safe, and fun ways.
- Lunch at Lawrence middle schools and high schools.
- Evaluate the potential for opening a youth drop-in center that would allow us to reach and build relationships with more of the unchurched student population in Lawrence and become a light to the community.

- Available to all Lawrence students as a fun and safe hangout after school Monday through Friday and on Saturdays.
- Could also host concerts, workshops in dance, art & drama etc.

Growth Opportunities

Consistently provide opportunities for students to grow in their understanding of who God is and just what it would look like to be on a journey of faith. Such opportunities will include:

- Weekly Youth Group meetings;
- Monthly Growth Groups;
- Sr. Youth Growth Group on Sunday nights incorporating a Bible study designed to teach students how to prepare and lead a Bible study themselves;
- Allowing 11th and 12th grade students to act as Student Growth Group leaders in the Jr. Youth Growth Groups;
- Summer camp opportunities, service projects, and retreats;
- Mile-marker activities for incoming 6th graders and graduating seniors, including gifts to celebrate the incoming 6th grade students and to honor the graduating seniors;
- Annual parent/guardian and student surveys within the youth ministry;
- Participation in Growth Groups on Sunday mornings and at other times;
- Summer mission trips within the U.S.; and
- Possible international mission trips with other youth groups in the Lawrence area.

FCC Youth Parents

- Encourage and involve parents/guardians of FCC youth students.
- Have the youth pastor call the parents/guardians of new attending students to introduce themselves, ask if the parents have questions regarding the youth ministry, and ask if they would like to become included in the parent/guardian email list.
- Consider the possibility of creating parent discussion groups.

Youth Advisory Team

Empower the Youth Advisory Team members to play an important role in the decisions, budgeting, events, and planning regarding the youth ministry.

WELCOMING AND CONNECTING MINISTRY

Purpose: Welcome new members of all ages to FCC and find ways to connect newer congregants to the FCC body.

3-Year Vision: FCC is truly a multi-generational church that supports its members and seeks to attract new members. Our goal is for FCC to be a place for them to feel welcome, to connect socially and spiritually, and to integrate with other Christians that demonstrate a relevant and active faith inside and outside the church. This must be accomplished by specifically appealing to every age group.

Approach: Appoint a team to revise and define the mission and purpose of this ministry and to develop goals given current opportunities at FCC.

- Create new ways of connecting with visitors, college students and members.
- Consider making this group part of the essential engagement team for all who enter our doors
- Develop specific timelines and action plans.
- Contact all visitors with 2 days of their church visit
- Purposefully include college students in welcoming and connecting efforts; appealing to their specific needs.
 - Where appropriate, develop closer relationships with para-church organizations such as InterVarsity, The Navigators, Young Life and others
- Accommodate several “all-church” events (this combines previous all-church section)
 - Plan at least 4 church-wide events per year, encouraging multigenerational events and other opportunities for people to get to know each other
 - Communicate all-church events via posters, FCC website, bulletin inserts, etc. Consider a brief bio of regular attendees
 - Utilize the fellowship hour between services & determine the best use of that time

COMMUNICATION/CHURCH WEBSITE

Purpose: Provide an effective on-line presence for FCC in order to inform members and engage potential members in the various ministries of the church.

3-Year Vision: Upgrade our website and develop a consistent approach for managing it. Implement an FCC presence on other social media to promote the various ministries and programs of FCC. Have a sustainable plan to keep all online assets updated (including church-branded social media sites), both by staff and lay-leaders.

Approach:

- Form an ad-hoc committee to determine what kind of Web site is most appropriate for us. Present cost alternatives to the Trustees.
- Appoint a local Web-master who is responsible for managing and maintaining the site so that it is constantly changing and interesting.
- Empower office staff to spend more time developing and enhancing the website.
- Publicize the website so our congregation uses it.
- Examine other social media tools, such as 'The City' to enhance the usefulness of the site.

ADULT GROWTH GROUPS

Purpose: Create growth groups that nurture, challenge and deepen our Christian faith. Encourage everyone to do life together and demonstrate the love of Jesus. Provide a way for FCC members and visitors to learn more about the Bible, their faith and grow deeper as Christians.

3-Year Vision: FCC maintains a regular and varied group of voluntary and staff-led small groups and classes that meet the growth needs of our church. Every congregant feels there is at least one group than fits their needs, whether at FCC or elsewhere.

Approach:

- Groups would:
 - Meet in the format where group members are most receptive—small group; lunch, coffee, or breakfast; with an activity (gardening, cycling etc.); online (blogs, study guide, Web-based instruction, etc.);
 - Have resources to grow into Christ
 - Train growth group leaders in Bible study, prayer and group dynamics
 - Provide class/group materials for sustained learning
 - Intentionally provide occasions and people to receive encouragement—Online friend, study group, mentor, blogging, children's play groups.
- To oversee these programs, identify a visible coordinator who:
 - Is knowledgeable about all active groups;
 - Helps in leadership development;
 - Attracts new members; and
 - Publicizes dates and times of meetings.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Purpose: Develop future leaders to provide for smooth transitions when leadership changes, spreading out the workload, and growing disciples.

3-Year Vision: Develop and fund a consistent path – via on-on-one instruction, classes, workshops, etc. – that will help prepare potential leaders for service in the church. These potential leaders will be trained on:

- Leading effectively, assigning coaches or partners to come alongside them;
- Recruiting and training ministry teams;
- Motivating volunteers and staff;
- Giving counsel and advice; and
- Decision-making processes.

Approach:

- Evaluate the Church Leadership Initiative (CLI) conducted in 2010, 2011, and 2012 and consider using it in some form as a source of training new church leaders. Most all of the teaching materials for this program are still available.
- In whatever program is used, FCC Staff and leadership should develop a funding mechanism and provide assistance to those chosen to lead the training.
- Proactively rotate leadership of ministries on a periodic basis to avoid burnout and introduce new ideas and passion.
- Encourage interaction of family ministries leaders with staff of each sub branch to focus on how to combine these ministries and incorporate members of all ages (parents/adults/senior volunteers).
- Twice-a-year leadership class that explains leadership at FCC and gets people excited about participating.

CARE

We care for one another so that all are supported through the various resources of the church and its congregation.

CARE MINISTRY

Purpose: Care ministry extends care and compassion to our church family, embracing each other as we experience unique life changes.

3-year Vision: FCC staff and Care Ministry leadership will create a three-year plan that is achievable given the finite financial and human resources available and other church

priorities. The plan will take into consideration the following care ministry strategic priorities:

- Identify and resource the congregational care ministries that are most needed for our church family.
- Develop a Care Ministry visitation program designed to embrace those in our church family who need contact, social interaction, and friendship at challenging times.

Approach: Staff and leadership will define and develop various actions to achieve the strategic priorities including:

- Recruit and engage volunteers to participate in the care ministries from both worship services:
- Explore using local resources to train volunteers (friendly visitors) to reach out to those in situations such as in a nursing home, recuperating from hospitalization, homebound due to injury or illness, etc.
- Train volunteers (companions) to reach out to those in our church experiencing a life change or challenge; evaluate resurrecting the Stephen Ministry program.
- Communicate/advertise broadly the services that are available to everyone in the church family so people in need know how to connect with someone who can help them.
- Provide information from the community quarterly on resources available to serve the needs of various target populations within our church family, e.g. caregivers' support, senior services, chronic illness, etc.
- Sponsor regular events for the JOY (Just Older Youth) seniors group.

SERVE

Through serving, we embody Jesus to one another and the world.

SERVING OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Purpose: To embody Jesus as we engage and embrace those who are struggling in our local community, both within our church family and beyond.

3-Year Vision:

- Invest significant amounts of time and resources into a few key ministries: LINK, Homeless Ministries and Care.
- Continue to support the efforts of other ministries but on a more limited basis.
- There will be a visible means to request support for new local service ministries.

Approach:

Key Ministries:

- Continue to support LINK through monthly volunteer commitment, financial support, providing the location, and serving on its board.
- Focus on building client relationships at LINK, as we seek to embody Christ in our development of long-term friendships.
- Continue to support Family Promise through being a hosting congregation on a quarterly basis and with financial support.
- The FCC Care Ministry provides an opportunity to serve those within our church family as they experience unique life challenges. See the Care section above.

Other Ministries:

Continue to support other local service organizations both internal to FCC and external in Lawrence such as FCC Helping Hands Closet, Habitat for Humanity, Food Pantry and Food Drive, Willow Domestic Violence Center and the Pregnancy Care Center.

Potential New Ministries:

Evaluate FCC's involvement in these new ministries.

- DART Center – explore the role that FCC should play regarding justice issues in the Lawrence community such as the transition out of homelessness.
- Partner with one of the “facility-less” churches such as Vintage or Velocity and provide support in a way they cannot. At the same time, allow them to really capture the college population in a way that is meaningful to students.
- Look for opportunities to partner with other churches and/or find a niche where services aren't already offered to make the biggest impact possible.

SERVING OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Purpose: We will encourage members to be directly involved in missions through partnerships with international ministries, as well as partnering with and supporting individuals working abroad, to serve those in need and bear witness to Jesus.

3-Year Vision: Members of the congregation will be encouraged to be involved in mission trips in which they are interested and qualified for, including possible church-wide (group) mission trips. There will be a visible means/method to request financial and prayer support from the congregation.

Approach:

- Encourage support of members' involvement in existing international missions like World Vision, medical missions, Wycliffe Associates, etc.

- Financial support will continue for congregational families who have entered full-time global ministries. The congregation will be encouraged to receive their newsletters in order to be informed regularly of their needs and activities.
- Continue to work with other churches or organizations locally, such as InterVarsity or International Student Ministries in the ministries they offer e.g. car tours of Lawrence, free garage sale, car repair resources, holiday housing/dinners.