

Strategic Plan of Christ Community United Methodist Church

2011-2016

Adopted by Church Council February 16, 2011

Christ Community United Methodist Church is entering a new phase of ministry in Butler, Pennsylvania. As the congregation celebrates its 45th anniversary, we are also anticipating new pastoral leadership with the announced retirement of Reverend Howard Burrell to be effective on June 30, 2011. Several conditions have prompted church leaders to conduct a strategic planning process.

- The life-cycle stage of our congregation suggests that we must experience renewal through an examination of our core beliefs about our purpose.
- After reaching a peak of 825 in 2002, our official membership count in 2009 was 730.
- After reaching a peak of 303 in 2004, our official count of attendance in 2009 was 215.
- Through the first nine months of 2010, monetary gifts to the church totaled approximately \$191,500. This represents an \$18,000 shortfall for the annual budget and a \$28,000 reduction from the same period in the prior year. Further, pledges for the 2011 budget have fallen short of current giving by approximately \$50,000.
- Over the last decade, the church has had a succession of three pastoral appointments with a fourth imminent resulting in a sense of instability and upheaval.

In spite of these conditions, Christ Community United Methodist Church continues to engage in valuable ministries to make and send disciples of Jesus Christ. We continue to provide unique styles of worship experiences. We continue to serve the community and the world through faithful service and mission. We continue to support Christian education and development of children, youth, and adults. We have worked to embrace the Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors philosophy by trying new ministries and opening our church to community programs such as a pre-school and Narcotics Anonymous meetings.

The strategic planning process initiated by the Church Council has worked to establish a compelling vision for the future and an outline of the goals and action steps needed to achieve that vision. Representatives of Council held five Listening Post events that drew 72 participants from the congregation. Several core themes were identified to guide the congregation over the next several years. All staff members, lay leaders, and committee chairs reviewed the themes and outlined specific action steps to be completed in order to achieve alignment with those themes. The Church Council addressed those issues that involved multiple areas of responsibility or required policy or financial decisions. The Church Council also noted that several themes aligned with the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations by Robert Schnase. That resource has been adopted as a tool to assist committees and leaders in developing action steps when appropriate.

Strategic plans are designed to be working documents that need to be reviewed and revised on an on-going basis. As specific action steps are completed, the Church Council is responsible for evaluating the impact and determining whether any course corrections are required. Likewise, as conditions change both within the congregation and in the surrounding community, the strategic plan needs to be adapted to fit the current realities of our congregational life together.

The following terms are used in the strategic plan. Theme is used to describe each of the broad concepts identified through the Listening Post exercises. Objective is used to further define a theme to identify the specific categories for improvement as expressed by the congregation and its leaders. Action Steps are those specific tasks identified by a

committee, staff member, or individual to bring a program or ministry into alignment with the Themes and Objectives. Action steps are associated with a particular person or group that is responsible for completion and have a specific timetable for completion.

Theme 1: Hospitality. Members expressed conflicting views as to our current expression of hospitality with a strong desire for fellowship (*aligns with Five Practices - Radical Hospitality*)

Objective 1A: To exhibit radical hospitality in welcoming visitors and newcomers

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council	Will create a Greeter Ministry. This ministry will staff a Welcome Center in the lobby during all worship services. This will include the development of a team of greeters and appropriate training.	Following training	Must find and train volunteers
Pastor	Will offer training program, "Beyond 30 Seconds," a 7-session module designed to help make a more welcoming congregation	March 2011	Money for training materials; ushers, greeters, and other leaders identified and included
Ushers, Greeters, and other leaders	Will interact more with visitors in providing a welcoming atmosphere as a result of participating in training program.	Beginning at the conclusion of a training program entitled "Beyond 30 Seconds," presented by the Pastor	Head Usher to coordinate with all ushers and greeters. Identify greeters for contemporary service.
Church leadership	Will watch for new faces and make introductions during services	Every week	
Youth Director	Will provide welcoming training to youth for youth	In September and February each year	Time
Director of Christian Education	Will train all class leaders on how to welcome and invite newcomers to their classes	August training events	Good resources for training
Director of Christian Education	Will create invitations to events and programs to give to members to hand out to friends and/or groups they participate in like sports teams, scouts, etc.	Prior to events or program starts	Approval for increase in office supplies
Secretary	Will send a letter of welcome to visitors	As needed	

Outreach Committee	Will produce a brochure of outreach opportunities available to visitors	By March 31, 2011	
Praise Team members - rotating	Will give specific introduction and word of welcome to visitors at the beginning of service and issue invitations to Sunday School or café at end of service	Contemporary service	Time

Objective 1B: To create fellowship experiences that provide the means for members who attend a specific worship service to meet members who attend a different worship service

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Nurture Coordinator	Will create and support a Fellowship Committee to plan specific events (e.g. pot luck dinner, family activities, etc.)	As soon as possible	Identify and appoint a Nurture Coordinator
Youth Director/Youth	Will sponsor fundraising dinners to bring everyone together	At least once per year	Cooperation and participation
Kitchen Coordinator	Will continue to provide the Oasis café as a fellowship opportunity between Sunday services	Ongoing	Timing of services to allow time for cafe
Christian Education Dept.	Will sponsor fellowship breakfasts during Power Hour	On Rally Day, Thanksgiving, Easter, and Closing	Timing for Power Hour needs to remain a separate hour
Finance Committee	Review budget and identify funding if possible to support additional fellowship activities.	As needed.	On request

Objective 1C: To provide a welcoming and accessible physical environment.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Trustees	Will conduct a complete facility analysis and present prioritized results to Church Council	By June 1, 2011	Considerations to include: make lobby more attractive and welcoming by consolidating bulletin boards, removing pew, creating welcome center; redesign cry room; paint kid's café; etc.

Trustees	Will complete a design study and cost analysis for interior accessibility between floors for persons with disabilities	June 1, 2011	Resources
Youth Director/Youth	Will install new furniture in the youth room	By December 2011	Money for furniture
Finance Committee	Will request new project list from Trustees and work with Council to develop plan to identify funds	By April 2011	Approval from council on plan

Theme 2: Inspiring Worship. Members expressed desire for creative, challenging, and vibrant services with all worship elements aligned (*aligns with Five Practices - Passionate Worship*)

Objective 2A: To create and sustain distinctively unique worship experiences building on current strengths

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Pastor	Will support and encourage the development of worship teams to study and recommend unique worship services that would reach the most people, including members, but especially non-churched people of our community	By July 1	Identification of interest in new services
Taize worship team	Will continue to develop and present special Taize worship services as long as interest remains	Ongoing	Interest
Appointed staff and representatives of each worship service	Will discuss and plan for joint worship experiences and make recommendations to Church Council	May 2011	Church Council appointing willing participants on the planning team
Pastor and music ministry teams	Will coordinate music with scriptures and sermon topic to enhance worship experience	Ongoing coordinated planning meetings	Awareness of sermon topics, scriptures, hymns, special needs in advance
Pastor and worship teams	Coordinate visual displays in worship services to align with themes	According to themes	Worship team participation
Pastor and worship teams	Will publicize upcoming worship themes in newsletter	Monthly	Advanced planning

Youth Director/Youth	Will participate actively in worship services (reading, music, ushering, etc.)	As often as possible beginning immediately	Cooperation & participation
Sunday School classes (children, youth, & adult) by Christian Ed	Will create opportunities to share things from classes (songs, messages, skits) in worship	Any/all worship services	Letters and reminders to class leaders to encourage this
Worship leaders (by Christian Ed)	Will share Power Hour themes in worship and encourage participation	All worship services	Christian Ed must intentionally make themes available to worship planners
Outreach Committee	Will incorporate mission/outreach opportunities in worship regularly	March 1, 2011	Someone to volunteer at each service so no one person has to attend all three
Lay Leaders	Assist with planning of annual celebration of laity	Annually	Scheduling of celebratory service
Early worship team	Will hold planning seminars twice a year to conduct visioning activities for the early worship experience.	Twice a year	Time, money, resources

Objective 2B: To implement best practices with technology to enhance worship experiences.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council	Will establish a technology oversight committee to assist in the planning of technology initiatives and the development of technology policies.	Immediately	Volunteers
Appointed staff and representatives from worship services	Will determine the technology needed to support worship services and evaluate the current equipment as to whether it meets those needs (with professional consultation). Need to evaluate short term needs such as the projector bulb and long term upgrades.	By July 1	Appointment of representatives from worship services who will study best practices; resources for consultation and technology expenditures

Director of Technology	Will implement standards and procedures as developed by the technology committee; identify budget required for necessary equipment; and train all users of equipment.	Ongoing	
Operators (youth and adults)	Be trained by the Technology Director <u>before</u> using equipment.		Regular training opportunities
Class leaders by Christian Ed. Dept.	Will work with technology coordinator to prepare for any Sunday their class is sharing in worship	Week prior to the Sunday	Include these expectations in training and reminders to class leaders

Theme 3: Leadership. Members desire to know how to connect to opportunities; program planners desire increased participation; and everyone expects leaders to effectively implement their responsibilities (*Aligns with Five Practices - Intentional Faith Development*)

Objective 3A: To educate and inform members of the congregation on church mission, purpose, and structure

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council members and staff	Will offer a series of Reverse Listening Posts to give congregation members the opportunity to learn of the church mission, purpose of ministry, and church structure	In May 2011	Council is clear on mission, purpose, and structure. Effective leadership and organization of listening posts
All staff and committee chairs	Will contribute to the church webpage in order to provide up-to-the-minute info about all events, etc.	Begin to develop immediately	Secretary to serve as communication clearinghouse for all info
Committee Chairpersons	Will communicate the mission and goals of the church to the committee members	Annually at first meeting	
Strategic Planning Committee	Will implement a book study and sermon series on the Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations for whole church	Beginning immediately	Leadership
Church Secretary	Will include information (names/roles) on worship guide pertaining to committee chairs, key roles	Weekly	List of committees and contact names

Church Secretary	Will include information in newsletter highlighting the various committees and membership/contact info. Feature one committee or job each month. Include all info on website also.	Monthly	Committee chairs writing summaries and submitting on schedule
Finance Committee	Communicate finance information in the quarterly finance statements	Start in the first quarterly statements	

Objective 3B: To increase awareness and create processes to connect people to ministry opportunities.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Program staff, office staff, Pastor, & Church Council.	Will better utilize the existing communication methods and explore new methods to communicate consistent information about involvement opportunities.	First week in April 2011	Creation of church email directory. Funds for website maintenance. Staff commitment to writing monthly updates.
Church Council	Will sponsor an event to include a ministry fair promoting opportunities for involvement	Annually	Volunteer to coordinate
Lay Leadership Committee	Will recruit and train (with materials available from the denomination) a volunteer church communications coordinator who will utilize the free newspaper postings, internet, email, electronic sign board, and other avenues of communication to inform the public of church events	By June 1, 2011	Evaluate current processes to determine what changes are necessary to achieve goal
Youth Director	Will create an adult youth ministry team	By January 2012	Alignment of gifts, time

Lay Leaders	Will support efforts/initiatives of staff, committees, volunteers, etc; participate in training programs; and encourage members of the congregation to do the same.	Ongoing	
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Objective 3C: To develop and implement procedures to clearly communicate expectations and uphold accountability

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee	Will update and revise existing job descriptions of all lay staff and continue annual evaluation of each staff member	Update job descriptions by July 1, 2011 and conduct annual evaluations in fall 2011	Gather and review current job descriptions
Pastor, Lay Leadership Committee, Committee Chairs	Need to clearly define expectations for all committee participants	Fall recruitment	Resources for materials
Christian Ed Department	Will create a fun, engaging training event for current and potential volunteers in the Christian Ed department	Every August prior to Rally Day	Invitations sent to those current volunteers and general announcements for anyone to consider
Church leadership	Will support programs and events through active participation	Ongoing	Awareness of events
Trustees	Will inspect and report on the condition of all church property	Annually	

Theme 4: Mission. Members expressed appreciation of our mission tradition with a desire to expand in a clearly-defined and focused way in order to increase participation (Aligns with Five Practices - Risk-Taking Mission)

Objective 4A: To celebrate mission accomplishments

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Outreach, Youth, Mission Team, etc.	Will report to the congregation about mission trips, special offerings, designated conference offerings, and other mission activities through various communication methods	Monthly	Assignments as to who will report what and when should be clearly designated

Youth Director/Youth	Will create a worship service around a mission event	The Sunday following the mission event	Cooperation and time
Christian Ed director	Will invite those who just participated in a mission to come and share during Power Hour	Power Hour	Can be in the Kid's Cafe, Oasis Cafe, youth Room, etc.
Early Worship	Whole services focused on mission experiences	As they occur	Willingness and cooperation

Objective 4B: To create and communicate a clear and defined focus for mission opportunities

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Outreach, pastor, related staff	Will establish closer relationship with Volunteers in Mission (VIM) coordinator at the annual conference level and make the current district and conference volunteer mission opportunities available to the congregation through various communication methods	By April 1, 2011	Setting specific times, dates, and responsibilities to contact VIM Coordinator, Diane Miller, and regularly updating information
Outreach, Youth Coordinator, Pastor	Will set a Youth Mission Trip open to all in the church to a specific area of need either within or without the bounds of the annual conference (or outside the US) to be conducted sometime in 2012	Set location and date by September 1, 2011	Research need, cost, and interest in such a mission venture
Christian Ed Department	Will periodically host a mission project during Power Hour for the whole church to come together to work on	Begin Fall 2011	Must be approved by Council and then work with Outreach chair for ideas of projects
Christian Ed Department	Continue to participate in Camp Creation and encourage our children and teens to participate	Summers	If Camp Creation folds Christian Ed Director to research the new playgrounds program as a possible substitute
Outreach Committee	Will write a mission statement, set yearly goals, and meet quarterly to evaluate progress	Fall 2011	A viable Outreach Committee must be created

Outreach Coordinator	Will announce mission opportunities at all worship services	Beginning immediately and ongoing	None
Mission Team	Will create brief work projects encouraging wider participation of church members. Personal invitations will be made to individuals who have shown an interest in mission work in the past.		

Theme 5: Diversity. Members expressed appreciation of diversity in terms of both worship styles and the inclusiveness of our membership.

Objective 5A: To emphasize the diversity of beliefs and worship styles as strengths of our congregation.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
New communications coordinator, witness team, Church Council	Will devise ways to publically promote the different styles of worship we offer to the community	By July 2011	Recruitment of communications coordinator
Christian Ed Director	Will create an adult education team recruiting members from various worship/belief backgrounds to develop adult offerings throughout the year	Have all in place for fall 2011 offerings	Identify chairperson then create team
Worship planning teams	Will incorporate worship styles, traditions, and elements from other cultures	Ongoing	

Objective 5B: To work to include underrepresented people and groups as full participants of our congregation.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Witness and Outreach teams	Will devise a program to reach underrepresented people in our community to invite them to worship and/or special programs and/or worship services	Fall 2011	Demographic information needs to be gathered

Christian Education Director	Will recruit and utilize experts in our congregation to train volunteers to work with people with disabilities during Power Hour	August training events	
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Theme 6: Pastoral Transition. Members desire for the Staff Parish Relations committee to effectively engage with the District Superintendent and Bishop to educate the congregation and successfully represent the interests of the congregation in the appointment process

Objective 6A: To develop a clear statement of congregation characteristics and expectations for pastoral leadership for the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee to present to the District Superintendent.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council	Will compile a portfolio of information from all program staff and committees that gives a summary of church activities/programs	April 1, 2011	
Finance Chairperson	Will meet with the SPPRC to review budget and discuss alternatives	February 2011	

Theme 7: Timing Issues. Members expressed that timing of services and programs affects participation and satisfaction

Objective 7A: To determine the appropriate timing for the Saturday night service.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council	Will consider the viability of continuing Saturday night service due to low participation	Immediately	<i>RESOLVED-Saturday night service discontinued effective January 30, 2011.</i>

Objective 7B: To determine the appropriate timing for Sunday worship services and Sunday School.

Action Steps:

Who	What	When	Conditions
Church Council to appoint committee of program staff, representatives from both worship services, pastor, lay leaders	To conduct a thorough study of how worship times affect attracting new members and attendance of current members. Study should reflect the optimum times for attendance and growth, not convenience of members.	Study to be completed by summer 2011 and implemented in September 2011	Considerations listed to date include organist appreciates summer timing of 10:30; Christian Education suggests consideration of Power Hour concurrent with one worship service; early worship suggests a later start time.