



FIRST FRUITS

plant • bloom • harvest

A Strategic Plan for First United Methodist Church

A Strategic Plan

**First United Methodist Church,
Portland, Oregon**

September 2012

We are strongest when we are united! We accomplish the greatest good when we align our resources. We are most successful when we focus our efforts.

We are truly inspired when we operate from collective goals. The time is ripe for us to engage a “fire in our collective bellies” and move forward with true Methodist activism. We are rich with assets – talent, energy, ideas.

This plan, crafted in common, gives us the direction to connect with the “needs of now”, to communicate with renewed vigor, and to positively impact our own community of faith and the broader community surrounding us.

In our Reconciling congregation, our quality educational programming will continue, as will our stunning worship services and musical offerings, our beautiful and powerful setting for the spoken Word, and our ministry to homeless families.

The five Priority Goals in this plan will place us on a positive trajectory for our impact on the community, our ministry to our congregation, and increasing attendance and resources. We will realize the thriving and empowered church that we envision.

Your Planning Team:

*Cheryl Bittle, Dan Woodward, Rev. Donna Pritchard, Janice Gratton,
Rev. Jeremy Smith, Richard Allan and Sonja Connor*

Our Five 3-Year Priority Goals

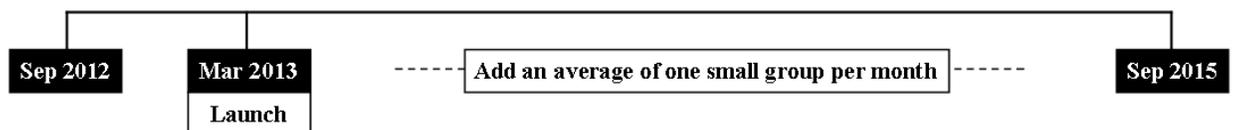
September 2012 – September 2015

"Behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me." (Deut 26:10)

The offering of first fruits is both a personal risk and a demonstration of faith.

- 1. ENGAGEMENT: Develop and successfully sustain a small group program (with opportunities in service, mission, social justice, fellowship, study, etc.) that engages 50% of all members and 30% of all multi-date visitors within 3 years.**

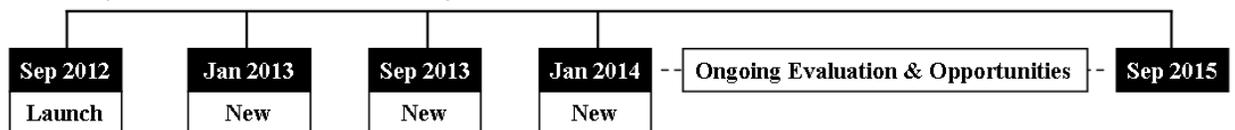
Launch small group program by March 2013 with at least 12 groups adding an average of 1 group every month



- Offers multiple ways for people to connect with the congregation (fun, fellowship, service, social justice, hobbies, education, etc.)
- Engages people at their point of need or interest (young mothers, people in recovery, skateboard enthusiasts, knitters, etc.)
- Builds a platform for tangible community within the context of a large membership church
- Broadens the role and location of church beyond the main campus to neighborhoods, colleges, etc.
- Increases opportunities to engage multi-date visitors and to invite those in the personal networks of members
- Develops more leaders to sustain a vital church

- 2. YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS: Develop and successfully sustain at least 4 ongoing opportunities (in service, mission, social justice, fellowship, study, etc.) that altogether engage 100 or more youth and young adults ongoing within 3 years.**

Launch 1st opportunity in September 2012 with new opportunities offered by January 2013, September 2013, and January 2014



- Provides a platform for the development of additional worship experiences
- Offers relevant ministry to youth (pre-teens through 18 years old) and young adults (those in the 20s and 30s age bracket)
- Develops leaders in younger generations
- Extends the ministry of the church through the efforts of youth and young adults
- Builds age diversity, intergenerational connections and congregational sustainability

- 3. WORSHIP: Growing out of small group and young adult initiatives, develop and successfully sustain 2 additional worship experiences that meet the needs of “new audiences” and that, within 3 years, together engage 100 or more in average attendance.**

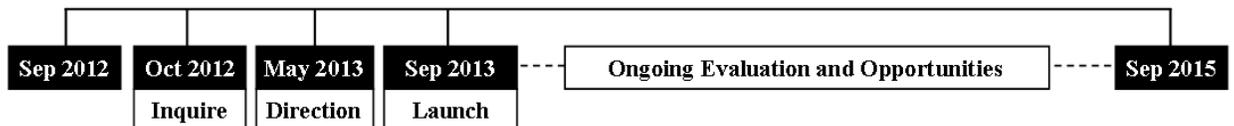
Launch 1st new worship experience by September 2013 and 2nd worship experience by September 2014



- Offers new ways for people to seek God and fellowship
- Broadens our reach to new populations (persons of color, special needs families, those under 50 years of age, etc.) and geographic areas (Portland eastside, etc.)
- Deepens our spiritual foundations
- Increases opportunities to invite those in our personal networks to a worship service that will be meaningful for them

- 4. A SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT: Engage 50 members in an ongoing relationship with a public school that addresses specific needs of students, parents and communities, enriches their academic experience and supports their healthy development.**

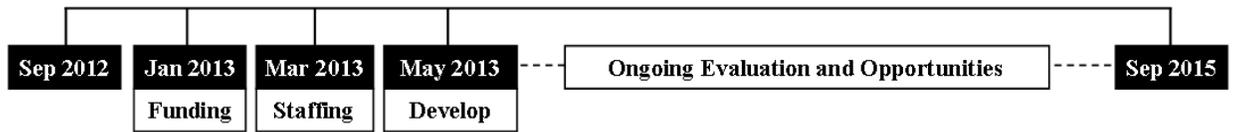
Begin communication with local schools in October 2012. Identify school to focus on and direction of ministry by May 2013. Launch school-focused ministry by September 2013.



- Builds a community-centered ministry with many opportunities for the involvement of members and community partners
- Offers resources and energy at a critical moment when school finances are in jeopardy
- Creates points for integration with other priority goals for the engagement of small groups, youth and young adults
- Continues to “brand” our church as a community that develops successful social justice ministries that have real impact (like the homeless shelter)
- Has potential for developing or using tools (e.g. anti-bullying curriculum) that can be replicated in other schools

5. **COMMUNICATIONS: Build a 10-member committee, staffed by a hired or contracted communications professional, to develop and implement a communications plan (including branding, social media, online video and email). Reach 80% of members monthly, connect with 75% of first-time visitors, and attract 12 earned media mentions annually within 3 years.**

Identify funding by January 2013. Secure staffing by March 2013. Develop communications plan by May 2013.



- Puts in place the communications infrastructure necessary to reach all age groups in adaptable ways in the congregation and in the wider community.
- Builds in a marketing component to support all Priority Goals and ensure successful outreach
- Offers the “scaffolding” of a common brand, visuals and messaging to integrate and leverage the success of efforts on all Priority Goals
- Secures a communications resource that can be used throughout church operations

Uses of the Strategic Plan

The five Priority Goals in this Strategic Plan will guide the development of our budget and the deployment of our staff. Our various committees will ascertain how they can make a contribution to our success on these Priority Goals. Our education curricula and worship experiences will all speak at key points to our work on these Goals. Decisions about new activities and expansion of areas will use the Priority Goals as a filter.

A strategic plan is not an operating plan. There are many aspects to the ongoing operations and functions of the church that are not addressed by the strategic plan. The strategic plan is a tool for focusing the efforts of the congregation on a few areas that are deemed to be significant and strategic for the ongoing sustainability of the church, for the vitality of our ministries, and for our impact on our members and wider community.

This Strategic Plan will not collect dust on a shelf. It will be a constant guide for pastoral and lay leadership, staff, Parish Conference, Ministry Conference, committees, teachers, volunteers and members.

Measurable Outcomes

In addition to meeting the metrics set within each Priority Goal, we will also monitor:

- Worship attendance
- Visitors
- Membership numbers and demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
- Financial support
- Participation of members in education, mission and outreach

Strategic Plan Development

The Planning Team coordinated the planning process and secured relevant data about our church and the broader community. They were assisted by the professional planning expertise of Dana L Brown Consulting. Parish Conference and Ministry Conference members (both outgoing and incoming) and FUMC staff engaged in three “Planning Hours” (April, May, June 2012) where they began the process of identifying “bold ideas” for the future, understanding the urgency of making change, and prioritizing areas for strategic plan goals. A retreat for church leadership was held on July 28, 2012 and attended by 50 members where the Priority Goals were developed. At an August Planning Hour, this plan was finalized for delivery to the congregation for their review and approval.