

# Strategic Plan

## First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

### Huntsville, Alabama for 2010-2017

Affirmed by Board on July 12, 2010

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#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this strategic plan is to aid in the implementation of the Future Story, which was discerned as God's future for our church by the Prayer Triads during 100 Days of Prayer during the fall of 2009.

There is more detail in the first two years or so of the plan because the unfolding of the later years will depend a great deal upon what is accomplished in the first two years and upon regular evaluation of progress and the plan itself. This plan will be reviewed every 180 days in order to make adjustments as needed and to celebrate that which has been accomplished since the last review. Changes and celebrations should be shared with the congregation in a public way and, as possible, in a context of worship.

The primary factor in the rate of forward movement is the congregation's *capacity* in terms of time, energy, and money. As the congregation grows, new time, energy and money will become available and a greater rate of movement will be achievable. Thus, for example, what might seem to be impossible in the fifth year of the plan (when seen from the perspective of the current day) will become quite do-able as the congregation steadily grows over the next seven years.

## **Principles**

The following guiding principles for the strategic plan were discerned from the Prayer Triad's comments and represent the characteristics of a transformed congregation. In order for First Christian Church to realize God's future us, the Future Story calls on the congregation of First Christian Church to:

- **Create a Christ centered environment for people of all ages that nurtures and fulfills spiritual needs so that all feel welcome**
- **Rediscover the core values of our denomination**
- **Serve the needs of our community, especially the most needy**
- **Do a better job of communicating who we are to the public**
- **Revitalize members and attracting new people**
- **Remain open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit**

## **Key Strategies**

First Christian Church currently has average worship attendance of 215 and participating membership of 420. Drawing on the Future Story and seeking to be faithful to the vision toward which it points, this plan aims to make First Christian a more vital congregation with 450 in average worship attendance and 800 participating members by the end of 2017 through the following key strategies:

1. Providing for an ongoing prayer ministry that will engage people in regular prayer for discernment, health and growth at First Christian.
2. More completely understanding and living our core values as Disciples of Christ.
3. Increasing the number of small groups offered.
4. Shifting the amount of time and energy spent on governance toward spiritual nurture and mission through right-sizing and other improvement; affirming and clarifying the definition, role and vision for "mission families".
5. Engaging in identification of gifts and skills, leadership development and training programs.
6. Providing strong stewardship education.
7. Maintaining and building on our strong commitment to local and global outreach.
8. Improving our communication, including more effective use of communication technology.
9. Developing intentional strategies for associational evangelism (e.g. development of mentors) and hospitality that generates genuine community that warmly welcomes member and visitor alike.
10. Strengthening the quality of our traditional worship offerings while also adding worship alternatives.
11. Strengthening ministry to children and families, including youth.
12. Continuing to review and improve our campus and buildings with an eye to possible needs in the areas of maintenance, remodeling and addition given our Future Story.

13. Developing a staff team that works together and effectively under girds the mission and program of First Christian, helping to build a unified and well equipped congregation and moving the congregation from a “staff centered” model to a “program centered” model. (See contextual analysis).

It is important to note that the congregation will not achieve a membership of 800, average worship attendance of 450, and the accompanying program in a year! Rather, the plan seeks to help the congregation grow into this size over the course of the next seven years.

### **Key Instruments of Implementation**

1. **The Future Story** was produced out of the yearlong visioning process of 2009-2010 and provides a vision of what First Christian Church will become by 2017 if it is faithful to what it has discerned God is calling it to be and do. The Future Story may be changed as events unfold and new understanding is discerned.
2. **The Strategic Plan:** developed by the Vision Team for comment by the congregation and affirmation by the Board.
3. **Long Range Planning Committee:** the Vision Team becomes this once the Strategic Plan is affirmed by the Board. The Long Range Planning Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress of implementation and recommending to the Board any mid-course corrections to the Strategic Plan each six months. The Committee is also responsible for reporting to the congregation, in various ways every six months, the details of progress and leading a celebration of the progress in public worship. The initial membership of the Long Range Planning Committee will be assigned to three annual classes, with a class rotating off (and a new class rotating on) each year, to provide for both freshness and continuity.
4. **Implementation Team:** as soon as the Strategic Plan is approved, an Implementation Team is developed in consultation between the Moderator, Staff, and the Long Range Planning Team for affirmation by the Board. The Implementation Team is responsible for recommending to the Board the assignment of specific tasks to specific individuals and/or groups and for holding those individuals and/or groups accountable to the plan through regular reports to the Board. A few of the members of this group should come from the original Vision Team for the sake of continuity and understanding of intent.
5. **Disciples 101 Class and other opportunities** for learning about whom we Disciples are: our history, core values, and distinctive characteristics. The Disciples 101 class curriculum is designed by the associate minister and two lay leaders selected by the associate minister. The class is eight weeks in duration and repeated three times each year (beginning in February, May, and September). This class will provide opportunities to connect with key FCC leadership (lay and staff), orient participants to the worship services (with particular attention being

paid to the origin and meaning of the structure and language of each service), explore the other offerings of FCC in mission and nurture, orient to the governance structures and customs, and address the expectations of members (Christian growth, worship attendance, stewardship, etc.).

A “**Visitors’ Orientation Seminar**” of 90 minutes duration (with refreshments) each month will provide a brief overview about Disciples history and beliefs and the history and current offerings of FCC. This event should provide interaction between visitors/prospective members and 3 or 4 key lay leaders as well as pastoral staff.

6. **Prayer Groups:** developed by the elders, these monthly groups will focus on the continued growth and faithfulness of FCC. There will be at least one group in place at all times with up to eight in a group.

7. **Small Groups Task Force:** this is a short-term task force that is appointed as needed by the Cabinet. Its purpose is to review the number, type and quality of small groups in order to recommend new small groups for implementation.

Quality small groups are essential in order to provide “ports of entry and engagement” for the un-churched and de-churched and to further address the needs of current members. As of June 2010, FCC has 21 small groups for adults (in which participation is emotionally significant). The total attendance in these groups is 427. However, because there is considerable overlap between them, we estimate perhaps 150 actual adult participants in such groups. The rule of thumb based on success of congregations of similar size is 7 groups per 100 adult participating members. That would suggest a total of perhaps 31 for 420 participating. So, there is a shortage of about 10 small groups for adults. An additional and important question is, “Are these small groups inviting and open to potential new members and others in the wider community?” It is much easier to become involved in a small group and gradually become a part of the larger congregation than it is to start out meeting with the congregation as a whole (i.e. in a worship service).

In addition, most of these small groups are designed for current members, which means there are even fewer places for *new* members and *potential* new members to “connect” with the congregation in a relatively easy and safe way. This is especially important to note in a congregation that practices “associational evangelism” (that is, people are *invited into association* with FCC where they *hear* the Gospel from the preacher, the choir, the classes and so forth and *experience* the Gospel in small groups and mission opportunities.). So, in addressing this matter, planners will want to pay special heed to developing small groups that address the spiritual needs of new people as well as long standing members including the young, old, single, divorced, and widowed.

Some of the new small groups will be designed to be offered off-campus in homes or public places. Some of the small groups may be short-term, with new topics beginning each 6 weeks or three months, for example.

Possible themes/subjects could include: Bible studies (including short term studies on themes such as “Survey of the Old and New Testaments,” “The Life

and Times of Jesus,” etc); forms and styles of worship (helping people better understand the elements of various styles); church history; Christian ethics; centering prayer; care groups built around grief, single parenting, life transitions; other themes around Scripture, the spiritual disciplines, life issues, etc.

8. **Development of a Communications Task Force:** to improve all aspects of communication within and beyond the congregation including the website; use of social media; regularly updated information posting on web and video display in Commons Area; increasing our public presence and visibility (branding); projecting a clear image of who we are (e.g. an annual signature event, signage, leveraging our location and campus with programming that reaches out to the community and that shares our facilities with others). This is an ongoing group of three or four people, preferably at least one of whom has special expertise in communications and at least one of whom has an overall understanding of the life and work of the congregation.
9. **Consultations:** consultations are a matter of annually (or as needed) calling together a small group of leaders on a one-time basis to review current circumstances and to think together about needs in a particular arena and how those needs could get met. The ideas generated in a consultation may be referred to particular program committees, to the board, to the staff, and/or to the next Annual Planning Event. Consultations generate recommendations rather than mandates: they are designed to help leadership “take a step back” to think “outside the box” and “big picture” in a way that is difficult to do when leading in the midst of day to day challenges. The recommendations coming out of consultations are always subject to review by an appropriate oversight group to be sure that recommended changes don’t overload the total program and staff capacity or create conflicts between programs. Examples in this strategic plan include the following:
  - A. **Worship Consultation:** in order to keep worship at First Christian fresh and engaging, and to meet the needs of all generations and potential participants, a “worship consultation” is convened to review the current worship offerings and any needed change, expansion, timing, etc. The consultation would typically include the ministerial and music staff, the lay chair of worship and 5 or 6 additional lay people chosen to be representative of the diversity of the congregation generationally, gender-wise, etc. This group may devise a three year recommended plan for current worship services to be enhanced (by the use of additional music, art, etc.) and any additional services to be offered in a way that does not “cannibalize” current services but addresses identified needs as effectively as possible. New services of worship might be different in character from the present services: there might be a kind of “contemporary” service or contemplative (such as a Taize) – depending on perceived needs of the envisioned audience. Most new alternative services would be offered at a time other than Sunday. This plan will be reviewed by a similarly comprised group each year, extending and maintaining a three year recommended plan. Each year these plans will be submitted to an appropriate oversight group or

groups (e.g. the full worship committee, and/or the board) and shared with the APE (Annual Planning Event) in the spring.

- B. Children’s Christian Education Consultation:** because First Christian seeks to be a congregation that “draws people of all ages” and “appreciates, affirms and “owns” children, a consultation is convened each year to review the current offerings in children’s educational ministries and to develop recommended plans for expansion of this area of programming. A three-year plan will be developed and reviewed annually by a similarly comprised group each year, extending and maintaining a three-year plan. Each year these plans will be submitted to an appropriate oversight group or groups (e.g. the full Christian education committee, and/or the board) and shared with the APE (Annual Planning Event) in the spring.
- C. Mission Consultation:** convened in order to “maintain and build on our commitment to local and global outreach. This consultation reviews the current mission involvements of First Christian Church locally and globally and to develop a three year plan for mission work locally and beyond. This consultation would address all aspects including the possibility of contacting other Disciples congregations in the city to develop ways to work together in local mission and in domestic and/or overseas mission trips in the next year and beyond. The consultation would include the ministerial staff, the lay chair of mission, and 5 or 6 lay people (selected by ministers and mission chair) to be representative of the diversity of the congregation. A three-year plan will be developed, recommended, and reviewed annually by a similarly comprised group each year, extending and maintaining a three-year plan. Each year, these plans will be submitted to an appropriate oversight group or groups (e.g. the full mission committee, and/or the board) and shared with the APE (Annual Planning Event) in the spring.
- D. Discipleship Consultation:** In order to be a safe place for people to grow in their faith and its expression, a “discipleship consultation” is convened to review current methods and processes for helping people grow in their faith and become engaged as part of the First Christian fellowship. Possibilities include creating triad groups for new and long-time members to be in together, and events in which members would gain experience and comfort in sharing their own faith story. The consultation would include the ministerial staff, the lay chairs of evangelism and membership, and 5 or 6 lay people (selected by the ministers and the appropriate program chairs) representative of the diversity of the congregation. A three-year plan will be developed, recommended, and reviewed annually by a similarly comprised group each year, extending and maintaining a three-year plan. Each year these plans will be submitted to an appropriate oversight group or groups (e.g. the full evangelism and membership committees, and/or the board) and shared with the APE (Annual Planning Event) in the spring.
- E. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation:** convened to review the current children and youth programming of First Christian and to plan for a growing program that, for example, integrates them into the whole life and ministry of the congregation, provides missions trips, participation in the regional and

national Disciples youth program, etc. The consultation would include the ministerial staff, the lay chairs of Christian education and mission, two middle school youth, two high school youth, and 5 or 6 lay people (selected by ministers and chairs) representative of the diversity of the congregation. A three-year plan will be developed, recommended and reviewed annually by a similarly comprised group each year, extending and maintaining a three-year plan. Each year these plans will be submitted to an appropriate oversight group or groups (e.g. the full Christian education and mission committees, and/or the board) and shared with the APE (Annual Planning Event) in the spring. E.g. strong youth program )

- F. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation:** convened to review current programming and attitudes and to continually develop a “culture of evangelism and hospitality” in the congregation, designing and supporting new ways and means to reach out, attract, and assimilate new participants into the body. Examples may include creating an outreach to college students (including international students) and Redstone visiting personnel (e.g. go into coffee shops, bookstores, campus, etc.). The consultation would include the entire ministerial staff, the evangelism and membership chairs, and 5 or 6 current participants representative of the diversity of the church (including relatively new participants who can speak to their recent experiences of FCC). Recommended plans will be developed for review by appropriate oversight groups (e.g. membership and evangelism committees, board).
10. **Annual Planning Event (APE):** an annual event in the spring, APE helps provide better program coordination and lessen dependence upon monthly program committee meetings during the course of the year, thus releasing some time and energy for other projects. It also helps develop wider ownership of the church’s program by the congregation. This event may result in some expansion of programming, *yet care must be taken to plan within capacity while also involving new members as well as longer-term members in the planning and execution of the programs.* This will help alleviate burnout among those who have “always been the workers” and will help to involve more people. The planning event will begin with worship, an invitation to an approach to planning that is marked by prayerful discernment, a review of the future story, and review of any input from consultations. Dick Hamm has materials that further describe the structure and set-up of APE.
11. **Governance Task Force:** a group of five persons (including a past Board chair, the current board chair, an elder, a current or former committee chair, plus the senior pastor ex officio) review the congregation’s governance structures with a view to a) right-sizing and streamlining while b) enhancing the congregation’s sense of being regularly consulted and the reality of their being regularly consulted, and c) shift the amount of members’ time and energy being spent on governance toward nurture and mission instead. The need for this shift reflects the change in perspective and needs of those born before and after 1945 (as described by Dick Hamm in “Recreating The Church”, Chalice Press, 2007).

It is recommended that rather than rewriting by-laws first, that the Task Force ask for the suspension of those by-laws that they wish to experiment with (always specifically indicating which by-laws and for how long), then try something new for a trial period of specific length at the end of which it can be decided to try something different, adopt the new practice, or go back to the original practice.

12. **Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar:** once adequate endowment policies are developed (utilizing the services of the Christian Church Foundation) these seminars are offered annually or every other year. These seminars are resourced by the Christian Church Foundation. It is an opportunity for members to include the church in their charitable giving and estate planning.
  
13. **Lay Leadership Development Program:** to be developed by a Lay leadership development Committee to review, develop, and give oversight to lay leadership development at FCC. Such a program will include several elements:
  - A. **Gifts and Skills Inventory:** offered regularly and accompanied by volunteer coordination and support of those engaged in ministries in the areas of nurture, mission, and governance in order to develop enthusiastic volunteers. The inventory will be designed to help individuals identify their spiritual gifts and skills and to identify what kinds of engagement for which they may be best suited and called. Some will express their ministries individually in ministries beyond the congregation, while others will express theirs within the programs and ministries of the congregation itself. There are many such inventories available, but it may be necessary to develop one locally that appreciates the equality of genders, etc.

Ultimately, to be most effective, people engaging in such ministries will be provided with points of accountability (such as an elder or other designated person) to provide regular oversight, nurture, and appreciation.) For example, the “point of accountability” may meet with an individual each three months to ask questions such as: “How is your ministry/service going?” “What is working and not working?” “What are your points of greatest satisfaction and frustration?” “Is there any way in which First Christian could help you in your work?” As such a session ends, the leader prays for the person and his/her ministry/service.
  - B. **Development of lay officer and committee job descriptions and handbooks:** clarity about roles, responsibilities, resources, and lines of accountability are essential to satisfying service in lay leadership. These resources should be developed in a way that lifts up the congregation’s core values, mission and vision.
  - C. **“Fellowship of Twelve”:** a lay leader development program to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church. The staff and elders will select 12 people each year to be mentored in a “Fellowship of 12” leadership development program. Dick Hamm has materials to guide the development of this program.

14. **Early Childhood Ministry:** strengthening and building a bridge to ECM, reaffirming its connection to First Christian through orientation for families and seeking ways to minister directly to ECM families (e.g. Friday nights out for parents). A task force is developed to review the current relationship of ECM and FCC and to plan ways to strengthen that relationship and to connect more effectively with ECM families.
15. **Consultation with Church Extension:** to review our current campus and buildings with an eye to possible needs in the areas of maintenance, remodeling, and additions as may support our Future Story.
16. **Staff Meetings, Retreats, and Annual Evaluations:** in order to facilitate the staff becoming and remaining a team, the staff will meet weekly to review goals, calendar, and possibilities for collaboration. As team leader, the senior pastor will provide for these meetings. In addition the ministerial staff will meet in 24 – 48 hour retreat at least once a year. Annual evaluations will be conducted as a means to helping staff succeed by providing accurate feedback from the congregation. Evaluations will be tailored to match the job descriptions of individual staff members, but all will include elements relating to being a “team player” and working in collaboration with both staff and members (360 degree approach).
17. **Staff additions:** new staff will be added as needed to facilitate the growth and depth of First Christian Church. As staff team leader, the senior pastor participates in all searches for new staff members.

# The Strategic Plan

## Remainder of 2010

### Overall Goals for remainder of 2010:

1. To present a strategic plan based on the Future Story to the Board for review, amendment (if needed), approval of the first year and affirmation in principle of the rest of the plan (knowing that mid-course corrections will occur as the plan unfolds) .
2. To begin implementing the plan.
3. To increase average worship attendance to 225 (10 persons over the 2010 mid-year average of 215) and to add 10 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 420 to 430.
4. To add 2 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (21 groups in mid-2010 to 23 minimum by the end of 2010).

### August, 2010

1. Visioning Team completes a draft of a Strategic Plan and presents it to the Board for reflection, affirmation and/or amendment. (key #2)
2. Upon affirmation of the Strategic Plan by the Board, the Vision Team becomes the Long Range Planning Committee. The Committee monitors the progress of implementation and, in various ways reports the details of progress every six months to the congregation, leading celebration of the progress in public worship. (key #3)
3. An Implementation Team is developed in consultation between the Moderator, Staff, and the Long Range Planning Team for affirmation by the Board. The Implementation Team is responsible for recommending to the Board the assignment of specific tasks to specific individuals and/or groups and for holding those individuals and/or groups accountable to the plan through regular reports to the Board. (key #4)

### September 2010

1. “Visitors’ Orientation seminars” are planned by staff and key lay leaders. (key #5)
2. In order to provide “ports of entry and engagement” for the un-churched and de-churched and to further address the needs of current members, a “small groups task force” meets to consider what small groups need to be added in the remainder of 2010, with two (net) to be added by the end of 2010. This task force will be appointed through consultation of the Cabinet and staff. (key #7)
3. Weekly staff meetings begin. (key #16)
4. ECM Task Force meets. (key #14)

### October, 2010

1. These groups will continue throughout the year and may be extended into the future. (key #6)
2. The Lay Leadership development Committee begins work by reviewing and amending the spiritual gifts and skills inventory. (key #13)
3. The Communications Task Force begins work. (key #7)

### **November 2010**

1. “Visitors’ Orientation Seminars” begin. (key #5)
2. In order to connect members’ giving with the Future Story and what God is seeking to do with and through First Christian Church, during this month the stewardship campaign will be built around the Future Story and will encourage members to increase their giving by 1% of their income.
3. The “Disciples 101” class curriculum is created for a start-up in February, 2011. (key #5)

### **December 2010**

1. A consultation with Church Extension. (key #15)

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# **2011**

### **Overall Goals for 2011:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 250 (25 persons over the 2010 average of 225) and to add 30 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 430 to 460.
2. To add 3 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (23 groups at the end of 2010 to 226 minimum by the end of 2011).
3. To begin using effectively an Annual Planning Event to develop a reshaped program (in line with the Vision) and to begin reducing the amount of time and energy spent in governance and program committees in order to free up members’ time and energy for spiritual nurture and mission activity.
4. To begin a “Fellowship of Twelve” leadership development group.

### **January, 2011**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date. (key #3)
2. Staff evaluation. (key #16)
3. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

## **February, 2011**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan. (key #3)
2. Endowment policies are developed for FCC utilizing the services of the Christian Church Foundation. (key #12)
3. The staff and lay leadership develop a “Fellowship of Twelve” curriculum for use with a group July, 2011 – June, 2012. (key #13C)
4. “Disciples 101” class begins. (key #5)
5. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)
6. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)
7. Children’s Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)
8. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)
9. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)
10. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)
11. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

## **March, 2011**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year’s programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event (“Which programs and events are thriving?” “Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?” etc.). (key #10)

## **April, 2011**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)
2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the “Fellowship of 12” leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

## **May, 2011**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

## **June, 2011**

## **July, 2011**

1. This year’s class of the “Fellowship of Twelve” begins meeting. (key #13C)
2. A Governance Task Force begins meeting. (key #11)

### **August, 2011**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

### **September, 2011**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

3. Lay leadership Development Task Force begins development of job descriptions and handbooks. (key 13B)

### **October, 2011**

### **November, 2011**

### **December, 2011**

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## **2012**

### **Overall Goals for 2012:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 280 (30 persons over the 2011 average of 250) and to add 40 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 460 to 500.

2. To add 5 adult small groups (*net*) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 26 groups at the end of 2011 to 31 minimum by the end of 2012).

3. To continue using effectively the Annual Planning Event to develop a reshaped program (in line with the Future Story) and to begin reducing the amount of time and energy spent in governance and program committees in order to free up members' time and energy for spiritual nurture and mission activity.

4. To engage in an exploration of how governance might be right-sized and improved.

### **January, 2012**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.

2. Staff evaluation. (key #16)

3. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

### **February, 2012**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. The annual “Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar” (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)

3. “Disciples 101” class begins. (key #5)

4. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)

5. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)

6. Children’s Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)

7. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)

8. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)

9. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)

10. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

### **March, 2012**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year’s programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event (“Which programs and events are thriving?” “Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?” etc.). (key #10)

### **April, 2012**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)

2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the “Fellowship of 12” leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

### **May, 2012**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **June 2012**

**July, 2012**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key #13C)

**August, 2012**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

**September, 2012**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

**October, 2012****November, 2012****December, 2012**

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## 2013

**Overall Goals for 2013:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 310 (30 persons over the 2012 average of 280) and to add 50 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 500 to 550.
2. To add 5 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 31 groups at the end of 2012 to 36 minimum by the end of 2013).

**January, 2013**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.

2. The annual "Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar" (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)

3. Staff evaluation. (key #16)
4. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

### **February, 2013**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.
2. "Disciples 101" class begins. (key #5)
3. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)
4. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)
5. Children's Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)
6. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)
7. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)
8. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)
9. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

### **March, 2013**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.). (key #10)

### **April, 2013**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)
2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the "Fellowship of 12" leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

### **May, 2013**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **June, 2013**

### **July, 2013**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key #13C)

### **August, 2013**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

### **September, 2013**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.
2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **October, 2013**

### **November, 2013**

### **December, 2013**

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## **2014**

### **Overall Goals for 2014:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 340 (30 persons over the 2013 average of 310) and to add 55 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 550 to 605.
2. To add 5 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 36 groups at the end of 2013 to 41 minimum by the end of 2014).

### **January, 2014**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.
2. The annual "Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar" (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)
3. Staff evaluation. (key #16)
4. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year

ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

### **February, 2014**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. A stewardship of accumulated resources seminar is offered both to help members plan for their financial future and to begin promoting interest in the congregation's endowment.

3. "Disciples 101" class begins. (key #5)

4. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)

5. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)

6. Children's Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)

7. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)

8. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)

9. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)

10. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

### **March, 2014**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.). (key #10)

### **April, 2014**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)

2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the "Fellowship of 12" leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

### **May, 2014**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **June, 2014**

### **July, 2014**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key #13C)

### **August, 2014**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

### **September, 2014**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **October, 2014**

### **November, 2014**

### **December, 2014**

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## **2015**

### **Overall Goals for 2015:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 375 (35 persons over the 2014 average of 340) and to add 60 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 605 to 665.

2. To add 5 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 41 groups at the end of 2014 to 46 minimum by the end of 2015).

### **January, 2015**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.

2. The annual “Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar” (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)

3. Staff evaluation. (key #16)

4. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

## **February, 2015**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. A stewardship of accumulated resources seminar is offered both to help members plan for their financial future and to begin promoting interest in the congregation's endowment.

3. Search Committee and the senior pastor meet to plan for the hiring of a half-time program person specializing in needed areas.

4. "Disciples 101" class begins. (key #5)

5. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)

6. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)

7. Children's Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)

8. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)

9. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)

10. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)

11. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

## **March, 2015**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.). (key #10)

## **April, 2015**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)

2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the "Fellowship of 12" leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

## **May, 2014**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

## **June, 2015**

## **July, 2015**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key #13C)

## **August, 2015**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

### **September, 2015**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **October, 2015**

### **November, 2015**

### **December, 2015**

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## **2016**

### **Overall Goals for 2016:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 410 (35 persons over the 2015 average of 375) and to add 65 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 665 to 730.

2. To add 5 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 46 groups at the end of 2015 to 51 minimum by the end of 2016).

### **January, 2016**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.

2. The annual “Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar” (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)

3. Staff evaluation. (key #16)

4. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

## **February, 2016**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. A stewardship of accumulated resources seminar is offered both to help members plan for their financial future and to begin promoting interest in the congregation's endowment.

3. "Disciples 101" class begins. (key #5)
4. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)
5. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)
6. Children's Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)
7. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)
8. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)
9. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)
10. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

## **March, 2016**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.). (key #10)

## **April, 2016**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)
2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the "Fellowship of 12" leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

## **May, 2016**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

## **June, 2016**

## **July, 2016**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key#13C)

## **August, 2016**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

2. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.).

### **September, 2016**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **October, 2016**

### **November, 2016**

### **December, 2016**

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## **2017**

### **Overall Goals for 2017:**

1. To increase average worship attendance to 450 (40 persons over the 2016 average of 410) and to add 70 *net* new members (by baptism and/or transfer) to boost participating membership from 730 to 800.

2. To add 5 adult small groups (net) in which participation is emotionally significant in order to continue growth in membership and worship attendance (from 51 groups at the end of 2016 to 56 minimum by the end of 2017).

### **January, 2017**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in February of what has been achieved to date.

2. The annual "Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Seminar" (SOAR) is offered. (key #12)

3. Staff evaluation. (key #16)

4. 24-48 hour Staff Retreat to review the past year and look forward to the year ahead with emphasis on spiritual renewal, relationship and team building. (key #16)

### **February, 2017**

1. Public/worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.
2. A stewardship of accumulated resources seminar is offered both to help members plan for their financial future and to begin promoting interest in the congregation's endowment.
3. "Disciples 101" class begins. (key #5)
4. Small Groups Task Force meets. (key #7)
5. Worship Consultation held. (key #9)
6. Children's Christian Education Consultation held. (key #9)
7. Mission Consultation held. (key #9)
8. Discipleship Consultation held. (key #9)
9. Children and Youth Ministry Consultation held. (key #9)
10. Evangelism and Hospitality Consultation held. (key #9)

### **March, 2017**

1. Preparation for Annual Planning Event: Ministers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event ("Which programs and events are thriving?" "Which are declining and should either be renewed or terminated?" etc.). (key #10)

### **April, 2017**

1. Annual Planning Event (APE). (key #9)
2. In order to mentor people into servant leadership and a broad understanding of the faith and heritage of our church, the staff and elders select 12 people to be mentored in the "Fellowship of 12" leadership development program that will run from July through June. (key #13C)

### **May, 2017**

1. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **June, 2017**

### **July, 2017**

1. This year's class of the "Fellowship of Twelve" begins meeting. (key #13C)

### **August, 2017**

1. The Long Range Planning Committee meets to review the Strategic Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration in September of what has been achieved to date.

### **September, 2017**

1. In order to keep the Future Story current and to keep it before the congregation, there is a public worship celebration of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the strategic plan.

2. Disciples 101 begins anew. (key #5)

### **October, 2017**

### **November, 2017**

### **December, 2017**

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### **Some Assumptions:**

1. More small groups are added with each Small Group Consultation and/or Annual Planning Event. The assumption here is that two out of three will take hold and continue, while one of three will be unsuccessful or will succeed but end after running their course in a year or a few years.

2. Half ministerial staff positions are added occasionally. The assumption is that growth requires additional staff both to maintain and to increase. Adding a one-half staff person could mean increasing a half-time person to full time or adding two quarter time people or any such combination as seems most helpful and appropriate.

3. As the plan unfolds, it may be found that the designated months for specific events are not the best. As experience is gained, the dates of specific events in the plan may be changed to reflect optimum times, rates of change, etc.

4. The congregation will regularly pray for what it needs in the way of visitors, new members, leadership, and other resources.

5. Many of the year-to-year details of these plans will be developed in the yearly APE (Annual Planning Event).

### **Other programs to consider:**

1. Establish a “Sunday Morning Book Store” to sell books every Sunday morning regarding the Disciples, church history, good Bible study resources, etc.

2. Religious Film Festival

3. Two seniors groups for those in early retirement and late retirement.

4. Mission trips could be offered (alternating between domestic and foreign).

Domestic mission trips might be near Huntsville or somewhere else in the country. Foreign mission trips would be coordinated with the denomination. Non-members (including prospective members) would be welcome to take part in these trips (this would be very attractive to some in the community who might thus be drawn into association and membership). Preparation would be provided in each case for participants so that individuals learn about the deeper social-economic, political, cultural and theological issues inherent in each domestic or foreign mission setting.

### Statistical Projections

	Worship Beginning	Adds	Worship End	Members Beginning	Adds	Members End	Groups Beginning	Adds	Groups End
2010	215	10	225	420	10	430	21	2	23
2011	225	25	250	430	30	460	23	3	26
2012	250	30	280	460	40	500	26	5	31
2013	280	30	310	500	50	550	31	5	36
2014	310	30	340	550	55	605	36	5	41
2015	340	35	375	605	60	665	41	5	46
2016	375	35	410	665	65	730	46	5	51
2017	410	40	450	730	70	800	51	5	56

Attach Future Story here followed by Contextual Analysis