

STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLAN

for

CLOVERDALE UNITED CHURCH

November 16, 2014

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INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to develop a strategic ministry plan is a privilege for our community. Our hope is that an intentional ministry plan will lead us toward God's intended future for us as the Body of Christ in Cloverdale and beyond. Just as we rely on God, God relies on each of us to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

HOW DID WE GET HERE

It all began with our ministry group Forward in Faith. In the fall of 2012 our council sanctioned a small team of people to study the sustainability of our congregation. We met to discern our assets and liabilities in terms of the following:

- People power
- Our building
- Our finances

BEQUEST

Next in the fall of 2013 we received a bequest from the estate of Florence Attoe for just over \$1,000,000.00. An amazing gift that wasn't the answer to our sustainability, but it gave us a hope for the future if a sustainable plan could be created and agreed upon.

STRATEGIC MINISTRY PLAN

As research began on how to discern what to do with the money many consultants were approached. In the spring of 2014 we contracted with Rob Waller & Associates to help us develop a Strategic Ministry Plan: that would be a plan of action for our future. Rob Waller has worked with this congregation before and many other churches to help develop Strategic Ministry Plans.

THRIVE TEAM

A small group of leaders were gathered for the core team that would do the preliminary work for developing and strategic ministry plan. The Thrive Core Team, consists of the following members:

- Penny Meadows – Chair and Finances
- Doug Sowerby - Building
- Marguerite Cryer – Strategic Ministry Plan
- Tanya Grace – Communications and Outreach
- Lori Megley-Best – Strategic Ministry Plan
- Rob Waller – Consultant

Over the spring and summer of 2014 the Thrive Core Team has consistently met with each other as well as with other members of the congregation who formed the Core Team's support teams. Research has included, but was not limited to the following areas:

- Changes in the church of North America
- What thriving churches are doing
- Community of Cloverdale and Surrey, the social issues that they are addressing and needs
- Finances
- Building – including an inspection
- Communications

OUR CONTEXT – THE CHURCH IN OUR CULTURE

REPORT ON CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

Context for the Church in North America

- Attendance of the United Church has been dropping since 1984 by 2.5%. Going from 404,000 members in 1984 – 167,000 members in 2011.
- If this trend continues by the year 2025 there will be only 25,000 members
- Membership and attendance is decreasing in all Protestant mainline churches, as well as in some Evangelical Churches, Catholic Church, synagogues, mosques, Kiwanis clubs, girl and boy scouts, bowling leagues, etc. Displaying that our culture is changing and people are not joining groups as before
- Decline is not because we are doing anything wrong
- All of our neighbourhood churches are struggling

A STUDY

(According to Nancy Ammerman, in Congregation and Community, an American study of protestant churches)

CHURCHES ARE RESPONDING IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. **Declining/dying** – congregations who choose to maintain the existing identities usually survive for one generation

or

2. **Moving** – moving to another area that will support the existing model of church

or

3. **Finding a Niche Ministry** – this means finding ONE area to focus on outwardly that speaks to the congregation; this is the option that works best for small churches. Focusing on more than one thing spreads folks and resources too thin and leads to decline

or

4. **Amalgamating** – joining with a church that is different and not on your doorstep contributes to the most success; amalgamation with a church that is the same as you continues the trajectory of decline, the influx of resources just delays the decline/death of the church. More successful when they release property for funding ministry

or

5. **Adapting** – Involves finding new partnerships, developing new leaders and new programs

CHANGE IS THE MOST HELPFUL RESPONSE

- Churches that survive these days, survive because their primary engagement is in ministry outside of the church; churches that seek to exist purely through developing revenue do not last long (because we need people and energy more than we need money to be the church)
- For small churches in big decline, the following have been found to be helpful:
 - Sacrificial giving
 - Community partnership
 - Lay leadership development
 - Small groups to help develop relationships in the community

“There is a path through change that leads to greater resiliency” – Margaret Wheatley

IN THE PRESBYTERY

United Churches in our presbytery are struggling. Many churches are striving to determine the best plan of action for survival. Some churches are selling their building and renting space; some are amalgamating or considering some kind of partnership with another congregation; some are seeking to redevelop and to live off the avails of developed space; some are seeking to form partnerships with a community entity; some are closing.

According to our United Church polity, the presbytery has jurisdiction over the use of large funds of money and/or the property of each congregation. Our presbytery chooses to exercise its oversight over congregations by asking for and expecting congregations to be working from an intentional ministry plan. As of late, our presbytery has been withholding funds from a congregation until they produce a viable ministry plan. This is to encourage congregations to be actively engaging in ministry.

Fraser Presbytery has a fund from which it will help congregations fund their ministry projects. This fund is for ministry projects that seek to meet the needs of those outside the church community.

OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

We have 75 households who are active in our community through offering service and/or financial contributions. Like many United Church congregations, we have many seniors who make up our community. We also have a large number of households involved in the workforce as well as enough children to have a Sunday School (many of the congregations in this presbytery no longer have a Sunday School, we are SO fortunate!). 74% of our active members have the resources to take on tasks and serve ministry teams. In the last two years, we have had 14 new singles or families come to our community and stay. All of these people are active participants in our congregation. According to the 2011 JNAC report, we are a congregation that values faith development and bible study, yet it is difficult to get folks to come to study groups. We have worked and succeeded in improving our relationship with Hazelmere United Church over the last three years.

COMMUNITY OF CLOVERDALE

The historical town of Cloverdale is the designated town centre of Surrey, British Columbia. The town was founded initially as a small farming community in 1870 for its fertile land and temperate climate; and has since become enveloped by suburban homes, making it a small town in the suburbs.

The community of Cloverdale is currently home to 54,400 people. An area saturated with single family dwellings, townhouses and condos with 88% of the households being families. With recreational centres, elementary schools, a swimming pool, ice rink and other opportunities for children to participate in activities, it's no wonder the town of Cloverdale is becoming largely a community of young families.

CENTRES OF INFLUENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

"In terms of the specific needs in Cloverdale, "supporting the healthy development of children and youth" could be a need for the community of Cloverdale (including Clayton), as the community is full of young families."

From a Social Planning's perspective, our current priorities are:

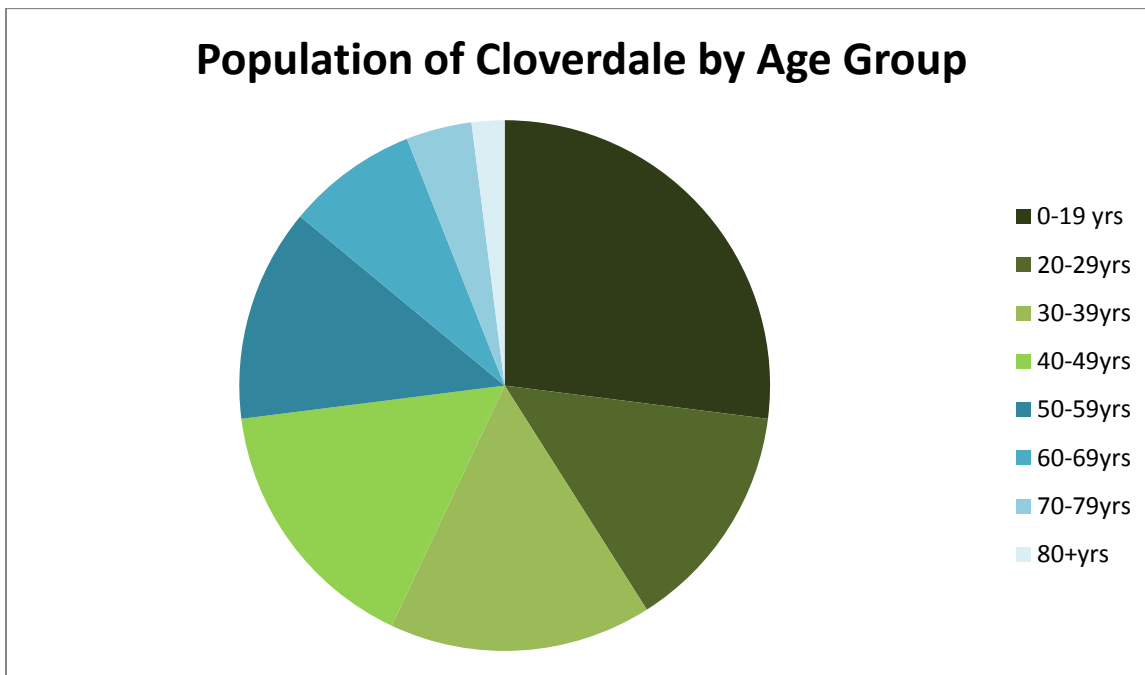
- Supporting the settlement and inclusion of new immigrants to the community, especially refugees
- Reducing poverty
- Addressing homelessness

It is great to hear that your church is looking at ways to become more involved in the community.

- Aileen Murphy – Senior Social Planner for the City of Surrey

"Thank you for your interest in the community. The one thing that I think would work and is needed is some kind of coffee club, which could be a good outreach for you. This would be good for young families or seniors."

- Ben Wevers – Executive Director of Cloverdale District Chamber of Commerce



PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT

To thrive in faith through relationship with God, one another, and the community.

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENT

Serving others as Jesus would.

These statements will be used to guide decisions made by our church Council and by any other groups or individuals making decisions on behalf of our congregation. All of our decisions and actions will be measured against these statements to ensure that we are acting from our faith stance and that we are moving toward our preferred future.

COVENANT FOR A THRIVING FUTURE:

We acknowledge that God has brought us to this place. That God is with us now, as close to us as our breath; and that God has already gone ahead of us into the future. God's desire for us is to THRIVE. So we hold God as our primary reference point on this journey of renewal.

We will listen and watch for the energy and encouragement of the Holy Spirit in our own heart and mind and in the core of this community.

We promise:

To grow with each other as we seek to discern the new directions in which God is leading us by openly sharing our prayers, energy and gifts with the community.

We promise:

To be open and honest with one another. We accept that disagreement and evaluation are normal and natural. We will make decisions as a team and support those decisions publicly whether or not we personally agree.

We promise:

To maintain confidentiality in matters both personal and professional.

We promise:

To stay passionate about the future of Cloverdale United Church. Leaning on God and each other during times of struggle and celebrating together as we endeavor to thrive.

We promise:

As disciples of Christ, individually and together, we will BE the change we want to see.

MINISTRY GOALS

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: *Establish the congregation as a place where faith is talked about and practiced.*

OBJECTIVE: *To offer a variety of experiences for faith development.*

STRATEGIES:

Strategy #1: To develop a men's group where men can share their lives and faith

Tactic:

- hire a male leader on contract to lead the group

Strategy #2: To establish the spiritual practice of having every group that is part of our church (including, Council, the choir, each UCW group etc), begin their gathering time with a spiritual protocol

The Protocol will include the following:

- checking in by sharing something personal from their lives eg. a joy and a challenge
- reading a short piece of scripture together and sharing briefly from it
- praying together

Tactics:

- publish guidelines for the spiritual practice
- provide a training session for group leaders

Strategy #3: Develop small group ministry in our congregation with the goal to having more than half the congregation involved

Tactic:

- groups of 10 or less will meet for a specified period of time and purpose and be led by a trained leader.

Examples of groups:

- share/explore a faith topic
- participate in spiritual practice

Strategy #4: Development and training of lay leaders

Tactics:

- training for group leadership will be offered to all leaders
- training for specific leadership roles will be offered eg. reading scripture; leading worship; preaching; leading services for Zion
- pastoral care training will be offered for those who would like to offer care on behalf of the church

NICHE MINISTRY

GOAL: *Work together to be outwardly focused and actively involved in our community.*

OBJECTIVE: *Develop a “niche” ministry outreach project (evaluated yearly) increasing the opportunities for the congregation to connect with and engage in missional work, in the community of Cloverdale*

This ministry would include the following elements:

- provide ministry to families &/or children
- have a hands-on focus
- be in partnership with another church or other group in the community

STRATEGY: To build on our strengths by expanding our current Hamper ministry with Guildford Park Secondary School. This was chosen because of our existing partnership, congregational interest and success of our current hamper outreach. The idea here is to start small, and to grow step by step

Tactics:

- appoint a team to approach Guildford Park School to enquire about expansion of our ministry with them and work with the school to meet identified needs
- evaluate this work and expand our ministry to the Cloverdale area
- hire a staff person to co-ordinate and organize and expand the ministry so that it can be “participation friendly” e.g. include our community garden ministry in this outreach project

PARTICIPATION

GOAL: *Increase engagement and participation with our church family.*

OBJECTIVE: *Learn more about each other personally and ensure all people in the congregation can participate in the service through a variety of forms of communication.*

STRATEGIES:

Strategy #1: Form a small group to compile a list of gifts and interests (hobbies) of the congregation

Tactics:

- Collect through various forms of communication, (for example our existing email list), the question "Do you have a gift you are willing to share and what are your interests?"
- Compile and share this information

Strategy #2: Request a small group be formed to investigate the cost and implementation of the placement of items to assist in everyone being able to clearly follow and participate in the worship service.

Some suggestions are:

- having large print available
- magnifying glasses in the pews
- increase the visibility of the service through evaluation of the existing audio-visual system

Tactic:

- By February 2015 have this group present to council the cost to implement these services

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

GOAL: *Develop and provide a ministry focus to Families, Youth and Children (including Sunday school).*

OBJECTIVE: *To offer a variety of ways to increase engagement of families, children and youth (both within the church and in the community) by providing faith-based and age appropriate activities.*

STRATEGIES:

Strategy #1: Hire a staff person to begin a youth and family ministry; the process should be started by January 2015. This person would be responsible for Sunday school, outreach to the community, educational and faith-based activities for youth and families aside from Sunday mornings as well as starting a youth group.

Tactics:

- Identify members of the congregation who would assist in the process of working with M&P to hire this person.
- To better meet the needs of the congregation also hire someone to care for 0 to three year olds in the 'quiet' room during worship services. The goal is to have this in place by the end of March 2015.
- To provide children's summer program during the worship service by summer 2015.
- Offering family ministry by planning speakers and educational opportunities for families on a bi-monthly basis.
 - Identify members of the congregation with a specific skill set to share their expertise. ie: financial planning for families.
 - Work with other organizations within the community that have the expertise to offer speakers.

Strategy #2: Increase intergenerational engagement in the church.

Tactic:

- Have at least one activity per month where multi-generational groups can engage with each other.

Strategy #3: Consider a youth choir for 2016.

FINANCES

Overview: The following amounts are as of Oct 15, 2014

- **Operating Fund:** 95,826.12**
- **Building Fund: 212,629.72**
- **Bequest: 1,007,738.05**

**** Operating Fund includes**

- The Memorial Fund
- Some of the Building Fund
- Some of the Hamper Monies
- Assistance Monies

GOAL: Increase the ministry capacity of the congregation through development of a sustainable financial position.

OBJECTIVE #1: To be able to show clearly how much money is available for each specific category. This would clearly define a budget and ensure funds were used for the purpose they were acquired. For example, our current Operating Fund does not accurately reflect our actual financial status.

Strategy: By January 1 2015 review the 2014 bank statements and ensure all expenses which were to come from a specific category (ie building expenses), came from the building fund not the operating expenses.

Tactic:

- Once the objective is met, review the financial statements quarterly to ensure this practice is met.

OBJECTIVE #2: Make a financial plan to generate funds to cover the deficit and ensure sustainability of the Ministry Plan.

Strategy: Invest a portion of the bequest to generate funds to cover the deficit. As of the Annual Report 2013 this was approximately \$25,000.00. As well as implement an increased giving program in 2015 to ensure the sustainability of the ministry plan

Tactics:

- Review options available for investment which would generate an income to Cloverdale United Church to assist in generating the necessary income to accomplish the goal. By February 2015 present to CUC Council the available options.
- Identify members of the congregation interested in assisting with this process

GOVERNANCE

GOAL: Develop a governance model that will most enhance our movement to a missional model of church that includes the development and encouragement of Lay Leadership.

OBJECTIVE: To restructure our current governance model to a model that is more effective, supports our strategic goals and includes the following elements:

- accountability
- roles, terms and job descriptions
- standardized orientation and training
- regular updates from Council provided to the congregation

Strategy: appoint a team to research and develop a governance model that is appropriate for the size of our congregation

Tactics:

- to present that model for congregational approval prior to the 2015 AGM
- shift the annual election of Council members to a congregational meeting in June

FACILITY PLAN

GOAL: *To ensure the facility remains a safe and stable environment capable of meeting all our future needs and mission objectives.*

OBJECTIVE #1: *To address the repairs and deficiencies identified through the 2014 building condition report:*

- Repair to the crack in the twisting foundation
- Repair by painting and, where necessary, repairing of the stucco to prevent water damage
- Add a 'heat to rise' detector in the kitchen (This will lower our insurance premiums slightly)
- Add smoke detectors and a Co detector where recommended by the Surrey fire department
- AED defibrillator and first aid training
- Oil tank inspection and if necessary it's removal
- Seal rodent access points beneath the sanctuary
- Repair to the concrete flooring in the lower hall
- New flooring or resurfacing of existing concrete (following its repair) in the lower hall providing something more durable and aesthetically pleasing
- Repair and paint the trim around the windows on the south and east sides of the building

Strategies:

- Review all the data collected by the THRIVE committee's "Facility Plan Support Team" and research any points of concern where actions have not yet been taken
- Obtain work quotes and cost estimates whenever possible

Tactics:

- Investigate the agreement between the church and the City of Surrey
- Appoint a team as a "Health and Safety Committee" to spearhead the health and safety concerns which would include the fire safety and medical related items. (Training for volunteers would also fall to this group)

Budget Assessment

Estimated cost **\$65,000**

OBJECTIVE #2: *Updating the facility to make it more functional and inviting for the congregation and outside users.*

- Adding a more multi-purpose functionality to the existing meeting spaces including the quiet room
- Update meeting rooms to be more cosmetically appealing taking into account comfort, atmosphere and technology (Computer network, monitors or projectors for note taking and webcams for conference calling)
- Enhance functionality of the Sunday school room
- Make the narthex space more welcoming and if possible more functional (a place for two or three individuals to meet and talk)
- Sound proofing of the upper hall to increase its functionality and extend usability to other groups and times of use
- Relocating the projector system in the sanctuary to a less visually restrictive location
- Audio visual upgrades for the sanctuary to accommodate guest speakers and lecturers

Strategies:

- Identify members of the congregation who have a creative flair for interior design solutions.
- Identify members of the congregation who are technically savvy that share a desire to modernize the facility through the addition or upgrading of the audio visual and networking components of the building
- Interview user groups (i.e. Sunday school teaching staff) to identify any specific requirements for a given space
- Obtain work quotes and cost estimates whenever possible

Tactics:

- Identify members of the congregation to create two separate teams that will consult and coordinate when necessary:
 - Creative Support team - to review and research ways in which to make the meeting rooms, Sunday School room and narthex more welcoming and functional
 - Technical Support team - to review and research upgrading, relocating and or adding technology to the sanctuary and the meeting rooms providing a larger scope of functionality
- Prepare a brief synopsis by March 2015 along with a budget assessment of each issue and present it to Council

Budget Assessment

Estimated cost **\$50,000**

OBJECTIVE #3: *To provide a greater level of visual appeal and to convey a sense of mission and awareness to the outward community:*

- Landscaping / beautification of the church grounds
- New sign relocated out front and made to blend with the look of the facility following any beautification upgrades
- Define ways to attract attention to the facility

Strategies:

- Investigate any restrictions to the exterior based on historical status
- Obtain work quotes and cost estimates whenever possible
- Brainstorm ways to enhance visual appeal.

Tactics:

- Appoint a team to review and research ways in which to make the grounds more attractive (lived in), inviting and reflective of who we are,
- Prepare for February 2015 a brief synopsis along with a budget assessment of each issue and present it to Council

Budget Assessment

Estimated cost **\$25,000**

Total estimated budget for this goal: **\$140,000**

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE MINISTRY PLAN

Our financial plan assumes that the funding of the ministry plan initiatives would be provided through The Attoe Estate. Having the Attoe Estate funds has given us the ability to use a portion for implementing the initial two year start up costs of the ministry plan goals. A plan to conduct an increased giving program for our operations budget is recommended for next year, then integrating the long-term implementation of the ministry plan into the operational budget after two years.

The plan will allow us to:

- Create a two-year window for growing the congregation and ensuring the congregation's future sustainability;
- Keep our options open for providing a niche ministry and form collaborative partnerships by maintaining our building in a good state and creating more meeting spaces that are attractive to the community;
- Limit capital expenditures to essential equipment (not spending money we do not have);
- Provide time for our minister to devote to the implementation of the ministry plan and growing the congregation;
- Make some program and governance changes which advance our governance and overall ministries.

This means that the visionary plans described earlier will be pursued modestly as we proceed toward implementation of key components of the ministry plan in early 2015. For example:

- We cannot yet have our minister devote 50% of her time to implementing the ministry plan.
- We may be able to make a few changes to our worship space but significant enhancements will wait until long range plans for our building are known.
- The full potential of our ministry plan depends on the full engagement of members of the congregation and the shared desire to grow our congregation through faith development and increased outreach ministry, actively over a 2 year period.
- We will rely on volunteers as much as possible for serving on teams to implement these goals so that we can be who God is calling us to be.
- Assistance with contracting expertise in fulfilling our ministry plan needs will be pursued immediately.

MINISTRY PLAN COSTS – NEXT 2 YEARS

FACILITY PLAN:

- The Building repairs and improvements will be \$140,000
 - See Facility Plan Goals

MINISTRY STAFFING FUND:

- In order to provide funding for the various initiatives the Thrive Team is proposing that a special fund of \$ 60,000 be established for each year 2015 and 2016.
 - See Faith Development Goals
 - Niche Ministry Goals

- Children and Families' Goals

To assist the congregation in the stewarding of the costs and in following the 'best practices' for a successful ministry plan, we are proposing that well defined 'milestones' be established that will measure progress, support effective decision making and guide the expected outcomes at each step. We also recommend that other forms of funding be pursued to help assist with the costs.

NEXT STEPS:

Our strategic ministry plan provides a faithful and compelling framework for the future of Cloverdale United Church, in the broader context of the other United Churches serving in the Fraser Valley area. It provides a pathway for what our church leaders believe we must do together to bring into being the future God is planning for us.

In order to move effectively from planning to action, we now must ensure that we have the financial resources required.

At the Congregational Meeting on Decision Sunday, November 16th, the congregation will be asked to approve, in principle, both the Strategic Ministry Plan and the proposed budget.

As we move forward together with our Strategic Ministry Plan, each step we take becomes a step forward in faith and is continuing sign to our neighbourhood and community that God's promises are true. Thanks be to God!