

Strategic Plan



December 2011

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CROZET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH STRATEGIC PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Process

Crozet United Methodist Church (CUMC) has embarked on a strategic planning process that will help guide decisions and actions over the next several years. This process started in March 2011 and was comprehensive, inclusive, transparent, and involved all constituencies within the church. The planning process has looked at the church as a whole and has resulted in the development and publication of this *Strategic Plan*.

This *Strategic Plan* outlines several specific short, medium, and long-term action items that CUMC feels it needs to undertake in order to meet important needs in the church family and the community. The planning process has resulted in an over-arching road map which will allow CUMC to meet those program needs that its members feel God is calling us to undertake. It has been a process of discernment, prayer, trust, and faith.

For the last several months a group of CUMC members has been leading the effort to collect input from the entire congregation on where we believe God is leading us going forward. This Strategic Planning Group has met with all constituent groups in the church, has collected this information, and has met several times to discuss what we've heard. We have also received responses from the "yellow" sheets, e-mails, phone calls, visits, impromptu conversations, our web link vision@crozetumc.org and an old-fashioned mass mailing via US Mail!

Planning vs. Reacting

CUMC constituents were active and engaged members in this strategic planning process. This ensures that we are being proactive about what is happening around us rather than reactive. Change is a guaranteed constant. How we respond to and manage that change will determine how closely we are following God's will for us.



Discernment of God's Will

Listening and understanding God's will for CUMC is a key component of this *Strategic Plan*. The planning process has provided opportunity for the entire CUMC family to engage and discuss their feelings and thoughts about this. Let's discern God's will together and lead the change!

Areas for Consideration

As part of this process, the Strategic Planning Group has collected a number of thoughts, ideas, comments, and input from constituents across all areas of the church. These comments have been consolidated and organized into eight Areas of Consideration which cover major areas of activity in the church.

These Areas for Consideration are briefly outlined here and are enumerated in more detail later in this *Strategic Plan*.

- Worship
- Service / Outreach
- Learning / Education
- Growth
- Organization
- Financial
- Physical
- General

Goals

The Areas for Consideration represent the collection of all input from the church and lead directly into the development of Goals. Eleven specific goals, covering all areas within the church, have been identified.

CUMC serves a big God, who deserves big goals and big plans. Development of these goals and plans seek to glorify God through activities that are prayer-led, spirit-filled, and mission-focused.

The Goals are briefly outlined here and are enumerated in more detail later in this *Strategic Plan*.

- Goal #1 – Increase average weekly worship attendance to 250
- Goal #2 – Evaluate current space utilization and develop renovation plan
- Goal #3 – Develop comprehensive financial plan to support and coordinate with program development plans
- Goal #4 – Increase cross-group and inter-generational fellowship opportunities
- Goal #5 – Evaluate current organization structure – committees; staff; volunteers
- Goal #6 – Evaluate Christian Education offerings
- Goal #7 – Evaluate possibility of adjusting worships times
- Goal #8 – Increase family-oriented activities
- Goal #9 – Improve external and internal communications
- Goal #10 – Improve environmental stewardship and sustainability initiatives
- Goal #11 – Upgrade existing physical environment

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BACKGROUND

Previous Studies

A recent review of comments, ideas, and input received during our last Planning / Visioning process ten years ago revealed that nearly 75% of what was identified as important to members then, has now been made a permanent part of the church.

Crozet has changed dramatically in ten years and is poised for continued growth. CUMC has an opportunity to help lead and shape that change, and this process will allow us to do that in a proactive manner. What will Crozet look like ten years from now? What will CUMC look like ten years from now? Only God knows. God has big plans for CUMC, and we have a responsibility to discern those plans and then make them happen.

What's happening in Crozet today?

A lot has changed in Crozet since the last time a comprehensive planning process at CUMC occurred. In the last ten years:

- The population of Crozet has doubled;
- The County has approved a Crozet Master Plan guiding future development;
- VDOT has initiated work to widen Jarman's Gap Road impacting the southern boundary of our property

Change is here and will continue. God has placed us in this place, at this time, in order to give us the opportunity to work with this change and be proactive rather than reactive. Participating in this process and providing ideas and input has ensured that this *Strategic Plan* is the Church's Plan that supports God's will for all of us.



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STRUCTURE

Facilitator

The strategic planning process was led by Mike Carmagnola, a CUMC member, who facilitated the 7-month long effort. Mike's assignment as facilitator was supported by Church leadership and was endorsed by the CUMC Administrative Board. Mike outlined a process that provided for input from all church constituents, led the Strategic Planning Group in its activities, provided regular updates and communication with all stakeholders, and served as editor for this *Strategic Plan*.

Strategic Planning Group

A group of ten church members, representing a cross-section of the church constituency, comprised the Strategic Planning Group. This group has donated their time and talents and has made a commitment to the process of reaching every single member of the CUMC family to hear and gather thoughts about the future of CUMC. The Group met regularly throughout the planning process and made recommendations on format and content for this *Strategic Plan*.

Specific members included:

- Brian Fuller
- Judy Hogberg
- Ron Kent
- Richard LaRue
- Kelsey Pace
- Kevin Palmer
- Jane Rogers
- Polly Sheets
- Amy Turner
- Jen Whitley



Strategic Planning Board

This mini-Board was established specifically for this strategic planning process and provided oversight for the activities of the Facilitator and the Strategic Planning Group. All major process milestones and key decisions were reviewed with this Board and endorsed prior to moving forward with next steps in the process. The Facilitator met regularly with the Board to provide updates and keep communications flowing.

Specific members included:

- Doug Forrester , Senior Pastor CUMC
- John Rowlingson, Chair CUMC Admin Board
- JR Sanders, Lay Leader CUMC
- Linda Weirich, Administrator CUMC

CUMC Administrative Board

The current CUMC organization structure includes an Administrative Board led by a Chair and comprised of the leaders of the key Ministry Team areas. This Board oversees the major activities of the church and reviews and approves key decisions directing its operations.

The CUMC Administrative Board endorsed the formation of a Strategic Planning Group and charged them with the responsibility of leading a church-wide effort to discern and develop future goals. These goals would ultimately impact church operations, so careful and close communication occurred keeping this organizational body informed.

The Facilitator undertook direct responsibility for updating the Administrative Board and secured approvals where needed to move forward with specific actions during the planning process. In addition, individual communication sessions were held with each of the key Ministry Team leaders to connect them with information specific to their direct areas of responsibility. This multi-pronged approach assured that key church leadership members were informed and supportive of this process.

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

Introduction

As noted in the Executive Summary, the Areas of Consideration developed directly from the input and feedback received from church constituents during the planning process. These eight areas represent the organized collection of all input that identifies what was heard from the entire CUMC family. This collection of data organizes that feedback and consolidates duplicate and overlapping comments.

It was important that no data was lost and no comment was ignored or not included. In order to ensure this, the process engaged Ms. Brooke Bailey, Calling 21 summer intern, to review all collected data and double check that everything was accurately captured. Ms. Bailey's work was extremely helpful and resulted in helping refine the organization of this data as currently presented.

The eight Areas of Consideration, with all comments, are noted as follows:

Worship

- Provide more opportunities for family-oriented worship
- Choice of services – traditional and contemporary – is good
- Physical opportunity for families to attend and participate in worship without having small children disturb
- Increase frequency of combined services – opportunity for additional fellowship and cross-group interactions
- Consider moving early service from 8:30 to 9am
- Consider switching time of contemporary and traditional services on a regular basis.
- Consider a Sunday evening or mid-week service to accommodate families who can't make it Sunday due to travel, holidays, vacations, etc.
- Extend weekly worship time with fellowship time
- Consider worship services in Spanish as an outreach to Hispanic community
- Provide more opportunities for alternative worship styles adding elements of drama, dance, skits, and the like
- Build / Rebuild both children's choir and youth band engaging younger members (and their families).



Service / Outreach

- Reach out to community; Be the “friendly church”
- Take care of CUMC members as well as non-members; All are part of community
- Partner with other churches on directed missions and outreach for the larger community
- Increase visitation to elderly and shut-ins – improved connections with Mountainside & Meadows; potential for connections with new adult care facility opening in Old Trail
- Consider engaging a staff volunteer coordinator who matches need with talents
- Consider developing a volunteer position – Parish Nurse
- Consider developing a Stephen Ministry
- Improve communications of available volunteer offerings and opportunities for more church members to participate
- Consider partnering with one or more other churches in community to develop community garden for eventual distribution of food as part of food pantry mission
- Consider an “after-school” program during the week
- Build on strength of GAS Youth Program by extending service and mission offerings

Learning / Education

- Increase learning of bible, philosophical, and theological issues
- Increase course offerings and options
- Move towards more small group study focusing on specific topics
- Consider organizing parts of Christian Education around offerings, not age groups
- Improve communication between adult and children’s Christian Education programs
- Rethink Kinderchurch – goal; missions; how staffed?; coordination with other Christian Education elements
- Sunday evening bible study for the entire family
- Consider revised approach for Sunday School during summer, including “taking a break”
- Consider offering an evening Vacation Bible School (VBS)
- Carefully consider not “squeezing” the Christian Education time between services as additional programs are potentially added

Fellowship

- Improve cross-group interaction opportunities
- Increase programs and opportunities for families which encourage inter-generational connections
- More fellowship time such as breakfasts, lemonade on the lawn, etc.; Connect and/or extend with worship time

Growth

- Increase average weekly attendance – more resources available to help provide more programs, financial assistance, etc.
- More members is not necessarily better – need to fully engage all existing members as disciples
- Manage growth so that a larger church is not necessarily a less-friendly church
- Maintain “small church” friendly feel
- There is no church in Old Trail. Who is serving that community?
- How long will the current site be big enough? Does that limit growth, or is that as much as we need to grow?
- Strongly consider purchasing the “yellow house” when available to preserve opportunities for potential future site growth
- Consider spiritual growth rather than growth of number of members; Prayer should be the focus

Organization

- Need to share responsibilities and involvement among members
- Prevent “burn out” of same few people doing the majority of the work
- Provide training for volunteers to enhance roles
- Evaluate number of paid staff vs. actual membership vs. active volunteers; do we have the right mix and balance?
- Evaluate need for both Ministry Council and Administrative Board – much overlap; roles & responsibilities; expectations; etc.
- Consider developing a Kitchen Committee to help establish “ownership,” rules, expectations, etc. *This could work under an existing group such as Trustees.*

Financial

- Actively manage debt – *There are varying positions regarding this ranging from no debt to revolving debt and many thoughts in between. This will require continued and more detailed discussion.*
- Concern about being overcommitted and under giving; Need analysis of giving units
- Building fund and operating fund need to be tied together
- Develop adequate financial contingency fund
- Desired new or expanded programs require financial analysis and testing prior to implementation
- Consider selling the parsonage and moving towards a housing allowance for the senior pastor
- Evolve church stewardship and giving philosophy towards becoming a “tithing church”

Physical

- To flip or not to flip Sanctuary; *There are varying positions on this related to cost, viability, short vs. longer term implementation and the like. This will require continued and more detailed discussion.*
- Improve connections and flow among all parts of church campus
- Building entrances, etc. will be impacted by ongoing site development activities; This needs to be actively managed, and many areas need improvement
- Consider adding new narthex with restrooms in front of Sanctuary
- Kingswood Christian Preschool – Increase both indoor and outdoor space for growing program
- Look at space utilization first, rather than space growth.
- Improve our environmental stewardship; increase sustainability efforts
- Many spaces look worn and tired; Upgrade several existing spaces including new paint, carpet and other finishes
- Open up Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall to allow for more flexible elements with service such as dance, banners, lighting, etc.

General

- Embrace diversity of all types including theological, racial, ethnic, cultural, etc.
- Consider doing fewer things better rather than more things spread out; Keep it simple; *This dovetails with the notion of increasing participation and best managing the resources that we have and can expect to have*
- CUMC should grow disciples and not just focus on getting things done

GOALS

One of the key objectives of this *Strategic Plan* was to develop a set of Goals that would form the basis for the church's work going forward. The eleven goals developed derived directly from the Areas of Consideration which came directly from the specific input received from CUMC constituents. This process ensured that the Goals would support specifically what constituents felt was important to focus on.

Each Goal is developed in the same format. It is written in a clear and concise format and is intended to be neither too broad nor too narrow. Strategic Planning Group members shared responsibility for writing up each of the Goals following the consistent format as noted below:

- Background / Area for Consideration
- Existing Conditions
- Program Drivers
- Physical Drivers
- Cross Connections
- Short Term Actions
- Medium Term Actions
- Long Term Actions

This list of Goals stretches across all key Ministry areas within the church. As part of the ongoing strategic planning process, these Goals will be given to those Ministry Teams for discussion and development into action items. This next step is described in more detail later in this *Strategic Plan*, and is intended to get the specific goal in the hands of those most close to it for further discussion and development.

Each Goal is enumerated in detail as follows:



GOAL #1 – Increase average weekly worship attendance to 250

Background / Area for Consideration – Worship is one of the key reasons for our church’s existence and reminds us that we are here to serve and worship God. Worship should not be about “what’s in it for me,” but rather about “what are we doing for God.” In worship, we gather, praise, and express our love and appreciation for the wonder, glory and grace that God gives to us every day.

Existing Conditions – Current average weekly worship attendance is 180. Over the last ten years, Crozet and the surrounding Western Albemarle area have been experiencing explosive growth. Population has increased, new families have moved in, and businesses and services have opened to serve this burgeoning growth. The growth continues today, albeit more modestly, despite the challenging economic conditions. There are many positive reasons why people are drawn to Crozet, and CUMC needs to continue to be one of them.

Program Drivers – CUMC has grown in parallel with Crozet. Many of the programs and initiatives that CUMC continues to undertake have grown as well as community needs have grown. CUMC desires to continue to be a mission-oriented church serving the community, and more resources to help lead and serve in these programs are needed. This underscores one major reason for increasing the weekly worship attendance.

Physical Drivers – The current sanctuary is designed to accommodate about 250 people at full capacity. The two current services (one contemporary and one traditional) are nearly equally attended with about a 40/60 split on a typical Sunday. The CUMC campus includes several other spaces, including a medium-sized Fellowship Hall. At this time worship is held only in the Sanctuary.

Cross Connections – Worship is the most common “entry” into CUMC. The worship experience can act as a springboard for other involvement as family members learn more about church programs, each other, interact, and grow in faith. CUMC desires to build on the strong family-friendly atmosphere and can do that with continued cross-generational connections. Long term members, new transplants, seniors, and young families all coexist in a welcoming environment despite our varied schedules, two distinct services and growing membership.

Short-Term Actions – Crozet has been growing for some time and continues to grow despite the current economic challenges. CUMC is also growing and should be prepared to accommodate this growth as changes occur. Over the next three months, the following questions need to be addressed:

- How do we increase weekly worship attendance nearly 40% and still maintain the same qualities of CUMC?
- Should we continue with two service offerings per week? More? Less?
- Are the service offerings scheduled at the best times?
- If the service offering times are adjusted what other impacts are there on other CUMC programs?
- Should CUMC be focusing on engaging new members or existing inactive members? Should this be an either/or approach?
- How should other teams such as Invitation be engaged in this activity?
- Is our current physical environment without change able to accommodate this growth?
- What are the financial expectations for increased giving with increased attendance?

Medium-Term Actions – As specific short-term actions are undertaken, a series of additional questions will need to be addressed:

- Will the Sanctuary require renovations to accommodate increased attendance?
- Will worship need to be held in locations other than the Sanctuary?
- Are the related program initiatives such as Missions, Christian Education, Youth Group, etc. ready to accommodate increased attendance? If not, how are those areas addressed?

Long-Term Actions – It may be difficult to look beyond a multi-year time frame with any level of certainty; however, change will continue. It is important for CUMC to be open to change, to manage change, and to continue to be ready to serve all members. God has given us many gifts, and CUMC needs to continue to use them responsibly.

- What will CUMC look like if average weekly worship attendance doubles in the next ten years? Is this an unrealistic question? If not, how can we be sure we're ready?

GOAL #2 – Evaluate current space utilization and develop renovation plan

Background / Area for Consideration – Over the last 10 years CUMC has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for access to our church facilities. This demand has been driven by both expanded church supported programs and activities, as well as community driven programs. While long range plans may include expanding church facilities, such plans are most likely years away, making it imperative that our current facilities be utilized to maximum potential.

Existing Conditions – The physical presence of CUMC consists of 4 primary areas. The sanctuary, the fellowship hall, the old church building which is now classroom space, and the Kent building which consists of classrooms, church offices, and storage areas. The word that best describes our existing condition regarding space at CUMC is crowded. Most available space is currently shared by multiple groups at different times to maximize utilization.

Over a decade ago CUMC undertook a bold vision of expansion by completely renovating the classroom space in the old church building and initiating the process of building the current fellowship hall in order to accommodate the anticipated growth in the Crozet area. It would be hard to imagine our church now without these renovations and facilities. These actions have played an integral part in the growth of CUMC over the past decade, making possible the expansion of existing programs and creating opportunities for many new programs appealing to a broad population. While welcome, this growth creates challenges in accommodating these programs and the people they attract in a finite space. Not only must we find space for our existing programs, we must also address the increased wear and tear this increased usage puts on our facilities.

Program Drivers – Numerous factors impact the need to evaluate our space utilization policies. These include but are not limited to:

- Expanded Christian education
- Expanded worship services
- Kingswood Christian Preschool has a significant impact on the usage of church facilities during the week.
- The Food Pantry, one of the great ministries of CUMC has seen significant growth expanding into multiple days per month with the possibility of further expansion as space allows
- Expanded youth programs. With the addition of a dedicated youth minister this year our youth ministry is growing steadily and we must provide adequate space and facilities for this important ministry
- Expanded music programs
- Boy and Girl Scout programs continue to be popular and are increasing in membership.
- Children's programs. There has been a decided shift to a younger demographic at CUMC in the last decade which has brought with it a large increase in the number of younger children
- Private enterprise: Where appropriate CUMC has allowed private businesses to rent space in the church property when such businesses are deemed compatible with the mission of CUMC.
- Community events: Because of its central location to downtown Crozet, CUMC is often asked to host community public service events

Physical Drivers – The primary factors in planning for space utilization and renovations are our existing facilities. As mentioned before CUMC is comprised of 4 main areas. They are separate buildings with no logical flow. Our current design has evolved over the years as needs and funding came together. Coordinating flow among the available buildings remains an ongoing challenge in best utilizing our space.

Cross Connections – Proper space utilization will allow us to maximize and expand the programs we are able to offer at CUMC. These programs are not only opportunities to attract new members from the community, but they are also great opportunities for newer members to interact with and get to know long time church members. It is important to remember that as we move forward with decisions on space utilization and renovations we gather input from all church members, new and old.

Short-Term Actions – Here are some actions that can be considered in the short term:

- Upgrades in flooring, wall coverings, lighting, as needed and budgets allow
- Possible changes in days and times of scheduled activities
- Adding or possibly combining programs
- Portable partitions to divide larger areas (fellowship hall, basement) into multi use areas

Medium-Term Actions – As specific short term actions are addressed, some medium-term actions to consider would include:

- Renting additional space
- Bringing in trailers for additional classroom and storage space
- Purchasing the yellow building on the corner when available

Long-Term Actions – Long-term actions to consider, most likely after our current mortgage on the fellowship hall has been paid off would include:

- A major building project including classrooms, fellowship hall, gym/multi use room, etc.
- Flipping or rotating the sanctuary and/or adding an expanded narthex with restrooms at the front of the existing Sanctuary
- Selling the existing property and relocating

GOAL #3 – Develop comprehensive financial plan to support and coordinate with program development plans

Background/ Area for Consideration: To ensure the sustainability of church programs/services and provide new initiatives, financial resources have to be adequate and ongoing. One of the current challenges being faced is the inability to raise church giving. With the increase in population growth in the Crozet area and the concurrent increase in church attendance, that by itself doesn't automatically translate into increased church giving.

Existing Conditions: Current giving is not keeping up with current expenses; the church has had to tap existing financial reserves in order to maintain current balances. There may be some relief from VDOT settlement funds from the Jarman's Gap Road Project; however, we can't rely on VDOT to solve our fiscal shortfall.

Program Drivers: Attendance is a key driver of financial goals; program expenses are controlled but stretched by lack of adequate income. There has to be analysis of number of new giving units as well as how debt is to be managed. There is going to be a need for more ongoing discussions as it relates to the debt issue.

Physical Drivers: The current economic times somewhat limit the giving potential in any charitable environment. As economies contract we should expect resources to contract as well.

Cross Connections: Finance is connected to all church programs and will be a major determinant of what CUMC program offerings will be to the congregation, community and beyond. Worship, for example, is a major ingredient of getting and keeping families involved and connected.

Action Items:

- Are we overcommitted as it relates to our giving?
- Are new members giving?
- Do we need more growth before embarking on new projects/initiatives?
- What about contingency fund requirements? What about capital fund?
- How do we really analyze new programs for financial viability?
- How do we handle the debt question? What amount, if any, can the church service?
- Is there a need to combine building and operating/campaigns/funds?
- Consider selling the parsonage and moving towards a housing allowance for the senior pastor.
- Are there any other creative ways to increase revenue stream?
- Will we fall into a trap of worrying about just "keeping the lights on"?
- Develop endowment funds with finance committee agreement.
- Develop planned giving/endowment committee as a separate group.
- Church and pastoral leadership work to evolve CUMC stewardship and giving philosophy into a "tithing congregation."

GOAL #4 – Increase cross-group and intergenerational fellowship opportunities

Background/Area for Consideration – CUMC was originally a smaller church with the “small-church” feel, where everyone knew everyone else and all members were included in every activity. There were also many more activities that incorporated all ages and groups. Now that we have grown to having so many more members, it seems that the church has more pronounced boundaries among groups and generations. We are looking to enhance our sense of community and develop more opportunities for members of every age to engage in fellowship together.

Existing Conditions – While the activities involving all ages have been scaled back considerably, there are still opportunities to participate in fellowship with members of all ages. For example, Operation Sharehouse encourages every member to be a part of it and incorporates jobs that can be done by the very youngest member to the very oldest. Box packing and the Food Pantry ministry is a long standing tradition that gives most all members’ chances to help, from middle school children to parents, to grandparents.

Program Drivers – There are so many more people living in the Crozet area, and many of them are families. We are hoping to attract more members and keep current members by increasing the activities that are more family friendly, and finding ways to make current activities become more inclusive for the whole family.

Physical Drivers – We have sufficient fellowship space, we can always find more uses for it!

Cross Connections – In order to grow and be a successful church, we need lasting members. We need to make the oldest member down to the youngest member feel included, and we need to find ways so that the oldest and youngest member have opportunities to be in fellowship together. There are so many places where people don't feel comfortable bringing the whole family, and we don't want CUMC to become one of those places. By striving to bring members of all ages together in fellowship, we will be better able to attract new members who come from every type of family. We will also generate friendships throughout the church groups which will make every member feel welcomed, included and wanted.

Short-Term Actions –

- Would increasing and expanding the mediums used to communicate family friendly church activities reach more members?
- Could we incorporate social media into our notification system in a useful way?
- How can we make it easier for members of every age to travel to these cross-generational fellowship opportunities?
- Should we look back and see any previous activities that CUMC has participated in that includes all ages and brought all members together and see what it would take to do them again? (For example, bring back the Christmas plays!)
- Would incorporating younger members into the services by asking them to be readers and greeters make them more inclined to be an active part of worship? (the youth used to be in charge of filling all the jobs necessary for the service every 4th Sunday).

Medium-Term Actions –

- Should we establish a program that makes getting to know members of all ages a necessity? (for example, give youth members a shut in or older citizen to visit or write letters to)
- Would incorporating members of various ages into committees, or finding ways that make it easier to gather the opinions of all ages make the decisions reached more well-rounded and make every member feel like their thoughts are meaningful and could have an impact on the Church? (like the Strategic Planning Committee!)

Long-Term Actions –

- By creating a volunteer position/committee whose purpose is to organize and publicize cross generational activities, and/or finding ways to make existing activities family friendly would we be able to reach more members and get them to attend?
- Could we establish ourselves more strongly in the community by creating an event that appeals to the entire Crozet Community and brings every person living in Crozet together under the CUMC umbrella? (something along the lines of the Tree Lighting in the Square?)

GOAL #5 – Evaluate current organization structure – committees; staff; volunteers

Background/Area for Consideration – The organization structure of the United Methodist Church is determined in part by *The Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. This includes, to some extent, committees and membership of committees.

Ministry drives formation of committees/teams to accomplish goals with volunteers primarily responsible for committee/team actions.

All members of the United Methodist Church are ministers, and as members have a covenant to “faithfully participate in the ministries of the church by their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.”

Existing Conditions – The organization structure of Crozet United Methodist Church conforms to *The Discipline* with committees established accordingly. As ministry determines, teams are formed under the leadership of a team leader and are empowered by the Administrative Board to implement goals. Clergy staff consists of a Senior Pastor and a Youth Pastor. Lay staff consists of a Church Administrator, a Director of Music and Arts, and Preschool staff. There are also several positions filled by independent contractors; organist, treasurer, and custodial crew.

Program Drivers – There is always a need for more volunteers. As we continue to grow, the need for additional staff and volunteers will have to be evaluated.

Physical Drivers – Physical space is a major issue, since we have little, if any, potential for physical growth. This will need to be taken into consideration as we reorganize our ministry to accommodate an increasing number of people without increasing our physical space.

Cross Connections – The organization structure of the church, by its very definition, involves all areas of the ministry. Effective communication within this structure is very important. Everyone involved needs to feel “connected in all areas of the life of the church”.

Short-Term Actions

- Do we need to evaluate the current committees?
- Are there ministry areas not being adequately addressed?
- What can we do to improve our ministry to shut-in members?
- How can we engage all members in ministry?
- What is the "job" of the clergy/staff?
- What is the "job" of the congregation?
- How can the organization structure of the church support the mission and vision of the church?

Medium-term Actions

- Is the Time and Talent survey the best vehicle for identifying interests and gifts of our membership?
- Would a volunteer coordinator who matches volunteers with talents and gifts be advantageous?

Long-term Actions

- As we continue to grow in numbers, we need to ensure that we grow spiritually and are always cognizant of God's plan for us.
- We must be flexible and visionary in planning for the future.
- How would a Parish Nurse enhance our ministry to the elderly, shut-ins, ill, hospitalized, and those in our church family who have physical needs? Volunteer or paid? What other areas would this impact?

GOAL #6 – Evaluate Christian Education offerings

Background / Area for Consideration – For many people the first memory of attending church is associated with coming to Sunday School. The power and influence of what we learn in childhood about God cannot be underestimated. As people mature and begin having families themselves, the desire to bring their children to Sunday School is often a driver for coming back to church. Christian Education is both the foundation and one of the key building blocks on which our faith is built.

Existing Conditions – Currently there are weekly Sunday morning classes generally categorized by age and/or gender. The children's education (preK-5) classes are designated by age and school grade level and follow a quarterly curriculum schedule. Youth education classes are divided into middle school (6-8) and high school (9-12) sections. The adult education classes are a variety of short-term topic-specific studies with an emphasis on fellowship and mission, and the more traditional lectionary-based Bible studies. A number of small gender-based groups meet at other times during the week and engage in specific-topic Bible study.

The past three summers have been an experiment in stand-alone lessons and larger groupings of classes in order to give regular teachers needed time off or the ability to attend a class themselves. Summer study and curriculum also supports the core theme of Vacation Bible Camp, which is a major community outreach activity.

Program Drivers – The CUMC Christian Education teams strive to offer classes for all age groups – pre-school through mature adult. Curriculum is continuously evaluated and adjusted based on members' interest and attendance trends. The driving goal is to make disciples for Jesus Christ as we offer short and long-term classes and studies that increase our knowledge of God and belief and understanding of God's word, the Bible. With this foundation of knowledge and belief, disciples are empowered to live out their faith in actions and deeds of service to others.

Physical Drivers – The current classrooms are all multi-use areas that share space with other church and church-related program activities throughout the week. Space is limited as all classes cannot fit in our current available spaces during a typical Sunday morning timeframe. Space utilization, traffic flow and similar issues will continue to present challenges for folks moving to and from Sunday school classes.

Cross Connections – While worship may be the key entry into CUMC, participation in a small group or class may be the connection to increased involvement and commitment. The supportive fellowship of small group interaction fosters the development of faith and ministry.

Short-Term Actions – In order to continue to provide a meaningful and successful Sunday School environment, several suggested actions in both the areas of program and physical must be addressed.

- Assess space utilization and expected growth
- Provide additional small group space options
- Improve communications among the current three Sunday School organizational components – Children’s; Youth; Adult
- Increase pool of teachers and small group facilitators
- Increase training opportunities

Medium-Term Actions – As the above-mentioned short-term actions are considered and implemented, additional actions will need to be considered.

- Increase course offerings?
- Provide more small group Bible studies focusing on more specific topics?
- Organize Christian Education program around specific offerings, not age groups?
- Rethink the goal, mission and leadership of Kinderchurch? Is this a Christian Education offering or a worship offering?
- Improve communications of available offerings?
- Improve ongoing communications of specific class activities
- Revise summer approach, including “taking a break” for all? Some?

Long-Term Actions – As many of both the short and long-term actions are considered and addressed, a serious review of more complex issues will need to be undertaken.

- Move Christian Education time to Sunday evening or a weekday evening in lieu of Sunday morning between the two services?
- Expand Vacation Bible Camp into a morning event for children and an evening event for older children, youth, and/or adults?

GOAL #7 – Evaluate possibility of adjusting worship times

Background/Area for Consideration—Worship is one of the key functions for our church and reminds us that we are here to serve and worship God. All aspects of worship are important to reach out to the varying needs of the congregants/attendees and include interaction such as music, prayer, sermon, drama, liturgical dance, and fellowship. Through these means, we gather, praise, and express our love and appreciation for our heavenly Father. In addition, as we worship, we continue on our faith journey, growing closer to God.

Existing Conditions—Currently, we have two worship services per week, 8:30 (a contemporary service) and 11:00 (a traditional service), with Christian Education sandwiched between them (9:45-10:45). Each worship service is intended to last approximately one hour.

Program Drivers—Often, when components other than the base weekly ones are added to worship, the service runs longer than one hour. Examples are communion, healing services, baptisms, confirmation, special presentations, and special music. One issue concerns the 8:30 service since a lengthening of this service runs into the Christian Education hour. Teachers have spent much time preparing material for a one-hour lesson. Students do not have proper discussion time when the Christian Education time is cut shorter than expected. Another issue revolves around the beginning time of worship service. Average weekly attendance at the 8:30 and 11:00 services is 70 and 110, respectively. Routinely, approximately 20% of the 8:30 attendees and 10% of the 11:00 attendees arrive after worship service has begun, often missing many important items in the first part of each service.

Physical Drivers—Currently, two worship services are held only in the Sanctuary. There must be enough time between the services to accommodate length of service, differing setups for the services, and music rehearsal prior to service. Additionally, when attendees overlap between service times, parking can be challenging.

Cross Connections—Worship is the entry into CUMC. There are multiple visitors most Sunday mornings. In order to feed existing members and visitors, we need to provide aspects of worship to help them grow in their faith journey. Development of new Christians is enhanced with education and small group fellowship. Church family relationships are born when worship time involves fellowship.

Short-Term Actions—In order to provide a meaningful and personal worship time, the following questions need to be addressed within the next three months:

- What is the ideal time(s) for worship? Do we move the contemporary service from 8:30 to 9:00?
- Should we offer both traditional and contemporary services?
- Should those services maintain a consistent schedule or should the traditional and contemporary service times switch routinely?
- Should we consider worship times other than Sunday morning? Would Sunday evening or mid-week services accommodate families who can't make it on Sunday mornings?
- How can we incorporate more opportunities for alternative worship styles by adding elements of drama, dance, and skits?
- Could other areas of the CUMC campus be used for worship services?
- Could we incorporate a longer transition time after the 8:30 worship service prior to the Christian Education time?

Medium-Term Actions—As specific short-term actions are undertaken, a series of additional questions will need to be addressed:

- In order to increase fellowship time before and after Sunday morning worship service, do we need to restructure Christian Education time?
- If Christian Education is moved to a different time, how will that impact the volunteer teacher pool?
- Will the Sanctuary require renovations to more easily accommodate alternative worship styles?

Long-Term Actions—As we continue to add meaningful aspects to worship at times that are convenient to our congregants; a different space configuration may be a more viable solution.

- Do we flip the sanctuary at a 90 or 180 degree rotation to allow for an expanding music program or dance/drama ministries?
- Do we add a new narthex with restrooms at the front of the Sanctuary with the potential to improve pedestrian flow and improve the Crozet Ave. "front door presence?"
- How do we handle the financial aspects of a major building renovation?

GOAL #8 – Increase family-oriented activities

Background/Area for Consideration – Family is an important aspect of the church. Our CUMC “family” is an extension of our immediate families, a place where we can all find comfort, refuge, and support. Family is also a key reason for many people’s initial attendance to church; many parents have a desire to include their children in church, and attend for their support. Likewise, many children will continue to attend as they grow older based on their parent’s desires and values. The church can also be a resource for parents and families on Christian-based principles relating to personal finances, child-raising, etc.

Existing Conditions – Currently, a majority of the CUMC congregation is comprised of families of all ages, and this will continue to grow as new families move-in to the new subdivisions around Crozet. CUMC offers several opportunities for families, including Sunday worship, special concerts and meals. Kingswood Christian Preschool continues to bring in new families to the church, and a strong family-friendly atmosphere exists. However, many current CUMC programs are individual-based and age-separate, or are not offered concurrently with others. Furthermore, there may be young families who do not desire to attend because of the burden of entertaining or “disciplining” very young children. Increased emphasis and advertisement of nursery care and Kinderchurch may help alleviate this.

Program Drivers – CUMC and its family programs are in constant competition with outside sources, such as youth and adult sports leagues, scouting programs, etc. There is never enough time for a family to attend all current or potential programs that are available at CUMC and around western Albemarle County. However, current programs such as Kinderchurch and G.A.S. (youth group) are growing as the surrounding community continues to grow. Many families also have aging family members in nearby communities (Mountainside Senior Living, the Meadows, and the Lodge at Old Trail) and these people will need to be ministered to and engaged with as well.

Physical Drivers – The current CUMC campus location is in a great central location at the center of Crozet at a major intersection. The church is a visible landmark to anyone driving through town, which can help in attracting new families who are searching for a church home. However, the physical layout of the buildings makes it especially difficult for families with young children; the nursery is completely separated from the sanctuary and fellowship hall, the playground is adjacent to a busy parking lot, classroom space is segregated by age groups, etc.

Cross Connections – Worship is the entry into CUMC, but family-oriented programs are typically the reason why most people will stay involved and become invested. There are many aspects of worship, Christian education, space utilization, and cross-group / intergenerational fellowship opportunities that are closely tied to families and their experience within the church.

Short-Term Actions – Family growth continues within and around CUMC. Over the next three months, the following actions need to be considered:

- Consider creation of a 3rd-5th Grade Ministry (youth group preparation)
- Consider non-traditional family support opportunities, such as a monthly babysitting co-op or a “Mother’s Day Out” program
- Consider a monthly Wednesday night fellowship dinner and educational program
- Increase youth opportunities for participation in Sunday morning worship
- Continue to grow and strengthen the Kinderchurch program
- Continue to grow and strengthen the nursery program and staff
- Evaluate nursery location and emergency accessibility
- Resurrect the United Methodist Men group
- Sponsor family trips to secular activities (ballgames, plays, festivals, hikes, picnics, etc.)
- Sponsor Christian-based educational programs (financial planning, family planning, etc.)
- Sponsor progressive dinners in homes and other off-campus dinner/fellowship groups
- Consider additional or alternative programs during or adjacent to regularly-scheduled events (Sunday evening worship or adult Sunday school during youth group, etc.)

Medium-Term Actions – As specific short-term actions are undertaken, a series of additional actions will need to be considered:

- Consider creation of a Program Director staff position (part-time or a portion of another new staff position, such as Christian Education Director, etc.)
- Intergenerational mission trips (local and abroad)
- Creation of alternative activity locations on-campus (playfield, fire pit, picnic pavilion)
- Alternative activity locations off-campus (coffee shops, parks, future library, etc.)
- As the congregation grows, consider the creation of small groups within subdivisions / neighborhoods for dinners, Bible study, etc.

Long-Term Actions – While it may be difficult to look beyond a multi-year time frame, many serious financial actions will need to be considered:

- Evaluation of existing church campus and space limitations if family growth continues
- Consider creation of additional interior gathering and entertainment space (gymnasium, etc.)
- Consider additional transportation options, such as a small bus for Kingswood Christian Preschool field trips, youth trips, and senior transport to Sunday worship

GOAL #9 – Improve external and internal communications

Background/Area for Consideration: Good communication within the church and with the community is critical for maintaining church attendance as well as for drawing new attendees and/or members from the community. As Crozet continues to grow, it is our duty to minister to people within the church as well as to our neighbors.

Existing Conditions: Crozet UMC currently utilizes the following forms of communication:

- Sunday Church Bulletin
- Fellowship Hall Bulletin Boards
- Permanent sign in front of church
- Website – crozetumc.org
- Electronic mailing of “This Week at Crozet UMC”
- *The Graceline* written publication available online, in print in the Sanctuary, and mailed to approximately 75 visitors and members
- Monthly advertisements in *The Crozet Gazette*

Program Drivers: CUMC desires to be a mission oriented church serving the community. Without good communication, however, the community (and possibly churchgoers) may be unaware of what CUMC has to offer. The other side of the coin is that without good communication, CUMC may not be aware of the needs of the community. Church members/attendees also need to be aware of what CUMC has to offer. They also need opportunities to express the needs of the congregation.

Physical Drivers: In order to maintain and grow church membership, CUMC needs to communicate the available offerings and opportunities. Currently there are numerous ways in which the community can get involved at CUMC, but the community and congregation need to be made aware of the opportunities.

Cross Connections: When a member of the community discovers something of interest to him/her at CUMC, they are likely to enter the church itself. Participation in activities such as Scouts, Food Pantry, VBS, Bible Studies, Kingswood Christian Preschool, etc. can encourage people to inquire about becoming a part of the CUMC family. Likewise, when members of the congregation are made aware of new and exciting opportunities at CUMC, they are more likely to regularly attend worship, grow their faith, and share their enthusiasm with family, friends and neighbors.

Short-Term Actions:

- How can we better communicate church related events and activities to the community?
- How can we better communicate church related events and activities to the congregation and to members who do not attend on a regular basis?
- How can we increase the number of people who receive the e-mailing of "This Week at Crozet UMC"?
- Is it possible and/or cost effective to mail copies of *The Graceline* to more people in the congregation and the community?
- Can we update the Fellowship Hall bulletin boards more frequently?

Medium-Term Actions:

- Should a new publication be created as a means of reaching out to Old Trail and other neighborhoods?
- Can we create a new procedure that allows church members to voice the needs & concerns of the community?
- Is it possible to electronically publish the weekly church bulletin and announcements?
- Can we improve access to/awareness of worship podcasts?
- How can we partner with other churches and/or missions in the community?
- How can we advertise more of CUMC programs, missions, opportunities for fellowship?
- How can we create more fellowship opportunities? Weekly suppers, family game nights, community gardens, activities with Mountainside, the Meadows and the Lodge at Old Trail?
- Can we engage a volunteer to receive suggestions and requests from the congregation?

Long-Term Actions: As the face of Crozet continues to change, we must constantly assess the needs of the congregation and community. We must continue to search for new avenues by which we can make the many wonderful opportunities for growing faith known. We must always strive to reach out to new residents as well as long term Crozetians. With each new technological development in communication, CUMC must attempt to communicate with the community using this technology. We can also take advantage of this new technology by utilizing it to better foster communication within the church.

GOAL #10 – Improve environmental stewardship and sustainability initiatives

Background / Area for Consideration – Sustainability is an operational and decision-making framework that is used to explore the ability of an organization to conduct its mission in support of current and future generations' needs. For Crozet UMC, sustainability is about positioning and operating our church to be good stewards of the people, planet and our church resources now and into the future.

Existing Conditions – Many communities are exploring the long-term ability of their communities to continue as they are while insuring the ability of the community to support the aspirations and needs of future generations. Our local community is experiencing growth that continues to erode the cultural and natural environment surrounding our community. Growing numbers of our community are seeking material (food, clothing) and financial support from our church. Employment and economic issues may limit the ability of church members to meet community needs now and in the future.

- How will Crozet UMC operate to best support the current and future needs of our community?

Program Drivers – Sustainability is ultimately about human, financial, and environmental resources and how we use them. As such, sustainability translates into our ability to integrate human, financial, and environmental considerations into Church efforts and decisions. In the private sector, this concept is referred to as the triple-bottom-line (TBL) of people, planet, and profit. For CUMC's purposes, the TBL might be considered as people, planet, and mission (we're not concerned about profit – rather, we are focused on living our lives as Christ envisioned while encouraging others to do likewise).

Physical Drivers – The drivers for creating a sustainable church are economic, environmental, and human. The goal is to integrate these considerations into Church decision-making and operation.

Cross Connections – All church activities can support sustainable behavior.

Short-Term Actions

- Coordinate and hold a series of discussions on how the church envisions sustainability and activities to support it (education and scoping)
- Conduct evaluations on how the church can operate in a more sustainable fashion. Evaluation might consider:
 - Energy and water usage;
 - Material use (paper, cleaning products, disposal materials)
 - Land use (how will the current development impact the environment – do we have other options?)
 - Carbon footprint – what is our footprint and what causes it? How can we reduce this footprint?
 - Sourcing – where do the things we buy/use come from? Are they green? Were they produced in accordance with fair trade concepts?
 - Power – are green options available? Can we access them? How will this reduce our footprint?
- Community partnerships – meet with other community organizations to discuss opportunities to partner to better support our community.
- Establish a team of concerned members who will establish intermediate and long-term objectives.

GOAL #11 – Upgrade existing physical environment

Background/Area for Consideration - Crozet UMC has expanded several times since the original sanctuary was finished in 1892. The original building was expanded in 1912, 1946, 1949, 1957, and 1983. A new sanctuary was constructed and finished in 1962. The final addition was a new Fellowship Hall in 2004. Due to the numerous additions and renovations to the buildings, the facility has become a maze of doors, halls, and rooms with a poor overall flow pattern. The recent loss of the only paved parking lot and property has resulted in the need to redesign the parking lot plus the entrance points in the church.

Existing Conditions - The parking lot is currently partially paved behind the church's Fellowship Hall and gravel along the length of the education building. The main sanctuary entrance is the farthest point from any parking lot and there is limited handicap accessibility. The other issue stems from the sanctuary not being connected to any of the other buildings resulting in the congregation needing to go outside to enter any other building. The lack of restrooms in the Sanctuary is also an issue.

Program Drivers - The loss of the paved parking lot and easily accessible handicap parking for the sanctuary has resulted in the church forming a building committee to redesign the outside and examine many of these problems. We have a growing elderly population in the congregation with handicap needs that need to be addressed. There is also a growing young family population that needs to be able to get to the education building and restrooms without having to go outside the building.

Cross Connections - The feel and flow of the building is one of the first impressions that a new family experiences when entering the church. The church needs to have convenient facilities that meet the needs of all age groups and physical abilities. Long term it may be determined the site doesn't meet the needs of the church, however, until that time it is necessary to improve the existing building to make it a warm and welcoming facility.

Short Term Actions

- Redesign the parking lot to maximize parking spaces, meet the needs of the preschool, and improve the overall appearance of the church.
- Look at the handicap accessibility to all buildings and seek to make improvements.
- Look at the entrances into the sanctuary, determine if there is a solution to the 'outside' exit problem, and determine if there is a need to redesign the sanctuary itself to fix these problems.
- Consider the outside space including the playground, 'green' area, and the small space created by the road construction. What do we do with the area on the south side of the church?
- The preschool is continuing to grow and would benefit from a larger playground area. Where and how?
- Is a covered drive-thru for easier entrance into the church necessary? Both the elderly and families with young children could benefit from this feature.
- Consider the development of a work order system to address simple ongoing maintenance request
- Consider the development of a multi-year maintenance plan that provides for planned activities and coordinates with Finance to set assigned funds to complete this work. This will help ensure that necessary maintenance does not get deferred or missed.

Medium Term Actions

- The office is below ground and not easily accessible or visible. Do we need to move the office or add space for an above ground office?
- Does the youth group have the space necessary for its growth?
- Does the food pantry have the space for its future needs?
- Examine expanding the narthex, including restrooms.

Long Term Actions

- As the church continues to grow does the existing property have enough space and facilities to meet its needs?
- Despite the church's location in the middle of Crozet, the church is landlocked with little chance of expanding its property holdings. Will a new location become necessary?
- The only land available may be the small property owned by the Stanley/Sandridge families behind the church. Do we purchase the property should it become available?

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NEXT STEPS

It is clear that the CUMC members want to serve God and recognize that this may be best accomplished by serving people. There will be challenges as we often want to do more than may be possible given financial and time constraints. We do know, however; that God does provide as long as we remain faithful and focused on his desire for our lives.

This Strategic Planning Process started with conversations with members and will continue with members undertaking specific actions. All God's people will be engaged and will be working together in a coordinated and integrated way. All goals will be cross-connected and will support each other, much like all members will support each other.

This Strategic Plan will be available for review by all CUMC constituents. The key ministry team areas will be asked to develop 2-3 specific action items out of each of the developed eleven goals. These action items will be brought forward and discussed at future CUMC Administrative Board meetings with the goal of arriving at a full consensus list of approximately 20-30 action items. This activity will continue through the end of calendar 2011, so work may begin on specific actions starting January 2012.

The goals were distributed for small group and Committee discussion as follows:

WORSHIP

- Goal #1 – Increase average weekly worship attendance to 250
- Goal #7 – Evaluate possibility of adjusting worships times

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Goal #6 – Evaluate Christian Education offerings

INVITATION

- Goal #4 – Increase cross-group and inter-generational fellowship opportunities
- Goal #8 – Increase family-oriented activities



TRUSTEES

- Goal #2 – Evaluate current space utilization and develop renovation plan
- Goal #10 – Improve environmental stewardship and sustainability initiatives
- Goal #11 – Upgrade existing physical environment

FINANCE

- Goal #3 – Develop comprehensive financial plan to support and coordinate with program development plans

ADMINISTRATION

- Goal #5 – Evaluate current organization structure – committees; staff; volunteers
- Goal #9 – Improve external and internal communications

The work outlined in this Strategic Plan will guide the future work of Crozet United Methodist Church in an interconnected way that supports the complete mission of the Church. Crozet United Methodist Church will move forward proactively serving God and serving people today and tomorrow.

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