

Strategic Plan for Central Presbyterian Church

September 2011- August 2013

This plan, developed over a period of six months by the congregation and Session through prayer, discussion, and discernment, reflects where we believe God is calling us in our ministry together. It is built on foundational Biblical principles, Reformed theology, Central's rich history, and our faithful engagement with twenty-first century realities, needs, and resources.

The Strategic Plan is organized into six sections, each progressing from the preceding one:

I. Our Mission—why are we here in this place at this time? What would God have us do?

II. Our Vision of Who We Are---who are we? How do we perceive ourselves?

III. Our Key Values---what is important to us?

IV. Our Goals---what should we set out to accomplish?

V. Our Strategies—how do we achieve our goals in the most effective way possible?

VI. Our Ministry Plan---what specific actions will help us achieve our goals and fulfill our strategies?

I. Our Mission

The Great Commission: *[Jesus said] Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20*

The Great Ends of the Church: the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. *[from the Presbyterian Church USA Constitution, Preliminary Principles G-1.0200]*

Central's Mission Statement: Central Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), is a witness to God's love and grace revealing

itself in creation through Jesus Christ. Central is an urban church that thrives on the diversity of people and perspectives in Denver. We hold faith and reason in creative tension, yielding fresh understandings of fidelity to God. We strive to nurture community - both among our members and beyond our walls—giving meaning to the common good. Central’s historic building is a sacred space, linking the past with the future.

II. Our Vision of Who We Are

During this process, several consistent descriptions emerged about what it means to be “Central.” The meaning of the word itself denotes something which is inner, vital, essential, in the middle of things, at the core. **Central Presbyterian Church** brings people together around the most vital dimension of existence, our relationship with God, a dynamic relationship which is both personal and shared. **Central Presbyterian Church** offers foundational Christian teachings. Central means balanced, as in “I feel centered.” **Central Presbyterian Church** provides sanctuary and peace, a space to regain one’s sense of balance. Central means the heart, the place from which things spring. **Central Presbyterian Church** sends people out with the strength that comes from being connected at the center.

Vision Statement: To be a vital family of faith welcoming people inside for spiritual nourishment and sending people outside to nourish the community.

III. Our Key Values

Our Vision Statement reflects our shared key values:

A Vital Family of Faith: people of diversity, spiritually curious, engaged, inspired, caring, intergenerational, open;

Welcoming People Inside: providing a place of welcome, safety, and acceptance for all; accessible (without barriers), sanctuary; shelter from the storm; peace;

Providing Spiritual Nourishment: wonder, holding faith and reason in creative tension, friendship, inquiring, responsive, probing (going below the superficial to the core), relevant;

Sending People Outside: daring, risk-taking, venturing outside our personal and collective comfort zone, following Jesus, living lives consistent with faith;

Nourishing the Community: serving, encountering the “other” (i.e. people not known to us, people who may seem to be different from us), ministering, doing justice; being God’s hands and feet on earth.

IV. Our Goals

Our shared values help us set strategic goals. Without goals, our values are hollow and have no life.

A Vital Family of Faith: to foster open dialogue, communication, discovery and discernment that affirms each person’s gifts and his or her special place in God’s kingdom; to acknowledge God’s transcendent presence everywhere, constantly pushing us to engage in meaningful and energizing work together.

Welcoming People Inside: to achieve consistent excellence in our ministry together capitalizing on the strengths of our location in the heart of Denver, striving to offer outstanding traditional worship and a sense of belonging; continuing our service to the community, and to project those qualities in a way that makes involvement with Central an irresistible part of people’s search for meaning and purpose.

Providing Spiritual Nourishment: to provide rich and varied opportunities for lifelong Christian spiritual formation, taking advantage of our location in downtown Denver to meet the spiritual needs of people near and far.

Sending People Out: to live grace-filled, joyful lives, enabling each person associated with Central to radiate God’s love into the community in both action and attitude.

Nourishing the Community: to develop capacity-building (i.e. increasing skills and creating opportunities), high-impact (i.e. transformative) mission, justice, and service activities bringing the community to Central, and sending Central into the community.

V. Our Strategies

To achieve these goals, we will adopt the following strategies:

- A. To serve the spiritual needs of those who live and/or work downtown, to attract and integrate new members, and to nurture Christian faith and a sense of community among all who call Central home.

- B. To restore and reinvent our building as an effective tool of Christian ministry and mission in the city.
- C. To grow as a Christian community of shared values, including gratitude, generosity, and stewardship of God's gifts.
- D. To become known as a church whose values compel us to address the issues our local and global communities face.

VI. Our Ministry Plan

To serve the spiritual needs of downtown workers/residents, to attract and integrate new members, and to nurture Christian faith and community among all who call Central home.

In 2012, we will

***continue to provide** meaningful worship which 1) praises God, 2) includes sermons which help us understand our relationship with God and challenge us to engage in the world, 3) is enhanced by rich and varied music, and 4) celebrates the Sacraments with joy.

***expand** youth ministries with an active Youth Ministries Committee, part-time youth director, and balanced program including faith formation and spirituality, fellowship and mission that connects youth to all areas of church life.

*** evaluate** our current worship enrichment program and design ways to strengthen family worship choices.

*** foster** deeper relationships with all who call Central home by organizing a rich variety of faith-sharing groups for all ages and providing community-building experiences (e.g. all-church musical, retreats, etc.)

***organize** a rich variety of faith-sharing groups for all ages.

***design and advertise** a variety of regular spiritual programs and services that attract downtown workers/residents into our building (e.g. yoga, labyrinth, meditation space, concerts and recitals, prayer service, Bible studies, etc.)

***develop** a regular "theologian-in-residence" program with speakers from a variety of theological perspectives presenting workshops and lectures, and preaching in worship.

***present** "Parenting with Love and Logic" and "Marriage Enrichment" classes annually, widely advertised to members and public.

***select** a committee to coordinate “invitation to worship” ministries in neighboring businesses and residences.

***create** a spiritual formation task force to address the contemplative and spiritual formation needs of the congregation and community.

In 2013, we will

***explore /develop** Christian Education resources/experiences for children with special needs; recruit and train volunteers.

***conduct** staffing assessment and develop an ideal staffing plan for Central’s vision.

How will we evaluate?

Increase weekly worship attendance from 250 to 300. Track the number of weekday visitors to the church. Increase the number of new members by 20% each year (in 2010 we received 14 new members). Identify at least 6 “touchpoints” (connections with Central) to aid retention of new members. We will increase number of members making an annual pledge.

To restore and reinvent our building as an effective tool for Christian ministry in the city.

In 2012, we will

*** appoint** a Building Renewal Task Force to conduct a comprehensive analysis of our building including organ restoration, develop a program of functional/operational needs, develop a Master Plan for building improvements that will help us realize and implement our strategic initiatives, and incorporate priorities for preserving our historic building.

In 2013, we will

***elect** a Capital Campaign Committee to conduct a campaign to raise funds for this purpose, including identifying a goal and creating a comprehensive development plan for reaching the goal (through historic grants, utility company rebates, etc. as well as individual giving).

How will we evaluate?

We will have a Master Plan, space plans, architectural renderings, a phased implementation plan, and estimates of probable construction cost

by the end of 2012, and will objectively evaluate/reaffirm how these plans will help us advance the goals of the Strategic Plan.

To grow as a community of shared values, including gratitude, generosity, and stewardship of God's gifts.

In 2012, we will

- * **energize** planned giving (estate plans) by forming a committee to increase visibility of the Central Presbyterian Church Covenant Society, and make personal visits.

- * **develop** a year-round stewardship calendar, organized around giving (annual stewardship campaign, special offerings, giving time and talent), celebrating (thanking and recognition), and witnessing (personal testimonies in worship, VOICE articles, website, coffee hour info sharing and recruitment, interpretation of Presbyterian Church (USA) ministries and mission).

- ***increase** congregation's knowledge of Central's Endowment Fund.

In 2013, we will

- ***increase** understanding of, and financial commitment to, wider church mission (Denver Presbytery, Synod of Rocky Mountains, and General Assembly)

How will we evaluate?

In 2012, we will increase the congregation's pledge/non-pledge income for the operating budget by 5% (from \$502,000 to \$525,000) and set goals for increases each succeeding year. In addition, we will reduce annual draw from unrestricted endowment principal by \$20,000 each year for 5 years (from \$107,000 in 2011). We will increase financial mission support from operating budget by 2% annually (currently this represents 8% of total operating budget). We will report other giving, including special offerings and fundraising, in-kind donations, building use, etc. We will increase congregation's awareness of how additional giving has benefited local mission, enhanced church programs, and preserved the Endowment Fund for future generations.

To become known as a church whose values compel us to address the issues our local and global communities face.

In 2012, we will

***conduct** an “environmental scan” of our community, assessing its most pressing needs and ways/groups/projects already addressing those needs; committee will recommend collaborative mission initiatives.

***assess** Central’s involvement with New Genesis and Central Visitation Program for renewal, recommitment, and outreach (e.g. Bible studies, art or music programs, etc.).

***recommit** to downtown interfaith initiatives.

***increase** downtown participation in mission initiatives (i.e. an “alternative Christmas bazaar” of fairly-traded items, open to members and the public, invite public to join us in a Habitat build, etc.)

***develop** a comprehensive communications plan designed to raise Central’s visibility in the community and our members’ knowledge of opportunities for ministry.

In 2013, we will

***designate** 10% of funds raised through a capital campaign for the establishment of a mission endowment.

How will we evaluate?

By the end of 2012, we will have identified a primary metropolitan community need to address or project on which to embark. Members of all ages will have more options for hands-on mission opportunities. We will survey the congregation to recognize and celebrate current mission involvement.

Not the last word: This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, not cast in stone. It is a road map we will use to engage in faithful and effective ministries. In addition to some quantitative benchmarks we’ll be using for evaluation, we will continually scrutinize the tactics and strategies as we go along, to see if they are working and how they might be modified for even greater effectiveness. We’ll also be responsive to emerging realities and situations and a future we can see only a step ahead. Always, always, we will keep listening for the still small voice of God to lead and guide us. The future is secure because we are in God’s hands. Thanks be to God!