

Visioning Report Feedback  
1/9/2005

A. Read the Mission/Purpose statement on p. 8

**“First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is called to witness to all humankind with a spiritual vitality that embraces inclusiveness and Christ-like justice. Therefore, we seek to be a community that reaches in to one another, reaches up to God, and reaches out to the world with the love of Jesus Christ.”**

Discuss this statement with your group.

Respond to the following...

1. Does the Mission/Purpose Statement capture the essence of your view of our congregation's mission?

Yes

*\*The in-up & out could be re-ordered to up-in-out  
(A circle of arrows would value them all equally)  
?Where is “no creed but Christ” in this?*

Yes

*It's more concise & action oriented than before. It reflects Dick Hamm's 3 areas of spirituality, community and justice. We like it! A definite purpose, clear. Witness through word & deed or action. Witness implies verbal (preaching and teaching). “World” a better word than “witness to all humankind”—sounds enormous and too verbal a meaning.*

*How do we reach out? --We need training.*

*Reaches up, then in, then out because our first focus should be toward Christ. We like the conciseness of it.*

*Why wasn't “reaching up” to God first?*

Yes

*Like “in, up, out” phrasing. Consistent with denominational philosophy*

2. Which words are particularly meaningful to you? Please list.

*Witness – inclusiveness*

*Spirituality, inclusiveness, Reaching– (requires effort, action oriented), Community (Sense of belonging), the love of Jesus.*

*In, out, up, inclusiveness, Christ-like justice*

*Can't extract one or some words—all are meaningful, however ---\*spiritual vitality \*all humankind*

*Reach In, Reach Up, Reach Out = Good description in a few words which are memorable.*

*Witness, inclusiveness – important because sometimes we can forget to be inclusive to outsiders or in our own congregation.*

*Reaching in, up, & out – “embraces inclusiveness” – Hopefully that's what we try to do despite depth of spirituality, etc.*

*A. Humankind?! How about “people”. Less politically correct & more plain language*

*B. In, Up, Out is good – helps focus.*

*C. Spiritual vitality is good.*

*D. Justice can be a confusing word – good & bad*

*Like inclusiveness, “Christ-like” justice tied together. Loving caring receptive (not nonjudgemental, but not gloating in judgement.*

B. Read each core value slowly and carefully. Then respond to the questions.

**“We provide a place where the constancy of God’s love and the compassion of Christ are expressed.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Sounds like freedom to be ourselves, be diverse, and still be accepted here. A building, a home for a body to meet in safety. What we aspire to be. Compassion of Christ—Everyone is welcome here. Everybody! Home base for personal support with contact with loving trusting friends upon whom we can rely in all areas of need, spiritual, physical, emotional in corporate comfort throughout the week as well as just on Sundays. Constancy—this place—a God centered place—doesn’t change. Have grown in this value because of involving Salvation Army in our church. Requires us to work at being better Christians. We need to practice communicating in a way that’s non-judgemental. We need to play nice. Worship service, study groups, Bible study, small groups, funeral dinners. Feel a sense of love that is shared regardless of whether or not one agrees*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*We need to be sure in this aspiration—recognition & celebration of the constancy of God’s love. Programming needs to reflect that. Easy to get sidetracked onto other things. Create structures that encourage expression. Electric door!! Welcoming to all disabilities—all bodies. Need work done NOW to ensure accessibility. Completely different elevator is needed. People with disabilities cannot mingle with others, nor can their families. We think we do. Place of sanctuary and worship apart from pressures of everyday world. Several were skeptic(al) of sharing church with Salvation Army—but all of our fears have been laid to rest. Requires us to practice what we preach. Means we must create an environment where we don’t make them feel bad. “Communities” groups such as SS class, choir, Women’s groups, generally show love and compassion for each other. What happens to those not in a group? How can we find the “overlooked”? Need to do more than express it; need to live it. (We may do fairly well at expressing it, but not sure if we live it) constant struggle.*

## **“We care for those who have no relationship with God”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Does it mean we're not going to exclude people or fail to love them?—But would it also mean we'll work to get them here? So I actively seek out people we know are searching. Unconditional love.*  
*Daily jobs—witnessing*  
*We all could do better. Share our joy with God with others.*  
*God loves us unconditionally so we should include everyone to be a part of us and in turn we can lead them by showing them unconditional love.*  
*We care for those who appear to have no relationship with God. We care for everyone.*  
*How do you know if someone doesn't have a relationship with God? Are we not to care for everybody—no matter if they have a relationship with God? This seems limited.*  
*Group consensus is we may not care as much as we should—define “care for”. Do we actively care for them? Do we pray for them?*  
*Try to learn to be unembarrassed about witnessing.*  
*Mom's group—AI Anon—DBSA support—Mission funding*  
*Need to be active in circles where unchurched folks travel. Need to minister to non-believers with same intensity, (&) enthusiasm*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*(Get out there!) We need to be attuned to the opportunities God gives us. The opportunity to be an example, or lift people up. We need to make those opportunities. It's our mission outreach. We could do more as a presence in the community—more than just advertising.*  
*Signage for church, Invitation Sunday for outreach—all to bring a guest; Clinic, Salvation Army, Outreach Missions, Jamaica, Geographic location (our neighborhood)*  
*Door to door—food meals. Concerts to draw people here. We have a bus—what can we do to get (above) college students here?*  
*Mission Trips, Community Health Center (to be)*  
*We should be proud of our invitation, which is open to all.*  
*Our job is to reach out and have faith that God will do his part*  
*We don't know how to find these persons—Support ECM—How do you know about someone's relationship to God?*  
*Help is help!*

## **“We are a place for healing and comfort”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?

*We are when we know there's a need! Personally it's great. To open myself to vulnerability to get healing and comfort.*

*Prayer concerns that are shared. E-mail concerns.*

*Habitat for Humanity*

*Corporate support for us in all areas—joy or sorrow.*

*\*This church has been a place of healing and comfort.*

*Yes, we are as individuals and as a whole as long as we know the needs.*

*Requires a willingness to be aware of those around us, their problems and (that we) are willing to help. We don't add to others' pain and suffering.*

*Counseling—Grief, widow-widower, child's death, sudden accidental, suicide; Support for divorce, family concerns. Find other churches that have support groups. Become involved.*

*Need to work at knowing what is happening—some don't want to share their pain.*

2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?

*Would like us to be more alert, aware of the needs. The spiritual life groups are very important, but how do we convince others to open their lives to that? We're really good about the crisis moments, but as weeks and months go by, we sometimes don't "check in" with that person. Prayer request box and e-mail list—so you know someone is praying for you. Push the yellow card. (?)*

*Clinic; care and concern for members with sickness.*

*Habitat, Salvation Army and other. No FCC Groups.*

*Hospital visits (ministerial and Lay), Home visits, Funeral Dinners promote comfort,*

*Materials for use—library, handicapped equipment for use.*

*The e-mail notifications have helped. Block party for church neighborhood was another way.*

*Participate in health and counseling clinics.*

*Counseling—Grief, widow-widower, child's death, sudden accidental, suicide; Support for divorce, family concerns. Find other churches that have support groups. Become involved*

**“We work for justice for all God’s people”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Justice and God’s people is hard to put together—We need to spell out where we witness injustice. Whose understanding of justice? Peace and economic needs have to( be met?)*  
*Opportunity*  
*How can we define justice and God’s people? Justice for some may be different than justice for others. How socially aware are we about those in the community and the world?*  
*We must take more initiative to see problems and act on them.*  
*Respect for others; Shepherd’s crossing.*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Programming—Christian Action is more than She(pherd’s crossing); Handicapped accessibility for physical/mental/emotional; Accessible bathrooms! legislative contacts, e-mail alerts that (deal with?) discrimination, health.*  
*?*  
*Getting involved in community health clinic. Sending all to church camp.*  
*Participating in Shepherd’s Crossing, Habitat etc.*  
*Doing something is required through programs or ad hoc action. (Making a situation righteous)*  
*Low income housing—We need more,— minimum wage, Habitat for humanity-- furnish lunch.*  
*Not sure that we as a body do much, lip service*  
*(Three groups did not respond here)*

**“We dispel isolation and alienation by celebrating diversity and the inclusivity of Christ’s love.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*The word celebrating—Do we have programs that allow that? Are we capable yet of doing that? Mindset needs to be opened.*  
*One way diversity is witnessed is by the different people we have in our worship every Sunday. People feel welcome here. Celebrate—how can we do this? Celebrate women are in leadership.*  
*Need to do better calling on members who’ve been absent for awhile. More tolerant of differences now in big part due to new leadership.*  
*Jesus would say “Come on in”-- we should too.*  
*? Love all Christ’s children. Cultural differences*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Diversity of thought—of background. Every Sunday we see people sitting by themselves and walking out alone in the midst of others hugging. We need to look beyond our “usual” contacts.*  
*Sign (especially during summer with Farmer’s Market) Letting community know what we stand for, what is happening here. Business cards introducing our church as a welcoming body of Christ. Add phrase to newspaper ad, phone directory listing, (“welcoming” inclusivity) Enjoyed day and Verleta Meyer’s prayer. Have more of that—many backgrounds—make them welcome.*  
*By individual actions & words & continuity.*  
*We did vote that we are an open and affirming congregation. Work to do, but good things are happening.*  
*Disciples of Christ is open to all—Anyone who professes faith in Jesus Christ.*  
*Jesus would say “Come on in”-- we should too.*  
*It is difficult to please all people’s preferences.*

**“We serve God and others through the use of our spiritual gifts.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Identification of spiritual gifts.*  
*Don't say NO when you're asked to help or do a thing. Think about it and say, "I'll do my best!"*  
*We have a lot of people doing much. Still a goal for us. Focus- to serve God; We should step back and ask if this is for us or for God?*  
*Need to identify gifts and then use them in yourself and others.*  
*I do the things I like to do—Challenges are hard.*  
*Need to identify, recognize & celebrate*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Need to get to that Spiritual gifts study! And then get the organizational people to channel those gifts/people into the right spots.*  
*Time, talent survey for congregation.*  
*We need another Inventory Survey!*  
*Do you consider physical labor as a spiritual gift?*  
*Set up situations where spiritual gifts may be identified.*

**"We grow in Christ through the spiritual habits of prayer, scripture reading, small group interaction, and the stewardship of our resources."**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Prayer walk—good, bible study—good (keep hitting it) Need bible reading every day for me.*  
*Sunday School, Complete assessment of property, building needs so all congregation knows.*  
*Some or all of those keep me/us from becoming STAGNANT.*  
*We are making progress in prayer, scripture reading and small group interaction—but there may be work to do with stewardship.*  
*Spiritual Life groups have helped as well as prayer retreats, groups of 8, Wednesday Bible study.*  
*Participate in groups (spiritual life, Bible study, Sunday school, men's & women's groups) as teacher or student.*  
*Sunday School, small groups are very valuable for spiritual growth—Stewardship has to be taught early and reinforced by example.*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Resources we have and don't utilize. (Bible study, Daily Bible reading, etc.)*  
*Stewardship of resources-Recycling (What can we do? Youth project? Scout project?) Salvation Army & other groups meeting here, Budgetary decisions (stewardship) MUST be looked at by more. Boy Scout service project—building inventory*  
*Spiritual Life Groups, Wed. Evening*  
*Put in Bulletin—sources for devotionals.*  
*Realize stewardship is not fund raising, but...how do we finance a budget more than our income? Being a good steward also means turning off lights, locking doors, etc.*  
*Spiritual life group, Bible Study, Sunday School, Men's & women's group.*  
*Encourage more spiritual habits.*

**“We share the stories of our faith and our spiritual journeys.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Core Value? Or is it something we do? Spiritual life.*  
*Small groups are best for this.*  
*Find a way to expand participation. Advent brunch program – good.*  
*Be willing to do so.*  
*Our staff and volunteers need more “thank you” from all of us*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Could some speak during church?*  
*Give opportunities for all of us to share.*  
*Spiritual Life groups etc. have really helped!*  
*Set up opportunities to do so.*  
*Need to find wider varieties of avenues for drawing in.*

**“We support and nurture Christian growth of children, youth, and adults.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Children—I think we WANT to.*  
*May need more members involved in nurturing youth*  
*Choir, Sunday School, Outreach, Bible Study, Spiritual Life, Deacon, Elder*  
*That has been at the core for quite a while, We need to appeal to younger families.*  
*Participate—become active*  
*Stephanie needs encouragement (support)*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*Children—This needs emphasis—offer it and they will come.*  
*Children—Need improvement! (Are there kids that come to Sunday school that do not come to church?) What are we doing to recruit youth? What events could we sponsor? Could youth figure it out?*  
*Children’s programs are lacking! ?contact to homebound, Is the radio sermon effective?, ?College age folks*  
*Lots of room for growth here.*  
*Sunday School, VBS, Day Care, Mother’s day out, Elderly Day care.*  
*Scramble Sunday School classes for summer, or once a month or occasionally.*

## **“We embrace different expressions of worship”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Depends on the day and the (?????rt). Sorry I couldn't read the last part! Accept the fact that there are more ways to worship than “my” way.*  
*Kudos to organist & pianist—wonderful blend of contemporary, classical.*  
*Embrace (should we say welcome, invite?)*  
*Like the blended service, Prefer not to split up the congregation into Traditional & Contemporary congregations.*  
*We try. We shouldn't change just for change sake.*  
*We need to be patient during “odd” or different expressions*  
*Sometimes*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*More innovative-- like trying drama, music, video, guest artists, etc.*  
*What happened to the once monthly contemporary service? We need to improve quality of contemporary music! Continue with blended service—It will turn people off to have only 1 type.*  
*We need to reach out more.*  
*We appreciate the blended service, appreciate that proponents of two services accepted that church membership as a whole was not ready for it.*  
*Don't be in a rut, Try different things, involve youth.*  
*Not sure we accept this! Sort of have “grudging” acceptance.*

## **“We utilize an effective organizational structure that empowers individual and corporate ministries.”**

1. What practical applications does this statement have for you personally?  
*Prioritize more, crossover or community(?), Adults/children's sermon, Sunday School scramble—Move out of comfort zones. Corporate Sunday Schools. We know each other well in those communities (in which we participate?)*  
*Need for structure. Structure is a way to communicate. Committees seem to work.*  
*The constitution has saved us in the past.*  
*We have to be willing to trust each other and God*
2. What practical applications does this statement have for the church body as a whole?  
*We don't have this now. Too many people involved in every decision.—We need to invest responsibility in a few people on each area. More permission giving.*  
*Programs don't have to go through---(program idea-committee-staff-staff-elders-etc.)*  
*Inefficient board meetings. We are a democracy, not a republic. Flatter organizational structure. Whoever is selected/elected to make decisions MUST do better job of communicating these to at large congregation.*  
*We need both ways to get things done: \*committees \*self-directed small groups*  
*What about “Fix-it” ministry? (groups of people who help people who have home repair needs, etc.)*  
*Not yet, maybe some day.*  
*Ugh! We're not good at this.*