

Long Range Visioning Plan – An Evolving Process

History:

Over the last 15 years, due to our steady growth and the creation of several new ministries and programs, we have undertaken various conversations about how to remain vibrant and faithful into our future. At our annual meeting in January of 2009, a directive was given to the Cabinet to undertake a process of long range visioning. With the purchase of new land in 2010, the energy for this process was heightened. A rough outline of a plan was formed and is constantly being crafted. Here is the latest update:

Stage 1 - Listening

Beginning at our annual meeting in January of 2011, an invitation was offered to our entire church family to set aside some quality time each week until Easter to listen, pray, think and dream about the “vocation” (the work that we are called to by God) of our church into the future. Twenty six members made formal commitments of listening while several others spent valuable “listening” time.

Stage 2 – Education and Gathering

This summer, we hope to continue our process through two endeavors: education and gathering.

1. We would like to research and publish a document which includes a wide variety of possibilities for ministry. Churches often have an insular existence. But we shall look around this summer: What are other churches doing in the way of creative ministries and programs? What can we learn from others about ourselves and our future?
2. Ask anyone in our church family who is interested to compose a personal vision statement about the future of the church? A prompt will be provided, and we hope this will invite creative thinking and a wonderful cross-section of ideas. These statements will also be published.

Stage 3

This fall, informed by the publication of our research and personal vision statements, we will gather in thoughtful community conversation in the form of cottage meetings as we have done in the past. These meetings will be led by trained facilitators and carefully recorded. Ultimately our goal would be to share a report with the annual meeting in 2012. This kind of process allows us all to participate in the vision of our church family and all of us to be responsible to one another and the Spirit as we continue to live and grow as a congregation.

PLEASE SHARE YOUR VISION – IMAGINE THE CHURCH

We invite each of you to re-imagine the Vermillion UCC by writing an essay. (We suggest a length of 500 words.) Often we rethink institutions when there is a crisis. There is no crisis in our church. In contrast, we have an abundance of good spirit and energy, talent and resources, facilities and land. It is because of this abundance that we ask for your considered opinion about the mission of our church. As you think about our future, you might conclude that the current mission (however you describe it) needs no changing. You might also argue for a completely new vision for our church family. It is up to you. As you write, please do try to define what you perceive as the mission of the UCC and how you think that mission can best be served. Feel free to express your vision for the overall mission of the Vermillion UCC or for a specific program. Feel free, as well, to address things we are already doing but could do better, things we should start doing, or things we should stop doing. We will share all responses anonymously with the rest of the congregation in the fall so that we can focus on ideas and not personalities. It is our hope that this process will provide a means to share our hopes with each other and to clarify our spiritual mission. Please e-mail your essay to uccv@uccvermillion (or bring a hard copy to the church office.)