



2020 Vision

for

St. Pauls

United Church of Christ

Clear Faith for the Future

A 20/20 Vision for Saint Pauls UCC

St Pauls UCC Strategic Plan Development Process

In October, 2016, Congregation President Karen Johnson and Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald commissioned Congregation VP Craig McCroskey to establish a Strategic Planning Task Force to embark on creating a new Strategic Plan for St Pauls. The Task Force was formed and consisted of the following church members:

Craig McCroskey, Vice President	Karen Johnson, President	Matt Fitzgerald, Sr. Pastor
Jim Brandt	Kristin Lane Mack	Steve Peterson
Sally Fletcher	Francois Millard	Anna Titcomb
Marcia Frank	Wayne Parman	Steve Winters
Dan Lias		

The Task Force made the decision to hire an external consultant to guide the Strategic Plan development and this was approved by the Council and funded by a gift from a member. Task Force members interviewed consultant candidates, resulting in the hiring of Rev. Larry Peers, a national consultant with experience in leading congregations and religious organizations in the strategic planning process. In February 2017, Rev. Peers led the Task Force through a weekend of reflection and planning to develop a strategic planning approach based on extensive congregational input and engagement. One of the outcomes of this weekend session was the creation of a Framing Statement to guide the intent, direction and eventual outcome of the strategy planning process (see **Appendix 1**)

The next step of the strategic planning process was Focus Groups with the goal of merging the collective energy and resources of the church in order to discern possibilities and commitments for the future of the congregation. Participants were specifically recruited to represent a cross-section of St Pauls congregants (see **Appendix 2** for the list of participants). This diverse group of over sixty St Pauls members gathered in March, 2017, for over ten hours of focus group sessions and workshops focused on developing the foundation for this Strategic Plan. Working together in small groups, as well as in a cohesive whole, the participants were guided through exercises to reflect upon various experiences, work through a discerning and analytical process and define a common ground vision. The agenda for the various conversations and activities is included in **Appendix 3**. Focus Group participants determined six Strategic Vision themes or Calls that are presented in this Strategic Plan.

In order to clarify the Calls further, Action Planning Committees were formed to analyze and develop action plans for each theme. The Action Planning Committees were chaired by one or two Strategic Planning Task Force members and comprised of congregational volunteers who expressed interest in serving on a particular committee. The opportunity to participate was announced at multiple church services and through multiple emails to the congregation. Over 80 people participated in these Action Planning Groups and the list of all contributors is included in **Appendix 4**. While the goal was to get as much participation as possible (and please accept the

team's apologies if anyone was missed in the list), the work had to proceed according to a schedule and some may have not been able to participate fully due to schedule constraints. Thus, a survey for the congregation was developed and sent to the church email list as well as paper copies made available in the office to ensure general alignment with the resulting themes across the congregation. The Task Force estimates that a significant percentage of the active congregation participated in developing this Strategic Plan in at least one step of the process. The outcome of the six Action Planning Committee meetings is presented in detail in this Strategic Plan.

Reflection on God's Call to Saint Pauls

Throughout the Bible, God calls people to specific actions and particular tasks. God called Abraham and Sarah to become Israel. God called Moses to lead his people out of slavery. God called Samuel to become Israel's judge and David to become Israel's king. God called Mary to be Christ's mother. Jesus called disciples and later, after the resurrection, he called Mary Magdalene to go and tell his story. Through Paul, God called the early church to be Christ's body. In every one of these instances, God called and people answered, "Yes." Sometimes their "Yes" was enthusiastic. Other times it was full of objections and trepidation. But God called and they answered.

Throughout our long history, God has called Saint Pauls forward. God called us into being 174 years ago. God called us to help form the UCC. God called us to rebuild after fires, to start UCAN, to remain in the city, to move to Lincoln Park, to welcome LGBTQ people, to embrace change, to hold fast, to make a joyful sound in the city.

God is still calling! Our neighborhood is changing rapidly. Our nation is torn by divisive politics. The American religious landscape is shifting dramatically. In the face of all this change, God is calling Saint Pauls to step forward and meet new needs.

Our Strategic Planning process rests on an old UCC assumption: When faithful people gather together under the authority of scripture and listen carefully to one another, God's lead can be discerned. We have listened carefully in focus groups, large meetings, small meetings, and actions groups and we have heard God calling us to six related tasks:

Call #1. God is Calling Us to Grow Toward Each Other

The Church has always rested on the belief that in order to connect with God, people need to connect to one another. Some of our members rely on one another, relate deeply to each other and find great joy together. Unfortunately, many of our members do not experience such closeness. We can do more to intentionally foster connections between our members. Too often, new members feel unknown and drift away, while longtime members feel unnoticed and disengage. As the culture around us grows increasingly disinterested in churchgoing, it is vitally important to our future that we create a culture of connection, building relationships that will retain and engage our current and future members.

Call #2. God is Calling Us to Grow Toward God Together

A coherent and meaningful church experience requires a congregational emphasis on its members' relationships with God as well as each other as mentioned in Call #1. Personal transformation occurs at church when we can strengthen the faith journeys, through varied activities to express our shared longing toward these bonds through education, music and community service. These opportunities offer members a chance to not only grow toward each other but turn our attention toward God. Continuing our focus on receiving God's love is crucial for our planning and long term success as a church.

Call #3. Increasing Diversity in our Partnerships and Congregation

Diversity at St Pauls is about complete inclusion. St. Pauls seeks to consistently interact with people from all walks of life through Sunday church services as well as programming and outreach that occurs throughout the week. Creating a stronger diversity within St. Pauls can happen internally and externally. Strengthening the "ties that bind" St. Pauls members by facilitating congregational relationships among the individual church members will provide a foundation for external outreach to a diverse population. Partnering with other organizations and churches as well as within the neighborhood will broaden the inclusivity of the faith and outreach of the church. By achieving these goals of diversity, St. Pauls will be living our faith and embracing our credo that "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Call #4. Living Our Faith in an Age of Injustice

At this moment in the history of our nation and our city we hear God calling Saint Pauls to be faithful in ways that are increasingly active. In addition to contemplating faith, God is calling Saint Pauls to act on our beliefs. The church is called to be a sign of hope by providing constructive and peaceful solutions to violence and poverty. St. Pauls can be bold in response by living our faith and supporting others in need through our words, programs, and actions.

Call #5. Using Our Building for Service and Mission

The St. Pauls UCC building provides a home for our faith. Reimagining and redevelopment of the building will provide the ability to expand our internal and external community involvement. It would grant greater accessibility to members and the community into and throughout the church and would provide a new social space to congregate. Several possible redevelopment ideas include:

- A redesigned courtyard to provide an outdoor meeting space for Sunday School, youth groups, for neighborhood residents to gather or small summer concerts.
- Reconfiguration of the central hallway and installation of an event space on the main floor level with the sanctuary to allow for full accessibility by all members for social hour or other events and improve the options for other programs.
- Renovation of the third floor rooms to increase the capacity to offer more programs desired by the congregation.

While these projects may not be the only possibilities, overall, redevelopment of the church building allows the congregation to strengthen and expand the goals of the faith mission and vision of St. Pauls UCC.

Call #6. Tending Our Finances Faithfully

Over the last several years, Saint Pauls UCC has been sustained by the extraordinary gifts of members and friends including time, talent and financial gifts. Although our financial reserves have grown, we have experienced significant building expenses (i.e. new boiler, HVAC, and necessary exterior maintenance) that have required use of the reserve funds. In order to be fully connected to each other, to God and to our community, St. Pauls must be guided by the need for financial stability. We must be disciplined in order to achieve a balanced budget. Discipline in revenue growth and expense management is needed so that the dreams and aspirations of St Pauls to reflect God in the world can be met faithfully and in financially sound ways.

How will we use this Plan:

St. Pauls UCC has a long and rich history of focusing our efforts through connections to God, our community and to each other. This Plan continues that focus with a greater attention to the current status of the mainline Protestant church throughout our nation and specifically in Chicago. Making a Joyful Sound in the City continues to be an important component of our mission.

Over the next several years, the dreams and hopes of our congregation will take us down several paths all reflecting our place as a faith community. We will utilize this plan for a capital campaign, for governance redesign, for increasing connections and honoring our commitments to the community for carrying out the vision that has been expressed in developing this plan.

The following sections of the plan provide details behind each of the Calls. This includes a quick assessment of where we are now and where we feel God is calling us, based on the outcomes from the Focus Group and Action Plan Committee process. The sections then list several steps for the current view of the way forward to realize the vision, again as heard through the process. These steps are derived from the Task Force led Action Planning sessions held with congregational volunteers.

Small groups will be formed as the workforce for each section and will determine target dates for action steps and goals as needed. The small groups will provide updates and feedback to the Strategic Planning Chairperson.

The Church Council will receive regular reports, measuring effectiveness of each action step and updating the progress accordingly. The Vice President/Strategic Planning chair will provide updates to the congregation quarterly and at the annual congregation meeting.

Recommendations for reading and processing this document

This plan was developed with great discernment, prayer, patience and thoroughness. From the very beginning, the Task Force's goal was for this to be truly guided by:

- a) God's will and direction for this body of believers, and,
- b) the heartfelt desires and goals of the members of the body itself.

While our theology and doctrine provide for individual voices, the aim of this process was to use a process of consensus with a result in a combined voice for the direction of St Pauls. With this intent, the Task Force presents this Strategic Plan to the congregation and leadership, believing this plan builds on St Pauls strengths and history of accomplishments and looks forward to new accomplishments for the congregation, surrounding neighborhood, Greater Chicago and the realization of God's vision for us, His beloved people. This plan will be a living document that will require many different individuals and groups to accomplish the mission and keep alive. Hopefully you will find at least one area that resonates with you to embrace with your time, talent, and treasures to bring this strategy to life here at St Pauls.

THE SIX CALLS

CALL 1: God is Calling Us to Grow Toward Each Other

For as in one body we have many members and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Romans 12:4-5

Where We Are Now

Our faith has always insisted that in order to connect with God, we need to connect to one another. Strong relationships are built at Saint Pauls. Some of our members rely on one another, relate deeply to each other and find great joy together. Through such relationships, our awareness of God is enriched and our commitment to the church grows. Unfortunately, many of our members do not experience such closeness. Often, new members feel unknown and drift away, while longtime members feel unnoticed and disengage. We want to do more to intentionally foster connections between our members.

Naming Where God is Calling Us to Go

Our people want to *know* the church as well as be *known by* the church.

Steps

A revised and revitalized joining process.

Led by our clergy, along with a dedicated team of lay leaders (recruited by Task Force members) to serve as “Membership Shepherds”, we will revise the Joining Process.

- There will be one Membership Shepherd for every four prospective members.
- We will hold two Joining Sundays per year, one in early December and another in May.
- New members will be invited to attend four two-hour sessions before joining.
 - Each two-hour session will take place on a Sunday evening, beginning with a shared meal in the chapel.
 - Using a “Dinner Church” model, a Pastor will share a particularly interesting story from St. Pauls history during the meal, describing how it impacts our current faith and life together.
 - The bulk of mealtime will be unstructured conversation.
 - After dinner, prospective members and their shepherds will divide into small groups of 5-8 for one hour.
 - These groups will discuss a biblical passage or recent worship service using a series of guided questions.

The goal will be to help people know one another while talking about faith.

At the last session, prospective members will be reminded that we are all expected to participate in life at St. Pauls. Each member will be invited to help with worship by participating “behind the scenes” or “out front” for one year. On a carefully scheduled basis, new members will work with established members to help with communion preparation, videotaping, organizing the sanctuary and nametags, reading scripture, serving communion, ushering and greeting. After new members join, there will be a celebratory meal at the parsonage. Shepherds will organize follow up group activities like mission work and an annual reunion. If new members drift away,

Shepherds will check in on them and alert the pastors or other lay ministries as appropriate.

“Re/affirming Faith:” A (re)introduction to Protestant Christianity.

Many of our members did not grow up worshipping regularly. For some, Saint Pauls marks their first adult experience of church. Many others were raised in religious practices with different levels of congregational participation. Others were raised in conservative traditions that emphasized doctrine and dogma more explicitly than we do in the UCC. Many of our longtime members haven’t given focused attention to Christian truth claims for years. All of these people want to know, “What do we believe? What do I believe? What does it mean to be a Christian? Or a ‘progressive or liberal’ Protestant?”

To address these interests and needs, St. Pauls will offer a five week class each year during Lent, held on Sunday afternoons. Curriculum will be created by January, 2018, by the Faith Formation committee, the pastoral staff, and current confirmation teachers. Classes will be taught by clergy, past confirmation teachers and members with graduate theological degrees or past similar experience. Those who complete this class and wish to reaffirm their faith will participate in a rite of celebration on Palm Sunday. To encourage members to become active participants in the church, this class could also become a requirement for those wishing to have their children baptized at Saint Pauls.

Members will introduce worshipers to one another on Sundays.

We will work toward establishing broad congregational ownership of a “greeting culture” helping worshipers know each other. Activities may include investigation of a practical plan for nametags, make use of “follow up greeters,” utilize photos, discuss methods to make coffee hour inclusive and appealing, and revise usher duties and training for all members. This new approach will be defined and implemented by April, 2018 by the clergy, Church Council, and Greeter and Usher committees.

Facilitate participation in small groups, committees and ministries.

There are many small groups, committees, and ministries at St. Pauls UCC in which members and friends can be actively involved. In order to market and advertise these opportunities and recruit participants, several action steps are proposed:

- **Committee Summit**
The pastors will identify all small groups and leaders to participate in a summit. Clergy, Church Council members, and Task Force members will hold a small group leaders’ summit by February, 2018. The summit will focus on the value of devotions before meetings and gatherings and the importance of welcoming new faces to each group. Discussion will also focus on “best practices” from groups already doing a great job in these areas.
- **Join Us Moments**
To promote identification of these groups to the congregation, small group leaders and committee chairs will stand up in the pew during worship and briefly explain the purpose of their group, the benefits of participation and how it serves the church and world. Each

“Join Us” moment will conclude with an invitation to learn more and join at a table during coffee hour.

- New models of church governance
St. Pauls will seek to reorganize in ways that reflect today’s world and the goals of this plan, while encouraging committee engagement and turnover, empowering and involving as many members as possible. Congregational President Karen Johnson and the Executive Committee will appoint a governance task force by May, 2018 to include a complete rework of the current Church Bylaws. This group will complete its work with a report to the Church Council by December 1, 2018.
- New prayer groups
Start two new lay-led prayer groups, similar to “Ancient Prayers in Anxious Times” which is a prayer discipline based upon Lectio Divina. There are four steps involved which are done as a group--read, meditate, pray, contemplate. The group prays out loud for one another--providing solace and comfort in uncertain times. Pastors will begin prayer group by January, 2018.

CALL 2: Growing Toward God Together

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

Where We Are Now

Saint Pauls is home to a broad variety of Christian beliefs. Some of our members are relatively orthodox, others are “spiritual but not religious.” Many of us fall or move in-between these poles. We are strengthened by this diversity. We are united by a shared longing for God and the recognition that Christians need each other in order to connect to the divine. Our worship is deeply satisfying.

Naming Where God Is Calling Us to Go

We are those whom God loves. To know this, is to know the gospel. Learning and living this good news is our task and our joy. We feel God calling us to bring the sacred feeling we encounter on Sunday morning into the weekday life of our church and our weekday lives outside the church.

Steps

St Pauls Lecture Series

An annual lecture series - perhaps two lectures and wine and cheese on a Saturday afternoon - by a national figure on some aspect of the Christian faith intended to reach out to our unchurched or anti-church neighbors as well as to nurture the congregation. A lecture committee will be established to plan events and speakers.

Dinner Church

Dinner church combines faith practices during a shared meal. Possible features include preparing meal together, sharing faith stories, singing, Quaker silence, inviting guests from the homeless shelter, deeper social engagement, prayer, exchanging food or soup, an educational component, and liturgical experimentation. St Lydia’s (NYC) and Root and Branch can serve as possible models for a “Dinner Church” format.

Virtual St Pauls Community

Technology can be used to connect with God’s message and by making resources and opportunities visible and readily available. Deeper spiritual engagement may occur with some social media experiments involving Facebook, email, Twitter. Some of these improvements may require technical changes while other revisions may be more cultural in nature. Members of the congregation have a variety of levels of technological expertise and interest. While St. Pauls desires to communicate information efficiently and engage with each other using technology in all forms effectively, there also remains the importance of unmediated communication and bodily presence. One suggestion is the creation of a web-based application for St. Pauls UCC which could include daily devotions, prayer requests, messages, bibliography of Christian-focused books and movies for self-study introduction to faith, and reminders of events.

Mission Trips

Expand adult and youth mission trip initiatives to Haiti, Cuba, and elsewhere. Perhaps schedule an annual trip to Haiti in February and a summer trip to various locations to meet different interests and availabilities in the congregation. Local possibilities include work trips to Englewood or Lawndale to rebuild homes. Structures for these trips are already in place and the interest level is high. Additionally, many of these trips and opportunities can be self-funded.

Hymn sings

Host regular gatherings throughout the year focused on singing together. Themes can include Shaker hymns (and Shaker dances?), civil rights songs, metrical psalms, Taize, Luther's hymns, George Herbert's poems (over 90 set to music) Sacred Harp, gospel songs, Leonard Cohen, or Bob Dylan. Song leader(s) from St Pauls and elsewhere would provide some historical and theological background, musical guidance for untrained, and perhaps some performance. The evening could also include a meal or snacks and drinks. A hymn sing committee will be established to plan and stage hymn sings.

Youth Education

Continue to grow the youth education programs with involvement in the church services and activities and dedicated youth Christian Education programs (youth groups, youth mission trips, fundraising events, special youth church services, etc.).

Call 3: Increasing Diversity in our Partnerships and Congregation

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14

Where We Are Now

“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” Diversity at St Pauls is about full inclusion with members and friends feeling welcome and included, and by building relationships with people who are similar and dissimilar. St. Pauls is very diverse by age, gender, sexual orientation, financial situation, family formations or religious background.

Naming Where God Is Calling Us to Go

Creating a stronger diversity within St. Pauls can happen internally and externally. Strengthening the “ties that bind” St. Pauls members by facilitating congregational relationships among the distinct church members will provide a foundation for external outreach to a diverse population. Individuals choose a spiritual home for a variety of reasons: faith community, style of worship and preaching, level and types of outreach, or even a practical reason such as accessibility. St. Pauls seeks to consistently interact with people from all walks of life through Sunday church services as well as programming and outreach that occurs throughout the week. St. Pauls desires partnerships with other organizations and churches as well as within the neighborhood to broaden the inclusivity of the faith and outreach of the church. The congregation demonstrates a legacy of love and inclusivity for all by founding and supporting remarkable organizations including St Pauls House (elderly); UCAN and Refugee One summer camp (youth, underserved communities, economic issues); LPCS (homeless individuals, mental illness, addiction, economic issues); and the Night Ministry (youth, sexual orientations, mental health issues). Increasing and strengthening the relationships with these organizations will assist St. Pauls in broadening the diversity of spiritual partnerships.

Steps:

Diversity at St. Pauls can occur by building community with partnering organizations and the individuals who represent those organizations. This can be achieved by creating opportunities for relationship-building that are consistent and collaborative so that over time the congregational members and the partnering organizations become familiar and bond with each other as part of the same community. Steps must also be taken to improve internal diversity within the congregational staff and membership. Potential action steps include:

Internal

- Ensure that our Sunday School curriculum and materials (toys, books, etc) are diverse.
- Be sure that our hiring process is being done with diversity in mind.
- Guaranteeing that our physical building and our online presence are accessible to those with physical handicaps.
- Get to know current St Pauls members better and learn more about the diversity already represented by our members.

Media/Public Relations

- Building SPUCC brand by helping our members know how to share about the church as a welcoming place for diversity and openness.
- Build accessibility into our website and other social media.
- “People of St. Pauls” on social media: a photo and a little story about St. Pauls members
- Storybooth (like NPR’s Storycorp) leading up to 175th anniversary sharing issues, history, and people-based stories.
- Create a church podcast featuring church members and their stories.

Outreach

- Faith and Public Issues seminar series held as ongoing and continuous projects with the possibility of hosting seminars off-site.
- To grow our own congregation through “Bring a friend to church Sunday” as well as many activities outside in our neighborhood.
- Future involvement with the Lincoln Commons association that will surely exist.
- Take some of the faith and public issues programs off site (visit UCAN, Police Officers, Nursing Homes, Preschools).
- Outdoor activities (similar to Oktoberfest).
- Expand the Faith and Public Issues seminars into ongoing activities and projects, possibly off-site.

Collation

- Create a sister church relationship.
- Collaborate with the alderman and other community associations.
- Invite our partner ministries to come and worship with us on a regular basis.
- Church swap Sunday.

Youth

- Survey the youth to determine how they might like to participate with the community.
- Expansion of church youth population, looking at what neighborhoods we can tap into in the city to recruit families to join us.
- Weekly Saturday night young adult service with a courtyard tailgate or other social event afterwards, possibly in partnership with neighboring churches.

Future Vision

It is believed that greater inclusivity and diversity can be achieved at St. Pauls UCC by implementing the suggested action steps. These actions would address diversity issues both internally (with our membership, staff, and building) and externally (with our neighborhood and organizational/church partners). By achieving these goals, St. Pauls will be living our faith and embracing credo of welcoming and providing ministry to all.

Call 4: Living Our Faith in an Age of Injustice

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:17-21 (NIV)

Where We are Now

Saint Pauls has a longstanding commitment to social justice. As an urban church, we understand that we cannot hide from the most burning issues of our time. We have been a leader in the Open and Affirming movement. We housed young protesters after the Lincoln Park "police riot" at the 1968 Democratic Convention. We support students living beneath the poverty line at Lincoln Park High School. We co-founded the Lincoln Park Community Shelter and the Common Pantry. We began the Polar Peace March and continue to protest gun violence. This is only a partial list! We have taken risks in our effort to be Christ's body. But we have also played it safe, sidestepping justice questions and keeping silent on issues that call for prophetic witness. Our congregation is politically diverse. We welcome all people. Although we are a progressive church in a liberal zip code, we try to avoid conflating the Gospel with a particular set of political convictions.

Naming Where God is Calling Us to Go

At this moment in the history of our nation, our city, and our church, St. Pauls hears God calling us to be increasingly bold and active as we try to live out our faith in an age of rising injustice. We strengthen our own faith as we help others in the world guided by the following tenets:

- We will grow toward God as we live our faith just as Jesus demonstrated His.
- We will express our commitment to community, not just individuals.
- We will keep faith with our identity and history as a leading UCC congregation.
- Together we will be connected to a set of goals and values that are bigger than ourselves.

Building on our deep reservoirs of compassion, we will move beyond charity and toward justice. Working together, the Faith and Public Issues Task Force and our new Faith in Action group identified five areas on which to focus:

- Discrimination (racial, religious, ability, and LGBTQ)
- Immigration & refugees
- Environment and climate change
- Hunger, poverty & homelessness
- Gun violence

Moving forward, Saint Pauls will work to engage each of these issues more deeply by offering and organizing educational information and opportunities for direct action. Socially-progressive people who aren't already engaged at church can connect with us because of our commitment to social justice through short-term and long-term steps that we can take.

Steps***Social Justice Table***

Beginning in November, 2017, St. Pauls will establish a “Social Justice Table” for each week’s coffee hour. The table will provide information about issues and related actions. Members of Faith and Public Issues and Faith in Action will guide the implementation of this step.

Social Justice in Sermons

Clergy and Worship Committee will discuss ways for Pastors to incorporate social justice concerns into sermons beginning Autumn, 2017.

Non-violent Technique Training

Faith in Action members and other experienced protesters, perhaps experts from Nonviolence Chicago or the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center will train church members in non-violent protest techniques, including conflict resolution and police relations beginning in 2018.

Social Justice Opportunities

Current members involved in community organizations can assist St. Pauls in broadening communication and visibility of existing opportunities, including those with the Lincoln Park Community Shelter, Colleen Henry Writing Center and UCAN.

Social Justice Cafe

Beginning in 2018, the Facilities and Outreach and Benevolence Committees can guide the use of our kitchen to feed more hungry people and actively investigate opening a coffee shop utilizing the First Slice or Inspiration Cafe model.

Call 5: Using Our Building for Service and Mission

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise master builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds. 1 Corinthians 3: 9-10

Where We Are Now

The St. Pauls UCC building provides a home for our faith. The St. Pauls UCC neighborhood is changing and growing with new housing developments on Orchard and Fullerton for 500 or more new neighbors expected by late 2018. Opportunities to express and expand our faith are present with current facility space becoming available (with the departure of Park West Nursery School). Church programs that are currently in place could expand and curriculums that have been prevented due to lack of space can be established. Throughout the process, concepts were evaluated with focus as to how a renovation would impact what the church could offer in the future.

Naming Where God Is Calling Us to Go

The purposes for the recommended structural changes in the St. Pauls church building are to help meet several of the goals studied and recommended by the larger Strategic Planning Task Force:

- (1) Expand internal and external community involvement,
- (2) Provide accessibility for all people to every part of the St. Pauls UCC church building;
- (3) Contribute to St. Pauls financial stability by upgrading 70-year old buildings; and
- (4) Provide rental space to organizations that align with the mission and vision of St. Pauls.

It is envisioned that these projects would occur through a multi-phase, multi-year plan to renovate and/or rebuild the Parish House Corridor, which runs between the sanctuary and the chapel/parlor and includes the gym.

Steps:

Phase I: *Architectural/engineering Feasibility Study*

Following the strong recommendation by several architects on the committee, this phase will begin with an architectural/engineering study of all potential building projects in order to achieve streamlined project management and maximum fiscal efficiency. The study will coordinating the projects through several phases over time allows projects to be planned, phased in over time, and “fit” together and avoid costly “rebuilt” that might result from a narrower focus.

Phase II: *Preserve the Beauty/Greet our Neighbors*

The St. Pauls UCC neighborhood is changing and growing with new housing developments on Orchard and Fullerton for 500 or more new neighbors expected by late 2018. In response to the needs of our existing and potential new members, Phase II will include a re-envisioned courtyard and entranceway to possibly be created on the West (Orchard) side of the building with a distinct, dedicated, and accessible main entrance through the original arched-door main entrance. The re-envisioned courtyard and entranceway would enhance the beauty of the whole St Pauls building complex and reinforce to the Lincoln Park neighborhood our commitment to the history and architectural culture that it represents. It is suggested that the first phase begin in 2018 and end in 2019, about the time the new neighbors begin moving into the community.

Phase III: *Renew and Re-Orient the Corridor*

It is vital that all members of the congregation as well as friends and visitors are able to easily and safely navigate the building.

- *New elevator access*
Elevator service with access to all floors in the building will be installed. Reconfiguration and/or modification of existing classrooms and the gym will occur to provide flexible space for multiple uses as deemed by the church's mission and vision.
- *Potential café*
It also is possible a café near the offices/courtyard could be included.

In recognition that the Orchard doorways once were the main doors, this phase assumes the possibility of restoring this entranceway as outlined in Phase II. This second phase will likely incorporate additional life/safety modifications and may have some possible overlap in projects with the latter part of Phase II depending on the results and recommendations of the Feasibility Study. This phase may occur 2020-21.

Phase IV: *Open the Corridor to the Future*

Accessibility to congregational life events (i.e. Social Hour, potlucks, etc.) is a strong concern for St. Pauls members and friends. In response to the goals of enhancing St Pauls commitment to its own members and to the two main goals in Phase Two:

- *Modification of Gymnasium*
The Gymnasium could be modified to create a two-story structure.
 - A large, multi-purpose Event Center on the top floor (at the same level as the present hallway outside the church office).
 - Additional rooms for support services, classrooms, and storage on lower level.

The Event Center is envisioned as a much larger room than the Social Hall, which could be converted to other uses, possibly much-needed music practice and storage. The Center could be built with a multi-function floor that would permit play activities on weekdays or be attractive enough for social occasions, such as after-church social hours. The Center also could be rented for wedding receptions, small conventions and community meetings/gatherings. This phase might take place in 2022-23.

Future Vision

Reimagining and redevelopment of St. Pauls UCC church building will provide the ability to expand our internal and external community involvement. It would grant greater accessibility to members and the community into and throughout the church and would provide a new social space to congregate. A redesigned courtyard could provide an outdoor space for Sunday School, youth groups, or small summer concerts. Senior citizens in the neighborhood would benefit from a large plaza at ground level where they could gather in warm weather. Reconfiguration of the central hallway and installation of an event space on the main floor level with the sanctuary will allow for full accessibility by all members to social hour or other events. This project may improve the options for programs and fellowship opportunities. Renovation of the third floor rooms will provide less dormancy in many of the church rooms thereby increasing the capacity to offer more programs desired by the congregation. Overall, redevelopment of the church building allows the congregation to strengthen and expand the goals of the faith mission and vision of St. Pauls UCC.

Call 6: Tending Our Finances Faithfully

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. I Timothy 6:17-19

Where We Are Now

Over the last several years, Saint Pauls UCC has been sustained by the extraordinary gifts of members and friends including time, talent and financial gifts. We have seen our financial reserves grow through the generosity of members who have passed on. We have weathered challenges in the investment market and have worked diligently to utilize these resources responsibly by budgeting 4% of the income from these reserves. Unfortunately, we have had to utilize the reserves for day-to-day financial needs over the last several years. At the same time, we have seen the needs of our beloved church building grow, including replacing the boiler, HVAC and exterior work. We have had to tap into the reserves to assist in paying for work that has been required by the age of the building and by deferring maintenance in a responsible way. Additionally, when Park West Preschool departs the building, we will lose \$184,000 of rental income beginning toward the end of the next fiscal year that will need to be made up in some way or other. Continued utilization of the reserve funds while not raising additional revenue and managing expenses will make it difficult for Saint Pauls UCC to live out this strategic plan and carry us forward to another 175 years of Making a Joyful Sound in the City.

Naming Where God Is Calling Us to Go

We must instill a disciplined practice of managing our fiscal resources to achieve a balanced budget. In order to live out our connections to each other, to God and to our community, we need also to be faithfully connected to the need for financial stability. Our desires to be a reflection of God in our world will require discipline, including from a financial management perspective.

Steps

There are four key areas to focus efforts towards faithful and stable finances that will be led by the Giving Committee, the Finance Committee, the Church Treasurer and the Senior Pastor.

Membership contributions

Support larger church efforts to increase overall membership of St. Pauls by focusing on increasing percentage of new and current member gifts from previous years by more personal contact through visits, phone calls and other means via the Giving Committee. Educate all members on the joys and costs of discipleship with sustained focus on giving of time, talent and treasures.

- Reduce expenses and continue to raise yearly giving through 2022 to reduce the deficit by \$50,000 annually. Continue to utilize 4% of the income from the reserve fund.
- New Members Classes must include a focus on the financial health of Saint Pauls. Continue to encourage new members to make a gift of time, talent and/or treasures beginning with the new membership class in September, 2017.

- Appoint a task group to explore a viable financial giving goal (% of income) to recommend to church members as members are able.
- Communicate goal to congregation membership as an explanation of how to determine what to give - financial or time and talent.
- Cultivate more personal and individual connections to promote giving.

Major gifts

Educate and encourage major gifts by members and friends

- Create a planned giving group as part of the overall Giving committee including a lawyer and a financial planner. Initiate and expand planned giving conversations with individual church members.
- Beginning in 2018, utilize the UCC materials to provide literature and mailings on the campaign to provide bequests to the Saint Pauls' reserve funds.
- Explore creating a 501c3 to enable us to attract corporate donors.

Fiscal communications

Improve education and communication to the broader congregation regarding the financial circumstances of Saint Pauls UCC.

- Objectively evaluate our current cost structure and consider changes. As there is a potential to lose a substantial amount of revenue with Park West Preschool leaving, we need to reconfigure that space and rent it to individuals or organizations to recapture as much of that revenue as possible.
- Establish a five year plan (beginning in 2018) to balance the budget through income growth and controlled/reduced costs. Reduce expenses by \$50,000 a year until the budget is balanced within 5 years while utilizing 4% of the income from the reserve fund.
- Hold three church finance meetings per year (during worship and after) regarding church finance: Giving Campaign kick-off, annual budget development and mid-year status report. Include reports focused on the Saint Pauls Reserve Fund: its establishment, maintenance, and use over the years.

Capital Fund Raising

Prepare a five- to ten-year plan for raising and allocating funding for major changes in the buildings. These changes will be guided by the engineering/architectural study recommended by the Building Task Force group and by the congregation, as its members deem appropriate.

- Examine how a new St Pauls 501(c)3 designation could add gifts to Capital Campaigns.
- Provide for the funding of an engineering/architectural study of the plans for the projected 2018 Capital Campaign.
- Provide fund-raising advice and guidance in all the Capital Campaigns needed to make desired buildings changes for the life of the plan.
- Responsibility for these steps is with the Executive Committee, Giving Committee, Facilities Committee, and Capital Campaign groups formed as needed. The first two tasks are to (1) initiate the engineering/architectural study in early 2018, and (2) to appoint a group to investigate and make recommendations to set up a new 501(3)c corporation.
- Other deadlines depend on approval of and planned fundraising as the congregation reviews and decides to act.

Appendix #1

20/20 Vision for St. Pauls United Church of Christ
Framing Statement

The congregation and community of St. Pauls United Church of Christ have experienced significant transitions in our history of almost 175 years. During this time, we have strived to be a church that is “traditional, not conventional” while serving others and praising God. There is much to celebrate! Yet, we also realize there is more that we are called to do to remain relevant in a challenging and changing world. Our discernment about what is next and how we are called to serve will provide us guidance as to what strengths we should build upon, which challenges are worth our dedicated attention and what our priorities should be moving forward.

We know that people enjoy being part of St. Pauls community and that we are experiencing significant growth. St. Pauls practice of honoring and living the Gospel gives meaning to our lives and inspires us to serve individually and as a congregation in this city and beyond. We cherish our deep care and concern for one another. We want to continue “making a joyful sound in the City” through preaching that is challenging and relevant to satisfy our deeper desire for God. Our strong lay and pastoral leadership is revealed through worship, through outreach and congregational programs, and through music that nurtures our faith and spirit.

On the horizon are some opportunities and challenges that call us as a congregation to “do a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19). We are presented with the challenge of living up to our potential and our dreams, while needing to strengthen the resources required to achieve our goals. St. Pauls UCC has a chance to be a unique progressive Christian voice in a time that longs for prophetic and compassionate witness. The departure of Park West Nursery, the influx of new people in our neighborhood, and our congregational growth compels us to consider how to best use our building and what programs will meet the needs of the congregation and the community. We desire to share our transformation with others through outreach to our neighbors.

We now embark on this vital and transformational strategic planning process to determine priorities and strategic direction for St. Pauls United Church of Christ. We are particularly interested in determining our common vision and commitments that will enable us to:

- Build on our current strengths and envision expanding what we do,
- Determine ways to plan for and accommodate the potential growth of our membership,
- Discern how we might best respond to the needs of the broader community,
- Define our call for social justice and visionary action in challenging times,
- Align our financial resources with our priorities and mission,
- Nurture our intergenerational community while balancing our diverse worship experiences, and,
- Share strengths and weaknesses of worship, action, and prayer practices at St. Pauls UCC.

*Appendix #2***Strategic Planning Focus Group Participants**

Rachel Adams	Julian Jezerbowski
Maggie Arden	Karen Johnson
Jessica Ashley	Barb Kaiser
Shannon Banjavcic	Ed Keller
Amy Bashiti	Chuck Kent
Greg Basil	Jack Knight
Hannah Basil	Dan Lias
Jim Brandt	Kristin Mack
Ryan Braun	Tara Magner
Carrie Bruggers	Kelly Martin
Brent Carstensen	Craig McCroskey
Shannon Castle	Eithne McMeniman
Carlos Cata	Brent Mix
Ann Christopherson	Greg Mooney
Andrew Cittadine	Lydia Murray
Emily Cittadine	Tim\ Nowack
Julie Culver	Wayne Parman
Nancy Curotto	Linda Patton
Char Damron	Mark Pellegrino
Peter Doerr	Nancy Pifer
Deon Fayhee	Jen Pope
Sue Finkle	Christine Reeds
Matt Fitzgerald	AJ Smart
Sally Fletcher	Nick Swinehart
Marcia Frank	Anna Titcomb
Sarah Garcia	Dan Vaughn
Geoff Gist	Nancy Voigt
Melanie Harris	Marcia Volk
Ginger Hecht	Avena Ward
Jennifer Heiney	Gerald Wilk
Doug Heyboer	Steve Winters
Jack Hogan	Dianne Witkowski
Scott Jackson	Julie Womack

Appendix #3**Focus Group Agenda
“20/20 Vision for St. Pauls”**

Thank you for joining us for this important event. Because each session builds on the information from the previous session, your attendance at the whole event is needed and appreciated. Based on the results of the Focus Group, short-term action planning task forces will be established.

Friday, March 17, 2017

6:00-6:30 p.m. Dessert and Coffee

6:30-9:00 PM Focus Group Session

- Opening Prayer - Rev. Matt Fitzgerald
- Welcome and Framing this Strategic Planning Process - Craig McCroskey
- Orientation - Rev. Lawrence Peers
- Introductions in small groups
- Reviewing Our Lived Story: Timeline
- Reflections and Lessons of Our Lived Story

Saturday, March 18, 2017

9:00 a.m. -12 noon: Focus Group Session

- Opening Prayer – Rev. Matt Fitzgerald
- Reviewing and Reflecting on Our Lived Story & Large Group Dialogue
- Embracing the Present: Group Mind map of Current Trends and Challenges Prioritizing trends and major concerns: Whole group dialogue
- Owning the Present: in small groups & whole group dialogue

12:00-12:45 Lunch (provided)

12:45-4:30 Focus Group Session

- Creating Ideal Possible Future Scenarios for St. Pauls
- Discerning Common Ground Future Directions for St. Pauls
- Reorganizing into action planning groups (for work that will continue afterward)
- Next steps and Closing

Appendix #4**Strategic Plan Small Action Planning Groups:****#1 Membership**

Sally Fletcher, Chair
 Francois Millard, Chair
 Diane Biegert
 Julie Culver
 Patricia Calore
 Nathan Chamberlain
 Matt Fitzgerald
 Bobbie Gannello
 Creighton Hartanov
 Barb Kaiser
 Ed Keller
 Gay Kelly
 Tara Magner
 Nancy Mayer
 Angi Miller
 Greg Mooney
 Sheryl Mooney
 Michael Mosley
 Marcia Opp
 Linda Patton
 Jen Pope
 Katie Truskey
 Marcia Volk
 Jan Womack

#4 Social Justice

Dan Lias, Chair
 Avena Ward, Chair
 Maggie Arden
 Ann Christopherson
 Kelly Martin
 Eithne McMenamin
 Nick Swineheart

#2 Faith

Steve Peterson, Chair
 Anna Titcomb, Chair
 Rachel Adams
 Jessica Ashley
 Carrie Bruggers
 Chuck Kent
 Diana Laskaris
 Sue Reddel
 AJ Smart
 Nancy Voigts
 Gerald Wilk

#5 Building

Marcia Frank, Chair
 Wayne Parman, Chair
 Steve Winters, Chair
 Barb Arsenault
 Jan Bail
 Greg Basil
 Deb Bayly
 Brent Carstensen
 John Cochran
 Char Damron
 Sarah Garcia
 Sarah Good Mosley
 Phil Hamp
 Kurt Hansen
 Allen Heinemann
 Jennifer Heiney
 Candi Huber
 Larry Kearns
 Gay Kelly
 Paul Kendall
 Mark Mosley
 Lydia Murray
 Tim Nowak
 Nancy Pifer
 Liz Raiman
 Deon Sanders

#3 Diversity

Kristin Mack, Chair
 Ann Carstensen
 Nancy Curotto
 Sue Finkle
 Jerry Glashagel
 Melanie Harris
 Ginger Hecht
 Doug Heyboer
 Jack Knight
 Christine Reeds
 Peg Wander
 Julie Womack

#6 Finance

Jim Brandt, Chair
 Karen Johnson, Chair
 Wayne Parman
 Hannah Basil
 Andrew Cittadine
 Peter Doerr
 Matt Fitzgerald
 Gay Kelly
 Tom Murray
 Frank Mynard
 Jana O'Brien
 Bev Petrunich
 Tilly Wilhoite