

DEEPENING OUR SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

Strategic Plan for 2010-2015

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Presented to the Congregation

February, 2010

Introduction to the Strategic Plan

Plymouth is a covenanted community of believers and seekers with diverse viewpoints about our theology. We experience and celebrate many paths to the sacred through our worship together, our outreach in the community, our relationships with one another, and the education programs for all ages. And while it is clear that no statement or document can speak for everyone at Plymouth, we are commonly grounded in the Christian tradition and influenced by the life, teachings and spirit of Jesus.

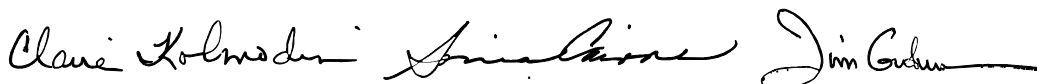
This Strategic Plan is rooted in an extended period of reflection among members of the congregation about our shared hopes for Plymouth, our common concerns, and the ways we can put our good ideas into action. Hundreds of you participated in the 2007-08 Listening Sessions and related activities. Nearly a hundred of you responded to the Strategic Vision which was the philosophical framework for this plan. Your comments were affirmative, inspiring, candid, informative as well as constructively critical, and the committee is grateful for them all.

Informed by your contributions throughout the process, the Plan includes the following:

- Our Mission and Shared Values, revised from the Strategic Vision document we presented to the congregation in October
- The Strategic Priorities which are the Plan's central focus:
 - I. How We Believe
 - II. How We Explore our Spirituality
 - III. How We Live in Community
 - IV. How We Put our Faith into Action In The World
 - V. How We Communicate
 - VI. How We Sustain a Vibrant Congregation
 - VII. How We Work Together
- Appendix

We trust you will find the Strategic Plan as authentic, challenging, visionary and bold as our beloved church needs it to be. While we have laid a direction for the work to be done, it is you – the Boards, ad hoc groups, other lay leaders, individual members, clergy and staff – who will take responsibility for deliberation and implementation of various parts of the plan, under the direction of the Church Council. **Please note that we will present the Strategic Plan for your discussion and confirmation at a Congregational meeting on Sunday, February 28th, directly after the 10:30 a.m. worship service in the Sanctuary. We hope you will participate in the meeting.**

Warm regards,



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Our Mission

Plymouth Congregational Church is a progressive faith community grounded in the Christian tradition. In mutual care and with respect for our diverse understandings of God, we seek to embody the radical love and justice found in the life, teachings, and spirit of Jesus.

Our Covenant

“We covenant with you, O God, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in your presence to walk together in all your ways, according as you are pleased to reveal yourself to us in your blessed word of truth.”

Based on the Salem Covenant of 1629

Our Shared Values

Value 1: Our Theology

Plymouth’s shared theology is Progressive Christian Universalism: affirming that there are many paths to the sacred, that no one religious tradition contains them all, but that ours is a Christian story. We are a covenanted community of diverse viewpoints and widely differing beliefs though we are of common purpose in our service to the community. As a community rooted in the Christian tradition, our faith affirms that by teaching and example Jesus calls us to the daily struggle for justice and to persistent works of love, compassion, forgiveness, and healing.

Value 2: The Individual, Spirituality and Congregationalism

While the individual conscience is the final authority for us on matters of faith, we honor the dynamic nature of the Scriptures and the collected wisdom of the tradition, as well as the searching of our individual minds. As we affirm and support our differing beliefs, our historic Covenant, the hallmark of our Congregational heritage, binds us together to share our journeys and to reflect on, explore, worship, and live our faith in community with one another.

Value 3: Our Life in Community

Plymouth Church, like its Congregational forebears, was formed by a community of spiritual seekers who found meaning and purpose in their common life, trusting that their loving and committed

engagement with one another would illuminate and enrich their individual journeys, help them meet the challenges of their lives, and give support and authority to their good works in the world. So it remains today.

Our individual spiritual paths have been and will always be sacred strands of the life we live together as a gathered community of adults, youth, and children, a life that must be characterized by deep and genuine care for, and trust in, one another and in our shared values; by a willingness to engage in honest dialogue about our deepest beliefs; and by an abiding commitment to nurture and bless our common life into the future.

Value 4: Inclusivity

Our Plymouth community is inclusive: all are welcome. We embrace diversity, we affirm the dignity and worth of every person as created in the image of God, and we honor the guiding principle that discrimination is incompatible with Jesus' message of unconditional love.

Value 5: Our Action in the Wider Community

We celebrate our historic role and central commitment as a congregation to the wider community. Inspired by our varying beliefs and the blessings we have received, we seek to engage with others to promote social justice and to improve the well-being of others in our neighborhoods, our city, our country, and the world.

Value 6: Celebration of the Arts as Sacred

We believe in the transcendent power of the arts to move us spiritually and intellectually. The arts are a pathway to the sacred, encouraging us to experience the mysteries of faith and spirit, and bearing witness to the divine in us all. We affirm and celebrate the many forms of the creative and imaginative aspects of human experience as integral to our individual and communal spiritual life.

Value 7: Affirmation of Compatibility between Science, the Intellect, and the Spirit

We celebrate the gifts of science and the intellect as well as those of the spirit, and we affirm that science and religious faith are complementary and not in conflict with one another. We honor our Congregational heritage that values life-long education and intellectual inquiry in all facets of our life together.

Our Strategic Priorities

I. Strategic Priority: How We Believe

We value our legacy of Progressive Christian Universalism for its guidance, morality, and inspiration in a complex, divided world. While our individual beliefs are strengthened by our

respectful exploration of other religious faiths, we are rooted in the Christian tradition. Though we have diverse views of Jesus, we are guided by his life and teachings in the Scriptures as we seek to create a more just, loving, compassionate, and forgiving world.

While we believe that the authority of the individual conscience is primary, our historic Covenant calls us into community, to share our faith journeys with one another.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Honor our diverse beliefs, confident that there are many paths to the sacred.
2. Continue to seek wisdom from the world's great faith traditions and to learn more about our own.
3. Continue to identify and share with one another the lessons of Jesus' life and teachings for us today. As a Progressive Christian community, we will explore our diverse understandings of Jesus and welcome the many different ways those in Christian communities understand him.
4. Engage the tension between our respect for each individual's spiritual and intellectual freedom and our commitment to nurture our life together as a community.
5. Strive to live out the central notion of liberal theology that truth is not codified in creeds but is revealed in human experience.
6. Pursue opportunities to strengthen our leadership in the wider Progressive church community.

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Strengthen our congregation's theological and biblical literacy, especially of the life and teachings of Jesus, by creating multiple opportunities for learning and discussion.
2. Explore different faiths and theologies, and how they can enrich us spiritually.
3. Contribute more proactively (in educational programs and other formats) to the Christian-Muslim dialogue.
4. Continue to find ways to be a teaching church not only to our own congregation, but to those who have been called to ministry and service with us.
5. Consider occasional pulpit rotation with other faith traditions.
6. Help one another discover evidence of the divine in our own experience.

Leadership for Implementation

1. Plymouth's team of clergy, who are on the leading edge of Progressive Christian theology, who provide intellectual and spiritual leadership to our congregation and to other faith communities beyond Plymouth
2. Plymouth's Board of Deacons, which has as its charge the spiritual life of the congregation
3. The Plymouth Center, whose mission is to articulate, share, and act upon foundational and emerging values of Progressive Christian faith
4. Numerous former clergy who are members at Plymouth

II. Strategic Priority: How We Explore Our Spirituality

We value the worship service with its intelligent and inspired guidance from sermons and rich music that enable us to explore and grow together spiritually. Some want the opportunity to be more engaged in worship services, and many seek additional opportunities to enhance and deepen their spiritual journeys.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Continuously seek ways to enrich the worship services for all while sustaining the excellence of the words and music and the intellectually stimulating preaching.
2. Celebrate the gifts of the arts and intellect as well as the gifts of the spirit as avenues to the sacred, seeking ways to engage our church community in deepening our awareness of and appreciation for all manifestations of God in the world.
3. Create ways to explore our spirituality together, raise questions with one another, and enrich our own theological perspectives.
4. Share our faith journeys, in community with one another, in order to live out the meaning of our covenant to "bind ourselves...to walk together...."

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Pursue multiple levels of spiritual dialogue: within ourselves, within our Plymouth community, with the broader Christian community and beyond.
2. Develop opportunities for spiritual growth through small groups, retreats, courses, workshops and service opportunities.
3. Build on the excellence, expertise and experience of our signature music program at Plymouth to expand the repertoire and create new worship experiences.

4. Pursue opportunities for off-site worship and fellowship for people who may not want to come to Plymouth's campus.
5. Create additional opportunities to enhance participation of the congregation in the worship services.

Leadership for Implementation

1. Board of Deacons, which guides worship as well as the spiritual life of the congregation
2. Board of Membership, which engages in on-going efforts to attract and integrate members
3. Talented music personnel with wide-ranging interests and expertise
4. Clergy, who are deeply interested in enhancing worship services and committed to working more closely with the congregation on spiritual matters

III. Strategic Priority: How We Live In Community

Influenced by our Congregational heritage, we believe that our individual spiritual and broader life journeys will be enriched by loving and trusting relationships with one another. We choose to worship, learn, socialize and serve in community. As a gathered community of adults, youth and children, we seek ways to nurture and support one another.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Create opportunities for all members to experience community through their active engagement in worship, volunteer work in the church and in wider community, special activities, small groups and social events at Plymouth.
2. Seek ways to increase and celebrate diversity in our community.
3. Celebrate all loving and committed relationships.
4. Explore strategies to make Plymouth's worship services and its broad range of activities more welcoming to members of every age.
5. Nurture the care-giving culture at Plymouth that includes opportunities for active caring by our members for each other and beyond our congregation.

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Implement strategies developed by the Board of Membership for actively inviting, encouraging and sustaining members' interest in and commitment to fuller participation in Plymouth's church life.
2. Further develop the current host program that helps sustain the engagement of newly active members.

3. Review the church's recent inventory of identified barriers to community at Plymouth and create specific strategies for overcoming them.
4. Encourage and strengthen lay and staff support for those who are experiencing challenging times.
5. Create strategies for nurturing one another on an on-going basis, not just when people are in crisis.

Leadership for Implementation

1. Board of Membership, which regularly explores how to integrate members into the fabric of Plymouth
2. Board of Member Care, which ensures that members of the congregation are supported in times of illness and difficulty
3. Board of Stewards, which provides hospitality on Sunday morning
4. Minister for Member Care, whose special commitment is to provide nurturing care to members and leadership to the rest of the Congregation
5. Team of clergy, who are deeply committed to building community within the church

IV. How We Put our Faith Into Action In The World

Inspired by our Christian tradition, God's generosity to us, and Plymouth's historical outreach to the community and commitment to social justice, we will work with others of all faiths for justice and wellbeing in our neighborhoods, our city, our country, and the world. We will do so as a joyful expression of our shared values and to honor our church's historic commitment to improving the lives of the poor, the marginalized, and the excluded.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Take a strategic and deliberate approach to assessing the needs in our community and the world to determine where we believe we are particularly called to take action.
2. Strive to effect systemic change by addressing the root causes of issues and educating ourselves and others to create long-term solutions while addressing immediate needs and crisis situations when appropriate.
3. Break down walls and build bridges with other faith and secular communities, working collaboratively to address areas of greatest need.
4. Better connect our congregation's passions and gifts with opportunities for action.

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Identify the most critical local and global concerns we want to address and assess our current efforts against these needs.
2. Expand the opportunities available for our congregation's involvement; develop clearer ways to match members with opportunities for action.
3. Strengthen our efforts individually and collectively to learn about, protect and sustain our environment.
4. Extend our local initiatives to address the critical need for food and housing facing the most vulnerable in our community.
5. Sustain our global initiatives to create secure, self-supporting communities in other parts of the world.
6. Expand our voice and our influence in the broader community around issues we believe must be addressed.

Leadership for Implementation

1. Outreach Board, which addresses social justice issues, especially of people in the neighborhoods surrounding Plymouth and in downtown Minneapolis
2. The Benevolence Committee of the Board of Deacons, which makes decisions about our church's contributions to wider community initiatives
3. The Global Connections Committee of the Board of Deacons, including the One Village Project, Plymouth Cuba Connect and others
4. Relationship with the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation and the Downtown Churches to End Homelessness
5. Church clergy and staff, who provide leadership for our community involvement

V. Strategic Priority – How We Communicate

We enrich our sense of community by working to increase and enhance our communication with one another; by finding and supporting more opportunities for honest, open and trusting dialogue; and by encouraging and supporting mutual respect for each other's views on issues such as faith and spirituality.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Work to develop and introduce new standards for genuine and open communication at Plymouth, asking leaders to model these norms.
2. Work to expand and integrate multiple forms of communication into our life together.
3. Create supportive opportunities for more trusting, open and respectful

conversations among church members.

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Develop a comprehensive communication plan that will guide our communication with one another and outside of Plymouth.
2. Develop a comprehensive online platform which enables and encourages multi-channel, multi-directional communication within and beyond Plymouth (including Facebook, podcasts and more).
3. Promote increased usage of up-to-date technological methods of communication; explore and introduce strategies or models that promote candid, compassionate, and generative communication.

Leadership for Implementation

1. The Executive Minister, who has responsibility for overall coordination
2. Ad-hoc communication committees comprising a cross-section of interested groups, individuals, and Board representatives that would be responsible for each action
3. Staff with communication expertise and responsibility

VI. Strategic Priority – How We Sustain a Vibrant Congregation

Geographic mobility, aging membership and the evolution of individual members' faith paths require that Plymouth continuously focus on the roles of children and youth, families, visitors, and new members in our congregation, and find new ways of communicating with those searching for a Progressive Christian faith community.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Express more effectively the value and importance to Plymouth of every member throughout their lives and their changing engagement with the Church.
2. Continue to refine an environment that values the role of children and youth, not just as the future of Plymouth but as an important part of the Church community every day.
3. Define and communicate more clearly the meaning of membership at Plymouth and its value to potential members.
4. Actively reach out to members of the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul community who are receptive to Plymouth's Progressive Christian model for worship and church life in an effort to attract new members.
5. Commit to having a membership of sufficient size to sustain our ongoing mission and who will prioritize Plymouth and its programs in their ongoing financial giving.

6. Ensure that our annual, capital, planned and special pledge campaigns effectively engage the generosity and financial support of our members and regular visitors.
7. Increase the financial transparency of the organization and talk openly about our resources and needs.

Potential Actions

We will:

1. Refine and implement (with leadership of Board of Membership, Board of Deacons, staff and Church Council) the comprehensive, multi-year strategy for growth in numbers of engaged members and visitors.
2. Build a set of metrics and tools for Board of Trustees' regular communication with our members about the financial status of the Church. This will also help to guide and manage stewardship campaigns.
3. Build on recent Plymouth research regarding children and youth to explore how our Boards and other systems can make our community attractive and inspiring to young people.

Leadership for Implementation

1. Board of Membership, who will, in conjunction with the Executive Minister, identify resource needs for the implementation of the member and visitor plan within one year of the adoption of the Strategic Plan
2. Board of Deacons, who will, in conjunction with the Senior Minister, identify the implications for worship
3. Board of Trustees, who will work with the Business Manager and the Executive Minister to build the financial metrics and reporting tools as well as to formulate and implement the stewardship campaigns within one year of the adoption of the Strategic Plan
4. Minister for Education, who oversees religious education and spiritual enrichment for children, youth and adults, will play a central role

VII. Strategic Priority – How We Work Together

The congregation will organize itself in ways that encourage wider participation by the members and that are geared toward taking action, effectively utilizing the talents and experiences of members and staff.

Our Objectives

We will:

1. Develop ways to make our leadership and governance processes more efficient, transparent and collaborative. These strategies will make participation in the leadership of the congregation more enjoyable, will allow for more effective communication and decision making, and will create results that are better aligned with our mission.

Potential Actions

1. The Moderator, in consultation with the Senior and Executive Ministers, will appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct a review of Plymouth leadership and governance.
2. The ad hoc committee will report to the congregation with recommendations for action within 24 months of adoption of the Strategic Plan.
3. Plymouth will immediately increase boards' and committees' access to leadership-development practices.

Leadership for Implementation

1. The Moderator and Church Council
2. The Senior and Executive Ministers
3. The church professional staff

Conclusion

The Strategic Plan is a Call to Action but the plan is only as good as the energy and commitment of our congregation to implement it. We now hand off the work to you—the Boards, ad hoc groups, other lay leaders, individual members, clergy and staff—to bring it to life. It is the intention of the Strategic Planning committee that Boards and others who have responsibility and interest in various Strategic Priorities will deliberate the objectives and recommendations of each, determine how your current work is aligned with them, and develop your plan of action under the direction of the Church Council.

It has been a privilege for us to work with you to develop the Plan.

Claire Kolmodin and Sonia Cairns, Co-chairs
Jessica Allen
Katie Dailey
Mike Monten
Ellen Van Iwaarden

Jim Gertmenian, clergy
Peg Birk
Phebe Haugen
Bill Schafer
Lew Zeidner

Appendix

I. Acknowledgments

Mindful that this Strategic Plan would guide our collaborative efforts to deepen our spiritual community over the next five years, we created a variety of ways we could hear your ideas: weekend Listening Sessions, email communications, ad hoc meetings, questions for your written response, feedback sessions, and one-to-one conversations. We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of you who contributed your time, energy, ideas and wisdom to lay the foundation for this Strategic Plan.

With each response, we were impressed with your love for Plymouth Church. We deeply appreciate your guidance and the thoughtfulness with which you contributed your ideas. We and the other members of the Strategic Planning committee listened. We considered your contributions with our heads and hearts. We heard, above all, your deep longing for a stronger sense of spirituality and community with one another.

The Strategic Planning Committee also wants to acknowledge Jim Gertmenian, who was a full participant in the process and who provided wise counsel and spiritual guidance throughout the three years; John Bryson, Dee Gaeddert and Peter Heegaard, who served as strategic advisors; and Betsy Cussler, who edited the document. An **Oversight Group** for the Listening Sessions included Jessica Allen, Karin Birkeland, Dave Buran, John Breitingner, Heidi Burch, John Bryson, Karen Esjbornson, Nancy Gores, Tom Hysell, Mike Monten, and Lynn Truesdell.

II. Process Used by the Strategic Planning Team

The Strategic Plan results from a long and deliberate process. Our priority in the earliest works we did together was to develop a process that would allow us to discern what we had learned from you, what principles would guide our work, and the norms for how we would work together. We listened deeply to you and to one another; we proposed and wrestled with big ideas; we challenged one another to be true to our guiding principles and norms. The **process** was vitally important to the work we have accomplished on the development of the Vision and the Strategic Plan.

Our Strategic Planning Prayer

God of our past, we thank you for Plymouth Church, for the vision of our founders, for the courage of those who taught us to love the city, for the constancy of members through the years who have made their home in this congregation.

God of our present, we thank you for Plymouth Church, which is now our home. We thank you for our church's wide-open doors, for its deep and caring heart, for its lively conscience and for its caring spirit.

God of our future, we thank you for the Plymouth Church to come. As we look to the years ahead, fire our imagination, strengthen our resolve, deepen our faith and open our ears, not only to one another but to your voice so that we might know where we are called.

Be with us, O Holy One, and help us to be who you intend us to be. Amen.

Principles that Guided our Work

As we worked, we sought to:

1. Increase the congregation's authentic engagement and active involvement in our planning
2. Increase a sense of community while celebrating our individuality
3. Identify what we share as a faith community—our institutional identity
4. Set a direction that builds on our rich history
5. Recognize existing challenges and embrace future opportunities
6. Create an overall roadmap of where we are going, knowing we will need to adjust as we move forward
7. Build the congregation's commitment to the Plan

Norms for how we worked together

Throughout the planning process, we pledged to:

1. Make truly aspirational, break-through recommendations that are worthy of our beloved church's future
2. Approach our work with head, heart, courage and a spirit of genuine curiosity
3. Frame all aspects of the Plan within a spiritual context
4. Model authentic, straightforward, and caring communication among ourselves
5. Embrace the seemingly paradoxical views of Plymouth members
6. Foster a sense of stability within the Plymouth community during turbulent times
7. Commit to making ourselves and the Strategic Plan accountable to the membership of Plymouth

III. Summary of Themes from Affirming our Spirit, Building our Legacy: 2007-08 Listening Process to Lay the Groundwork for Plymouth's Strategic Plan

These are the dominant, recurring themes extracted from the Listening Sessions. Other topics were raised, but these were the issues around which people focused the most energy. We met with nearly 400 people including the Church Council, the eight formal boards of the Church (in some cases, more

than once), the clergy, confirmands, Sunday School students and teachers, several ad hoc committees, several informal small groups, and the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation.

1. Theology: We value our legacy of progressive liberalism – which “provides guidance, morality and inspiration in a complex, materialistic world.” Our own beliefs are strengthened by our respectful exploration of other religious traditions. The Plymouth Center’s conference on faith and politics reflects our sense of progressive liberalism. This liberal theological stance challenges our thinking and expectations for ourselves. We see that as critical to our future. However, our theology also raises interesting questions for consideration: What do we stand for as a whole as well as individually? What is our connection to Christianity? What do we mean by spirituality?

2. Worship: We value the worship experience (particularly the 10:30 worship service) as a very important and prominent part of Plymouth Church life. The preaching is highly valued for its open, challenging and thoughtful nature. Many see the music as a major highlight, although there are some people who would value more diversity. Others find some of the hymns out of alignment with our liberal theology. The worship service is inclusive in many ways, although not perceived as such by some young people or parents with young children.

3. Community within Plymouth: For many, Plymouth provides a welcoming community and they find ways to participate as a small church inside a large church. For others, especially some newcomers, Plymouth is non-welcoming, almost intimidating. Once people start participating in church activities, they begin to feel community. Given the sense that “connection at Plymouth inevitably leads to passion,” our challenge is to encourage more people to participate in church activities and small groups. People who attend Plymouth are thinking, caring, and interesting people with unique stories to tell. How do we capitalize on this to grow the sense of community for all of us and for prospective members? Can we create a new culture at Plymouth of passionate curiosity and deep interest in one another?

4. Diversity: Plymouth is a church inclusive of many types of diversity—diversity of thought, religious background and experience, sexual orientation, and vocational, professional background and interests. We are not ethnically diverse. Some say we should accept the variety and breadth of our own lives and experiences, though others genuinely want us to explore how we can attract others who expand our sense of diversity and enrich our experience. In regard to the diversity of our program offerings, Plymouth is amazing. How do we better leverage points of intersection?

5. Youth: Many young people find Plymouth a compelling place to be. There are many active and engaging programs for youth. Many young people also value our liberal theology, inclusiveness, social outreach, and freedom to hold and defend their own opinions. However, there are opportunities for Plymouth to strengthen our connection to young people and their families. While some say they appreciate the sermons, they are less enthusiastic about the structure of the Sunday services and the music. Some say they would value the opportunity to have young people shape and participate in occasional services.

6. Social Justice and Outreach: We highly value that our congregation is a “vibrant member of our geographic community” and the larger community as well. Making a difference in our community by taking action on behalf of others who need our support is a very important part of our legacy. We feel enriched by the action and advocacy opportunities Plymouth offers. A challenge remains to explore how we can increase our impact in the community through further active involvement of our

members and clergy. Partnerships with groups like the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation, “which has Plymouth Church in its DNA,” and the Sierra Leone Partnership are one way. PCNF, for example, can take bigger risks, can mobilize more quickly, and can bring in other groups—which PCC cannot do. But PCC also needs to continue to develop its own outreach to be strong.

7. The Arts: We see Plymouth’s fine arts as an effective way to draw new people into the church, given the path that many of us have taken ourselves. The excellence we experience is compatible with high standards of our other programs—sermons, outreach, etc. The arts are another way to confront issues and initiate important discussion at Plymouth. For example, the music presented around the Martin Luther King anniversary exposes us to valuable cultural contributions of African Americans. Issues raised about music in the Worship section (#2) are relevant here.

8. Communications: Plymouth speaks about wanting to attract young people but communicates in ways that seem directed at an older congregation. We could encourage more communication with young people—and perhaps mainstream members of the congregation—by using more interactive technology and links to other websites to promote more robust, vibrant and transparent discussions. Questions about how to introduce—and budget—high-tech communications while maintaining our existing high-touch communications are important to consider.

9. Governance: Some of us question how we organize ourselves to do the work of the Church. Some say the work could be more compelling, fun, transparent and productive if we figured out how to make our meetings more dynamic, participatory and geared toward taking action. There are many talented—and very busy—people with deep knowledge and experience who play only passive roles at meetings. Looking forward, we should explore how to take full advantage of their participation and generous contributions of time.

10. Growth: There are many issues about growth about which the church seems ambivalent. Do we need to grow to stay alive—financially, spiritually, and in other important ways? Can we maintain our excellence in worship, the arts, community outreach without growth? Would our internal community be enriched—or undermined—by growth? How should/would we grow? In what ways might diversity (age, ethnic, socio-economic, etc), be an aspect of growth? In what ways might growth help us accomplish our mission?