

MINISTRY PLAN FOR CHRISTIAN FORMATION AT FCC PUYALLUP

Principle: *Christian formation requires each of us to be a reflection of our faith; to communicate and perpetuate our hopes for the future with our congregation and the community; and to nurture the growth of each person in knowing and sharing God's love.*

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

OBJECTIVE:

- **Nurture spiritual growth through meaningful worship.**

ACTION PLAN:

- Create even more varied opportunities for worship for people of all levels of experience. Provide an array of methods, spaces, and times for participating in and learning about the elements and traditions of the worship service, their origins, and other background information pertaining to worship and spiritual disciplines and practices. Topics of instruction might include the Judeo-Christian church year and related seasons, and such central elements as prayer, communion, giving, music, art, forgiveness, ministry, ancient/contemporary practices (and others).
- Perpetuate an attitude of expectancy through which each person is held accountable for proactively becoming a learning, growing participant in their own spiritual growth and relationship with God. Facilitate a widespread understanding that Spirit-led worship requires reciprocity, openness, and attention.
- Keeping in mind the principles of the priesthood of all believers, create and support a holistic, participatory, and team approach to planning and practicing worship.
- Use a variety of communication methods to describe and invite participation in worship-related discipleship groups and events.
- Develop ways to keep open and constant communication between all discipleship groups (formerly known as small groups), including worship-related groups, in order to nurture a common goal and mindset. Perpetuate a unified attitude of acceptance, gratitude and praise by using prayer, scripture, and reflection in all gatherings.
- Utilize a resource database to find the support and expertise needed to accomplish worship-related goals.
- Form a discipleship group to learn from congregants their interests based on study and learning. This group would follow leads and assess possibilities for enhancing and broadening the worship experience, which might include researching other churches, regional and denominational resources, reading books, articles and other sources, and sharing findings and common elements with the pastor and worship leaders. Design a procedure for processing worship input from congregants and research. Gather youth/young adult input.

TIMELINE:

Year 1: Formulate a plan for creating a wide variety of worshiping (and learning) opportunities using an array of venues, topics, methods, and participants. At least some of the subject matter would address core elements of Christian worship.

Year 2-3: Form a discipleship group to follow leads and assess possibilities for enhancing and broadening the worship experience and to design a procedure for processing worship input from congregants and research (see bullet 7, page 1).

Year 4-5: Reassess the systems put into place, adjust as needed, encouraging continued growth in spiritual lives of all worshipers. (Worship/spiritual practices not limited to Sunday mornings.)

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Initially, the Pastor and Worship Chair will put ideas into action.
2. Elders, diaconate, and congregation will eventually be represented in worship planning.
3. Greeters, scripture readers, choir, and musicians will be encouraged to take on larger roles through input, study, and planning.

RESOURCES:

Regional and denominational resources will be considered as well as the input from the worship research discipleship group.

The Worship budget will evolve to meet changing financial needs of the plans, supplies, and materials.

Worship planners and research groups will commit to communicating on a timely basis and meeting as necessary with enough lead time to prayerfully approach weekly and seasonal needs and plans.

INDICATORS:

Qualitative Indicators: Worshipers will grow in their enthusiasm and understanding of the elements of worship. Some discomfort may be voiced by those who are not comfortable with change.

Quantitative Indicators: Worship attendance will grow and more leaders will emerge.

Evaluation: On an annual basis the pastor, Worship Chair, and other key leaders will engage in a significant review of the area of worship and spiritual practices. This may involve at least a day away together or a retreat to pray, study, discern, and decide course corrections. Annual “course corrections” to be implemented over the next six months will become expected and commonplace.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE:

- **Support and encourage a lifelong commitment to learning and seeking knowledge.**

ACTION PLAN:

- Support the creation and utilization of the Spiritual Gifts (Resources) database for assessing, tracking, developing and encouraging individual and corporate spiritual gifts. Utilize a resource database that can be used to find the help and expertise needed to accomplish goals and maintain and nurture our D/discipleship C/community.
- Encourage intergenerational and inclusive mentoring and partnering to enhance relationships and leadership of learning opportunities. Develop a renewed sense of the importance of leadership of and participation in all types of studies. Nurture a sense of value on life experiences as a teaching tool.
- Develop leadership training resources and/or retreats for all lay leaders, elders, diaconate, and staff that would include an outline of expectations, responsibilities and obligations to help them reach their potential, while also expressing a sense of value to the position and individual.
- Classes for laypersons, at least one of which would be a denominational study (“What it means to be a Disciple of Christ”).
- Develop ways to keep open and constant communication between all discipleship groups (formerly known as small groups) in order to nurture a common goal and mindset. Perpetuate a unified attitude of acceptance, gratitude and praise by using prayer, scripture, and reflection in all gatherings.
- Use a variety of communication methods to describe and invite participation in ministry, leadership roles, and discipleship groups.
- Offer creative avenues for learning with a variety of times, locations, topics, and invitees (members, building users, neighbors). Provide learning opportunities for D/disciples of all stages of life experience.

TIMELINE:

Year 1-2: Provide a study series in respect to core beliefs and expectations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Initiate ways to help individuals recognize and use their spiritual gifts and support the creation and utilization of the Spiritual Gifts (Resources) database. Form a strong core discipleship group (formerly known as small group) to oversee all learning venues. Research new ways of promoting and encouraging spiritual development (doesn't stop at Sunday School).

Year 2-4: Add, consolidate, or reduce venues, times, and participant groups as needed for optimization of our current circumstance(s). Assess participation by facilitators and learners.

Year 5: Methods are in place and evolving.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Initially, the Pastor and current Christian Education leader(s) will put ideas into action. A Spiritual Development group will be added to as leadership roles are defined.

Elders will commit to teaching and embrace their roles as spiritual leaders.

The Diaconate and congregation will commit to participating in studies and sharing leadership roles.

RESOURCES:

Regional and denominational resources will be considered along with a variety of materials that align with the vision of our congregation.

The Education/Leader Development budgets will evolve to meet changing financial needs.

Spiritual Development groups will commit to communicating on a timely basis, perhaps meeting bimonthly to assess the plans put into place and the contextual needs of the congregation and C/community. Enough lead time to prayerfully approach needs and plans should be given.

INDICATORS:

Qualitative Indicators: Congregants will grow in recognition and sharing of their spiritual gifts and in enthusiasm for learning, teaching, partnering, and mentoring. Some discomfort may be voiced by those who are not comfortable with change.

Quantitative Indicators: Study attendance will increase and more leaders will emerge. The number of opportunities for involving all ages and all types of persons, members and non-members, young and old, will grow and be well attended.

Evaluation: On an annual basis the pastor and Spiritual Development group will engage in a significant review of the area of Spiritual Development. This may involve at least a day away together or a retreat to pray, study, discern, and decide course corrections. Annual "course corrections" to be implemented over the next six months will become expected and commonplace.

WITNESS & MINISTRY

OBJECTIVE:

- **Promote opportunities to share our faith and stories and to discern and use our gifts.**
- **Live out our faith inside and outside the church walls in the way we resolve conflicts, in our respect for ourselves and others, through our partnering and mentoring, our habits of creation care (environment), and our actions on justice issues.**
- **Enable a widespread approach of living in abundance, using what we have wisely, and sharing with and caring for others through what we have been given.**
- **Create opportunities to work together for common goals and the well being of God's people.**

ACTION PLAN:

- Provide arenas in which church attendees can speak openly about their faith and passions.
- Create ways to share our faith by involving our neighbors and community in a variety of activities and ministries.
- Bring about an air of generosity through our individual and corporate sharing of knowledge, resources, and time in mirroring God's unending love to all we meet.
- Connect congregants and acquaintances in ministries which match their gifts and passions.
- Share plan elements with the discipleship groups (formerly known as small groups) that already exist and work to build more internal groups and outreach groups that will share and nurture the elements.
- Develop ways to keep open and constant communication between all discipleship groups in order to nurture a common goal and mindset. Perpetuate a unified attitude of acceptance, gratitude and praise by using prayer, scripture, and reflection in all gatherings.
- Use a variety of communication methods to describe and invite participation in ministry and discipleship groups.
- Support creation and utilization of a resource database that can be used to find the help and expertise needed to accomplish goals and maintain and nurture our D/discipleship C/community.

TIMELINE:

Year 1-2: Continue to offer comfortable, “safe” places for congregants to share faith stories and witness to God’s works in their lives. Possible venues: Worship, discipleship groups, cottage meetings (inward); and existing and new outreach ministries (outward, based on passions and context). Beginning Year 1 into Year 2, define and realize plans to tell those stories in action and in voice (mirror God’s love) outside the church walls.

Year 2-3: Research neighborhood and community networks to connect with others in sharing faith and stories (witnessing and ministering) through partnering.

Year 4-5: Continue to expand Year 1, 2, 3 plans. Assess the systems put into place, adjust as needed, encouraging continued involvement in ministry based on individual calling and C/community context.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Initially, program chairs or representatives from Outreach, Worship, and Education will partner with the pastor to define venues to begin this process.

The Board (Program Council? Executive Team?) will take a role in developing a discipleship group to further plan and coordinate this process, at which time Worship and Education will support but not lead.

RESOURCES:

Witness: Regional and denominational resources will be considered along with existing networks that align with the vision of our congregation. Ministry: Balance between local, national, and global ministries.

The appropriate budgets (Worship/Education/Outreach...) will evolve to meet changing financial needs.

The initializing team and subsequent discipleship groups will commit to communicate on a timely basis, meeting as necessary, perhaps monthly at first to assess the plans put into place and the contextual needs of the congregation and C/community.

INDICATORS:

Qualitative Indicators: Speaking out in faith will become a way of life, and through our congregational witnessing, a common trust will develop. More people will feel heard and listened to. A renewed solidarity will result as congregants’ enthusiasm spills over into their daily lives and of those they meet outside of the church building. Some discomfort may be voiced by those uncomfortable with change.

Quantitative Indicators: The number of ways we are working as God’s called people increases as more persons become comfortable in expressing themselves through ministry.

Evaluation: The core discipleship group will meet annually to assess the process and make “course corrections” to be implemented over the next six months. This will become expected and commonplace.