

# FCC Values, Purpose, Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

## *Timothy Project Final Deliverable January 2012*

### 1. Introduction

Since our beginning in 1955, FCC has been a covenanted Christian community of faith drawn by a vision of being an open church. Today, as we look forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the time has come for us to reflect on what that core vision of openness means for our congregation and our community.

FCC is blessed with exciting opportunities presented by our unique place and time. The Houston community, as a model of the diversity of all people, gives us the opportunity to frame our worship, mission and spiritual growth in new and bold ways that stretch our imagination and understanding. The digital age, with its entirely new ways of connecting with people, presents many opportunities for how FCC will be a church in the upcoming years, and to further our mission in the world.

Through careful consideration of our past and the perceived future needs of our community, we have expanded our vision and set ourselves upon a new, transformational mission. Our future will stretch our imagination and understanding, while gaining strength from our convictions and traditions. We will carry on as an open church, but we will find new ways to engage the breadth of our increasingly diverse community of Houston. We will continue to develop spiritually and further our mission, but we seek to reignite the Spirit of God within us by embracing, as our own, God's bold vision of love for all people. It is a call that speaks directly to our core values and purpose as a congregation.

### 2. Our Values

At FCC Houston, we are a church whose character is colorful; yet, we are bonded together like a family because of our shared values. At our core, we seek always to be:

- **Open.** We strive continuously for equality and acceptance of all people: men, women, and transgendered persons, people of all ages, languages, races and sexual orientations.
- **Reflective.** We encourage learning, and believe that questioning and thinking is a healthy approach to understanding what it means to be Christian.
- **Spiritual.** We aspire to be listening, feeling beings, and seek a personal relationship with God and a clearer connection with Jesus.
- **Responsive.** We share our time, talents, and treasure to attend to the needs and concerns of our communities: the family of FCC, the Houston community, and greater communities beyond.

### 3. Our Purpose

As we journey together, using our hearts and minds to grow in faith, the work of FCC in the past, present and in our envisioned future all suggest that our core reason for being is

- **To fulfill God's vision of love for all people**

This is an essential message of Jesus, and is our essential heading, the direction to which we point all of our efforts.

## 4. Our Vision

As a Christian congregation attentive to mission and social justice, our vision of the future has three focus areas: our community of FCC; our local, national and world communities; and, the Christian faith.

- **FCC will be vibrant and engaging**

We envision FCC fulfilling a role of leadership in the emerging Christian church, and becoming widely known as a vibrant and engaging community that warmly welcomes all people. FCC's stimulating and spirit-filled programs will feed our minds and souls, and generate a vibrant energy that fuels personal and community growth. By bringing people together and empowering them to use their abilities for ministering to the needs and concerns of the community, FCC will make a difference in our world.

- **Our community will be open and connected**

We envision local, national and global communities creating a spirit of openness and encouraging closer connections across races, cultures, faiths, or other divisions. Communities will commit to initiatives for reconciliation and unity through the use of education, dialogue, and community member engagement. Greater understanding and acceptance of others will open doors to new opportunities for members to collaborate to resolve broad community needs and concerns.

- **The Christian faith will be embracing and enlightening**

We envision an emerging, unified Christian church embracing all people, and enlightening them in the way it encourages individual discovery of a Christian life journey. The Christian faithful will come to respect freedom of inquiry and thought in biblical understanding as a guide to what it means to be Christian, while broadening our hearts and minds through the wisdom of other faiths and cultures. Being Christian will come to mean being committed to peace, justice and mission.

## 5. Our Mission

As an open church looking ahead into the 21st Century, a digital age with unprecedented means for communication and information sharing, we believe that the greatest change we'll see will come not to the ways of being open, but to the ways of being a church. Our challenge lies in how we fulfill the role of being a church as we channel our efforts into two initiatives:

- **To center the Christian life on love for all people**
- **To engage our community in justice and mission**

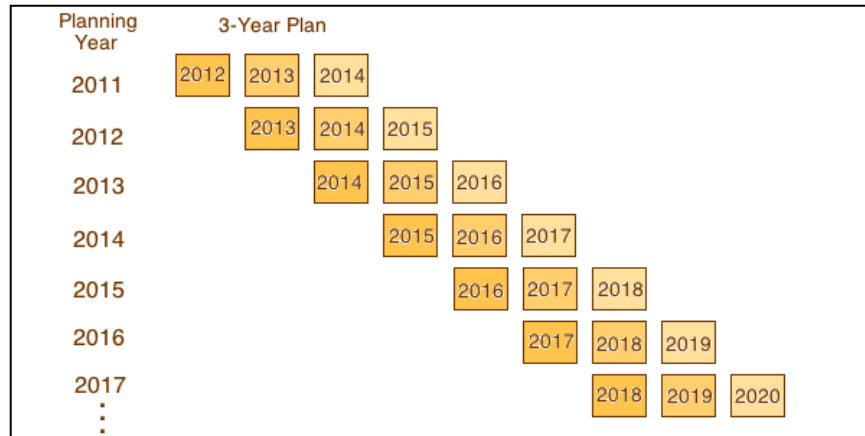
In practical terms, what we are doing is revealed in the key goals we have set to achieve by the end of 2020.

- **Create an attractive public media resource (internet and social media) that empowers people to engage themselves in our initiatives**
- **Extend our worship experience on-campus, off-campus, and on-line to appeal to a broad spectrum of the Houston community**
- **Develop a network of communities of faith that share our purpose and vision**
- **Operate a mission opportunities exchange that connects volunteers with needs**

By sharing with others our vision and methods, we believe our efforts will multiply to create more significant change. Ultimately, by the end of 2020, FCC will reach more than one million people. Together we'll make a difference. Let us build a WIDE open church.

## 6. Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan consists of a set of goals for the next three years for FCC overall, and for each board and committee or group within FCC. The three-year strategic plan is a rolling plan. Composed in the fourth quarter of each year, it provides goals for the following three years, as shown in the figure below. Every year the goals for the following two years are reviewed and revised as needed, and new goals are set for the additional third year. The aim of the rolling three-year strategic plan is to achieve the goals defined in the Mission. A mid-term goal beyond three years may be set to provide additional guidance or to plan for unusually large or challenging objectives; however, it is generally recommended to focus planning on the “foreseeable” three-year range of the future. (see Excel sheet)



The rolling 3-year Strategic Plan is formed at the end of each year.

## 7. Explanation of Terms

**Values** - Our core principles by which we live together as a community are the essence of what binds us together. As we hold true to our principles, we do not expect our values to change.

**Purpose** - Grounded in our values, our purpose points us in the direction to which we believe we are called. As a general heading, it is not a concrete state of being that will one day be realized. Rather, it is the direction we will take always in our future. Like our values, we do not expect our purpose to change.

**Vision** - This is our envisioned future: our church, our community, our world, our religion as it ought to be. It is steadfastly consistent with our purpose, and reflects the reality of today as we seek to overcome that which obstructs our purpose. Our vision describes a desired state of being that may one day be realized within the lifetime of many of us. It is appropriate that, as we approach the realization of our vision, or part of it, we look still further to establish a new, far-reaching vision.

**Mission** - The mission addresses how we will go about fulfilling our vision. It establishes challenging, yet achievable goals within the foreseeable future that will move us significantly closer toward our vision. The mission reflects the reality of our present situation, striking a path to overcome the major obstacles that prevent the fulfillment of our vision. It is appropriate that our mission is refreshed periodically as we progress, and thoroughly reviewed and redefined as we fulfill its goals.

**Goal** - The goals are specific achievements we have defined as markers of significant progress in our mission, and which we aim to accomplish.

**Major Goals** - As part of the Mission, major goals should be defined over a 10 year time frame. It is appropriate that Major Goals are adjusted as progress brings further clarity to the details of the goal, such as during annual Strategic Planning.

**Sub-Goals** - Subordinate to major goals, sub-goals might be defined over a shorter period of

time, such as 5 years or 3 years. As with Major Goals, Sub-goals may be adjusted as progress is achieved.

**Annual Goals** - As part of the Strategic Plan, annual goals are defined as the future state we expect to achieve within a calendar year. Annual goals may be challenging, and should lead progressively to the achievement of sub-goals and major goals. Only under exceptional circumstances should changes to Annual Goals be permitted during the year.

**Strategic plan** - The strategic plan is a set of specific goals we have laid out for ourselves to reach within the next three years. It is defined by our mission, our resources, our priorities and our ambitions. It should define specific annual goals for three consecutive years for each identifiable entity within FCC (boards, committees, or groups). It is expected that the strategic plan will be reviewed and revised annually each year, including adding another year to the plan.