



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST · BOULDER

## **Strategic Plan**

Adopted at a Special Congregational Meeting  
October 30 2022

## Development of the Strategic Plan

During the summer of 2021, a series of Visioning Conversations were held with small groups of members of the congregation. Most of the discussions were in person and consisted of two parts: the first session provided an opportunity to look back over the previous year when everything changed with the pandemic, a tragic shooting occurred in our community, and climate crises and racial reckoning shook our world. People discussed what they had experienced and learned personally and what we learned as a congregation. The second discussion explored the opportunities ahead, including what we wanted to continue and the ways that God might be calling us to learn and grow.

Approximately 85 people participated in these conversations led by volunteer facilitators, and several themes emerged:

- Need to re-envision the Christian Ed/Youth/Family programs to acknowledge the changes in education and family life, and provide more support
- Interest in re-framing our Missions/Benevolence work to more active, hands-on projects in partnership with others
- Need to improve communications and engagement both within the congregation and out in the community
- Find new ways to practice care in our community to connect and support each other.

These outcomes were reported to the congregation at the Fall Congregational Meeting, and in January 2022, First Congregational Church built on the Vision work with a more structured strategic planning process, guided by the Rev. John Wimberly. A Strategic Planning Team was approved by Church Council: Lily Chavkin, Karen Cumbo, Carol Hasselbacher, Matt Hess, Tom Lounsbury, Eric Nickell, Laura Riihimaki, Jill Schaefer, Chris Shearer Cooper, Sarah Schulte, and Rev. Chris Braudaway-Bauman.

This phase of the effort began with a leadership retreat with the Strategic Planning Team (SPT) and ten other congregational representatives to review the summary of the Visioning Conversations, discuss major trends in ministry, and best practices for churches. The Strategic Planning Team drafted the Purpose Statement, which was refined by Church Council, and developed four Goals to help us achieve that purpose. Strategy Teams, which included SPT members and additional expertise from the congregation, worked on strategies to implement those goals. A series of congregational forums were held in late April to solicit additional input from members of the congregation. The Strategic Planning team met on April 30 to prioritize the strategies for each goal. A draft Plan was presented to the Church Council in June and was discussed in September. The Church Council recommended approval by the Congregation. The Congregation approved the Strategic Plan at a Special Meeting on October 30, 2022 to guide us for the next 3-5 years.

Next steps:

- Faith Formation (Children/Youth/Family/Adults) Study Team
  - Implementation Teams for each Goal

## Purpose Statement

*We joyfully embody the transforming love of God in community by:*

- *Extending an unconditional welcome to all,*
- *Growing in Christian faith through transformational worship and lifelong learning*
- *Caring for one another*
- *Engaging in hands-on service*
- *Working for justice and peace for the earth and all its people*

**Goal 1: We will engage in deep and transformational listening and action as we expand our ministry from charity to addressing structural injustices, allowing us to live more fully into the values defined by our covenants**

### *Strategy A*

Integrate social justice ministries (racial justice, Climate Action Team, gun violence prevention, and others that may arise in the future) into the life of the congregation through worship, learning, communication, service, staff time, boards and committees, and finances. This will include expanding the use of benevolence funds to support social justice ministries directly connected to the congregation's efforts.

### *Strategy B*

Create stipended social justice internships for young adults to work with mission partners to deepen our relationships with those partners and find opportunities for others in the congregation to be engaged in social justice activities.

### *Strategy C*

Further the conversation about advocacy as a faith practice and develop skills for engaging in advocacy and showing up for justice.

### *Strategy D*

Create more opportunities, including intergenerational activities, for church members to be of service in the wider community, serving shoulder to shoulder and face to face with our neighbors as an act of justice.

**Goal 2: We will cultivate lifelong faith formation by expanding opportunities for children, youth, families and adults of all ages to worship and learn together in new ways.**

*Strategy A*

Re-envision the Christian Education and Youth programs with respect to spiritual, relational, and numerical growth. Validate students' struggles and emotions, utilizing scripture and other guidance where appropriate, to give students resources to guide value and faith formation.

- A1: Find the churches doing forward looking, innovative ministry in faith formation with children, youth, family, and adults and be in conversation with them to learn and expand our own imaginations.
- A2: Find and create devotional materials to equip families to use at home and high-quality online faith formation for kids and families they can access anywhere at any time.
- A3: Build on the strengths of the week-long ARTS Camp and Youth Services Project to create new opportunities to keep kids and youth engaged all summer long.
- A4: Provide opportunities for parents to meet together meaningfully in facilitated conversations to build community and support each other.
- A5: Provide opportunities for children, youth and parents to learn about and practice mental wellness.
- A6: Develop opportunities for Adult Faith Formation to accompany other priorities of the church, such as small groups related to a particular theme for a liturgical season or the whole program year, or an all-church summer read with opportunities for discussion in the fall.
- A7: Expand children's choirs into a community outreach, starting with a parent/toddler music program offered for free.

*Strategy B*

Increase opportunities for child, parent, family, and senior interconnectivity, recognizing that these interactions are vital for individual growth at all ages, and expand intergenerational events as core activities of the church

- B1: Build a team of Adult Advisors/Companions to attend weekly youth group meetings and build relations with middle and high school youth.
- B2: Create intentionally intergenerational worship experiences on a regular schedule, perhaps reviving monthly Dinner Church or creating Sunday morning Breakfast Church.
- B3: Create opportunities for intergenerational service
- B4: Create opportunities for meaningful intergenerational art and service projects.

**Goal 3: We will weave the five generations of our congregation together by helping each other in times of need and fostering a caring community where everyone belongs.**

*Strategy A*

We will continue and expand our efforts to care for one another, through regular check-ins, meaningful connections among generations, and new forms of intergenerational worship.

- A1: Invigorate and expand the Visitation Ministry
- A2: Expand outreach and check-in opportunities throughout the year, paying special attention to those less visible who are sometimes overlooked.
- A3: Develop mentorship programs for new members
- A4: Provide educational and practical opportunities to understand and cope with the challenges of all aspects of mental and physical health.
- A5: Continue to explore preparation for end-of-life activities, including consideration of a columbarium at FCC Boulder.

*Strategy B*

The church will host a number of all ages events that are designed with *fun and play* in mind and could feature a series of intergenerational activities such as dancing on the plaza, talent shows in Plymouth Hall, out of town retreats, or picnics at regional parks, among many other possibilities.

**Goal 4: We will develop a communication plan that enables us to share our faith and activities with the congregation and the wider community.**

*Strategy A*

Form a team of skilled congregational volunteers to develop comprehensive communications strategies and to review all of our communications needs and opportunities, both inside our congregation and in the wider community.

*Strategy B*

Expand our communications staff to implement the communications plan and manage the webpage, social media, and all communications

*Strategy C*

Enhance our existing data storage infrastructure by getting all church documents including annual reports, governance documents, relevant church history, and board and committee resources, in one common location that is easy to access and use.