

Cayce United Methodist Church  
Long Range Planning Committee  
2016 Strategic Plan

**Introduction:**

Cayce United Methodist Church in Cayce, South Carolina (CUMC), is clear about its discerned mission: CUMC changes lives and transforms communities for Jesus Christ. As we move further into our second century of mission and ministry, we believe it is important to prioritize our strategies and structure our work so that we can be more effective in carrying out God's call and our mission.

Since January, 2016, the charge-conference approved Long Range Planning Committee (Committee) has gathered input from church members and community leaders, studied demographic data, reflected on biblical and denominational mandates, and dreamed together of what the future of CUMC may look like. The goal of the Committee is to create a living strategic plan that can serve as an effective guide for the coming years while also providing a mechanism for consistent growth and revision through yearly review and refinement. At this point in the process, the plans for the immediate future and priorities for the next 3-5 years are now ready for the congregation to review.

**The Challenge**

Cayce United Methodist Church and the Cayce/West Columbia community at-large have both experienced significant change over the last decade. What was once a community filled with long-time residents has become more transient, more diverse and younger. What was once a church community that was vibrant and full across all age ranges has become one that has a pro-rata deficiency of members within certain age ranges that needs to be addressed for the overall health of church body.

**Committee Process:**

**Membership**

The Committee is composed of 8 church members, Pastor Joseph James and the Committee's facilitator Lex McDonald, who is, himself, a Methodist elder and was a childhood member of CUMC. Additionally, social work intern Allison Volk provided valuable assistance to the Committee in its early work until her internship ended. The church members who were asked to serve on the Committee were chosen to represent a diverse cross-section of the church and included an even split between individuals who had been members of CUMC for many years and individuals who had been members of CUMC for a relatively short time.

The church members who serve on the Long Range Planning Committee are Jay Coker, Heather Ford, John Frick, Lynn McClure, Robin Nicholson, Emily Temples, Brittany Tevepaugh and John Tjaarda.

## **Meetings**

The Committee met once a month for a period of 9 months in order to develop this plan. Each meeting began with a member of the Committee sharing a scripture, a thought or a concern with the other members of the Committee. Over time, as these scriptures, thoughts and concerns were interwoven with the work that the Committee undertook, distinct threads began to emerge. The members of the Committee have been humbled to see the handiwork of God take shape over time and the sum of those threads turn into what the members believe is a complete vision for CUMC over the coming years.

Prayer, study and sharing were only a part of the Committee's work, however. It was very important to Committee members to have an in-depth and involved conversation with all of the membership of CUMC to make certain that every idea was heard and every perspective considered. Accordingly, the Committee undertook three unique steps to bolster the effectiveness of their considerations:

1. It commissioned a demographic profile of the surrounding community in order to understand who CUMC's neighbors are and to identify any trends that might be apparent.
2. It spent time engaging with local community and political leaders in order to directly hear their concerns and their thoughts about how CUMC could be impactful outside of the walls of the church.
3. It spent time developing an extensive survey of CUMC membership. After several weeks of taking feedback through Sunday School classes, written surveys and one on one discussions, it ended up collecting pages and pages of feedback on a wide variety of subjects that were of tremendous importance to the CUMC membership.

## **Survey**

The surveys were critical to the Committee's final work product because understanding and applying those results to its planning process proved to be the bulk of the work that the Committee did.

The survey was based loosely upon a widely-used planning approach called SWOT analysis (SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and was intended to elicit wide-ranging responses without suggesting any answers. The questions posed were:

1. What do you like best about our church (in addition to 'the people')?
2. What ministries are our best?
3. What could we do better?
4. What is the biggest challenge that we face in the coming years?
5. What are the biggest opportunities that our church has?

The results of the surveys will be discussed as "background" within the individual sections of each of our specific areas of focus.

## Themes

### **Mission Statement**

CUMC's mission statement is "Changing lives, transforming communities for Jesus Christ." The Committee used this mission statement as a map that helped give structure and meaning to its considerations. The Committee saw the mission statement as describing the role of the church as one that must nurture and grow the discipleship of its members in their "being" and in their "doing;" to ensure that its members grow in their knowledge of, understanding of and personal reliance on Jesus through worship, education and connection (their being) and to ensure that its members minister to those in need and spread the message of Jesus through giving, serving and reaching out into their communities (their doing).

The Committee was lead in their understanding of the roles of the church through careful consideration of scripture. Among those scriptures that informed the work of the Committee were the words written by the apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus:

*11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.*

**-Ephesians 4:11-14**

Also among the influential scriptures to influence the Committee in discerning the church's mission were the words from the apostle Paul in his second letter to the church in Corinth:

*19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.*

**-2 Corinthians 5:19**

Equipped with the feedback from demographic studies, from community leaders, from the extensive surveys, from careful study of God's Word and from prayerfully searching itself under the leadership of Pastor James and the facilitation of Lex McDonald, the Committee presents its five-year strategic plan for the consideration of the body of Christ at Cayce United Methodist Church.

## Five Year Strategic Plan

### **General Vision**

The vision that became the focus of the Committee over time is one that has connection at its center. Connection between CUMC members and their loving Creator. Connection between and among CUMC members themselves. Connection between CUMC members, individually and collectively, and their Cayce/West Columbia community as a whole.

It is a vision in which every member is encouraged and empowered to use his or her God-given talents and desires to further the Kingdom of God on earth. Where growth and development in members' relationships with each other, with their families and with God are explicitly at the leading edge of each church activity. Where individuals' passions are identified and cultivated through educational initiatives. Where opportunities to employ those passions are organized and coordinated with the needs of other CUMC members and Cayce/West Columbia residents.

It is a vision of a church family that functions like a regular family. Where the young and the old teach, and learn from, each other. Where everyone knows who is sick, who is hungry and who is hurting and shares needs not as gossip, but because they know how to help.

It is a vision of a church with physical facilities that are an asset to the community at-large. A place where community identity is built and reinforced by providing venues for people to gather together. Where members and non-members alike feel safe, comfortable and at-ease.

It is a vision of a church where all people are welcome, no matter what they look like, where they are from, what they have or who they know. Where people with physical, emotional, financial and spiritual needs are tangibly loved without condition and where people do not feel superior to those who they are helping.

In an effort to achieve this vision, the Committee has looked at specific initiatives that will make this vision a reality.

### **Specific Areas of Focus**

As the Committee worked through each specific area of focus, it became clear that three fundamental questions would need to be answered within each specific area and that answering each of these questions would require further work. The fundamental questions are:

1. *Who?* It is impossible to move forward without asking and answering this question: who has the responsibility to make sure these goals are accomplished? In some areas, present staffing may be adequate to accomplish the vision of the Committee. In other areas, however, it is difficult to imagine growing into the vision discerned by the Committee without additional staff. Regardless of the specific area of focus, the question of staffing must be considered and resolved.
2. *What?* Also within each area of focus, work must be done to determine the specifics for each aspect of programming that will be required in order to accomplish the goals presented by the vision. There may be several ways within an area of focus to accomplish the vision presented herein, so deciding which particular programs will be employed to further these goals is another crucial step that must be accomplished.

3. *How?* Even after deciding what specific programs will be employed to accomplish the goals set forth and deciding who will be responsible for the implementation of those programs, specific plans for how to execute those programs will also need to be made.

Immediate Priorities – To be completed within 3 months

**1. “Missionary” Development**

- I. Background: CUMC has a wide and loyal group of former members who grew up in the church but who, for many reasons, are no longer members. Some are now vital members of other congregations. They were nurtured in the faith at Cayce; this church has prepared them for leadership and service in other places. There is a sense that these former members’ fondness for the church could be helpful in fundraising and securing human resources for church development.
- II. Goal: To leverage the experience and support of former members of CUMC to benefit its growth and development.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends that a network of CUMC missionaries (people nurtured here but serving God elsewhere) be created to help with the ongoing needs of the church and the people she serves.

**2. Long Range Planning Continuation:**

- I. Background: The long range planning process is an important one that can easily be overlooked and ignored once the plan is established. In order to keep the process relevant, the church and its programs must be evaluated on an ongoing basis in comparison to the plan.
- II. Goal: To bring the vision and goals developed by the Committee to fruition.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends that it be empowered to continue its work on an ongoing basis by evaluating the steps it has recommended, coordinating with the Church Council and the various task forces created to further develop and implement its recommendations, and reporting on progress each year. The Committee also recommends it be allowed to continue the refinement and/or expansion of the strategic plan on an annual basis.

Short Term Priorities – To be completed within 12 months

**1. Staffing for vision implementation**

- I. Background: In past attempts to implement strategic plans, the church has not followed through on well-conceived concepts and ideas. The Committee believes that a degree of expert staff coaching and leadership will help the congregation implement the plan through logistical assistance, volunteer coordination and training. We believe that this resource could also be used to connect the church with the wider community more effectively.
- II. Goal: To hire a new staff member to coordinate vision implementation in order to achieve the missional priorities specified in the strategic plan through training, coordination and support of congregational members. This staff member would

provide support and coordination for the short term priorities specified in the strategic plan, including, but not limited to, youth and children's ministry, education and discipleship and connectional training. In addition, the staff member would assist each task force in the development and implementation of their actionable plans.

- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the church council and the SPRC work to further develop a job description as well as a set of reasonable benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of this new endeavor. We recommend that the church leadership utilize district and annual conference counsel as well as resources. The Committee and the SPRC should make a recommendation to the church council within 12 months.

## **2. Youth and Children's Ministry:**

- I. Background: The children's ministry was generally regarded by the church membership and the Committee as very strong. The children's mission activities, vacation bible school and the work of Lisa Fisher were singled out during deliberations as exemplary. The youth ministry was generally regarded by the church membership and the Committee as a deep concern. Building and maintaining a youth program was identified as one of CUMC's greatest challenges. There is a current need for support and coordination in both youth and children's ministry.
- II. Goal: To have an active and vibrant Youth and Children's ministry that emphasizes discipleship, connection and community and which becomes an identifiable strength of CUMC.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends the immediate creation of a Youth and Children's Ministry task force consisting of persons from the Council on Ministries and other interested and gifted persons from the congregation. This task force is to create an actionable Youth and Children's Ministry Plan. In formulating this plan, the task force should consider the goal set by the committee and specifically consider the following:
  - a. How specifically will this group work with church volunteers, district and annual conference leaders as well as current and future staff to provide the quality of Youth and Children's Ministry specified as described in the goal and consistent with the long range vision of CUMC?
  - b. What measures can be employed to increase volunteer participation in Youth and Children's Ministry?

The task force should coordinate with the Church Council and the Long Range Planning Committee as it accomplishes its work and should be prepared to present its recommendations to the church council within 12 months.

## **3. Facilities:**

- I. Background: CUMC has a beautiful but aging facility. In recent years, needed repairs have been made, most notably to the roof and to the air conditioning in the sanctuary. Even with those repairs finished, many aspects of the building are

outdated or in poor condition. Properly caring for the facility was raised as one of the biggest challenges facing CUMC by both the membership and the Committee.

- II. Goal: To have facilities that promote the mission of CUMC by providing its membership, and the community as a whole, a safe, welcoming and innovative environment that is conducive to the spiritual growth and development of all who use them.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends the CUMC Board of Trustees produce an actionable facilities modernization plan to share with the congregation. In formulating this plan, the trustees should consider the goal set by the Committee and recommend sequential steps prioritized by urgency to make sure the facilities are appropriate to the needs of the congregation and the community. The trustees should specifically consider immediately implementing the following 3 steps:
  - a. Conducting an audit of building costs to see if there are ways to cut the high, and continually rising, costs associated with maintaining a building of the size and age of CUMC.
  - b. Clearing unused space of unsightly stored materials including relocation of those materials to less visible areas.
  - c. Continuing proactive building maintenance practices that anticipate problems and the need for updates or modernization.

The Trustees should coordinate with the Church Council and the Long Range Planning Committee as it accomplishes its work and should be prepared to present its recommendations to Church Council within 9 months.

#### **4. Education and Discipleship:**

- I. Background: While CUMC has multiple well-attended Sunday School classes and bible studies, no membership or Committee surveys ranked its educational efforts among the best things about the church. There were several suggestions about how its educational efforts could improve.
- II. Goal: To provide a robust and intentional educational program that informs the mind and feeds the soul of CUMC members through focus on fundamentals of scripture, tradition and spirit-led conscience.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends the immediate creation of an education and discipleship task force consisting of persons from the Council on Ministries and the congregation at large. This task force will produce an actionable education and discipleship plan. In formulating this plan, the task force should consider the goal set by the Committee and should specifically consider:
  - a. Beginning a class for new members to familiarize them with the teachings of the church and the opportunities that exist at CUMC.
  - b. More diversified Sunday School/Bible Study offerings that provide an expanded range of choices to members.

- c. Formalizing and publicizing educational offerings so that any member or any visitor would know what classes are available, what each class is about and how to find each class within the building.

The task force should coordinate with Council on Ministries and the Long Range Planning Committee as it accomplishes its work and should be prepared to present its recommendation to Church Council within 9 months.

#### **5. Connectional Training and Leadership Development:**

- I. Background: There are no formally organized leadership development or connectional training programs at CUMC. Among the most often repeated needs throughout the deliberations of the Committee and the receipt and processing of the comments from the membership was the need to promote connections between members, between members and non-members and between the church as a whole with the community at-large. Comments from the Committee also indicated that actively developing leaders within the membership is crucial for the long term vitality of the church. Because most of the ministry needs identified by the membership and the Committee will require lay leadership, this area is one that may be the most fundamental to executing the long range vision.
- II. Goal: To create an atmosphere at CUMC that functions like an intergenerational family where members know each other, perspectives are shared and the next generation of leaders is grown.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends the immediate creation of a connectional training and leadership development task force consisting of members of the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development as well as from the congregation. This task force will produce an actionable connectional training and leadership development plan. In formulating this plan, the task force should consider the goal set by the Committee and should specifically:
  - a. Consider creating a connectional training program aimed at equipping members to connect better with each other and with those outside of CUMC, and with the community at-large.
  - b. Consider creating a leadership training program which will be appropriately broad but would include training on small group ministry, older adult ministry, men's ministry, youth ministry and children's ministry.

The task force should coordinate with the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and the Long Range Planning Committee as it accomplishes its work and should be prepared to present its recommendation to Church Council within 6 months.

#### Longer Term Priorities – To be completed between 1-5 years

##### **1. Outreach:**

- I. Background: Outreach was viewed by membership both as something that CUMC did well and as something that it could improve upon. There was significant feedback from the membership about the need to advertise the church more.
- II. Goal: To create connection with people in our community who are not members of CUMC.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends that a task force be established to consider outreach approaches targeted to reach four demographics: college students, young professionals, young families and the aging community. The task force should coordinate with Council on Ministries and the Long Range Planning Committee as it accomplishes its work and should be prepared to present its recommendation to Church Council within 16 months.

## **2. Community Support:**

- I. Background: When the Committee surveyed local political leaders about their perceptions of the needs of the community, two strong messages came through:
  - a. The community needs places to gather.
  - b. The community needs programs that serve their unique needs.
- II. Goal: To effectively serve the needs of the community as they are known and understood.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends that:
  - a. CUMC explore other opportunities to open its doors to local community organizations for their use when needed.
  - b. CUMC continue on the strength of its scouting programs by looking at other programs that exist purely to serve the needs of the community, (mother's morning out, recreational opportunities for teens, for example).
  - c. CUMC explore the possibility of a daycare program.

These recommendations should be accomplished within 18 months.

## **3. Public Safety:**

- I. Background: Cayce has a new police chief and, especially in light of the recent tensions involving law enforcement, helping them connect with their community is especially important.
- II. Goal: To effectively serve the needs of the community as they are known and understood.
- III. Recommendation: The Committee recommends the preparation of goodie bags that can be given to police officers for distribution to children within their jurisdictions in an effort to promote connection and trust. This recommendation should be accomplished within 24 months.

## **4. Children:**

- I. Background: Among the most praised efforts by the membership and the Committee were those involving Davis Elementary School and God's Helping

Hands. While they were almost universally seen as strengths, there was also strong sentiment that more could be done to strengthen these efforts.

II. Goal: To effectively serve the needs of the community as they are known and understood.

III. Suggestions: The Committee recommends increasing the CUMC presence at local elementary schools and increasing the CUMC support for God's Helping Hands. This recommendation should be accomplished within 18 months.