



St. Lucas UCC

Strategic Plan:

2014-2020

Latest **Draft** as of May 30, 2014

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I: Strategic Plan Overview	3
Core Values	5
Key Goals of the Strategic Plan	5
Key Strategies Employed in this Plan	6
Part II: Strategic Plan Details (2014 – 2020)	9
Phase 1 of Implementation	9
Ideas for Possible Inclusion for Future Phases	13
2015	13
2016	17
2017 – 2020	18
Appendix	
Vision Process Background	20
Key Themes of Triad Input & Connection To Strategic Plan	21
Index	25

Part I: Strategic Plan Overview

St. Lucas UCC is a special church with great members, great programs, and great heritage. Like many churches in today's world, St. Lucas faces challenges with regards to maintaining its membership, participation, and programming. The Visioning Process that has been undertaken by this Congregation since early 2013 strives to ensure that St. Lucas UCC can continue to be a special, thriving church in the future. Many great ideas have been generated by our Congregation through the feedback received during this process, focused on attracting new members as well as engaging all members with strong programming and with a united sense of purpose for connecting with God and carrying out God's ministry.

This Strategic Plan is designed to help fill in the gaps between where we are today as a church and where we see God calling us to be in 7 years based on our recently affirmed Future Story. It does not touch on every ministry within the church as there are many ministries that are working extremely well today and don't need tweaking, such as our Vacation Bible School, Confirmation program, or the Ice Cream Social, just to name a few. Instead, the plan focuses on strategies that can be used to fill in the gaps to help make the Future Story become a reality.

This Plan is created based on the feedback received from the Congregation during the Visioning Triads and all of the other opportunities that the Congregation has had to provide feedback along the way. Out of this feedback, several key themes were identified and are the basis for this Strategic Plan. Please refer to the Appendix to see the Key Themes from the Congregation's feedback as well as how the Strategic Plan elements are related to each key theme. There is also an appendix item describing more about the Visioning Process steps.

The Congregation's feedback also produced many great ideas for possible programming, activities, and fellowship opportunities. These ideas have also been captured in a separate program document held by the Implementation Team and will be shared with the appropriate committees and action teams as we go forward into the future as possible ideas to consider down the road.

The projects laid out in the plan will be led by small action teams that will be brought together to accomplish the goals. Some action teams will be for a shorter duration, some a longer term. Existing committees will be involved in helping with the process of forming these teams. Some of these action teams could be handled completely by existing committees while other action teams could become extensions of existing committees or a brand new team, depending on the work to be done and the capacity and skill set of the existing committees.

The key ingredient to making the plan successful is YOU. There will be opportunities and the need for all members to join in and contribute to this exciting future. Whatever your talents, interests, and availability may be, there are fitting opportunities that will allow for you to learn and grow as you help serve God through serving our church and the community around us. A list of the tentative groups and action teams can be found in the Index of this document, pointing you to where they can be found in more detail within this Strategic Plan.

The Plan is laid out in a tentative order to show the approximate year we would hope to launch each initiative. However, the church will launch the plan in phases, which will help ensure that we reach a level of success or conclusion with our current activities before we attempt to take on new initiatives. The Strategic Plan is a Living Document that will be tweaked and changed over the next 7 years as our needs

and priorities change. The Plan will be reviewed and adapted by the Implementation Team, the ministerial staff, and Council on an ongoing basis.

The Congregation looks forward to calling a Senior Pastor to join the ministry of St. Lucas UCC. While the specific role of the Senior Pastor is not outlined within the Strategic Plan, it is envisioned that he or she will become involved in helping shape future implementation phases of the plan, offering their ideas, leadership, and direction to the Strategic Plan and the wider church.

At St. Lucas, we want to move toward a structure of partnership between ministerial staff and lay leaders. As detailed in the contextual analysis, St. Lucas has systemic elements of three different kinds of Congregations: pastor-centered, program centered, and corporate. Significantly, this plan seeks to move us from being a Congregation that is mixed and somewhat inconsistent in this regard, to a Congregation that operates in a way that is consistent and appropriate for its actual size. In part, this means being less dependent upon the senior pastor as a hub of activity and decision-making and moves towards a model that encourages a strong partnership between lay-leaders and staff, with particular attention to the ratio of staff to membership. Close personal relationships and a warm atmosphere would persist, while the lay leadership would be recruiting, entrusting, empowering, engaging and equipping more members for mission and ministry in the church. It also means adopting governance that is increasingly transparent, that intentionally seeks Congregational input, and that engenders trust and ownership.

St. Lucas United Church of Christ currently has about 1,000 participating members and about 400 in worship services on average. These numbers have declined somewhat in recent years. Therefore, while growth in numbers is not the only or primary goal and will not be the measure of success for this plan, we do hope that new members will be drawn to join us in our mission and ministry as a result of this Plan. Our church will then experience additional energy and vitality while helping insure the effectiveness and sustainability of our life as a Congregation. These new people would also help us be more effective in responding to God's call to love our neighbor through ministries of charity and justice.

There is more detail in the first three years or so of the plan because the unfolding of the later years will depend a great deal upon what is accomplished in the first two years and upon regular evaluation of the progress of the plan. This plan will be reviewed at least every 6 months in order to make adjustments as needed and to celebrate that which has been accomplished since the last review. Changes and celebrations should be shared with the Congregation in a public way and, preferably, in a context of worship.

The Congregation's capacity in terms of time, energy, and money will be a key factor in determining the speed with which we can realize our future story. As the Congregation grows and reorganizes, new time, energy and money will become available and a greater rate of movement will be achievable. Thus, for example, what might seem to be impossible in the second year of the plan, when seen from the perspective of the current day, will become achievable as the Congregation steadily grows over the next seven years.

With this plan in place, we are excited about the prospects for what God calls our church to be and do in the years ahead.

Five Core Values

- Providing people with fulfilling opportunities to **worship**.
- Leading **mission** programming to do the work of God.
- Developing Christian **education** to deepen our faith and personal growth.
- Inviting others through **evangelism** to fuel our church's future.
- Building the family of God through nurturing **fellowship**.

Key Goals of the Strategic Plan

1. Develop exceptional hospitality: going beyond welcoming to inviting.
2. Become a more connected community of faith with each other and with God that is marked by spiritual depth, mutual respect, care, and love.
3. Provide worship services where people can experience a sense of belonging while also appreciating the other forms of worship offered.
4. Entrust, empower, engage, and equip all members including our youth for our mission and our ministries, quickly drawing new members into leadership and avoiding burnout.
5. Provide Christian education for all generations, equipping people for deeper spiritual life and Christian service.
6. Expand and deepen our influence and witness, both to we who are part of St. Lucas UCC and to the wider community and world.
7. Intentionally meet the needs of each generation while also engaging the generations with each other.
8. Consistently grow the average worship attendance from current levels. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry. Particular focus made towards increasing the membership and engagement from youth and young adults.
9. Communicate more openly and effectively using multiple means including paper, mail, telephone, e-mail, website, texting, etc., so that people both inside and outside the Congregation know what is happening at St. Lucas UCC.
10. Clarify, simplify, and adapt our decision making process so that decisions are made with Congregational input and trust is engendered.
11. Foster a collaborative relationship with the Preschool.
12. Positively enhance the culture of St. Lucas so that we become more adventurous in trying new things; everyone gets heard and no one falls through the cracks; we celebrate our history and culture in a way that empowers us to move into the future; we become a church in which everyone is equipped and empowered for ministry; we are unified by a common purpose and direction; we move towards a model of dialogue and discernment; we move towards a more mission-based mentality, actively reaching out to the community.

Again, it is important to note that the Congregation will not realize the future story in a year! Rather, this Strategic Plan seeks to help the Congregation grow into this vision over the course of the next 7 years. Some of the programs, activities and groups mentioned in this Strategic Plan have already been operating in some form, but we hope to make them more intentional and frame them in an integrated, broader approach.

Key Strategies employed in the Plan

1. Expand the scope and number of small groups offered in which participation is emotionally significant. Small groups will be designed to appeal to the needs of both current members and people not participating in a church as well as the de-churched. De-churched refers to people were connected to a church at one time but left because of negative experiences. As themes, times, etc., are considered, the needs of all generations should be considered, including intentionally planning some groups to be cross-generational.

Small groups are typically 8-12 participants in size. Some will be ongoing, some relatively short-term at six weeks or so. For example, some may address a theme such as Bible study, grief recovery, or single-parenting, some will be mission oriented such as Habitat house-building, or preparing for a year in advance to go on an international mission trip, or some will be aimed at leadership development, etc. All will foster mutual support and intentional faith development.

2. Develop more intentionally as a safe community, emotionally and spiritually, in which faith and Christian love are central and diversity of all kinds is appreciated and sought. This will mean connecting with each other by listening to, educating ourselves to, and respecting one another's perspectives, strengths and weaknesses; engaging all of us in various experiences and reflection upon those experiences; and coming together to see our differences as gifts. It will also mean being intentional about developing a sense of unity and identity even as we offer many options for worship, learning, service and action. While many of our programs will be generation-specific, others will be cross-generational.
3. Continue to develop our communication methods, both within the Congregation and to the wider community. In part, this means more effective use of current communication technologies while respecting everyone's preferred methods of communication (electronic, paper, etc.). The speed at which these technologies are changing means we need an ongoing communication group that will help us to keep up with current technologies such as social media and texting and to anticipate developing opportunities and challenges. An effective website is crucial to the outreach and growth of St. Lucas. Studies show that more than 80% of first-time visitors check out a church on the web before deciding to visit.

In addition to keeping up with developments in communication technology, we also need to address the structural issues of our communication: how can more people know more about what is happening in the day-to-day governance and ministry of our Congregation? How can we be more open in our decision making, thus enhancing trust and community?

4. Develop greater consistency in how we are organized for mission and ministry. Currently, we have a hybrid of pastor-centered and program-centered organizations. This hybrid arrangement creates confusion, inadequate communication, and other problems and interferes with growth and effectiveness. We need to move toward a better balance of lay people and ministerial staff leadership in order to address the needs of individuals and to maintain consistent decision making processes. (See Appendix I of the Contextual Analysis: Four Types of Congregations).
5. Streamline gradually our governance, planning and decision making processes, so fewer volunteer hours and committees are required for governance, releasing time and energy for ministry and mission. This is a process of design and implementation that will take some time to complete and old and new structures will necessarily run parallel in some cases as transitions from old to new occur. Everything we do as we implement this plan will follow St. Lucas UCC's Constitution and By-Laws, which govern our church.

A primary tool toward this goal of streamlining will be the use of a Congregation Annual Planning Event which will facilitate coordinated planning for coming program years. All members and participants will be invited to attend and self-select which program area they wish to participate in for the day. This is not a commitment to become part of a committee or other ongoing group. Congregational Annual Planning participants will be asked to assist in recruitment of persons to take responsibility for particular tasks and programs throughout the year. A printed program document with a combined program plan and narrative budget will be developed for distribution to the Congregation. As the annual consultations and the Congregational Annual Planning gain momentum, fewer committees and committee meetings will be needed.

6. Provide both Generation-Specific and Cross-Generational programming. We will seek to provide programming that meets the needs of each generational group while also encouraging cross-generational fellowship, learning, and mission service. This means, in part, Bible-based curriculum for children and youth, young adults, young married and empty nesters. Offer educational programming including skills for life such as marriage seminars, financial seminars, etc. There will be leadership development and service opportunities for all ages. Youth will be drawn into worship leadership.
7. Support our staff and help them succeed. Pastors will have Pastoral Relations Committees. Lay leadership will regularly review and modify staff responsibilities and add staff as needed to provide the necessary support for these programs and initiatives. Staff will have regular annual performance reviews and development plans.

The first staff addition anticipated is a senior pastor who embraces the Future Story and is equipped and feels called to help St. Lucas UCC move in the directions the Congregation has discerned through the visioning process. This person will also bring their own gifts, graces, and ideas to help us move forward.

8. Strive for thoughtful and prayerful stewardship through consideration of the generous donations of our time, talents, and resources. The goal will be to focus on encouraging joyful giving in proportion to the blessings God has bestowed on each individual. The increased donations of these three important resources can help ensure the vitality of St. Lucas UCC.

9. Increase hands-on local and global mission opportunities and opening them to people outside current membership, e.g. mission trips, Habitat builds, engagement with local social service agencies, etc. Goal is to grow deeper bonds with mission partners and have a comprehensive and coordinated effort to make the biggest impact on helping others in our community.
10. Provide ongoing training for existing and potential church lay leaders through the Servant Leadership Program, a lay leadership development opportunity.
11. Help members identify their gifts and find a ministry/mission engagement that suits them rather than the current approach which seeks leaders to fill institutional slots.
12. Continue to develop our building and grounds to support worship, mission, and programming.
13. Increase endowed funds through gifts, commitments, or pledges through estate planning, etc. by 2020. This increased endowment would make possible the undergirding of additional programming, mission, and staff.
14. Teach and emphasize that we are a congregation of the United Church of Christ and what that means locally, nationally and globally.

Part II: Strategic Plan Details

(2014-2020)

Several different strategies will be employed over the next 7 years to help our church realize the future God calls for us. The following pages contain a list of many of these possible strategies and ideas that St. Lucas could choose to pursue. To get started in a manageable way, the church will implement the plan in phases, focusing on a defined number of specific strategies at a time. The goal will be to attain a level of success with each phase before moving to new phases in the future. Phase 1 of the Plan has a well outlined set of objectives and activities which we plan to work on first. The dates mentioned beyond what is included in Phase 1 are simply estimated timeframes and will adjust as priorities and capacity changes in the years ahead. The Plan is a Living Document and will be reviewed at least every 6 months for possible tweaks.

Phase 1 of Strategic Plan Implementation (2014)

Theme: Delivering God's Exceptional Hospitality...Inside and Out

Focused largely on meeting God's commandment of *Love Thy Neighbor*.

Overall Objectives for Phase 1

1. Begin implementation of the St. Lucas Strategic Plan
2. Exceptional Hospitality: Begin changing the culture of St. Lucas with more dialogue, more prayer and spiritual depth in membership, more reaching beyond the walls of St. Lucas, etc. Become exceptionally inviting to visitors and new members.
3. Develop an ongoing Visitor's Orientation Seminar.
4. Identify opportunities for increased support of and participation in local, national and global mission work both denominationally and ecumenically.
5. Begin to develop a comprehensive communication plan for the Congregation.
6. Involve youth in visible participation/leadership of each of our worship services.
7. Grow the average worship attendance from current levels. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry.

Activities Already in Motion

- The Triad feedback suggested a **Sunday worship structure** with 2 services, with one being more traditional in nature and the other more contemporary. Council and the Worship Committee subsequently led a Congregation-wide process to help determine the new times of the Sunday worship services. A decision on Sunday worship times is complete with Traditional Worship now at 9:00 am and Contemporary Worship at 11:00 am, effective March 2014. Coffee and fellowship hour is offered between services and continues to develop to help promote exceptional hospitality. Each Sunday service will be family friendly and include children's church school programming. Worship styles will continue to be discussed and developed through on-going efforts under leadership of the Worship Committee and our Pastors.
- The **Senior Minister Search Committee** has begun to search for a new senior pastor. This group's goal is to identify a candidate that is welcomed by the Congregation and feels a calling to be a part of St. Lucas UCC and the exciting path ahead for our church.
- An **Implementation Team** is being formed to help give oversight to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Implementation Team, comprised of 5-8 people, will monitor progress of the Strategic Plan, share successes with the Congregation, and review with Council no less than every 6 months, suggestions for the appropriateness and timing for pursuing future elements of the plan in keeping within the capacity and priorities of the church at that time. The Implementation Team will also lead celebrations in public worship and otherwise of what has been accomplished in the past six months through the Strategic Plan.

New Activities to Reach Objectives

Inside Hospitality

Goal: Let's become exceptional as an inviting place where people feel included and welcomed to join the ministry of our church.

Strategies to achieve ***Inside Hospitality*** include:

- **Hospitality Action Team** of one staff person and 5-6 lay leaders formed to develop plan for increasing awareness of hospitality and ways to improve. Team meets over the course of three months or so to develop ways to help St. Lucas, on an ongoing basis, become a spiritual refuge, a spiritually and emotionally safe place, to learn how to be truly hospitable to all, and to become a safe and nurturing environment for the un-churched and de-churched. This may, for example, require workshops or other approaches that address both the knowledge and skills of members in regard to diversity and that address the culture or atmosphere of St. Lucas. These diversities will include generational differences, theological differences, socioeconomic differences, political differences, racial differences, etc. The team will also consider how to intentionally plan and structure for recognizing and connecting with visitors in worship, at coffee hour and church-wide. The team will be expected to make recommendations regarding next steps to the Council. This will be an ongoing work, but it is hoped we can begin taking significant steps in this direction immediately.

- Develop and begin conducting periodic **Visitor Orientation Seminars**. Key lay leadership, with guidance from staff, will plan a monthly seminar to provide visitors an overview of United Church of Christ history and beliefs, a brief history of this Congregation, and current offerings of St. Lucas. This monthly event should provide interaction between visitors/prospective members and 3 or 4 key lay leaders as well as clergy. The idea is that regularly offering these seminars will begin to build attendance as new people feel welcomed.
- **Involve youth more visibly** in participation/leadership of worship. Nurtures inter-generational interactions that are intended to form important new bonds while visibly showing the younger generation how important they are to the vitality of our church today and in the future.
- **Form new small groups** focused on inviting underserved groups in the Congregation. For example, developing groups to attract young adults and young families will aid in attracting these important demographics.
- Members are invited to participate in an **ongoing prayer project**: bathing St. Lucas in prayer as it transforms into the Congregation God is calling us to become. This may be done in triads similar to those that yielded the Future Story, and/or in small groups of 5-9, and some may wish to join a virtual prayer effort in which people are connected electronically to hold each other accountable to praying daily or at another specified interval. There may be ten or one hundred ten who wish to participate, but the goal is to have at least five praying for the church regularly during these seven years. The existing St. Lucas prayer chain process can be leveraged to lead this focused effort.

Outside Hospitality

Goal: Let's become exceptional as a place that makes a real difference in our community.

Slogan: "St. Lucas UCC Cares"

Strategies to achieve **Outside Hospitality** include:

- Form **"Mission Leadership Team"** to coordinate and increase focus on mission efforts across the Congregation. This Team will review the present outreach ministries of St. Lucas UCC locally, nationally, and globally and identify possible opportunities for "hands on" mission in the neighborhood and beyond in the next year or two. These mission opportunities should be available to members and visitors alike and provide opportunities for service beyond the walls of St. Lucas as we share the care and concern of our members beyond our walls. The consultation should also look for ways to educate the Congregation about Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and other denominational and ecumenical opportunities to support spiritually, financially, and in other ways. Also, could there be opportunities to partner for mission both financially and hands-on with other Congregations and denominations locally?
- Mission efforts will include all generations. All groups can have opportunities to pitch in and help.
- Develop a common sense of purpose and increase awareness inside and outside our Congregation about our mission efforts.

Other Activities for Phase One

Communications Team: Exceptional Hospitality will be enhanced by additional focus on communications. The existing Marketing & Website committees will be supplemented with additional resources on forming this team to implement new approaches for increasing visibility in the community and making the Congregation more aware of the activities within the church.

Purposes of the Communications Team include enhancing communication regarding programs offered by St. Lucas, enhancing transparency in decision making in St. Lucas, creating a brand and communicating our brand both internally and externally, thus creating a “presence” and knowledge of St. Lucas UCC in the community at large. Additional areas of focus for the Communications Team could include:

- Marketing and visibility, working with St. Lucas program and ministry groups as appropriate
- Appoint and support a publicity person to communicate regularly through social media
- Possible direct mailings to targeted zip codes
- Consider possibilities for greater visibility in the city and our neighborhood
- Development of a common look to published and posted materials as a means of “branding”
- Obtain input from those who do not use electronic media to determine and meet their communication needs
- Prominent display of website address on street front and in all communication
- New street signage which might include all or part of the mission statement, “welcome” and “try us” signs, signs with pictures of members “in action” at public areas
- Creation of a “governance” display that shows pictures of officers/leaders
- Promote quarterly Congregational forums held to share information about church life and for Council to hear input regarding upcoming decisions
- Develop special brochures and a DVD that describes the mission, ministry and programming of St. Lucas and provides a tour of the building. Additionally, the web site should eventually include Bible study courses, produced locally or acquired elsewhere with the assistance of a member of the clergy and other educational resources.

A **Recruitment Team** is appointed by Council as soon as possible to recruit, or assist in recruiting, the people needed for the various new action teams and other functional groups the plan calls for, drawing especially on people beyond those currently involved, or typically involved, in the leadership, and engaging significant numbers of youth. This Team will work closely with both the Implementation Team and Council.

Ideas for Possible Inclusion for Future Phases of Strategic Plan

To consider beginning in 2015 as resources and priorities allow.

The Implementation Team will lead the consideration of taking on new phases and activities in the future. Timelines and prioritization of activities from this point forward are tentative estimates. The exact timing and order can and will change in the years ahead depending on the Congregation's needs and readiness to pursue new activities.

2015

Overall Objectives for 2015

1. Appeal to inactive members to return when the new senior minister arrives.
2. Review the church's relationship with the Preschool and its ministry.
3. Determine Saturday night worship flexibility to accommodate weddings.
4. Begin using a Congregation Annual Planning Event.
5. Begin review of governance structure to identify ideas for improvement and efficiency.
6. Begin education and promotion of endowment giving via the Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Program.
7. Begin enhanced evaluations of staff to better help them succeed.
8. Assist members in finding ministries for their passion, gifts, and interests, and encouraging them to take on leadership roles.
9. Develop a continuous Membership Class.
10. Begin creating an in-depth leadership development opportunity, called the Servant Leadership Program, which will prepare people to lead effectively at St. Lucas in various roles in the life of the church.
11. Identify future annual Biblical themes for the Congregation.
12. Further develop support for the clergy and staff of St. Lucas.
13. Continue to grow the average worship attendance from current levels. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry.

Potential Activities to Reach Objectives

- Once the new senior pastor is on site, the Membership and Evangelism Committee will develop a short term **Inactive Member Initiative** for appealing to those who have been members of St. Lucas in the past but who left for whatever reasons. This appeal should be a three-month effort and include multiple approaches to be considered in late 2014 of 2015, as priorities and resources allow. However, once this effort has been made, no further special effort needs to be expended in this regard as inactive members are generally very difficult to draw back.
- A **Preschool Action Team** reviews the Church's relationship to the Preschool and seeks collaborative possibilities moving forward so that the Preschool is more closely identified with the church and provides a missional outreach to those in the community with need. This Team will be comprised of current Preschool Board members, Preschool administration/faculty, and additional church members not currently affiliated with the Board or Preschool. The action team is asked to make a report and any recommendations for Council consideration.
- A seminar on **Coping with Change** is offered as a way of helping congregants name the changes that they are experiencing in their lives, in the culture, and at St. Lucas.
- The Church and Ministry Committee reviews the **annual evaluation process** for ministerial and non-ministerial staff for possible changes in procedures to enhance helpfulness. Each employee should have regular evaluative feedback to help them succeed, to find greater satisfaction in their work, and to head off difficulties in performance and/or relationships.
- Each of the clergy is expected to have their own **Pastoral Relations Committee**. Pastoral Relations Committees are not involved in evaluation or salary-setting processes but are designed to facilitate communication from the Congregation to individual clergy and vice versa, especially communication that is delicate, difficult or awkward. The key is for these groups to meet regularly before there are the issues to address, so that mutual trust has already been established between the Pastoral Relations Committee members and the minister with whom they meet.
- The senior pastor or the interim senior minister and a **Leadership Development Planning Team** of three persons, begin designing a **Servant Leadership Program**, a lay leader development program of one year's length. This program teaches: the history, policies, and national and global mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ; the history, mission and ministry of St. Lucas UCC; public speaking and presentation in worship and other settings; active listening and basic conflict resolution; the content and meaning of our worship services; both the use of Roberts Rules and consensus building methods; such other skills and knowledge as the senior pastor and action teams shall determine is helpful. The purpose is to develop a pool of well prepared leaders, both men and women, and including multiple generations, although specific focus should be made towards recruiting younger adults. Those participating in the Servant Leadership Team will include some current members and some who have never been involved at a deep level in St. Lucas leadership. The group should consist of 10-12 persons, intentionally with half or more of those selected would be under age 40. New group will be formed each year.
- The staff and key leadership meet to plan a **Continuous Adult Membership Class** that repeats in content after every six sessions so people can begin and end when they wish/are able. This

curriculum should offer an overview of the history of the United Church of Christ, orient participants to all of the worship services with particular attention paid to the origin and meaning of the structure and language of each service, since traditional or contemporary worship forms may be new to some or all participants, address the other offerings of St. Lucas and the expectations of members such as Christian growth, worship attendance, mission engagement based on their gifts, stewardship, etc.

- As soon as the new senior minister is in place, a **Search Committee** is appointed to seek a settled Minister of Congregational Life to replace the current Interim Minister in that position.
- The **Saturday Night Worship Action Team**, represented by a minister and 4-5 interested lay members will meet and determine how flexibility can be built into the Saturday evening worship schedule to periodically accommodate weddings to occur in the sanctuary. This flexibility could be with time and/or space.
- The **Fall Stewardship Campaign** is designed to highlight the future that we have begun implementing and strive for thoughtful and prayerful stewardship through consideration of the generous donations of our time, talents, and resources. The goal will be to focus on encouraging joyful giving in proportion to the blessings God has bestowed on each individual.
- A **Governance Action Team** is appointed to review current governance and to explore how our structures and practices might be changed to provide for greater transparency and openness, simplicity and “right sizing”, efficiency, and better alignment with our size and changed culture as we grow. The goal would be to identify ways to streamline governance and thus free up members’ time and energy for faith development, ministry and mission. The team will be expected to bring recommendations to Council for review and the Congregation will be invited to offer comment.
- A **Biblical Theme Action Team**, including 3-4 lay members and a member of the clergy is appointed to develop annual or two-year Biblical themes for our program and ministry. These themes will be used in stewardship emphases and will be used by Congregation Annual Planning Events beginning in 2015 to give spiritual direction to our life and work together as a Congregation.
- A seminar on **Constructive Conflict** is offered.
- **Implementation Team** continues oversight for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. At least every 6 months, will make recommendations to Council about the timing for pursuing future elements of the plan in keeping within the capacity and priorities of the church at that time. Will lead celebration in public worship and otherwise of what has been recently accomplished through the Strategic Plan.
- A **“Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Commission”** is appointed to design a program of promotion which educates members about how to make lasting gifts to St. Lucas through our endowment program. The Commission will begin by consulting denominational leaders about best practices and any possible needed changes in our endowment policies and procedures. These

seminars will occur at least annually to educate members about how to make lasting gifts to St. Lucas through our endowment program.

- A **“Small Groups Planning Team”** meets to consider what small groups likely need to be added as we strive to attract and engage underserved groups within the church. This team will work three years out, remembering that not every needed or desired small group can be added immediately without exceeding capacity. But a three year plan for development of small groups will provide intentionality. This planning team will meet annually to review the plans already made and to extend the plans to the third year. This planning team’s plans for small group development will be shared at the Congregation Annual Planning Event and may be altered or enhanced in conversation with Congregational Annual Planning Event participants.
- **Congregation Annual Planning Event:** Staff, officers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year’s programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event. This will help provide better program coordination and lessen dependence upon monthly program committee meetings during the course of the year, thus releasing some time and energy for other projects. It will also help develop wider ownership of the church’s program by the Congregation. This event may result in some expansion of programming, yet care must be taken to plan within capacity while also involving new members and longer term members in the planning and execution of the programs. This will help alleviate burn-out among those who have “always been the workers” and will intentionally seek to involve more people. The primary focus of the Congregational Annual Planning Event will be coordinating events for next upcoming program year. Areas to be discussed include: the current mission involvements of St. Lucas locally and beyond, denominationally and ecumenically; evangelism; enhancing fellowship with Congregation-wide events; children’s Christian education; youth and young adult education and engagement; leadership development for children, youth, and adults of all ages; stewardship education.
- A **Member Engagement Action Team** is appointed to: seek ways to track church participation so that no one falls through the cracks; draw new people into the full life of St. Lucas UCC; discover and utilize people’s gifts and interests for ministry, mission and leadership. This could involve the use of a sophisticated membership software and training and engaging the members of St. Lucas in awareness of members and visitors and in these intentional activities. The team is to bring a report and recommendations to Council. Ideas might include mentors assigned to visitors, people trained to do personal interviews with members about their experience and skills. This personal interview strategy is viewed as being preferable to having members fill out written surveys since few people tend to fill out written forms that seeks to identify their experience, gifts and talents. It may require up to three years to complete the personal interviews with the current membership, then only interviewing of new members as they join will be required. However, people will often reveal these things in face-to-face conversation. This team of up to 24 interviewers will be trained to ask people one on one to discuss their gifts, skills, past experience and interests. The information gathered can be used by program builders, the nominating committee, and others. It is expected that each interviewer could do ten such brief interviews a year, thus every member would be interviewed over the course of just a few years. In addition, it would provide a new sense of connection between the interviewers and the members they interview.

2016

Overall Objectives for 2016

1. Continue implementation of new governance structures and procedures.
2. Begin a discernment process regarding whether St. Lucas should become an open and affirming Congregation.
3. Continue to grow the average worship attendance from current levels. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry.

Possible Activities to Reach Objectives

- **Implementation Team** continues oversight for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. At least every 6 months, will make recommendations to Council about the timing for pursuing future elements of the plan in keeping within the capacity and priorities of the church at that time. Will lead celebration in public worship and otherwise of what has been recently accomplished through the Strategic Plan.
- The **"Servant Leadership Program"**, a lay leader development group, begins meeting and meets monthly throughout the year. The group should consist of 10-12 persons and, ideally, half or more of those selected would be under age 40. New group will be formed each year.
- A **Human Diversity Discernment Team** is appointed to design a discernment process for the Congregation regarding the possibility of becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation. This action team will have 9 members broadly representative of the Congregation generationally and theologically, plus a member of the clergy. The recommendations of this action team regarding process will be presented to Council.
- We offer the annual, perhaps twice annual, **Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Program** which educates members about how to make lasting gifts to St. Lucas through our endowment program.
- A **"Small Groups Planning Team"** meets to consider what small groups likely need to be added in the next 3 years. This planning team's work will be fed into the Congregation Annual Planning Event where other suggestions may surface about additional groups to be added or suggested substitutions to be considered.
- **Congregation Annual Planning Event:** Staff, officers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year's programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event. This will help provide better program coordination and lessen dependence upon monthly program committee meetings during the course of the year, thus releasing some time and energy for other projects. It will also

- The **Fall Stewardship Campaign** is designed to highlight the future that we have begun implementing and strive for thoughtful and prayerful stewardship through consideration of the generous donations of our time, talents, and resources. The goal will be to focus on encouraging joyful giving in proportion to the blessings God has bestowed on each individual. (Undergirds all strategies and goals)

2017 – 2020

Overall Objectives

1. Continue to grow the average worship attendance from current levels. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry.
2. Consider staff/ministerial additions, if warranted, based on church size and pace of growth. A best practice is to have approximately one full-time ministerial staff person (or the part-time equivalents) for each 100-150 or so in worship. Some administrative personnel may also need to be added as the ministerial staff grows (but not at a 1:1 ratio).
3. Additional goals to be determined as we get closer to 2017, based on priorities and resources at that point in time.
4. Perform an architectural and use assessment of the building and grounds to most effectively align these assets with the ministry and mission of St. Lucas.

Annual Activities to Consider for 2017 through 2020

- **Implementation Team** continues oversight for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. At least every 6 months, will make recommendations to Council about the timing for pursuing future elements of the plan in keeping within the capacity and priorities of the church at that time. Will lead celebration in public worship and otherwise of what has been recently accomplished through the Strategic Plan.
- The **"Servant Leadership Program"**, a lay leader development group, begins meeting and meets monthly throughout the year. The group should consist of 10-12 persons and, ideally, half or more of those selected would be under age 40. New group will be formed each year.

- We offer the annual (perhaps twice annual) **Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Program** which educates members about how to make lasting gifts to St. Lucas through our endowment program.
- A **“Small Groups Planning Team”** meets to consider what small groups likely need to be added in the next 3 years. This team’s work will be fed into the Congregation Annual Planning Event (which is also this month) where other suggestions may surface (either additional groups to be added or suggested substitutions to be considered).
- An “architectural and use assessment of our buildings and grounds” is initiated with the appointment of a **“Campus Assessment Action Team”** of 4-5 persons (plus a representative of the clergy) including at least one architect and a person with building and grounds managing experience. The purpose is to develop recommendations as to how we may most effectively align the buildings and grounds with the ministry and mission of St. Lucas. The team is to report its recommendations to Council.
- **Congregation Annual Planning Event:** Staff, officers and program chairs review the Strategic Plan, evaluate the current and previous year’s programming and prepare any relevant recommendations for the consideration of those participating in the Annual Planning Event. This will help provide better program coordination and lessen dependence upon monthly program committee meetings during the course of the year, thus releasing some time and energy for other projects. It will also help develop wider ownership of the church’s program by the Congregation. This event may result in some expansion of programming, yet care must be taken to plan within capacity while also involving new members and longer term members in the planning and execution of the programs. This will help alleviate burn-out among those who have “always been the workers” and will intentionally seek to involve more people. The primary focus of the Congregational Annual Planning Event will be coordinating events for next upcoming program year. Areas to be planned include: the current mission involvements of St. Lucas locally and beyond, denominationally and ecumenically; evangelism; fellowship (enhancing fellowship including Congregation-wide events); children’s Christian education; youth and young adult education and engagement; leadership development for children, youth, and adults of all ages; stewardship education.
- The **Fall Stewardship Campaign** is designed to highlight the future that we have begun implementing and strive for thoughtful and prayerful stewardship through consideration of the generous donations of our time, talents, and resources. The goal will be to focus on encouraging joyful giving in proportion to the blessings God has bestowed on each individual. (Undergirds all strategies and goals)

Appendix

Visioning Process Background

To more fully understand the current Strategic Plan, it is helpful to understand the prior steps that have led us to this point during the Visioning Process. The steps of the Visioning Process achieved to date include:

Visioning Process Established: Council adopted a Visioning Process in late 2012 as a method for discerning and guiding our church's future based on how God calls us to move forward. Council selected Dick Hamm to serve as the church's mentor in the process and assembled a Vision Team of demographically diverse church members to lead the Visioning Process. The Vision Team began meeting in early 2013.

Contextual Analysis: The Vision Team developed a Living Document that provided context for what St. Lucas has been like historically as well as what we are like today. This document included important details such as membership trends, member demographics, current church programming, and selected details about the church's history. The Contextual Analysis report was presented to the Congregation in April 2013 and was further revised based on feedback received from the Congregation.

Period of Discernment (aka Visioning Triads): The Congregation then underwent a Period of Discernment that engaged and solicited the feedback of the wider Congregation. Over 150 members participated in Visioning Triads which met for 10 sessions over a period of 4 months to help discern what God is calling St. Lucas UCC to be and do in the future. Additional input was also gathered via several listening sessions as well as direct feedback provided. This period of discernment concluded in September 2013.

The Future Story: Using the feedback obtained from the Visioning Triads, listening sessions and direct feedback, the Vision Team then developed a Future Story presentation that provided a high level glimpse into what St. Lucas could be like for the next 7 years. While this document did not contain many programming specifics, it did highlight the key themes and areas of needed focus that were apparent from the feedback received. The Future Story was presented to, and affirmed by, the Congregation in a special meeting in November 2013.

Key Themes of Triad Input and Connection to Strategic Plan

Major Themes From Triad Input	Strategic Plan Initiatives
Core Values, Faith and Identity	
We need to clarify and teach our core values, the content of our faith, and what it means to be a UCC Congregation.	The Biblical Theme Action Team identifies annual Biblical themes for the Congregation for the next 5 years.
	A continuous Adult Membership Class will review what St. Lucas offers members and expectations from members.
	A Visitor Orientation Seminar will be developed to provide visitors and prospective members an overview of UCC history & beliefs and a brief history and description of current program offerings at St. Lucas.
	An Ongoing Prayer Project will pray for the transformation at St. Lucas.
We need to go beyond welcoming and become inviting.	The Hospitality Action Team will lead the Congregation in creating "Exceptional Hospitality" initiatives.
	Mission Leadership Team coordinates "St. Lucas UCC Cares" outreach opportunities.
Many want to have a discussion concerning Open and Affirming at St. Lucas.	The Human Diversity Discernment Team designs a discernment process regarding an open and affirming Congregation.
Congregational Growth	
We need to function as a "Corporate-Size" church so that all feel cared for and can easily find relationships and engagement. We want more members, but we also want quality relationships.	Move from a mix of Pastor-Centered and Program-Centered to a Congregation that operates in a way consistent with our size.
	Grow average worship attendance from current level of ~400. Also grow the numbers of those participating in the church's mission and ministry.
Pastoral Care	
People want a Pastor to "know their name" but some triads recognized that this is not always possible given the size of our Congregation.	Move towards a better balance of lay leaders and ministerial staff leadership.

Key Triad Themes Continued

Major Themes From Triad Input	Strategic Plan Initiatives
Support of Staff	
We should provide strong support for our clergy.	Pastors each have their own Pastoral Relations Committee . The Pastoral Relations Committee is not involved in evaluation or salary-setting processes but is designed to facilitate communication from the Congregation to individual clergy and vice-versa... especially communication that is delicate, difficult and awkward.
We need to avoid over-working our staff and causing burnout as our church grows.	Recruit and install additional staff to support growing Congregation (as needed).
Communication and Coordination	
We need consistency of message, both internal and external. We should use our website and other forms of technology to advertise what we do well.	A Communications Team will develop a comprehensive communication plan and protocol for the Congregation, improving marketing and visibility in the community.
We should use internal forums and other gatherings to share information and our various individual perspectives.	Schedule Quarterly Congregational Forums to share information and gather input regarding upcoming decisions. Update web site to include Bible study courses.
	A Congregational Annual Planning Event will develop coordinated planning for coming program years.
Small Groups	
Our church needs more small groups that are cross generational and build relationships. Some groups need to be short term and not require long term commitments.	A Small Groups Action Team will help develop and grow a mixture of age specific and cross-generational groups.
Worship and Coffee Hour	
We need to work out our Sunday worship times. We want flexibility to allow for Saturday evening weddings. We should have three worship services, one on Saturday evening and two on Sunday morning. One of the Sunday services should be more contemporary. There should be one social hour on Sunday morning. We need to provide adequate support for all worship services, including children's programming.	Resolve the question of when 3 worship services will be offered and what style they will be.
	The Saturday Night Worship Action Team will determine how flexibility can be built into the Saturday evening worship schedule to periodically accommodate weddings to occur in the sanctuary.

Key Triad Themes Continued

Major Themes From Triad Input	Strategic Plan Initiatives
Volunteer Leadership and Engagement	
We need to address the 80/20 rule at St. Lucas with regards to time and treasure. We need closer to 60% engaged in the work so that fewer volunteers are overtaxed and burned out. This would allow more people to be blessed by serving and would work to eliminate territorialism. People are often repeatedly recruited / asked to serve because we know they are willing. Our goal is to routinely introduce new people with fresh ideas into the process.	A Recruitment Team will recruit people needed for the various new action teams and other functional groups.
	A Member Engagement Action Team will develop ways to intentionally follow member's attendance and participation. Begin helping identify their gifts and where they might feel a call to do ministry.
	The Fall Stewardship Campaign will increase giving.
	The Stewardship of Accumulated Resources (SOAR) Commission will educate and promote a "stewardship of accumulated resources".
We need to develop future church leaders.	The Leadership Development Action Team will develop an in-depth leadership development program. The Servant Leadership Program is a lay leader development program.
We need better ways to address conflict. We need to learn how to discuss and work out differences of opinion and perspective.	Encourage additional multi-generational interaction through several initiatives in the Plan.
	Focus on interactive dialogue and open discussions among the Congregation, encouraging listening for understanding of all perspectives.
	Host seminars to address Coping with Change and Constructive Conflict .
We need fewer committees and more short term action teams, simpler planning processes in order to free up members' time for faith development and service.	The Governance Action Team will review options to streamline our planning and decision making process.
Evangelism and Outreach	
We need our church to be a more comfortable and safe place, less intimidating, and genuinely welcoming. We desire to be more outwardly focused, engaged in the community. We need more effective evangelism, but in a way that expresses who we are. Our style is not to go "door-to-door"; instead, we should use social media, marketing tools, and programming to attract people. Some desire more opportunities for less formal attire.	The Hospitality Action Team will lead the Congregation in creating "Exceptional Hospitality" initiatives.
	A one day mission consultation - Our Church's Wider Mission education will identify opportunities for support and participation in local, national and global mission.
	The Inactive Member Initiative will ask inactive members to return when the new senior minister arrives.
	The Visitor's Orientation Seminars will introduce St. Lucas and the United Church of Christ to visitors and prospective members.

Key Triad Themes Continued

Major Themes From Triad Input	Strategic Plan Initiatives
Multi-Generational and Attracting Younger Generations	
We need to be intentionally multi-generational in approach while also offering cross-generational opportunities so we can know and understand each other across generational lines. We want to continue to build community.	Part of several goals in the Strategic Plan, especially small groups.
We need to reach out to young adults, especially 20-40 years old. Engage youth in the whole life of the Congregation.	The Mission Leadership Team will help develop hands on mission opportunities attractive to all generations, with an emphasis towards younger people.
	The Governance Action Team will perform their work knowing that younger people are less attracted to serving on long term committees and more interested in doing shorter term, defined projects.
	The Small Group Planning Team will promote intentional growth of emotionally significant small groups to attract and engage younger people.
	The Worship Committee will design ways to involve youth in visible participation/leadership of each worship service.
Facilities	
We want to use our buildings and grounds in ways that engage and serve the community at large as well as the Congregation.	The Campus Assessment Action Team will develop recommendations to align the buildings and grounds with the ministry and mission of St. Lucas.
Preschool	
Our church needs preschool programming that also meets the needs of working parents. We should offer assistance for households with financial hardship. The preschool needs to be more connected with the church and serve as an entry point for membership.	The Preschool Action Team will review the church's relationship with the preschool and its ministry.

Additional Resources

Future Story of St. Lucas United Church of Christ
Copies available in the Church Office or on the St. Lucas UCC website

Contextual Analysis
Copies available in the Church Office

Index

Adult Membership Class	14, 21
Biblical Theme Action Team	15, 21
Campus Assessment Action Team	19, 24
Communications Team	12, 22
Congregation Annual Planning Event)	7, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19
Constructive Conflict Seminar	15, 23
Coping with Change Seminar	14, 23
Fall Stewardship Campaign	15, 18, 19, 23
Governance Action Team	15, 23, 24
Grow average worship attendance (ongoing result of other activities)	5, 9, 13, 17, 18, 21
Hospitality Action Team	10, 21
Human Diversity Discernment Team	17, 21
Implementation Team	3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18
Inactive Member Initiative	14, 23
Involve youth in each of our worship services	7, 9, 11, 24
Leadership Development Planning Team	14
Member Engagement Action Team	16, 23
Mission Leadership Team	11, 21, 24
Ongoing Prayer Project	11, 21
Pastoral Relations Committee	7, 14, 22
Preschool Action Team	14, 24
Recruitment Team	12, 23
Saturday Night Worship Action Team	13, 15, 22
Search Committee	10, 15
Servant Leadership Program	8, 13, 14, 17, 18, 23
Small Groups Planning Team	16, 17, 19
Stewardship of Accumulated Resources Program	13, 15, 17, 19, 23
Visitor's Orientation Seminar	9, 23