



Casting Your Nets on the Other Side

An Initiative for Net Increase in Mission, Members & Money

...for the difference made in every life touched,
...for the vitality of our congregations, and
...for the ability of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
to preach and practice a powerful, progressive faith



MISSION VISION ASSIGNMENT:

“Mission” comes from the Latin word meaning “to send.” In its broadest church usage, it challenges Christians to ask themselves faithfully what God, having established the church, is sending us to do? Why, Lord, have we been called? For what purpose? What are you waiting on us to accomplish.

A “Mission Vision” is an agreement around identity and purpose. The best ‘mission visions’ are word pictures showing where your congregation hopes to go in faithfulness to God’s call. They steer you towards how you are becoming different and the difference you want to make. They also help people beyond your community know who you are and what you are about.

A ‘mission vision’ expresses what you share in common with other congregations (i.e. some UCC identity) as well as what is unique about your congregation. It provides a definition of your ministry: 1) what you believe, 2) where you serve, 3) what gifts you bring to your work, and 4) the people you are called to engage in ministry. And it hints at the criteria you will use to measure progress in your church and its ministry for the foreseeable future.

Despite carrying so much information, the ‘mission vision’ works best when it is concise and memorable. To accomplish this, your church should seek images and words deep with meaning to your members as well as to people beyond your church community.

“Mission visions’ vary according to the church that faithfully dreams them:

~“Making God’s love visible (to anyone in sight of our church).”

~ “We are people who try to think, speak and act in God’s way, rather than in the ways of a fear-filled world. Our church is a home for love, for sisters and brothers to rest and be healed, to let go of defenses and be free— from worries and loneliness ...for laughter and tears. All this, so we can might serve God together.”

~“If you understand taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally,
if you sense Jesus has a lot to do with justice;
if you are seeking a congregation on the cutting edge;
if you want your faith to keep expanding;
if you plan to raise your children in a nurturing, innovative faith community;
if you believe everyone is a unique and unrepeatable person;
if you know God’s love embraces all, no matter who or where,

**if you are willing to tear down the walls that divide us,
...then we need you to help us build a brighter future for all."**

~ "Our faith is a journey, not a destination; and it's open to all seekers."

~ *"We are an intentional Christian community, believing that vital faith leads to social action.
With us, you will find a warm welcome, inspiration, and a community to make a difference
in your life and in the world."*

~ **We are about:**

**a more inclusive community,
a more expansive understanding of justice,
a more loving recognition of the meaning of family,
a more respectful view of humankind
a more in-depth commitment to peace,
a more profound understanding of spiritual pilgrimage...
the more abundant life Jesus promises.**

What do you imagine for your church's 'mission vision?'

Before the next retreat, please spend some time thinking, sharing and working on a 'mission vision' for your congregation, its history and its strengths, and what it might become. How do you believe your church could grow in faithfulness? What's God's calling you towards?

You are going to work together on dreaming 'mission visions' according to Ministry Area groups. Choose from among one of the Ministry Areas listed below, and first work on your own, then as a group to come up with possible 'mission visions' for your specific ministry areas. At the next retreat, we use what you all have come up with to create a working 'mission vision' for the whole church:

Focusing on Mission- what is God sending our church to do?

Growing Fellowship- what difference does God expect participating in this community to make?

Strengthening Worship- what does God mean for us to accomplish in worship?

Teaching Generosity- where does God want us to grow to in the giving of ourselves?

Inviting Others- how is God calling us to share our faith with each other and with people not yet part of our community?

Remember: mission is who we are and all we do as Christ's church. It's not just charitable work we undertake far from home with folks who are very different from us. It's also what we have been sent to do right in our own neighborhoods to, for and with people more like us that not. Mission is also what we do for one another.