

Covenant Life Church

Taking the Next Step

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BUDGET YEARS 2010-2012

January, 2010 VERSION



Schedule for Staff-Elder Master-Planning Meeting February 13, 2010

8:30 Welcome/worship/prayer

8:45 **Sharing**
“This is Church!”

9:15 **Discussions about the Information Section of the Master Plan**
In small groups we’ll look at all the information section of the plan, looking for 2 things: 1) Anything surprising? 2) What does this mean for us? i.e. insights for our planning.

10:00 **Talk-Down.**

10:30 **Break**

10:45 **Discussion I By Department**
In these discussions you will consider the recommendations from the Master-Planning Team. Are these on target? Any additional ideas that should be added? New directions or insights?

Some elders around each of the following major areas of ministry:

- Small Groups
- Children’s Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Facilities

11:15 **Discussion II By Department**
Communication
Frontline
Missions
Adult Ministries

12:15 **Grab Lunch**
Discussion III By Department
Prayer
Worship
Care
Discipleship

1:00 **Talk Down/Finances/Other Recommendations**

2:00 **Closing time of prayer/worship**

Creating Our Future Strategic Planning for 2010 and Beyond

Here are some things that short-sighted people have said in the business world.

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons." --Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." --Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM, 1943

"I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year." --The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957

"But what ... is it good for?" --Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, 1968, commenting on the microchip. "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." --Ken Olson, president, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp.,

"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C,' the idea must be feasible." --A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. (Smith went on to found Federal Express Corp.).

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." --Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." --Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented." --Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899.

"Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction". --Pierre Pachet, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse

"640K ought to be enough for anybody." -- Bill Gates, 1981

Ah, the examples could go on. The point is that as we look at the future of Covenant Life Church, we don't want to underestimate what God might have in mind for us. And though this strategic plan will provide some direction, both general and specific, we eagerly want to leave room for God to suddenly open new opportunities and give new directions.

What Hasn't Changed

While this report looks at what has been happening in CLC and the community, and makes many recommendations about what we believe the future may look like, we have not made any suggestion about changing our Mission and Vision statements. These have only been in place for two years, and are just now catching on. For your reminder, our mission statement is: **Helping Each Other Take the Next Step In Our Relationship with Jesus: Gathering, Growing and Going.** Our Vision Statement, i.e. what we hope to see happen as a result of our planning and prayer, is **Growing Deeper, Growing Larger, Reaching a New Generation.** For more information you can access our present Strategic Plan on our website to see how we have been doing in fulfilling this mission and vision.

Process

Just a word about process.

- **The Community**
We considered a report on what's been happening in the zip codes 49456 and 49417 in regards to population shifts and life-style preferences.
- **Covenant Life**
We examined several things that would tell us what is happening in Covenant Life Church. These studies included the Percept Survey, written responses of the congregation, and the Natural Church Development Survey. We also looked at attendance graphs and heard reports from Bruce and Bob on what is happening program-wise here.
- **Praying**
We and others have been praying that God would open our eyes to what he has for the future. One of the bottom-line issues in making any plan is that we don't know what opportunities and challenges God is going to place before us. We believe it is God's will for us to continue to grow. We think we know some of the means to that. But we must continue to be in prayer, seeking God's best plan for us.

In the rest of this document we'll consider what we have learned, and end with some general directions statements and some specific plans.

The Community

We purchased from Percept a statistical review of the 49417 and 49456 area codes, encompassing the Tri-Cities area. Here is some snapshot figures describing the community in which we live and work.

Population: 49,332

Growth: The population of the Tri-cities area has been growing.
25.5% since 1990.

Projected to grow by 4.3% or 2,129 additional people by 2014.

Ethnicity: This area is 95.5% Anglo. Hispanics are expected to be the largest growing ethnic minority in the next few years.

Age-distribution:

Millenials (ages 2 to 27)	12,848 or 26% of the population	
Survivors (ages 28-48)	13,857 or 28.1% of the population	
Boomers (ages 49-66)	11,620 or 23.6% of the population	12.4%
	above the national average.	
Silents (ages 67-84)	6,132 or 13.4% of the population	

12.4% above the national average)

Builders (ages 85 and up) 1,066 or 2.2% of the area.

Family Structures

This is a very traditional area when it comes to people married and two parent families.

Education: This is a very educated area (89.4% of those over 25 have graduated from high school; 36% of those over 25 have graduated college[24.4% in the general U.S. population]).

Concerns in the Community that are above the national average:

- Achieving a Fulfilling Marriage
- Time for Recreation/Pleasure
- Parenting Skills
- Child Care
- Aging Parent Care
- Good Schools

Average Household Income is high: \$72,982.

Median Age: 40.4 (increased from 38.0 in 2000)

Faith Involvement

- Strongly involved with their Faith: 33.9%
- Somewhat involved with their faith: 31.1%
- Not involved with their faith: **34.7%**

What people are looking for in a church:

- Personal or Family counseling 23.7%
- Marriage Enrichment Opportunities 18.9%
- Bible Study Discussion and Prayer Groups 37.9%
- Family Activities and Outlines 30.4%
- Active Retirement Programs 26%
- Blended Worship Style 33.7%
- Emotionally Uplifting and Intellectually challenging worship 33.7%

Contact Preference

- Mail 53.3%
- Telephone and offering to send material 25.5%

Some things to note:

Over 1/3 of our area is not engaged at all in church.

People are looking to church for things like counseling and marriage enrichment, etc. But most of all, they are looking for Bible study, theological discussion, etc.

The family orientation of the community is well reflected by Covenant Life, as is the overall age-demographic.

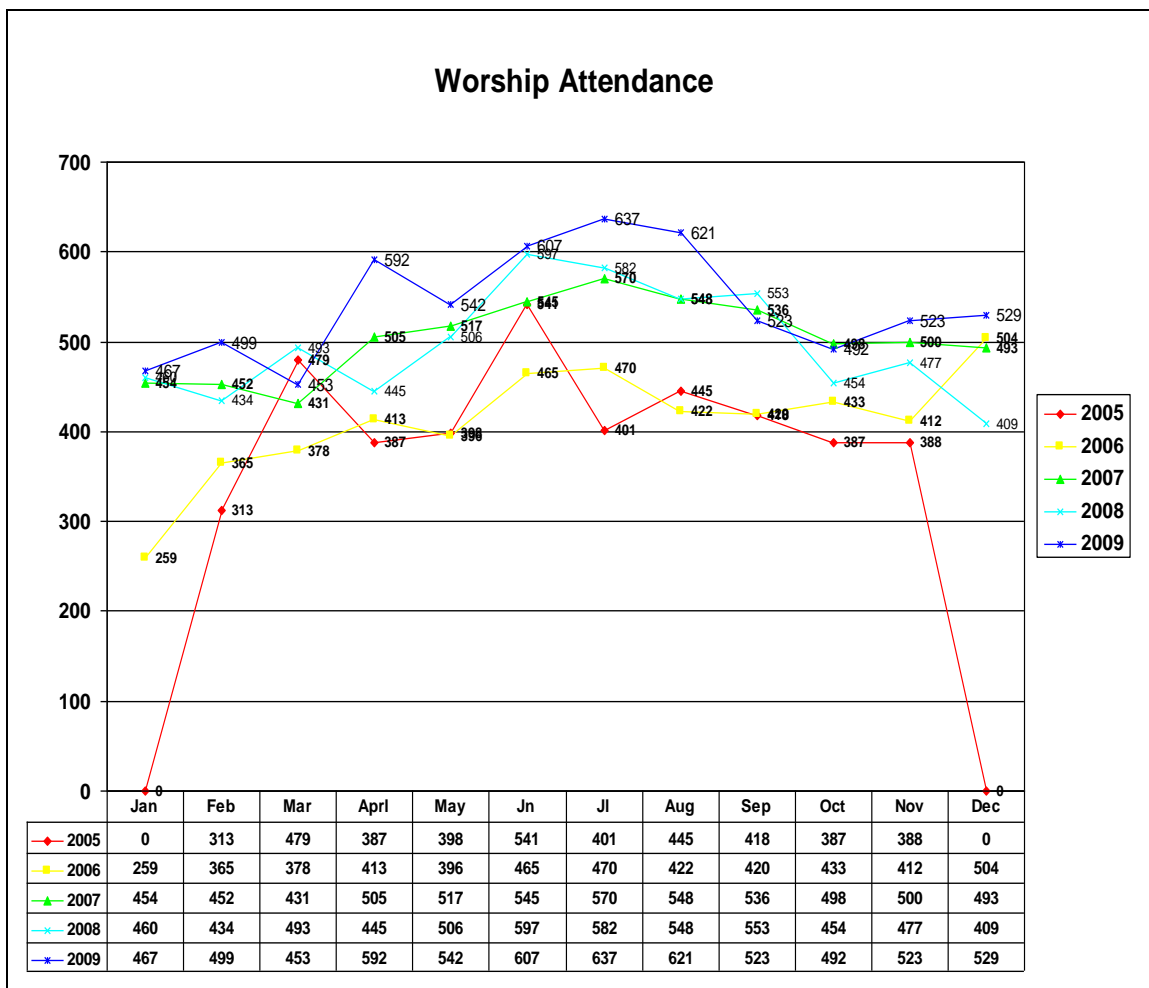
Economic Challenge: One thing we need to note as part of our considerations for the future is the economy. Up until last year our area and church were somewhat insulated from the overall downturn in the economy and the crisis in Michigan. In October, 2008, however, things started to hit home. This area has seen many businesses close, with resulting job layoffs. Small business owners in our community are running behind last year, and way behind 2 and 3 years ago financially.

Covenant Life Church

As we looked at Covenant Life we found that the church is overall very healthy, and people are quite happy with the congregation. Here are some of the things we considered.

Attendance Trends

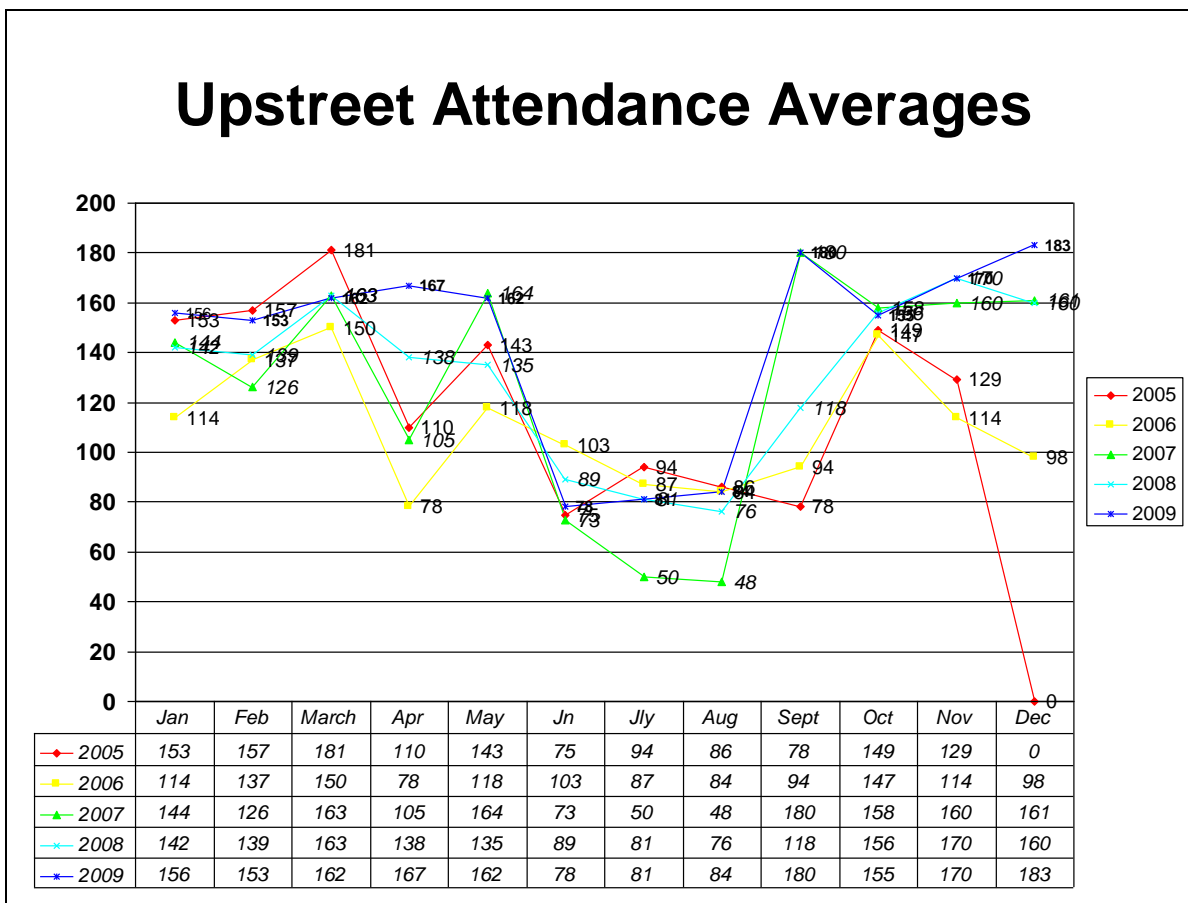
We have been tracking attendance trends since 2005. Below is the average weekly attendance in graph and table form.



Some things to note:

- The trend for attendance month to month over the previous year is up.
- We saw a large increase (30%) in attendance between 2006 and 2007 with the arrival of a new pastor.
- The rapid growth in attendance was not all positive, since we were unable to assimilate all the new people and experienced a period in 2008 where people were leaving CLC almost as fast as they were coming.
- If we average the attendance of 2008 averages and 2009 averages, there was an increase of 58 people per week (482 to 540). **That's 12% growth overall in attendance.**

Below is the graph of average attendance at Upstreet from month to month.



Some things to note:

- Upstreet is facing the growing challenge of two-parent families, so that kids are not here consistently from week to week.
- The wide swings in attendance are indicative of the fact that attendance varies widely from week to week.
- Attendance has remained stable this year.

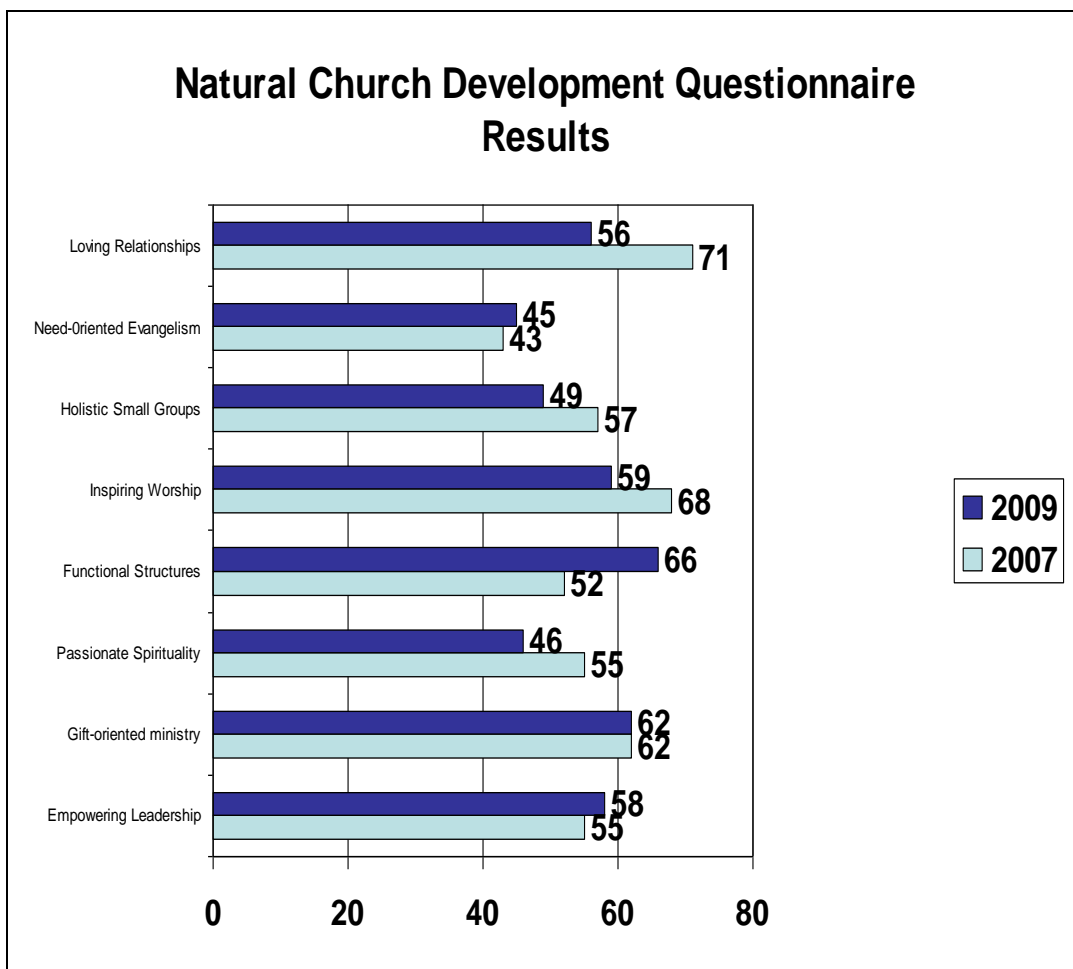
In 2006 we did the Natural Church Development Questionnaire. In preparation for this report we once again did this evaluative questionnaire. This questionnaire, developed by Christian Schwartz, measures the overall health of a congregation. In his research of over 10,000 congregations around the world he found that there are eight variables in the church that affect the health of that congregation. These eight areas of health are evaluated by 30 key people (involved in worship, leadership and a small group). The primary idea is that we should identify the “Minimum Factor”, the area where we are the weakest. The image that is sometimes used to describe this is a barrel with 8 staves. The church cannot grow beyond the weakest area, just as a barrel can’t be filled with water beyond the lowest stave. The eight areas are:

- **Empowering Leadership:** The leadership in growing churches seeks to empower people for ministry. People in these churches are equipped, supported and motivated for ministry. It is clearly communicated that ministry belongs to the people.
- **Gift-Oriented Ministry:** People are encouraged to discover their gifts and to focus their volunteer work in those areas where God has empowered them.
- **Passionate Spirituality:** Members in healthy churches are excited about their faith.
- **Functional Structures:** The structure permits and encourages new ministries and new ideas. There are few hoops to jump through to get permission.
- **Inspiring Worship:** In the healthy churches attending worship is fun because there is a sense that God shows up.
- **Holistic Small Groups:** It is essential for health to have people in small enough groups that they can go beyond discussing Bible passages and share the issues and concerns of daily life.
- **Need-Oriented Evangelism:** Outreach is focused on the questions and needs of the non-Christians in the area.
- **Loving Relationships:** People in healthy churches care for each other and gather outside of the official “church” functions to care about each other.

After defining these signs of health, Brian Schwartz investigated healthy, growing churches and declining churches. His conclusion was that a church cannot grow beyond its “Minimum Factor”, the weakest of these 8 links. How does Covenant Life score in these various areas? The table below shows the result of the questionnaire answered by involved members of Covenant Life. There are a couple of things to know that will help with interpretation of the information below:

- 50 is the “mean” score—in other words, that is the average in the churches around the world.
- 70% of the churches surveyed scored between 35 and 65
- 15% score above 65
- 15% score below 35.

So health is defined as having a score over 50. Glowing health in an area would be defined as any score over 65. Growth-destroying sickness would be represented by any score below 35. Here is the graph showing both the 2006 score and the score of the questionnaire done in 2009:



Things to note:

- Our scores decreased in some areas that indicate that we need to give better attention to our **small group ministry**, loving relationships and small groups.
- Need-oriented **evangelism** remains our weakest area, our minimum factor.
- Our **restructure** has born fruit as the score in that area increased dramatically.
- Our decline in worship scores probably reflects a period where worship became somewhat static here as Steve was considering the challenge of missions.
- People have caught on to the idea of **gift-based ministry**.
- As we looked at the areas of ministry, we decided that there may be some pre-conception of the one called “Need-oriented Evangelism”. Therefore, we added a question to the Percept area that asked people if they thought that we were meeting the needs of the community. The written responses were very positive in this area.
- **Overall, Covenant Life is very healthy and should expect growth as a result.**

PERCEPT SURVEY

A great deal of information was gleaned from the Percept Survey. On September 27 we set aside 15 minutes in the worship service for everyone present to fill out the survey and respond to written questions that we had formed. Here are some of the things that we learned from the snapshot of Covenant Life.

Some things to note:

- There were **416 respondents**, though not everyone answered every question.
- People in Covenant Life are **engaged** with their church life. **91.4%** indicated that they were Somewhat Involved (49.5%) or Strongly Involved (41.9%).
- Our mission of *Taking the Next Step* is working for a good percentage of the people. **40% say that their involvement has increased** in the past two years. 11.2% say it has decreased (Compared to 16.8% in 2005)
- An area of great concern: **150 people say that they have no close friends** in the congregation (36.6%).
- There is a large percentage of people who give little to CLC. **30.2% give less than \$1000 per year.**
- The average annual household contribution is **\$3,631.**
- People in CLC are more interested in areas that will increase spiritual growth rather than counseling and family programs.
 - o 57.6% ask for **Bible studies**
 - o 23.5% for Adult Theological Discussions
 - o 19.6% for spiritual retreats
 - o 11% for personal or family counseling
- **Family activities** are desired by 37.6%
- Youth ministry is important to 33% of the people.
- 62.7% prefer a contemporary format to worship.
- The largest area of concern is a fulfilling marriage (49.6%).
- While the largest area of concern is marriage, 85.3% report being very satisfied or very satisfied with their marriage.

- A large percentage (43.7%) indicate that they are **dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their Personal Bible Study and Prayer.**
- There is some dissatisfaction with relationships in the church (32.2%). We need training in this area.
- A surprising percentage is **planning to move out of the area** in the next 3 to 5 years (11.5%) This will impact some of our attendance and financial projections.

The above are general observations. Near the end of the questionnaire people were asked to give their impressions of various ministries in Covenant Life. The responses were encouraging. On a scale of 1 to 10 here are the rankings of our ministries and as they are compared to the survey that was done in 2005.

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2009</u>
Upstreet	8	9
Merge Family Ministry	-	5
Middle School	2	9
High School	0	8
Worship	9	7
Care Ministry within CLC	-	7
Care Ministry – Community	-	7
Missions Partnerships	5	6
Short-term missions trips	-	6
Women’s Ministry	6	7
Men’s Ministry	0	6
Small Group Experience	4	5
Holistic Small Group Vision	-	3
Kids’ Hope	6	8
Frontline	7	9
New Members’ Class	-	5
Follow-up on visitors	-	5
Library	0	2
Elders	4	5

WRITTEN ANSWERS

We also asked people to respond to a series of written questions. There is too much material to reproduce here, but we did note the following repeating emphases:

Communication: There are many people who are not getting the information about what we offer. This was true in regard to Missions (didn’t know when trips were forming), Adult Ministries (didn’t know what was offered), Library (“We have a library?”), Small Groups (didn’t know how to connect), etc.

Missions: There was a perception among several that we aren't engaging the entire church in our mission enterprises.

Adult Ministries: There was a repeated desire for more in the area of adult education and family activities.

Small Groups: We have to improve what we are doing in small groups. There were repeated comments about not being able to be involved.

Care Ministry: There were several suggestions to improve our caring to the church and community.

Encouragement: There were many statements encouraging us to dream big, and many statements of affirmation for our ministry.

Where To From Here?

With all of the above information as background, where do we go from here? What are our targets for the next 3 years? In this section of this report we'll look at each area of ministry in CLC, talk about what is being done this year, and make some recommendations for emphasis in the coming few years. There are three areas that will need particular attention, in order of importance to fulfilling our mission and vision.

SMALL GROUPS

In this past year we have developed a new vision for holistic small groups. Below is an overview of the vision that has been adopted by elders along with the transition process that is being developed right now.

The Vision

The Vision of the Small Group Ministry at Covenant Life Church is to provide an opportunity for individuals to:

- Be "at home" with members, attenders, and seekers so that all experience genuine community
- Encounter Jesus as we engage with God's Word and interact with each other, and thereby become disciplined to live an increasingly Christ-centered life
- Respond to the powerful working of God's gracious love among us with spirit-filled expressions of awe, adoration, and praise
- Become mobilized together by Christ for serving the people of our communities and beyond, and for attracting people into his family

Our Values:

The following values will guide us in living out this vision. We will:

Be faithful in attendance and participation
Be available to others in the group
Keep all interactions of the group confidential
Be open to newcomers
Seek out and invite others to join the group
Mentor, equip and commission new small group leaders
Provide strong ongoing support for our small group leaders.

Since the development of this vision and plan we came to realize that this process won't provide the necessary small groups to assimilate all of the new people that have joined in the past couple of years. So a renewed emphasis on Covenant Groups was made this past fall. The good news is that we have about 80 more people in small groups than we did a year ago. At this writing everyone who has indicated an interest in small groups has been assigned to one. This means a total of 15 more groups than there were last year—more than doubling the number in one year. The bad news is that we are woefully shy of our goal of having 75% of the people in small groups. So here's what we need to be doing in the immediate future. In the process of working on the Master-Planning information the Small Group Vision Team was asked to look at their process for the next three years with the following things in mind:

- Revise the vision to include a means to get to our stated goal of 75% of our church in small groups in the next three years. Some of the necessary steps will include:
 - Determining what percentage is in small groups now;
 - Pursuing the development of Life Group leaders;
 - Expanding our recruitment, training and deployment of Covenant Group Leaders;
 - Developing a means of recruiting members into small groups;
- We also asked for a recommendation from the team on how many more staff hours will be necessary to meet our goals. Last year we hired Doug Einfeld as our Director of Small Groups, and he has done a wonderful job of leading a team through the visioning and planning process. We hired him because of his vision, in spite of the fact that we knew he couldn't work more than 10 hours per week. At the time we figured we would add hours as necessary to the position, hiring additional part-time people. We now realize that we underestimated the necessary time for this crucial position. Our future is largely dependent on how we develop this area. One church leader (Leith Anderson) has compared the assimilation of people to Velcro connections. If you only have a Velcro connection held by one or two loops, it will easily be broken. The more connecting loops, the more solid the connection and the more difficult to break. When 150 people say they have no friends in the church (More than 1/3 of the respondents), **we are in a danger of losing these people.** Therefore, we are going to have to devise a means of effectively assimilating people into small groups as quickly as possible.

The planning document below is the response of the vision team to those requests.

Small Group Strategic Planning

I. Observations regarding the current reality of small group ministry at CLC

A. Looking back we can see:

1. When CLC began, a strong emphasis was placed on small group ministry. Covenant Groups were formed and everyone at CL participated in them.
2. Although small group ministry has continued to be a stated value of our church, the percentage of our congregation participating in small groups has continually declined over the years – until this past year.
3. Various efforts were made over the years to enhance small group ministry, with very limited sustained success.
4. What had survived through all the ups and downs to late 2008 was about a dozen or so Covenant Groups.

B. Covenant Groups have played a positive, helpful role in the life of our church:

1. Participants have been able to form closer, more meaningful relationships, and experience a strong sense of belonging to CLC.
2. Participants have experienced mutual care, support, and ministry.
3. People have been helped to take “next steps” in their Christian journeys, and enabled to “personalize” their Christian faith.
4. These groups have helped to provide a “safety net” to keep participants from falling through the cracks at CLC. Ministry needs have become known and responded to by one another.

C. There are some inherent weaknesses and limitations, however, with the Covenant Group system that has evolved:

1. Covenant Groups have largely functioned without any clearly defined leadership responsibility. Although participants have been willing to share in leading group discussions at group gatherings on a rotating basis, they tend to be reluctant to accept any designated role as “group leader.” There seems to be a general aversion to taking on an official role as Covenant Group leader.
2. There has been a lack of emphasis and energy placed on developing new Covenant Group leaders.
3. Covenant Group members have generally been strongly resistant to the idea of multiplying their groups into additional groups that would provide space for more people to join a Covenant Group. The value of “not breaking up our group” has generally trumped the value of making room for new people.
4. When there is the desire to start new Covenant Groups, there generally are no leaders available to help start them.
5. Covenant Groups have tended to function with a great deal of autonomy and little accountability or pastoral oversight.
6. The de-centralized nature of the Covenant Group system has resulted in groups functioning largely in isolation from each other and lacking any cohesiveness among them.

7. An adequate support and encouragement system for these groups and their “leaders” has been lacking.
 8. With an insufficient number of new leaders being developed, it has been difficult to start new groups. This has made it difficult to integrate new CLC members into the life of our church through small group involvement.
- D. The leadership of CLC, acknowledging the inherent limitations of the Covenant Group model, made a commitment in 2009 to begin transitioning our small group ministry to a “holistic” small group model. A new vision statement describing this model for small group ministry was adopted.
1. The Covenant Group model has primarily emphasized the value of caring for one another and spiritually supporting one another in the small group.
 2. The holistic model includes this vital Inward-reaching emphasis as well. However, it incorporates 3 additional emphases and places an equal emphasis on all 4:
 - a. A strong Upward-looking emphasis on prayer and worship.
 - b. A strong Forward-moving emphasis on developing new small group leaders and small groups .
 - c. A strong Outward-reaching emphasis on developing relationships with acquaintances who are not now following Jesus.
- E. During 2009 this holistic model was launched at CL with the piloting of a new “Life Group” ministry.
1. It seems to be off to a strong start. Those involved in it have been energized and excited about their experience.
 2. The rest of the congregation, however, has very limited knowledge about this yet, as it has not yet been ready to “go public.”
 3. Those in the congregation with some knowledge about Life Groups are likely feeling somewhat left in the dark, and are perhaps forming pre-conceived notions based on their very limited knowledge.
- F. Some observations about how small group ministry in general is viewed at CLC:
1. It is valued by the leadership of CLC.
 2. It is valued by those who are involved in a small group.
 3. An element of our congregation has feelings of ambivalence about small groups.
 4. Small group ministry is viewed as one of several “departments,” one among many program options offered to people.
 5. It is generally viewed as an option for people who may feel the need for it, have an interest in that sort of thing, and have the time for it in their busy schedules.
 6. There is a strong temptation to approach small group ministry (along with other ministry programs) with a “consumer mentality.” Small groups can easily be seen as a “spiritual product” for interested “spiritual shoppers.” As a result people often end up making decisions about participating or not participating in small group ministry based primarily on what they judge to be of most value to them personally.
- G. The main focus of a strategic plan for small group ministry at CLC would be to continue the process of transitioning toward a fully-functioning, fully-developed holistic model.

- H. It should be noted, though, that such a transition would have a far-reaching, paradigm-shifting impact on the way we “do church” at CL. Making a complete transition would involve small groups becoming central to the life of our church. Some other existing ministries would end up being gradually phased out. The structure of pastoral leadership would likely need to be re-configured. These are matters our pastoral leadership and elders need to be aware of, carefully think through, and be unified in spirit about.

II. What we envision happening 3 years from now

- A. Covenant Groups are continuing to function as needed and desired.
- B. Prayer is an integral, foundational element of all small groups.
- C. Continued progress is being made in changing the culture and values of our congregation in regards to small group ministry.
- D. Life Groups are developing momentum and achieving a critical mass of 10-12 groups that are practicing the Upward, Inward, Forward, and Outward values.
- E. Key leaders and influencers at CL are integrally involved in the development of this critical mass.
- F. People are experiencing a deepening relationship with God through their living out Jesus’ Upward, Inward, Forward, and Outward values.
- G. An effective leadership development system is in place – one that is producing a sufficient number of leaders to enable small groups to incorporate new people who are entering the groups from both within and outside the congregation.
- H. A strong leadership support system is in place for both Covenant Group and Life Group leaders.
- I. An effective pastoral/shepherding oversight system is in place over small group ministries.
- J. An equipping/discipleship track has been laid. It involves a mentoring system, operating in conjunction with small group ministry, which can take a person along a path of maturing in Christ and being equipped for ministry – from the starting point of becoming a new Christian to a point where he/she has matured and been equipped to mentor others.
- K. Opportunities for small group involvement are available for people of all the various generations, stages and circumstances of life, marital statuses, and family situations that are present within the broader CLC community. Children and youth are able to be fully incorporated into small group life as well.
- L. Mid-size group gatherings of 30-120 people (Prime Time would be an example of this) have been developed to provide opportunities for the people of CLC to connect as friends on a social level. This is supporting the development of small group ministry by giving members of small groups opportunities to interact with others at CLC outside their small group, and enabling new people at CLC to make relational connections that can naturally lead to their joining a small group.
- M. A full-time small group pastor is working to develop, implement, and oversee all of these critical small group ministry components.
- N. An increasing percentage of the congregation is involved in small group ministry.

III. Possible Challenges and Roadblocks

- A. Transitioning from a 10-hour/week Director of Small Group Ministry to a possible full time Small Group Pastor, without losing continuity and momentum in the process.
- B. Putting together the intricate elements of staffing, budgeting, focus, and energy to accomplish the plan.
- C. Managing the growth of the Life Group ministry and at the same time growing Covenant Groups as needed, both numerically and spiritually.
- D. Facing resistance to the holistic Life Group model due to fear, ignorance, misunderstanding, misplaced pre-conceptions, etc.

IV. Steps to be taken in order to reach the desired destination in 3 years

- A. Design and develop a comprehensive, unified discipleship/equipping track.
- B. Design and develop a pastoral oversight system for small groups.
- C. Design and develop a small group leadership development, coaching, and support system.
- D. Design and develop a mid-size group component.
- E. Define the role of small group pastor.
- F. Work out the logistics of transitioning to full-time small group pastor.
- G. Develop the necessary budgeting to support this transition in staffing.
- H. Assist Life Groups in developing spiritual community through their living out the Upward, Inward, Forward, and Outward values. Make sure they are developing an atmosphere of prayer (Upward), promoting “one another” relational life outside the group meetings (Inward), and stimulating relational evangelism (Outward).

Recommendations:

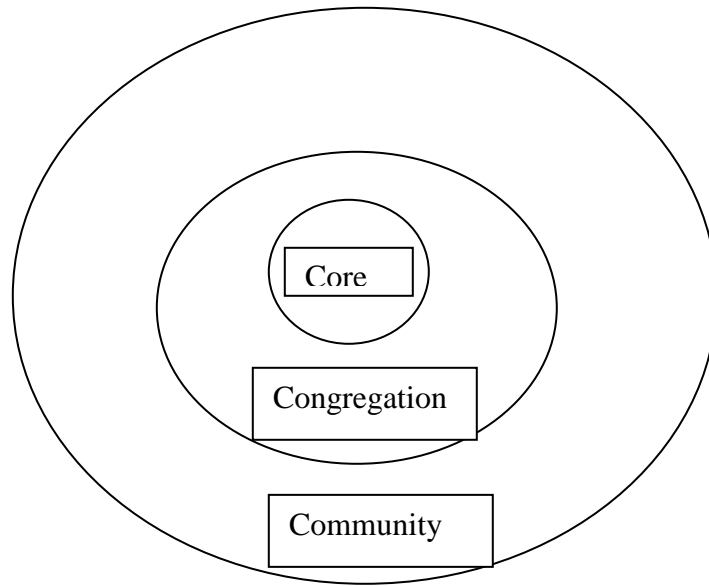
1. **In this coming year’s budget we increase the time for Small Group ministries from 10 hours to 25 hours.**
 - i. The specific tasks in that job will be developed with the Personnel Team and Doug Einfeld.
2. **That we endorse the plan to emphasize the Life Groups and support the Covenant Group support so that our small group ministry expands along two avenues.**

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

One way to look at any congregation is to visualize it as a grouping of three different kinds of people. There are those at the core of the church, a relatively small group of people who are greatly involved. This group is about 20% in the standard church. Then there is the congregation, about 30 to 40% of the church. These people are fairly regular in attendance and usually have become members. They usually attend church functions, but aren’t regularly volunteering in the

ministry. And finally, there is the community. This group makes up 40% of the standard church. They identify with the congregation, and call the church their “home” church, but their involvement is limited to church attendance and small gives.

The picture of this way of looking at the church is below:



When a church experiences fairly rapid growth, such as Covenant Life over the past few years, the challenge is to keep growing the core. Otherwise the ministry begins to implode because there aren't enough people at the core to support the growing congregation and community. In other words, there isn't enough growth in the number of people running ministries to continue to unfold and help a growing number of people take next steps in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we have to become intentional in the next few years in developing new leaders, moving people from the community and congregation into the core. Specifically, we have to engage more of the next generation, the 20's and 30's in functions of teaching, discipling and leadership of ministries.

So part of this plan will call for a process that is developed by the Senior Pastor for identifying future leaders and engaging them in preparation for their roles as leaders. Specifically, this calls for:

- Gathering a group of present leaders to brainstorm about what makes a leader in CLC;
- Developing a process (probably mentor driven) by which the concepts identified can be “passed on” to younger leaders;

- Identifying those younger leaders;
- Recruiting them into the process;
- Deploying them as opportunities present themselves.

Recommendation:

- 1. To charge our Senior Pastor with the task of developing a workable plan for leadership development, to be presented to the Governing Elders by fall, 2010.**

COMMUNICATION

We have made huge strides in the area of communication in the past couple of years. As part of our last Strategic Plan we formed a Communications Team that has

- Developed a user-friendly and effective website
- Revamped our bulletin
- Created an emailed newsletter that is colorful and readable
- Been working on a series of brochures that will introduce people to Covenant Life and our programs.

Now it is time for us to ask them to take the next steps in communication. In this coming year we need to:

- Complete the brochures
- Build the long-planned communications center
- Develop a means of telling the many stories of CLC in our newsletter and elsewhere
- Develop ways to make sure that people receive the information about what is out there.

We are also agreed that we need to explore the newer means of communication: Facebook and Twitter, and other means that come up. How can these means be used by CLC to further connectedness and communication? **We will ask the communications team to make recommendations in these areas by fall, 2010.**

These are going to some steps that will require recruitment of writers, and acting in a pro-active way with the many ministry heads, so that information is not just received, but solicited (sometimes repeatedly).

THE HEDGEHOG FACTOR

In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins described what he called “the hedgehog factor” in great companies. These companies, like a hedgehog, focus on doing one thing, and doing it better than anyone else. Gillette, for instance, sees their hedgehog as producing the best quality shaving blades. They refuse to get distracted from that mission.

What is Covenant Life’s Hedgehog Factor? There is a primary one and a secondary one that we believe should form our plans for the next few years.

First of all, we are a church that thrives on and thrives with **young families**. We are known for our children's program and are becoming known for our youth programs. In our previous plan we put a great deal of emphasis on "Reaching A New Generation", and God has blessed that emphasis. In this next plan, we need to continue to build up and resource our children and youth ministries.

A secondary potential Hedgehog for Covenant Life is that we do well with failures. We are a place where people don't have to have it all together to be here, to be valued, to be cared for and about. In the life of this plan we need to investigate how we might capitalize on this aspect of our ministry to a greater degree. We have talked about how we might do this architecturally. For some ministries slogans have been helpful. Something connected with **Restoring a Building, Restoring Lives** would allow us to communicate this aspect of our vision to our community in a meaningful way.

Recommendation: To charge the pastors to work with Staff on how we might enhance these two concepts in our communications.

Having said the above things that we will focus on, here are plans for the future by department.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

We have made some significant moves this year already in anticipation of this plan. We have:

- Expanded the Merge family ministries, meeting some of the felt-need for family kinds of events
- Organized Children's Ministries to have supervision and planning responsibility over areas that were not located in our structure (GEMS, Cadets, Kids' Kamp)
- Revamped the staffing structure of children's ministries.

In addition, the staff of Children's Ministry has been working with our Pastor of Discipleship and Operations to plan for this year and aim toward the future. Here's what they have been planning.

Present Reality

Over the past five years the median age at Covenant Life Church has decreased from 29 to 24. As our church family grows younger, we have a greater need to be even more intentional in the care and faith formation we provide to our children.

Currently, loving childcare is provided during all worship events at Covenant Life. For children ages two through fifth grade in UpStreet ministry, creative and engaging methods are effectively used to teach lessons that make the Bible stories real and the love of God experienced.

New in 2009 was our family production called Merge. As we merge generations to worship together, we are also merging the church with the home. This was intentionally designed to help families put into practice during the week, the virtues taught in UpStreet on Sunday mornings.

As the number of children attending our programs has increased, it has required an increase in staff time as evident by the hiring of a full time director with the support of a part-time small group coordinator and a part-time infant through preschool volunteer coordinator.

There is a great deal of enthusiasm for our children's ministries expressed by parents, volunteers, and the children.

An area of concern is the unequal distribution of children during the gathering times. Currently the first service typically has more than twice the number of children than the second service. If the numbers continue to increase at 9:00, we'll need additional meeting spaces.

Conceptual Plan (2009-2012)

Children's Ministries will continue to be known by its quality, this will be appraised each year by the staff.

In UpStreet we are currently able to teach God's word through engaging large group lessons and offer dynamic relational experiences in the small group setting. To offer a meaningful worship component, a worship ministry leader is needed. This position would be shared with our youth ministries program. This staff member would equip middle school and high school students in leading worship for UpStreet. Developing creative ways to include children in corporate worship is also an area for us to grow.

As our numbers grow, space will be an area that will need to be addressed. An additional large group room and additional small group areas will be needed on the west side for our second through fifth grade students, and additional nursery space will be necessary.

Strategic Plan (2009-2010)

The commitment of volunteers will go to the next level. In UpStreet each age level will have an adult leader or adult co-leaders. Middle school and high school students will assist. Those students with the spiritual gift of teaching will be considered for the role of leader. Clear policies for communicating with parents, finding substitutes when needed and lesson preparation will be distributed and explained during the fall training.

Exploration is needed to determine the best way for upper elementary age students to feel a part of the corporate worship experience before being dismissed to UpStreet. The presence of our children blesses our worship and carefully evaluating ways for them to be more inclusive is desired. An investigation of the most beneficial dismissal time is also needed.

An analysis of our age level grouping of children for large group is needed. For educational purposes grouping children by early fives through second grade in the east wing and students in second grade through fifth grade in the west wing would be beneficial. Due to the need for additional classrooms on the east side to accommodate our growing class sizes for younger children this may not be an option. Creative planning will be needed as we look at options for our facility.

A variety of educational opportunities for parents would be beneficial. Topics such as techniques for spiritual growth, parenting challenging children, adolescence issues, positive parenting, and helpful

strategies for being a single parent have been identified. Well thought out children's activities will be essential during any classes for parents.

Developing ownership of our childcare ministry by the committee to be officially named on May 17 will be an intentional focus of the next year. The members of this committee will serve as the eyes and ears among parents of infants and toddlers, and they will be asked to develop essential policies and procedures for administrative review and consideration. Educating our paid Wednesday attendants and Sunday volunteers on our procedures and guidelines for interactions will be vital. It is the goal that loving and safe childcare will be provided for all church events.

Finally, during this next year an intentional effort will be made to increase the planning and administrative support provided to all of the children's programs. At Covenant Life Church our Children's Ministries are richly blessed by many dedicated volunteers. It is the hope and intent that the Children's Ministry staff continues to foster the ability and the opportunity for volunteers to continue to take both leadership and supportive roles in our children's ministry programs such as: the Children's Christmas musical, Kids' Kamp, GEMS, Cadets and others. Facilitating volunteer involvement increases ownership, creates family engagement with the whole church, and provides opportunities for leadership development. The Children's Ministry staff will facilitate the volunteer experience by helping to create positive dialogue in the planning stages of programs, assisting with communication among the staff and church family in the promoting stage, helping to obtain needed resources for the implementation stage, providing encouragement during the process stage, and assistance with wrapping-up and evaluation in order to strengthen the on-going effectiveness of each program in the closing stage. It is the hope and intent that the Children's Ministry staff will cultivate the life of the church by creating loving opportunities for families to be engaged and involved with each other.

Beyond these plans we need to charge the Children's Ministry division of CLC to

- Maintain the creative excellence of Upstreet
- Expand offerings to families
- Work with the Youth Division to develop more opportunities for family events and for training of parents.
- Investigate After-School possibilities for children to be engaged with CLC and make recommendations in time for the budget of 2010-2011

Carolyn Schamback has indicated her desire to retire. In time for the budget of 2010-2011 Lyn will make recommendations about what should be prioritized in a revised position for children's ministry.

YOUTH MINISTRIES

As we begin this section of the plan we need to acknowledge the wonderful job that Sandy and Wendy have been doing as our leaders of Middle School and High School. Overall rankings went from 0 and 2 in 2005 to 8 and 9 for these ministries in 2009! God has blessed many of the plans made by a task force for youth ministry that was formed in 2005.

We are expecting youth ministry to grow. We've provided a great deal of space, and the results are already being seen in increased attendance. With that growth comes greater demand on

two part-time staff people. If we are going to keep our emphasis on Reaching the Next Generation, we are going to have to pay attention to the needs here.

So where does youth ministry go from here? Below are their plans for this ministry year as they aim for the future.

Background/Present Reality – Changes since 2007

We continue to make progress on the benchmarks set by the taskforce of 2005 and the revision in 2006. In addition to the leadership by Sandy Mast, Wendy Sabatino, and Bob DeVries, we have added 4 hours of administrative time and have hired two part time worship leaders – this position is currently unfilled but we plan to fill it for fall. Bob DeVries is our Director and very involved in our programs, and we now have Kathy Fevig as our administrative assistant with 4 hours each week dedicated to Student Ministries.

We are enjoying our new space, another accomplishment of the goals set in 2006. This is key to our ministries. The number of M.S. students attending has increased by more than 30% in the last 2 years. The High School has seen continued growth also. When we move upstairs, M.S. will have the space they need, and High School will have a place to keep their games out and call their own.

Middle School and High School have also become much more culturally relevant in how we present information to kids and how we communicate with parents and students. We now regularly use PowerPoint, videos, email, and the church webpage. High School also uses FaceBook and texting to keep in touch with students. We continue to have food prepared by parents which is great for our ministries and also lets parents see what goes on. Middle school has started having a Parent Breakfast every winter to try to include parents more.

The desire to incorporate youth into the mainstream of CLC and its worship is an ongoing effort. Progress in this effort will need the support of all ministries and leadership, not just youth ministry leadership.

Conceptual Plans - 18-36 month out

Staffing is an issue. The plan in 2005 foresaw two full-time people in youth ministry, and that may be what is called for toward the end of this plan. However, at this point we prefer to capitalize on the two people who have gotten us a long way into meaningful ministry here. They will need support. And so, here are the kinds of staffing positions we will be considering.

- Part-time Volunteer Coordinator (maybe seasonally?)
- Half-time Worship Leader dedicated to Youth Ministry. This person would develop youth bands and prepare students to lead in UpStreet and Preschool Park.
- Additional Staff – we are currently considering different options for this. One possibility would be 2 part time assistants, one for Sandy and one for Wendy.
- Half time administrative assistant dedicated to Youth Ministry.

In the longer term we will be exploring the idea of having a full-time Director of Youth Ministries that will work with Sandy and Wendy, and who would develop a ministry to college aged young adults.

Parents

- Regular parent education opportunities

Programs

- Worship Leader leading a Worship Ministry instead of just leading songs on Sunday morning
- Continue to develop the worship component with a band and an engaging worship leader.
- Continued growth in the program may cause us to study the grade arrangement. Perhaps considering a 5th/6th grade ministry and a 7th/8th grade ministry.
- Continue to encourage a Christian World View through age appropriate opportunities. This will include local service projects for middle school and national and international projects for high school.

Strategic Plan for 2009-2010

Both Ministries

- Periodic educational opportunities for parents
Possibly an infant – high school education day for parents in the spring
- Start considering a new approach for Profession of Faith
- Clearly express the expectations of volunteers and as a result have more committed volunteers.
- Further developing worship.

Middle School – CrossRoads

- Possible meeting time changed if service times change
- Get acclimated to new space upstairs, and nurture kids in this transition year.
- Start ‘ReThink’ on ‘ReFuel’ Sundays.
- Encourage small group interaction outside of planned events.

High School – The Walk

- Use the space on second floor for area youth events
- Have students be given significant volunteer positions.
- Have Covenant Groups provide food for The Walk so that different groups of CLC have a chance to see the program.
- Prayer team made up of kids praying for The Walk and the youth of our Church.
- Offer a variety of service opportunities for kids who want to serve yet can not leave for a week long service trip.

Staffing:

Add part-time dedicated support for Sandy and Wendy. Expand part-time worship. Reasoning is that we have done well with these two, but now need to expand for week-day engagement.

Recommendations:

- 1. That we endorse the overall plan and direction of Youth Ministries.**
- 2. That we communicate to Sandy and Wendy our appreciation for the work they have done in building youth ministry here.**
- 3. That we add part-time dedicated administrative support to Youth Ministries in this year’s budget (details to be worked out with Bob DV).**

4. That Bob DV work with Sandy and Wendy to add appropriate hours in this year's budget to accomplish the work (Discussions to be held regarding adding 5 hours per week to each position, defining what will be accomplished in those hours.
5. That we move to expanding youth ministry in the 2011-2012 budget year, with the goal of adding a full-time position in the 2012-2013 budget year.

ADULT MINISTRIES

This area encompasses Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry and Adult Education. One of the felt needs of the congregation, as expressed on the Percept Survey, was for more adult education opportunities. Unfortunately, our track record in this area is not very positive. Adult classes that are offered begin well, but attendance begins to trail off soon after. However we have seen some notable successes.

Men's Ministry

Men's Fraternity has been effective in gathering in men. There are now over 30 men who are regular attenders early on Wednesday mornings. In this coming year we will continue this program, as well as work on things like:

- Re-energizing CLC outdoors
- Continuing to support the small groups that continue to function
- Provide a men's retreat

Women's Ministry

This past year has seen a major expansion to women's ministry. Jennifer Sellon has worked with Women in Worship on Wednesdays to offer the program they have been following in an evening study and an on-line study. Both are very well attended. We now have over 100 women involved on a regular basis in this Bible Study, a 97% growth in one year!

Special events continue to be a big part of Women's Ministry. This year we expanded the Christmas Tea from one evening to two, with a total number of 950 tickets sold! That is a 171% increase over last year!

One of the interesting things happening in Women's Ministry is an influx of middle-aged, single women into our ministry. Jennifer is working with Diane to define what a ministry to these women (and a couple of men) might look like. This may be a new avenue that God is opening up to us even as we emphasize family relationships.

Adult Education

As mentioned earlier, there is a felt need for more educational content in the ministry of CLC. We are proposing two responses to this felt need as the beginning of developing strategic planning for this area of ministry.

- Develop a couple of adult education classes and see what the response is. This will begin in January, 2010, with a course led by Bob Hitchcock. If there is a positive response, we will consider other such classes in the future.
- Redirecting the Job Description of the Pastor of Discipleship and Operations. When Bob DeVries was called to his position, it was with the recognition that there was a great deal to

do in the area of operations. In the past two and a half years that Bob has filled this position he has brought organization to our finances, developed a facilities team, supported administratively a major fundraising effort, and has helped the Personnel Team get organized. Now we believe it is time to turn over this responsibility to someone else so that Bob can focus more on the Discipleship side of his job description. Here's how that change would look:

- We would hire a part-time Operations Director
- Lyn VanTol would become the Director of Family Ministries, which will encompass both children and youth ministries
- Bob would take over responsibility of supervising and guiding Men's and Women's Ministry, as well as Adult Ministries.
- Bruce and Bob would work together in providing support for Small Group Ministries.

Out of these changes will come specific strategic plans in the first year of this plan, with goals written by January, 2011.

Recommendations:

- 1. To endorse the plans as presented.**
- 2. To express appreciation to Jennifer Sellon for her work and the resulting growth.**
- 3. To express appreciation to Steve Sabatino for the growing depth of Men's Ministry.**
- 4. To add a part-time position in Operations as described in the 2010-2011 budget.**

CARE MINISTRY

We have taken large steps in Care Ministry this past year, redefining the vision and organization of this department. Today Care Ministry has two components under the direction of Diane Wiersma:

- Congregational Care. We're almost to the point where every member of Covenant Life is either in a small group or under the care of a Care Assistant who is reporting to a Shepherding Elder. Through small group leaders and Care Assistants we hope to be able to quickly identify needs as they arise and respond to them.
- Community Care. Through Care Ministry we are engaged in a variety of ministries in this community. As needs arise, Diane is able to respond financially and with volunteers. We are also in partnership with Love Inc., Muskegon Rescue Mission, Tri-cities counseling, the Salvation Army and St. Pat's.

In this coming year here are some of the steps that will be taken to optimize Care Ministry.

- Work with The Common to provide more immediate response to needs within the congregation. This organization works on-line, with people posting needs and others responding to those needs. We have signed CLC up for this ministry, and will register users

on January 24. The purpose of this organization is to have more people responding to needs, avoiding the bottleneck of having it all fall on Diane's shoulders.

- Develop Day To Shine.
- Work with the Shepherding Elders to better use the Care Assistant program and provide greater support to this aspect of ministry.
- Expand Diane's position by 3 to 8 hours, depending on what the budget will be able to bear in 2010-2011.

Recommendations:

- 1. To thank Diane for her work.**
- 2. To add the recommended hours to the budget.**
- 3. To take the Care Fund out of the budget and support it with the Thanksgiving Day offering and 3 special offerings per year.** (Right now the budget is \$15,000 per year. We raised that much in the Thanksgiving Day and Year-End gifts this past year).

FRONTLINE

This area is well-managed and led by Cec Bradshaw. In this past year we have improved our follow-up considerably. People who sign on the card get a variety of kinds of welcome beginning with a letter from the pastor, then a telephone call, and rapid response to any inquiries that they have.

Plans for this coming year include:

- Build the long-planned Communications Center
- Develop the First Responders program.
- Initiate the Site Safety program.
- Evaluate and improve the New Members' Process. This will be done through a meeting with people who have recently gone through the process, and see where we are meeting objectives and where we are not.
- Improve the transition from New Members' to Small Groups.
- Work with the Communications Team to develop materials to go out to visitors.
- Work with staff to develop a mentoring program for newer believers.
- Continue to expand the middle school and high school student participation in various aspects of the Frontline team. Currently the team has an Upstreet greeting team made up of these students, led by Katie Alphenaar.
- Combine the usher team and greeting teams into one team, under the leadership of one team leader, along with team captains.
- Develop a formalized process to insure we have Frontline representation at all special services and activities.

One of the things that became apparent in our planning process is the vital role that frontline plays in our growth. Right now we are in the enviable position that most people come to us as visitors. We don't have to do much to "Go into the whole world..." People show up through our door each week. Growing this area of ministry is vital to our future. We see growth especially in our follow-up of visitors and intentional evangelism. In the life of this plan we can see the addition of part-time staff to make this happen.

Recommendations:

- 1. Thank Cec for his great work in building this aspect of our ministry.**
- 2. Charge this department with further developing follow-up to include evangelism and discipleship.**
- 3. Plan to add a part-time person in this department in the 2011-2012 budget.**

MISSIONS

This has been a hallmark of CLC since 2005. At that time a document was produced giving a road map to missions. That roadmap has largely been followed, with good results.

- We have partnerships with Circle Urban and Vida Abundante that are mutually enriching
- We have regular short-term missions trips (though not yet enough or open enough)
- We have begun supporting a long-term missionary couple (Kuipers) and decided to be the sending church for Steve and Sarah Caton.
- We have sent Jillann DeVries as the first daughter of the church on a one-year missionary assignment with potential for long-term engagement.
- We have begun to build a fund for long-term missionary support as a means of limiting the impact on the budget of enlarging the number of long-term missionaries that we support.

However, we have also realized that to go to another level in missions, we need to have staffing. We are pleased to have recently hired Tara Kram in this position. She has just begun her work in this area, and will begin, in partnership with the Missions Leadership Team, to develop strategic plans in the following areas:

1. Work with the Missions Leadership Team and staff to enrich and grow our key partnerships
2. Develop, with the MLT, short-range and long-range goals for missions in CLC.
3. Develop prayer support for missionaries, peoples and nations.
4. Identify, develop and counsel potential missionaries in the church.
5. Recruit people to expand the Missions Leadership Team
6. Organize mission trips for the church. Provide candid follow-up evaluation, including an assessment of the short and long-term success and impact of each missions encounter.
7. In cooperation with our children's and youth ministries, develop a process for training our children and youth to have a Christian view of the world.
8. Ensure that appropriate safety and security measures are in place, particularly in regard to international travel.
9. Train members of CLC to share their faith, or arrange for such training to occur.

WORSHIP

There is a high level of satisfaction with worship, according to the Percept Survey. We are in the process of seeking a new Director of Worship and the Arts. After a six-month period of engagement in CLC, we will ask the new person to develop a strategic plan based on the reflections done by the whole worship department in October, 2009, and on his findings. Those plans will include the following aspects:

- Development of our present musicians and vocalists.
- Expanding our ministry to include more vocal and instrumental groups.
- Supporting Children and Youth Ministries as they expand their worship practices.
- Developing a plan for the expansion of our audio-visual capacity.
- Explore the production of CD's done by our music groups.
- Plan for the potential of an alternative worship service or gathering in support of our *Reach a New Generation* vision.

FACILITY

This year we had the privilege of expanding our facility by developing the second floor. This has allowed our Youth Ministry department to expand its ministry and presented other opportunities for Adult Ministry to happen. It has also allowed our Upstreet ministry to expand by using the West side of the building. As a result, we have seen growth in both children and youth ministries this year.

Since last fall we have seen the expansion of ministries so that, with the added new adult class, we are full up there on Sunday mornings.

However, we are finding that we are stretched when it comes to our 9:00 a.m. worship service. At that time, the building is packed. We can fully expect major parking problems and lack of worship space this coming summer if we don't do something in preparation. The most logical step seems to be to adjust the times of our worship services so that we get a better balance between the first and second services. Therefore, we should plan for this now. Here is the plan for getting there:

- March, 2010 Survey the Congregation about preferred worship times.
- March, 2010 Work with staff to adjust plans to a new time-frame.
- April, 2010 Begin preparing the congregation for the change.
- May, 2010 Change the times of worship services.

We should also begin to plan for the future expansion of the third floor and beyond during the life of this plan. Therefore, **we recommend** the following in that regard:

- 1. Pour a concrete 3rd floor in 2010 in preparation for building out in the 2011/2012 year. (This may also be a cost savings in terms of heating and cooling costs). The estimated cost is \$50,000. We would recommend that a separate fundraiser for this be conducted, asking people to contribute above and beyond what they are giving at present.**
- 2. In 2011 we would add the HVAC equipment. Again, we would ask for special contributions to cover the cost. At this point, we would ask our own volunteer crews to begin to add walls according to plan.**
- 3. In 2011, when the present expansion is paid for, we should raise funds for adding windows, stairs, etc. to the third floor according to plan.**
- 4. Re energize the building task force to develop a plan for securing additional properties adjacent or across the street from our existing facility.**

5. Actively pursue the sale of our Harbor Drive parking lot to build a fund that will be used to purchase additional property, preferably across Fulton.
6. Actively pursue the purchase of the property across Fulton.

FINANCES

We can expect close budgets for the life of this plan as the economy in Michigan is not predicted to recover until after 2011. This means we will have to be careful in how we prepare budgets and expend funds. Here is a history of our budget expansion over the past few years:

2007-2008 Budget Year

Final Pledge Amount:	\$745,000
<i>Number of Pledges:</i>	168
<i>Average Pledge:</i>	\$4,554
 Budget:	 \$874,533
 Income:	 \$918,564
<i>General Fund</i>	\$892,726
<i>Non-budget income</i>	\$25, 838
 Actual Expense:	 \$907,505
 Weekly Giving Avg.	 \$16,843....\$892,726/53 weeks
 Additional Receipts:	 150,000 Windows 100,000 Elevator 40,000 Trips to Honduras 12,000 Care Fund

2008-2009 Budget Year

Final Forecast Amount	\$934,000
<i>Number of Forecasts:</i>	194
<i>Average Forecast:</i>	\$4,814
 Budget	 \$1,144,000
 Income:	 \$991,741
<i>General Fund:</i>	\$964,942
<i>Non-Budget Income:</i>	\$26,799
 Expense:	 \$965,755

Weekly Giving Avg. YTD	\$18,556	(\$964,942/52 weeks)
Additional Receipts YTD:	\$15,000	Care Fund
	\$6,000	Long Term Mission Support
	\$30,000	Student Trip to Honduras
	\$341,378	Capital Campaign Pledges

2009-2010 Budget Year

Final Forecast Amount	\$843,788	
<i>Number of Forecasts:</i>		176
<i>Average Forecast:</i>		\$4,741
Budget		\$1,099,486
Income through 12/31:	\$541,245	<i>(97.86% of Budget)</i>
<i>General Fund:</i>		\$526,753
<i>Non-Budget Income:</i>		\$14,492
Expense through 12/31	\$504,508	<i>(91.29% of Budget)</i>

Weekly Giving Avg. YTD	\$20,260	(\$ 526,753/26weeks)
Additional Receipts YTD:	\$18,314	Care Fund
	\$5,523	Long Term Mission Support
	\$71,250	Capital Campaign Pledges YTD

Percept Survey 2009.....416 responses

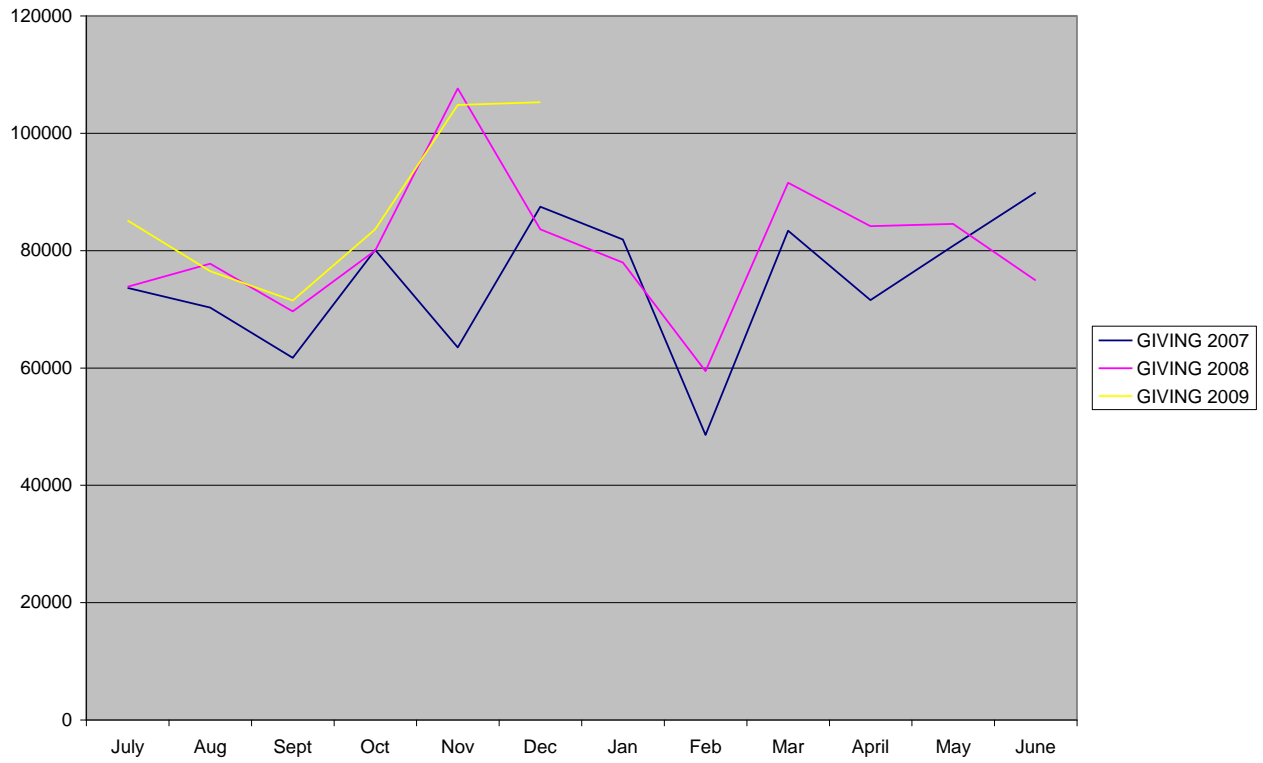
Average Family Income: \$72, 982

Average Yearly Giving: \$3,631

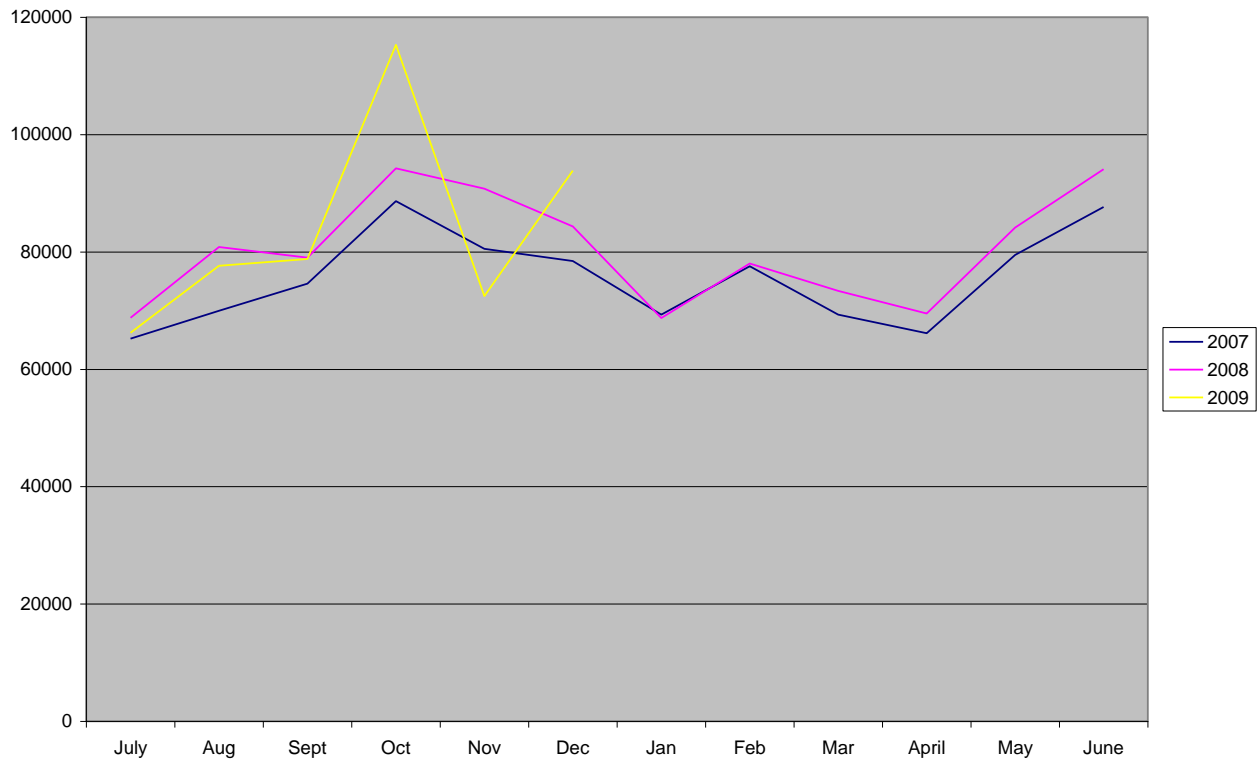
As you can see, our income has increased significantly in the past few years.

We have also made a graph of our income and our expenses over the past few years. See the graphs below.

GENERAL FUND GIVING



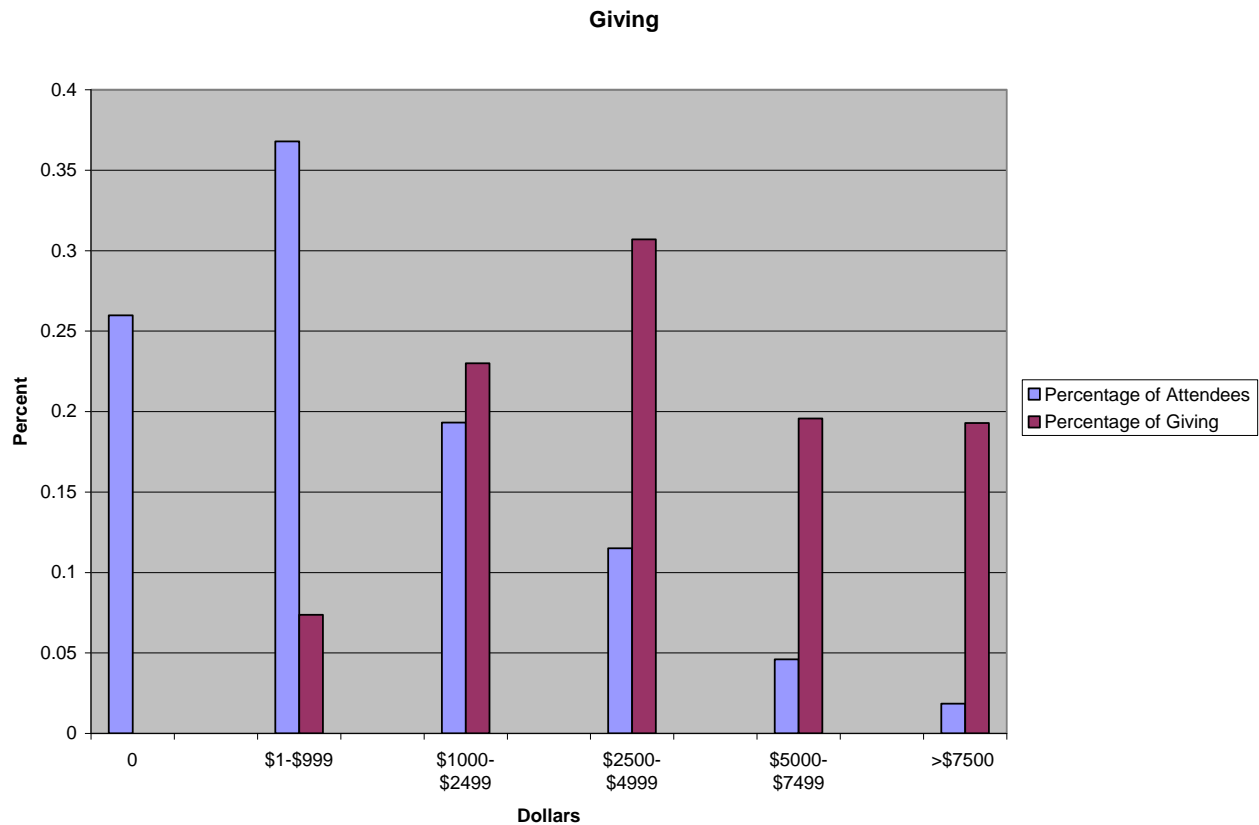
EXPENSES



There are several things to note in regard to these graphs:

- Our income has increased substantially over these years in spite of the severe recession that has gripped Michigan and the country.
- Our income increase tracks pretty closely with the increase in membership.
- We have managed our budget pretty carefully and accurately over the past few years.
- As we have taken bold steps in adding staff and expanding ministry, God has supplied with adequate funds (e.g. adding Pastor Bob and Lyn as full-time partners and new positions)

A further observation has to do with the issue of who is giving to CLC. The graph below indicates what percentage of people is giving what percentage of the budget.



This graph represents the six months from July, 2009 to December, 2009. It should be noted that it is considered fairly normal that 20% of the church give 80% of the income. However, when we look at these figures the following observations come to mind:

- Many people in CLC are missing the joy of giving.
- Many are disobedient to the call to engage financially in the Kingdom.
- We have a great opportunity to increase income if we can motivate the 80+ percent to increase their giving.

Since this is the first time we have made this graph and made this observation, we don't have a good handle on what will change this situation. In other words, we don't know if the series of messages on Money Matters changed the giving of families or individuals. We also don't know the impact overall of the Financial Peace University that we have offered for several years. With that in mind, however, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. **That we charge Bruce with planning a series on Money Matters every 18 months. The next one to take place in the fall of 2011.**

- 2. That we reinvigorate the Financial Peace University with a goal of offering this class in the Spring and the Fall of each year, supported by appropriate advertising.**
- 3. That we include discussions about the budget in our New Member process.**

PRAYER

This is last, not because it is the least important, but because it is the most important. In the past couple of years we have greatly expanded what happens in prayer in CLC. Here's some of what's been happening:

- The Tuesday Evening prayer group has grown greatly with families. Recently there were 15 adults and 19 children attending.
- We have begun a Prayer Development Team that is charged with strategizing on how to expand prayer ministry.
- The Prayer Matrix has expanded. Our pastors are well supported in prayer.
- We are ready to have prayer going on during each worship service.
- We have had a series of messages on prayer.

We are still a long way from being described as a House of Prayer, however. Once a new Director of Worship and the Arts is hired, Bruce should have more time to work in this area with the development team. Here are some recommendations for this area of ministry:

Recommendations:

- 1. Thank the Prayer Development Team for their passion and commitment to prayer through some difficult years, and celebrate with them the growth that we see.**
- 2. Commit to prayer as a significant part of Elder meetings.**
- 3. Charge Bruce with working with this team to develop a strategic plan for the life of this plan, complete with Budget implications for the following years. Some things to consider would be:**
 - a. The development of a larger, more usable prayer room connected to the worship center;**
 - b. Training classes in prayer**
 - c. Training in Spiritual Disciplines**
 - d. Communication of Prayers requests and answers effectively.**

ADDITIONALLY

The Master-Planning team has also discussed the following task forces to take a look at several issues that could impact future ministry here at CLC. Specifically, we are recommending the following:

1. Organize and charge an ad hoc team to evaluate the pros and cons of becoming a "teaching church". Report findings to executive team winter 2011.
 - a. We believe that we have much to offer other churches in Western Michigan in regards to various aspects of our ministry. This would allow us to engage other ministries in a positive way, giving them input into developing their ministries.

2. Organize and charge and ad hoc team to evaluate the pros and cons of developing a “para-church”. Report findings to executive team fall 2010.
 - a. Parachurch is literally defined as “alongside the church.” Ministries like Love INC are parachurch organization. As we engage more fully in Care of our Community, there are potential ministries that could have their separate boards and budgets, and be fully self-supporting, but could impact the ministry of CLC. For instance, we could consider an after-school program, a senior housing project on acquired property, a ministry to provide housing for the poor, etc. What is involved in this? We don’t know yet, but should study what this might mean for us.
3. Organize and charge an ad hoc team to evaluate the pros and cons of planting new churches instead of continued physical growth of our existing buildings. Report findings to executive team winter 2011.
 - a. There are certain sociological realities about how large CLC can grow. Unless something radically changes with the acquisition of additional property, our parking will not support much more growth. Yet 1/3 of the population is still totally unreached. One of the possibilities is to begin the planting of new churches in this area and region. We should explore this as one of our options for the longer-range future.

Note; these study teams may be made up of persons that are community /church leaders alongside members of our congregation

There it is!

What do we need to emphasize in this plan? What do we need to improve upon? Please prayerfully consider the recommendations contained here in preparation for our meeting on the 13th.

For the Master-Planning Team,

Bruce