

# UNITED CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE THREE YEAR PLAN 2020-2023

## PREAMBLE

As we look toward the future for the United Church of Gainesville, we affirm our commitment to our **mission** as expressed in our Compact:

- To worship God, however known;
- To welcome into our church those of differing understanding and theological opinion;
- To learn from our religious heritage, yet to grow by seeking new dimensions of truth;
- To follow, even imperfectly, the way of Jesus in personal involvement with each other;
- And, strengthened by this bond, to act in Christian concern for the welfare of all people.

As we move forward into the next three years of church life at UCG, an important component of our plan will be to maintain our areas of **strength and success**. Results of our current self-assessment indicate that a large majority of us value:

- Spiritual Practice and Nurture, including worship
- Adult Programs
- Programs for Children and Youth
- Outreach
- Fellowship and Social Connections

Beyond the affirmation of what we do well, we also acknowledge the need for **improvement and innovation** in several areas:

- Increasing Opportunities for Spiritual Nurture and Growth
- Making Connections and/or Creating Opportunities for Enacting More Connectedness
- Engaging our Youth, Children and Families
- Creating and Implementing a Plan for Inevitable Buildings & Grounds Improvements
- Enhancing Communication regarding: All of the Above.

Last but not least, **Ministerial transition** is an important component of the next phase of the United Church of Gainesville church life. We need to be realistic about what we can accomplish in Year One and take care of our current ministers while also supporting the Search Team in their important work of searching and finding our next ministerial match. And finally, we must consider the uncertainty we face as a church community in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that began globally in March 2020. This Three Year Plan is being birthed in the middle of fluctuating circumstances and

unforeseeable fallout from the coronavirus. Therefore, changes may be made and flexibility will be required as we move forward.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE THREE-YEAR PLAN**

This three-year plan contains recommendations to address three priorities that were distilled from a comprehensive year of self-study by the congregation that included:

- *The development of a survey by all church boards, ministers, and administrative staff*
- *The completion of this survey by members of the congregation, available electronically and in hard copy on Survey Sundays*
- *The careful analysis of the survey results by the Congregation Ministry Review Board to generate top priorities based on the survey data*
- *Congregational feedback through Chalk Talk input on Priority Sunday.*
- *Listening Sessions regarding concerns with ministerial collaboration and proposed models of leadership*

### **The three Priorities of the 2020-2023 Three Year Plan are:**

- Nurture **Spiritual Development**
- Enhance Our Opportunities for **Connections**
- Assess and Develop a Plan for Increased **Accessibility\***

(\***Accessibility is being proposed broadly here:** For something to be **accessible**, for example, someone needs to be able to complete the task they are trying to achieve without encountering a barrier or issue, whether the barrier is physical, technical or otherwise. As well, site owners are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make their sites accessible to people with disabilities. CMRB is committed to honor the variations on the theme of accessibility that were reflected in the survey and the Priority Sunday discussions.)

The three Priorities will be accomplished over the next three years with **one goal for each year**. This is detailed as follows:

## **GOAL of Year One: Evaluate.**

As members of the United Church of Gainesville, we covenant with one another and with our known sense of the sacred to learn from our religious heritage, yet to grow.

But we do not currently have significant markers for how we can define that growth that we seek. Our hope with Goal One is to begin by defining the success factors of the worship services and programs we offer through a spiritual lens. After we can name the factors that make the programs and offerings of our church a success, we can more accurately chart areas of future growth. And once we know where and how we seek to continue to grow, we can clarify our practices and capture the process by which our church is most successful.

Measurement Tool: The Church office will send out a quarterly survey to members to capture our participation in UCG events and to ask for an evaluation of the event based on the three priorities.

→ What events did you participate in? Please rate each on a scale of 1-5 based on our three priorities: Spiritually Nurturing, Enhanced Connection with Others, and Degree of Accessibility i.e. ease of use, ease of access, convenience, communication/how I heard about it). Leave room for Comments.

### Timeline:

- A. August – October 2020 – Three Year Plan is presented to board and committees at All Board Kickoff. CMRB holds seminars for members re: 3YP. Ministers focus on one aspect of 3YP during three Sundays in September. Congregation votes Oct. 4.
- B. Church Council sets calendar for three dates for Survey Sundays.
- C. 3 Survey Sundays: Survey is emailed to members. The congregation is also given time on Sunday to complete the survey during worship.
- D. Summer 2021: Boards and Committees consider the input from the surveys and proceed to goal of Year 2: Improve and Innovate.

## **Goal of Year 2: Improve and Innovate under specific areas of our Priorities.**

Incorporating the success factors from the Year One analysis, invite the Boards and Committees to experiment and explore or to enhance one or two additional or existing offerings. Continue the evaluation survey tool from Year One. In May 2022, compare analysis from Year One to Year Two and incorporate recommendations for our most successful offerings into the mission statements and workings of the board or committee.

Measurement Tool: Quarterly survey, refined if necessary, from Year One.

Timeline:

- A. August 2021: All Board Kickoff. Invite Boards and Committees to choose one priority and describe way in which they will each explore or enhance their program's offering in the year ahead.
- B. October Congregational Meeting: Boards and Committees will present to the congregation what each has learned and their hopes/plan for innovations in the coming year.
- C. January Church Council: Mid-Year Review for Boards and Committees from peers.
- D. May Congregational Meeting: Boards and Committees capture experience of their chosen innovation and compare 2020 to 2021 and report to members.

**Goal of Year 3: Incorporate new learnings into the work of the church.**

As members of the United Church of Gainesville, we covenant with one another to live in personal involvement with each other as a spiritual practice. Sacred Connections has been a desired factor for our entire existence as a church and has been lifted up as a priority for the last two three-year plans.

All Boards and Committees, utilizing the information received from the previous two years of analytics with a focus on spiritual nurture, enhanced connections, and accessibility, will create member information guides for the best practices of their work and ministry. Considerations for best practices and principles, yearly schedules and timelines, reimagined business and mission statements and best practices for committee and congregational process, will be communicated clearly for future generations of UCGers.

Timeline:

- A. August 2022: All Board Kickoff – Invite all Boards and Committees to rewrite their business/mission statements incorporating aspects of spiritual nurture, connections, and/or accessibility.
- B. Create a Board and Committee handbook which incorporates the spiritual nurture, connections, and accessibility options that we focused on the last two years.

**CONCLUSION**

As members of the United Church of Gainesville, we are all building this Three Year Plan together. Each one of us has our own unique experience and this plan seeks to have

each of us go inward and identify how our spirit has been nurtured, how a connection has been made or enhanced, and in what ways we felt welcomed and informed.

The beauty and mystery of UCG is that we hold 600+ "However Knowns" and only YOU can define what is "Known" to you. How is your knowing essence held, met with grace, inspiration, or new dimensions of truth? What do we have yet to discover and understand about each other and ourselves? We as a spiritual community would like to continue to explore our individual "knowns" together.

Finally, in conducting the business of the church, we attempt to see the things we can't see by creating structures we can see. This Three Year Plan has a simple structure that reflects some of the best thinking of our community. But UCG is not in the plan; the true community cannot be seen, because it is the energy and commitment generated by people working in relationship with each other that results in spiritual growth and actions in a world of need.

- *CMRB approved (6/10/2020).*
- *Council approved (6/17/2020 with acknowledgement of need for flexibility due to ongoing coronavirus pandemic and clarifications added regarding definition of "Accessibility").*
- *Final Draft presented as above (8/20/2020) – by Dar Mikula for CMRB. Ready for distribution to Boards, Committees and the Congregation.*

- August 2020