

# First Congregational Church of Essex Junction



## Strategic Plan

**2014-2024**

1 April 2014

Updated 3/3/2015

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## **Introduction**

Dear Fellow FCCEJ Members:

On behalf of the Church Council and the many, many members of our congregation who have worked on this document I am pleased to present the 2014 – 2024 strategic plan for the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction.

This document captures not only who we are as a Church but also our vision for the future to which we aspire. The plan enumerates the values that we hold as a congregation and it establishes goals and objectives to move us forward in the years ahead.

A strategic plan is an important document for any organization be it a business, governmental entity, non-profit or a church. Without a plan we wonder from program to program, emphasis to emphasis, or challenge to challenge with no guidance from the grassroots as to those things that are most important.

While our plan establishes key goals and objectives for the next ten years it leaves it to the various Church committees to prioritize and create work-plans that will lead to accomplishment. Much if not all of the work derived from the plan will be done by our committees. The reality is that to accomplish these goals and objectives we will need even more of our members to step up their volunteer activity by joining a committee.

None of this could have been accomplished without the support and hard work of a few key people. Much credit goes to former Council President Beth Warren for her dedication and perseverance in getting this plan written. Maureen Evans, who brought considerable knowledge and experience in planning from her professional background provided guidance on how to plan and also did the vast majority of the actual clerical work over many dozens of hours. Maureen's work and her input on the actual language were critical to the creation of this plan. Our new friend, Lisa Rees, contributed her expertise on the emerging planning process known as Appreciative Inquiry for which we are extremely, well..... appreciative. And, of course, our staff provided the foundation of knowledge about the Church and our operations that was indispensable to this process.

Finally, I want to thank the many members of the Church who contributed their time, thoughts and inspiration to create this plan and carry us to this point where it is now being adopted.

Much work has been done to create this plan, but the real work lies ahead; implementation. We must all dedicate ourselves to carrying out the plan and moving the congregation forward along the path that has been identified. It would be a shame if this plan, now created, got filed away on some shelf gaining dust. We must all work to fulfill the vision that we have for our future by getting behind the implementation effort and turning our attention to the future.

Members of this Church and those who preceded us have created an incredibly vital community of worship and service. This plan will help us and future generations to build on that legacy as we join together to do the work of God and build our community. With great respect and appreciation,

Kevin Dorn  
President, FCCEJ

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Dear Friends:

In the recent past, the First Congregational Church has been shaping who they are as a community of faith. A number of years ago we voted on having our Vision Statement be: "A Welcoming Community, Accepting and Serving All, In the Spirit of Christ." This Vision Statement set our ministry on a course that included sharing God's unconditional love, claiming the importance of serving others and all in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ. One result of that was our church's overwhelming vote to become an *Open and Affirming Church*, a statement that welcomes everyone including our GLBTQ brothers and sisters of the faith. Another result is in the ever widening number of ways that we continue to reach out into the community to share God's love in hands on mission projects.

During this same time, the administrative side of the church has passed updated by-laws, new financial policies and procedures, established new ways to evaluate our staff [ongoing], purchased new software to integrate all of our various ministries, adopted a new e-mail use policy, updated the ways in which we spend our endowment interest income and established some new financial policies that offer our church a firmer financial foundation. Many of these administrative decisions support and begin to coalesce with the vision and mission of the wider church.

As the church leadership entered into this great movement of the church they saw a need to be a bit more intentional in bringing all the incredible individual pieces of ministry together in one strategic plan. With an enormous amount of input from the congregation and with many hours of organizational effort by Maureen Evans and the Strategic Planning Team, we are moving toward a unified plan where all aspects of the church in its myriad and divergent ways can come together to shape its future and better utilize the resources we have available.

Not many churches enter into this stage of development and I am thrilled at the church leadership and honor their vision in attempting to remain strong, vibrant and focused in our pursuit of the gospel. May the leadership meeting on March 23, 2014 continue the process begun many years ago in shaping our identity and looking to the future. Thrilled to be a part of it, I am

Yours in Christ,  
Reverend Mark Mendes  
Senior Pastor, FCCEJ

How we got here:

What will our church be like in 2024?

We tried to envision a fulfilling future with God and each other. The First Congregational Church is a beacon of hope in Essex, empowering its members to offer their unique gifts in service, offering inspiration, educational opportunities, and building community in ever wider circles.

During the 2012 – 2013 church year we held a series of congregation-wide discussions to assess where we are today and to develop a shared vision of where we want to go and what we want our church to be. The result was a vision statement and set of commitments to realize that vision.

The assessment and the vision statement can be viewed as the end posts of a road marking a journey that the Congregation is beginning to take. Having defined the start and the finish, it is necessary to define the best road to take us to the finish – our vision of the future. This strategic plan accomplishes that purpose by defining goals and objectives that are consistent with our vision and our commitments, assigning responsibility for their accomplishment, and establishing a process for identifying milestones and dates for their completion.

This strategic planning effort conducted during the 2012-2013 church year, was commissioned by the Church Council, and was led by the following members: Beth Warren, Kevin Dorn, Ann Gray, Dan Petherbridge, Tom James, Carolyn Antone, Rev Mark Mendes, Rev Ryan Gackenheimer and assisted by Maureen Evans. The process used to develop this plan included an Appreciative Inquiry Summit led by Lisa Rees. The action items suggested during this process will be provided to individual committees for consideration as they develop tasks to achieve the objectives identified herein.

This strategic plan is not the final answer. Rather, it is a living document that can be used and shaped by leaders over the plan's period (2014 – 2024) to guide and promote the actions necessary to achieve our vision.

It, therefore, should be reviewed biennially and modified as necessary in light of changing circumstances.

Church Council

***“Our willingness to create a new dream or vision for ourselves is a statement of belief in our own potential.”*** - David McNally

## **Our Mission Vision and Values**

### ***Our Mission***

We build relationships with God, each other, the community, and the world through prayer, worship, fellowship, education, outreach, and service.

### ***Our Vision***

To be the church that most fully embodies Christ's vision of love by fulfilling the spiritual and physical needs of our community.

### ***Our Values***

- **Inquiry**: We grow through an intellectual journey and feel empowered to challenge, question, and explore our faith.
- **Inclusion**: We are an open and affirming, diverse, and inclusive congregation that offers an invitation to meet Jesus Christ no matter where you are on life's spiritual journey.
- **Service**: We seek opportunities to live Christ's love through active engagement in our world.
- **Fellowship**: We express kindness and compassion with each other through Christian community.
- **Stewardship**: We are responsible in the use of our time, talent, and treasure to care for our church.
- **Worship**: We express our faith through meaningful experiences in the presence of God through Word, Sacrament, Music, and fellowship.
- **Fun**: We are a place where people can laugh and be joyful.

## **Goals and Associated Objectives**

**Objective 1**: a lens or system of lenses that forms an image of an object  
2 a: something toward which effort is directed: an aim, goal, or end of action  
2 b: a strategic position to be attained or a purpose to be achieved by a military operation (Merriam-Webster dictionary)

Per definition 2a above, we have defined objectives for each goal, as the aims toward which effort should be directed. Objectives provide specificity to the goals in the sense of definition 1 as well, by enabling the reader to form an image of the future. By prefacing each objective statement by the phrase "FCCEJ is a church where..." one can envision how FCCEJ will evolve as we implement the Strategic Plan.

## **Format**

For each of the strategic goals, a number of objectives are identified. Objectives are written in the present tense to show the desired state once the objective has been achieved. Objectives are not presented in any particular order. Amplifying information related to an objective, if any, is provided as sub-bullets.

Most of our objectives represent ongoing initiatives, rather than one-time events. Many of the initiatives are familiar and already in progress to some extent. However, they are included in this strategic plan to ensure that the focus is maintained, since that is what is needed to achieve the associated goal and move toward our vision.

One of the key attributes of a “good” objective is that it’s clear when and if the objective has been accomplished. While some of the objectives below meet those criteria, others do not; in most cases, measurement methods need to be put in place to enable us to objectively assess progress in many areas. (Goal 7 supports this need.) However, the process of developing annual milestones for each objective as described below will ensure that progress is clearly defined and tracked.

## **Process**

At the beginning of each church year, the Church Council works with the committees and the staff to determine which objectives should be adopted for the coming year and who has primary responsibility for each objective. As noted above, most of our objectives represent ongoing initiatives, so it is likely that some objectives will be newly adopted each year, while others will be already in progress. In either case, it is important for the assigned lead(s) to identify the approach to be taken in the coming year, as well as key milestones, so that progress can be measured and communicated. A template is provided at the end of this document to capture this information; the responsible lead will complete this form for submission to the Church Council by their October meeting.

## **Accountability**

In order to assure timely implementation and review of this plan, Church Council will:

1. Accept primary responsibility for the plan’s execution
  - Assign implementation of Strategic Plan objectives to appropriate committees
  - Receive reports on progress at monthly Church Council meetings
  - Report progress relative to the Strategic Plan to the congregation at least quarterly.

The Church Council may designate a person or team to oversee execution of the Strategic Plan, including progress tracking.

2. Regularly update the Strategic Plan
  - Review the Strategic Plan in odd-numbered years.
  - Actively solicit comments and suggestions from the congregation in advance of these biennial reviews.

## Our Strategic Goals

1. Nurture spiritual growth.
2. Cultivate membership participation.
3. Engage within and reach out beyond our FCCEJ community.
4. Provide good stewardship of our property.
5. Act and communicate effectively in all congregation activities.
6. Provide sufficient resources of money and staff.
7. Measure our progress.

These goals provide the overarching direction for how we as a congregation will proceed in order to achieve our vision. These goals and objectives were derived from interviews with leaders in our community congregation, from information gathered from the congregation at-large during the Appreciative Inquiry, and through questionnaires and interviews with members of the church.

The identified goals are briefly expanded below, then further described in the pages that follow.

1. **Nurture spiritual growth:** We will provide and increase opportunities to enrich the spiritual growth of our members and friends of all ages.
2. **Cultivate membership participation:** We will promote the growth of our congregation, cultivating new members, volunteers, and church leaders while remaining mindful of the needs of current members and friends.
3. **Engage within and reach out beyond our FCCEJ community:** We will become a vital voice in the larger communities beyond our church by increasing our outreach, service, and social action efforts.
4. **Provide good stewardship of our property:** We will restore and maintain our buildings and grounds to a condition that will best facilitate the ministry and fellowship goals of the congregation.
5. **Act and communicate effectively in all congregation activities:** We will organize our governing and communications practices to serve our committees and the congregation at-large most efficiently.
6. **Provide sufficient resources of money and staff:** We will address the short and long-term financial and staffing needs of the church and provide the resources to achieve those needs while fostering a mindset of abundance.
7. **Measure our progress:** We will commit resources to establish and regularly use feedback mechanisms and tracking tools to measure our overall progress toward achieving our objectives, goals, and vision.

Note: These goals are numbered for reference purposes, not to indicate order or priority. These goals work synergistically toward our vision.

## Our Strategic Goals and Associated Objectives:

**Strategic Goal 1: Nurture spiritual growth.** We will provide and increase opportunities to enrich the spiritual growth of our staff, members and friends of all ages.

Objective A. **Worship:** Worship is one of the primary reasons people visit, join and value FCCEJ.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Music, Ushers
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Choir and Music Programs:** FCCEJ Choir and Music Programs offer a variety of musical expressions and opportunities that enhance worship and encourage participation.

- Primary Responsibility: Music
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Music Director and Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Deacons developed as Lay Leaders:** Our Deacons are actively developed as spiritual leaders within the church.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor

Objective D. **Christian Education:** Lifespan Christian Education is one of the top reasons people visit, join and value FCCEJ.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: CE Director, Associate Pastor

Objective E. **Adult Enrichment program:** Our Adult Enrichment program offers a wide variety of programs.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective F. **Family Ministry program:** Our Family Ministry program engages families with children.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: CE Director

Objective G. **Youth Ministry program:** Our Youth Ministry program engages youth ages 12 to 18.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Associate Pastor

Objective H. **Young Adult Ministry:** Our Young Adult Ministry program engages young adults aged 18+.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor

Objective I. **CE Teachers and Facilitators:** Spiritual Growth and personal development is an integral part of the training and support of CE Teachers and Facilitators.

- a. Qualified and interested adults who are not CE parents are regularly involved in CE activities.
- b. Qualified and interested men are regularly involved in CE activities.
  - Primary Responsibility: Christian Education
  - Associated Staff: CE Director, Associate Pastor

**Strategic Goal 2: Cultivate membership participation.** We will promote the growth of our congregation, cultivating new members, volunteers, and church leaders while remaining mindful of the needs of current members and friends.

Objective A. **Opportunities to meet and develop connections:** People in our congregation have opportunities to meet and develop connections with each other and with the congregation as a whole through social programs, focus events, CE, care giving, and other means of reinforcing community.

- Primary Responsibility: Hospitality, Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Missions, Music, CE, Ushering
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective B. **All well-informed about opportunities as volunteers and participants:** All members and friends are well-informed about opportunities for involvement in church activities as volunteers and participants.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Nominating
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective C. **All actively serving:** All current members and friends are actively serving in some aspect of congregational activities.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Nominating, Church Council
- Associated Staff: All Staff

Objective D. **Members can articulate intent:** Members can proudly articulate their reasons for choosing to be part of the FCCEJ congregation.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective E. **FCCEJ has a clear “brand identity”:** FCCEJ has a clear “brand identity” that is consistently used for internal and external communications.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective F. **Web site:** The FCCEJ web site is maintained regularly as a source of information about FCCEJ and its activities.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective G. **Culture of hospitality and inclusion:** We create a culture of hospitality and inclusion at all church events.

- Primary Responsibility: Hospitality
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective H. **Visitors receive follow-up:** All visitors receive timely follow-up contact from the Deacons and/or the Minister.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective I. **Members understand introducing others to our church:** Individual members have a clear understanding of each person's role in introducing others to our church community.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective J. **All understand expectations of membership:** All current, new and prospective members have a clear understanding of the expectations of membership.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Stewardship, Nominating
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective K. **Develop new members:** We develop new members, offering them time, support, and mentorship to discover what is important to each one about FCCEJ; to forge friendships and a strong bond with our community; and to develop a strong sense of stewardship within the FCCEJ community.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Nominating , Stewardship
- Associated Staff: All Staff

Objective L. **Goals to welcome new congregants:** In order to broaden the perspective of each committee from inwardly focused to include the wider community, each committee establishes goals yearly to bring in and welcome new congregants to FCCEJ.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: All Committees
- Associated Staff: All Staff

Objective M. **Members are well-informed, actively participating, including attendance at congregational meetings:** Members support the democratic process within our congregation by being well-informed about the congregation's activities and initiatives and by actively participating in congregational polity, including attendance at congregational meetings.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective N. **Develop church leaders committed to working to strengthen our community:** We develop church leaders who have already forged strong bonds to our FCCEJ community, and who are committed to working with dedication and in the spirit of stewardship to strengthen our community.

- Primary Responsibility: Nominating
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council, Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, CE Director

Objective O. **Members empower leadership:** Members empower FCCEJ's leadership to act in accordance with our By-laws, and in alignment with UCC principles and FCCEJ's Mission and Vision statements.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility:
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective P. **Safe Conduct Policy:** FCCEJ has and follows a written Safe Conduct Policy.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Christian Education, Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, CE Director

Objective Q. **Signage:** The signage for our property and spaces provides clear information for visitors as well as members.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons, Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective R. **Parking:** Members, friends and visitors can easily find a place to park.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

**Strategic Goal 3: Engage within and reach out beyond our FCCEJ community.** We will become a vital voice in the larger communities beyond our church by increasing our outreach, service, and social action efforts.

Objective A. **Programs to address local community needs:** Certain FCCEJ programs are consciously designed to address local community needs and to encourage involvement by diverse members of the local community.

- Primary Responsibility: Missions
- Secondary Responsibility:
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Expand or add outreach programs:** FCCEJ continually strives to expand outreach programs locally, nationally and globally.

- Primary Responsibility: Missions
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Children involved in Social Action initiatives:** Children are involved in Social Action initiatives, such as food pantry and Heavenly Cents.

- Primary Responsibility: Christian Education, Missions
- Secondary Responsibility:
- Associated Staff: CE Director, Associate Pastor

Objective D. **Environmental responsibility and advocacy:** FCCEJ promotes environmental responsibility through its actions, policies, and advocacy.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Trustees, Hospitality
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective E. **Community well-informed about FCCEJ:** The community beyond FCCEJ is well-informed about FCCEJ's presence and what our congregation has to offer.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective F. **Events and member perspectives in media regularly:** FCCEJ events and member perspectives are included in media regularly (for example: periodic newspaper column, relevant articles, social media, interviews, press releases, advertising and other marketing activities).

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective G. **Collaborative programming between our church and local organizations:** Collaborative programming is increasing between our church and other local organizations and initiatives.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective H. **Wider United Church of Christ community:** FCCEJ participates in activities and outreach efforts among the wider United Church of Christ community at district and national levels.

- Primary Responsibility: Delegates
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective I. **Mission Committee highlights social action issues and opportunities:** The Mission Committee highlights social issues in different ways such as by leading a Sunday service to highlight social action issues and opportunities.

- Primary Responsibility: Missions
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective J. **Mission Committee reports:** The Mission Committee reports social action activities and successes to the congregation using a variety of communication methods, such as the monthly newsletter, website and church bulletin inputs on a monthly basis.

- Primary Responsibility: Missions
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective K. **Continue the work of being known as an open and affirming community:** As an Open and Affirming Congregation, we continue the work of being known as an open and affirming community for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and straight people.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

**Strategic Goal 4: Provide good stewardship of our property.** We will restore and maintain our buildings and grounds to a condition that will best facilitate the ministry and fellowship goals of the congregation.

Objective A. **Maintain:** Our historic buildings and grounds are maintained routinely in sound and attractive condition so that they adequately serve the needs of FCCEJ's programs.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Comply:** Our buildings and grounds comply with fire, safety, ADA, and other regulatory requirements.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Steeple restoration:** Steeple restoration is funded and completed through a successful capital campaign and outside grants. (Note: This is also a part of the Property Master Plan. See Objective H below.)

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective D. **Income properties are operated responsibly:** Our income properties are operated responsibly as a good landlord while maximizing income to FCCEJ.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective E. **Sanctuary:** The sanctuary is a respectful and inviting spiritual space.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons, Music, Ushering
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective F. **Suitable space:** Suitable space is available for all of the congregation's programs and activities.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Secondary Responsibility: Music, Christian Education, Deacons, Hospitality, Ushering
- Associated Staff: Senior & Associate Pastors, CE Director

Objective G. **Property Master Plan:** A Property Master Plan is a primary resource for Council-level decision-making regarding the highest and best utilization of our property within financial constraints.

- Primary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective H. **Capital Campaign:** A Capital Campaign succeeds in raising the funds necessary to execute the Property Master Plan.

- Primary Responsibility: Stewardship
- Secondary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

**Strategic Goal 5: Act and communicate effectively in all congregation activities.** We will organize our governing and communications practices to serve our committees and the congregation at large most efficiently.

Objective A. **Governance structure:** Our governance structure enables church leadership to focus on strategic as well as operational goals effectively and efficiently.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Leadership development and succession planning:** We have a well-defined process for leadership development and succession planning, to support continuity and enthusiasm within our Governing Body and committees.

- Primary Responsibility: Nominating, Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council, Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Delegation clearly defined and is utilized:** Delegation of authority is clearly defined and is utilized to the greatest practical extent.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective D. **Communication between leaders and the congregation:** Two-way communication is encouraged and fostered between church staff, church leaders and the congregation as a whole.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Pastoral Relations, Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective E. **Communication between committees:** Communication between committees is encouraged and fostered, and committees work together for common goals.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective F. **Minutes documented and archived:** Minutes of meetings and reports of principal congregation committee activities, processes and their facilitators are properly documented and archived.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective G. **Communication vehicles provide information to members:** A variety of communication vehicles is used to provide timely and accurate information to members and friends.

- Primary Responsibility: Communications Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective H. **Bylaws reviewed periodically and updated:** Our governance structure and bylaws are reviewed periodically and updated as needed to ensure that they best support the mission of our church.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

**Strategic Goal 6: Provide sufficient resources of money and staff.** We will address the short- and long-term financial and staffing needs of the church and provide the resources to achieve those needs while fostering a mindset of abundance.

Objective A. **Well-defined process for budget planning:** We have a well-defined process for budget planning and development. The responsibility for execution of this process is also well-defined and the processes are being performed. Those with the potential to submit budget inputs are trained and supported in their budget planning efforts.

- Primary Responsibility: Finance Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Budget
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Programs receive financial support:** All FCCEJ programs receive sufficient financial support to realize our ministry.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Budget, Stewardship
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Members educated about financial processes and responsibilities:** Members and friends are regularly educated about FCCEJ's financial processes and their responsibilities.

- Primary Responsibility: Finance Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Stewardship
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective D. **Pursue grants:** We have a pool of trained people to pursue grants which can be used for property repairs and other church needs.

- Primary Responsibility: Stewardship
- Secondary Responsibility: Planned Giving
- Associated Staff: Church Administrator

Objective E. **Staff management:** We have well-defined processes for current staff management, including job descriptions, performance evaluations, and salary decisions. The responsibility for execution of these processes is also well-defined and the processes are being performed.

- Primary Responsibility: Human Resources Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective F. **Appropriate reserve:** The annual budget includes an appropriate reserve account to fund normal maintenance and repairs of property, as well as repair and/or replacement of equipment and supplies.

- Primary Responsibility: Finance Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Trustees
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective G. **Supplies and equipment budgeted:** Supplies and equipment to support a professional organization are budgeted and funded.

- Primary Responsibility: Finance Committee
- Secondary Responsibility: Church Council
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

**Strategic Goal 7: Measure our progress.** We will commit resources to establish and regularly use feedback mechanisms and tracking tools to measure our overall progress toward achieving our objectives, goals and vision.

Objective A. **New member's orientation:** All new members are surveyed to assess the effectiveness of and their satisfaction with their orientation to FCCEJ membership.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective B. **Sunday visitor's first impressions:** A meaningful sample of Sunday visitors is surveyed to get their first impression of FCCEJ from various perspectives including, but not limited to: congregation, sanctuary, church service, and fellowship.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Secondary Responsibility: Christian Education
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective C. **Members satisfaction:** All members are regularly surveyed to determine levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the church, including their own areas of particular interest and any volunteer roles they may have contributed.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons, CE, Pastoral Relations
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective D. **Visitors to events:** Provide visitors to FCCEJ events the opportunity to provide feedback about their experience (e.g., feeling welcome, facilities) and contact information for follow up or invitations to future events.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

Objective E. **Membership statistics measured and tracked:** Important membership statistics are regularly measured and tracked, such as growth, attrition, attendance, CE participation, interests, and volunteer service.

- Primary Responsibility: Deacons
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor, Church Administrator

Objective F. **Feedback mechanisms established to measure progress towards objectives, goals and our vision:** Additional feedback mechanisms and tracking measures are established and utilized as needed to properly measure progress towards objectives, goals and our vision.

- Primary Responsibility: Church Council
- Secondary Responsibility: Deacons, Pastoral Relations
- Associated Staff: Senior Pastor

## Tracking Our Progress

### ***SMART Objectives***

Objectives are the stepping stones to the achievement of our goals, and the way the objectives are written can affect their usefulness. SMART refers to the acronym that describes the key characteristics of meaningful objectives, which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic (sometimes Relevant) and Time-Bound.

Although long-term, ongoing initiatives as incorporated in this Strategic Plan do not meet SMART criteria, SMART milestones can be established on specific tasks over a measurable time period. For near-term tasks within each adopted Strategic Plan objective, it is intended that SMART milestones (sub-objectives) will be established on an annual basis using the format described below.

Details of the SMART methodology are available in many business texts as well as on the Internet. One source available at the time of this writing is:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART \(project management\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_(project_management))

## Tracking Template for Objectives

After an objective is selected for action and assigned, the following template will be completed by the lead person for that objective, so that the approach for achieving the objective is clear and specifically planned, and so that progress can be easily tracked. The Lead will provide periodic updates to the Church Council using this format.

Objective:  Primary Responsibility:  Secondary Responsibility:  Associated Staff:  Implementation window (start/end)	Approach (including cost and other resources)																																													
<b>Key milestones for this church year (follow SMART criteria)</b>																																														
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 45%;">Task</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Who</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Start</th> <th style="width: 10%;">End</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Complete?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Task	Who	Start	End	Complete?																																									
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## Tracking Template Example (hypothetical)

<p>Objective: 5A Our governance structure enables church leadership to focus on strategic as well as operational goals effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>Primary Responsibility: Church Council</p> <p>Secondary Responsibility: N/A</p> <p>Associated Staff: Senior Pastor</p> <p>Implementation window (start/end) 2014 - 2015</p>	<p>Approach (including cost and other resources)</p> <p>Consider present committee structure and consider realigning committees, possibly add 2 additional committees for communication and membership.</p> <p>Define updated committee structures and responsibilities</p> <p>Draft updates to Bylaws if necessary</p> <p>Nominating committee fills new/ updated committee structures</p>			
<p>Key milestones for this church year (follow SMART criteria)</p>				
<p>Task</p>	<p>Who</p>	<p>Start</p>	<p>End</p>	<p>Complete?</p>
<p>1. Consider present committee structure and consider realigning committees, possibly add 2 additional committees for communication and membership.</p>	<p>Church Council</p>	<p>4/2014</p>	<p>6/2014</p>	
<p>2. Define updated committee structures and responsibilities</p>	<p>Church Council</p>	<p>6/2014</p>	<p>9/2014</p>	
<p>3. Draft updates to Bylaws if necessary</p>	<p>Church Council</p>	<p>9/2014</p>	<p>10/2014</p>	
<p>4. Nominating committee fills new/ updated committee structures</p>	<p>Nominating Committee</p>	<p>10/2014</p>	<p>1/2015</p>	
<p>Status update notes (provide monthly)</p>				