

Cherry Log Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Strategic Plan

2010

Approved

Nov. 6, 2010



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2010 Strategic Plan

Approved by the CLCC Board November 6, 2010

Respectfully submitted by the

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	Page 4
Current Situation	Page 7
Recommendations	Page 13
Longer Term items for action	Page 27
Appendices	
Appendix 1, Demographic Information	Page 29
Appendix 2, Charts and Facts	Page 30
Appendix 3, Financial frequently asked questions	Page 32

Executive Summary

Chartered in 1997, with 80 members signing the document, Cherry Log Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has grown to an average attendance over 200, has occupied three different sites, and most importantly, has developed a unique set of values based on inclusion, acceptance and the desire to learn about Jesus, to live more like Jesus and to represent Jesus in our community. (For more info see page 7)

Growing from a Pastoral size church of 150 to a Program size church of over 200, occupying a new building and calling a new Pastor called for a new evaluation and vision. The visioning process, which involved about half the active members in a triad contemplation process, asking what is God's preferred future for CLCC, has produced a positive Future Story for the church. The vision (see page 9) calls for new programs to attract and meet the needs of youth and young families, more programs and small groups to provide a place for everyone, more spiritual growth experiences to provide our spiritual oxygen, intentional practices to preserve our heritage and core values, emphasis on knowing and being good neighbors and creation of more opportunities to practice mission ministry and social justice in our community.

The triads recognized the tensions created by the transition from being a Pastoral to becoming a Program size church. They said we want to continue to have an open table, to welcome all who want to join our community and we will work to offer the programs and experiences that will accomplish that, while preserving the values that make us who we are.

The Strategic Planning Committee began work following introduction of the Future Story in May. The focus was on what is needed to implement the vision. The planning committee asked the triads to reconvene for three meetings to consider and comment on the preliminary recommendations. More than half did reactivate and the committee appreciates the valuable feedback received. Three open meetings also generated helpful feedback which is also appreciated. Much of the feedback was encouraging and supportive. Some offered detailed suggestions which do not change the thrust of the recommendation and will be provided to the organizations responsible for implementation. The primary concern had to do with debt and finances and additional worship service. The preliminary recommendation on worship has been modified to allow more indepth research and planning by a dedicated team prior to implementing a major worship alternative. A write-up on the financial situation has been included in the Current Situation section of this plan (see page 11) and related Appendix 3 (see page 32) to provide a comprehensive picture of our financial situation including options for addressing needs in that area.

As stated above, the Strategic Planning Committee focused on what is needed to implement the vision. This results in ten recommended initiatives. Most of the initiatives are needed now. Some may take some months to implement, but the need for additional programs, staff and methods to be more intentional about meeting needs, assimilating members, identifying gifts and connecting people to ministry are immediate needs. Fortunately, many of the initiatives proposed are already being addressed by individuals or groups who have recognized the need or been motivated by the vision. Also, fortunately, there is little new expense associated with implementation of most of the recommendations. The Recommendations are:

Recommendation One: The SPC recommends that a new ad hoc committee be appointed responsible for facilitating small group formation. The name of the new committee would be, Small Group Ministry Team. We recommend that the Nominating Committee nominate a Chair, a representative from the Finance Committee and a person with consulting skills as the core of the new committee. Additions to the committee should be added by the committee and composed of people with an interest in small group ministry and with skills needed by the committee. The committee should be estab-

lished as soon as a leader and members with the needed skills can be identified. The committee should function to accomplish the purpose and operate within the guidelines set forth below. (see pages 13, 14, 15)

We recommend that the organization responsible for implementation and monitoring of this initiative will be the Board.

Timeline: The new committee should be appointed as soon as possible and begin work as soon as the training of leaders and members has been accomplished.

Recommendation Two: The SPC recommends that a formal new member orientation and assimilation course be developed and that all new members be encouraged to participate in the course within three months of joining Cherry Log Christian Church.

We recommend that the Christian Education Committee be charged with the responsibility for developing and implementing this course.

Timeline: This course is needed now and should be implemented as soon as appropriate curriculum can be found or developed and leaders recruited and trained. A target of no later than the end of the first quarter of 2011 is suggested. (see page 16)

Recommendation Three: The SPC recommends that a continuing adult education course for all members be implemented. The course would cover basic Christian beliefs/questions, CLCC history, vision and core values, information about our denomination, identification of gifts and connection to a small group ministry.

The SPC recommends that the Christian Education Committee be responsible for developing and implementing this course.

Timeline: The SPC believes this course is needed now and should be developed as soon as possible. We believe the new member course should receive priority and that this course should be implemented soon afterward. A target implementation of no later than second quarter 2011 is suggested. (see page 17)

Recommendation 4: The SPC recommends implementation of alternative worship services and experiences to enrich our Spiritual Oxygen and offer options attractive to younger families and others we do not reach today. Specifically we recommend formation of a small group team (suggested name, Alternative Worship Team) charged with research, development and implementation of alternative worship experiences. The Board will receive regular reports on the activity of this team through the Board Reports of the Small Group Ministry Team or Elders, depending on which organization is determined to be the home for this team. In addition the Alternative Worship Team will solicit advice and counsel from the Elders. Implementation of a potentially large scale new worship experience will require review and recommendation to the Board from the Elders and approval by the Board in accordance with II.D.6. of the Constitution and Bylaws. The Alternative Worship Team will coordinate with the Worship Committee.

The SPC recommends that the Small Group Ministry Team (created in Recommendation 1, above) be charged with forming a group with the skills and passion for this project.

Timeline: The Alternate Worship Team responsible for this project will need to conduct research, evaluate findings, plan appropriate services and experiment with times and format. The group should be appointed as soon as people with appropriate skills and interest are identified. Progress should be reported to the Board through the Small Group Ministry Team and/or Elders. Implementation should be begun as soon as complete research and planning has been accomplished. (see pages 18 and 19)

Recommendation Five: Assign responsibility to the Strategic Planning Committee to conduct market research to determine the feasibility of operating one or more revenue producing ministries. Child care, summer camp, adult day care, and a retreat center are some ministries that have been suggested as being needed and having the potential to generate cash flow over their associated expenses. Some of the criteria the SPC would use to prioritize ministries they would study would be 1.) availability of a qualified champion to follow through with prompt implementation, 2.) fit with mission and vision of the church, 3.) fit with skill set of the church or employees that can be hired to operate the ministry, 4.) economic feasibility and potential 5.) ministry potential.

The SPC recommends that the Strategic Planning Committee have responsibility for evaluating market demand for those ministries and facilitating prompt implementation of one or more revenue producing ministries. Board approval of a significant new revenue producing ministry prior to implementation is assumed.

Timeline: The SPC recommends that this effort begin in January 2011 with identification and implementation approval (by the Board) of one or more potential ministries by June, 2011. (see page 20)

Recommendation Six: The SPC recommends that the Board endorse the formation of a youth ministry small group team that has occurred since the Future Story was announced. A group with Bill Cox as chair came together, united by a common sense of urgency and felt need, to develop proposals for an effective youth ministry. The SPC recommends endorsement of their purpose.

Timeline: This group is at work now and recommendations and action will be forthcoming. (see page 21)

Recommendation Seven: The SPC recommends that additional program staff be added as soon as funds can be made available to bring staff levels to those recommended for sustained growth. We recommend two part-time positions. One, a part-time position to work with the Small Group Ministry Team and related groups to appropriately and effectively expand needed programs. Second we recommend a part time position to develop programs for young families, children and youth. If only one part time position can be added, we recommend the first position to be the Small Group/program development person because they can deal with a broader range of issues including giving attention to the needs of young families and youth.

The SPC recommends that the Personnel Committee be responsible for implementing this recommendation as quickly as funds can be made available.

Timeline: Implementation of this recommendation is urgent. We are one full time equivalent person short of being staffed for our size and program needs. In Mann's book *In-between Church* she characterizes this staffing level as being staffed for decline. Creative solutions should be pursued immediately to bring qualified part time staff on board as soon as possible. (see pages 22 and 23)

Recommendation Eight: The SPC recommends that a community needs assessment project be implemented promptly to identify the current needs of the communities we serve. This project should cover all community service areas (law enforcement, courts, schools, health providers, social agencies, etc.) and a cross section of community churches. This differs from recommendation five in that five deals with revenue producing ministries. This will look at community needs in total. Inclusion of other churches hopes to achieve some ecumenical joint projects.

The SPC recommends that a multi-disciplinary small group, under the umbrella of the Small Group Ministry Team be formed to conduct this needs assessment. The SPC proposes a methodology in the Background/comment section below, (page 24 and 25) although the team should not be constrained by the specifics of that suggestion.

Timeline: Completion in the first quarter of 2011 is recommended.

Recommendation Nine: The SPC believes that changes are needed in our governance and structure to bring the organization in line with the changing size and complexity of our programs.

This topic is currently being studied by the Constitution and By Laws Committee. The purpose of this recommendation is to endorse the need for change and the desire for a prompt start of implementation. (see page 26)

Recommendation Ten: The SPC recommends strong prompt action to address giving education, fund raising for mortgage payments, pursuit of strategies to implement revenue producing ministries, productive use of assets and potential sale of assets. The Stewardship and Finance Committee has looked creatively at this area and is in the process of bringing this work to implementation. The SPC endorses the need for this type action.

Current Situation

The past is prologue to the future: (See *The First Ten Years, March 30, 1997-March 30, 2007* for additional historical detail)

The popularity of Dr. Fred Craddock, the generosity of the Sisson family and the desire of many people, former Disciple members and others, for a church that would welcome them as family set the stage for God to establish a church in Cherry Log, GA.

In the prologue to the church history Dr. Craddock says, “Those who know me realize that I do not use religious language easily or casually, but now and then I do recognize the clear leading of God and I say so. Cherry Log Christian Church is God’s doing.”

The concept of the open table is central to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The denomination’s statement of identity reads, “We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table as God has welcomed us.”

Welcome, warmth, inclusion, acceptance of everyone, the feeling of family, loving acceptance are values that were present at the founding of the church and that remain core values today. Seeking to know Jesus and to represent Him in our community has been a constant focus from founding through today.

CLCC began meeting in the Pavilion in late 1996. The charter was adopted March 30, 1997 and remained open for one year. There were 80 founding members. Growth continued and the congregation dedicated its first building, the Church on the Hill, September, 1999. Still more people came. Plans for a larger facility began in 2002, land was broken for the new church in November, 2005 and the first service in the current building was conducted September 16, 2007.

Attendance is one way to look at the vitality of a church. Cherry Log Christian Church’s attendance has grown from an average weekly attendance of 65 in 1998 to its current average of 200.

What continues to attract people to CLCC? There are many reasons, strong pastors, excellent lay leadership, worship, music and programs that help us grow spiritually, local and global mission opportunities are all factors. The founding values of the open table, inclusion, and acceptance of everyone continue to unite members and attract new visitors. Newcomers detect and comment on the warmth and feeling of family. People continue to feel God in this place.

Transitioning to the present:

The 2005 CLCC Strategic Plan had two primary goals, build a new facility and call a new pastor. The building was occupied in the fall of 2007 and David Griffin came to us in October, 2008. Between the fall of 2006 and the beginning of 2010 average attendance increased from about 150 to over 200. Attendance on the peak 15 Sundays in 2009 averaged just over 250. These significant events called for a new look at our church and its role and goals.

Size Transition (For detail see *In-Between Church* and *Raising the Roof* by Alice Mann, Alban Institute)

In addition to having a new building and a new pastor, our growth above 150 marks another important transition factor. Size does make a difference. In her book, *In-Between Church*, Alice Mann describes the important impact of size on how a church functions. She describes the pastoral sized church with attendance from 50 to 150 which is typically centered around the pastor. It is small enough that everyone has the feeling of knowing everyone else. Governance and communication occur spontaneously.

The program size church is the next step, with attendance from 150 to 450. As the number and diversity of people grow, the sense of knowing everyone intimately is challenged. More programs and a wider diversity of programs are needed so that everyone can find their place and have their life needs met. Developing programs and connecting people to programs must become more intentional. More pastoral time needs to be devoted to administrative and coordination with laity picking up some of the congregational care load.

Mann makes the point that the transition from one size to the other is a time of tension as the culture, relationships, structures and processes are changing. She also makes the point that in the transition zone a church will make a decision, consciously or by default, that will enable growth and effective ministry or decline to the former size.

CLCC's current average attendance of just over 200 places us squarely in the pastoral to program size transition zone. Mann recommends six initiatives to move from pastoral to program size. Interestingly, the triads focused on these six in their deliberations and the planning committee also independently identified them as initiatives currently needed. The triads, representing about half of our active members clearly said we have concerns, but want to do what is needed to continue to invite, welcome and nurture those who wish to join this community. They said we want to maintain an open table and embrace the kind of changes that can welcome newcomers while maintaining our core values.

Moving to a Vision

The church embarked on a visioning process that began in the fall of 2009 and completed in May, 2010. Triads, groups of three members or visitors, met for ten sessions *to prayerfully seek discernment of God's preferred future for Cherry Log Christian Church*. 114 people, about half the active membership, participated in the triad process and open meetings were held to solicit input from members not involved in the triad process. Based on feedback from the triads, a vision team produced the Cherry Log Christian Church Future Story which portrays our dreams.

Cherry Log Dreams, Our Future Story

Our **heritage and core values** are exceedingly important and must be maintained. Acceptance, inclusion, a special warm family feeling are vital to who we are. We retain the desire of founding members to know more about Jesus and how to live like him in our community. The triads recognized the challenge of maintaining those values as we grow and said, we...

Dream of relationship and fellowship, we are willing to work at hospitality, fellowship, small group formation and other ways to teach and foster the core values that make us who we are. We will continue to emphasize hospitality and fellowship to foster the feeling of family.

They also said that our critical longing is for spiritual growth and development. We **Dream of spiritual oxygen**, those elements, events, and experiences that fire our hearts and souls and give us the strength to face life's challenges. We want multiple worship experiences and a variety of Christian education opportunities to foster spiritual growth.

Almost all triads struggled with the question of how we relate to our community because our congregation differs in many ways from our community. We **Dream of community involvement**, living like Jesus in our community. We want to be good neighbors.

We also **Dream of youth ministry** and **Dream of young adults and young families**. The triads said we do not want to be only a congregation of retirees. We want to offer programs that appeal to young families, small group studies that focus on their life issues and meaningful child care programs that address the needs of their children like, Day Care, Pre School and Summer Camp. We want to offer vital, engaging programs for our youth and to include them in all facets of the life of the church.

But we are largely a congregation of retirees and we **Dream of caring and healing**, for all of our constituents, but especially we want to fully meet the needs of older adults in our congregation and in our community. Stimulating a retirement center, and wellness programs, providing needed services like transportation, resource center and similar ministries is our dream. We want to enrich the lives of all through intergenerational programs.

A passionate call from the triads was expressed as a **Dream of mission, outreach and social justice**. We want more opportunities for outreach and service to meet real needs in our community. The desire for more active mission ministry was one of the loudest messages from the triads.

This vision drives the plans

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) conducted independent fact finding, research and analysis to bring relevant information to the table. However, the committee was primarily focused on being driven by the vision, asking what are the barriers to implementing the vision and what will it take to implement the vision. The ten initiatives listed in the Recommendations section of this booklet (page 13) are the ones the SPC believes are most needed now to facilitate realization of the vision.

Short term focus

Because we are in a size transition zone, **and** in a new facility, **and** with a new pastor, **and** concerned about our debt load, **and** testing the bounds of our organization structure, **and** bursting with new ideas from many talented people, **and** feeling God calling us into new ministry we often feel anxious and queasy about our future. We wish for a simple answer to a complex set of circumstances.

The SPC is encouraged that our situation is not unique, that other churches have faced similar circumstances and thrived, that our members love our church and that we believe God is still with Cherry Log Christian Church. Feedback from the triads and open meetings expressed excitement about the vision and plans along with concerns about all that is happening and especially about the church debt load.

Our committee believes that all ten are needed and that work should start on all ten right away. The good news is that work has started on many already as a result of people seeing and being motivated by the Future Story. Most are interrelated and the impact would be weakened if not implemented as a family. The triads called for programs that can attract young adults, programs for youth, more programs and a variety of worship experiences that will provide spiritual growth experiences. The triads also recognized the changes needed to address the size transition, that is more programs to provide a place for the growing number of members. The emphasis was on doing what we do more broadly, addressing unmet needs and enriching desired experiences. The planning initiatives address these current needs.

Two of the important initiatives (9. structure and governance and 10. finance and stewardship) are being addressed by other committees. By listing these initiatives the SPC wishes to endorse the direction we understand these committees are taking and underscore the importance of action in these areas.

Six of these initiatives (1. small group ministry, 2. new member class, 3. continuing adult foundation course, 4. alternative worship services, 6. youth task force and 8. community needs survey) can be started with very little expense. Finding the right persons with the experience and skills to lead them being the most critical success factor. Initiative 5 (market study to determine feasibility of several potential revenue producing ministries) may cost a small amount, but is a sound investment because of the significant potential revenue that can be realized if there is sufficient market demand. Initiative 6., adding staff is the only initiative that will involve substantial cost and most church experience shows effective staff additions pay for themselves by attracting new members in short order.

Concern about finances

The primary concern discussed in triad sessions, open meetings and comments to committee members has to do with concern about the debt load, lack of understanding about our financial situation and questions about how we will resolve this issue. Because of the large number of questions and concern we are including in this Current Situation section facts about the CLCC financial situation.

CLCC Financial facts and comments: (See appendix 3 for additional information in the form of frequently asked questions and answers.)

Normal Operating Budget (non-building):

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>Sept YTD 2010</u>	<u>2010 Budget</u>
Contributions and other income	\$305,915	\$353,834	\$259,993	\$384,468
Operating Expenses	\$307,334	\$345,185	\$260,657	\$384,468
Surplus or Deficit	-\$1,419	\$8,649	-\$664	0
Year over Year % Budget Growth		12.3%		11.4%

The annual operating expense of the church has grown about 12% per year since 2008. Contributions have roughly matched expense each year with a surplus of giving over expense for the three year period of about \$6500.

Debt (as of July 31, 2010)

Both Church on the Hill and CLCC mortgage are held by the Disciple's Board of Church Extension.

Craddock Center Property	None		
Church on the Hill	\$ 584,388	Interest rate	8.0%*
CLCC current land and building	\$2,454,437	Interest rate	7.0%*
Total	\$3,038,825		

* Interest rates are reset every three years based on the level of interest rates at that time. The rates for the Church on the Hill mortgage will reset November, 2010. We will not know the exact rate until it resets but based on current interest rate levels we anticipate a new rate in the 6% to 6.5% range. A rate at the midpoint, 6.25%, would reduce the annual payment by about \$10,000. The rate on the CLCC mortgage will reset about a year later.

Debt Service

Church on the Hill monthly payment	\$ 4,621
CLCC Mortgage monthly payment	\$17,990
Total monthly mortgage payment	\$22,611

Building Related Cash Reserves

A capital fund drive conducted in 2008 raised about \$970,000 cash and pledges to be paid over three years. This was a very successful campaign and raised much more than advisers had said could be raised by a church our size. Payments began July, 2008 and pledges will be paid out June, 2011. Some large lump sum payments were made in 2007 and 2008 toward the capital campaign. A few of these were directed toward principle reduction at the donor's request. Contributions to the Celebration Fund also go directly to principle reduction. Early contributions exceeded immediate mortgage payment needs and were "banked" in a reserve fund for future building/mortgage payments. As of September, 2010 that reserve total was \$21,100. Also, Disciple's Board of Church Extension holds a reserve of \$50,982.

Current Situation, Building Contributions compared to Building (ie Mortgage) Expense:

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010 Sept YTD</u>	<u>2010 Going Rate</u>
Building Fund Contributions		\$339,040	\$211,792	\$115,111	\$153,481
Building Fund Expense					
Construction & other		\$99,787			
Mortgage		\$270,85	\$223,541	\$203,499	\$271,332
Surplus or Deficit		-\$31,598	-\$11,749	-\$88,388	-\$117,851 (est.)

Contributions to the Building Fund are composed of pledges made during the 2007 Capital Campaign, pledges made by new members, and non-pledged contributions designated for the Building Fund. It is normal for the largest amounts to be given in the first years of the campaign and for Building Fund giving to decline as the term of the pledge period nears its end. The decline from the level of giving in 2009 to the level of giving in 2010 is greater than anticipated.

What is being done and planned to address this situation?

The Finance Committee and Strategic Planning Committee have identified a number of actions that can be taken to address the debt situation. The Finance Committee has worked diligently and creatively this year to explore possibilities. They have met with Ruben Swint, one of The Columbia Partnership's financial experts. ***Publication of their ideas in this document should not imply any credit for the planning committee virtually all of these ideas are Finance Committee work product.*** The Strategic Planning Committee strongly supports implementation of the actions identified by the Finance Committee promptly and effectively.

Many of the ten initiatives proposed by the planning committee do address the financial situation by creating an environment and procedures that help remove some existing roadblocks, stimulate appropriate program growth and address capacity constraints. Collectively these steps will stimulate and accommodate growth while teaching and retaining the core values of CLCC. Also, the planning committee strongly recommends that quality market research be begun to identify the most appropriate revenue producing ministries for Church on the Hill facilities.

The most important reason to accommodate growth is to meet the needs of individuals who are seeking the theology and Christian support we offer. Incidental to the purpose of growth, but important to the financial issue is that growth does increase the number of contributing members. Current average weekly giving per attendee is about \$50.00 per week. The income from 50 new members giving \$40.00 per week would slightly exceed \$100,000. Appendix 2, page 2 shows a giving analysis for the years 2004 (through August) and the year 2009. Giving units increased from 177 to 263 and average giving per unit increased from \$1050 to \$1685.

Ideas and actions on the table are:

1. A stewardship campaign is underway now (October, 2010) to receive pledges for the year 2011, including Building Fund pledges for new members who did not participate in the original BF Campaign.
2. Following the stewardship campaign, conduct a special short term campaign to reduce the debt (as opposed to raising funds for mortgage payments) of Church on the Hill.
3. Conduct a professionally lead Capital Campaign in the spring of 2011 to replace the revenue stream that will be expiring with payment of the 2008 campaign pledges. This campaign should focus on the goals of the vision.
4. Implement a variety of ways to communicate about the financial situation and giving. It is clear that different generations understand giving in different ways and use different language. While the Builder/Silent generations understand and value duty and obligation, younger generations value generosity and mission. Churches that have moved to a focus on generosity and mission goals are touching larger numbers of people. Recent experience in our church demonstrates that God does stir hearts to respond to mission needs.
5. In addition to the Capital Campaign, implement a longer term, 12-18 month educational effort that would focus on generosity and mission. Traditionally we think of this as stewardship education. The difference is that this campaign would utilize recent research and developments to present the message in ways appropriate for a variety of experiences.
6. Immediately begin market research to identify the most appropriate revenue producing ministry or ministries to utilize the facilities of Church on the Hill.
7. Investigate formation of a separate 501c3 non-profit organization to own and manage Church on the Hill property and associated ministries. The 501c3 Board would be comprised of CLCC members to maintain the mission focus of the church. The purpose is twofold. One would be to transfer the debt from CLCC to the new corporation. Second, and more important, is to make the separate corporation eligible of grants and contributions that a church is not eligible for.
- 8.. Investigate the possible sale of the Craddock Center property. There is no intent in this suggestion to remove support for the Craddock Center. Church on the Hill facilities, for example, could be used instead.

Recommendations

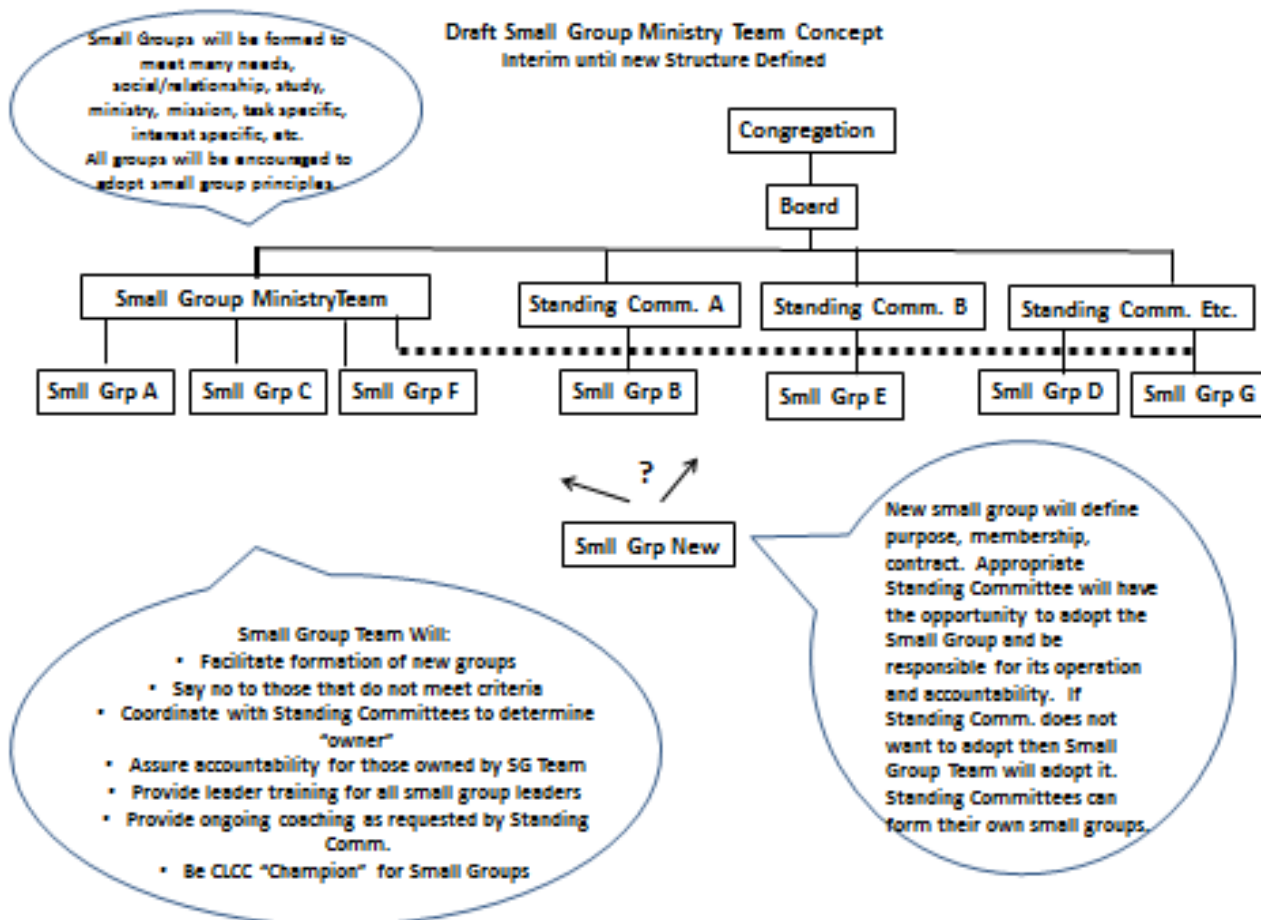
1. Implement a strong, broad small group ministry.

Recommendation One: The SPC recommends that a new ad hoc committee be appointed responsible for facilitating small group formation. The name of the new committee would be, Small Group Ministry Team. We recommend that the Nominating Committee nominate a Chair, a representative from the Finance Committee and a person with consulting skills as the core of the new committee. Additions to the committee should be added by the committee and composed of people with an interest in small group ministry and with skills needed by the committee. The committee should be established as soon as a leader and members with the needed skills can be identified. The committee should function to accomplish the purpose and operate within the guidelines set forth below.

We recommend that the organization responsible for implementation and monitoring of this initiative will be the Board.

Timeline: The new committee should be appointed as soon as possible and begin work as soon as the training of leaders and members has been accomplished.

Purpose: The purpose of forming this committee is to provide a focus and process that can reduce confusion and delay for a person or group that wants to implement a new ministry, or group that fits the mission and vision of the church. The Small Group Ministry Team will become expert in small group dynamics and operation, can train small group leaders, can protect the financial and liability interests of the church by screening prospective new small groups, develop a contract to clarify church versus small group responsibility, provide consulting service to help prospective new groups develop an appropriate ministry plan, provide self-financing, and effective implementation.



Small Group Champion Guidelines

It is the desire of Cherry Log Christian Church (CLCC) to empower and support individuals and groups who want to volunteer time and resources to start a new or to expand an existing ministry. The following guidelines will apply to groups or individuals, hereafter called the champion, who wish to initiate a new program or ministry. The responsibilities agreed to by CLCC and the Champion will be documented in a contract. The Small Group Ministry Team will represent the Board and congregation to accomplish these goals.

Small Group Definition:

The Small Group Ministry Team (the Team) will approve and support the formation of small groups for a variety of purposes. A small group can form to pursue a large goal, like the establishment of a YW-YMCA like facility to serve a two county area to meet the whole life needs of a wide range of people, or a group can pursue a more limited goal like forming a small Bible study/accountability group. The purpose could be to promote relationship and fellowship with a particular age or interest group (example Movie Group), to study a spiritual/discipleship topic (example a three week Wednesday lunch study of Luke), to provide education and support for a particular life issue (example, a six week parenting education/support group), to provide ongoing support (example ongoing Caregiver Group), to provide a particular church ministry (example a Saturday Mowing and Sowing work group), to provide a needed community ministry (example a Gilmer Middle School Tutoring Group), to address particular interests (for example a church Arts Guild). This list is intended to be illustrative, not conclusive. In other words there are many areas of need or interest, some short term some longer term. The intent of CLCC is to facilitate formation and effective operation of small groups to meet a wide variety of interests and needs. The small group ministry/project must:

- Serve a legitimate need

- Be approved by the Team

- Be in support of the stated mission and vision of Cherry Log Christian Church

- Not be redundant/competitive with an existing church ministry

In addition, there is an expectation that every small group in the church will incorporate more than one purpose. In addition to the primary purpose of the group, each group will incorporate some facet of relationship and fellowship, spiritual growth, care and healing and outreach. Each small group is a body of the church and should incorporate the ministries of the church in their activity. For example an outreach ministry team, Summer Meals for Kids, would have as its primary purpose gathering and delivering meals to needing children. In addition to organizing to deliver that service, the group should periodically conduct a brief but appropriate Scripture study and prayer time that puts their ministry work in a Scriptural context. Also, the group should monitor the welfare of its members and respond with prayer or support as needed. Also, the group should take some appropriate time for the team members to get to know each other at a deeper level. These additional steps supplement the main purpose-outreach ministry, with periodic opportunities for spiritual growth, care and healing and relationship and fellowship.

Point of entry:

The Champion should contact a member of the Small Group Ministry Team for information and guidance to facilitate implementation of the small group or determination that the group does not meet the criteria.

What is expected of the Champion?

The Champion should be a member of CLCC, willing to share his/her passion and faith by leading a team of volunteers in service to others. He/she will be expected to have an identified need or problem to serve and a conceptual plan for how to address the problem or need. The ministry must be consistent with the mission and vision of CLCC.

The Champion will make sure that CLCC's policies and procedures applicable to the small group are followed in full. The Champion will follow standard accounting procedures and church policies in the solicitation and disbursement of all funds

The Champion should not expect CLCC to fund their dream. The Champion should feel responsible for the funding and operation of the small group task. The Champion can expect support from the church of the type enumerated below. The Small Group Ministry Team will help the Champion define their concept, detail expectations of the Champion and the church, write a contract and help move through an appropriate Team approval and implementation process.

What can the Champion expect of the church?

The Champion can expect:

- To be empowered to take first steps
- For their ministry to be covered under the church umbrella liability insurance policy.
- To receive support and access to solicit volunteers for the ministry.
- To have assistance with publicity, - access to bulletin and newsletter space, following existing guidelines for space availability and deadlines.
- To have reasonable access to church resources – secretarial support, copier, transportation, kitchen, meeting space etc.
- To utilize church facilities following existing scheduling guidelines.
- To have access to church Clergy for mentoring and spiritual support.
- To be included in church prayer support.
- To petition for special fund raising using church property or events using existing guidelines in that area. (i.e., Special Collections)
- Church committee support (with approval of the committee)
- When appropriate, access to the church budget process

Who will have ongoing responsibility for new small groups?

The intent is for small group formation to be easy and flexible and to fit the existing structure of the church. A new group can be formed in several ways:

- An existing standing committee can form a new group under its ministry umbrella and be accountable for its ongoing operation. For example the Outreach Committee can see a need for a new ministry, for example tutoring and find a person on fire to lead that ministry. Outreach would then request assistance from the Small Group Ministry Team to provide targeted leadership training and or consulting services to expedite formation. Outreach would then be responsible for the ongoing operation of that small group.
- A person with a passion to start a tutoring ministry could come directly to the Small Group Ministry Team and request help to start a tutoring ministry. One of the responsibilities of the Small Group Ministry Team in screening an initial request would be to contact the Outreach Committee to determine if implementation of this ministry would conflict with any ongoing projects they have and determine if Outreach wishes to “adopt” this new small group if it is approved. If Outreach does want to include it in under their ministry umbrella that is where the ministry would be placed and Outreach would have ongoing responsibility for that small group. However, Outreach could say, no, our plate is full, that is a worthy, needed ministry but we cannot accept responsibility for it at this time. In that case the new small group would become the responsibility of the Small Group Ministry Team until experience determines where its eventual “home” should be.

2. Implement a new member orientation and induction course

Recommendation Two: The SPC recommends that a formal new member orientation and assimilation course be developed and that all new members be encouraged to participate in the course within three months of joining Cherry Log Christian Church.

We recommend that the Christian Education Committee be charged with the responsibility for developing and implementing this course.

Timeline: This course is needed now and should be implemented as soon as appropriate curriculum can be found or developed and leaders recruited and trained. A target of no later than the end of the first quarter of 2011 is suggested.

Purpose: The purposes of this course is to help assure that new members can promptly be exposed to a course that will acquaint them with the history, vision and core values of our church, provide a grounding in our denomination's history, beliefs and values, hear the financial story and understand their options in that area, understand their gifts and how those gifts can be applied in the church setting and be connected to a small group to continue their assimilation into the church family.

Background/comment: The SPC assumes that it will take several sessions to adequately cover this range of material and that at least a three week (3 sessions) time frame will be needed. The SPC has also envisioned several leaders, lay and Pastor, would be utilized to provide appropriate expertise and to allow new members to be exposed to more than one church leader.

3. Implement a continuing adult education foundation course for all church members

Recommendation Three: The SPC recommends that a continuing adult education course for all members be implemented. The course would cover basic Christian beliefs/questions, CLCC history, vision and core values, information about our denomination, identification of gifts and connection to a small group ministry.

The SPC recommends that the Christian Education Committee be responsible for developing and implementing this course.

Timeline: The SPC believes this course is needed now and should be developed as soon as possible. We believe the new member course should receive priority and that this course should be implemented soon afterward. A target implementation of no later than second quarter 2011 is suggested.

Purpose: About 120 new members have joined the church since we began services in this building in September, 2007. New members come from many denominations. A sample study indicates that 20% have had no church participation within the preceding seven years. The purpose of this course is to provide some grounding in basic Christian beliefs, understanding of the Disciples denomination and of CLCC's history, current situation and values. In addition the course would help participants identify their gifts and experience and explore how those gifts and talents can be used in the ministry of CLCC.

Background/comments: The SPC envisions a foundation course that would provide an in-depth look at the topics covered. Therefore, a course of six sessions or more may be needed to adequately cover the topics. As in the new member course, several instructors may be used to reduce the load on one instructor, bring best knowledge and expertise to a topic, and provide a variety of learning experiences.

4. The SPC recommends implementation of alternative worship services and experiences to enrich our Spiritual Oxygen and offer options attractive to younger families and others we do not reach today.

Recommendation 4: The SPC recommends implementation of alternative worship services and experiences to enrich our Spiritual Oxygen and offer options attractive to younger families and others we do not reach today. Specifically we recommend formation of a small group team (suggested name, Alternative Worship Team) charged with research, development and implementation of alternative worship experiences. The Board will receive regular reports on the activity of this team through the Board Reports of the Small Group Ministry Team or Elders, depending on which organization is determined to be the home for this team. In addition the Alternative Worship Team will solicit advice and counsel from the Elders. Implementation of a potentially large scale new worship experience will require review and recommendation to the Board from the Elders and approval by the Board in accordance with II.D.6. of the Constitution and Bylaws. The Alternative Worship Team will coordinate with the Worship Committee.

The SPC recommends that the Small Group Ministry Team (created in Recommendation 1, above) be charged with forming a group with the skills and passion for this project.

Timeline: The Alternate Worship Team responsible for this project will need to conduct research, evaluate findings, plan appropriate services and experiment with times and format. The group should be appointed as soon as people with appropriate skills and interest are identified. Progress should be reported to the Board through the Small Group Ministry Team and/or Elders. Implementation should be begun as soon as complete research and planning has been accomplished. (see pages 18 and 19)

Background and comments: The triads expressed a strong desire not to be JUST a church for retirees. They expressed the desire to offer programs that will be attractive to young families, young adults and youth. Although we have many young families visit on Sunday, few join. The average age of recent new members is the same as the average age of the existing congregation. We also are told, by weekenders, recreation focused visitors and people with Sunday jobs, that they would like to come, but the 10:55 worship time does not work for them.

The topic of worship options has elicited strong feedback and little congregational unanimity. The SPC has read widely, surveyed worship practices in local churches and talked with pastors and lay leaders in churches with multiple worship experiences. We have heard very many positive and some very negative experiences. One SPC member recently spent some in depth time with two Atlanta area Disciple churches. The experience of Brookhaven Christian Church resonated with the SPC.

Brookhaven, through trial and error has evolved a process that is working well for them. Some of their lessons learned are the need for intensive planning, willingness to experiment and to learn from each experience. They recognize that not every attempt will be a winner, but learning and applying lessons learned leads to success. Over time, Brookhaven has significantly increased attendance and retained support of the total congregation. The lesson is not to duplicate exactly what they do, but to replicate the disciplined learning process that can determine what works for us.

There are other examples and other sources of information. The SPC recommendation is to form a team that can assimilate experiences like Brookhaven's in order to create a process that can lead CLCC to an alternative or alternatives that will be effective in attracting visitors/members.

A somewhat different triad call was for more attention to offering contemplative, meditative spiritual expe-

riences. The diverse religious and life experience background of our membership is a congregational asset. It also emphasizes that one size does not fit all. Ideas for alternative spiritual enrichment submitted by a group interested in expanding these experiences lists these ideas:

1. To emphasize the importance of spiritual practice, establish a group that is responsible for insuring that adequate attention is given to this issue. This could be a subcommittee of an existing committee such as the Education or Worship committee, or a separate small group that works in liason with these existing committees.
2. Make education about spiritual practice an integral part of the faith enrichment program at CLCC through classes, workshops and retreats.
3. Have spiritual retreats on an ongoing basis so that there is continual opportunity to deepen ones spiritual practice.
4. Form a contemplative prayer group that meets weekly to practice centering prayer and/or lectio divina.
5. Develop the spiritual practice of walking the labyrinth at CLCC. A canvas labyrinth could be obtained for using indoors and/or a labyrinth and meditation area could be built outdoors in the beauty of nature.
6. Designate a specific time on Sunday morning that people can meet for silent prayer or meditation before Sunday school classes and the worship service begin.
7. Create a space within the church that is designated for individual and small group prayer and meditation.
8. Develop a North Georgia Retreat Center that will expand our ministry by providing spiritual resources for people in our region. This could be done in conjunction with the Co-housing development.
9. Increase worship opportunities by developing other services that would serve different needs in our congregation and in the community, such as the Taize and Word & Wisdom services. Opportunities to create and participate in worship can be very helpful in deepening spiritual life.
10. Emphasize that an important part of the ministry at CLCC is to serve the spiritual needs of our larger community. By developing programs such as those listed above we could meet the needs for spiritual practice for people in our community who have not felt attracted by the experience they have previously been exposed to.

The Alternative Worship Team will consider the Brookhaven process, suggestions like these and other inputs they feel appropriate to begin generating additional alternatives to answer the triad's call for additional worship and spiritual enrichment experiences.

5. Conduct market research to determine the market feasibility of potential revenue producing ministries that can be implemented using existing church property. Child care, adult day care, a retreat center and other ministries have been suggested.

Recommendation Five: Assign responsibility to the Strategic Planning Committee to conduct market research to determine the feasibility of operating one or more revenue producing ministries. Child care, summer camp, adult day care, and a retreat center are some ministries that have been suggested as being needed and having the potential to generate cash flow over their associated expenses. Some of the criteria the SPC would use to prioritize ministries they would study would be 1.) availability of a qualified champion to follow through with prompt implementation, 2.) fit with mission and vision of the church, 3.) fit with skill set of the church or employees that can be hired to operate the ministry, 4.) economic feasibility and potential 5.) ministry potential.

The SPC recommends that the Strategic Planning Committee have responsibility for evaluating market demand for those ministries and facilitating prompt implementation of one or more revenue producing ministries.

Timeline: The SPC recommends that this effort begin in January 2011 with identification and implementation approval (by the Board) of one or more potential ministries by June, 2011. Board approval of a significant new revenue producing ministry prior to implementation is assumed.

Background/comments: There are a number of ministries with fees charged at market rates operated by churches. Some that would appear to be needed in our area are childcare, after school elementary and middle school care, adult day care, and a retreat center. There are advantages to operating revenue producing ministries. One is that the ministry itself provides a needed service in a quality manner. In our case, a quality church program offered by CLCC would do so in a theological environment that would provide an option to others offered in the community. A second is that a church operated ministry can offer some scholarships or reduced fees to accommodate families that cannot afford full market rates. Third, the revenue produced over expenses can support mortgage payments of the facilities used. This in turn relieves other church funds to go toward other mission ministries.

A person experienced in the operation of childcare ministries has examined the Church on the Hill facilities, measured the space, determined what can be licensed and generated a three year pro forma. He assumed 25% fill in year one, 50% fill year two and 50 to 75% fill (varies by ministry) in year 3 for Middle School after school care, child care and summer camp. In year one, revenue over expense was \$16,000, \$56,000 in year two and \$73,000 in year three. There are also licensable rooms that could be used for childcare ministry in our current building that were not included in the pro forma.

Pro formas are useful tools to indicate potential. They cannot indicate demand. Only if there is a demand for the product in our location and facilities can the ministry generate the indicated revenue. If there is indicated demand there are still other hurdles to overcome to successfully begin ministry operation. Being able to employ qualified directors and staff being one of the most critical.

A retreat center that would provide a wide range of community spiritual enrichment and potential denominational services is another high potential use. Parenting classes, theological workshops, church and community retreat spiritual growth experiences are examples of a host of potential topics and uses for Church on the Hill facilities. Grants and gifts as well as fee income could support this ministry.

The SPC believes that both our desire to be involved in ministry and our financial need for additional revenue for mortgage payments clearly calls for prompt, professional investigation of the potential market demand for these ministries.

6.Appoint a task group to conduct research and develop a recommendation for building a strong youth program.

Recommendation Six: The SPC recommends that the Board endorse the formation of a youth ministry small group team that has occurred since the Future Story was announced. A group with Bill Cox as chair came together, united by a common sense of urgency and felt need, to develop proposals for an effective youth ministry. The SPC recommends endorsement of their purpose.

Timeline: This group is at work now and recommendations and action will be forthcoming.

Background/comment: This church has long desired a youth program. Previous strategic plans have called for action in this area.

We do not have a lot of youth, but we do have a strong, capable core of young people. We have a much larger group of children who are rapidly growing into the middle school and high school ages that define “youth”. We have visitors with younger children and middle school children who visit but do not join. A competent youth program could well be one of the programs that will help sway these type families to join.

It is not necessary to have a large core youth group to have a competent youth program. Relevant, exciting, well executed programs will attract a large youth turnout. Cornerstone Baptist demonstrates this point well.

A well rounded program with active mission activities, periodic special events, interesting programs with a sound theological foundation and entertaining presentations can attract and engage youth of the area.

7. Appoint additional staff.

Recommendation Seven: The SPC recommends that additional program staff be added as soon as funds can be made available to bring staff levels to those recommended for sustained growth. We recommend two part-time positions. One, a part-time position to work with the Small Group Ministry Team and related groups to appropriately and effectively expand needed programs. Second we recommend a part time position to develop programs for young families, children and youth. If only one part time position can be added, we recommend the first position be the Small Group/program development person because they can deal with a broader range of issues including giving attention to the needs of young families and youth.

The SPC recommends that the Personnel Committee be responsible for implementing this recommendation as quickly as funds can be made available.

Timeline: Implementation of this recommendation is urgent. We are one full time equivalent person short of being staffed for our size and program needs. In Mann's book *In-between Church* she characterizes this staffing level as being staffed for decline. Creative solutions should be pursued immediately to bring qualified part time staff on board as soon as possible.

Background/comments: Church growth/effectiveness consultants with the Alban Institute like, Alice Mann and Roy Oswald, say that a good staffing rule of thumb is one full time program person for each 100 active members. For congregational voting purposes we identified 300 active members. Recent attendance figures average slightly above 200. Therefore our current need is for 2.5 to 3 full time program staff plus appropriate support staff. We have one full time program staff person, the Pastor. Oswald says that if you are slightly under the one per 100 figure you are staffing for maintenance. If you are significantly under that figure you are staffing for decline. We are significantly under that figure. Church consultants add that a church should staff ahead of the immediate need to keep growing, lagging for an extended period of time will precipitate decline.

We point out that our peak attendance figures occurred in the fall of 2009. Attendance at that time exceeded 100% of parking capacity, exceeded 80% of comfortable seating capacity, exceeded program capacity and exceeded staffing capacity. Attendance has declined by about 10% since that period. That decline would have been predicted by most church consultants. The ten recommendations of the SPC address ways to increase program capacity (small group expansion), parking and seating capacity (second Sunday Service) improve new member induction and retention (new member class, continuing adult foundation course) and staff capacity (add two part time program staff ASAP). Implementation of these can be expected to encourage resumption of growth. All need to be addressed to be effective.

The Alban Institute and several other church consulting sources recommend a staffing rule of thumb of one full time **program** staff person for each 100 average attendance. CLCC has one full time program staff, the Senior Pastor with slightly over 200 average attendance. Alice Mann's book, *In-Between Church* (page 58) suggests program, music, clerical and custodial staff for Pastoral and Program size churches. Her recommendation is one Senior Pastor plus two full time program staff persons. Using the best guidelines available is clear that we are 1.5 to 2 full time equivalent staff persons short in the program area. The SPC is recommending the addition of two part time positions as soon as possible.

Some have argued that because of the large number of talented lay people and retired pastors in our congregation we should be able to tap them for free staff work. The SPC believes that the presence of this talent pool has been well utilized and has help us mask this problem for some time. The need now is clear. Volunteers often cannot make the time and emotional commitment that is required of employees. Similarly, it is often difficult for a member to work on staff as an employee. The SPC believes that dedicated full and part time employees, carefully selected for skill, experience and fit, can meld into a team with common objectives and greatly enhance the effectiveness of program development and operation.

Another argument for not using members to “fill in” this task is that the new staff should be seen not as “assisting” the Pastor with his existing tasks, but extending the reach of the church into new areas. It is this extension that attracts new members and in a reinforcing circle adds revenue that pays for the new staff position. Consultant’s say and some on the SPC have seen this work, that you only need to identify half of the new staff cost because effective staff will generate the other half.

8. Conduct a community (Fannin and Gilmer Counties) interview project to determine the actual needs of the community as a prelude to initiating outreach ministry projects.

Recommendation Eight: The SPC recommends that a community needs assessment project be implemented promptly to identify the current needs of the communities we serve. This project should cover all community service areas (law enforcement, courts, schools, health providers, social agencies, etc.) and a cross section of community churches. This differs from recommendation five in that five deals with revenue producing ministries. This will look at community needs in total.

The SPC recommends that a multi-disciplinary small group be formed to conduct this needs assessment. The SPC proposes a methodology in the Background/comment section below, although the team should not be constrained by the specifics of that suggestion.

Timeline: The SPC recommends that a small group be formed under the umbrella of the Small Group Ministry Team. The process can be completed quickly once a team can be formed. This group should be organized by the end of the first quarter 2011.

Purpose: There are several goals that this project can accomplish:

1. Identification of the most pressing needs in the community that community leaders believe are not adequately addressed and that lend themselves to church help.
2. By having a relatively large group of church participants talk with a relatively large group of community leaders valuable new relationships will be developed and our network with the community will expand substantially.
3. Some of the participants will be touched by a need they are exposed to and can become an effective new ministry champion within the church.
4. By including other churches in the project it is hoped that some new ecumenical projects can be identified.

Background/comment: Several members offered this advice early in our discussion of mission ministry opportunities, “The most strategic thing you can do is identify what is really needed so we do not spin our wheels working on a project that duplicates work or does address a real need.” This resonated with the committee. There is a passion to be involved in ministry with the community in our church. We believe it is important to identify needs the community really has and needs the community wants to work with a church to help solve. Thus this recommendation to conduct community interviews to determine what those needs are.

The SPC also discussed the need for an in-depth community listening project. This concept would involve meeting the people of our community, listening and recording their stories as a way to know and preserve the history and culture of our community. There is a great deal of interest in this but this is different than the recommendation. The recommendation is for a quick but broad survey of needs that can be identified by the people working every day with the problems.

One method that would accomplish this is to assemble a team of about 24 volunteers. The volunteers would attend a brief training session, be assigned 2-3 target community leaders to interview, call their assigned leaders to set up a personal visit, meet with their leaders to ask what problems or issues they deal with that our church might be able to help with, listen to the answer, record it and report back to the task team. Target leaders would include, but not be confined to, Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, Family Court Judges, middle and high school principals and guidance counselors, social agency heads, health care professionals, a sample of other church pastors (different questions would be used with them), and any other community resources that would be knowledgeable of community needs. Individuals in the identified need groups could also be interviewed. Both Fannin and Gilmer Counties would be covered by the project. The task team would compile a written report which would be published to the church. The task team would remain available as a resource to the Outreach Committee, the Small Group Ministry Team (if approved) and other

church groups to provide network/information linkage to the community leaders interviewed.

Other churches have completed this project in two to four weeks. Generally the most difficult part is arranging a meeting with the targeted community leaders. The reaction of community leaders once they meet has been very positive.

The people conducting the interviews should represent a cross section of members, longer term and newer. Affiliation with an existing standing committee is not as important as willingness to conduct the interviews and a curious and inquiring mind. This is a simple short term project that would be good for newer members or those members not active in standing committees.

9. Revise structure and governance to be more permission giving, flexible and transparent.

Recommendation Nine: The SPC believes that changes are needed in our governance and structure to bring the organization in line with the changing size and complexity of our programs.

This topic is currently being studied by the Constitution and By Laws Committee. The purpose of this recommendation is to endorse the need for change and the desire for a prompt start of implementation.

Background and comment: Discussion about ways to implement some of the initiatives in this plan have emphasized to the SPC the need for structure change. The SPC is supportive of the direction we understand the Constitution and By Law Committee is pursuing and encourage and look forward the beginning of change in that area.

10. Develop a plan and process for stewardship, financing and financial management that will remove this area as a major congregational concern and barrier.

Recommendation Ten: The SPC recommends strong prompt action to address giving education, fund raising for mortgage payments, pursuit of strategies to implement revenue producing ministries, productive use of assets and potential sale of assets. The Stewardship and Finance Committee has looked creatively at this area and is in the process of bringing this work to implementation. The SPC endorses the need for this type action.

Longer Term Items for Action

Longer Term Items for Strategic Planning Work to address in 2011

1. Study the market feasibility of potential revenue producing ministries for Church on the Hill and other church facilities with the goal of identifying one or more potential ministries for approval by June, 2011

Child care, summer camp, adult day care, and a retreat center are some ministries that have been suggested as being needed and having the potential to generate cash flow over their associated expenses. Some of the criteria the SPC would use to prioritize ministries they would study would be 1.) availability of a qualified champion to follow through with prompt implementation, 2.) fit with mission and vision of the church, 3.) fit with skill set of the church or employees that can be hired to operate the ministry, 4.) economic feasibility and potential 5.) ministry potential.

10. Develop a plan for use of all church properties

The church owns three parcels of land, five buildings and is considering the purchase of the little white house property when it becomes available. There are multiple ideas circulating about the appropriate use of these properties. Ideas range from full use of Church on the Hill property (a variety of potential ministries have been discussed) to sale of some of the properties, namely Church on the Hill and the Craddock Center property (comments include the caveat that the church wants to continue to support the Craddock Center).

This plan proposes that the Strategic Planning Committee investigate options, develop facts, coordinate with proposed ministries and propose a plan for use of land and buildings, including if appropriate sale of one or more properties. This would be a primary focus of Committee work in 2011.

3. Resolve lingering issues:

- A. The desire for a church cemetery and columbarium has been placed on the SPC agenda for several years. The Craddock cemetery property has been offered to Cornerstone Baptist church. Accepting this offer fits with their future plans and they would like to see a columbarium on that site. They plan for this to be an open community cemetery and our members would have access to cemetery plots and, when constructed, columbarium space. They have asked that we provide road access through our Craddock Center property to provide circular access through the cemetery. Opening that roadway would provide access to some very desirable hilltop property on the Craddock Center property that could be used for a labyrinth, community picnic pavilion, garden and hiking trails, playground, summer camp space, etc., etc., etc. Obviously these options can only be pursued once the issue of possible sale of Craddock Center property is resolved and therefore connects to item 2. above.
- B. The desire to plant a Disciples church in an appropriate location in North Georgia has been on the CLCC planning agenda for many years. The decision to build our new building placed that option for expansion on hold. The SPC believes that there are a number of urgent issues the church needs to decide and implement to fully utilize our existing facilities and serve our existing community before we tackle planting a new church. However, during the five year life of our planning cycle and seven year reach of our vision, planting a new Disciple's church may well become ripe for action. To keep the dream alive the SPC proposes two actions that will be on its action agenda for 2011 and beyond. One, maintain liaison with Regional church exten-

sion activity. Two, work with the Small Group Ministry Team to encourage development of CLCC home based communities in the furthest reaches of our serving area. The purpose is to offer Bible study, prayer and worship and fellowship opportunity based in homes in those areas where multiple trips to CLCC are daunting because of distance. This will provide a needed service to members and outreach to those communities. If at the point church plant becomes an active goal there will be a base in several communities. Also, if spontaneous combustion occurs in one of the communities, church planting could be accelerated. The primary purpose is to serve our members and communities well now. The intent of including this on the SPC agenda is to provide a “home base” to champion this idea. It may be that the proposed Alternative Worship Team wishes to embrace this concept, in which case the champion role should pass to them.

- C. The status of the donated organ is in process of resolution. The SPC proposes that it monitor that issue and help as requested.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Community and Church Demographics

Community Demographics: (based on 2000 census with estimates for growth to 2007 by Applied Geographic Solutions. Numbers for CLCC derived using a 30 minute drive time geographic area centered on Cherry Log.)

The population of the CLCC serving area is 43,244 in 17,782 households. The average household income is \$50,761 and the median age is 41. The area we serve differs from the state of Georgia significantly in several significant ways. Population increase, 1980 to 2000 was 67% for our area, 50% for Georgia. Average household income is lower for our area, \$50,761 compared to \$68,940. Households with incomes below \$20,000 area about the same for our area (22%) and Georgia (21%) but higher income families differ with 21% having HH income of \$75,000 or more compared to 38% for the state.

Our area is 94% White, 3% Black, 7% Hispanic compared to Georgia's 64% White, 30% Black and 7% Hispanic. Our area also has a higher percentage of older adults with 22% 60 or older compared to the state average of 12%.

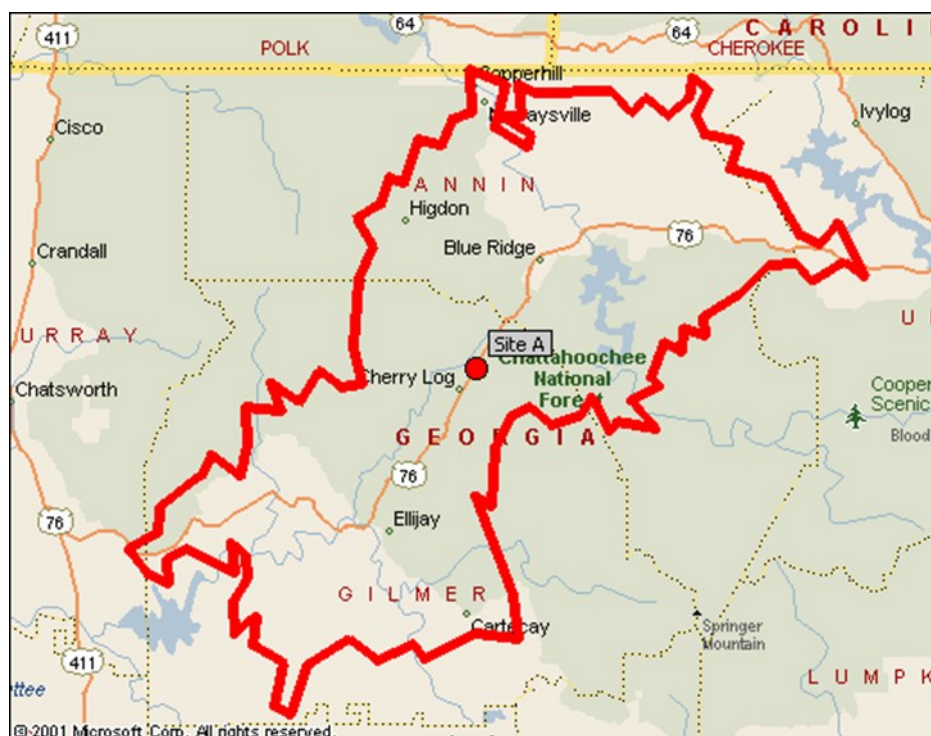
Educational attainment is also much different from the state average. In our area 36% of the population has less than a high school degree, 22% for the state. 21% of our area has a college degree while the average for Georgia is 38%.

Cherry Log Christian Church Demographics (Less precise than census numbers, figures based on survey done for Search Committee in 2005)

The average age of CLCC members in 2005 was 62. A large sample of new members since 2005 showed an average age for that group of 61. 2% had less than a high school degree, 7% a high school degree, 23 % a college degree, 46% a graduate level degree and 2% specialty training. 27% were employed full time and 67% retired. Average income was not surveyed but appears to be higher than that of our served area.

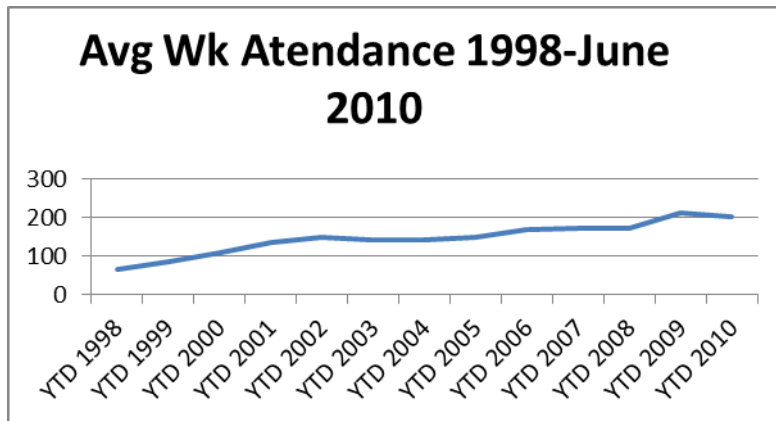
The disparity between our congregations demographics and that of our community was the topic of much triad discussion. The triads expressed a strong desire to bridge this gap to know our neighbors, to be good neighbors and serve neighbors appropriately and well.

Cherry Log Christian Church Area Served (30 Minute Drive Time)

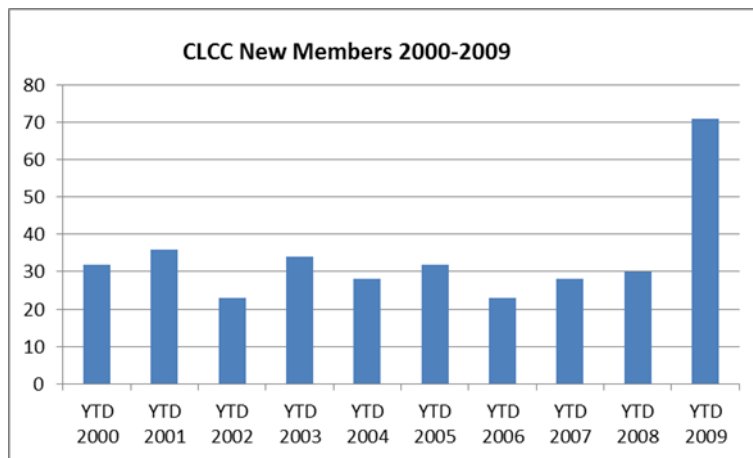


Appendix 2

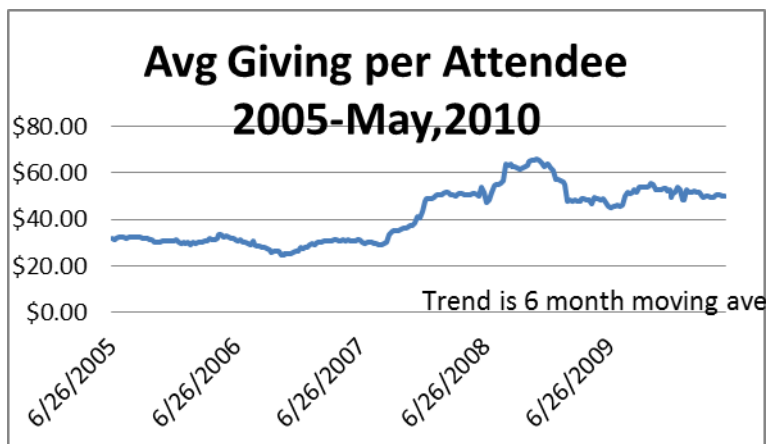
Charts and Facts



From 80 charter members in 1997, the church has grown to an average attendance of 200. The growth has been very steady except for a plateau in the 150 area between 2002-2006 when the Church on the Hill was at capacity. The peak in the fall of 2009 challenged our current parking, seating and program capacity.



22 to 35 new members have been added each year until 2009 when 76 were added. About half of the new members in 2009 were transfers from Ellijay UMC. 15 new members have been added in 2010 through the end of May. It is significant to note that 20% of the members added in 2009 and 2010 had no significant prior church experience.



These numbers combine giving to operating budget and capital needs. Giving to the capital campaign for the current building began in September, 2007, which is what causes the sharp increase at that point. Lump sum giving, primarily for the capital campaign, causes the high dollar anomalies in 2008.

Contributor Giving Analysis

Eight Months, 2004, From 2005 Strategic Plan

Range	# Contrib.	Total Given	Avg/Contrib.	% Givers	% Total \$
0-0	38	\$0	\$0		
1-200	74	\$4,460	\$61	42%	2%
201-500	24	\$8,681	\$362	14%	5%
501-1000	24	\$18,538	\$772	14%	10%
1001-2500	34	\$56,413	\$1,659	19%	30%
2501-5000	15	\$52,573	\$3,505	8%	28%
5001 & Up	6	\$45,260	\$7,543	3%	25%
Total	177	\$185,925	\$1,050	100.00%	100.00%

Year 2009

Range	# Contrib.	Total Given	Avg/Contrib	% Givers	% Total \$
1-200	100	\$6,155	\$62	38%	1%
201-500	23	\$7,866	\$342	9%	2%
501-1000	25	\$18,441	\$738	10%	4%
1001-2500	53	\$81,262	\$1,533	20%	18%
2500-5000	39	\$130,116	\$3,336	15%	29%
5001 & Up	23	\$199,428	\$8,671	9%	45%
Total	263	\$443,250	\$1,685	100%	100%

Appendix 3

Financial frequently asked questions

Q. Why did we build the current building?

A. At the time the decision was made to build the current building (2004-2005) the local and national economic situation was completely different from today's. The local economy was booming. Real estate prices were escalating. Money was flowing to this area. Membership had grown from day one and giving had kept pace. Sanctuary, educational and fellowship space was badly needed. Second guessing that decision in today's climate is neither appropriate nor helpful to our current situation. The decisions were made in good faith and a number of good things have happened as a result. The debt today is the debt today. That is the reality.

Q. What results have we seen since we began using this building?

A. Since the first service in the new building in September, 2007 what ministry impacts have we seen?

1. We have added 122 new members (through May, 2010)
2. About 20% of the new members have not been active in church for at least the previous seven years.
3. Average attendance has increased from 172 to 205, about 20%. Attendance on the 15 highest Sundays has also increased 20% from 194 to 232.
4. An energized Christian Education program has added classes and variety. Sunday School attendance has increased 63% from an average of 49 to 80.
5. Congregational care has been enhanced by the organization of the Chaplain Corp, and formation of Stephen Ministries, Health Ministry, and Prayer Shawl Ministry.
6. A Healing Service is conducted weekly.
7. Over 100 people a week attend AA meetings.
8. Mission giving has increased from about \$40,000 to slightly over \$54,000.
9. A Haiti relief mission ministry has stimulated several trips to Haiti by a number of people, members and non members. Through partnership action with other churches and organizations, goods and services and funds with a substantial value have flowed into Haiti.
10. Seeing the need, a church group organized a summer lunch program to assure children that depended on the school lunch program would be feed during the summer.
11. A church Arts Guild has been formed to enhance the visual appeal of the building, enhance the visual spiritual feel of the Sanctuary, utilize and recognize the many talented artists in the congregation.
12. Ice cream socials, after church snacks, fellowship dinners, a church picnic and many other similar activities offer opportunity for fellowship to maintain the special family feeling of the church.
13. A visioning process used 34 triads involving about 115 people to meet ten times using a thoughtful, prayerful process to help discern God's preferred future for the church.
14. Responding to suggestions and critiques a task force (Constitution and By Laws) has been studying governance best practices in other churches laying a foundation to recommend improvements for our church.
15. Parking has been expanded to help relieve capacity restraints in that area.
16. A parking greeter ministry has been established to provide a welcome in the parking lot and assistance to those needing it.
17. Church and community activities utilize church facilities regularly during the week and weekend.

The additional space has stimulated attendance and membership growth which in turn has grown operations revenue and mission and ministry activity.

Q. Why haven't we sold the Church on the Hill property?

A. When the decision to build was made it was anticipated that the Church on the Hill land and buildings would be sold. Two churches appeared to be candidates. When that land was donated to the church the deed requires that it be used for a non-profit purpose. As the economy began to turn down one potential buyer backed off and another elected to lease with option to buy. That tenant has now decided to go another

er route. The combination of use restriction and poor real estate market make near term sale prospects dim.

Q. How does the little white house property fit into all of this?

- A. The little white house property (1.9 acres and house adjacent to the church property) offers a number of advantages and cost savings. They are:
1. The house itself is larger than outward appearance suggests. The rooms lend themselves to multiple uses that fit with our vision.
 2. Parking spaces can be added on that property at much less cost than adding spaces on existing property.
 3. Parking spaces on that land are better positioned than space available on existing property. People prefer a church parking space that offers a view of the front door. The little white house property does that.
 4. Any expansion of floor space in our existing building will require septic expansion. There is no space to economically expand the present drain field. Absent additional land, an expensive pump system will be required for expansion. Owning the little white house property would provide land adjacent to our existing drain field and facilitate much lower cost septic expansion.

Money has been contributed and pledged for two purposes, parking expansion (about \$41,000 in hand) and down payment for the little white house property (about \$16,000 in hand). In addition pledges have been made that will bring in revenue in future years to pay toward little white house mortgage payments. The ad hoc parking committee has **discussed the possibility** of approaching contributors to request their permission to switch the use of funds from parking to purchase. If donors agreed to this, very little additional money would be required to purchase the property and the committee would request donations to cover that amount. At this point (November 6, 2010), the seller does not yet have permission to enter a short sale and no committee action has been officially proposed. Once the seller has permission or is forced into foreclosure the ad hoc committee will meet, adopt a committee recommendation, which will depend on circumstances at that time, and come to the Board and/or congregation, as required, with that recommendation.

Q. Why does our denomination charge us such a high rate of interest?

A. The Church Extension agency does not have access to the 0%- .25% money from the Federal reserve. It must borrow money from Disciples members who place their money as investments (CD's) which right now are yielding 3.5%-4.0% for a 60 month note. The spread between the current 6.25% and the 4.0% investment rate finances the agency, puts some money aside for interest free loans for some churches (we got one of those when we built the church on the hill), and puts aside reserves for non-performing loans. (www.churchextension.org) It should also be noted that construction loans were financed by local banks, but local banks would not provide permanent financing. The Church Extension agency was the viable option available at the time. The current rate of interest for a new loan with the Church Extension agency is 6.25% which is close to commercial loan rates.