

On the 15th day of January 2006, Covenant embarked on a dynamic process of discerning God's will for Covenant which will prepare it for ministry and mission in the 21st century. This process involved two years of bible study, discussion and taking stock. It followed a five-phase process developed by the center of Parish Development and used successfully by many churches and many denominations. The process introduced the congregation or resources and activities that were designed to lead us to think afresh about what God is calling Covenant to do. It also led us to discover how to become more flexible, agile, and responsive to the turbulent world of the 21st century in which we live.

MISSIONAL STRATEGY FOR COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A cluster of decisions made in Phase 3 of “Discerning God’s Will for Covenant” comprise the Missional Strategy. These are the decisions about:

1. GUIDING VISION

(What is God calling this church to become?)

2. ROLE-AND-MISSION STATEMENT

(In light of the Guiding Vision, who are we, and what do we do, and where are we headed?)

3. KEY RESULT AREAS AND GOALS

(In what key areas must we achieve results in order to actualize our Role-and-Mission?)

4. KEY PARTICIPANT GROUPS

(With what specific groups of persons will we participate in ministry and mission?)

5. CORE BELIEFS AND COMMITMENTS

(What core commitments, beliefs, and practices will shape and guide our life together?)

THE COVENANT HOUSEHOLD

God calls the Covenant Household into being.

In the Covenant Household,

we understand that God has a plan, a mission, and that God's mission needs a church. The plan is there; we strive to discover it, not invent it. Our purpose is from God.

In the Covenant Household,

we recognize God's love through the ironies of life's many events. We seek to know God's will, to understand and follow the Way of the Cross.

God shapes the Covenant Household through Jesus Christ.

In the Covenant Household,

God calls us to live in the mind of Christ, to be the new humanity which welcomes and embraces all people, in spite of the good and the bad in everyone.

In the Covenant Household,

we gather as God's people, being formed through scriptural images and prayer. We go out into the world to continue God's work, returning to Covenant to share experiences and gather support.

This is what we seek.

In the Covenant Household,

we strive for inclusiveness, not exclusiveness. In this way, we can be a model of God's Kingdom in the world.

In the Covenant Household,

we are intentional about building and strengthening relationships, especially through transformational conversations that address the spiritual hunger for knowing one another in faith.

In the Covenant Household,

we find a place where God's gifts of the Spirit are given and received.

This is what we value in our life together.

In the Covenant Household,

we celebrate the acceptance of our diversity, recognizing that each person brings unique gifts which contribute to the flavor of the whole. No one of us has to do it all; we trust in the synergy of the whole.

In the Covenant Household,

we work together to build and become mature, responsible disciples of Christ, living in freedom to experience God's all inclusive love that guides our relationships with our Covenant family and with the world beyond.

This is what we are called to be for the sake of the world.

In the Covenant Household,

we develop an awareness of the needs of other people in our community and in our world. We are intentionally visible in the community as a people of God, corporately and individually.

In the Covenant Household,

we are deliberate in our effort to imitate Christ and live responsibly in the world. We exist, as Jesus did, in times when society and political forces undermine our values. Like Christ, we must try to be peace and do justice.

In the Covenant Household,

we affirm God's reconciliation with the world in Jesus Christ, and we seek our role in his commandment to love one another.

We offer ourselves as part of God's plan to be reconciled to one another and to be good stewards of God's creation.

This is what we hope for the future.

In the Covenant Household,

the truth and light of God grounds us for action taken in love.

In the Covenant Household,

we live in hope-filled openness to the future that is God's reign, trusting in the mystery of God's love that shapes the household, *for every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.* (Hebrews 3.4).

Scriptural references that have been foundational in developing this Guiding Vision in an understanding of "household" (oikos): 1 Peter 2.5, 1 Timothy 3.15, Hebrews 3.6, Galatians 6.10.

ROLE-AND-MISSION STATEMENT

In light of the Guiding Vision, who are we, and what do we do, and where are we headed?

As members of God's inclusive household, we seek to follow Christ's example as servant people building relationships, showing God's love, and discovering God's hope filled plan for the future.

KEY RESULT AREAS AND GOALS

In what key areas must we achieve results in order to actualize our Role-and-Mission?

Witnessing Household

To develop a public identity for Covenant Church as a healing presence, demonstrating stewardship of God's creation, and promoting participation in issues of justice and peace.

Worshipping Household

To be a people whose worship of God reflects joy, connection, and love across generations and cultures.

To develop an atmosphere in the Covenant Household which promotes a sense of family and belonging.

Relational Household

To encourage deepening relationships within the Covenant Household, reflecting obedience to Christ's commandments to love and accept all people without regard to cultural differences or station in life.

To build relationships with God's larger Household of the community and the world.

Christ Forming Household

To discover the mind of Christ through study, prayer, worship, and action so we model God's Kingdom in the world.

KEY PARTICIPANT GROUPS

With what specific groups of persons will we participate in ministry and mission?

- All demographic groups within Covenant, i.e. current congregation members
- Persons within and without who desire a sense of belonging to a "family" that is intergenerational

- Persons within and without of various cultural, socio-economic backgrounds and beliefs
- Diverse faith communities (e.g., Jewish, Islamic)
- Visitors
- Persons within and without who want to make offerings to God using their various gifts
- Music ministry
- Involvement-challenged members
- Persons within and without who want to continue their spiritual formation through meditational and other worship styles
- Spiritual outreach (e.g., labyrinth, Cursillo, Centering Prayer, Taizé)
- Persons within and without who need support in gaining and maintaining justice in social, economic, and racial issues
- Those disenfranchised and marginalized
- Outreach ministry (e.g., WTOS, NOROC, Family Promise)
- People in need (in the congregation and beyond)
- Persons with no church home (unchurched)
- Neighborhood
- Students and youth
- Presbyterian connections

CORE BELIEFS AND COMMITMENTS

What core commitments, beliefs, and practices will shape and guide our life together?

We seek to discern and follow God's will, not our own, in all aspects of church. We believe in God's plan and will.

We welcome all people and value each one's contribution. We believe in respect for individuals.

We seek to engage our hearts, minds, hands and feet, and souls in the service of God.

We believe in the growth of people and their development as a servant people.

We seek to bring God's peace and justice to the world.

We believe in the power of joy, connection, and love in relationships with people and God which empowers us to be peace and do justice.

We seek to build an alternative community of love based on the gospel of Jesus Christ and not the values of the world.