

FIRST CHURCH DISCERNMENT PROCESS 2009-2010

Goal: To set aside time for prayerful reflection that will educate the congregation about our current crisis and solicit input about the core values of First Church. This will be a multi-pronged approach, led by a Discernment Process Ministry Team accountable to the Council of Deacons. The purpose will be to get as much input from as many members and constituents as possible. The congregation will be kept informed through regular updates in worship, Tower Topics, the web site and emails.

- 1. Congregational Survey (June) Time to Complete:** 20-30 minutes
Vehicle: Parish Profile Inventory
Purpose: Anonymous survey will provide an honest sense of where the Congregation is about a variety of issues and a general overview of congregational dynamics.
Funding for a professional survey has been underwritten by an anonymous church member.
Leadership: Stewardship Committee.
- 2. House Meetings (September 21-October 19) Time to Participate:** Approximately 1.5 hours
Vehicle: Neighborhood house meetings with dessert and discussion.
Purpose: To hear about the current state of First Church, discuss the results of the Survey, engage the participants in a discussion of our core values and possible outcomes.
Leadership: Key lay people and staff.
- 3. Stewardship Campaign (October) Time to Participate:** To be determined
Vehicle: Yet to be determined
Purpose: To determine the level of congregational support for the 2010-2011 budget and to provide a further means of communication to leadership about any issues or concerns.
Leadership: Stewardship Committee
- 4. Congregational Priority Setting Exercise (Late October) Time to Participate:** 2 hours
Vehicle: After-worship meeting in the Porter
Purpose: To take the results of the above activities and collectively set the priorities that will be used for building a budget and a staffing plan for 2010-2011.
Leadership: Outside leader with no stake in the outcome
- 5. Tying program, staffing and financial support to budget for 2010-2011 (November) by the Council of Deacons at COD meetings.**
- 6. Focus Groups (November) Time to Participate:** 1.5 hours for invitees
Vehicle: Representative samples of congregation (including non-participants) in small group setting
Purpose: Provide feedback on and preference for future staffing and direction developed by the Council of Deacons.
Leadership: Outside leader with no stake in the outcome.
- 7. Congregational Meetings as necessary to implement plan after January 1, 2010.**
- 8. Congregational Visitation Program (January-March)**
Vehicle: Trained lay visitors to visit every household of the congregation
Purpose: To understand and document members' reasons for joining the church, their expectations of their role in the Church and the Church's role in their lives after the staffing and budget decisions have been made. Will also serve to double check census and demographic data of membership.
Leadership: Discernment Process Ministry Team