

Wilson Memorial Union Church's

Plan for Our Future:

Our 2020 Vision

Prepared through the efforts our church family

Approved by the Executive Board: December 3, 2012

Executive Summary of Wilson Memorial's "2020 Vision"

The church family of Mary E. Wilson Memorial Union Church has worked together to produce the ideas, plans, and action steps described in this document. It has been an invigorating and unifying effort with encouragingly active participation by a good portion of the congregation. By investing in expert consulting help from The Alban Institute, specifically in the person of Rev. Larry Peers, we believe we have achieved a higher quality product and an important milestone in the life of our congregation. The challenge ahead of us is clearly to join together and actively pursue the exciting ideas and plans documented herein.

Each of the Common Ground Vision Themes agreed upon by our congregation and listed below is deserving of investment of our resources – our time, our talent, and our finances.

In the future, we will be/become a church that:

- leads in Youth Ministry;
- provides Christian fellowship, support, and activities for young families;
- continues to celebrate diversity and will act to encourage it;
- participates actively in community outreaches;
- is the community center for church and community activities;
- actively and consistently communicates our message, ministries, events, and programs through various media;
- meets individual and family spiritual needs.

We encourage everyone to read thoroughly this document, to reflect and pray about the ideas and plans, and to be active participants in the exciting future for our church.

Process for Developing Our Vision of Our Future at Wilson Memorial Union Church

What is needed to envision the future for a church? Active, open-minded participation by a representative cross-section of the congregation is critical in order to assure that the congregation feels a true sense of ownership in the vision. In addition, it is crucial that we learn from past experiences, building upon successes and avoiding repetition of past pitfalls. Our church had been through a period of discord in 2010 and had taken steps to ensure we would learn from those experiences. Process changes had been proposed by an Ad Hoc Committee and approved by the Executive Board. Regular communications were provided to the congregation throughout the development of these changes. A suggestion was made that now would be a great time for our church to come together to clarify our mission as a church and our vision for the future.

Growing out of this suggestion, the development of this plan encompassed five distinct steps involving our church's leadership (Executive Board and Pastor) and our congregation over a period of about 18 months.

The first step in the process occurred at the annual Executive Board strategizing session held in July 2011; these Board strategy retreats had been held each year for the past five years. The Board members brainstormed about the feasibility of our church engaging in the development of a strategic plan for the first time in twenty years. Their focus was on the why, what, when, how, and who aspects of undertaking a planning initiative. At the end of their strategy retreat, the Board had a strong consensus that it was important to tackle this planning challenge and to begin doing so as soon as possible. A steering committee of three Board members plus the Pastor volunteered to propose an approach and a timeline.

The steering committee's proposal, endorsed by the Board, resulted in the second step in our five-step process, Wilson's World Café, held in October 2011. The team felt strongly that the development of a focused vision for our congregation needed to start with an **experience** that would **engage** members and friends of our church family. This experience would not directly produce the vision, but would provide the foundation for developing it. They proposed that what was needed was a "raw material gathering phase," followed by a "grappling phase," and concluding with an "output phase." The World Café, which was widely promoted within our church family, would provide the raw material needed to begin the development of Wilson Memorial's strategic plan. It was well attended and did provide a lot of good information that was helpful in the subsequent steps of planning.

The Steering Committee and the Board realized that the quality of our church's plan would be far better if our church were able to take advantage of the expertise available from The Alban Institute, a group we had worked with previously with good success. They also realized that the work ahead required an expanded steering committee and they gratefully added four more volunteers from the congregation to that team. With the help of Rev. Larry Peers of the Alban Institute, the team was able to prepare for and then hold the third step in the planning process, the All-Church

Conference held on two days in early May 2012. Through the active participation of a large number of church family members and following the structured approach of Larry Peers as our facilitator, the participants agreed on the seven common ground vision themes for Wilson Memorial Union Church that are described in this document.

The outcome of the All-Church Conference also led to step four in the planning process, the preparation and reporting out on short-term and longer-term actions and projects that would enable us to make progress in each of those seven common ground vision themes. Volunteers worked with a steering committee member over the summer to develop proposed short-term and longer-term actions and projects. Then in September 2012, members of our church family gathered after church to hear reports from each team, to ask questions for clarification, to affirm aspects of what was presented, and to add other suggestions.

The fifth step involved preparation of this report. To complete the report, the steering committee worked with our consultant, Larry, to identify ways to coordinate and sequence the actions and projects. Some steps come logically before others. These activities resulted in this report, first presented to the Board for discussion, modification if necessary, and approval, and then distribution to the entire congregation.

It is evident from reading the sequential description of the planning process that many people have invested a large amount of time and energy in the plan's development. The Steering Committee consisting of Pam Davis, Michael Droege, Al Ellis, Martin Greller, Joe Higgins, Barbara Peters, Judy Thomson, and Hugh Woodruff have worked tirelessly to prepare for each of the steps along the way and to keep moving things along. The guidance provided by Larry Peers of The Alban Institute has been invaluable. The support of the Executive Board and the participation of many members of the church family in the planning sessions were imperative and appreciated.

Of course, those efforts won't end with the distribution of this report. As good stewards, now comes the exciting part, our investment of more time, talent, and resources to accomplish the proposed actions and projects – to make our vision a reality.

Our Vision

It is 9:45 on Sunday morning in the fall of 2016. A young family enters the front door of Wilson Memorial Church. They had seen a newspaper article during the summer, about the church's youth mission trip, and after visiting the church's website had decided that this "family friendly" church might just suit their needs. As they look around the narthex, and are admiring the stained glass windows, which they recognize from photos on the website, they are greeted by two teenagers. Today is the second Sunday of the month, they are told, and a special "Kid's Church" is being held in the church's chapel. The teens offer to escort the young children to this special service.

As the mother walks to the chapel with her two children and their new teenaged friends, the father waits in the narthex for his wife to return. He is approached by a couple in their 30's, who are wearing pins identifying them as "Greeters". They welcome him to the church, inquire about his family and give him a copy of a brochure describing the church and its activities.

When his wife returns, the couple enter the sanctuary. One of the ushers, a teenage boy, gives them copies of the Sunday morning bulletin, and another, an older gentleman, offers to help them find seats. The church is not crowded, though most of the pews are at least partially filled, and they find seats about midway towards the chancel. As they look around they notice that the congregation, like the town in which the church is located, is predominantly Caucasian, though there are a few darker complexions as well: Latinos, African-Americans and some, like themselves, Asians.

The twenty members of the choir enter at the front of the church, and make their way to the choir "loft" on the left side of the sanctuary. They are followed by the pastor who stops at the center aisle. The congregation is invited to join in singing a simple opening song, and then the pastor reads a few announcements about upcoming church activities: a Wednesday Kid's Club; the CROP walk to raise money for food for those in need; a weekly Bible Study; and in a couple more weeks the 5th Annual "Trunk or Treat" Halloween Celebration in the church's parking lot. She mentions that several other events are listed on the weekly calendar included with the bulletin, and also makes note of the coffee hour following the church service.

The pastor climbs the few steps to the chancel area, and the service begins with a prayer, followed by an old familiar hymn. The service is not unlike that of the church they had attended in their old hometown, and is alive and joyful. During the "passing of the peace", several members of the congregation have made a point of greeting the newcomers, and one, identifying herself as the chair of the membership committee, has even come to sit beside them.

Later in the service, a representative from the church's Outreach Committee speaks briefly about the church's participation in an organization called StarFish --- a local food bank.

When the service ends, the membership chairwoman invites the couple to join her and the rest of the congregation for coffee in the church's Fellowship Hall. As they enter the room, the couple notices a calendar on the wall, listing the events they heard about prior to the service, as well as many other activities, both spiritual and social, in the coming weeks. The wife notes that the church's choir practices on Thursday evenings and considers joining them.

With the Kid's Church service completed, the Youth Director has come in, accompanied by the children, and takes a moment to introduce himself to the newcomers. The pastor, who had greeted them briefly at the close of the service, also stops by to say a few more words of welcome.

As they sip their coffee and enjoy some simple snacks, other members of the congregation also introduce themselves. The couple recognizes some as parents of their children's schoolmates, but find that the congregation has a number of members from surrounding towns as well.

Finishing their coffee, the couple says goodbye to the people they've met and walk up the ramp to the narthex and the front doors. As they leave the church and walk to the parking lot, they are smiling. They are excited because they have found an active church that doesn't impose a set of beliefs or constraints, but invites you to share in the Christian journey.

They will be back.

Action Plans

The following pages list both short-term and longer-term action steps and potential projects that can/should be undertaken in each of the seven common ground themes that we decided as a congregation needed to be our areas of focus. Each team met, brainstormed, and documented their ideas in a consistent tabular form. By taking these actions steps in a logical, sequential manner, our church family will move toward the future that we envision. Please read through each of the tables and hopefully identify areas that are of greatest interest to you and in which you would like to invest your time and talent.

As a reminder, the seven common ground themes that we agreed upon as a congregation are:

In the future, we will be/become a church that:

- leads in Youth Ministry;
- provides Christian fellowship, support, and activities for young families;
- continues to celebrate diversity and will act to encourage it;
- participates actively in community outreaches;
- is the community center for church and community activities;
- actively and consistently communicates our message, ministries, events, and programs through various media;
- meets individual and family spiritual needs.

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that

Leads in Youth Ministry

Team Members: Judy Thomson (chair), Laurie Conley, Joe Higgins, Steve MacTaggart, Joanne Meeks, Sarah Miller, Dave Ray, Deidre Seidel, Yvette Whitley

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

We believe it is important to provide Wilson's youth with positive associations with other like-minded youth and adult leaders; we believe in fostering community support and supporting each other; we believe we are called to enhance and support the individual spiritual paths of the youth in our congregation. Providing a strong foundation in our youth program and for our youth, will enhance the experiences of our youth and create a foundation for their future spiritual journey here at Wilson and beyond.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. We have invested in a full time Youth and Family Ministry Director
- b. We have a very successful Vacation Bible School program in conjunction with Saint Mary's Catholic Church
- c. We have a successful Summer Mission Trip for 14+ age group
- d. We have a Confirmation program and class which includes a mentoring program
- e. We are improving our Youth Group activity programs and Youth Room renovations
- f. We continue to sponsor and have a strong relationship with the Boy Scouts of Watchung

2) Challenges

- a. We must improve our communication of events to youth, families, the community and the congregation as a whole
- b. We must provide consistency in the events we offer so people and families can plan ahead
- c. The youth must be involved in generating ideas for volunteering within and outside Wilson Church; they need to set the priorities
- d. Defining who the youth group participants are (i.e., naming them such as Alpha and Omega)
- e. Reaching out to other churches and youth groups to "team up" for events or to gather ideas

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Leads in Youth Ministry

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Create a church calendar with youth activities and events; provide volunteer opportunities on calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth and Family Ministry Director -Pastor -Church School Directors -CE Committee *Parent Advisory Board? *Interested parents and other congregants with ideas and suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -church calendar -paper and web distribution -announcements in bulletin -volunteers/webmaster
Create an email and phone chain for youth and their parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth and Family Ministry Director -Church School Directors -Youth and their parents *Parent Advisory Board? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Information from families and youth members; -Updated information as it is available - email and hard copies available
Create a solid structure for communicating events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Email -phone call -text messages -Facebook -Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Youth Director -Pastor -CE Committee -Parent Advisory board -Willing members of the congregation who are a part of an event/fundraiser 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Updated information from youth/families so they can easily receive the information -a willing person to communicate information on Facebook and Twitter
Begin using youth group names for distinction of those participating in activities and for identification with a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Pastor -Youth Director -Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ideas from youth and guidance from Youth Director
Leverage Boy Scout relationship for sharing information on events; heightening community awareness and expanding connections that may increase youth participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Boy Scout Liaison -Youth Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -willing participants (perhaps those involved in scouts) -community

Proposed Longer-Term Action Steps

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Expand the mentoring program for the confirmation class beyond the current 3 months; create moments to gather and share post-confirmation; reunions	-Pastor -Youth Director	-ideas for events to reunite the mentor with their mentee -mentor and youth participation
Create incentive programs for Youth to participate in events; AIM, Sunshine Dollars...	-Youth Director -Church School Directors -CE Committee -Youth	-creative ideas from creative individuals -\$ possible cost for materials
Create a “College Connection” group that that may have their own reunions, mission trip weekends, retreats, holiday gatherings	-College-age “young adults -Youth Director for resources and connections to recent graduates -Volunteer committee of college students and recent graduates	-contact information for recent grads and college info -ideas for gatherings at the church -Possible fundraising help

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that
Provides Christian fellowship, support, and activities for young families

Team Members: Michael Droege (chair), Karen Hennelly, Eileen Higgins, Deidre Seidel

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

We all decided that our commitment to this task lies in two areas. First is our commitment to the spiritual and social development of our children and families. This is key. But secondly there is the logical realities that the future of our church depends on how we develop the younger generation. Having quality ministry to young families in the area means we have a natural, organic mechanism for growth.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. the young families that come have deep roots and long-standing friendship that keeps them coming. That sense of community needs to be fostered and expanded so that all who come to our church have that same experience.
- b. we have good events, such as advent workshop, that we need to improve and do a better job at promoting
- c. VBS is a huge win. What can we learn from this event?
- d. Youth group is on the right path. This will assist greatly.

2) Challenges

- a. Sunday School is in need of a rebuilding process.
- b. There is a disconnect between the "adult church" and the children/family ministry
- c. Recruitment of volunteers is not as easy as it used to be
- d.** Family life trends such as time, social opportunity, and other family opportunities are obstacles that need to be addressed

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Provides Christian fellowship, support, and activities for young families

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Sunday School Renewal	Owner: Roger and Arlene with Michael and Kim There is also a need for teachers and parents to be on board with this.	Team to look deeply into our process, resource ideas.
Calendar of Family Ministry Events	Owners: CE Committee, Michael Droege	Every possible event submitted to the calendar creator
Mid-Week Kid's Club	Owner: Youth and Family office	Volunteers to be on Michael Droege's team
Family Camp Weekend: Hold one Family Camp Weekend 2013	Owners: CE Committee, Michael Droege, Barbara Peters, Camp Committee	People's time and creativity.

Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Programs to address the spiritual needs of the whole family	Owners: Barbara Peters and Michael Droege	TBD
20-Somethings Ministry	Owner: Michael Droege, members who fit criteria	Participants and ministry opportunities
Youth/Children's Choirs	Owners: Executive Michael Droege and a musician	People willing to invest time and energy
Homecoming	Owners: past participants	See above

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that

Continues to Celebrate Diversity and Will Act to Encourage It

Team Members: Martin Greller (chair), Denise Greller, Eileen Higgins, Judith Lie, Roberta Smith

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

Diversity means different ethnicities, different socio-economic groups, different family configurations including singles, different ability groups (hearing, sight, mobility challenged, for example) coming together in the experience of faith, worship and support. This is important in Wilson Memorial in two ways:

- First, diversity creates opportunities for the congregations, collaborating churches, and members of surrounding communities to be exposed to the faith traditions, experiences and the perspectives of a range of races, ethnicities, cultures and religious expressions we would not otherwise encounter thereby enriching our own spiritual lives.
- Second, diversity within our church is one indicator of how successful we are at welcoming all. We have an open table. As an ICCC church we are committed to welcome all. We do so by accepting people as they are, celebrating the diversity. By doing so we become an ever more welcoming church family as our growing membership increasingly reflects the communities in which we are situated.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. History and tradition as a community church and our historic role shaping the ICCC
- b. Open table
- c. Our covenant with St. Mary's
- d. Breadth of Christian faith traditions of membership
- e. Vacation Bible School
- f. Habitat mission trip

2) Challenges

- a. To open our doors and our hearts to the community requires many small actions performed with consistency over time, as opposed to a single big action done once. It is more like tending a garden than cutting down a tree.
- b. Timely recognizing the consequences of programming, scheduling, and other choices on potential participants other than those who have participated in the past.

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Continues to Celebrate Diversity and Will Act to Encourage It

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Find people to not just greet but to welcome and engage newcomers at services or events. Establish and follow protocol for following up	Owner: Membership Committee Cooperation with ushers, church school, youth programs, adult program	Volunteers able to quickly engage visitors. Small follow up team.
Visit three ICCC churches or other Christian churches in 2013 with faith traditions that differ from our own. Invite their members to visit us and make an event of it.	Owners: Ecumenical Committee Visits require some of congregation be interested. Hosting requires pastor and hospitality.	Can begin immediately. Challenge is making it a regular activity
Examine communications for unintended exclusionary messages and visual images	Owner: Communications Committee Pastor, office staff, general vigilance.	Attention, awareness, and clear path to share information so correction can be made.
Eliminate the designated area for the hard of hearing since it no longer is meaningful, having been replaced by other means to support hearing impaired worshippers.	Owner: Facilities Committee	Chisel, varnish
Improve how we inform sight or hearing impaired visitors of the resources we have that could help them, while being respectful.	Owner: Ushers Pastor – during announcements at the start of worship service	

Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Host events with groups different from ourselves	<p>Owners: First Facilities, then Outreach, Adult Education & Ecumenical</p> <p>Need to review policies for events and then identify opportunities for events appealing to our members and potential partners (multiple committees). May require some funds for individual events, although partners may be willing to contribute.</p>	Added costs for cleanup and possibly conducting event
Demographic self assessment	Owner: Board Membership, Church School	
Keep diversity as a focus in scheduling and budgeting activities and in annual reports	<p>Owner: Board</p> <p>Eventually, it affects every committee. Gets there by using diversity as a criterion in discussing committee's work in annual report and with Board. Part of presentations on committees' work to congregation</p>	Educate committee chairs on expectation
Determine how to engage the diversity of Christian heritages within the Wilson Memorial	Owner: Adult Education	Resources for program (expertise, funding)
Examine our communication to identify ways we can expand the groups we reach	<p>Owner: Communications Committee</p> <p>Board, Office, report back from committees</p>	Review requires scheduling time. Expect modest costs in expanding communications

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that

Participates Actively in Community Outreaches

Team Members: Hugh Woodruff (chair), Jim Greeley, Dick Hill, Gwen Mayer, Lisa Renaud

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

Eight times in the Bible we are told to "love your neighbor as yourself." It is "Gospel 101;" it is living our Christian faith to love our neighbors. When we hear the word neighbors, we need to realize it means to support our own church family and to support our community family. The bottom line is that we need to support our "Neighbors in Need."

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. We have made financial contributions to nearly twenty organizations for many years.
- b. We have successful initiatives that reach out to our "neighbors in need:"
 - i. Frippery – both by serving the community's needs with items for purchase and with monetary gifts made using profits;
 - ii. Starfish – by supplying food, money, and workers;
 - iii. United Families program at Christmastime;
 - iv. Mission Trip to help more distant "neighbors in need;"
 - v. Additional monetary donations for one-time benevolence needs from our Memorial Endowment Fund;
 - vi. Blankets+; Crop Walk; Mitten Tree; Souper Bowl; Stuff the Bus; 20 Hour Famine; ...
- c. We currently offer weddings, baptisms, and funerals to people in the community, even if they are not members of our church.

2) Challenges

- a. Our church's size is not what we think it is – what it used to be.
- b. Do we have too many, too few, or just the right amount of outreach programs for a church of our size?
- c. Are we too unfocused in our efforts thereby resulting in too much dilution of our work?
- d. Results are not always tangible to the members.
- e. We are not always specific about what is needed.

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Participates Actively in Community Outreaches

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Celebrate our successful outreach programs as a church family through tangible/visual reminders of how we have helped our “Neighbors in Need.”	Owner: Publicity Committee? Creative people willing to create ways to convey through visual and verbal means what impact our outreach programs are having, hopefully resulting in an increased level of volunteerism going forward.	Poster boards, photographs, testimonials, volunteers.
Advertise specifically what we need for Starfish in the way of food; provide reusable Wilson Memorial shopping bags for people to use when shopping.	Owners: Outreach Committee and Frippery Creative people to design the shopping bags and to develop better ways of communicating the need to our church family, hopefully resulting in an increased amount of food and money donated to Starfish on a regular basis.	Funds to purchase reusable shopping bags, volunteers.
Report back to the church family the results so we all will know if we have achieved success.	Owner: Outreach Committee “Owners” of various outreach initiatives who make certain to communicate results to the church family, hopefully resulting in an increased spirit of volunteerism.	Writers for Hilltopics updates; Speakers for pulpit updates.
Create a calendar of what outreaches happen when (or combine our calendar with others calendars being proposed)	Owners: Outreach Committee to supply the data and Office Staff to incorporate into our Church Calendar Participation of everyone who is the champion for each of our outreach initiatives will be needed.	People’s time and creativity.
Challenge ourselves to assess our current outreach donations bearing in mind our church membership has changed over the years; are we maximizing the benefit – the “bang for our buck”?	Owners: Outreach Committee and Executive Board Open-mindedness to change our thinking from “we have always done it this way” to “where can we make the biggest impact?” – hopefully resulting in an increased sense of involvement in our outreach donations rather than a feeling that they are at arm’s length.	People’s time, energy and open-mindedness.

Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Create an Inreach program for Wilson Memorial Church	Owners: Pastor and Executive Board Pastor to function as “gatekeeper”; Board to establish guidelines and criteria for use to ensure integrity, yet enable confidentiality for the recipient	Finances to fund the program
Extend the Inreach program to cover more than just finances; A/C loaner program for elderly with nothing; transportation program for people who need it; etc.	Owner: Executive Board Volunteers to create the programs, sort through the logistics, and implement the programs	People’s time and creativity
Evaluate at year-end our successes and failures; what programs succeeded and why	Owners: Executive Board and Outreach Committee Energetic volunteers; various program “owners” willing to make honest assessments	People willing to invest time and energy

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that
Is the Community Center for church and community activities.

Team Members: Pam Davis and Al Ellis (co-chairs), Don Cox, Jim Greeley, Ed Kresge, Dave Nunn, Roberta Smith

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

There was a time that Wilson Memorial Church was mentioned in the same sentence with the Rescue Squad, Firemen's Exempt and other prominent community groups. That is no longer the case. Wilson Memorial needs to become relevant in the community again, as a place for community gatherings, establishing a renewed community identity and possibly increasing membership as a by-product of this effort.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. We have a beautiful facility (all venues within)
- b. Our facility is accessible, not only for the handicapped, but the location is prominent.
- c. We have an established fee structure for facility usage.

2) Challenges

- a. Our fee structure may not be consistent across group types.
- b. Wear and tear on the facility
- c. Security for events
- d. Need monitors for events
- e. Liability for non-members
- f. Sound system
- g. Air conditioning consistency throughout building
- h. Alcohol policy
- i. Is there a need for a community center?

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Community Center

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Revisit "For Fee" structure and plans	Owner: Executive Board Committee appointed for review. Building & Grounds? Facility?	Volunteer time, research comparable facilities
General Interest Seminars: Goal: Hold two general Interest Seminars in 2013	Owner: Executive Board Is there a committee for Public Relations? Not sure what group this would fall under.	Funds to create and distribute flyers. Place advertising in community newspapers
Extend invitation to local community groups to use facility for regular meetings	Owners: Executive Board, PR	Funds and personnel to create facility information package
Offer facility to Library and Arts Center for events that are too large for their facility.	Owners: Executive Board, PR	Funds and personnel to create facility information package
More Concerts: Goal Hold two concerts in 2013.	Owners: Concert Committee	Volunteers to organize, publicize. Funds to pay for performances or charge admission.

Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Public Safety Courses	Owners: Executive Board	PR
Serve as a facility that members of the community can use in times of emergency (power outages, etc.). Provide heat, blankets, bathrooms. May need to consider power (generator), showers, cots, etc.	Owner: Executive Board Perhaps work with Red Cross for supplies	Funds for generator, supplies
After School camps	Owner: Executive Board Would have to have a group to run these	Should be self-funding by fees
<p>Participate in and offer various community activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ take part in Village's Earth (Green) Day ○ We could have a weekend in the Fall where we become a site to prepare emergency packs for the Red Cross or Church World Services or FEMA - or prepare gift packages for soldiers - something like that. ○ Have an annual Health or Senior Fair - in conjunction with the Somerset County Office on Aging - offer health screenings + other services ○ Historical Society - there MUST be one for Watchung - host an event with them like a "pioneer day" or something along those lines – something celebrating the heritage 	<p>Owners: Executive Board Energetic volunteers; various program "owners" willing to organize and follow through on a particular activity</p> <p>Partner with an exiting community organization</p>	<p>People willing to invest time and energy. Perhaps some funds for PR</p>

<p>of the Village of Watchung and of which Wilson Memorial is such a big part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Antiques Road Show" o Trunk Sale - people have a garage sale type thing - sell out of the trunk of their car using our parking lot. o Some kind of youth "camp" - not VBS - but for older kids like a leadership camp 		
<p>Playground area</p>	<p>Owner: Executive Board Volunteers to research costs and options</p>	<p>Funds to purchase equipment. Volunteers to install equipment.</p>

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that
Actively and consistently communicates our message, ministries,
events, and programs through various media

Team Members: Joe Higgins (chair), Paul Baylis, Pam Davis, Karen Hennelly, Steve MacTaggart, Lorri Monetti

Why is this important to Wilson Church's future? What impact and results can this have on what's possible for Wilson Church?

Good, effective communication is essential to the success of any organization, for keeping members and non-members informed of the organization's activities, as well as for clearly conveying the organization's purpose and mission to others. If we are not communicating well, we are "hiding our light under a bushel". The words "communicate" and "community" derive from a common root. One's "community" is that group of people with whom one communicates. Thus by improving our communication processes and broadening the scope of our communication, we will be able to increase the size of our community, in terms of both our membership numbers and the number of people whom we are able to serve.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. We have a website that is available to members and non-members.
- b. We have a telephone system that allows us to quickly contact all of our members with information on upcoming events.
- c. We have a beautiful facility in a visible location on a high-traffic road.
- d. We have many wonderful programs throughout the year, both religious and social.

2) Challenges

- a. Information on the website is often out of date or inaccurate. The online calendar, once posted, is never updated but only replaced from month to month.
- b. The phone system is not used often enough. It is most commonly used to announce a memorial service when a member has passed away, thus making the system a conveyor of bad news.
- c. We do not consistently use outside signage to announce our events to passersby.
- d. Our events are not consistently publicized in local newspapers or on community websites.

- e. We do not have links on our website to other organization in Watchung, such as St. Mary's Stony Hill church, or outside Watchung, such as the ICCC, nor do other websites link to ours.
- f. Information is not always shared. We make the assumption that everyone already knows certain things (the traditions, order of service, leaders) and don't always make a conscious effort to inform newcomers. This sometimes has led to the feeling that only a small elite group are "in the know", when usually the information is available for those who manage to ask the right person.
- g. Increased use of technology (Facebook, Twitter, on-line calendars, etc.) may present a learning curve to less "tech savvy" congregants.
- h. There may be some privacy issues with posting photos on the website. Also, there are potential copyright issues if we post recordings of choir anthems or other music used in out services or activities.

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Actively and consistently communicates our message, ministries, events, and programs through various media

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Define Communication Process/Rules/Owners a. Who owns each form of communication: Website; Homepage, Calendar, Prayers, Photos, etc. b. What is each type of communication appropriate for.	Pastor, Youth Director, Secretary, anyone involved in communicating with congregation or with outside media.	People's time and creativity.
Begin a redesign of church website and implement simple changes. Determine a consistent "look and feel" that will make the website appealing and useful. Update and replace any obsolete content and add links to other organizations where relevant (ICCC, St. Mary's church).	Youth Director, Website Committee, others (youth?) with knowledge of web design.	input from other committees, for updated website content.
Update our Friendship directory	Church office staff, Membership Committee	\$ --- cost of printing
Improve our internal information tools: -Have a station (in narthex?) with pamphlets. -Make Sunday bulletins available in/near Church School office for parents/teachers who don't attend service in Sanctuary -Post a (multi-month) calendar of events in accessible location(s) (outside Fellowship Hall, near Church School office, etc.)	Church office staff, ushers or greeters (to make visitors aware of the information). Note: the church brochure is already available in the narthex, and bulletins are provided in the church school office for teacher. However, it is important that people are kept aware of the availability of these items.	
Begin to incorporate Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) into church website.	Youth Director, Website Committee, others (youth?) with knowledge of web design.	

Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
<p>Extensive redesign of website. Determine if there are existing web development tools that will make it easier to update the site and keep information current. Increase the use of photographs and even videos on the website. Provide the capability for blogs by pastor, youth director, Board president, committee chairs, etc. Provide an online dynamic calendar that can be updated by those scheduling events rather than relying on one person to do all updates. Add the ability to donate on-line, both for regular pledges and special donations such as outreach or mission trip</p>	<p>Youth Director, Website Committee, others (youth?) with knowledge of web design.</p>	<p>\$ --- possible need for new software. \$ --- may need professional assistance</p>
<p>Update our photo directory.</p>	<p>Office staff, volunteer photographer(s)</p>	<p>photographer(s), printer</p>
<p>Increase the frequency and visibility of our coverage in local newspapers and other media; Encourage (assign?) participants in various activities to write follow-up articles to be submitted to the papers, posted on the web and summarized in "Hilltopics"</p>	<p>this may require a new committee or sub-committee (do we currently have a group that is responsible for communicating with the local community).</p>	<p>People's time and creativity.</p>
<p>Leverage our Prime Real Estate Location: Improve Fixed Signage Increase ad hoc signage for special events. Hold more visible outdoor events</p>		<p>\$ cost of additional signs for special events.</p>

In the future, Wilson Memorial Union Church will be/become a church that

Meets Individual and Family Spiritual Needs – Lest We Forget

Team Members: Barbara Peters (chair), Marie Comerford, Pam Cox, Fran Ellis, Karen Hennelly, Bruce Ryno, Deidre Seidel

Why is this important to Wilson Church’s future? What impact and results can this have on what’s possible for Wilson Church?

Spirituality is the core of who we are. At Wilson, individuals seek to have a personal relationship with God and look for God’s constant support in all aspects of life. Every stage of life creates an opportunity to seek guidance. We believe that as adults and children learn the things needed to be complete individuals, a non-judgmental attitude is important on everyone’s part. There is no “one size fits all” way to meet anyone’s spiritual need so flexibility is critical in this regard. We also affirm that we have a very important responsibility to bring “church” to those who are unable to get out due to illness or other reasons.

What are your current strengths in this area that you would want to build upon? Are there some obstacles to be aware of?

1) Strengths

- a. Minister contact with individual parishioners.
- b. We are comfortable with and prize the children in our congregation.
- c. We are not stuffy.
- d. We accept everyone.
- e. We aren’t forceful.
- f. We have a strong Covenant relationship with St. Mary’s
- g. We have a different style of midweek Lenten Service.
- h. People are welcome to think outside of the box.
- i. We have open communion
- j. A person doesn’t have to belong to a particular group in church to feel part of the church in general.
- k. We offer a variety of experiences (from playing bells to Sunday School).

2) Challenges

- a. We don’t offer a contemporary service. If we did offer a regular Sunday morning contemporary service, however, then we would have “two congregations”.
- b. We don’t communicate our strengths well.

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET FOR VISION THEME

Meets Individual and Family Spiritual Needs

Proposed Short-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Hold day “mini-retreats” for women and men	Owner: Pastor and /or Youth and Family Ministry Director who would invite individuals in the congregation to work along side them for purposes of planning and facilitation	Volunteers willing to plan, publicize and assist in facilitating. Cost could be covered by participants with scholarship funding available.
Develop a prayer group and/or contemplative prayer group.	Owner: Pastor who would invite interested individuals to assist.	Volunteers willing to promote through publicity.
Develop a statement that can be used to describe the general nature of the spirituality of our congregation. Perhaps this could be a springboard for a full congregation mission statement for how we proceed in the future.	Owner: The Executive Board through possibly an ad hoc team appointed by the Board (the existing spiritual action team?) Once a statement is suggested, feedback from the Board and congregation would be actively encouraged.	Volunteers willing to give their time to meet together. Writers for Hilltopics and speakers from the pulpit would be needed as well.
Develop a mechanism to find out what people want (programs, etc.) to help meet their spiritual needs, especially people who aren’t here.	Owner: Possibly the CE Committee	People’s time and creativity.
Hold a thematic series on Sunday mornings.	Owner: Pastor and/or Youth and Family Ministry Director.	No additional resources needed.
Invite Sr. Antonia to lead Tai Chi	Owner: Pastor and CE Committee	Funding through adult education line item of budget
Evening Women’s Guild	Owner: Interested volunteers willing to lead	People’s time and creativity.
Hold a prayer service open to entire community for a purpose (such as pray for our troops).	Owner: Pastor and Executive Board	Volunteers willing to plan and publicize.

Hold “spiritual yoga” in our building	Owner: A facilities/church as community center team or committee	Volunteers would be needed to explore the feasibility of this program and determine who would be the instructor as well as whether we could accommodate a regular program like this without conflicts with building usage. Participants would cover cost.
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Proposed Longer-term Action Steps/Projects

Sequenced Action Steps:	Recommended Group or Committee	Resources needed:
Hold an annual overnight spiritual retreat for women and men.	Owners: Pastor and/or Director of Youth and Family Ministries who would invite individuals in the congregation to work alongside them for purposes of planning and facilitation.	Volunteers willing to plan, publicize and assist in facilitating. Cost could be covered by participants with scholarship funding available.