

Dear friends:

This document is an **action plan**. This is an application piece, drafted with another document within easy reach -- *The Great Commission: The Transformative Journey to Christ-likeness – A Strategic Vision for 2004 – 2009*. That “strategic vision” is a guiding document, representing the foresight and collective vision of our elders and pastoral staff; in concert with other key laypersons. This document makes no attempt to go farther than that vision piece, with one notable exception. This document will include action items related to church expansion onto other geographical locations. While the guiding document is committed to broad visions, values and objectives (with scriptural reinforcement), this **action plan** introduces **specific courses of action** intended to honor and facilitate the visions, values and objectives found in the guiding document.

This **action plan** will be introduced to pastoral staff and elders for consideration and adaptation. Then it will be introduced to other relevant leadership entities charged with enacting the plan with us. It will also be available for the interested church member. Then, with God’s help, we will do it, live it and generally *be* it.

A **third document** will also be created. This *sizzle piece* will be a pamphlet or packet that introduces our corporate goals and action plan in a way that is easily read and understood by the average church participant. The goal of that third piece is to inspire and inform, primarily for the purpose of **enlisting broad participation**. It will be light on detail and heavy on stories, images and opportunities. Yes, it will spell out our hopes for the future, but with colorful brush strokes.

With all of these documents, our assumption is that our visions, goals and plans are subject to many winds of influence. Yes, our values should remain firm and mostly timeless. But as for our goals, our intention is not to create an inflexible manual of dictates. Rather, we simply want to walk together with a shared sense of common conviction and strategy. May the Holy Spirit be our truest Guide.

Thanks for being part of this dynamic faith family in this fascinating season. I thank God for all of the people who’ve played vital roles during the unfolding story of this church.

Yours in Christ,

Keith Potter, Senior Pastor

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1. The OVERARCHING GOAL for 2004 - 2009:

TRANSFORMATION

The Journey To Christ-Likeness

Over the next five years, our investments of time, energy, talent and resources will be subject to a fundamental driving question:

Are lives being changed?

A number of related questions stream out of that primary one:

Are people coming to Christ and receiving Him?

Are people growing in the knowledge of Christ: God's Word and God's ways?

Are people growing deeper into lives of prayerful communication with God?

Are people growing in service and responsiveness to His leading?

Are people experiencing healing and deliverance toward a life of healthy discipleship?

Are people discovering their gifts, talents and treasures and learning how to live consecrated lives, applying their assets to God's purposes?

Are people experiencing community in ways that change their reality?

Are people more confident about telling their stories and sharing their faith with an interested world?

Are we agents of transformation, changing the lives of people in our community and in the wider world with our loving investment into them?

We're led to ask other critical questions: **Does this program catalyze transformation? Does this investment breed real change? Does this class stimulate actual growth? Does this experience foster authentic movement along the journey toward Christ-likeness?**

And that is the goal: Christ-likeness. Unreachable as it seems, this is the compelling call of God – for us to be imitators, disciples, learners, followers, participants and partakers in the Divine work of loving and changing the world.

OUR THEME SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority is heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (New International Version)

These were Jesus’ parting words. For much of the Church around the world, they represent a kind of charter, or purpose statement. We call this passage *The Great Commission*. Other scriptures, like the Great Commandment (Love the Lord your God...and love your neighbor as yourself), deserve equal attention in the big picture of Christian living. However, Matthew 28:18-20 represents our immediate sense of God’s leading for Saratoga Federated Church in this season of our lives.

There are various reasons why this passage captures our prayerful attention in this season.

- We realize that God has been leading our church over several decades toward an *evangelical consensus*. While we continue to serve diverse people and represent diverse Christian agendas, we know that God has progressively awakened at SFC a clearer understanding of His outward call – to make disciples of all nations.
- We realize that our growing theological consensus is not always represented by *evangelical behaviors*, or programs and actions that are obviously born out of our hunger to see more people know Christ and enjoy His life-changing benefits.
- We realize that we have often chosen familiarity at the cost of transformation; comfort at the cost of growth; inwardness and cloistered community at the cost of real lives around us.
- We realize that answering this outward call to love and change the world requires *real discipleship*, fueled by deep devotion to prayer, study, accountable relationships, community and stewardship.

We believe that Christ, in *The Great Commission*, is commanding us to both experience and catalyze transformation.

1. TRANSFORMING INDIVIDUAL LIVES

“The goal of Saratoga Federated Church is bold: we seek transformation during this next season of our church life as evidenced by new people who will come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, people who publicly declare their commitment to Him, disciples who are trained and equipped to go where the Lord might lead in order to be witnesses for Him in our homes, schools, workplaces and community. This transformative process can be described as a journey to Christ-likeness.”

This is a seasonal application of our church mission statement (MESSAGE, MATURITY, MINISTRY).

To reach this transformational goal, there are some changes that EACH of us will need to embrace:

1a. Acquiring our faith

We are a Christian church, with a distinctly Christian message about God’s love revealed through Jesus Christ. Our hope is that every person who attends this church will hear the good news, believe in Christ and follow Him. We believe that this is a transformative experience. The Holy Spirit brings real and immediate change. Every step along the Christian journey brings more change. We believe, as Paul writes in Romans 12:2, that as we acquire faith, God wants us to “be transformed by the renewing of our minds.” We long to experience and witness this transformation.

Therefore, we will:

- **Preach and teach** the gospel, in every possible setting, with a strategic awareness that some people are still in need of acquiring faith in Christ. Almost every meeting or activity could be a threshold event for one or more people to receive Christ.
- Provide more straightforward **opportunities to receive** Christ, especially in the worship services, but also in other gatherings. We need to call the question and provide opportunity: “Are you a Christian? Would you like to become a Christian?”
- Train leaders and teachers to have **an eye open for seekers** in our midst, and to create threshold moments when seekers might cross into the family of faith.
- **Pray for seekers** to become believers and followers of Christ, in every context imaginable. We cannot forget this fundamental and crucial prayer concern.

- Create more contexts for **stories and testimonies** of transformation, to inspire and encourage others to be open to faith and transformation.
- Continue to offer adult **learning experiences** for seekers (similar to the ones recently held at the Foothill Club).
- Expand the potential for seekers to acquire faith by offering church gatherings on **more than one site** each Sunday.
- **Change our language.** In the past, people at SFC have said openly, “We’re not into numbers.” This is the equivalent of saying, “We’re not into introducing people to Jesus and his transforming ways.” At SFC, we ARE “into people, lots of people, receiving Christ” and then experiencing the transformative benefits of discipleship.

1b. Declaring our faith

As Christians, the Bible tells us to declare our faith. Romans 10:9 says, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. In Acts 1:8, Jesus says, “you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” In Luke 9:26, Jesus says, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory....” 2 Corinthians 5:20 calls us “ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

Therefore, we will:

- Renew our efforts to provide focused, meaningful contexts for **baptism, confirmation, dedication and public confession of faith**, so that everyone can “confess with their lips” and each of us can declare our allegiance to Christ. We need better teaching, documents and experiences.
- Encourage and teach one another, in every imaginable context, to **tell our stories** of faith and transformation to friends, family and others. As leaders, we need to model a testimonial and confessional way of living.
- Urge and train people to **carry our faith** into the workplace, schools, neighborhoods and families, and to see ourselves as ambassadors for Christ in every facet of life.
- Offer church on **more than one site**, through strategic partnerships with other churches, through house churches and/or through satellite ministry sites. If we have more sites, we can declare our faith to more people in more ways to greater affect.

1c. Learning and living our faith

Christian discipleship requires an integrated view of learning and living. The best Christian learning finds expression and inspiration in the field – in the midst of a lifestyle of adventurous living that demands good information and training. The best information and training is intensely practical and relevant to everyday life. Personal transformation happens in both learning and living.

Therefore, we will:

- Create settings where the deeper pursuit of **prayer** is fostered. We need to find strength and direction in our daily dialogue with God. Any effort to improve other areas without deepening our devotional commitment will lack authenticity and transforming power; like sailing on a windless day. Prayer fosters transformation as much as any other behavior. We simply must pray more, both publicly and privately. We must become a church that is characterized by a commitment to prayer.
- Continue to create settings where **biblical knowledge** is cultivated; not to puff us up, but to prepare us for lives of devoted service to God.
- Create settings specifically aimed at **training new believers** in essential practices like prayer, Bible study, stewardship and service.
- Identify and train **mentors** to step forward and embrace willing learners and walk with them.
- Identify and train more **teachers** to help prepare disciples of Jesus Christ to live that way.
- Provide opportunities for people to discover and exercise their passions and **spiritual gifts**.
- Initiate outside-the-box thinking about **stewardship**. God knows how much potential we have in this place. We need more honest talk, more teaching and training, more inspiring visions and more risk-taking. This is an area in need of great transformation.

2. TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH

We love this church. God has done marvelous things throughout the story of this church, right up to this day. Still, there's danger in staying the same. We believe that church must be a transforming place. On the one hand, the best churches are those that are committed to timeless truths and timeless values that aren't compromised. On the other hand, the best churches are always adapting the programs and vehicles for conveying timeless messages. The best churches are also humble, open to growth and

change and the guidance of the Holy Spirit into new seasons of focused awareness. The best churches aren't static islands of *sameness* in the midst of a changing world. The best churches are actually dynamic gatherings where transformation is the norm. We believe that this church needs to be a *change place*.

With transformation as our goal, this means subjecting all programs and activities to several transformation-related questions, such as, “**Are people experiencing transformation** in this program?” In some cases we might need to be more intentional about letting vehicles and programs retire gracefully, to be replaced by other more transformational alternatives. In other cases, we might give longstanding programs a boost of focused energy, hoping for renewal.

There are also transformational behaviors that deserve special focus in this season. The next six sections represent our primary areas of corporate focus for the next five years. This **does not** mean that we will neglect other areas. We will continue our growing emphasis on adult discipleship. We will continue to build on the *Above and Beyond* spirit. We will continue to emphasize children and youth and worship and all the particular ministries that have characterized life in this church. Nonetheless, we will give special emphasis to:

2a. Prayer

- Those with strong proclivities for prayer as a personal and communal ministry need to be mobilized into **prayer teams** for significant efforts and honored for their disciplined and hearty contributions.
- **New Christians** and newly engaged Christians need to be taught in the **art of prayer**.
- **Worship services** need to include more prayer, and more invitations to share in special prayer times with caring prayer partners. A prayer room is part of the sanctuary remodel, to be used for special prayer.
- Church elders are organizing times for **people to pray for people**, the church and the world, even during the worship services.
- **Small groups** will be encouraged and trained to spend more time in prayer.
- Special prayer **retreats**, seasons of focused prayer and other tools will be made available for all to deepen their prayer lives.

2b. Outreach and Evangelism

- We must encourage one another to build more **relationships with un-churched people** and to invite them into the experience of faith and community.

- We must be **unashamed of the gospel**, “because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” (Romans 1:16) Some of us must overcome the embarrassment of faith that hinders our better efforts.
- We all need to learn how to **tell our stories** of faith and encounter with God, and then pray for opportunities to abound.
- We must continue to foster the *Above and Beyond* spirit of launching and boosting outreach endeavors, careful to stay alert to every emerging possibility. The church has to be a place, continually, that says “yes” to possibilities.
- We need to create and publicize more “**shuttles to the real world**”, giving all Christian people short-term opportunities to expend compassion and help.

2c. Baptism and Other Expressions of Faith and Commitment

- This season requires a readiness to **declare faith** and experience together the affirmation that comes from clear, informed events like **baptism, dedication, ordination and commissioning** prayers. These are critical expressions of faith and devotion, for the individual and for the church.
- This season requires an obedient response to the **Great Commission** to make disciples and baptize them.
- This season requires a kind of “**amnesty project**”, where long-established Christians can swallow hard and come to the water for baptism. For whatever reason, many in this church never have been baptized.
- This season requires intentional **teaching** and better information on who should be baptized, why and how, along with experiences that capture more enthusiasm and participation from the whole congregation.

2d. Leadership Development

- We need a stronger, more united, more helpful **leadership culture** where, together, we can chart our ministries according to a shared set of values and goals and mutually encourage one another.
- We need **settings and formats** for church leaders of every kind to meet together, exchange ideas and gather around shared values and goals. If necessary, we must trim back the schedule of activities to make room in the calendar for this to happen.

- By successful joint ventures like *Above and Beyond*, we have won the intellectual battle against the “Stanford Band” mindset of independently functioning enclaves of ministry. Now we must win the practical battle of actually **doing this ministry together**.
- We need cleaner, clearer avenues toward the involvement of **skilled people in leadership roles**, along with appropriate job descriptions and lines of authorization and support.
- Renew our efforts at the **mobilization of all people** for ministry. We made gains in recent years, and then didn’t fully capitalize on the excellent work done by a few. Now is the time to go the next step toward the ministry of all believers.

2e. Stewardship and Gift-Giving

- **We are a ten-talent church.** This is nothing to be ashamed of. Still, we all need to acknowledge the enormous potential for good represented by the resources and holdings that are at the disposal of this congregation. God has blessed us to be a blessing.
- We need new eyes to see and new **methods to instruct and evoke** the best out of one another. We need fresh participants in this discussion.
- We are no longer ashamed to talk about money, tithing and generosity. So **we must really talk**. How do we do this?
- We need **new structures** and groups to gather and to capitalize on the growing freedom and interest in this area.
- We need to teach and embrace the centrality and **primacy of God** in our lives, reflected in our patterns of giving and living
- We need to **pray more** often and more intentionally for God to work through people to provide resources for an expanding church vision

2f. Expansion

- **The Great Commission calls us to go** and make disciples of all nations. Every church ever built was the product of Christians reproducing and breaking away (usually for the best reasons) to form new fellowships in new locations. Our own church is part of that story, planted by a federation of committed people from various denominations.

- Our church has the opportunity to be part of this **reproduction and expansion** of God's Church. We are uniquely situated to move into exciting adventures in expansion.
- **This property** cannot house the burgeoning ministry that currently happens on this site. Any modest success in our goals will make this property doubly insufficient.
- This church has **no call or appetite for relocation**, and **not enough surrounding property** for expansion of the current site beyond the modest gains we anticipate in coming days (more parking space, some office spaces).
- Ministry that expands onto **other sites**, in this community or in other communities, is our best solution to the issues presented by growth and relative progress.
- Turning people away, even inadvertently by crowding and mayhem, is no solution. It is contrary to Christ's commission and adverse to our values and goals. We believe that we are already turning some people away.

3. TRANSFORMING THE WORLD AROUND US

For much of its long history, this church has participated in strategies to make the world a better place. In the last several years, we answered a call to go *Above and Beyond* our previous levels of commitment. We set out to launch new ministries and boost existing ministries with energy and resources. We established new structures and systems for enhancing our longstanding commitment to missions. We pray that the **spirit of *Above and Beyond*** will live on!

At the same time, we also know that this church has progressively and increasingly embraced a theology and a mission statement that are **unashamedly evangelistic**. We believe that people need Jesus and we believe that the church exists to reach people with the love and message of Christ.

Therefore, we will:

- Continue to foster the ***Above and Beyond*** strategy and spirit by using special giving to launch and boost ministries, beyond our budgeted support for missions. We will also use the new structures for Local and Global Outreach to push our experience of engagement with the world into new realms of involvement and support. This one goal has dozens of potential applications in the next five years, depending on what the Spirit inspires in the hearts of people. *Venture compassion* must live on!

- Encourage **friendship and lifestyle evangelism** in every venue imaginable, helping people to find their mission in life and to get comfortable telling their stories of redemption in Christ.
- Think expansively about growing our influence by using **strategic partnerships, house churches and satellite ministry sites** to increase the scope of our ministry and to reach more people in more places.
- Develop ways to be more connected with the broader church and serve as a **regional resource center** for other churches, by hosting conferences and training events that inspire and equip Christians to answer God's call. In the same vein, we will encourage pastors and lay persons to participate in events at camps, conferences and seminars where we can share our stories and strategies with others who would benefit.
- Create contexts, or support existing contexts, for Christians in the marketplace, schools, government and community agencies to learn and discuss ways to **leverage our presence as ambassadors for Christ in the world.**
- **Launch annual church-wide programs** for reaching and inviting friends, neighbors and associates into fellowship and discovery (like "bring a friend" Sundays).

4. SPECIFIC PASTORAL AREAS AND RELATED STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The following action items are broken down into three categories.

Primary = both critical and worthy of timely, focused new activity

Progressive = a continuation of previous focus, with hopes of ongoing gains

Pervasive = values, goals and behaviors that should always drive our plans and activities

4a. LEADERSHIP (Keith Potter, Senior Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do and say?
- Foster a boost in **leadership culture**, rich in dialogue, unity and information so that every leader of all ministries can benefit from a strong current of collaboration around a clear set of values and goals
 - periodic Leadership Symposium
 - CBN Leadership Uplink Simulcasts
 - publication of relevant materials that teach and guide leaders regarding vital issues of spiritual and church health
 - urge participation in conferences and seminars elsewhere that inform and inspire
 - create a newsletter or article in the Federated Family to disseminate leadership ideas, principles and trends

We, as leaders, need to **get together** more often and with a clearer set of strategic imperatives.

- Become a **regional resource** to other churches. We have been blessed to be a blessing. Our congregational polity cannot lead to privatized religion. We are part of a grand mission and an enormous Church worldwide. We expect that our staff and other lay leaders will be serving the broader church by sharing from the wealth of our discoveries and experiences:
 - host CBN Uplink Simulcasts.
 - host 2 annual conferences each year on relevant ministry topics.
 - publish material for broader church use.

- solidify strategic partnerships with churches and para-church organizations (mission groups, Mt. Hermon, Leadership Catalyst, Willow Creek Association), leading to healthy cross-pollination.
- pastors mentoring interns and seminary students for the broader church.
- pastors and lay leaders speaking and leading in other settings (e.g. Don and Terri Goehner have been asked twice to lead seminars on “how to develop hospitality ministries” for churches in S. Cal).
- strategic partnership with at least one other nearby congregation that can provide a boost to a viable, worthy ministry.
- solidify our sister-church relationship with the Baptist Church in Constanta, Romania.

Progressive

- Improve our process for identifying and preparing **potential leaders**, in partnership with the Nominating Committee.
 - Continue and improve Golden Key events to integrate newer participants into church life.
 - Create a Timothy Fellowship for those considering full-time service.
 - Create a pool of prospective elders, identifying and preparing them for this vital church role.
 - Rebirth the spiritual gifts class to help people identify gifts and calling in life.
 - Rebirth the Lay Mobilization ministry and create a church placement center that is functional.
 - Step up public commissioning services and expressions of appreciation for those who have served.
 - Increase stories, testimonies and video footage in worship services, informing and inspiring, for the purposes of recruitment and encouragement.
 - Clarify job descriptions and authorization channels to maximize enjoyment and effectiveness in various roles.

Pervasive

- Maintain high standards of faith, conduct and spiritual health among leaders.

- Maintain a commitment to relationships, over program or curriculum.
- Maintain a high-authorization environment, honoring freedom and God's leading in the lives of all leaders.
- Maintain a commitment to the ministry of all believers.
- Maintain a commitment to broad distribution of influence and authority, breaking down power clusters in the infrastructure and empowering the extremities with resources, freedom and respect with which to do the actual work of ministry.
- Maintain a peaceable, friendly leadership culture that is also confrontational and dynamic.

4b. PREACHING (Keith Potter, Senior Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Prepare and deliver sermons for SFC that are compelling and instructive for people of every age and maturity level, with the goal of **transformation** in mind virtually every week.
- Increase the emphasis on **stewardship** so that our people can be informed and inspired regarding this crucial area of discipleship
- Launch, from the pulpit, an annual, church-wide focus on **inviting friend, neighbors and associates** into fellowship and discovery (like "bring a friend" Sundays)

Progressive

- Increase the number of **visual and audiovisual aids** to serve visual learners and modern audiences. Every week there should be an outline that is relevant to the content. Every fourth week, there should be some kind of visual or audiovisual aid that enhances the message.
- Increase the number of **invitations** to faith, baptism and other commitments that solidify personal devotion. Once each month, there should be a prayer that invites seekers to accept Christ. Once each quarter, there should be an

invitation to baptism. Every Sunday should include an invitation to rededicate our lives, in one way or another, to the purposes of God.

- Give increased attention to **follow-up experiences** that expound on interests and needs generated during sermon times (e.g. after a sermon on marriage, have a marriage class or retreat set up to give people a place to go with questions and renewed commitment).
 - Work with Greg Davis to associate adult learning experiences with sermon series.
 - Create seminars, retreats, roundtables and forums that open the door to dialogue and further learning.

Pervasive

- Give attention to content that **engages highly mature** and/or informed people through intentional scholarship. While this group is a minority in the gathered congregation, and are also quite able to find resources that nourish their spirituality, they still need to have an experience on Sunday that stimulates and educates.
- Give attention to content that **engages less mature** and/or informed people through great attention to cultural trends, humor, story-telling and relevance issues. This group is a majority of the gathered congregation. They need to be engaged *where they are* and moved farther on the road to maturity with carefully crafted instruction in scripture.

4c. WORSHIP (Kevin Friesen, Associate Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Consider offering **additional times** for worship that could serve those unable to attend on Sunday mornings, and reach new people.
- Expand the role of **prayer** in corporate worship, including united prayer and more intentional use of prayer in response to the message.
- Complete **construction of the improved sanctuary**, including décor, altar area, acoustics, multimedia systems, prayer room, cry room and overall functionality.

- Enhance the place of baptism, dedication, renewal of faith and public confession in our worship experiences, giving more attention to **key public acts** that solidify faith and commitment.

Progressive

- Continue to **develop worship leaders** and artists of every type, finding ways to highlight their gifts, improve their skills and nurture their spiritual growth.
- Continue to offer **multiple styles** for multiple types and preferences.

Pervasive

- Tie contemporary souls to the best of **modern and ancient** forms and styles.
- Provide a **grace-based environment** where love for God and people is the order of the day.
- Be **bridge-builders**, between God and people, people and worship, worship and daily life.
- Teach and model the **centrality of God** in life.
- Embrace the value of **excellence** in worship: we will offer our best with what we have.

4d. CONGREGATIONAL LIFE (Kevin Friesen, Associate Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Enhance of the place of **baptism** in the life of our congregation.
 - Build a team to oversee our practice and support candidates for baptism.
 - Improve written materials used to teach and direct candidates for baptism.
 - Create new and better contexts and environments for baptism.
 - Refer to baptism more often in public settings, educating the congregation and securing baptisms rightful place in the minds of the community of faith.

- Improve our training and preparation process for baptism, securing the authentic and meaningful nature of the baptisms.
- Make a new sweep through the congregation, encouraging new and long-time worshippers to **solidify their commitment** to this church through **membership**.
- Renew our focus on **lay mobilization**, building on previous work and developing a functional placement team to.
 - Help people know and use their spiritual gifts.
 - Help provide human resources for vital ministries.
- Teach and train the entire congregation to be partners in **hospitality**, welcoming each other, visitors and new members in concert with the excellent work of the Hospitality Teams.

Progressive

- Continue to create **community events** to help our congregation engage the community (like the Advent event).
- Continue to improve **signage** and other helps for visitors and members.
- Continue to create events intended to bring our **whole congregation** together at least once each year (like Mother's Day).
- Continue to improve **communication pieces**, within the church and on behalf of the church.
- Continue to find experiences and partnerships that celebrate our **role in the larger Body** of Christ (like 40 Days).
- Continue to provide **multi-generational events**, like the church picnic, to keep us playing and eating and being together across generational lines.

Pervasive

- Fellowship and the fostering of **relationships** is a driving concern to us.
- **Diversity** is something that strengthens us, and must be handled with care.
- Excellent **communication** encourages participation and strengthens morale.
- We are enlarged by our **associations** with the community and other churches.

- We embrace opportunities for spiritual growth that are **initiated by other churches** or organizations (like 40 Days, Alpha Dinners, Renovare).

4e. CONGREGATIONAL CARE (Arvin Engelson, Associate Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Establish and sustain the **Prime Timers** seniors fellowship.
 - to provide social contexts and shared activities for active seniors.
 - to encourage greater integration of seniors in to church life.
 - to encourage seniors to continue to use their gifts.
 - to help identify and meet primary needs of seniors.
- Teach **small groups** how to be first responders on behalf of group members in time of crisis.
- Create a **safe space**, away from the church building, for confidential conferences and support group meetings.
- Increase the awareness of other's pain, sorrows and joys during the **worship services**, building on understanding of "one body in Christ".

Progressive

- Continue to encourage the **dual expression** of Christian fellowship and community outreach by offering events and services to the church and community simultaneously.
- Continue to improve our systems for **identifying and responding** to care needs, and communication within care teams and pastoral staff.
- Continue to improve **available resources** for care within the church family, and the awareness of those resources.

Pervasive

- **Each member** and church participant will be encouraged to engage in acts of compassion.

- We must become a place where, **when one part of the body hurts**, the whole body hurts. This means better awareness and more genuine community.

4f. LOCAL OUTREACH (Arvin Engelson, Associate Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Preserve and grow the spirit of *Above and Beyond* by fostering **venture compassion** through launching and boosting new and existing ministries, utilizing the new structures in place to sustain these priorities.
- Provide support, infrastructure and nurture to **SFC-born outreaches**, especially during their formative stages.
- Provide more *shuttles to the real world*; more opportunities for people to participate in local outreach in one time experiences, or consistent experiences.

Progressive

- Continue to ensure that local **outreach agencies** feel our encouragement and influence, especially those involving our members.
- Step up efforts to use Mission Fairs, publications, video, special offerings and other venues in creative ways to **inform and inspire** the congregation to be more involved.
- Continue to open doors to the community by offering **weddings and funerals** to un-churched people.
- Continue to relate to the **neighborhood** around us to keep relationships in a cooperative state.

Pervasive

- We want to prove that we love our community by offering **tangible service** and expressions of care.
- **Every member** of SFC is an **ambassador for Christ**, and should take seriously his/her role in caring for the communities around us.

4g. GLOBAL OUTREACH (Greg Davis, Assistant Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Preserve and grow the spirit of *Above and Beyond* by fostering **venture compassion** through launching and boosting new and existing ministries, utilizing the new structures in place to sustain these priorities.
- Provide support, infrastructure and nurture to **SFC-born outreach ministries**, especially in their formative stages.
- Provide more **short-term global mission trips** for people to use gifts, share faith and experience real-world conditions of human need.

Progressive

- Continue to ensure that global **agencies and missionaries** feel our encouragement and influence, particularly those that involve our members.
- Step up efforts to use Mission Fairs, publications, videos, special offerings and other venues in more creative ways to **inform and inspire** broad involvement in global missions.
- Continue to build **partnerships** with other churches in mission fields that might create amicable relationships and increase the potential for those ministries (like our partnership with The River in Romania).

Pervasive

- **Every member** of SFC is an **ambassador for Christ** in this world, and must be encouraged to engage with the world in a mission venture.
- **Sharing the good news in love across cultural boundaries** is a huge part of our commission from Christ. We are called to be witnesses to "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth."

4h. CHILDREN AND YOUTH (Tim Galleher, Associate Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?

- **Build bridges** between the young people and the adult congregation by
 - Featuring Kid's Town events and happenings in worship services.
 - Offering more shared mission activities (like Mexico).
 - Encouraging seniors to mentor youth or children, or even to rock babies in the nursery.
 - Give youth significant and visible leadership roles in or around worship, even inviting them to give primary leadership to evening experiences.
 - Use video to present images of youth and children's events during worship services (like we did with VBS).
 - Include children in adult worship occasionally during the singing and praise portion of the service.

- Enhance the focus on **friendship evangelism** among peers, teaching young people how to share the story of their faith, and how to be ambassadors for Christ.

Progressive

- Continue to teach **stewardship principles** in age-appropriate ways, focusing on the primacy of God in our lives and the responsible use of time, talent and treasure.
- Continue to improve on the **Kid's Town** concept, building a corps of shepherds and workshop leaders.
- Consider **alternative learning environments** for children who function better in more traditional Sunday School contexts.
- Continue to improve events and relationships that foster **teacher training and spiritual mentoring** of the volunteer staffs.
- Continue to improve services offered for children and families with **special needs**.

Pervasive

- **Reach** students and children.
- **Connect** students and children with Christians.

- **Lead** students and children toward Christ.
- **Grow** students and children in their faith.
- Challenge students and children to **serve** others, using their gifts and **honoring** God with their daily lives.

4i. ADULT DISCIPLESHIP (Greg Davis, Assistant Pastor)

Primary

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people’s lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Inspire the leadership teams of **EVERY** Adult Discipleship entity (Adult Sunday School, Small Groups, Men’s Ministries, Women’s Ministries, Singles Ministry) to ask, “**Do our programs and activities catalyze transformation?** If not, why not? If so, how so?” Every group and event should be subject to this line of questioning, lest we expend time, energy and resources on nominally effective activity.
- Prepare to provide an **honorable retirement** for programs that no longer catalyze transformation in a way that justifies the investment of time, talent and resources OR prepare to provide a **focused renewal process** toward energizing programs that are deemed “at risk”.
- **Small groups are our primary structure for encouraging discipleship and growth.** Through the 40 Days, and after, we hope to greatly increase the number and quality of small group experiences.
- Let 40 Days serve as a model toward experimenting with a **united curriculum**, where some or all small groups can be following a well-rounded program in concert with other small groups.
- Provide transformational learning environments for **seekers to dialogue and learn** about the core elements of Christian faith.
- Provide transformational learning environments for **new, or as-if-new, believers to dialogue and learn** about core elements of faith and practice.
- Encourage greater **integration of singles with the broader congregation** by
 - introducing singles to the church periodically, and hearing stories and testimonies from group experience.

- creating intentional settings for fellowship between singles and other church people.

Progressive

- Continue to grow our ministry to **singles**, encouraging their walk with Christ and providing transformational events and services that are particular to the needs of singles.
- Continue to grow our various ministries to **women**, encouraging their walk with Christ and providing transformational events and services that are particular to the needs of women.
- Continue to grow our ministries to **men**, encouraging their walk with Christ and providing transformational events and services that are particular to the needs of men.
- Continue to grow our **adult Sunday School**, encouraging people to walk with Christ and providing transformational learning environments.
- Continue to build and nurture **a faculty of teachers and mentors**, primarily from our own congregation, who can teach in almost any learning environment on a breadth of topics.
- Continue to **broaden the curriculum** to offer classes, retreats, conferences and other contexts for transformational learning to happen.
- Continue to provide **teacher training events and experiences, here and elsewhere**, to develop and nurture our faculty.

Pervasive

- Continue to make every effort to fight **biblical illiteracy**, even among highly educated people, by providing transformational learning environment for every kind of person and every level of knowledge and maturity.
- Continue to emphasize **discipleship as a lifestyle**, and not merely a classroom learning activity. Continue to stress mentoring, on-the-job training and practical application so that we are producing disciples who are better ready to be “doers of the Word, not hearers only.”

4j. CHURCH OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MINISTRIES (Keith Potter, Senior Pastor; Jerry Bruce, Administrator)

■ Elders (Spiritual oversight and governance)

We continue to build on the notion that elders are lay pastors and that pastors are staff elders. While this unique relationship between pastors and elders is dynamic and hard to define, we maintain our commitment to the best possible relationship between these two important elements of leadership. Together, we want to give wise, able spiritual leadership to this church. In concert with the pastoral staff, the Elder Council will:

- Make **transformation** an overarching priority. Are people's lives being changed by Christ through what we do or say?
- Lead an all-encompassing **prayer movement** in the life of this church.
 - Lead prayers in public settings.
 - Increase prayer focus in elder gatherings.
 - Call other ministry teams to increase commitment to prayer.
 - Organize prayer teams to pray during worship services.
 - Encourage people with a strong propensity for intercessory prayer and honor the role they play in church life.
 - Call the church into special days or seasons of prayer.
 - Be more visibly available for prayer, anointing and the laying on of hands according to James' teaching.
- Cultivate the **vision, faith and courage** in this congregation to embrace the vision for **expanding this ministry** onto new sites. From a united position of faith and conviction, the elders will need to grant a sense of direction and confidence, inviting prayer, generosity and participation in this aggressive vision for church growth.
- Give visible and tangible leadership in efforts to build a more proactive and united **leadership culture**, through influencing, teaching, attending and supporting key events.
- Provide **forums, dialogues and outlets** for expression and response during critical seasons in the life of the church and the world (e.g. times of war, ethical debate around hot issues, natural catastrophe).
- Provide clear value statements, goals and corporate vision to functional ministries under direct Elder oversight (Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee, Trustees, Foundation, Stewardship and Finance Committee) and then **inspire and authorize** those groups to enlarge the scope of their vision and influence.

■ Trustees

- **Our trustees** have worked faithfully for years to make our property attractive and functional. We want to encourage the trustees to keep building on their vision and the scope of their work by asking:
 - a) **How does the current campus facilitate the long-range goals of the church?**
 - b) **How do we support the property needs generated by multiple-site ministry?**
 - c) **How can we work in partnership with the Hospitality Ministry to make this church user friendly, seeker friendly and welcoming in every way?**

■ Nominating Committee

- **The Nominating Committee** has always been an excellent, behind-the-scenes contributor to our church life. In order to assess and nominate church leaders who can serve well in an increasingly sophisticated church culture, we encourage the Nominating Committee to:
 - a) Work with Lay Mobilization efforts to enlist “every member as a minister
 - b) Participate with the Elders and Senior Pastor in Leadership Training efforts, particularly in “moving the selection process back a year” to build relationship with, and develop intentionally, a pool of interested, trained people for critical leadership roles.

■ Personnel Committee

- **Personnel Committee** has played a critical role in establishing policy, payroll and a number of other supportive aspects of staff hiring and care. We encourage the Personnel Committee to consider ways to engage in relational ways with the health and growth of the pastoral staff by becoming, or enlisting, a **pastoral relations team** to ask critical questions regarding spiritual health, happiness and family and to support staff in prayer.

■ Stewardship and Finance Committee

- **Finance Committee** has been commissioned in different seasons for different levels of financial oversight and fund-raising. In changing our language to “Stewardship and Finance”, we are making a statement of priority. Once a small line item on their job description, we believe that **prayer, strategy, instruction and inspiration in the realm of Christian stewardship and giving** must become the chief priority for this team.

While caretaking and distribution are important matters, the greatest need in church life is for an informed and inspired congregation of givers.

■ **Foundation**

- The Foundation has always been thinking ahead, strategizing ways to make future strategies affordable. Now is the time for the Foundation to address **the financial challenges of multiple-site ministry**.
- While we currently lease and operate part of the **Cox Building**, the Foundation should continue to pursue ways for us to own or lease, and operate, the entirety of the Cox Building.

■ **Unified Outreach Team (see also “Global Outreach,” page 22 and “Local Outreach,” page 21)**

- Continue to refine the process for selecting special mission projects and communicating special appeals to the congregation,
- Preserve and grow the spirit of *Above and Beyond* by fostering venture compassion through launching and boosting new and existing ministries.
- Provide ever-improving modes of support for the missionaries and agencies that extend our mission to the community and world.

5. SPECIAL PROJECTS

5a. 40 Days of Purpose

- This church-wide focus on purpose-driven **spiritual transformation** is likely to produce various outcomes. We are likely to need more focused efforts at discipling new believers, stewardship training, mobilization of volunteer workers, baptism mentors, additional worship services here or elsewhere and a host of other possible deliverables. While this focus will “end” in November, we assume that the effects will continue into the new year and beyond.

5b. 5 Year Vision Casting Strategies

- **January and February** will be our months for focusing on the 5 Year Plan. Beyond those months, we will need to keep people engaged with the progress of the vision. We will also need to invite newcomers to be full participants in the adventure. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation in May, other timely gatherings and some excellent literature will keep the prayer, information and dialogue flowing. We need to keep this vision before the congregation, with an annual process of refinement and presentation.

5c. Church Expansion to Multiple Ministry Sites

- This is likely to be the most aggressive ministry objective since 1920, when four congregations “federated” (two, officially) to maximize their ministry potentials. After a year of prayer and discovery, the **Church Expansion Team** recommends to the Elder Council, and the **Elder Council recommends** to the church congregation, a **threefold strategy** for advancing this church onto **multiple ministry sites**.
- This strategy is driven by two primary values. First, we value Kingdom expansion and growing size and influence of God’s church, His primary agent for reaching the world today. We are *not* interested in creating some kind of ministry empire that gives glory to us. We *are* interested in helping to glorify God by promoting the growth and influence of His Church in any way possible. Second, we realize that we’ve been pressing the capacity of our current property to its limits for a long time. We see downsides to pressing it further, with even more worship services and even more people and activity on this site. We see the shoe (the current site) telling the foot how big to grow. We don’t believe that our acreage should limit our vision.

So, we suggest church-wide readiness for God to open doors like these:

1) Strategic Partnership: As in our historic beginnings, we believe that one way to expand our ministry is to form mutually supportive Strategic Partnerships with one or more existing congregations that fit the following profile:

- a) Enough **shared values** and theology to make partnership natural and functional. We want to be “equally yoked” in every possible way.
- b) Enough **health and vitality** among the leadership and the congregation to justify our interest and to supplement our investment of human resources. We would not be interested in partnering with a church that has lost the critical elements of vitality to succeed. Renewing those churches is harder than planting new ones.
- c) A **strategic location** with potential for growth in numbers and influence, within easy driving distance of Saratoga.
- d) A **target population** that captures our imagination.

We are currently being asked to explore a relationship with an historic church in downtown San Jose, which is in the midst of a significant renewal effort. We are also exploring partnership potentials with a small church at a strategic location in Almaden. We are open to opportunities that might arise, and trust God to lead us into relationships that will grow God’s kingdom and accomplish His purposes.

As these opportunities arise, we can imagine:

- a) A relational discovery process with the leaders of a potential partner church
- b) A call for members of our congregation to enlist for periods of 6 months, one year or two years to **go, participate and serve** in the partner congregation.
- c) A season of training and mobilization, preparing our “Go-Teams” for their new field of ministry.
- d) A consecration service that celebrates partnership

- and sends the “Go-Team” with our prayers.
- e) Enough collegiality and shared events to keep our “Go-Teams” tethered to us by love and prayer.

2) Satellite Ministry Site(s)

We believe that we have the personnel and passion to create worship and fellowship experiences (church) at one or more strategic sites. With committed volunteers and a wise appropriation of pastoral staff, we believe that we could present **worship services with high growth potential** in a contemporary style at rented facilities in Saratoga or a nearby community. The goal would be to target the population in that immediate area, with potential for reaching others in search of a new expression of church.

Studies have shown that the best way to reach new, un-churched people is through **new churches**. While we imagine that these “sites” would be extensions of SFC ministry, we would assume that there might come a day when they would become independent entities.

The **organizational structure** of these church sites would be relatively simple: Celebration (worship services) and Cell (small groups), with additional programming for young people. Leadership in the early days would likely be composed of a primary preaching pastor, worship leaders, shepherds/elders to do follow-up and pastoral care, and the infrastructure of SFC.

In time, we’d love to see a satellite site outgrow the “mother church” and extend itself to another satellite site. Our own church might even “shrink” in size during seasons of sending, with the assumption that we’re making room for new people to visit and join our faith venture.

3) House churches

This home-grown, **organic** approach to expanding God’s church is both historic and hip, time-tested and contemporary. Around the world, house churches are spreading rapidly. They grow quickly, reproduce quickly and carry the benefit of being inexpensive and flexible.

We currently have members interested in and well-exposed

to the House Church movement around the world. It has been particularly effective in **post-modern subcultures**, and among people who are skeptical or shy about traditional, institutionalized religion.

The center of House Church worship is **the table**: a shared meal and The Lord's Supper are the central acts of House Church gatherings, with messages and Bible study taking forms that are more dialogical than in most church settings. These small churches are usually shepherded by one or more elders, usually trained by, and connected to, a pastor or overseeing elder. They operate and grow by a simple premise: when the group gets too large for one house, they split away and form two house churches. And so on, and so on, and so on. First century stuff.

We feel called to be open to ALL THREE FORMS OF EXPANSION as God gives the opportunity, resources and people to make them happen. We do not know which approach will come first, or in what order God might introduce all three potentials. We are asking for church-wide readiness as God gives opportunity.

We do NOT, at this time, feel called or led to purchase property, build buildings or plant an independent congregational institution by means that are more customarily exercised by denominations.

5d. Sanctuary Renovation

The sanctuary renovation project began many years ago. People have been meeting and redesigning and planning for close to a decade. Two years ago, a five-stage strategy took form. A working permit with the City is in full sway and we need to make stepped gains to keep that permit alive.

In the last year, significant gains have been made from Stage One, and a few things have been accomplished from Stages Two and Three which became a greater priority:

- Demolition of the platform area.
- Extension of the platform area.
- Temporary carpet on platform area.
- Raise organ to platform level.
- Electrical wiring for platform.
- Temporary video projection unit.
- Raise sacristy to platform level.
- Air conditioning installed (Stage Three).

- Temporary handicap access to the platform area (Stage Two).
- New sound board (Stage Two)
- Hire part-time technician to run current system

Significant donations have been made that allow us to move forward more quickly. There are also Memorial Funds available that allow us to move forward. This is the most initially expensive portion of the 5 Year Plan. It will cost approximately 1.2 million dollars to finish this renovation. We are inviting all members and friends of the church to participate in this renovation, though we do not intend to have a large-scale capital campaign.

These are the additional stages and steps that need to be taken to finish the renovation:

STAGE ONE

- New pulpit and communion table (we're actually restoring two historic pieces which have been under-utilized).
- New sound monitors for platform

STAGE TWO

- Create storage for portable risers, communion table and other worship furniture.
- Purchase portable choir risers.
- Purchase choir chairs.
- Purchase or build modesty rails for choir and to cover sound equipment on the platform.
- Extend the back wall (under the stained glass window) to create storage.
- Add faux décor (arches and columns) to match chapel design.
- Add shelves and spaces to display flowers and worship aids.
- Remove wood slats and fabric that covers organ chambers on both sides, and replace with lighter colored fabric to match the redesign, serve as reflective material to replace screen, and increase organ capacity, which has been greatly reduced by the wood slats.
- Paint and texture.

STAGE THREE

- Change light fixtures.
- Remove all wood panels.
- Texture and paint all walls.
- Platform lighting redesigned.
- Upgrade video projection system.

STAGE FOUR

- Demolition of back wall.
- Finish balcony.
- Relocate sound booth to front row of balcony.
- Pews for the balcony.
- New and/or repositioned speakers.
- Cry room (in current sound booth)
- Exterior façade renovated (decorative window).
- Narthex renovated (interior doors, windows, storage, décor).

STAGE FIVE

- New carpet throughout sanctuary and narthex.
- New floor in sanctuary.
- New pew cushions and fabric OR new pews in sanctuary.
- Acoustic treatment on walls.

5e. Parking Lot Addition

- While this plan has already taken form, and the parking lot is already nearing its completion date, we want to pay for it. One large donation has

paid for a portion of the cost. The Foundation has secured financing for the remainder. We want to pay down the mortgage as quickly as possible.

5f. The Cox Building

- We currently lease a portion of the Cox Building. Sometime in the next five years, we'd like to occupy the entire building, either by leasing or owning it. We would gain office space and classroom space. This would likely represent the end of our potential to own and operate properties contiguous to our current property, unless we were to cross the street in any direction.

6. STAFFING STRATEGY

We have an excellent staff. We have continuing needs, hoping to increase our effectiveness and expand our influence. The pastors have a desire to become more relational and less programmatic; more involved in lives and less involved in the administrative details that tend to swallow up time. Many of those worthy details need to be in the hands of able administrative assistants, or specialized support staff, so that the pastoral staff can apply more attention and energy to **transformative relationships**. This staff plan reflects the need for more focused help in many areas.

6a. Administrative Staff

- **Administrative Assistant to the Children's Director**

- An immediate need, this item has already been budgeted.

- **Increased hours for Administrative Assistants.**

- As needs arise and resources are available.

- **A part-time IT consultant or assistant (computer)**

6b. Specialized Support Staff

- **Campus Manager**

- To oversee the physical plant, improvements, Trustees, custodial staff. The need is immediate.

- **Editorial Assistant to the Senior Pastor**

- To assist with the completion and publication of numerous writing projects currently in various stages of completion. The need is immediate.

- **Communications/Publications Director**

- As our commitment to excellent communication increases, so does the need for focused staff in this area. This need will only increase as ministry happens on more than one site.

6c. Pastoral Staff

- **Preaching Pastor for a Satellite Ministry Site**

- If a satellite ministry site presents itself as strategic and God-

appointed, we would need to hire, or assign, a pastor to be the primary preacher. This person might be on staff, currently, or someone from outside the congregation. The timing is dependent on the unfolding of Spirit-driven opportunity.

- **Pastor for Outreach OR Pastor for Discipleship**

- The Assistant Pastor of Discipleship and Missions will need to divide that role in the next five years. When it becomes clear which portion of that role needs new personnel, we will need to do a search inside and outside the congregation.