

V3 DRAFT Core Values, Purpose, and Vision Statement (May 8, 2018)

The following represent the **CORE VALUES** of First Parish Church, Congregational, United Church of Christ at this time in our history:

1. **We value *Transformational Worship***, which we define as being fed and nourished by the Holy Spirit--through music, preaching, and prayer--in such a way that we find ourselves feeling refreshed, joyful, and helped to live from a Grace-filled center when we walk out the door into our week. (*Romans 12:2*)
2. **We value *Fellowship***, which we define as enjoying each other's company and deepening our connections with one another in our family of faith. (*Acts 2:42*)
3. **We value *Tradition***, which we define as the rituals associated with the rhythms of life and faith, rituals that BOTH connect us to our democratic congregational roots that go back centuries, AND allow us to adjust to changing times, mindful that when Christ is at the center of what we do, our traditions can creatively evolve in order to stay relevant. (*2 Thessalonians 2:15*)
4. **We value *Christian Education***, which we define as a growing understanding and knowledge of God that continues throughout life, helping both adults and children to form (and re-form) our faith and align ourselves with God's Vision. (*Colossians 3:16*)
5. We value ***Preserving Buildings***, which we define as providing an environment, rich in history, to support the work of the congregation so that we can continue to pass on our faith to future generations, as it was passed on to us, for the "up-building" of community. (*1 Chronicles 29:16*)

The following represent the **ASPIRATIONAL VALUES** of First Parish Church, Congregational, United Church of Christ; these are values we hope to embody more fully in the near future:

1. **We aspire to value *Social Outreach***, which we define as following Christ's example of caring service, which involves finding a better balance of connecting with BOTH those who are currently part of our fellowship AND those who are not, inviting all to experience a community whose mission is characterized by love, care, and justice for all. (*Matthew 25:40*)
2. **We aspire to value *Building Up the Community***, which we define as seeking to follow Christ together in unity, cooperating with one another, speaking the truth in love, and trusting that each of us has the best interests of the church at heart, even when we disagree. (*Ephesians 4:15-16*)

The following is our **PURPOSE STATEMENT**, which is a description of what we feel God is calling us to do, based on our Values:

***Awaken to the Light and Love of God
Be a Joyful Beacon to our World***

The following is our **VISION STATEMENT**, which is a “picture of the future,” a description of what we hope the church will look like in 5 years as we live out our Values and Purpose:

As a congregation, we recognize the following trends in our immediate community (and/or in our world) which we feel called to address:

- Many people in our society (young, middle-aged, and old alike) experience social isolation and loneliness.
- Many people in our society (young, middle-aged, and old alike) feel anxious and fearful.
- Many people (especially young families and some seniors) are being “priced out” of our area and struggle with economic issues such as affordable housing.)

In light of the above trends, by the year 2023, we will have increased our average Sunday Worship Attendance by 20% and our active membership by 10% by means of engaging in—and inviting others to engage with us in:

Weekly worship that is lively, joyful, uplifting and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

(With the understanding that within each worship service there need to be elements, such as prayers and sermons, that provide encouragement to the congregation as we acknowledge and address the brokenness of the world.)

Vibrant weekly Christian educational opportunities for children, youth, and adults that help deepen people’s faith and help them find a center meaning and vitality. (Such as Sunday School, book groups in people’s homes, Bible studies)

Monthly Christian fellowship and learning opportunities that give people a sense of feeling connected. (Such as Friday game nights, Soup and Conversation, useful parenting groups)

Other spiritual activities that occur once or more during the year that give people the sense of being fellow travelers on the journey of faith/life. (Such as Advent/Lenten Vespers, retreats “off campus”, ecumenical services in alternative locations such as outside, on beach, in movie theatre.)

Partnering with other community organizations to engage in one or two “large scale” inter-generational activities per year to give people a sense of belonging and connection. (Such as working with Parks & Rec to plan a community kickball game with police or fire department; a candy cane hunt following the Dec. Christmas Concert we host with Women’s club; having a summer picnic on the beach; planning an activity with the Council on Aging; coordinating with High School to do an activity that dovetails with their “week of gratitude”).

Consciously making both the exterior and interior of our buildings more welcoming.

(Through use of such things as banners, signs, plants, colorful wreaths or decorations on front door during services, as well as “boards” showing our activities.)

By the year 2023, we will have increased by 10% the number of people participating in “mission events” in which we already engage AND we will have chosen one or two high investment missions for the whole congregation to focus on for a set number of years.

(Examples of current mission events: Open Door meal serving; Brown Bag lunches. High investment mission possibilities could include: Zimbabwe Mission, Grace Center, and/or Family Promise.)