

**Summary of Planning and Sustainability Meeting
October 16, 2011**

Leaders: Yvonne Cottrell, Marc Haefke

Location: Cottrell Home

Attendees: Paula Nelson, Patti Cosgrove, Kathy Schawel, Don & Jacquie Ulrich, Jackie Heath, Marsha Davis, Glenn Cottrell

What do you love about the FCC?

Each member of our group said that it was the welcoming, friendly people they liked. There is a feeling of holiness when going into the sanctuary with its stained glass windows and the architecture. Everyone was welcome and no one was judgmental. It meets the needs of those who attend. All liked Norm's sermons: the humor, the message, the inclusiveness and that he borrows from other faiths. We like it because it is liberal politically, always seeking the truth. The feeling of community was commented upon: helping with Winter Night, Easter Baskets for Juvenile Hall, baby layettes for County Hospital and Blessing of the Animals. We like being in a Circle and a part of Women's Fellowship. Everyone enjoys the choir and the social occasions the church holds. The book study was thought provoking for all who attended. For everyone the church is a place where friendships, both old and new are treasured and where spiritual and social. Needs are met.

Where will the FCC be five years from now?

We hope there will be more people and children attending. Everyone agreed that the church would be functioning as it is now in five years.

What tool and recourses will need for this journey?

All members of the group emphasized the need to make the church more visible. Some of the ideas given were: a sandwich board or kiosk in front of the church telling of activities that were going on, this would include pictures, a booth at the Farmer's Market, continue Facebook and the web page and put information in The Patch. Everyone would like to see more interfaith meetings be held. These should be advertised throughout the community. Small groups should be formed to tell new people about the church. People visit the church at Christmas and Easter therefore the sermons should reflect the flavor of our inclusiveness (alternate religions, sexuality, etc.) Invite new people to participate in activities such as the choir, Circles and the Book studies. The church appeals to a very limited segment of society. New folks come primarily from conversation and talking with members, personal contact is very important. Spread a positive attitude and be open-minded. Ongoing letters about the financial needs should be sent. It is necessary to keep lines of communication open about what is going on in the church.

**Summary of Planning and Sustainability Meeting
October 26, 2011**

Leaders: Barbara Patchin, Larry Coltharp

Location: Patchin Home

Attendees: Marlene Vasilieff, Brenda and Darrell Colbert, Carol Baier, Norm and Deloris McDonald, Alma Coltharp, Richard Patchin, Migs Carter.

What do you love about FCC?

We love the architecture and the sanctuary of the building, the people we meet, accepting everyone who attends, the music and choir, the closeness to our homes, the community involvement, and the quiet time to reflect on our personal needs. Some of us have attended this church for 40-50 years and have raised our families here. We like the small congregation, where we know everyone. We respect independent thought, having an open mind, and diversity. The church has very active committees. The church leadership is strong and respected by all of us. We are not pressured to become involved in church activities, but we are welcome to participate if the activities are of interest. The pastor has freedom in the pulpit and his spiritual lessons are often tied to current world issues. His sermons help us relate to the real world around us. Many feel that the congregation has always been a part of our lives and we don't want it to change.

Question 2: What will FCC be doing five years from now?

FCC will be doing more community outreach to help people in the downtown area. We will be a part of the religious life of Martinez. Many feel we will be doing about the same as we are now, and it will be a struggle to keep the church going. We will increase our Christian education activities to attract younger families and youth. We will be more actively leasing the church for local events that would include increase use of the kitchen. We will be doing more fund raisers with the goal of attracting others from outside the church to participate. Financially, we may be forced to merge with another church such as the Methodist, Hillcrest CC, or Polish church. After Norm retires, it may be hard to support a full time minister. We may need to consider a part-time minister.

Question 3: What tools and resources will we need for the journey?

Become missionaries for the church to increase the awareness of who we are and what we stand for. Encourage singles to attend church and become involved in activities. Upgrade the website to include more pictures - 360° views for viewers to better see the interior of the church. Use the web to publicize the church to tell people who we are and what we stand for. Advertise our fund raiser events on the web and in the community. Include the Sunday sermons on the website. Work as a congregation at community functions. Don't be afraid to discontinue doing things that have not worked in the past. More activities for children. Contact members who do not attend church any longer – try to bring them back. Stay in contact with members who are ill or need help. Find out how they are doing and report to the congregation. Publicize events on Martinez Patch. Address the need for a youth minister and in what capacity. Continue the book study – publicize on the web so others may attend

Summary of Planning and Sustainability Meeting October 26, 2011

Leaders: Janet Castagnetti, Laura Febus

Location: FCC Mayflower Room

Number of participants: 13

Question 1: What do you love about FCC?

At FCC we love many things about our church. We especially enjoy connections with friendly, open, welcoming people, that everyone is invited to join, and that we meet and grow friendships that otherwise might never have happened. This gives us a feeling of community within the church, like family it has longevity and roots. It is kid friendly; the Sunday school teachers are very kind. We love the location within Martinez. We love the setting for our service, traditional and beautiful sanctuary; the architecture of the building and the “quaintness” of the church, the choir and singing, music and choice of hymns. We also love the views/message of the church and of the UCC, non-dogmatic, non-judgmental, no vengeful god views. Our church supports the values of individuals, acknowledging that there is more than one path to God or Christ. Everyone is allowed to have their own opinion and we are not male dominated. We love many things about Pastor Norm: content of sermons, sense of humor, relaxed atmosphere of service, one-hour service, how all religions are accepted and used in service. We are inspired after service. We enjoy the book study. We love working with other members on various community service projects, such as cooking for the family shelter and providing shelter for Winter Nights, as well as projects within the church. We love all the social activities and our time with the women’s group.

Question #2: What will FCC be doing five years from now?

FCC will be cultivating an energetic, enthusiastic, growing congregation of members who are committed to serving in faith to each other and the community. We will continue to live the “all are welcome” message of our church by encouraging a variety of groups to utilize our facility and to be a church “home” for more people. Our worship services will continue to celebrate religious traditions and music while incorporating modern elements into our worship. The focus of FCC efforts will be in five major areas: **our facility**, the building, its structural needs and expanded use; a variety of **community outreach activities**; youth **activities**; diverse **social, intellectual and recreational programs** offered at the church; and **establish a members’ talent and skill database for** members to share their talents and skills with each other in time of need. Because our **facility** will be completely ADA accessible, technologically updated and structurally sound, we will be host to numerous cultural events, social and recreational activities (i.e., Music Forum, social justice lecture series, interfaith panel discussions, and after-school study halls with Wi-Fi accessibility, dance groups). Our updated facility will be marketed to various organizations/businesses as a place to meet (i.e., kitchen for caterers, meeting rooms, dance or music performances) providing the church with more rental income to sustain our programs.

Community outreach programs will be ongoing with the Interfaith Council Winter Nights program utilizing FCC annually to house the homeless, food and clothing collections for the needy and food preparation for community shelters. Our church will offer seasonal (holidays/summer) child care/babysitting services to member parents who need a night out.

Our **youth program** will grow as we offer a variety of programs for youth. We will provide an after school study hall in Pilgrim Hall for middle school students complete with Wi-Fi access, supplies and volunteer tutors. Family movie nights will be a regular occurrence along with service projects that involve youth in our community.

FCC will be a place to hold **diverse intellectual, spiritual, and recreational activities**. Community forums and lecture series on various topics (social justice issues, the interfaith community, embracing diversity, Bible study and book study seminars) will be solicited and regularly scheduled.

Members of FCC will **establish a member talent and skill database** to be able to help each other in time of need. Needs of members will be matched with skills of members, who can support each other, i.e.: tech support, household maintenance, shopping assistance, Medicare guidance, counseling, tutoring. The church will also maintain a community bulletin board where members can post what they need and members can post what they can do.

Question #3: What tools and resources will we need for the journey?

Facility repairs and renovation:

ADA accessibility: wheelchair access for the entire building (ramps and lift),
downstairs bathroom accessibility

Kitchen renovation: new stovetop, oven; updated kitchen utensils

Upgrade interior

PR/marketing person/committee to market the church to groups who would rent the space,
coordinate community/member bulletin board linking members to services/needs

Connect with community activities to become visible within the community – having a “booth” at all annual community events, i.e., Peddlers’ Fair, Farmer’s Market, Main Street Martinez events, First Night.

Create youth activities to attract youth: Parents’ night out, dances, movie nights, etc.

Conduct an overall financial analysis of church expenses, i.e., insurance, PG&E, investments; to make sure we are getting the most for our money.

Volunteers for youth activities.

Furniture/Supplies: paper, books, pencils; decorations for galas, tables for board games

Technology: computers for study hall, big screen TV

Games: ping pong table, futbol table, board games, game system for video games

Grow the membership.

Capitalize on member talents, services and giving.

Summary of Planning and Sustainability Meeting November 1, 2011

Leaders: Lori Ortiz, Norm Luecke

Location: Luecke Home

Attendees: Sharon Luecke, Tari LaCourt, Bill & Pat Chase, Shirley Peterson, Scott Parker, Mark Thomson, Sandy Thurman Snyder, Linda Thurman, Marlene Thompson, Betty Holt, Rita Carlson, Pat Arnold, Cynthia Baker.

What do you love about FCC?

Feels like a home. the friendliness and openness of everyone. It's "small town" feeling. The great memories of the services and social activities held in our church. The diversity. The history. Classic old building; beautiful design; intricate details; the pews/ stained-glass windows etc. A minister who addresses how to live/offers practical insight. "He knows just what I'm feeling/thinking?" The music; the Choir. People who listen to you. Circles and W/F. A true sense of community; outreach. Allowing other groups to use our church. Deep devotion to our church; family ties. The open mic during our service- allowing people to express their joys and concerns. The freedom to be as involved as I choose to be. Those members and friends that encourage change and growth. The feeling that I can express anything, without judgment; feels safe. Relaxed attitudes about religion; not dogmatic. A short service.. The church at Christmastime.

What will FCC be doing five years from now?

Conducting a strong, active youth program. Staffed with a Nursery attendant and Sunday School teacher(s). A revitalized church. More members. More outreach. Lots of activities offered. Financially stable. Don't want much to change. More family involvement. Continued diversity. Full every Sunday. No longer singing those "fuddy duddy" hymns; more contemporary hymns/music. Recycling program in place. Allowing animals to attend service. Committees that act upon decisions. Rarely tabling suggestions/concerns. Members/friends who offer solutions, and act- not just complain. Continued fellowship and caring of all people. Large choir- known for our excellent music. Solid men's fellowship group. Sponsor of a scout organization. Known as a viable alternative to the other local churches.

What tools and resources will we need for the journey?

More members. Sunday School program in place. More outreach. Send out/hand out church information rather than send via computer. Something in your hand is read more frequently. Institute a "Welcome Wagon" to new members of our community. Think of young adults activities (mid 20's); newly-weds are often the ones who may be looking for a church. Pay attention to our church staff; underpaid. Special focus on music. PR campaign. MORE ADVERTISING; look into free advertising. Attend more community events showcasing our church (Art-in-the-Park, First Night; Holiday Frolic/Park) Go back to holding Church-in-the-Park in a park! More visible to the community. Activities for our youth during holiday & school breaks. More fundraisers. Larger budget. ENERGY, lots of it! A congregation that "talks it up";

encouraging friends, neighbors, youth to attend. Go door to door, “without looking like Jehovah Witnesses”; providing an agenda or calendar of what’s happening in our church. Rent the church out more. Add a blog page to our church’s website. Address topics that young people can identify with. Have a dance at the church.