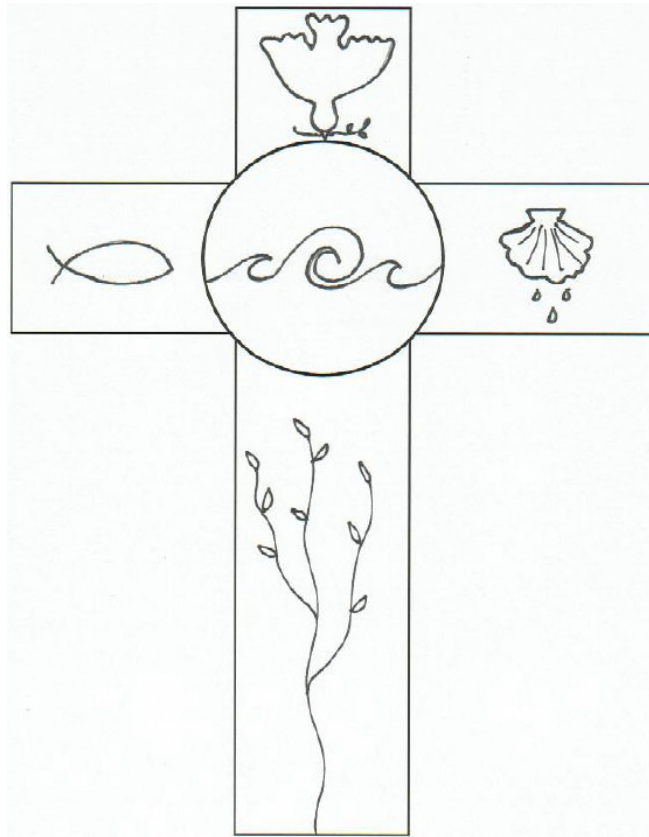


# *IMMERSING OURSELVES IN THE JOURNEY*

First Congregational Church of Chatham  
Vision, Next Steps, and Growth Areas

*'Be Thou My Vision Oh Lord of My Heart'*



*"Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love."*

*Reinhold Niebuhr*

January 2009

## **First Congregational Church of Chatham**

### **Our Vision ~ Our Purpose:**

Wherever you are on your faith journey, you are welcome here! We are a people who believe in:

- ✦ The God Who is Still Speaking;
- ✦ Discipleship to Christ;
- ✦ Welcome and Hospitality;
- ✦ The Goodness of Creation and Care for the Earth;
- ✦ Justice, Peace and Mission;
- ✦ The Ministry of Abundance: Time, Talent and Money;
- ✦ Healing; and
- ✦ Communion of Heaven and Earth.

***This is our practice, this is our joy!***

### **Our Core Values:**

- ✦ Going deeper in faith, spirituality.
- ✦ Treating each other with respect, truth, kindness, compassion, integrity and love.
- ✦ Involvement in mission, both locally and globally.
- ✦ Growth as individuals, children included, and as a church; spiritually and numerically.
- ✦ Opening to joy.
- ✦ Experiencing community.

## **WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THE GOD WHO IS STILL SPEAKING**

*This is our practice, this is our joy!*

***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.***

**Mark 12:30**

### **Our focus:**

We are invited to love God with all that we are, with every aspect of our existence. We proclaim that God is still speaking through our life experiences - through our senses, our emotions, our physical beings, our spirits - not just our minds. Sally Morgenthaler writes, "For far too long, we have imagined that information was the key to transformation, that if one only had enough God-data in the cerebral context, one would have God." We are a people who long to be a blessing to God, to one another and to this world - to experience God, not just talk about God. We proclaim that we are in the process of transformation as a church and acknowledge here, that God is calling us to a 'new place' as a faith community. We listen and pray for discernment to the God who is still speaking!

### **Next Steps and Growth Areas**

1. We reflect and discern how our church can continue to be a transformational church; working towards implementing a church structure that will uphold our vision, values and purpose. We create lean, permission giving structures that function to encourage and support the involvement of our members in ministry.
2. Our renewed focus is on 'ministry' rather than 'committee;' with Bible reflection and spiritual devotion the grounding place for all ministry meetings; "encouraging and nurturing us to making Jesus present in the faith consciousness of the ministry". Our church community pays careful attention to the discernment and

- development of God-given gifts, and uses these as the basis for determining the involvement of our members in ministry.
3. Annual orientation and training are needed for all ministries as they take on new members. Equip, train and send - building on the UCC transformational model; leading to faith, energy and mission, instead of burnout and drop out.
  4. Explore what it means to be a church that nurtures spiritual leadership; a church that helps each of us discover what is needed for our own spiritual growth. Continue to develop and foster leadership that is shared by clergy and laity, based on gifts (not predetermined roles), spiritually powered, vision led, servant focused, team building, risk taking and conflict utilizing.
  5. Offer a variety of small group experiences that provide opportunities for prayer, action, reflection, learning and sharing based on particular interests of participants, as a way to be present to one another and deepen our relationships, to further discover and discern our gifts, and to be a witness to one another's journey. For example hiking, parenting, dance, biking, film, theater etc.. 'Small groups are not a program of the church but become the church'.
  6. Expand our understanding of spiritual formation through hands on art, viewing still or media art, recalling personal stories and reflecting on how they intersect with the Gospel story; dance and movement to engage the body; mission trips and other hands on experiences of living out faith; and other sensory experiences for example baking bread while talking about Jesus.
  7. Join with kindred spirits to read and discuss books together, sign up for seminars and workshops, find a group for support in the process of change, participate in a spiritual growth group; like 'Mitten Strings for God' group, Gathering of Men and the Gathering of Women.

8. Build and expand upon the role of our Annual Meeting as an opportunity to continually look at our vision and values, to celebrate where our church has been faithful and where it has fallen short, and to reflect together how to better live out the vision in the year ahead; include this in our By-Laws.
9. Seek to understand and respond to the community around us. At least once a year, our church leadership will study and reflect on demographic material, interview business and community leaders, prayerful listening to community demographic groups, conversations with the unchurched, prayerful discernment of what groups to reach next, matching church programs to community needs.
10. Let old programs die with celebration and acknowledgement of their value and meaning to our church with rituals that recognize the sadness of letting go, while at the same time making way for future programs to take shape; grounded in the hope of resurrection.

***'You show me the path of life, O God. In your presence there is fullness of joy.'***

***Psalm 16:11***

## **WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN DISCIPLESHIP TO CHRIST**

*This is our practice, this is our joy!*

***Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.***

*John 12:26*

### **Our Focus:**

We believe that God's love for all humanity shines forth through the life of Jesus Christ. As disciples to Christ, we honor our commitment to Him by following His example through service, worship, teaching, and love. We believe that the yearning to follow Christ grows as we focus on His example. As disciples, we are aware that we are continually deepening and growing in relationship with Christ, with ourselves and with others in community. We are always in a process of developing skills and knowledge, of discerning our gifts, our purpose, our ministry - as a congregation and as disciples living our lives in the world.

### **Next Steps and Growth Areas:**

We are immersing ourselves in the journey of going deeper in faith, reclaiming the art of prayer, faith sharing and evangelism. We offer Christian educational opportunities and experiences to deepen our understanding of, and call to discipleship; remembering to honor the 'whole person'; through the senses, emotions, physical body, spirit, as well as the mind.

1. Offer vibrant and creative Church School program for all ages; engaging our body, mind and spirit. We build on programs for youth; including the introduction of 'Journey to Adulthood' for middle school/high school ages. We create inviting spaces for our youth to gather that reflect their unique place on the journey.
2. Offer diverse adult biblical and contemporary issues study, seminars, workshops at Second Hour and during the week etc., for example offering a series on Hymnity and writing our own hymns, 'Credo'

(Latin for “I believe”) – learning about the meaning behind our worship service; ‘Scriptures by the Sea’- Bible Study by the sea.

3. Establish and continue to build strong connections between children /young adults (Church School members) and members of our congregation through music, worship, mentorship, special projects, teaching, mission work etc.
4. Be intentional about creating opportunities for children and adults to participate in worship services.
5. Offer outside educational opportunities.

We are immersing ourselves in the journey by ‘going out’ – learning how to reconnect with our community; near and far. We offer opportunities for service within and beyond our local walls, so that our focus includes that which reminds us of our greater purpose;

1. Be open to a calling for a partnership(s) with a sister church.
2. Continue to grow the Youth Choir (4<sup>th</sup>-8/9<sup>th</sup> grades); offering opportunities for all youth in our church and the wider Cape Cod community to participate by singing and performing in different venues such as, worship services, First Night, A's games, Cranberry Festival, the Art Institute in Boston etc.; also providing opportunities for youth to develop an awareness and understanding of the music being performed.
3. Handbell Choir offer their time, talent and treasure at worship and outside our walls by ministering to people through their music in assisted living, nursing homes, and hospitals.
4. Build upon children's and young adult's mission programs to deepen the concept and experience of service.

5. Seek to discern how to be involved with hands on mission opportunities that reach in to the community; actual involvement, not the sending of money for someone else to do it.
6. Active participation in local community events and activities to live out God's calling us to be in relationship with one another.
7. Develop a 'Young Artist Program' as a bridge from youth to adult; encouraging and inviting local Cape Cod youth musicians/artists to perform as guests in church choirs (vocal or instrumental), and also as a means of drawing young people and their families in to the church community. A nominal fee would be required.

Vital, transforming worship: the worship services of our church provide both members and newcomers a powerful experience of the transforming power that comes through an encounter with the holy. Build upon and create worship opportunities for praise, prayer, confession, contemplation, music, joy, and healing;

1. Offer mid-day and mid-week evening services.
2. Explore possibility of an early Sunday morning service, including Communion.
3. Continue and expand special and unique worship services (i.e. Forgiveness and Acceptance; Justice and Peace; UCC Heritage; Healing; All Saints; Taize; Lenten; Celebration of the Goodness of Creation). Explore possibility of occasional, less traditional worship services.
4. Offer a 'Cherub Choir' for children in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger as an introduction and opportunity to sing in an organized, ongoing choir.
5. Continue to shape and grow our Adult Choir; making the most of differing gifts and availability. Recruit people of all ages to participate in and experience the offering of sacred music to God

- and to one another. Explore and experience world music; African, Celtic, South American as well as other cultures.
6. Be open to learning and experiencing more of what the UCC refers to as the “emerging church” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; invite speakers / ministers to lead worship / workshop to assist us in our growth and understanding.
  7. Continue to develop the ‘Sacred Music in the Arts’ Program to include liturgical dance, poetry, visual art, short stories, painter and writer artist-in-residence. Continue to publicize, fundraise, and faithraise to support and sustain this ministry.

Develop, publicize and support family, small group and individual experiences and retreats to broaden and deepen our commitment to Christ.

1. Create opportunities for ‘community’ to develop as followers of Christ through meals, worship, fellowship, and learning; helping us to grow and mature, individually and collectively. Update our history book, create a historical sketch of our instruments, ‘Interview Project’: produce a documentary (on tape or film) by interviewing one another and learning about our journey’s, to witness and be present to the ‘living saints’ that are all around us. Scrap booking project also as a way of telling and sharing our story.
2. Promote UCC-sponsored and ecumenical events, workshops and retreats; through our newsletter, website, bulletin, fliers, newspaper etc..
3. Spiritual Life Center will focus in on developing and coordinating events, workshops and retreats.

***I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.***

***John 8:12***

## **WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY**

***This is our practice and this is our joy!***

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

John 13:35

### **Our Focus**

We open our doors and welcome all to enter into our church with joy and gladness. We extend Christian hospitality to all. Our hearts and minds are open. We appreciate our present and our past differences in ethnicity, beliefs, thoughts, words and deeds, and build up the body of Christ in this spirit, this is our commitment. This is our joy!

### **Next Step and Growth Areas**

1. Develop a core "Welcoming / Hospitality Ministry Team" designated to be the 'welcoming face of Christ' and to demonstrate follow-up interest and caring for guests who come to our church. Acknowledge guests during the service with a scallop shell, an ancient symbol of hospitality as well as a part of our heritage here in Chatham. Utilize a consistent method of collecting information about newcomers and following up. Develop and implement a consistent process for Fellowship /Coffee Hour following the worship service; offer training at the beginning of the year so that volunteers will be aware of what is expected of them and feel comfortable with their responsibilities.
2. Engendering a greater sense of community through effective internal and external communications and warmth. For example, the development of an information brochure as a hard copy for

members and guests to understand who we are and what we do; update and refresh annually. This information is also on the website and updated accordingly.

3. 'Pass the peace' at worship services; develop a user-friendly system of name tags to identify members and guests.  
Acknowledge birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestones and celebrations, by inviting people to come forward for a blessing; also publishing milestones in the Bulletin (no need for the year!).
4. Appreciating and collaborating with other denominations, religions and cultures and our community.
5. Complete and distribute welcoming instructions to ushers, reaching out to draw in ushers from all ages and interests of the congregation; invite ushers into the Welcoming and Hospitality Ministry.
6. Encourage our congregation to invite others to worship and/or other people- gathering church events i.e. church suppers, musical events etc.
7. Review prospects and invite outside speakers with diverse "drawing power".
8. Review the prospects of introducing a "what if everybody came?" Sunday.
9. To continue to promote and publicize our church as a house of worship, a source of excellent music, art programs, Christian Education events and Spiritual Life Center; through our church newsletter, website, newspapers, direct mail, flyers, radio, and television. Be intentional by designating funds in the budget for this purpose; including maintaining an interactive and up to date website.
10. At the altar we place big pillows and a crate filled with crayons and paper to create a welcoming atmosphere for the children.

Enhancing the image of our church as a new or renewed desirable church home. (see 'The Goodness of Creation' section)

***If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete; be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.   Philippians 2 :1-4***

**WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN  
THE GOODNESS OF CREATION AND CARE FOR THE EARTH**

*This is our practice, this is our joy!*

***“You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.***

**Nehemiah 9:6**

**Focus Area:**

We believe in and proclaim the Goodness of God's Creation! We delight in God's love for us and see it expressed in one another, and all of God's creation. We are grateful that each of us is unique, is loved and treasured for being exactly who we are, and where we are, on our journey. We see and know God in the eyes of a stranger, in the vastness of the ocean that surrounds us, in sacred music that touches our soul, and in the beauty of the seasons. We love and know this spacious God through our senses and through our imagination. We ask; 'what might change for us if we began to realize the many ways God comes disguised as our lives?' God is calling us to become more aware of the sacred 'not away from life, but deep within all that has life.' We are truly grateful and act from this place of joy and thanksgiving for the goodness of God's Creation.

**Next Steps and Growth Areas**

With awareness and intention, we 'listen for the heartbeat of God' by creating an atmosphere that is alive with the hope of transformation; ever growing and connecting to the spirit of the living Christ; through our mission, our relationships, our worship services, our offerings, our church building, our grounds.

1. Renewing our church building; including the sanctuary, vestry, narthex, etc. to draw people in, to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere and a place that nourishes us and connects us to the

- living spirit of Christ . Using warm colors and natural, local touches to breathe new life in to the sacred space of the sanctuary; acknowledging and rejoicing in our nautical heritage, the murals on loan, utilizing 'native' resources for the altar and in the narthex – plants, paintings, pottery - connecting us to Christ through our surroundings; through nature; form a 'Sacred Space Renewal Ministry'. Once a month, volunteers to “create” an alternative altar for Sunday Services, based on the readings etc for that day.
2. Renewing our church grounds to bring it alive with color and content; an inviting, light-filled presence in our community i.e. hydrangeas and other native plantings, a light in the steeple, a 'Quiet Garden' for meditation and prayer, a 'Garden Ministry' to keep it vibrant. Consider collaborating with other churches or organizations to design and construct a labyrinth.
  3. Connecting to the living spirit of Christ; more participation by members young and old in the worship services; intinction every other month with whole grain breads; alternative services, for example a Taze Service during the week, spiritual music playing before worship on Sundays; services out doors. Upgrade our speaker system so it works and all can hear.
  4. Explore and implement ways of honoring God's Creation through the “greening” of our church; develop short and long-range plans that help us as a church community to cultivate a just and sustainable environment at our church and in our community. Begin by establishing an overall recycling program including paper, bottles, cans, plastic, and glass etc.. Explore how to be an example in our community.
  5. Work towards developing a comprehensive plan that includes short and long-range goals and timelines for the upkeep and refurbishment of our material goods, building, and grounds;

- including budget implications and planning. Seeking input and support from a diversity of church members.
6. Give thoughtful consideration to hiring a part time sexton; including budget implications and planning; including an option of maintaining the overall church-cleaning component separate.

### **Focus Area**

We are in loving and compassionate service to God, to ourselves, to one another and to all of creation. We are God's hands and lips and eyes. We express God's love through healthy discussion; honoring one another's thoughts and feelings; going deeper in understanding of what it is to be human and to be spiritual.

### **Next Steps, Growth Areas**

1. Practicing self-awareness and transparency by having an authentic openness to one another about feelings, beliefs, and actions – open hearts and minds. We are direct with one another and hold Christ at the center of our conversations and conflicts. “We are committed to exploring the meaning of the Kingdom of God and to making connections between what we profess and the way in which we live and work”.
2. Engaging and building up our young families, acknowledging the special joys and challenges of family life; through mentoring, intergenerational activities; small group activities, and providing child care so that parents will be able to participate in offerings.
3. We communicate in ways that support and enhance our relationship to God, to one another, to our church family, and to our wider community; through direct conversations, group meetings, email, newsletters, website, newspapers, radio, tv.
4. We are growing our awareness and appreciation for one another by acknowledging, celebrating and sharing more of who we are; through our gifts and talents, sharing our journey's, music, story

telling, arts and crafts, our heritage, our UCC heritage, pilgrimages and soulful travel, and acknowledging milestones, birthday and anniversary celebrations,.

***As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.***

*Psalm 42: 1-2*

**WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN JUSTICE, PEACE, AND MISSION**  
***This is our practice, this is our joy!***

***What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.***

Micah 6:8

**Our Focus:**

We believe that God is at work beyond the church as well as within it. As Christians, it is our responsibility to work for justice and peace for our neighbors as well as ourselves. We are committed to work for justice through awareness, education, understanding compassion, prayer, and action. World peace becomes possible when we focus on and grow in peace within ourselves, our families, our church, our community, our country, and our world.

**Next Steps and Growth Areas**

Involve ourselves in mission and justice;

1. Provide opportunities to enlarge our vision of peace and justice.
2. Continue to offer opportunities that build awareness of the need for mission and justice.
3. Create space in our worship to be intentional in our prayers for peace and justice.

Create opportunities for encouraging and cultivating growth of inner peace;

1. Promote UCC-sponsored and ecumenical events, workshops and retreats.
2. Create opportunities for various spiritual types to explore inner peace, such as contemplative prayer, devotional guides, spiritual gatherings, and retreats.
3. Discover and cultivate individual and collective spiritual gifts.
4. Create opportunities for further formation and sustenance for families.

5. Spiritual Life Center will assist in developing and coordinating events, workshops, and retreats.

Search for ways to contribute to justice and peace, promoting peace beyond our walls;

1. Deepen our understanding of how church programs for justice and peace contribute to world peace.
2. Learn about, give to, and serve in local and global programs for justice and peace.
3. Engage in discussions of Christian perspectives on peace and justice in the public arena.
4. Explore, discern and encourage service opportunities for members and friends of all ages.
5. Highlight our peace pole and have intentional gatherings to acknowledge the power of God's love for all people.

***The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.***  
5:22

*Galatians*

## **WE BELIEVE IN THE MINISTRY OF ABUNDANCE: TIME, TALENT AND MONEY**

**This is our practice, this is our joy!**

**“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:21**

### **Our Focus:**

We believe in God's abundance. Our deepest hope is that our thinking may be transformed from an attitude of scarcity and fear, to an acknowledgement and abiding faith that God speaks through our abundance. Our understanding of money and economics is crucial to our discipleship, and a reflection of our gratitude for what God has so graciously provided. We trust in this sense of God's provision and believe that faith raising and fundraising are inseparable. Our focus is on gratitude, building relationships and nurturing a sense of community, as well as fulfilling our financial responsibilities.

### *Next Steps and Growth Areas*

1. Develop our exposure to other economic realities and cultures through field trips, pilgrimages, and mission trips. Acknowledge what is currently going on.
2. Develop an awareness and understanding of other economic realities and cultures through education, i.e. speakers, retreats, workshops, and participation in events.
3. Assess how members learn about the different ministries of the church and create new ways of educating and calling forth members to ministry; for example an overview of the different ministry's in a church brochure, and the website; perhaps once or twice a year in the Carillon, a 'ministry fair' following worship in early fall etc..
4. Expand how we might help members to discover their gifts and a calling to use those gifts. Look at ways of training people to utilize

- their gifts to the best of their ability; team them with other like-gifted people, to go deeper in faith and to utilize God's gifts to be a blessing to one another and to the community.
5. Incorporate fund raising in to our spiritual life through gratitude, celebrations and rituals; marking beginnings and endings; the importance of relationship building, the call to be in community, the celebration and acknowledgment of our individual and corporate gifts; emphasizing quality over quantity.
  6. Explore ways of revitalizing the church's approaches to Stewardship; building on God's abundance; being a congregation that is focusing in and practicing generosity, sharing, justice, trust, faith, and sacrifice.
  7. Transform our approach to money and church finances as a ministry, engage in discussion and education; through "Money Ministry" Workshops and with speakers.
  8. Provide Planned Giving Seminars, financial management workshops etc.
  9. Integrate stewardship in to the Christian Education Rotation and J2A programs, as a way of teaching children, youth and their families about the Ministry of Abundance: time, talent and money. Offer a Spiritual Gifts/Talents Inventory for all youth in the J2A program.

**I came that you may have life and have it abundantly.  
John 10:10**

**WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN HEALING**  
*This is our practice, this is our joy!*

***“Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn in to joy”.***

*John 16:20*

**Our Focus**

Acknowledging our own imperfection, in a wounded world, we believe in the healing power of God's love; healing based on our faith that God longs for the wholeness and healing of every part of creation, every person in the world. By grace we are called to be in community, to be present to one another and to discern this healing presence of God. Through prayer, living with an open heart, and being present to our own need for healing; the healing begins. “Reaching out with healing becomes one of the first fruits of a healthy individual, and healthy community. This longing to help others is an inseparable part of growing within the healing of God's love”.

**Next Steps, Growth Area:**

1. Reaching out to others who are in need of healing by offering at least 4 Healing Services a year; for example Blue Christmas/December 21 (winter solstice/darkest day of the year), Lent, All Saint's Day etc.). Individuals who are in the midst of the healing process are encouraged to contribute and shape the services.
2. Through Christian Education; encouraging awareness and acknowledgement of the need and desire for healing for our children, listening and validating children's experiences of pain and suffering, incorporate in to the CE rotation.

3. Continue to communicate to the congregation and the community at large; opportunities and experiences of our Healing Ministry's that are ongoing or new.
4. As much as possible, make use of the small group model at our church as a way to be present to one another and deepen our relationships, to experience healing that comes from being in community, and being a witness to one another's journey toward wholeness.
5. Create a 'Support Group' for people who are a part of our church and who come to us from different denominations, who are in a mixed faith marriage or family; to explore their faith journey and to learn more about how this impacts their lives today.
6. Deep listening; develop awareness and practices to encourage deep listening to strengthen and heal our relationships with God; Jesus, the Holy Spirit, with each other, with our families, friends, our community, our world, nature. Theme for the year or for a season; "Be still and know that I am God."
7. Shepherds: exploring how to become more shepherd-like; looking at our church roster to see who is connected to one another within the congregation (through family, friends etc.), and who is not; be intentional about making connections with people letting them know they are not out there going it alone.
8. Education; skill building and retreats that focus on healing, communication skills awareness and development, getting to know one another better, healthy approaches to conflict; how to be the welcoming and hospitable presence of Jesus. Healing can come from sharing and it comes from forgiveness; hold services that focus on forgiveness.
9. Worship Services: each moment there is the potential for healing; small groups: sharing our experiences of healing; relational Bible

Study; experiencing God's unconditional love for us happens when we practice forgiveness; this is incarnation.

***I will restore health to you and your wounds I will heal.***  
30:17

*Jeremiah*

**WE ARE A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN  
THE COMMUNION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH**

***..And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending it."***

**Genesis 28:10-12**

**Our Focus**

There is on this earth an intertwining of the Spiritual and the material, the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen. There is a communion of heaven and earth, time and eternity. The sacred dwells within the ordinary. We are connected to all those who have gone before us and honor these "clouds of witnesses" in the witnessing of the church. Through the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we celebrate with thanksgiving that God in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, is forever present and still speaking.

**Next Steps and Growth Areas**

We hope to honor and bring witness to this communion by:

1. Creating a memorial garden for those who wish to be interned in a holy place, as well as provide a place for loved ones to come for quiet reflection and remembrance.
2. Remembering our Saints through special services, hymns, prayers, memorials, flowers, heritage days, candlelight and silence.
3. Providing spiritual formation/educational events for small groups which support those in the dying and grieving process.
4. Creating opportunities to explore "thin places" (places where the earthly and the spiritual draw near to each other) in Chatham, in our church and in our lives. ( For a few examples: a pilgrimage or candlelight walk through our church grounds identifying our church history; a walk through Chatham identifying one's personal "thin spaces"; creating a steeple lighting.)

5. Finding ways to reconnect our current lives to our Baptisms and revitalize our experience of the Lord's Supper.

***Your immortal spirit is in all things.***

***Wisdom 12:1***

*“Seeking the place of one’s resurrection.. a willingness to die to one’s home, or the place that was comfortably familiar, in order to find new life.. the gospel of Christ leads us not into what we already know but into what we do not yet know..”*

Visioning Ministry

Anne Bonney

Kathi Diaz

David Erickson

Rosemary Giasullo (charter member)

Amy Middleton

Linda Middleton

Cynthia Pugh

Jay Stahl

Dawn Tolley, Chair

RESOURCES

United Church of Christ Website [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org) ; Evangelism and Renewal

*Listening for the Heartbeat of God* by John Philip Newell

*The Book of Creation* by John Philip Newell

*Appreciative Inquiry Process*, Clergy Leadership Institute

*Prayer, Stress and Our Inner Wounds* by Flora Slosson Wuellner

## **Vision ~ Symbols on the Cross; Who We Are, and Where We are Heading**

### The Empty Cross ~ God is Still Speaking

Sign of resurrection, Christ's eternal presence, restoration, transformation, renewal, life, vitality, rejuvenation, sacred love, belonging and faith.

### The Fish ~ Discipleship to Christ

The 3 points of the fish as a symbol of the trinity - God, Christ and Holy Spirit, a sign of recognition to followers of Christ, welcome and hospitality, the history of the church, commitment to Christ, gratitude, sustenance, generosity of God, more than enough, abundance, our heritage, ICTHUS (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior), Cape Cod – cod.

### Scallop Shell ~ Welcome and Hospitality

The trinity, the relationship – Creator, Son, Holy Spirit 3 in 1, 1 in 3 – as a model of relationship. On a heading it was as sign of pilgrimage; the journey to eternal life or a sacred place. Baptismal waters, a sign of journey, new beginnings, new birth. Protection, a symbol of hospitality – the shell over the door, our heritage here on Cape Cod, hidden things, fertility, seeds, water, disciplines.

### Vision Cross ~ The Goodness of Creation and Care for the Earth

(the cross with a circle at the center, along with the symbols)

The goodness of creation - God proclaimed it was good! As a symbol, 'the ancient, high standing crosses are rooted in the belief that Christ, represented by the cross and creation, represented by the circle at the heart of the cross, are one. We come forth from the same point, together we merge out of the heart of God's Being'.

### The Dove ~ Justice, Peace and Mission

Peace, justice and mission, Messenger of hope, bearer of peace, coming from Noah's Ark, hope, olive branch, Holy Spirit, freedom, liberation, the leaves- 3 /trinity, sky, fire, communion of heaven and earth, peace makers.

### The Vine ~ The Ministry of Abundance: Time, Talent and Money

Faithfulness to Christ, 'I am the vine, you are the branches', new growth and possibility, abundance, grounding, gifts of the spirit, belonging to each other and to Christ, communion of heaven and earth, resurrection, transformation - seeds to blossoms to fruit, God is below us, beside us, above us, within us, potentialities, all encompassing, the goodness of creation, gratitude, 'in the beginning'; 'it is good', re-creation.

### Waves/Ocean ~ Healing

The vastness of the sea – of God, the sea as a place where we connect with God and experience God's healing and grace. The sea as a part of our heritage, the rhythm of creation, eternal, balance of the opposites. Going deeper - deepening awareness of being on a faith journey. The sacred dwelling within the ordinary.

### The Center Circle ~ Communion of Heaven and Earth

Creation, eternity, infinity; the circle as a symbol that all creation is being held by God, the love that holds us together. The nature of life is spiral (not linear), An intertwining of the spiritual and the material, the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen. The communion of heaven and earth, time and eternity.