



First Church Strategic Plan Summary

Fall 2011

Agenda

- *Background and Initial Findings*
- *The Five Pillars of the Strategic Plan*
- *How to Build the Five Pillars – Three Foundations*
- *Next Steps and Timeline*



Background & Process

- ***Work Began in March 2011***
 - *Strategic Planning Committee formed*
 - *Engaged Paul Nickerson as Strategic Consultant*

- ***Spring and Summer of 2011***
 - *Background Research, Exploration of Key Issues*
 - *Discussion of Preliminary Conclusions*
 - *Integration with Jonathan's Sabbatical Findings*

- ***Fall 2011***
 - *Exploration of Key Issues*
 - *Discussion of Preliminary Conclusions*



Church in America

- *80% of ALL church denominations have declining membership & attendance*
- *125,000 churches have closed in the last 20 years*
- *18% of Americans attend church on a regular basis (only 10% in New England)*

Simsbury Demographics

- *Population of 23,166 with 8,401 households*
- *64% of residents have a bachelors degree or higher*
- *Unemployment is lower than the state and national averages*
- *Fastest growing demographic groups are single adults and seniors*



Findings (cont'd)

First Church Information

Membership & Participation

- Records show 1,138 "members" plus 442 participating non-members = 1,580 total
- 175 families with children of JF & PF age
 - 110 kids enrolled plus ~30 Confirmands
- 106 families with children church school age
 - 169 children enrolled
 - Average attendance 30 – 70/ Sunday
- 42 known volunteer or other Church groups
 - 560 people involved (some overlap)
 - 60 people on various Boards
- Worship attendance has declined since 2008

Financial Information

- 2011 pledge summary
 - 346 pledges (22% of participants)
 - 35 (10%) gave less than \$250
 - 107(31%) gave \$250 - \$999
 - 132 (38%) gave \$1,000 - \$2,999
 - 72 (21%) gave more than \$3,000
- Pledge estimate for 2011 is \$810,000 with total revenue projected at \$912,580
- Expenses projected at \$912,260
 - 66% is for personnel costs
 - 15% is for building & grounds
 - 10% for mission

91%
of all
FCC
costs



Strategic Plan – 5 Pillars

1. **NURTURE DISCIPLES:** *Help Participants to Explore, Deepen and Practice their Faith*
2. **INVITE OTHERS:** *Grow First Church by Reaching Out into our Surrounding Community*
3. **TARGET MINISTRIES:** *Respond to the Different Needs of Various Segments of our Congregation and our Community*
4. **FOSTER GENEROSITY:** *Deepen our Commitment to Faithful Giving*
5. **EMPHASIZE MISSION:** *Put our Faith into Action by Pursuing the Wellbeing of all God's People*



Pillar #1 – Nurture Disciples

Goal

To develop opportunities for members and friends to *EXPLORE* and *DEEPEN* their faith by *INTEGRATING* faith formation into *ALL ASPECTS OF OUR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE* and *DISCOVERING* ways all can *LIVE OUT FAITH* in *DAILY LIFE*

Desired Outcomes

- Vibrant worship that feeds & inspires worshippers to live out faith in their daily lives
- Expanded opportunities to participate in worship
- Music ministries that invite, cultivate & incorporate a broad range of talent in worship
- Faith practices such as prayer, Bible study incorporated into all aspects of congregational life (including meetings)
- More opportunities to explore faith in small groups
- Serving as a Teaching Parish, training a seminary intern each academic year as a part of mentoring



Pillar #2 – Invite Others

Goal

To develop a **CULTURE** of **INVITATION**, encouraging and **EQUIPPING** members and friends to invite **NEIGHBORS** and creating more **DOORWAYS** into the life of the Congregation

Desired Outcomes

- Congregants invite those without a church to participate in First Church events
- Expanded visibility and involvement of clergy and lay leaders in the community
- First Church routinely “tells its story” and generates “buzz” through use of local media, marketing & communication
- First Church web site becomes a source of information & inspiration by being more inviting, intuitive, dynamic & interactive
- First Church’s music program is recognized within the congregation and the community as a beacon of invitation and a source of spiritual inspiration



Pillar #3 – Target Ministries

Goal

To bring faithful ministries to the ***INFREQUENTLY ENGAGED*** members of our church and the ***UNDERSERVED*** populations of our community

Desired Outcomes

- Targeted programs developed and revised by clergy and lay leaders as new needs are identified and as known needs evolve
- Lay membership contributes to efforts to regularly assess demographic needs, identify and implement new ministries
- To begin, an enhanced ministry for senior members will be launched in 2011 - 2012
- Additional targeted groups and ministries will be identified in 2012



Pillar #4 – Foster Generosity

Goal

To cultivate a culture of **GENEROSITY** through regular emphasis on giving as a way to **PRACTICE** faith and express **GRATITUDE** to God

Desired Outcomes

- A well developed year-round approach to Stewardship that includes a season of pledging
- A spirit of gratitude by routinely “telling their stories” to highlight ways that First Church has made a difference in their lives and faith
- Customized pledge appeals, reflecting different places on the journey
- Measureable growth in faithful giving over time
- Development of a gift assessment tool to help members discover and use their gifts



Pillar #5 – Emphasize Mission

Goal

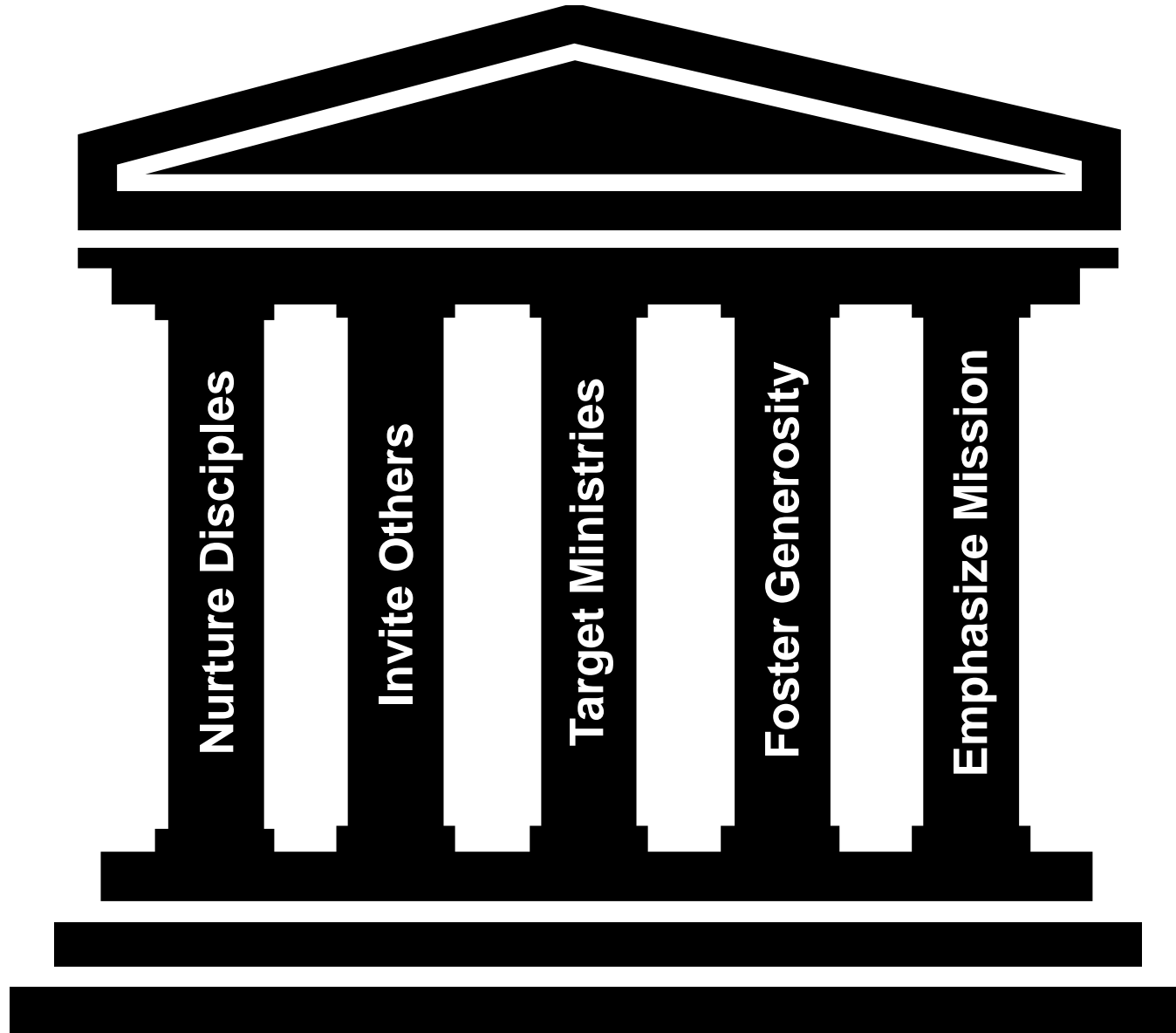
To sustain and build on this congregation's historic **COMMITMENT** to mission and outreach **SERVING WITH AND LEARNING FROM** those in need within our **LOCAL** community, **NATION** and the **WORLD**

Desired Outcomes

- First Church will “tithes”, committing a minimum of 10% to mission of all income annually received by First Church
- % committed to mission increases as membership & stewardship grow
- New Ideas inspired by our mission commitments
- Lay initiation of mission projects
- Mission commitment will be evident in worship life, prayers and learning opportunities, as well as through increased giving and participation in “hands on” projects
- Larger scale, “high impact” mission projects or initiatives that excite and engage our congregation



The 5 Pillars of First Church



Building a Foundation for these Pillars

- A.** *REVISE GOVERNANCE: Develop a more Flexible and Efficient Organizational Structure*

- B.** *REFINE STAFFING: Respond to Evolving Management and Administrative Support Needs to Meet Ministry Goals*



Foundation A – Revise Governance

Goal

To **RESEARCH** multiple models and **DEVELOP** and **IMPLEMENT** a structure that **STREAMLINES DECISION MAKING, REDUCES TIME AND ENERGY** spent on “running the church” and **EXPANDS OPPORTUNITIES** for all to participate in meaningful ministries

Desired Outcomes

- Fewer people involved in day-to-day operations and decision making
- Empowered individuals to initiate projects and new ministries without undue administrative barriers
- More people involved in short term ministry teams that reflect the gifts and passions of participants



Foundation B – Refine Staffing

Goal

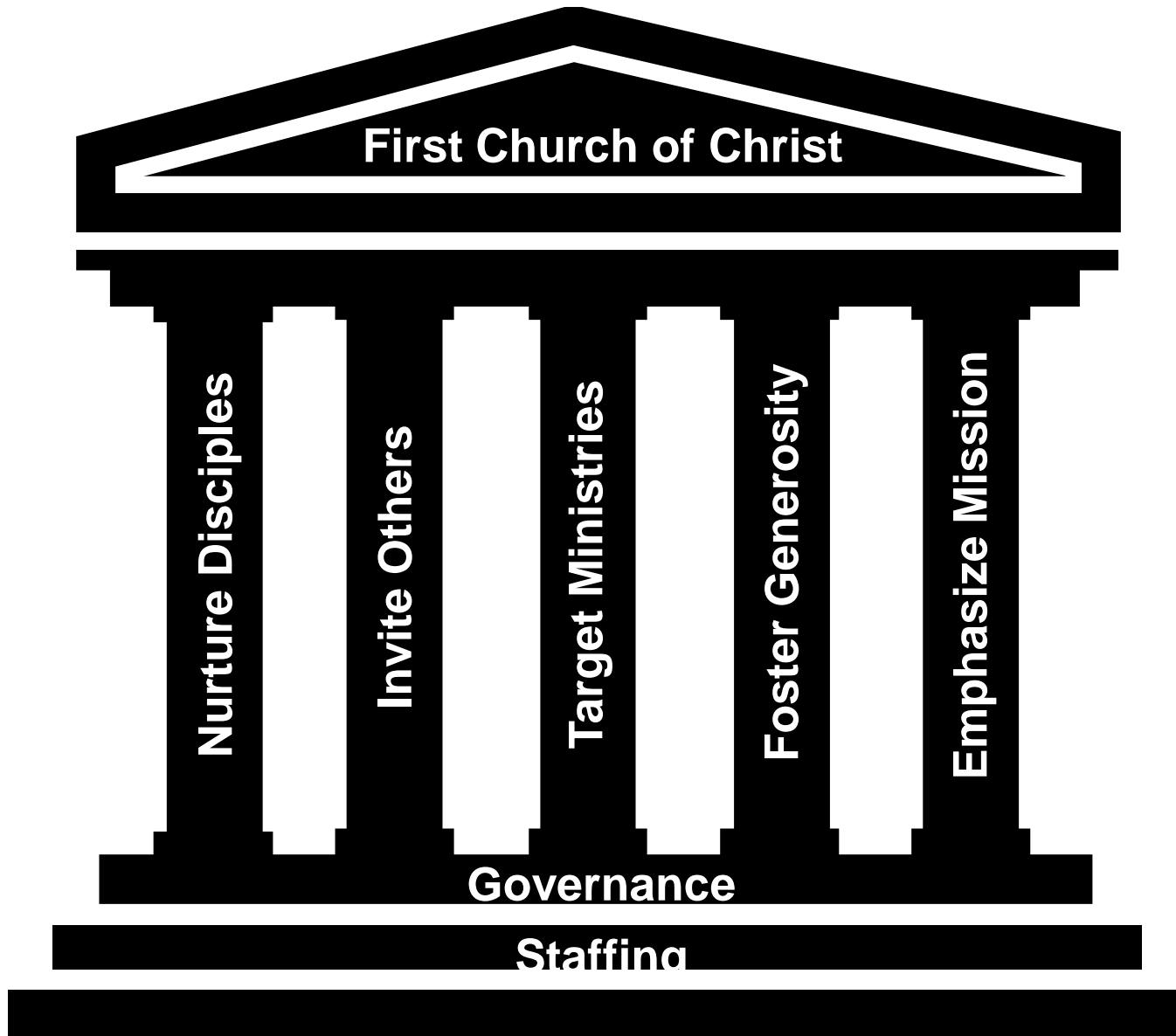
To establish the right **ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN** (structure, staff and capabilities) to meet the **CHANGING** management, administrative support and ministry needs of First Church

Desired Outcomes

- Three full time, ordained ministry positions sustained
- Job descriptions for clergy and program staff clearly define roles and responsibilities
- Church office is professionally managed
- Staff is organized and skilled to deliver high quality administrative and program support to ministerial and professional staff and excellent customer service to the congregation and visitors
- Proficient use of office technology is integrated into all aspects of service delivery



Summary



Next Steps & Timeline

Activity	Date	Accountable Party
Multiple small group forums to review & discuss strategic plan. Changes made as needed	December 2011 and January 2012	Executive Council and Congregation Members
Special Meeting of the Congregation to approve Strategic Plan	January 2012 (Date TBD)	Congregation
Special Governance and Music Study Groups formed. Board of Personnel begins evaluating staffing options.	January 2012	TBD members of Study Groups
Study groups and Board of Personnel meet to review and evaluate options	February – April 2012	TBD members of Study Groups
Study groups meet with Executive Council to review initial findings	April 2012	TBD members of Study Groups
Review of potential governance approach for Church Year of May 2012 - 2013	April & May 2012	Executive Council
Actions taken as appropriate	May 2012	Congregation

