

Final Planning Committee
Report
June 2011



The United Churches of
Olympia

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Acknowledgements:

The Planning Committee members wish to thank the Council and its members over the last several years for having the foresight to charter this work. We believe that the transition has occurred more smoothly because of that decision.

There are many other congregational members to thank.

Thank you to:

- ◇ Those who took the time to write or tell us what they thought.
- ◇ For help organizing the small group meetings, and for those who participated in those meetings.
- ◇ Pastor Tammy Stampfli for her leadership, guidance, and encouragement during her interim pastorate.
- ◇ The oral history interviewees and interviewers that helped capture some of our rich heritage.
- ◇ Pat Sonnenstuhl for her work on the church web site.
- ◇ Yvonne Wilhelmsen for her help posting many “Voice” articles.
- ◇ This is from Brian Hovis (as a personal privilege): I want to thank my fellow Planning Committee members for their hard work and commitment to what has been a long haul. You are a wonderful group.

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Report Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the final product from the Planning Committee (PC). The primary audience for this report is the Pastor Seeking Committee, and we hope that the work is helpful to that committee as they try to discern the desires of the congregation in the service of God. We also hope that church leadership, congregational members, and others will read the report.

It may be particularly important for Council to read the report and review materials gathered from the congregation. The Council may choose to review and approve the church profile that will act as a beacon for our next settled pastor. Discerning what the congregation needs from what members have said will keep that process true.

One of the tasks of the PC was to engage the congregations in “Holy Conversations.” This term is described later, but it could be thought of as facilitated congregational opportunities to comment on three questions:

- ◇ Who are we?
- ◇ What does God call us to do?
- ◇ Who is our neighbor?

The first three chapters attempt to answer those questions drawn from materials gathered from the congregation and other sources. The fourth chapter describes the process used to gather those materials. There is a rich assortment of materials and those will be available on CDs that accompany this report, in case the Pastor Seeking Committee and others wish to draw their own conclusions from the “Holy Conversations.”

Chapter 1 Who Are We?

Introduction to Chapter

The following reflections about “Who We Are” come from members and leaders of The United Churches of Olympia (TUCO) through discussions, written responses to questionnaires, and survey responses during the second half of 2010. The Planning Committee convened five discrete conversation sessions and the Worship Ministry conducted a survey of worship preferences. (Descriptions of these gatherings are summarized in the appendix for chapter one)

In this chapter, the Planning Committee attempted to capture what was said and written without trying to quantify each point. The methodology and nature of the discussions do not lend themselves to balance sheet accounting of the input. The Planning Committee did not judge the validity of any opinions expressed. They are included for each reader of this report to evaluate for his or herself. The reflections may sometimes seem contradictory, but that is the nature of our congregation.

Our Congregation

TUCO is a federated church of around 350 members, including people in the United Church of Christ and Presbyterian denominations and a few who are unaffiliated with either. We are glad that we have two congregations together and room for others.

We have a good sense of our history, and can talk about it readily. According to our recent Worship Survey, nearly one-third of the respondents have attended the church for more than 25 years. Almost two-thirds have been part of the church for more than 9 years.

We see ourselves as a diverse congregation, and although we may be theologically diverse, we may not be very socially and culturally diverse. The majority of us are college educated, professional, and over 50. Half of the membership is retired.

We acknowledge that we are an older congregation with an aging population and diminishing membership. We worry about our declining size. We are concerned with having enough support for our faithful and aging members.

We lack something for younger adults. We think we should be working to attract more children, young adults, and singles. We feel challenged to bring in new members and families, but we struggle with how to attract them. Youth want to continue or increase their participation with leadership and service.

We see a need for a greater intergenerational focus and a need for greater involvement for our youth in the life of the church, but we recognize that other demands (particularly on young families) can make such engagement difficult.

We are busy: busy with careers, church work, family, community. Some of us cannot manage more than attending church and we leave soon after. We are divided by time of worship, and many of us tend not to meet those who attend other services, except for meetings, if then.

When many of us came together at the church retreat, we showed significant enthusiasm in playing, visiting, and worshipping with people of different ages. Congregational suppers like the pie auction are well attended. We respond well to Dinners for 7. We have lots to say to each other at such gatherings! Yet we have mixed success with the routine basics of being welcoming.

Our Openness and Hospitality

We believe that welcoming all people is a core value and a characteristic of TUCO. We think of ourselves as a tolerant and broad-minded congregation, but we acknowledge that we have difficulty living into the welcoming body we want to be.

We wish to place more emphasis on welcoming visitors and we are concerned about lack of follow-up as people come to us. We may or may not initiate communication with those who are not yet old timers at church. Meeting and greeting is a work in progress for us. We are highly interested in improving our ability to welcome and sustain new and youthful membership.

The sense of history may sustain many members, but adds to the difficulty of new member assimilation. Longer-term members established their relationships when there were more church activities. New members may find it difficult to become part of the group and find it hard to break into the meetings and have input.

Becoming an open and affirming congregation in 1992 was a tumultuous process for the church, but to some extent, the issue has become more of non-issue for the congregation as a whole because from an outward appearance the congregation seems welcoming to Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transsexuals (GLBT). Most members appear to treasure our open posture. Some regard

marching in the Capitol Pride Parade with the church banner as one of the proud moments of the year.

We rent the building to many groups day and night, every day of the week. We are so rented out that there is little opportunity for members of our own congregation to gather. Without regular opportunities to gather, it is hard to build relationships and community.

Our Worship and Music

We have traditions in our services that are respected and yet change is desired. We have a tension between tradition (in theology, worship, and music) and the need to accommodate the preferences of a younger church population. The youth are involved in Family Worship, but we don't always know how to involve them in other services.

There is a tension between multiple, diverse services and the need for cohesion and unity. We continue to search out ways to sustain a variety of worship service styles with a schedule that will work for most. There was one suggestion that we have a single service each Sunday for a year to get to know each other.

Some wonder if we can sustain a mix of traditional and non-traditional styles of worship. Others would like to see Family Worship style services every week or every other week.

Music is a focus of much of our discussion about worship. We are a musically diverse and sophisticated congregation with multiple hymnals and song books as proof. Music as part of worship is extremely important, and accommodating differences in preference or style of music and worship is challenging. Familiar patterns are comforting, but may seem lifeless to some. We wish to find a way to marry our respectable tradition of high quality music with new, contemporary music that may call for different delivery. We are curious and cautious about Contemporary Christian and Praise music.

We have great potential for sustaining quality choral and instrumental music with a high level of musical talent amongst members. We are home to an amazing pipe organ that has brought great joy to many and concern to some. We need to pay tribute to the instrument that lives in the worship space and yet not let it dominate worship.

Our Theology and Education

We see ourselves as open and progressive in our theology. We are interested in exploring our own faith through questioning and wish to learn more about the faith of others. “No matter who you are or where you are...” resonates with many. We believe ourselves to be theologically diverse.

Within mainstream protestant Christianity, we view ourselves on the liberal end of the spectrum. Adult education is considered diverse and rigorous, and reflects the high level of interest and education in the congregation. People appear quite free to express views that differ from orthodox or traditional interpretations of scripture; within the congregation there is general respect for different faiths. Fundamentalism might be an exception because it is regarded as antithetical to our openness. Returning to a more conservative position is seen as a threat.

We are delighted with our sense of openness and proud of our inclusiveness. However, this may contribute to a lack of urgency about our “message.” Because everyone is welcome to be on his or her own path and to believe whatever they want to believe, we don’t have a sense of urgency about what it is that we are doing. We have to find a spiritual center that we can celebrate and promote and a mission focus that we can concentrate on.

We reach to find common, inclusive language to articulate our beliefs in order to have meaningful, spiritual dialogue. Some welcome our diversity in beliefs as exciting; others see it as divisive. The weight of the congregational response on this occasion viewed us as “open,” but would prefer us to become more centered. There are diverse and strong opinions about what it would take to be more centered and the congregation is contradictory along these lines.

Our families desire a high quality Christian Education for their children but want their children to be encouraged to think critically and creatively about what is shared.

Our youth are enthusiastic about their program overall, but feel the limits caused by its small size. They are concerned that the congregation may be too stuck in a traditional way of doing things. Our liberal position is both a strength and a weakness. The confirmation class is especially appreciated. The youth would like more involvement in worship, more structure and challenge, they would like more Bible education in Sunday school but wish to remain open to question what they learn. They desire to understand a variety of perspectives and respect diversity.

Some would like to have a Junior Church after the children's message, Sunday school after the 11:00 service, and changes to the Sunday school format.

Our Social Outreach and Mission

Social outreach is an important part of the identity and reputation of TUCO. We like social action. We are risk-takers, significantly involved in social justice issues with accompanying high visibility in the community. We feel that we have a lot of work to do in the community and the world. We are proud of our mission participation, though there may be a relatively small core of individuals who show up to work.

We have hosted Camp Quixote every year for several years. We support the winter women and family overflow shelter, the food bank, the Salvation Army feeding programs, and we give to many local missions. We provide a facility for public Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, and sponsor an alternative giving fair at Christmas. The youth expressed the importance of the service component of their program, and at least some of the high schoolers have said that they want to do more.

We highly value the percentage of our operating budget that we give to mission every year. We are service and action minded but we are again challenged by time, energy and resources. Some see a lack of creative thinking about mission and an absence of a unified thesis of mission.

Our Building and Staff

We have a very central and highly visible location in Olympia which makes us easily accessible.

We have opened ourselves up (increasingly so) as a place of learning, recovery and shelter. We serve as a community center in many ways.

We are an aging facility with a long list of *needs* and many who *need* it to remain in good repair.

We have limited use of technology but a desire to integrate more and improve the infrastructure.

We have limited staff and resources.

We sometimes have unrealistic expectations of our staff which may be reflected in vague and all-inclusive job descriptions.

Lay leadership is growing in the church and that sometimes creates a conflict for staff.

Chapter 2 What Does God Call us to Do?

Introduction to the chapter

As part of our church's transition process, your Planning Committee, acting under its "charter" from the Council, has now facilitated for the congregation what have been referred to as "Holy Conversations", one of which earlier addressed the question "Who We Are" (as our congregation and its leadership). A summary of the congregation's and its leadership's reflections was published on January 22, 2011, and made available to the congregation.

This paper now brings forward, in similar and summary fashion, the reflections the Planning Committee has received in response to a second question in our "Holy Conversations", "What Does God Call Us to Do or Be?" These responses were offered in the meetings of sixteen small groups, including our Council, staff Ministries, other established groups, such as our Stephen Ministers and Caring Friends, and our choir, and in "at large" gatherings of interested congregational members including our residents at Panorama City.

An Introductory Note

To guide our small group discussions during which we sought to discern God's wishes for us in our "doing" and "being", we used a four-part format where we asked ourselves:

- *What does God call us to be and do individually and as a congregation within our church?*
- *How do we think as individuals and within our congregation we can answer this calling within our church?*
- *What do we feel God calls us to be and do individually and as a congregation in the greater world in which we live ?*
- *How do we think that as a congregation we can best answer this call in the greater world in which we live ?*

We believe most of the participants in our small group discussions recognized that there are no strict divisions between our "internal" and "external" "doing" and "being". For example, how we worship and learn should, unsurprisingly, affect how we carry ourselves in the wider world. Nevertheless, this four-part format proved useful in structuring our discussions.

At the same time, in presenting this report, our committee believes that the summary of our small group discussions might best be presented under three predominant themes which emerged from these interchanges and which, we suggest, capture what the congregation believes to be faithful responses to God's call and thus our directions in mission going forward.

These themes are:

Community health and community building
Spiritual growth and transformation
Outreach to a wider community

As we list these themes, here, again, it is clear that each of these does not connote a compartmentalized group of activities. A faithful pursuit of one or another of these directions in mission will enrich and in return be enriched by the others. Thus, for example, an individual or corporate commitment to spiritual growth will nourish the health and formation of the community and its presence in a wider world.

With these observations, here is what you as the congregation have told us:

Community Health and Community Building

- The need to *be welcoming* was heard from all groups. There were quotes that emphasized how the act of being welcoming needed to extend beyond just the introductions and greetings. The welcoming efforts need to include all members and visitors and express caring, listening and concerning ourselves with one another..
- As we noted in our earlier report summarizing “Who Are We”, respecting diversity was particularly emphasized as a hallmark of our faith community. Many repeated the need to *be respectful of diversity* in talking about their calling within the church and at large.
- Respecting diversity can be supported through continuing to host and initiate small group ministries as well as social occasions where church members can become better acquainted and pool their talents and resources. Being better listeners, understanding and acting upon the needs of our church community will also strengthen our commitment to serving in our greater communities.

- With our efforts to welcome with hearts and hands, we need to find a better way to follow up with both current members and visitors. Follow up may come in the way of phone calls, e-mails, visits and personal one-on-one invitations to join small groups and ministries that will help both children, youth and adults stay connected and find their voices and talents as they help serve and lead. Our welcome needs to be “all the time” and not just during church hours. There is a great need to attend to the lives in community of our youngest members and similarly to those of our most elderly. So responding is both our challenge and our gift. We are seen to have connections to both our youth and elders within the church and in our greater community. Learning how to join forces with charitable and service organizations already assisting these populations can be part of our mission.

Spiritual Growth and Transformation

- There is a strong voice supporting the desire to be *spiritually focused* and able to identify us as Christians. This reflects the wide spread desire to continue to support and to grow in our faith as a Christian community through worship, education and service. This open and affirming spiritual center is what guides our actions. It is what makes us unique or different from other community service organizations.
- Keeping our spiritual center involves worship/music, education and service. In welcoming change but honoring tradition, there is a need to have strong preaching, teaching and praying communities which gather in a variety of settings and at a variety of times. It was often mentioned that through our Christian Education we need to continue to study and question our faith and be intentional and respectful as we share what we believe with others in our church.
- Members in our congregation value our call to be the *keepers of traditions and history* through worship, music and education. Embracing change is highly valued, but there is a desire to acknowledge and honor our past.
- Education and worship services will continue to help us move forward and reflect on our past. A variety of worship styles, music and educational programs for all ages need to exist but we need to use caution as not to become too compartmentalized. Diversity shouldn't create division. Traditions in our church come from many faiths and many times. More

important than maintaining any one set of traditions belonging to our denominations is a quest to establish our own rites and be informed about what role they play in our worship and spiritual gatherings.

Outreach to a Wider Community

- *Showing the love of Christ* through our daily actions takes our Christian faith into the world. By *being “Christ Centered”*, we are able to be the change that is needed in our world both close to home and far away. We can go out in the world and be open minded and still share the good news of Christ’s love. We need to be open to asking questions and being questioned. We can focus on and learn about what we share with other faiths rather than upon what sets us apart.
- We are called to *be helpful in restoring people to their full humanity* through keeping our doors open to support groups and healing ministries. We can be a faithful caring community that places our values in our actions. We can be a beacon of light and hope. It is important to focus on projects that promote sustainable solutions.
- We seek justice for oppressed people. We can *be advocates* for those that cannot advocate for themselves or need help with advocacy. We need to be visible in our community as we plan our work and work our plan.
- We should connect, communicate and learn with other faith communities. What common core values do we share? How does that guide us? How can our shared visions strengthen the world we live in? Maintaining relationships with Sister Churches and World-Wide projects can stem from local conversations. We must continue to share about what social action opportunities exist in our community with our congregation.
- There is a need to support and grow awareness of mental health and social welfare needs in our community. This can guide our efforts to help our neighbors. Keeping our doors open to those that seek sanctuary inside our church can also help take our “Word” out into the world. In order to make this possible, we must continue to be good stewards of time, talents and treasures as we maintain and improve our building. We could find ways to be more active in our hosting of support and recovery groups, while continuing, as we now do, to provide child care for their meetings.

- In our advocacy for the oppressed, we will continue to champion efforts that give voice and support to those who are marginalized. Through our time, talents and treasures, we can demonstrate our Christian faith in action as we practice our “no matter who you are or where you are, you are welcome here” creed.

Concluding

What and how we believe as well as how we serve as a church community are ultimately underlying themes. Ultimately, what God calls us “to be and to do” must be found in the nature of our faith and in our service. How do we continue to nurture our spirits and maintain our desired high level of service? These questions were raised in many of the small group meetings and they are at the core of what moves us forward as we continue our transition.

Chapter 3 Who Are Our Neighbors?

The Planning Committee didn't have an additional process to answer this question. It was apparent that the leaders and congregants think of themselves as part of the community, nation, and world.

The United Churches comprehensively described the community and neighbors in 2006 in the church profile prepared for the associate pastor search. Since that time, there have been some significant changes in the community:

- ◇ The Great Recession has impacted many aspects of the community. For the purposes of this report, charitable donations to non-profits have decreased. This has impacted many groups who provide social services, and accentuated some of the challenges noted in the church profile. Groups providing housing, food support, employment counseling, and medical services have all been impacted.
- ◇ The expansion of the Fort Lewis base has put additional stresses on housing and social services.

The planning committee explored community demographics within 5, 6, and 20 mile radii using software from MissionInsite (<http://www.missioninsite.com/>).

Another wonderful resource is the 2010 community profile prepared by the Thurston Regional Planning Council (<http://www.trpc.org/Pages/default.aspx>)

Chapter 4 Planning Committee Process

An Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter describes the major steps of transition that have led to this report for the use of the Pastor Seeking Committee, the congregation, and church leadership.

The Transition Team Report led to the formation of the Planning Committee (PC). The PC was there to assist the church Council and provide a needed focus for the transition process. Part of the strength of this process is the continuity of certain church members who had this focus. Processes often fail when there are breaks. Each major transition step has included new church members, but like a relay, some members have been willing to go onto the next step and pass the baton. Even now on the Pastor Seeking Committee John Bowden from the PC is running the last lap with the Pastor Seeking Committee.

The Pastor Seeking Committee now will help call a new settled pastor to the church. As part of the process, they must complete a church profile, and present it to the Council. The PC members hope that by showing the great amount of work that went into the transition process leading to this report that the Pastor Seeking Committee might confidently draw from the conclusions. That is not to say that the Pastor Seeking Committee should not engage the congregation further. The PC did not use all the tools mentioned in its guide, an Alban Institute publication by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann entitled “Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations”. More engagement is good, but the work and products that are summarized in this chapter should provide rich materials for the church profile. The products mentioned in this chapter are available on a separate CD that accompanies this report.

Transition Team Report

The transition team was the precursor group to the PC. Council began discussing the future of the church in 2007 when Pastor Dowdy began hinting about retirement.

The Council took action in 2008 and formed the transition team. Team members were Bob McMullen, Mike Segawa, Janet Anderson, and Brian Hovis. The team researched the transition process and the associated

denominational issues. The Council received the team's report in early 2009. The report opens with the statement below and made recommendations about the process, including the formation of a planning committee that would shepherd the transition that was about to occur. The Council adopted the Transition Team Report.

The church is on the cusp of change. A hypothetical timeline (Appendix 1) shows that the church is entering a transition period where there will likely be an interim pastor and new senior (edit note: now referred to as settled) pastor within the next five years.

Formation of the Planning Committee

The Council asked for names of potential planning committee (PC) members in Spring 2009 and selected a small group, each of who said yes to the charge. The volunteers were Joe Arnett, John Bowden, Lee Johnson, Janet Anderson, Marcia Smith, Amanda Scott, and Brian Hovis. Cheri Kelley replaced Amanda Scott in 2010.

The first committee meeting was in September 2009. At that time, Pastor Dowdy had not officially decided upon a retirement date. The PC took as its guide an Alban Institute publication by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann entitled "Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations". The committee began its work with the reading of "Holy Conversations" and preparing individual proposals for the communications plan.

Committee members worked with Council to clarify a timeline and charter (appendices 2 and 3), which were adopted in November 2009. The committee began working on its tasks, reported its plans, and gathered further input from Council at the January 2010 retreat at the Priory.

Communications Plan

The PC looked at ways to engage the congregation in a "Holy Conversation" and developed a plan. The Council provided its input at its retreat in January 2010. A visible aspect of the plan was a poster showing progress in the transition. There were many "Voice" articles and pulpit announcements (*i.e.*, minutes for mission) that kept the congregation informed about PC activities.

Exit Interview

One of the major milestones in the transition process was reflection on our relationship with Pastor Dowdy that was ending. The PC helped the pastor identify an administrative check-off that he might want to accomplish before leaving. A party was arranged and Pastor Dowdy shared with us his reflections in both a newspaper article and a transcription of his exit interview.

Interim Pastor Hiring

Before Pastor Dowdy left, the PC facilitated the formation of the Interim Pastor Hiring Committee. The hiring committee members were Brian Hovis, Bob McMullen, Leslie Cushman, Mike Segawa, Alice Tweit, and Deborah Reynolds. Brian Hovis was on both the hiring committee and PC to allow for good coordination between the two groups.

Period of Reflection

The Transition Team report called for a period where the church was without a sitting pastor. The PC worked with Council and staff to provide the basic congregational needs during more than an eight-week period during the summer of 2010.

Holy Conversations

Somewhat coincidental with the hiring of Reverend Stampfli, the PC began its processes to answer the following questions:

- ◇ Who are we?
- ◇ What does God call us to do?
- ◇ Who are our neighbors?

The congregational input was summarized in chapters 1-3 of this report. The elements of that input are described below and the products are included in Chapter 4 materials:

Elements included in “Who are we?”

- **Leadership Gatherings (July-August).** In three identical sessions, Council and staff offered their thoughts about the church and its current situation, applying “SWOT” (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*) analysis. Approximately 15 people participated.

- **Discussions during Congregation’s Annual Retreat (August 2010).**
More than 35 persons attending the Retreat shared their responses to a set of three questions:
 - (1) What is most important to me about my congregation?
 - (2) What do I worry about the most when I think of my congregation?
 - (3) If I could change one thing about me congregation at the “drop of a hat” what would it be?
- **Planning Committee Invitation at the Fall “Kick-Off” (September).**
Those attending our annual “Kick-Off” were also offered the opportunity given to those at the Retreat to respond to the same three questions set forth above. Ten persons provided written responses.
- **Oral History Project (February– June 2010)** – The PC worked with volunteers interested in TUCO’s history to interview church members. The quotations were gathered into a book that provides good insight into “who we are”.
- **Christian education class September 2010** – the PC coordinated with the Christian Education Ministry to hold a class on what it means to be a “progressive Christian” in relation to TUCO and the transition.
- **Timeline Presentation at the “Pie Festival” (October).** With the use of a timeline of United Churches history posted in the Social Hall members of the congregation identified when they became involved with the church and what they viewed as the three most significant happenings in the church’s life.
- **November 2010 Annual Meeting.** Participants at the Annual Meeting, equipped with a description of what constitutes an *open, bounded, or centered congregation*, were asked to both vote on how they currently saw our congregation and how they believed it should become. Sixty-one persons participated in the voting (twenty people offered written comments). The voting shows the following:

	Who We are Now	Who We Should Become
<i>Open</i>	40	9
<i>Bounded</i>	2	1
<i>Centered</i>	14	43

Additional Information Came from:

- United Churches Worship Survey (144 responses)

- SWOT discussion with TUCO youth
- TNSCC survey on evolution during an adult education program
- Informal feedback from ministry or small group contacts by PC members

A variety of individual conversations

Elements including in “What does God call us to do?”

In January 2011 began the process of interviewing small groups in TUCO and asking them the main question about “What does God call use to do?” The main question was divided into four related parts.

- *What do you feel God calls us to be and do individually and as a congregation **within our church?***
- *How do you think we as individuals and internally within our congregation can answer this calling **within our church?***
- *What do you feel God calls us to be and do individually and as a congregation **in the greater world in which we live?***
- *How do you think that we as a congregation can best answer this call **in the greater world in which we live?***

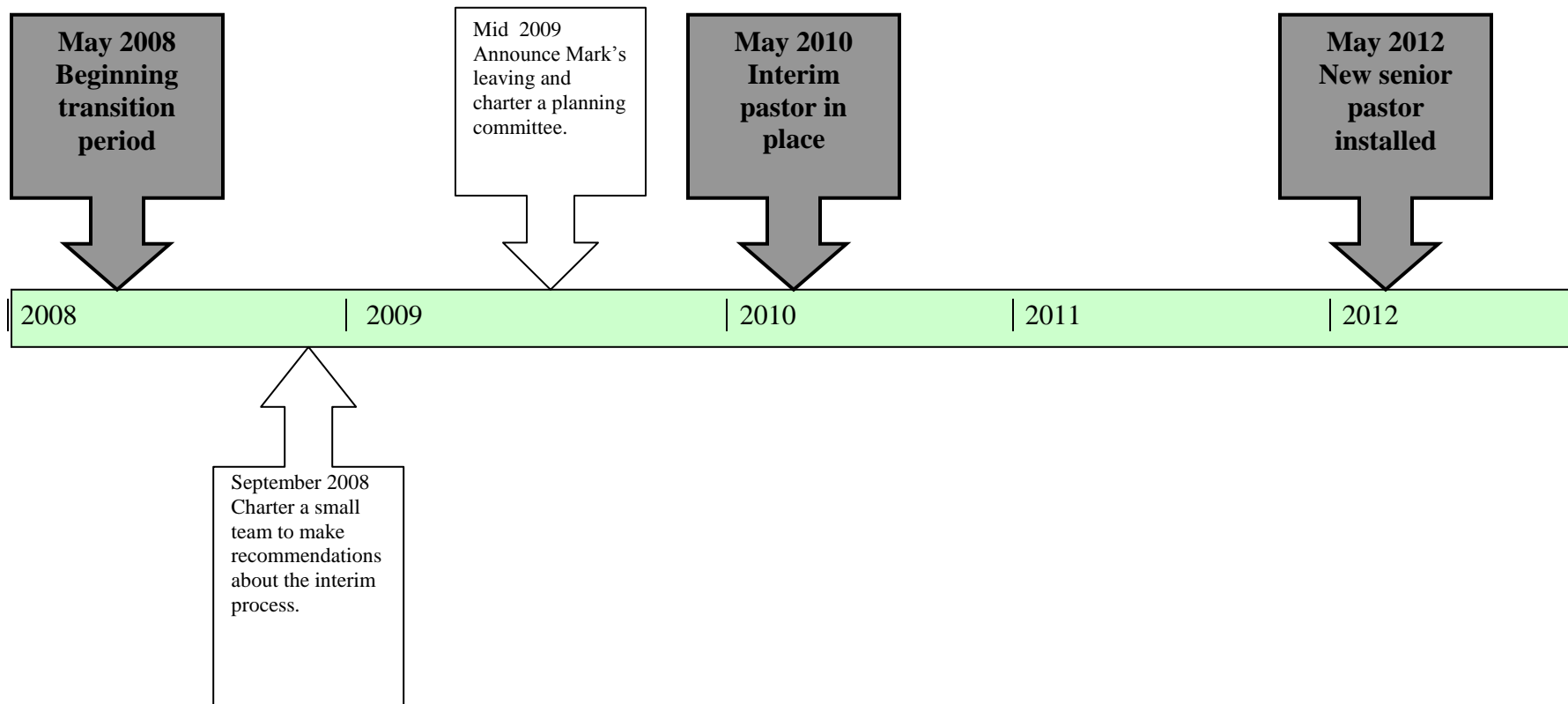
A table of small groups interviewed along with the principal facilitators and meeting times follow.

Other Groups

At least two other groups have been working in parallel to the PC. The Worship Committee completed its church survey that helped form parts of the “Who we are” chapter. Russ Rose and Eunice Robb have undertaken the Herculean task of compiling church records,

Group	Contact Person	Meeting Times	Facilitators
1. Council	Deb Nickerson	Jan 22, 1 pm, Priory	John Bowden, Joe Arnett
2. Daylight option*	Tammy Stampfli	Sun, Feb 27, 12:30 am	Marcia Smith, John Bowden
3. Evening option*	Tammy Stampfli	Sun, Feb 13, 7 pm	Joe Arnett, Janet Anderson
4. Administration	David Nightingale	Wed, Feb 2, 6pm	John Bowden, David Nightingale
5. Christian Ed	Leonard Bauer	Thurs Mar 3, 6pm	Cheri Kelley, Tammy Stampfli
6. Cong Life	Leslie Cushman		
7. Mis Peace Justice	Lee Johnson	Wed, Feb 9, 7 pm	Lee Johnson, John Bowden
8. Personnel	Mike Segawa	Wed, Feb 9, 6 pm	John Bowden, Mike Segawa
9. Stewardship	Amanda Scott	Sunday Feb 20, 9:30 am	Janet Anderson, Amanda Scott
10. Theology, Nat Sci	Yvonne Wilhelmsen	Thurs, Mar 3, 7 pm	Joe Arnett, Yvonne Wilhelmsen
11. Worship	Pat Sonnenstahl	Thursday, Feb 3, 7 pm	Marcia Smith, Janet Anderson
12. Stephen Ministry	Pat Dickason	March 8, 6:30 pm	Lee Johnson, Janet Anderson
13. Caring Friends	Jim and Karen Watts	Wed Mar 23 10 am	Tammy Stampfli
14. Choir	Dee Morton	Thurs, Feb 17, 8pm	Janet Anderson
15. Youth Groups	Mark Boyd		Cheri Kelley, Joe Arnett
16. Staff	Tammy Stampfli	Tues, Feb 15, 9:30 am	Lee Johnson, Janet Anderson
17. Men's Breakfast	Lee Johnson	Fri, Mar 11, 7 am	Lee Johnson
18. Panorama	Libby Penney	Sun, Mar 27, 1pm	Brian Hovis, Lee Johnson
19. Parents	Brooke Johnson	Via email	Tammy Stampfli

Appendix 1: Hypothetical Timeline Schedule from Transition Report



Appendix 2: Transition Milestones

Transition Schedule -		Updated: April 4, 2010
Milestones/Task	Target Date	Responsibility
Planning committee appointed by council and ready to provide guidance	November 2009	Council
Complete the administrative checklist in	January – May 2010	Pastor Dowdy (with help from Council and staff)
Start Intentional Interim Pastor Hiring Committee (Note: This group should include a member(s) of the Planning Committee. Coordination with UCC Conference Minister and Presbytery Executive is imperative)	January 2010	Council
Celebration of Rev. Dowdy's tenure	April – May 2010	Council
Exit interview with Rev. Dowdy	May 1, 2010	Planning Committee
Pastor Dowdy retires	May 31, 2010	Council
Maintain church services	June 1 – July 31	Planning Committee and Council
Intentional Interim Pastor hired	July 8 - 18	Interim Pastor Hiring Committee, Council, UCC Conference Minister, and Presbytery Executive

Transition Schedule -		Updated: April 4, 2010
Milestones/Task	Target Date	Responsibility
Period of Interim Pastor, including “Holy Conversations” and major interim tasks	August 1, 2010 – April 2011	Interim Pastor, Council, and Planning Committee
Senior Pastor Search Committee formed	January – February 2011	Council
New church profile adopted by congregation	July 2011	Council and Senior Pastor Search Committee
Senior pastor installed	January 2012	Council and Senior Pastor Search Committee
Interim Pastor leaves	January 2012	Council and Planning Committee
Planning committee completes report and dissolves	February 2012	Council and Planning Committee

Appendix 3: Planning Committee Charter

The Mission of the Planning Committee is to work with the Council, staff, ministries, the Interim Pastor and the congregation itself to prepare for our church's future throughout the transition period, which will conclude with the arrival of the new permanent pastor. As a congregation we need to learn from our past, to know our stories, who we are and what we can celebrate, and to plan for the kind of church we wish to become.

The Planning Committee will be charged with and will be responsible for facilitating the necessary communication during the transition period. To do so the Planning Committee will create and become a kind of holding environment where questions, tensions, learnings and ideas can mingle creatively until the congregation is ready to make decisions about them.

The Planning Committee has taken as its guide an Alban Institute publication by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann entitled *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. In this book, *planning* is defined in terms of *conversations* and by implication, *forms of communication*. The book's introduction states

Planning is *conversation* because it is truly dialogue . . . Conversation is *holy* because at its best, it is about a people's understanding of their identity as a faith community . . . At its heart it centers around three critical formation questions:

- Who are we?
- What has God called us to do?
- Who is our neighbor?

There are many tools and strategies outlined in *Holy Conversations* to help us structure these conversations within our congregation. Such conversations will not bring a quick consensus on the questions listed above, but will give us instead a safe and structured place for our members to explore what is important to them and what their visions are.

The Council and Ministries Are Partners with the Planning Committee. It is important that not all of the work of the transition be done by the Planning Committee (which has only seven members) or there will be little or no congregational or leadership buy-in. On a number of occasions, the committee will ask for time on the agendas of both the Council and the ministries. In addition, the committee will ask Council members and ministry chairs to actively support the Planning Committee's work by facilitating small groups outside of ministry time or other activities that may arise.

The Tasks of the Planning Committee have already begun and will continue throughout the time that an interim pastor is employed and until the new permanent pastor arrives. There are, however, a few key events that will trigger specific tasks. They are as follows:

Key Events:	Specific Planning Committee Tasks:
Planning Committee formed.	Submit a communications plan for our “holy conversations” that will involve as many of the congregation and its leadership as possible. We will gather information about our own church as well as the larger Church outside of our walls. We will discuss strategies, consider the tools needed and work closely with the Council.
Mark Dowdy announces retirement date.	Meet with Mark Dowdy to learn from him as much about the congregation as possible—its history, how he views its future, its strengths and any roadblocks we might find along the way. (This is not in lieu of the official exit interview that is always held for a retiring pastor.)
Interim Pastor Search Committee formed.	Meet with the Interim Pastor Search Committee before it begins its search so that it is aware of the information that has been already collected. For continuity, one member of the Planning Committee will serve on the Interim Pastor Search Committee.
Mark Dowdy retires.	Consider ways in which Mark’s retirement and/or its celebration event might be used as a way to continue these conversations.
Period without a pastor (3 to 6 weeks).	With the Council, insure that there are persons available to the congregation to assist in worship services, times of hospitalizations, deaths, or other emergencies.
Interim Pastor arrives.	Work closely with the Interim Pastor throughout his or her stay to plan events to ensure “holy conversations.” Because the Interim Pastor will be

trained in working with congregations in transition, he or she will have other tools and strategies to add to our initial plans.

Permanent Pastor Search Committee formed.

Inform the search committee about the work and results of the “conversations” that have gone before, especially as they may be relevant to preparing a church profile and conversations with pastoral candidates. The Planning Committee then leaves the search committee to its work.

New Pastor arrives.

Meet with the new pastor to review the work done by the congregation. At this point, the Planning Committee will have completed its work and will dissolve.