

**First Metropolitan United Church
Strategic Planning Session
June 15, 2019**

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Acronyms

FMUC	First Metropolitan United Church
ICA	Inter-Cultural Association
MPSR	Ministry Profile and Search Report
S.W.O.T.e R	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, Expected Results
UCW	United Church Women

1. Introduction

On June 15, 2019 twenty-two members of the First Metropolitan United Church (FMUC) congregation met to participate in a Strategic Planning Session. This was the first strategic planning session undertaken by the new FMUC Board, as a commitment exists to have a strategic plan completed by the end of 2019. Participants included the Lead Minister, members of the FMUC Board and individuals in lay leadership positions within the church. There was active engagement of participants throughout the six-and-a-half-hour Session which was facilitated by Nichola Manning of NM Consulting Inc.



This document provides a post-session summary, highlighting the discussion and action items explored during the FMUC Strategic Planning Session. The information provided in this summary document will be used by the FMUC Board to re-draft and update the FMUC Strategic Plan which will be presented to the congregation in the Fall of 2019.

2. Attendees

The FMUC Strategic Planning Session began at 9:00am and ended at 3:30pm. The Session was fully subscribed and attended by the following members of the FMUC congregation:

Jan Drent, Property Team Leader	Vreny Mathis, Spiritual Care & Wellness Co-Team Leader
Marie McKee, UCW Ministry & Personnel	Moria Nasim, Hospitality Team Leader
Mary Byrne, Music Team Leader	Janet Gray, Outreach Team Leader
Kathy Cook, Outreach & Welcoming	Marion Denton, Worship & Christian Spiritual Development Team Leader
David Bray, Communications Team Leader	Wally Lazaruk, Spiritual Care & Wellness
Steve Gray, former Chair of Ministerial Church Task Group	Hayley Henderson, Sunday School Coordinator – regrets
Micia Kanstrup, Sunday School Coordinator	Peter Clugston, Ministry & Personnel Team
Edeana Malcolm, Board Chair	Ross Breckon, Redevelopment Team Leader & Board Member
Jacque Henderson, Board Member	Liane Clark, Finance & Admin Team Leaders & Board Member
Shelagh Mackinnon, Minister	Ann Maffey, Congregation Member & Volunteer
Larry Scott, Congregation Member & Volunteer	Joan Dowse, Co-Chair United Church Women

3. Session Theme

The theme for the FMUC Strategic Planning session was **“Transformation”** and participants were guided by the following quote from Rev. Shelagh Mackinnon as noted in the *2018 FMUC Annual Report*:

Transformation



“We are talking to each other about the different vision we have for First Met going forward. We do not have a single vision but are learning vocabulary that will allow us to communicate openly about our limits and our possibilities.”

*Rev. Shelagh Mackinnon
FMUC Annual Report, 2018*

As the Session proceeded, participants were asked to keep the concept of “transformation” in mind and to think about the following question: *How Do We Transform What We Currently Do?* It was emphasized that the Strategic Planning Session was about how FMUC will transform and do things differently in the future.

4. Objectives

The FMUC Strategic Planning Session had three main objectives:

- 1) Establish FMUC strategic priorities for next three to five years
- 2) Networking opportunity for board members, Lead Minister, FMUC ministries & congregation leaders
- 3) Enable the FMUC leadership team to have a positive experience in developing an actionable Strategic Plan that will have attainable and measurable outcomes

It was acknowledged that the Strategic Planning Session process and resulting strategic plan would be somewhat different than what was experienced in the past. The Board felt that past strategic plans have been lengthy, with unattainable goals and action items which has resulted in some frustration amongst congregation members. Emphasis was placed on how the current Session would provide the high-level strategic direction which the FMUC Board would then translate into a revised strategic plan.

5. Homework Questions

Participants were sent pre-reading materials on June 5, 2019. The pre-reading package contained the following documents:

- 1) Strategic Planning Session Agenda
- 2) Homework Questions
- 3) 2015 FMUC Mission Vision and Strategy
- 4) 2018 Accomplishments
- 5) Final Dec 2018 MPSR Report FMUC
- 6) MPSR Outline



The following three 'homework questions' were given to participants:

- 1) ***What do you think are the key issues to be addressed with FMUC redevelopment?***
- 2) ***What are the programs or ministries that you see as being core to our future as a church?***
- 3) ***How should FMUC deal with diminishing resources in terms of people (volunteers, staff, congregation), money, building and social capital?***

While most participants did some advanced thinking, a few participants prepared written responses to the homework questions (collected by Ross Breckon who also was the Session note-taker). During the Session, participants were asked to turn to their partner and discuss their answers to the homework questions. A general group discussion of the responses took place and the following feedback was provided:

What do you think are the key issues to be addressed with FMUC redevelopment?

- Queried what was meant by 'redevelopment' – internal FMUC reconfiguration or FMUC physical structure
- Clarity required on the amount of available future space and the various improvements to be made
- Structures are required that will keep the congregation as a whole. Do not want to lose members during the redevelopment.
- Needs to be a detailed planning process that takes into consideration environmentally sound practices as the old building was not well designed
- Redevelopment needs to ensure a return on investment
- Some concern about the loss of gym space
- Belief that there needs to be a multipurpose secular space created
- Foundation funding needs to be preserved during the redevelopment

- During and subsequent to redevelopment, FMUC needs to maintain exciting programs that attract donations
- Concern over declining attendance, changing generations and diminishing resources
- FMUC needs to maintain its purpose, identity and mission during redevelopment
- Need to continue to communicate publicly all FMUC accomplishments during redevelopment

What are the programs or ministries that you see as being core to our future as a church?

- Children and family's ministry
- Outreach to the larger community
- Focus on subsequent generations
- Integration of the multicultural component
- Financial sustainability
- Maintain overarching mission as a reconciling church – clear, simple and spread throughout the church
- Collective sharing of FMUC space

How should FMUC deal with diminishing resources in terms of people (volunteers, staff, congregation), money, building and social capital?

- Need for continued focus and a strong 'why'
- FMUC should not try to be all things to all people
- Sometimes it is very difficult to let go of 'what has always been'
- Need to do increased networking within the local community
- Volunteer positions need to be smaller – more manageable distribution of work, otherwise will burnout volunteers
- Inter-agency cooperation and collaboration with other churches
- Apply for creative funding
- Living within the FMUC budget
- MSRP – diminishing resources and fewer staff contribute to the need for lay leadership within the church – start confirming this with Stephen Ministries
- Trained lay leadership
- 'Right-sized volunteers'
- Want FMUC to be known for 'community'
- Need to define the audience

6. FMUC Accomplishments

Over the past year, FMUC has had significant accomplishments that demonstrate the depth and breadth of the staff, ministries and volunteers and their commitment to ensuring that FMUC is a center for spiritual growth and community engagement. These accomplishments have been communicated to the congregation and are noted in the *2018 FMUC Annual Report*. Liane Clark provided the following accomplishment summary during the Session:

WE'RE HERE TO MAKE
GOOD THINGS
HAPPEN FOR OTHER PEOPLE.



As a congregation in 2018, we reached out:

- *By serving about 300 meals for an anniversary dinner for the Our Place family*
- *By giving 73 Angel Gifts*
- *By preparing 60 Gift Bags for Shelter treats*
- *By welcoming 2 new refugee families and supporting them financially*
- *By volunteering to assist at Our Place once a month for Sunday dinner*
- *By advertising and supporting financially the Our Place Therapeutic Recovery Community*
- *By holding workshops on Indigenous Law and the KAIROS Blanket Exercise*
- *By signing Amnesty International letters*
- *Through our building that allowed for 69 other groups including the Intercultural association to do their community outreach and caring*

We cared:

- *Through 10 memorial services, 13 memorial receptions, 2 baptisms, 8 reaffirmations of faith and a wedding*
- *Through 16 active greeters present 52 Sundays a year*
- *Through hospitality 52 Sundays a year*
- *Through soup socials and stewardship breakfasts*
- *By saying goodbye to 6 staff members and welcoming 3 new staff members and 1 current staff member in a new role*
- *By calling and visiting 26 homebound congregants*
- *By providing 669 Healing Pathways treatments*
- *Through prayer and the Prayer Connections team*
- *By walking with 23 weekly participants in Summer Strollers*
- *By supporting 10 participants in the Care Giver Support Group*
- *Through exercise like Yoga, Tai Chi and Ramblers hiking*
- *About our building through exterior painting, installing more environmentally friendly and economical lighting in the Fellowship Hall and cleaning out heating ducts*
- *About our building by making progress on our redevelopment plan so that our building meets our future needs*

We learned:

- *In workshops about Amos and Social Justice, 'Digging Deeper: the Gospel According to Mark' 'Epistles to the Hebrews', 'To Everything There is a Season', 'Epiphany Revisited', 'The Challenge of Paul', 'Exploring Advent with Luke', 'I intend' and mindfulness*
- *In the Women Exploring Spirituality Group about Contemplative Vision: A Guide to Christian Art and Prayer by Juliet Benner*
- *Through Sunday School with themes like faith and prayer and activities like faith bandannas, prayer ribbons and writing creeds*
- *Through a Youth Spiritual Retreat Day*
- *Through enjoying the outdoors and a variety of activities at Camp Pringle during Congregational Camp*

We worshipped:

- *With 310 members and 292 identified adherents about 20 of whom attended the 9 am service on average and 136 of whom attended the 11 am service on average along with another 10 to 15 viewers on Livestream*
- *Through the choir's, the choral scholars' and the Pringle Bells musical gifts to our services*
- *Through special services such as Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Least Coin Service, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women service, Ecumenical Advent service, Longest Night service, Paper Bag Christmas family service, and Magic of Wonder Christmas Eve service*
- *Through musical services such as 'Music for Meditation', 'Concert for A Winter's Day', 'Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled', and 'Carols in the Candlelight'*

There was some discussion subsequent to Liane's presentation of FMUC accomplishments that emphasized how FMUC focuses on spiritual growth, community engagement, service, caring for one-another, fellowship, learning and growing. FMUC also strongly promotes relationships – with God, with community and with each other. It was acknowledged that the work of the United Church Women (UCW) was missing from the accomplishments list. UCW work should be added in subsequent iterations of the accomplishments list.

7. FMUC Challenges

There is value in the learnings that evolve out of challenges. All challenges may be reframed in order to create opportunities. Edeana Malcom summarized the following challenges that FMUC experienced over the past year:

1. *The replacement of the Children and Youth Coordinator— Our job description meant that we had to look for a minister to fill the position. In retrospect, we should probably have rewritten it. It was difficult to find a suitable person to fill the position, and, over the course of time, we ended up losing many children and youth, as well as upsetting some other people.*



2. *The communication of the 2018 budget shortfall and the subsequent “solution”—
The financial situation in 2017 was very badly communicated. Council did not inform the congregation until after Christmas and then tried to “fix” it by reducing staff hours, which caused a lot of bad feeling among members of the congregation and staff.*

Other challenges

- *Diminishing resources*
- *Attachment to staff (has both a positive and negative side)*
- *Diversity of beliefs (has both a positive and negative side)*
- *An aging congregation*

The discussion following the ‘challenges’ presentation included:

- The need for immediacy and how it feels that FMUC has been in a state of transition for a long time
- There is a want and need among the congregation for strong leadership and decision making
- The need to be realistic and honest with the congregation about challenges. Problems need to be openly communicated and the congregation needs to have the opportunity to ask questions and be apart of solutions.
- The congregation needs to be accepting of change
- It is difficult in lieu of diminishing resources and congregation numbers to continue to provide traditional FMUC services
- Sometimes there is a tendency to silo
- Within the congregation there is a diversity of believes (e.g., on the style of music and worship)
- Need to do more community consultation
- While there is a strong sense of core FMUC values, need to balance what has worked well and try new approaches
- Future decisions will need to be made on what to stop and what to try differently

8. S.W.O.T.eR Analysis



A S.W.O.T.eR (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and expected results) analysis is a framework used to evaluate an organization’s position in preparation for strategic planning. S.W.O.T.eR analysis assess internal and external factors, as well as current and future potential. A S.W.O.T.eR analysis is designed to facilitate a realistic, fact-based, data-driven look at the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and its initiatives. Organizations should use the S.W.O.T.eR analysis as a guide and not necessarily as a prescription. The following table outlines information that was ascertained during

the discussion of FMUC’s strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats.

FMUC S.W.O.T Analysis

Questions to Consider When Discussing Strengths:

- 1) *What does FMUC do best?*
- 2) *What unique knowledge, talent, or resources does FMUC have?*
- 3) *What advantages does FMUC have?*
- 4) *What do other people say FMUC does well?*
- 5) *What resources does FMUC have available?*
- 6) *What is FMUC's greatest achievement?*

Questions to Consider When Discussing Weaknesses:

- 1) *What could FMUC improve?*
- 2) *What knowledge, talent, skills and/or resources is FMUC lacking?*
- 3) *What disadvantages does FMUC have?*
- 4) *What do other people say FMUC does not do well?*
- 5) *In what areas does FMUC need more training?*
- 6) *What complaints does FMUC have about its service?*

STRENGTHS:

- Spiritual care and wellness
- Great music
- Hospitality
- Health and wellness
- Volunteers
- Financial legacy
- Space and use of FMUC building
- Location, location, location!
- Epiphany
- Lots of activities
- Lead Minister and FMUC staff
- Ability to build relationships
- Image and reputation within community
- Stance on social justice
- Inclusivity
- Non-judgemental
- Inter-faith connections, activities and support
- Excellent website
- Live streaming capabilities
- Wonderful elders

WEAKNESSES:

- Lack of clarity on priorities
- Secular space needs to be multipurpose
 - Heavy dependence on a demographic in their later quarter of life to volunteer
 - Lack of volunteer availability and not many new youthful members to draw from
 - Volunteers do not have a terms of reference or job description. Need for better onboarding and maintenance of volunteers.
 - Volunteer capacity does not meet expectations
 - Communication is good but needs better reach both externally and internally. Not every member of the congregation is computer savvy.
 - Need other ways of expressing spirituality (e.g., music as powerful motivator)
 - Congregation may be 'stuck in the past' – need to think and plan differently for the future
 - Need to examine the staffing model to reflect funds available – re-examine roles and responsibilities
 - Administrative leads are required

Questions to Consider When Discussing Opportunities:

- 1) *How can FMUC turn its strengths into opportunities?*
- 2) *How can FMUC turn its weaknesses into opportunities?*
- 3) *Is there a need in FMUC that no one is meeting?*
- 4) *What could FMUC do today that isn't being done?*
- 5) *How is the field of faith-based organizations changing?*
- 6) *How can FMUC take advantage of those changes?*
- 7) *Who could FMUC support, and how?*

Questions to Consider When Discussing Threats:

- 1) *What obstacles does FMUC face?*
- 2) *Could any of FMUC's weaknesses prevent FMUC from meeting its goals?*
- 3) *Who and/or what might cause FMUC problems in the future? How?*
- 4) *Are there any standards, policies, and/or legislation changing that might negatively impact FMUC?*
- 5) *Is FMUC competing with others to provide service?*
- 6) *Are there changes in FMUC's field or in technology that could threaten FMUC success?*

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Camp with other churches
- Maintaining community connections
- Moving away from FMUC property during redevelopment (both a threat and opportunity)
- FMUC space to be repurposed. Community space to be created through redevelopment.
- Use of environmentally friendly products for redevelopment
- Communication to FMUC as a whole when discussing redevelopment
- Better use of FMUC resources for stewardship
- Using FMUC space for social justice – a centre for discussion about key issues (e.g. climate change, First Nations reconciliation, equality)
- Offering the opportunity for people to make a difference
- Problems with the rise of supremacy and the Christian right – FMUC to stand-up against and promote caring and inclusivity
- Radical hospitality and importance of change (this also creates an opportunity to attract youth)
- Develop a language of FMUC – sharing a message in a way that is non-invasive
- Jesus was not a Christian – opportunity to revisit this message
- Jesus ministry all about doing and being – actions speak louder than words
- Improved volunteer management
- Relationship building both internally and externally
- Amalgamation with other churches – Ivy Thomas did explore but no other United Churches were interested at the time. Instead of 'amalgamation' explore doing activities together in order to help build better partnerships and relationships.
- Potluck invite to other churches – informal conversations that will help build long-term relationships
- Live streaming as a means to expand FMUC message externally
- Spiritual growth through Weird Church

THREATS:

- Fear in people – supporting people not to be fearful
- Violence against faith communities
- Social intolerance
- Busy-ness of people
- There are now more specialized interest groups that have a better representative demographic than FMUC
- Rejection of institutional churches from successive generations
- FMUC is a designated heritage building by the City of Victoria therefore must be restored to its original 'look' – this will have budgetary impact and limit what can do with space
- Threat to credibility if do not deal with (or facilitate conversations on) significant issues impacting society
- Historical connection with residential schools and impact on credibility, there is much work to be done to address this
- Addressing First Nations reconciliation – report has been written on what churches can do to support reconciliation
- Threats in liabilities and legalities of FMUC
- How FMUC is a place of worship but also of stewardship
- Possibility that may have to pay future property tax
- Societal change of people having to work on Sundays, sports teams, two-income families
- Isolation of seniors
- Insurance – when decisions are being made need to ensure that insurance policy covers activities
- Atmosphere of neighbourhood and perception of being a 'rough neighbourhood'
- Aging congregation and need for drivers
- Separation of church and state – civic organizations are doing good things but have supplanted roles of churches. Prevented from 'talking church' at events and

- Use of mission in service fund
- Become an official affirming church
- University students as a means to attract youth to FMUC
- What would it look like if FMUC was accepting of all faith-based organizations?
- Availability of national church funding – need to explore
- Visits with communion cards type of idea, getting out to talk to people about FMUC values, putting people on prayer lists
- Emphasis on looking forward with HOPE

different organizations (e.g., users of ICA – did not want FMUC interaction with clients)

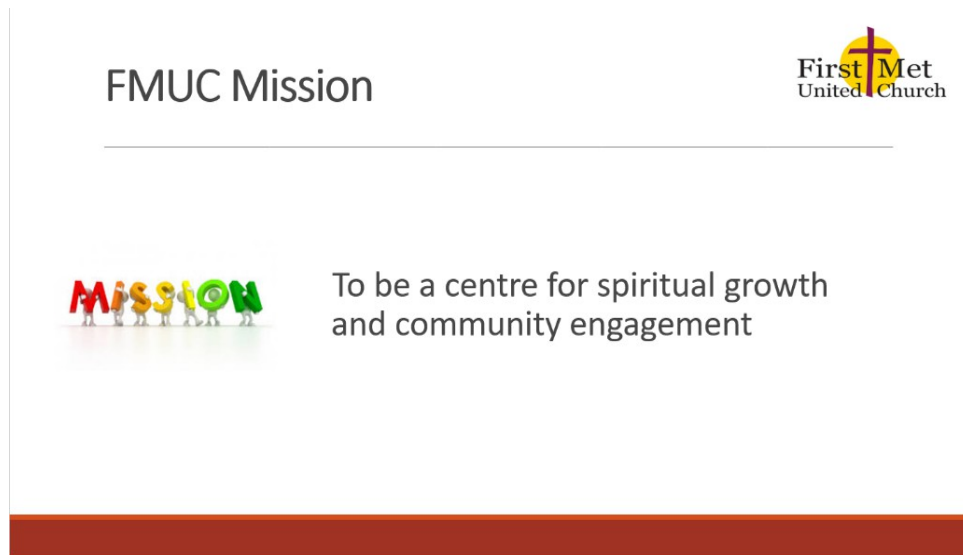
- Language – not calling church, “Church”. Need to think about talking about church differently.
- Threat of fraud – lay leaders need to be aware. Do not have staff accountability structures which may lead to fraud if no one is paying attention. Need accountability structure for volunteers as well.
- EARTHQUAKE! Still not 100% sure if FMUC is earthquake proof and if not, may be costly to repair.

EXPECTED RESULTS: - Time was limited to have a fulsome conversation about expected results at this point in the Strategic Planning Session agenda; however, many of these expected results were identified during the conversations on mission, vision, and goals. Please see these subsequent sections for further details.

9. Mission Statement

A mission statement is an organization's reason for being; it is what the organization does and sometimes how it does it. Mission statements define the overall purpose for the organization and should be primarily used for internal communication with staff, the congregation, board of directors and other stakeholders. An ideal mission is kept brief, clear, concise, easy to read, recite and understand.

FMUC's current mission statement is:



The slide features the title "FMUC Mission" at the top left and the "First Met United Church" logo at the top right. Below the title is a horizontal line. On the left side, there is a graphic of the word "MISSION" in colorful, 3D block letters. To the right of this graphic, the mission statement is written: "To be a centre for spiritual growth and community engagement". A solid red horizontal bar is positioned at the bottom of the slide.

Participants were asked to review the current mission statement to determine if it was adequate or required tweaking. To facilitate the mission statement discussion, the following questions were posed:

- 1) *What is FMUC's purpose? What does FMUC hope to accomplish?*
- 2) *How does FMUC go about accomplishing its purpose for being?*
- 3) *Who or what cause does FMUC focus on?*
- 4) *What values or beliefs guide FMUC?*
- 5) *How will FMUC succeed?*
- 6) *What does FMUC want to accomplish?*

While participants did not fully land on a revised FMUC mission statement during the Strategic Planning Session, the following comments were made in hopes to create a new mission statement for FMUC:

- There is an absence of the word "Christian" – most participants were comfortable with this, a few would prefer to have Christian referenced in a revised mission statement (rationale included – who want to join a club and not realize from the mission statement what it is all about)
- Some concern that the word "Christian" has been taken away from Christian organizations (generates certain connotations)
- Possible use of word "faith" instead of Christian

- Some participants reacted to the word “centre” in the current mission statement and suggested editing or wordsmithing it out – possibly just “spiritual growth and community engagement”
- Compassionate community engagement
- A community for spiritual growth and engagement
- Instead of the word growth, suggestion for “education”
- Possible reference to “transformational experiences”
- Community for growth, learning and service
- Possibly replace the word community with “fellowship”
- Suggestion of “dare, care and share”
- Suggestion of “faith, transformation and justice”
- Suggestion of “growth, learn and serve”
- Some concerns expressed about the word “justice” and the possible negative connotations it may invoke. Justice could mean either right or wrong. Those who supported word “justice” indicated that love makes justice, just; Jesus was about justice; justice means love, compassion and respect
- Suggestion of “to welcome, inspire, transform, seek justice and serve”
- Participants were clear that they wanted a shorter, rather than longer mission statement

Taking all the above comments into consideration, FMUC may want to consider the following revised mission statement:

“An inclusive faith-based community promoting individual and societal transformation, engagement and service”

-OR-

“FMUC is here to make good things happen for other people”

10. Vision Statement

A vision statement is what the world would look like if it achieved its mission. For most organizations, it is an almost unreachable goal and describes the end result that can be accomplished through the organization’s great work. The vision statement should energize and engage the organization, promote creativity and innovation and help the organization achieve a sustainable advantage. Vision statements should be inspirational, aspirational and motivational, as well, give clarity for decisions. The vision is the destination, the point of reference that the organization is always working towards. It is the ultimate picture of success.

FMUC's current vision statement is:

FMUC Vision



1. To be an alive, welcoming and inclusive Christian community for all ages
2. To enter into worship that draws us closer to our Creator, enabling us to be active followers of Jesus in our communities.
3. To nurture transformation through spiritual practices and learning that reconnect us to our Source and empower us to be salt and light in the world.
4. To reach out with compassion and respect, seeking justice and healing within our church, community and beyond.

Participants were asked to review the current vision statement to determine if it was adequate or required tweaking. To facilitate the vision statement discussion, the following questions were posed:

- 1) *What are FMUC's dreams for the future?*
- 2) *Where is FMUC headed?*
- 3) *What really matters to FMUC?*
- 4) *What would the world (community) look like if the mission of FMUC were achieved?*
- 5) *In five years from now, FMUC will... by....*

Again, while participants did not fully land on a revised FMUC vision statement during the Strategic Planning Session, the following comments were made in hopes to create a new vision statement for FMUC:

- Being part of the congregation has given members opportunities
- Will have fellowship hall redeveloped
- Vibrant new heritage space
- FMUC will be a hub of activity that will help Victoria plan on major issues
- Affirming confirmation
- FMUC will be a working expression of Christ within the community
- FMUC will be a vibrant meeting place for the local community
- Compassion and respect
- Living with respect and creation
- Keep working with immigrants/different cultures and vulnerable populations
- See MSRP document p. 10
- FMUC as a community hub of activity and is actively known in the community
- Living out our passion to be caring and justice seeking
- Serve our diverse communities with resources and expertise available

- As part of the North Park neighbourhood, FMUC will live out its passion, caring and justice within the community
- Known as a safe place
- Be a hub of connections for others to learn about reconciliation and form relationships with others
- Meet the spiritual needs of children, youth and adults of all ages during a time of transformation and change
- A place where people with concerns will seek as a place of solace, support and inspiration
- HOPE – hope comes through action
- FMUC will be actively inspired by hope
- Shift from destination church to inner city church – this is a shift in culture
- Active, hope, inspire and engage
- Community outreach
- Credibility in the North Park neighbourhood
- Gratitude, honouring pain, seeking with new eyes and moving forward

Taking all the above comments into consideration, FMUC may want to consider the following revised vision statement:

“FMUC is a vibrant space that fosters diverse community endeavours and meets the compassionate and spiritual needs of children, youth and adults”

11. Belief / Value Statements

Given the extensive discussion on mission and vision statements, and concerns about Session timing and the need to have the important discussion about priority focus areas and FMUC goals, the decision was made to skip the discussion on belief and value statements. This decision was made in consultation with the Lead Minister and Board Chair.

Belief statements are something that is accepted, considered to be true, or held as an opinion. Belief statements give clarity about the choices an organization makes and why its mission and vision matters. FMUC’s current belief statements are as follows:

FMUC Value /
Belief
Statements

1. To love one another unconditionally as God loves us.
2. To value each person's uniqueness and the gifts of community.
3. To actively care for and live with respect in Creation.
4. To nurture Christian spirituality and justice-seeking in ways that foster personal growth and creative interaction.

12. FMUC Service Delivery Activities

Again, in lieu of time and in consultation with the Lead Minister and Board Chair, the decision was made to skip the presentation on FMUC Service Delivery Activities. Liane Clark referenced many of the service offered by FMUC during the discussion on FMUC accomplishments. In addition, the *2018 Annual Report* provides detailed information on all FMUC services. For reference however, FMUC offers the following services:

Service Delivery Activities



Baptisms, Weddings, Reaffirmations of Faith, Memorial Services	Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Place Therapeutic Recovery Community • Sunday Dinner at Our Place • Law of the Land: Learning with Indigenous Law Workshop • Dinner for Our Place Family • Refugee Support • Amnesty International – Write for Rights • First Met/KAIROS • Remembrance Service for National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women • Angel Gifts for the Our Place Family • Our Place Adult Shelter Holiday Treats • Financial Supports to Organizations & Charities • Co-hosting Events with other Social Justice Organizations 	Spiritual Care & Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness Workshops & Presentations • Umbrella Groups • Stewardship Fair • Newsletter Submissions • Christmas Gifts for the Adult Shelter • Inquiries from Community Agencies • Care Call Visitation Ministry • Care Giver Support Groups • Gentle & Chair Yoga • Healing Pathways / Healing Touch • Knitting Ministry • Prayer Connections • Summer Strollers • Tai Chi 	Redevelopment Task Group
Worship & Christian Spiritual Development		Archives & Heritage	Communications
Property Committee	Innovations	Whole Life Stewardship Ministry	Mountford Library
Music			FMUC Board
Children & Youth Ministry			Congregational Meetings
			Transition Team
			Hospitality
			Newcomers Welcoming Team
			Board of Trustees
			Finance & Administration
			United Church Women



13. Priority Focus Categories

In advance of the Strategic Planning Session, the Board was asked to determine high-level categories describing where FMUC must focus for the next three to five years. Participants were asked to confirm that there were no missing priority categories and then were asked to 'dot-vote' on categories they deemed to be of highest priority. Although over the next three to five years FMUC must undertake actions to address all the priority categories, the idea behind this exercise was to understand the magnitude of each priority according to the participants. The priority categories are listed below in order of magnitude with the number of dot votes in brackets beside each category.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Community Outreach (17) | 6) Sustainability (12) |
| 2) Social Justice (14) | 7) Children's Ministry (11) |
| 3) Worship and Music (13) | 8) Hospitality and Welcoming (10) |
| 4) Pastoral Care (13) | 9) Health and Wellness (10) |
| 5) Innovation (12) | 10) Redevelopment (8) |

Participants were given a total of six dots and asked to put only one dot per category. Clearly participants value community outreach as a significant priority for FMUC but also all the other categories are of importance, given the relative equal spread of dot votes between the categories.

14. Goals

Goals are what an organization will do in order to realize its vision. The success of successful organizations can be attributed to one thing - they know where they headed and have detailed goals with associated activities outlining how to get there. Goals should be planned carefully as there is great satisfaction when an organization can look back and see their goals have been accomplished.

The “SMART” methodology of goal setting is a useful tool to ensure that goals can be achieved. Organizations should have “SMART” goals – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic & timely goals. When establishing goals using the SMART methodology, the following questions should be asked:

- 1) **Specific** – Is the goal **specific** enough for clarity?
- 2) **Measurable** – Is there a way to **measure** the goal? In other words, how do you know you achieved the goal?
- 3) **Attainable** – Is the goal truly **attainable**? Or is it such an outlandish goal that it looks good on paper but is nearly impossible to complete.
- 4) **Realistic** – Did you write the goal **realistically**? For example, did you address all the challenges of completing the goal and provide the necessary resources.
- 5) **Timely** – Is there a timeline associated with the goal to ensure a completion date and is it the best time to be tackling this goal?



Participants were asked to define a goal for each of the priority focus categories. The FMUC Board will need to review the information below and clarify capacity, content and timing of each goal. Goal statements should also be clear, concise and not lengthy. The following summarizes the discussion that occurred related to FMUC goals:

Community Outreach

- Develop guidelines for inter-church and inter-agency cooperation and interaction by end of 2019. Initiate one project by end of 2019 and then at least 2 projects annually thereafter (subject to capacity). Projects should meet the priority needs of the North Park community. Evaluate each project one year after implementation.
- Maintain the affiliation with Our Place – but with redevelopment, may no longer be able to offer Our Place night shelter options. Explore if sanctuary may be offered as an option for night shelter by end of 2019.
- Community outreach may not be about worship – sense of sacred comes from doing good things for people together as a congregation/community, being good neighbours. It isn't just about attracting new members to join the congregation.
- FMUC is part of the North Park community and should be involved in issues that are important to North Park. Is not about attracting more people to FMUC, believe that if do good things in a community, the rest will unfold over time.
- Regularly communicate to the congregation information about the North Park neighbourhood
- Need to have more discussions about reconciliation and determine what to do on a go-forward basis

Social Justice

- Become an affirming congregation
- Develop a plan to determine which social justice causes should be supported by FMUC. This assessment should be completed by the end of 2020

- Determine current capacity and develop strategy beyond what currently doing
- Current support given to refugees, the Therapeutic Recovery Community, Kairos, Out of the Rain

Worship and Music

- Align the intent and purpose of music with worship by end of 2020
- Ensure a wide variety of music and worship (begin now)

Pastoral Care – maintain the quality of existing pastoral care and train volunteers for the Stephen Ministry by 2020 (support, train and renew existing volunteers)

Innovation

- Develop Terms of Reference for Weird Church by 2020
- Develop a framework to identify and evaluate innovation initiatives
- Ensure by 2020 that there is line in the budget allocated to support Weird Church and the Reconciliation group
- Establish ongoing communication between Innovation and the Worship groups

Sustainability

- Confirm budget status and develop affordable staffing model by 2020
- Once strategic plan is developed, develop a staffing plan – explore from an in-house v. outsourced staff perspective
- Assess whether need a Volunteer Coordinator and Office Manager within the context of the staffing plan by 2020
- Once staffing plan complete, develop and HR Plan that established accountability for both staff and volunteers
- Develop training for volunteers by end of 2020
- Determine whether mandatory volunteerism needs to be implemented throughout the congregation
- Develop an evaluation plan for each of the projects within the priority categories
- Board to develop set of guidelines for determining which new projects FMUC pursues (e.g., FMUC wants to engage with community but needs to know when should offer free space or charge for space. Possibly consider offering certain amount of free space per month and then charge thereafter – but this undertaken while considering the desire for FMUC to become a community hub).

Children’s Ministry – develop guidance and plan for what to do with this ministry by 2020

Hospitality and Welcoming – develop manageable volunteer program that sets realistic expectations for volunteers

Health and Wellness – existing goals as defined by this committee are relevant in general terms (Committee to confirm)

Redevelopment – produce a detailed plan by end of 2020, include relocation, communications and parking details

15. General Brainstorming

The final agenda item of the Strategic Planning Session was devoted to general brainstorming on FMUC activities. Participants were asked if there were any activities they wanted to see completed that were not previously discussed during the Session. At this point in the day, participants were fatigued so the feedback was kept minimal. The following issues were raised:

- CAPACITY – this always needs to be considered when planning, developing and implementing FMUC activities
- It should not be seen as a failure if FMUC cannot do something
- FMUC needs to be brave about saying no and discontinuing certain activities
- Try something new, it is apart of learning
- Board has recently agreed to join the Organization Against Hate and Racism
- On the National Day of Action on Violence Against Women, FMUC invited members of the community to gather and discuss issues. Follow-up is required to see what future activities may stem from this event.
- Mount St. Mary's and other care facilities – need to pursue if live-streaming or offering FMUC services in those facilities is an option
- FMUC can transform by being more intentional and reviewing/evaluating what it does
- Need to broadly communicate the great work FMUC undertakes

16. Parking Lot

The issue of spiritual care v. pastoral care and whether they are the same thing or not came up during the Strategic Planning Session. It was agreed to 'park' this issue, to be discussed by the Board at a later date.

17. Session Evaluation Results

Eighteen of the twenty-two participants completed the evaluation survey (n=18) at the end of the Session. In terms of results, participants were neutral to the statement that FMUC now has a clear mission, vision and goals for the next three to five years. This is likely because no firm statements were developed during the Session. The majority either agreed or were neutral about the Session enabling enhanced relationships among participants, largely because most people attending were familiar with each other. Most either strongly agreed or agreed that the Session agenda was relevant and useful as well as thought they were given the opportunity to contribute to the conversation. Participants either agreed or were neutral about the statement that there were concrete, strategic suggestions made during the Session that will transform existing FMUC services. The majority thought the facilitator helped to guide the conversation and was well organized and in addition, the majority either agreed or strongly agreed that the duration, timing and format of the Session worked well.

FMUC Strategic Planning Session – Evaluation Survey Results:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. FMUC now has a clear mission, vision and goals for the next 3 to 5 years.		3	12	2	1
2. The FMUC Strategic Planning Session gave me the opportunity to enhance my relationship with other Board members and FMUC staff.	2	11	5		
3. The agenda and information presented was relevant and useful.	4	12	2		
4. I was given the opportunity to contribute to the conversation and feel my opinions were valued.	8	10			
5. I believe there were concrete, strategic suggestions made during the strategic planning session that will transform the existing FMUC services.	1	12	5		
6. The Facilitator helped guide the conversation and was well organized.	13	3	2		
7. I think the duration, timing and format of the strategic planning session worked well.	6	9	2	1	

General Comments, Feedback and Other Opportunities for Improvement:

- “Excellent session and facilitator!” “Thank you so much.”
- “A lot of repetition of material we have discussed in the past. Still more work to get to achievable goals given our reduced capacity.”
- “Should have had more tables so we had more room.”
- “We have building stones towards it. 8 hours for the entire session was a bit too long.”
- “Nice to be finished early. Need to spend more time focussed on the next 3 to 5 years.”
- “Process was good, but members have different goals and perspectives. Hard to bring focus.”
- “Thank you so much for today and following time slots so well.”
- “Could have based discussion on changes needed to existing documents. More precision needed on what product (strategic plan) would look like when complete. Perhaps a draft strategic plan using existing mission, goals might have been a better starting point?”
- “Too long. Two sessions better.”

18. Conclusions & Next Steps

The information provided in this post-Session summary report will hopefully be useful to the FMUC Board in re-drafting the FMUC strategic plan and transforming the services and activities FMUC undertakes in the next three to five years. Recall that the strategic plan does not need to be lengthy or filled with jargon but should help FMUC set its priorities while focusing energy and resources. The strategic plan will strengthen FMUC’s operations and provide the ‘road map’ for the congregation to work towards common goals and expected outcomes.

While suggestions for both the vision and mission statements have been made, the FMUC Board will need to assess and likely ‘test’ with congregation members. Goal statements also need to be further refined and dates reassessed to ensure they meet the ‘SMART’ goal criteria and fall within the three to five-year timeframe of the strategic plan. Given the FMUC’s past experience with unattainable goals

and targets, which may have led to frustration amongst some members of the congregation, achievability is something the FMUC Board should really focus on when finalizing its goals. Once the FMUC strategic plan is complete, it is recommended an annual workplan be developed that details the specific activities, according to each priority focus category and associated goals. A template for the FMUC strategic plan and annual work plan has been provided as an addendum to this report.

Finally, attribution and thanks are given to the FMUC Board for initiating the FMUC Strategic Planning Session. Participant input was valuable and, although diverse at times, should help the FMUC Board provide leadership and strategic direction over the next three to five years.