



Disciples Christian Church
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Ministry Plan

Growing Disciples

Ourselves. Our Church. Our Community. Our World.

The Board of Disciples Christian Church of Cleveland Heights, OH, a congregation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), formally adopted the following Ministry Plan on January 11, 2010.

Introduction

Ministry Plan - Growing Disciples

Ourselves. Our Church. Our Community. Our World.

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we submit the Disciples Christian Church ministry plan to the board for review and adoption. The development of the ministry plan was commissioned by the Master Plan Task Force, approved by the Disciples Christian Church Board and has been developed through study of biblical commandments and prayer.

Disciples Christian Church ministry plan is about growing into true disciples as individuals and as a congregation. The foundation of the ministry plan is spiritual growth. While Jesus calls for our individual obedience to his commandments, he also calls for our collective obedience to go forth and make disciples. The church must create and enhance an environment that provides not only programs but the relationships that are necessary for spiritual growth to occur and mature. It is through our personal and collective spiritual growth in the principles and practice of the Christian faith that we can truly offer that which our community and our world hunger for, a meaningful relationship with God. This ministry plan is about expecting and accepting nothing less than the biblical standard for ourselves, our church, our community, and our world.

Through this ministry plan, Disciples Christian Church will shift its focus from program based ministry to relationship based ministry through providing the structure and support for all members to grow and serve as disciples as they are ready. The overall goals of the ministry plan are as follows.

- Alignment of current and new ministries with marks of discipleship, specifically, transformation and servanthood;
 - Establishment of a systematic curriculum focused on biblical study and discipleship for children and adults; and
 - Setting personal and congregational spiritual growth goals and opportunities for evaluating our progress.
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Great Commandment – Luke 10:27

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus said to the disciples, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Mission & Vision

Mission: To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving, and serving from our doorsteps to the "ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Vision: To be a faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice. (Micah 6:8)

Disciples Christian Church Mission Statement

The mission of Disciples Christian Church is to be a redemptive Christian fellowship, ministering and sharing the good news of Christ Jesus to all people.

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Master Plan Task Force

The Master Plan Task Force is charged by the Disciples Christian Church Board to develop a building master plan that improves the functionality and quality of the whole property of our Disciples Christian Church over the next 10-20 years. The Task Force began its work by inviting Church Extension Representative, John Davidson to come on site and provide some guidance in developing a master plan for the church. During this session, it was recognized that the first step is to identify the ministry plan for the church.

The Master Plan Task Force charged David Eggert and Janie Morrison to work with Pastor Kristine Eggert in leading an initiative to write a ministry plan for the church. In this initiative it was immediately recognized that inviting the members and regular attendees of the congregation to be involved in the plan's development was essential.

During initial planning sessions, biblical review of Jesus' charge to the church was utilized in the development of the ministry planning theme, "Growing Disciples – ourselves, our church, our community, our world". This theme was the starting point in the "Discovery Sessions" that were conducted in the spring of 2009 where congregants were invited to assist in the development of the ministry plan.

Discovery

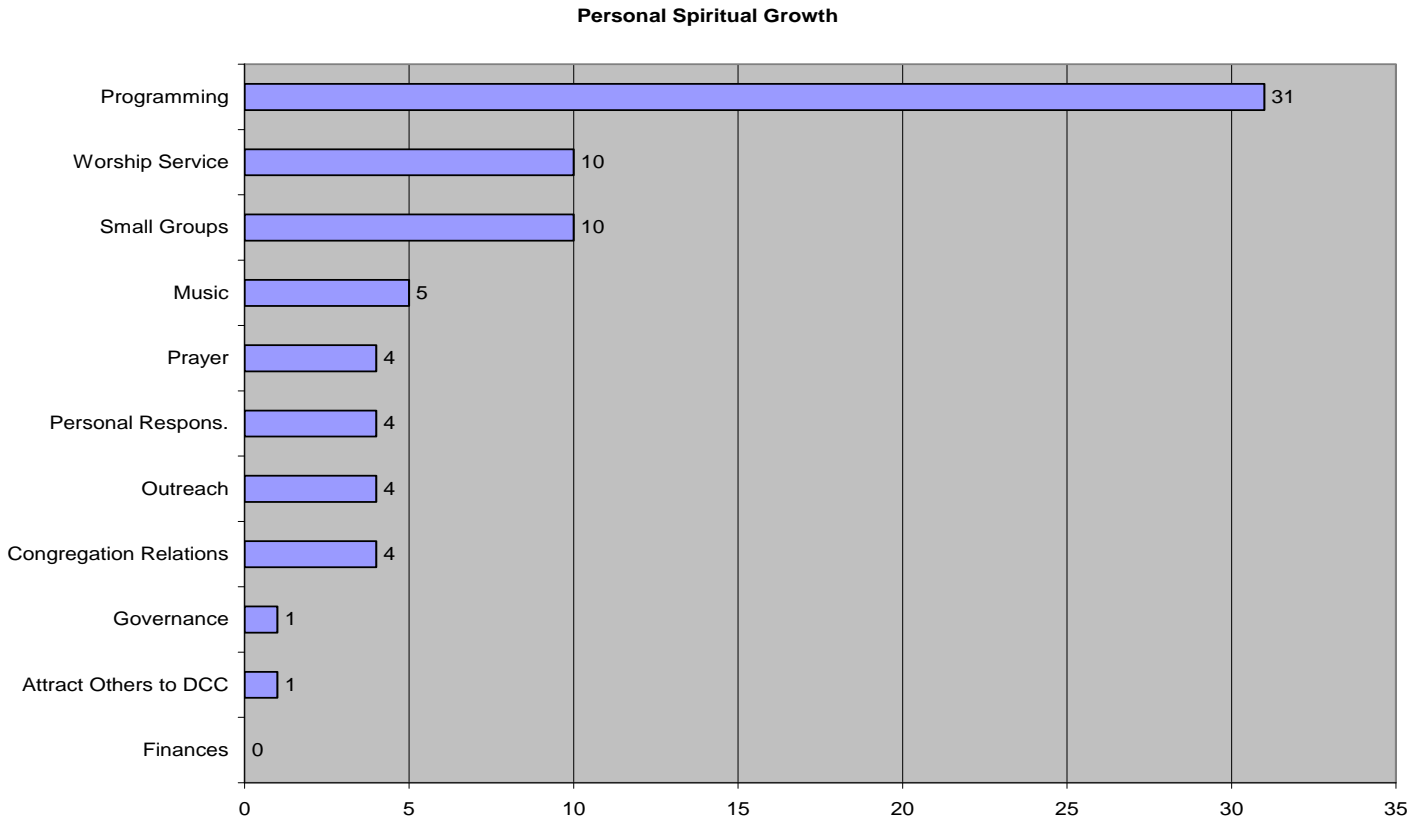
Five discovery sessions were held April-June, 2009, with total attendance of 64 congregants and Disciples Christian Church staff. The discovery sessions were designed to 1) review Jesus' commandment to discipleship; 2) provide a venue for participants to discuss their spiritual growth with each other; 3) solicit congregant perspective and interest in spiritual growth, personally and for Disciples Christian Church.

Each session began with review of Paul’s words to the church of Ephesus, “...we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:15-16. Each session also began with prayer.

Participants were asked to think about and discuss in their small group at their table this question. “What at Disciples Christian Church is growing us spiritually?” Common responses to this question ranged from excellent, practical sermons to opportunities to serve.

Participants were then asked to individually answer two questions. These questions and the responses are outlined below.

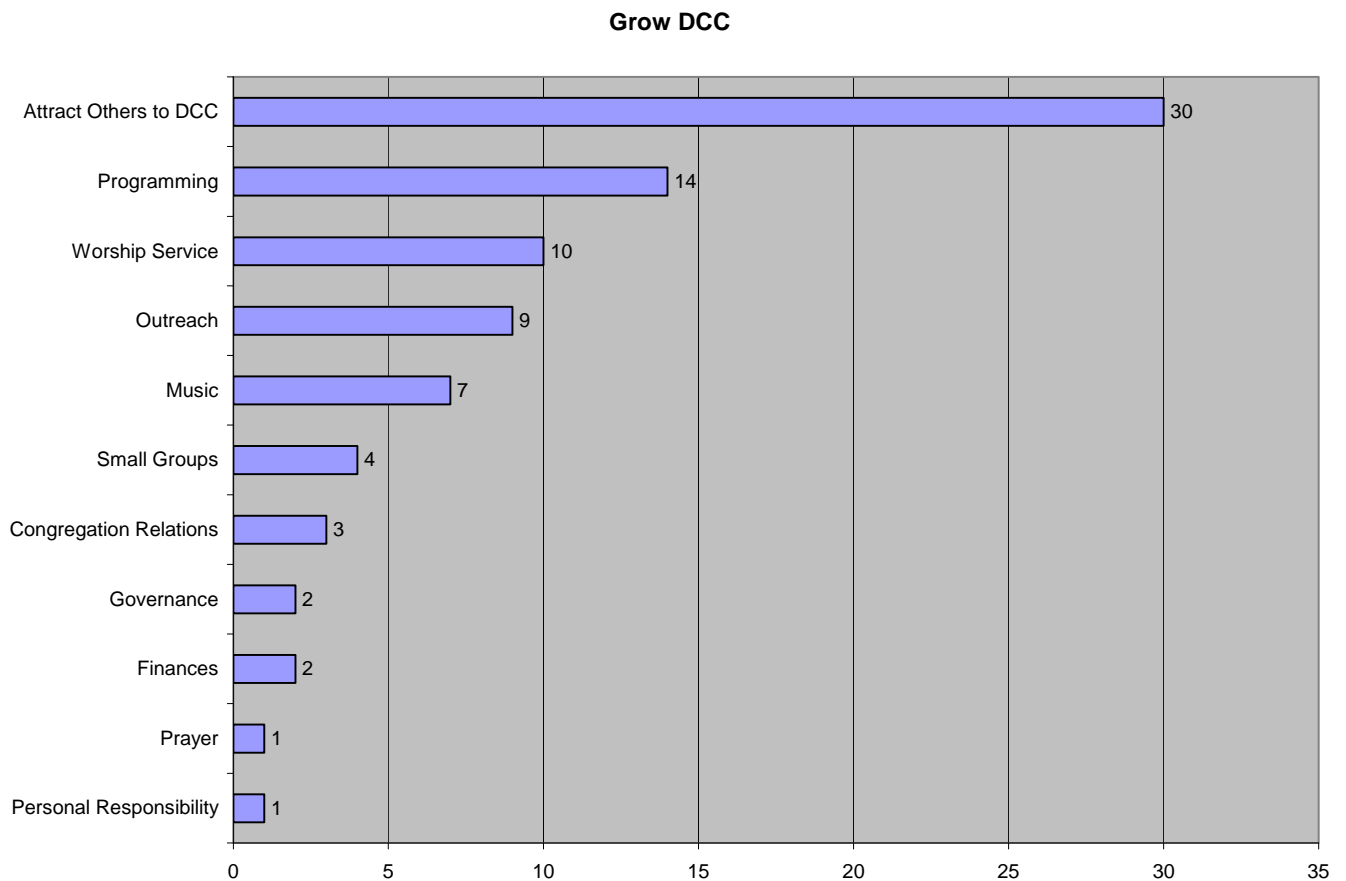
Question #1 - *What will enhance your spiritual growth?*



The overwhelming majority (42%) of the 74 responses to this question relate to Disciples Christian Church programming. A common theme in these responses is the need/desire for biblical study opportunities. Worship and Small Groups tie for 2nd and 3rd place at 14% each. The majority of responses regarding Worship indicate that a contemporary and/or more

variety in worship style will enhance individual spiritual growth. The responses regarding small groups express a desire for the opportunity for developing and encouraging deeper faith based relationships with the goal of helping one-another grow in Christ.

Question #2 - What else can we be doing to grow Disciples Christian Church?



The overwhelming majority (36%) of the 83 responses to this question relate to inviting others to Disciples Christian Church and/or advertising/marketing Disciples Christian Church. Programming comes in 2nd at 17% and similarly to the responses to question #1, most responses relate to some form of educational opportunities from biblical study and leadership training to support groups for life's events (divorce, etc.). Worship responses make up 12% and as is the case for question #1 above, the majority of responses indicate that a contemporary and/or more variety in worship style will grow Disciples Christian Church.

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation of their session; to pray for the discovery process, encourage others to participate; and to make a written commitment to grow. In addition, an invitation was given to anyone interested in participating in the writing of the ministry plan.

The evaluation feedback of the sessions was overwhelmingly very good. Many enjoyed the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns about their personal spiritual growth as well as the opportunity for Disciples Christian Church growth.

Retreat – Saturday, August 23, 2009

Based on the responses from the Discovery Sessions, a retreat was scheduled with the goal of providing biblical study regarding Jesus' call to discipleship and to begin to formulate the structure of the ministry plan. Thirty-five congregants came together and participated in small group prayer and study of the "marks of a disciple". The "marks" identified are utilized in the formulation of the ministry plan.

Retreat Follow-up

Participants of the retreat were invited to continue in study and serve as a ministry planning team.

During the subsequent follow-up meetings, the group continued to study the marks of discipleship and identified two major categories as the focus of the ministry plan, Transformation and Servanthood.

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Transformation

- **Call to Discipleship (Timothy, e.g. Acts 16:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:1-5)**
- **Passion for Christ (Stephen, Acts 6:1-15; 7:54-60)**
- **Joy (Post-Pentecost Disciples, e.g. Acts 2:1-21; 2:43-47)**
- **Commitment to Prayer/Study (John 17)**
- **Witness (Andrew's, e.g. Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:37-42)**
- **Integrity/Justice/Ethics (Nathanael, e.g. John 1:45-49)**

Servanthood

- **Obedience (Philip, e.g. Acts 8:26-40)**
- **Love (John, e.g. John 19: 25-27; 20:1-10; 21:7)**
- **Faithfulness (Mary, e.g. Luke 1:26-56; 2:5-7, 16-19; John 19:25-27)**
- **Humility (The Centurion, e.g. Luke 7:1-10; Matthew 8:5-13)**
- **Generosity (Joseph the Levite, e.g. Acts 4:32-37)**
- **Commitment to Community (e.g. James 5)**

Element 4 Growing As Disciples

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Growing Ourselves as Disciples

The core of this plan is a commitment to provide structure and support for all persons at Disciples Christian Church to “. . . in all things grow in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”(Eph. 4:15) This means that each person, as he or she is ready, will find a process waiting for them, in this church community, to grow as a disciple.

To achieve this goal, Disciples Christian Church will align its ministries to the transformational and servanthood marks above. Current ministries are already aligned with many of the marks. Our challenge is to identify the marks associated with each ministry, and for each person involved in that ministry to be aware of how that ministry builds discipleship for themselves and others. As new ministries are developed, they too will be aligned with the marks of a disciple so that those persons working in that ministry will know how that ministry grows disciples. Each ministry can and should be a resource for growing discipleship, and each ministry can be an opportunity for development in specific marks of a disciple.

Disciples Christian Church will also provide a systematic and ongoing program of study for children, youth, and adults in discipleship. The marks of a disciple can serve as the foundation for bible study, group studies and discussions, and other structures for growth. This program can provide a defined course of study, rooted in the bible and utilizing other resources, that is available to all as each person's growth calls them to marks of discipleship.

We are called to be a church not only for worship and outreach, but because only in a church can we support one another in our growth. True growth requires a commitment to goals and assessment of progress. As a church we can set goals for growth in our church, our community, and our world and we

can measure our progress. As a church we can also assist those individuals who are ready to assess their own growth as disciples, and we can provide the guidance they may seek along their path.

Growing Disciples Ministries

To achieve these goals, Disciples Christian Church must prayerfully align resources and ministries for growth. Our resources include our staff, our lay leadership, our physical plant and equipment, our endowment, our budget, and our special fund raising. Decisions about each of these resources must be based on our commitment to growing disciples in ourselves, our church, our community, our world.

Like our education ministry described above, our communications ministries can also be aligned with growing discipleship through the marks of a disciple. The communications “face” of Disciples Christian Church, can clearly express our fundamental commitment to growth. Our worship and music ministries offer additional opportunities for personal growth and for emphasizing our commitment to growth. Outreach ministries will continue to provide a strong connection with the marks of a disciple as each outreach ministry is tied to specific marks.

Our decisions about how we use resources and how we build and support ministries will be guided by our commitment to growing disciples and the goals that we set along the way.

Element
5 **Getting Started**

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Implementation

This ministry plan will be presented to the congregation for discussion and then to the Board for adoption.

Implementation of the ministry plan will require additional discernment and planning. Staff, lay leaders, and every person involved in ministries will be invited to participate in a process of clarifying how our current ministries already align with the marks of a disciple and provide opportunities for growth in those marks. Additional ministries or programs within ministries, e.g. courses of study within the education ministries, will also need to be developed. Goals and assessment techniques will also be needed. All of this will take time. The goal is to utilize 2010 to be a year of discernment and planning with priority given to identifying and establishing a curriculum for growing disciples which will facilitate transformational steps.

We also propose that with the adoption of the ministry plan by the Board, members will be invited to participate on a planning committee to begin the discernment and planning process for implementing the Growing Disciples Ministry Plan.

With appreciation to all those who participated and contributed to the development of this document, we humbly and prayerfully offer this Growing Disciples Ministry Plan to the Disciples Christian Church congregation and Board for its consideration and adoption.

Janie Morrison and David Eggert