

Vision Implementation 2008-2015

2008

Overall Goals for 2008

1. Affirmation of and beginning preparation for the new approaches.
2. Initial development of “Association Visitors”.
3. Create a task force to work with the NPower organization to further develop the web site as a “clearing house of information” that will support the Conference’s network of relationships and make the Conference less dependent on staff for the flow of information.
4. Begin determining the best staffing configuration (location and job descriptions) to under gird the new networking model.
5. A new church is started.
6. Develop a Capital Campaign for approval in 2008 and for implementation in 2009.

January

1. The visioning team and staff begin sharing this Vision Plan with association boards and meetings, clergy circles, the clergy retreat of January 28-30, and other gatherings of laity and clergy. Appropriate amendments, affirmations and approvals as needed begin to be sought. This process continues throughout the spring.

February

1. First reading at February 15 Conference Board meeting.
2. Approval of a contract with the NPower organization is sought from Board.

March

April

1. A “Communications Task Force” is called together, composed of two Conference members who have web development skills and two ministers who are aware of Conference sensitivities regarding content. The group works with the NPower organization and begins building on the current website to create a “clearing house of information”. The site will eventually include (but not be limited to): a Conference calendar of events, registration for all events including camp and conference (utilizing Pay Pal or a similar program), progress reports and updates of committees, Merom information, FAQ with an effective and extensive search function, appropriate referral information for specific inquiries, Conference publications, prayer requests, news and reviews of recent events, action alerts for justice campaigns, chat rooms, resources, and web links to each congregation’s website. Capacity will also be developed for a Conference e-zine, and list serves.

In addition, the task force will develop a plan to be sure each congregation is equipped with basic computer capacity, website, web access, capacity for on-line meetings using software such as “Go To Meeting”, and hands on training. This will facilitate virtual meetings.

This task force will continue meeting quarterly or as needed to further develop these capacities according to current standards and potentialities.

2. A proposal for a Capital Campaign is created for consideration by the Annual Meeting in June. The proposal will provide for development of a feasibility study for the raising of \$1.5 million to endow operational expenses at Merom (now being covered by Conference annual budgets), and then to develop some working

capital for the Conference for technology needs, new congregation establishment, etc. Findings are to be reported to the Board of Directors for action and to the Annual Conference for promotion. If the proposal is approved, the feasibility study would be reviewed and acted upon by the Conference Board in September. If approved by the Conference Board, solicitation of major and lead gifts would begin in spring, '09 and general solicitation of gifts would begin in September '09.

May

1. May 2, affirmation of this Vision Plan (as amended, if needed) by the Conference Board for recommendation to the Annual Meeting, June 6-7.

June

1. June 6-7, affirmation of this Vision Plan by the Annual Meeting is sought. This affirmation is for the overall direction and the first year's specifics – the plan will be reviewed semiannually and any suggested changes (and there will inevitably be changes made as we gain experience) will be presented to the Conference Board for further affirmation.

July

1. An "Association Visitors Development Task Force" (composed of clergy and lay representatives from each of the associations sufficient to provide demographic balance) will meet with the Conference Staff to develop a Conference-wide program.

These "Association Visitors" may consist of pairings of one lay person with one clergy person, with laity "Association Visitors" visiting congregations on one or two Sunday mornings a month, and clergy "Association Visitors" attending clergy circles and visiting councils/consistories once a year. They will seek to: be available for celebration of significant days and events in congregations; be available for advice and counsel; express appreciation on behalf of the whole Conference and wider church for their witness and various contributions; network congregations with each other according to their needs and strengths; and communicate to, from and between congregations about local, cluster, association, conference and wider church events.

As envisioned by the Visioning Team, Association Visitors will be people who have: been transformed by the Gospel; have demonstrated love for and participation in the life of the United Church of Christ beyond the congregation; modeled a lifestyle of integrity; exhibited appropriate relational skills; practiced the spiritual disciplines including stewardship; subscribed to an Association Visitors code of ethics (to be developed to parallel the current ministerial code of ethics); indicated willingness and ability to participate in continuing education designed for the Association Visitors.

The Association Visitors will be proposed by the associations and confirmed by both association officers and the Conference Board of Directors, will covenant with the Conference and will be confirmed and consecrated at Conference Annual Meeting. Association Visitors will serve a two year term initially and can be re-appointed. Their foundational ministry will be one of spiritual and pastoral care and encouragement.

Regular training of the Association Visitors will be provided by and through the Conference Minister, who will also be the primary point of accountability in addition to the whole group of Visitors holding each other accountable. Visitors will be volunteers but will be reimbursed for expenses.

2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

3. The streamlining of committees (as recommended by the visioning committee) is reviewed by the "Programming, Planning and Policy Advisory Committee." The PPPAC develops proposals for consideration by the Conference Board of Directors for implementation in 2009 (the Executive Service Corps of Indiana, which provides advice and counsel to non-profit organizations, may be utilized as a consultant). Also, changes to the Conference By-Laws will be recommended in order to permit smaller associations to share representation to Conference bodies in order to reduce the load on too few individuals. Conference quotas need to be fluid (the point here is that quotas are in place to *protect* all groups of people, not to *burden* them).

4. The Conference Personnel Committee meets to consider possible reconfigurations of staff (both ministers and support staff in Indianapolis, Merom and deployed) in terms of location and job descriptions. The new model calls for retaining two association conference ministers if financially possible. The associates will be asked to move back to Indianapolis by January, 2010 to facilitate their work with the new network model and to make the gifts of each easily available to the entire Conference.

5. A new church is started.

August

September

1. Conference Board reviews the Capital Campaign Feasibility Study for amendment and/or approval.

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

2009

Overall Goals for 2009

1. Begin using an Annual Planning Event (A.P.E.) in order to lessen dependence upon standing committees and to free time and energy for mission and ministry.
2. The expansion of a congregational transformation initiative.
3. A new church is started.
4. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2010.
5. To implement a capital campaign if found feasible (see April, June, and September, 2008).

January

1. The Church Growth Ministry (a combination of the functions of what has been the Church Development Committee and Evangelism Education Committee – see July, '08, #3) begins developing a “congregational transformation initiative” for Indiana-Kentucky congregations. This ministry group is composed of lay people and clergy who are representative of the Conference in terms of geography, race and ethnicity, congregational size and place on the “congregational life cycle”.

This “initiative” will seek to develop a “climate of readiness” among congregations and will offer recommended coaches and consultants for transformational work within congregations and/or clusters of congregations. (Some of these coaches and consultants may be Conference members who have been especially trained for this purpose. A list of effective outside coaches and consultants will also be maintained for those congregations preferring them.)

2. The new appointed Association Visitors meet for two days to engage in training and group building.
3. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

4. Association boards are asked to identify “Association Church Events” (ACE) that they may wish to develop or see developed around common needs and interests. These might be designed to occur on Fifth Sunday nights or other logical times in individual associations. These events need to provide content as well as fellowship. Content might include opportunities for church officers such as moderators, treasurers, elders, deacons, or others to meet and share concerns and resources; there might be a pulpit/choir exchange on Sunday mornings or other worship times; celebration of congregations’ signal events such as anniversaries, installations, etc.; clergy self-care meetings with learning components. These events as outlined by the associations would be fed into the A.P.E. event where possible sharing of certain events between associations could be considered and for overall coordination of efforts throughout the Conference.

The Associations *always* have the right to plan and develop their own programs, but the Conference has a responsibility to be certain that the congregations of *all* associations have the resource events they need to thrive. This may mean filling in gaps in programming in some associations or asking some associations to offer their programs to neighboring associations or to offer them in larger clusters of congregations or even Conference-wide.

February

1. A Lay Ministry Task Force meets with Disciples counterparts in the Indiana region to explore ways to strengthen the lay ministry education events at Tipton and otherwise.
2. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” (formerly conference committees - see July, ’08, #3) and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE in April.

March

1. If a Capital Campaign is approved by the 2008 Annual Meeting and the Conference Board in September, 2008, solicitation of major and lead gifts will begin this month.

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
2. Annual Planning Event (APE) is held to develop program for the Conference for the year ahead (July – June) while also projecting possibilities for two additional years (three years out in total). All members (lay and clergy) of the Conference are invited to come and plan together for the calendar year ahead, meeting with “conference ministries” (formerly “conference committees”). Individuals will be invited to self-select the area of planning and the planning group of which they would like to be a part. As soon as practical after the event, recruitment of volunteers to implement the plans will be completed by volunteers and staff and a printed booklet with the plans, the names of those serving, and the supporting budget amounts, will be published for the sake of publicity, promotion and accountability. APE will be informed by the work of various “conference ministries” (formerly conference committees - see July, ’08, #3) task forces, staff, officers, etc.

Programs considered during the A.P.E. might include “UCC History, Heritage and Ethos,” “UCC Lay Leadership Workshop” (which would examine the role of various lay officers, etc.), “Understanding Generational Differences,” “Effective Congregational Evangelism,” “Dealing with Conflict,” “Ministry in Small Churches,” “Ministry in rural Settings,” and seminars on various social justice issues, etc. The planning will include who will teach, when, where and budget required. “Wisconsin Conference” type educational events may be planned annually, utilizing clergy and seminary professors (these are events held over two or three days which provide intense studies).

Those participating in A.P.E. will initially plan for three years out and each year thereafter A.P.E. participants will review the next two years planned previously and plan for the third year. In addition to addressing the needs of those who are already active in conference and association life, these events need to intentionally reach out to members and ministers who have previously not attended such extra-congregational events and must intentionally be welcoming and inclusive of **all** who attend. To work over time, these events

must also have consistently high quality. Fewer educational events of quality will be better than many of lesser quality.

“Learning Communities” may also be planned during the A.P.E. Planning groups will need to decide what specific Clergy Learning Communities need to be developed, under what themes, and who will recruit and lead them. Most of these will be for clergy, but there may also be Lay Learning Communities established for lay leaders. Learning Communities may last for a year or for several years, depending upon the theme and the participants.

The A.P.E. event will not be able to do all of this planning in this first year, but 2009 will provide a good start and each year’s A.P.E. will build on the previous year’s A.P.E.

May

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for public celebration (at Annual Meeting) of what has been achieved to date. The Team may also offer suggestions to the APE event that meets in April.

June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.
2. The Church Growth Ministry (a combination of the functions of what has been the Church Development Committee and Evangelism Education Committee) considers a “rural and small town initiative” to develop a network for rural and small town congregations. The group may begin by investigating what is being done/offered in other Conferences and denominations, then tailoring offerings for rural Indiana-Kentucky UCC congregations. The group’s work will both inform and be informed by the APE (Annual Planning Event).

July

1. The newly consecrated (at Annual Meeting) Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information. Included in the agenda: what “specialists” do the AV’s think need to be trained, equipped and authorized to provide specific services to Indiana-Kentucky congregations on a stipend or a volunteer (with expenses reimbursed) basis. For example, the areas of conflict management or orientation to the search and call process might utilize such individuals instead of all that work being done by conference staff. Recommendations may be made to the appropriate Conference ministry or to the Conference Board. Some Association Visitors might serve in one or another of these areas, among other people in the Conference, as well as identify potential people for these roles from among those they are getting to know in their associations.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting.

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

2010

Overall Goals for 2010

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2011.
2. A new congregation begins meeting.
3. Continued transformation toward the network model.
4. Four congregations participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
3. If found feasible, a one year Capital Campaign is launched (see March, 2009).

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” (formerly conference committees - see July, '08, #3) and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE in April.

March

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
2. Annual Planning Event (APE) is held to develop program for the Conference for the year ahead (July – June) while also projecting possibilities for two additional years (three years out in total). All members (lay and clergy) of the Conference are invited to come and plan together for the calendar year ahead, meeting with “conference ministries” (formerly “conference committees”). Individuals will be invited to self-select the area of planning and the planning group of which they would like to be a part. As soon as practical after the event, recruitment of volunteers to implement the plans will be completed by volunteers and staff and a printed booklet with the plans, the names of those serving, and the supporting budget amounts, will be published for the sake of publicity, promotion and accountability. APE will be informed by the work of various “conference ministries” (formerly conference committees - see July, '08, #3) task forces, staff, officers, etc.

Programs considered during the A.P.E. might include “UCC History, Heritage and Ethos,” “UCC Lay Leadership Workshop” (which would examine the role of various lay officers, etc.), “Understanding Generational Differences,” “Effective Congregational Evangelism,” “Dealing with Conflict,” “Ministry in Small Churches,” “Ministry in rural Settings,” and seminars on various social justice issues, etc. The planning will include who will teach, when, where and budget required. “Wisconsin Conference” type educational events may be planned annually, utilizing clergy and seminary professors (these are events held over two or three days which provide intense studies).

Those participating in A.P.E. will initially plan for three years out and each year thereafter A.P.E. participants will review the next two years planned previously and plan for the third year. In addition to addressing the needs of those who are already active in conference and association life, these events need to

intentionally reach out to members and ministers who have previously not attended such extra-congregational events and must intentionally be welcoming and inclusive of **all** who attend. To work over time, these events must also have consistently high quality. Fewer educational events of quality will be better than many of lesser quality.

“Learning Communities” may also be planned during the A.P.E. Planning groups will need to decide what specific Clergy Learning Communities need to be developed, under what themes, and who will recruit and lead them. Most of these will be for clergy, but there may also be Lay Learning Communities established for lay leaders. Learning Communities may last for a year or for several years, depending upon the theme and the participants.

May

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating at Annual Meeting, on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.

July

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information. The agenda includes identification of potential leaders within the congregations and associations, discussion of perceived needs among congregations and associations (to be shared with staff, the various conference ministries, and A.P.E.).

2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

2011

Overall Goals for 2011

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2012.
2. A new congregation begins meeting.

3. Continued transformation toward the network model.
4. Six more congregations (beyond the four in 2010) participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
3. Capital Campaign pledges become payable.

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE event in April.

March

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
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May

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating at Annual Meeting, on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.

July

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information. The agenda includes identification of potential leaders within the congregations and associations, discussion of perceived needs among congregations and associations (to be shared with staff, the various conference ministries, and A.P.E.).
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

2012

Overall Goals for 2012

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2013.
2. A new congregation begins meeting.
3. Six more congregations (beyond the six in 2011) participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE event in April.

March

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
2. Annual Planning Event (APE) is held to develop program for the Conference for the year ahead (July – June) while also projecting possibilities for two additional years (three years out in total). All members (lay and clergy) of the Conference are invited to come and plan together for the calendar year ahead, meeting with “conference ministries” (formerly “conference committees”). Individuals will be invited to self-select the area of planning and the planning group of which they would like to be a part. As soon as practical after the event, recruitment of volunteers to implement the plans will be completed by volunteers and staff and a printed booklet with the plans, the names of those serving, and the supporting budget amounts, will be published for the sake of publicity, promotion and accountability. APE will be informed by the work of various “conference ministries”, task forces, staff, officers, etc.

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May

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating at Annual Meeting, on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.

July

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information. The agenda includes identification of potential leaders within the congregations and associations, discussion of perceived needs among congregations and associations (to be shared with staff, the various conference ministries, and A.P.E.).

2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

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2013

Overall Goals for 2013

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2014.
2. A new congregation begins meeting.
3. Six more congregations (beyond the six in 2012) participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE event in April.

March

April

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June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.

July

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2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

2014

Overall Goals for 2014

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2015.
2. A new congregation begins meeting.
3. Six more congregations (beyond the six in 2013) participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.
4. A new seven year vision begins to be developed using a new visioning team.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
3. A new Visioning Team is convened to begin working on a new Vision for the next seven years. This new plan will be ready for consideration at the 2015 annual Meeting.

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE event in April.

March

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
2. Annual Planning Event (APE) is held to develop program for the Conference for the year ahead (July – June) while also projecting possibilities for two additional years (three years out in total). All members (lay and clergy) of the Conference are invited to come and plan together for the calendar year ahead, meeting with “conference ministries” (formerly “conference committees”). Individuals will be invited to self-select the area of planning and the planning group of which they would like to be a part. As soon as practical after the event, recruitment of volunteers to implement the plans will be completed by volunteers and staff and a printed booklet with the plans, the names of those serving, and the supporting budget amounts, will be published for the sake of publicity, promotion and accountability. APE will be informed by the work of various “conference ministries”, task forces, staff, officers, etc.

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June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments.

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2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

2015

Overall Goals for 2015

1. The New Church Start Ministry identifies the location of a new church start in 2016.

2. A new congregation begins meeting.
3. Six more congregations (beyond the six in 2014) participate in the transformation initiative by choosing a transformational model and implementing it.
4. A new Visioning Process is put into place to develop another seven year plan.

January

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information.
2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

February

1. The staff meets to bring together suggestions from the “conference ministries” and other groups, as well as themselves, and to put them into a form useful to the APE event in April.

March

April

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting
2. Annual Planning Event (APE) is held to develop program for the Conference for the year ahead (July – June) while also projecting possibilities for two additional years (three years out in total). All members (lay and clergy) of the Conference are invited to come and plan together for the calendar year ahead, meeting with “conference ministries” (formerly “conference committees”). Individuals will be invited to self-select the area of planning and the planning group of which they would like to be a part. As soon as practical after the event, recruitment of volunteers to implement the plans will be completed by volunteers and staff and a printed booklet with the plans, the names of those serving, and the supporting budget amounts, will be published for the sake of publicity, promotion and accountability. APE will be informed by the work of various “conference ministries”, task forces, staff, officers, etc.

Programs considered during the A.P.E. might include “UCC History, Heritage and Ethos,” “UCC Lay Leadership Workshop” (which would examine the role of various lay officers, etc.), “Understanding Generational Differences,” “Effective Congregational Evangelism,” “Dealing with Conflict,” “Ministry in Small Churches,” “Ministry in rural Settings,” and seminars on various social justice issues, etc. The planning will include who will teach, when, where and budget required. “Wisconsin Conference” type educational events may be planned annually, utilizing clergy and seminary professors (these are events held over two or three days which provide intense studies).

Those participating in A.P.E. will initially plan for three years out and each year thereafter A.P.E. participants will review the next two years planned previously and plan for the third year. In addition to addressing the needs of those who are already active in conference and association life, these events need to intentionally reach out to members and ministers who have previously not attended such extra-congregational events and must intentionally be welcoming and inclusive of **all** who attend. To work over time, these events must also have consistently high quality. Fewer educational events of quality will be better than many of lesser quality.

“Learning Communities” may also be planned during the A.P.E. Planning groups will need to decide what specific Clergy Learning Communities need to be developed, under what themes, and who will recruit and lead them. Most of these will be for clergy, but there may also be Lay Learning Communities established for lay leaders. Learning Communities may last for a year or for several years, depending upon the theme and the participants.

May

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating at Annual Meeting, on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.

June

1. Annual meeting: report and celebration of the past year’s accomplishments and to affirm a new year seven year plan.

July

1. The Association Visitors meet for a day of training and sharing of information. The agenda includes identification of potential leaders within the congregations and associations, discussion of perceived needs among congregations and associations (to be shared with staff, the various conference ministries, and A.P.E.).

2. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

August

September

October

1. Communications Task Force quarterly meeting

November

December

1. A “Continuing Review Team” meets to review this Vision Plan to determine any needed amendments and to plan for celebrating on the web site and in other ways what has been achieved to date.