



*San Juan Capistrano
Community Presbyterian Church*

CONGREGATIONAL STUDY 2003

**COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, CALIFORNIA

Submitted to Session:

June 22, 2003

By:

Congregational Study Task Force

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE MODERATOR

Our congregation is strong from within, taking leadership change in stride, exceptionally satisfied with Deacons and generally satisfied with other programs, and are encouraged by the direction of Mission services to the community. However, the congregational study process forces us to look for our weaknesses as well as our strengths with the intent of improving our service to God. The congregation brought forth many constructive suggestions for strengthening our existing programs, which are included in this report; however there are two primary concerns, which require immediate attention.

One, our church has become self-absorbed. We are excellent at administering to ourselves, but are not very good at outreach. We have much here at CPC to share, and it s'our mission to share it, and yet we are not performing. Consequently, our numbers are dwindling. This results in burnout of our members, loss of revenue for programs, and lost opportunities to achieve service goals. Hence, we propose an aggressive marketing plan be developed which will affect every aspect of our church. It is important that this marketing plan promote growth through strengthening and revitalizing existing programs without the loss of the church family qualities we all now enjoy.

Two, although the congregation provided the Youth Center facility and a full time Director of Youth as recommended by our previous congregational study, they did not come .”We must find the solution to this weakness! We know that there are youth of this age group in our community, as well as, within our own church and it s'our responsibility to provide the programs that meet their needs. The marketing plan should help the growth of the youth program, but we also recommend that further study take place within the next four to six months.

I prayerfully request that Session exercise its leadership and resources necessary to keep the Vision and Mission Statements alive in this church.

Don Mueller,
Moderator 2003 Congregational Study Task Force

PS I wish to express my appreciation to the best ever committee; they are so dedicated to the future of this church and the love of God shows through each one of them.

Congregational Mission Study Task Force

Team Members:

Don Mueller, chair	Tammy Ause	Marge J. Ball	Julie Boyd
Frances Bucklin	Jim Jacobs	Marlin Kohr	Kurt Pederson
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INTRODUCTION

On February 18, 2003, the Session of the Community Presbyterian Church (CPC) selected this team to participate in the *ReVision* process on behalf of the congregation. *ReVision* has been viewed by the Task Force as a spiritual discernment process: What is God calling this congregation to do and be at this time in its life and ministry? The study is seen as the first step in the process of calling a new permanent pastor. The team has been wonderfully blessed by Barbara Murphy, who was selected by Presbytery as our facilitator.

NARRATIVE OF PROCESS

We have progressed through three major phases: Context, Reflections, and Focus.

CONTEXT

Following a time of orientation, the team selected a community study area in which 79.5 % of our congregation resides. The area contains the communities of San Juan Capistrano, Laguna Niguel, Dana Point, Capistrano Beach and portions of San Clemente. Currently, there are 155,496 people residing in this area. This represents an increase of 41,164, or 36%, since 1990. The population of the area is projected to grow by 9.3 %, or 14,537 persons, between 2003 and 2008. The team also chose a list of the twenty most important programs and ministries of our congregation to be included in the congregational survey, for evaluation.

The survey was distributed during a portion of the worship service on March 30, 2003, and was completed by 175 people. The surveys and other information we provided were forwarded to Percept. Percept, located in Rancho Santa Margarita, is a nationally recognized and respected research organization that specializes in gathering and distributing census and religious-oriented information. Percept subsequently provided us with a ReVision Context report as a planning resource that presented important and comparable information about our community, our congregation and our congregation's programs and ministries. Some of the results include the following:

Membership. While our community has increased by 36% since 1990, our present church membership of 274 represents a decrease of 66, or 19.4%, during the same time. If the trend continues into the next five years, the membership will decrease by 19.3%, or 53 members.

Racial/Ethnic Diversity. The surrounding community has high diversity with 74.1 % Anglos and 17.4 % Hispanics/Latinos. Anglos represent 97.1% of the CPC congregation.

Generation. The largest generational age group of the congregation is the 60 plus group (41%). Youth to age 20 make up 19% and 40-59 group 25%. The 21 to 39 year-old group has the smallest representation at (15%). While the community consists of 15% over 60, 32% in 40-59, 25% in the 21-39, and 29% in the 0-20 age group.

Family Structure. The community family structure is "somewhat traditional" and that of the CPC congregation is "very traditional." In the community 23% are single, 15% are divorced/widowed, and 62 % are married. In CPC households, 5% are single, 23% divorced/widowed and 72% married.

Primary Concerns. "Hopes & Dreams" are most important to the community and "Personal/Spiritual" are most significant to CPC members.

Regionally Indexed Stress Conditions. These are low in both the community and the congregation.

Faith Receptivity. The likely faith involvement is low in the community and extremely high in the CPC congregation, when compared to national averages.

Financial Support Potential. The likely giving potential in the congregation is high, based on an average annual household income of \$68,578, and 79% contribute more than \$500/year. The community has a higher giving potential based on an average annual income of \$107,993.

Church Style. The overall church style preference for the community is "somewhat contemporary ." Whereas, CPC members prefer "extremely contemporary."

Church Program Preference. The community prefers cultural programs, sports and/or camping, youth social programs and church-sponsored day school. At CPC, programs related to recreation are the most preferred (45%) and there is also significant interest in programs related to spiritual development (34%).

Potential Resistance to Change. Based upon the assumption that as people become older and more diverse, the potential for resistance to change becomes more significant, both the community and the congregation are likely to somewhat resist change.

Program Ratings. Twenty programs specific to CPC were rated and revealed basically positive responses. Adult CE/Bible Studies, Youth Programs and Care and Share/Senior Services were seen least positively. Those viewed most positively were Deacons, Prayer Chain, and Preschool.

Program Preferences. Areas of interest to the community and the church include Active Retirement Programs, Marriage Enrichment Opportunities, Sports or Camping Programs, Family Activities/Outings, Youth Social Programs, Adult Theological Discussions, and Cultural Programs (music, art, drama, etc.). *Life's Satisfactions.* Congregational respondents have expressed basic satisfaction with various areas of their lives including the church and their relationship with God. Distress is experienced primarily because of relationships.

REFLECTIONS

Once the Task Force had familiarized itself with the information in the ReVision Context report, two dates were established for sharing the report with the congregation in small groups and for providing opportunities for participants to discuss/explore the visions, hopes and dreams for the future of CPC. Under the leadership of the Team Members, the congregation met in nine small groups of 8 to 15 members after first service on April 27 and May 4. Approximately 100 people participated in each session. The first session was primarily devoted to an understanding and appreciation of the ReVision Context report and how it was pertinent to envisioning the life and ministry of our church in the 21st century. The groups also created lists of visions/hopes/dreams for our church. The second session encouraged "brainstorming," allowing free expression for all participants. In light of the Context report, the groups were asked to think about what threats/opportunities they perceived for the congregation. They were also asked to share their perceptions of what is going well at the church (strengths) and what is not going so well (weaknesses). Finally, the participants were asked to share what they would like to see happen over the next three years in the life of CPC. What are the most important programs that should be embraced/enhanced? The groups were also asked to focus their goals even more and help develop a "PlanDo" which would include the issues that should be addressed in the upcoming twelve months.

FOCUS

The team members have taken all strands of input to form a final document of key statements. These key statements have been assembled into a draft report that will be presented to the CPC Session at a retreat on June 22, 2003. The Session and Task Force will fine tune the report and have it in its final form. The final report will be submitted to the Presbytery of Los Ranchos, Congregational Studies Sub-Committee for approval and recommendation to the Presbytery and Congregational Development Committee.

Vision Statement

We at Community Presbyterian Church seek to nourish personal relationships with God and support commitments to be disciples of Jesus Christ, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Mission Statement

Community Presbyterian Church is a place of joyous worship, where hospitality and good humor abound and all are accepted. We seek to experience and to do God's will in our lives through:

- Participating regularly in God-centered worship**
- Studying the Bible**
- Engaging in an active prayer life**
- Demonstrating God's love in acts of service**
- Being Christ's hands in reaching out to others**
- Providing programs as a way of honoring Christ**
- Being caring and accountable in relationships with others**
- Being a church family to all**

Objective

Growth is the main objective of the Three Year Goals. The congregation's comments reflect a desire to create a "growth mindset" throughout the church programs and activities. The goals listed are interwoven and, treated as a whole, are designed to achieve the desired growth.

THREE YEAR GOALS

- Grow the church membership to 350 members and increase the friends (regular attendees, non-members) by the year 2006. Encourage growth from the survivor and boomer generations (21-59 age groups).
- Strengthen the overall mid-senior high youth program by providing an environment that is welcoming to new youth participants and nurturing to our existing youth congregation.
- Strengthen and supplement our current ministry programs in order to support our existing congregation and meet the needs of the community. Build upon our existing intergenerational church family when developing ministry programs.

TWELVE MONTH IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

I. Grow the church membership to 350 members and increase the friends ' (regular attendees, non-members) by the year 2006. Encourage growth from the Survivor and Boomer generations (21-59 age groups).

Twelve Month Plan Do

Increase membership by 25 people

Establish a marketing plan that would address the following:

Interview/research other churches in our area to determine how they developed a growth plan.

Develop exit interview program to determine why people leave our church. Share this information with the congregation to help the church family be more welcoming.

Research and develop an advertising campaign (such as newspaper, yellow pages, media etc.)

Significantly improve internal and external flow of information on events, programs and activities.

Organize a greeting committee for visitors (training, have greeters at coffee hour etc.)

Improve our system of inviting and welcoming those people already coming onto our property. Provide welcoming events and materials for groups such as CPC Preschool, Head Start, AA.

Survey needs of preschool and Head Start families.

Improve visibility and look of church (raise sign and cut bushes, paint, clean, improve signage for offices)

Provide public display of church activities both in narthex and around office (small groups, fellowship gatherings, Presbyterian Women, Bible study, youth events).

Display our vision and mission statements.

Investigate effectiveness of visitor follow-up.

Long Term Options

Increase membership by 25 annually for two more years.

2. Strengthen the overall mid-senior high youth program by providing an environment that is welcoming to new youth participants and nurturing to our existing youth congregation.

Twelve Month Plan Do

Develop a plan to revitalize our mid-senior high youth program. The following suggestions were offered:

Survey local youth programs to gain information and ideas.

Personally contact each family with mid and senior high students in our congregation to determine their needs.

Encourage joint activities with other youth from both Presbyterian churches and other local youth programs.

Encourage participation in Presbyterian youth events

Establish after school programs at the youth center (e.g. homework club)

Encourage youth participation in planning intergenerational events.

Invite youth participation on all session committees.

Long Term Options:

Evaluate and revise as necessary.

Start planning for a permanent replacement of the youth center

3. Strengthen and supplement our current Ministry programs in order to support our existing congregation and meet the needs of the community. Build upon our existing intergenerational church family when developing ministry programs

Fellowship: Continue programs and increase opportunities for the congregation and community to come together for social interaction both corporately and in small groups.

Twelve Month Plan Do

Increase small group fellowship opportunities (e.g Christmas progressive dinner organization as in 2002,)

Increase variety and number of cultural programs (music, art, lectures, trips etc.) and promote them to the community.

Longer Term Options

Increase number of recreational/ social activities, such as ice cream socials, summer concerts on the green, sporting events etc. Make these available to the greater community.

Quarterly festivals (harvest, Scottish, crafts, etc.) Encourage youth participation in the organization of events.

A more efficient, safer van for all age

Fellowship activities with other larger churches (e.g. joint cooperative singles program)

4. Study: Create frequent opportunities for educational growth for adults.

Twelve Month Plan Do

Add adult classes and Bible study groups

Provide classes on personal issues (health, financial, etc.)

Speaker programs (peace efforts in Middle East, people who have had experience with overseas mission, seminary students)

5. Caring: Make our church a center for meeting social and physical needs of the community. Strengthen our mission program and outreach to the community. Caring ministries will also encourage opportunities for nurturing our congregation through small group programs. Suggested ways of reaching this goal are:

Twelve Month Plan Do

Increase awareness of mission needs within the community and communicate these to the congregation through communication with the congregation. Encourage the congregation's participation in meeting these needs such as food, clothing, care, shelter, etc.

Create more and diverse mission opportunities to encourage and increase multi- generational activities.

Increase senior programs such as "Care and Share "

Expand and publicize adult small groups. This should also be used to welcome new members or friends to our community.

e) Examine Deacons Flock program to determine if it can be used to support small group opportunities, welcome new members, and be a forum for quarterly Flock activities.

Publicize the concepts of Parish Nursing to the congregation and find another church to split the cost of such a program

Long Term Options

Create an environment of support for those in personal crisis (such as current grief support group) and make these available to the community.

Expand support for existing programs (eg. older "empty nesters can offer help with food prep and/or childcare for Friends InC.)

6. Worship: Update worship service that appeals to the modern family (i.e. upbeat, current communication methods, strong music focus, uplifting spirit).

Twelve Month Plan Do

Implement a study of contemporary worship styles in growing churches. Determine if an additional worship service would be beneficial for church growth.

Increase the numbers participating in our music program. Provide more challenging music for adult choir and improve the mid and senior high music program.

Long Term Options

Move to three services: 2 contemporary and 1 traditional

Add a monthly praise and worship service.