



**A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUBMITTED TO THE CONGREGATION
JANUARY, 2016**

**“And they said, Let us rise up and build.
So they strengthened their hands for this good work.”**

-Nehemiah 2:18b

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS – The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) viewed its mission as endeavoring to answer three questions about First Congregational Church (FCC)

Who are we?

Where are we going?

How do we get there?

To answer these questions and advance the planning process the SPC was organized into seven subcommittees or Task Groups: Mission and Vision; Community Demographics; Congregational Demographics; Polity and Administration; Outreach and Ministry; Space, Parking and Development; Stewardship. Each of these Task Groups presents a narrative in the body of this plan which reflects the outcomes of their deliberations and includes recommendations for the future of FCC.

SENIOR MINISTER'S VISION STATEMENT – The support of an organization's chief executive officer is essential to the success of any strategic planning process. Rev. Andrews' Vision Statement reflects his strong support and his faith in a future for FCC based on the five spiritual pillars that he has set forth, Worship, Prayer, Study, Stewardship and Service. His Statement defines our overarching mission to be the Body of Christ and describes a path to ministry that will allow us to achieve this goal.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS – The Mission and Vision Task Group crafted a Vision Statement that describes the kind of church we hope to be and to become and a biblically based Mission Statement that sets forth spiritual strategies that FCC will use to achieve our objectives. Those strategies are based on the five spiritual pillars promulgated by the Senior Minister, Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS – This Task Group undertook a thorough demographic and psychographic analysis of the communities that live and work within a five mile radius of FCC. The five mile limit was chosen based on the frequent designation of FCC as a "downtown" church, and the changing demographics of the communities surrounding the church. The Task Group analysis revealed that the test area is a somewhat diverse one, racially, ethnically, in terms of gender, professionally and economically. With regard to the latter characteristic the analysis showed that the test area is bimodal, composed of the highly affluent and the very poor. The racial composition of the FCC environment is 48% black and 42% white.

The Task Groups psychographic analysis considered five groups within the FCC area: (1) Metro Renters, (2) Emerald City, (3) City Commons, (4) Modest Income Homes, and (5) Urban Chic.

Only one of these groups, Modest Income Homes, was found to engage in traditional religious practices. That group comprised around 9% of the total population surrounding FCC.

The major recommendation of the Community Demographics Task Group is that FCC should give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to the impact of the demographic changes in the church environment on our mission, ministries and programs.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS - This Task Group undertook an analysis of the composition of the FCC congregation. This analysis revealed that, as is the case with many churches in North America, the FCC congregation is graying. Fully 60% of those responding to the demographic survey administered by the Task Group are between the ages of 61 and 80. This fact clearly presents challenges to FCC as we endeavor to develop ministries and programs that meet the needs of our congregation.

The Congregational Demographics Task Group also examined the existing list of church members, determining that many on that list are no longer active members of the congregation. There were nearly 700 names on the membership list while the most recent church directory lists approximately 400 individuals and family units. It is also noteworthy that the racial makeup of the congregation is significantly different from that of the community that surrounds FCC.

The Task Group recommends the development of ministries that will attract young people and young families to FCC and additional ministries to address the needs of the FCC senior population.

POLITY AND ADMINISTRATION – The UCC has roots in the “covenantal” tradition-meaning there is no centralized authority or hierarchy that can impose any doctrine or form of worship on its members. The UCC therefore receives the historic creeds and confessions of our ancestors “as testimonies, but not tests of faith.” Christ is the sole head of the church and our faith tradition takes seriously the concept of the “priesthood of all believers.” Within the local church, the Pastor is the spiritual, theological and worship leader of the congregation. He or she works in partnership with the congregation to be the ‘body of Christ in the world’.

Within the framework for all UCC churches, the Polity and Administration Task Group (PATG) examined the organizational structure of FCC. The group concluded that the FCC Church Council in particular is an effective administrative organization for the church. The PATG noted the need for more efficient record keeping by the ABCCs made recommendations commensurate with that need.

The PATG and the SPC will take a closer look at the other major boards of the church in the near future.

OUTREACH AND MINISTRY – This Task Group began its work by examining the most recent directory of FCC Auxiliaries, Boards, Committees and Clubs (the ABCCs). The group concluded that the ABCC document, while still valuable, is somewhat outdated. The group recommends that the document be updated annually and that it be distributed to the congregation and made available to the public. The group’s analysis suggested that many, but not all, of the ministry needs and aspirations of FCC are being met by the ABCCs.

The Task Group concluded that the ABCCs would benefit moving forward by defining themselves in terms of a Christ-centered ministry of FCC. The Group will develop a set of guidelines to assist each ABCC in creating such a definition.

The overarching recommendation of the Task Group is that each member of FCC should become actively involved in some Outreach and Ministry activity in 2016.

SPACE, PARKING AND DEVELOPMENT - The Space, Parking, & Development Task Group (SPDTG) was charged to assess the current and anticipated space needs of the church. The group also assessed the short-term and long-term parking needs of the church and studied the feasibility of possible development plans/scenarios that would complement current church land uses and help underwrite the cost of any new facilities on the FCC campus.

The SPDTG report includes an assessment of FCC’s existing facilities and a look at its future space needs. Rev. Andrew’s vision for a “Bridge” Facility, a Multi-Generational Service Center, provides additional multi-purpose meeting rooms, classrooms, and activity spaces that can be used by the church as well as rented to the public. The report suggests two potential locations for a structured parking deck to meet the long-term parking needs of the church and transient users during the work week.

STEWARDSHIP – The Stewardship Task Group was composed of SPC members who are also members of the FCC Stewardship Committee. The Task Group/Committee endeavored to define Stewardship more broadly than has traditionally been the case at FCC. Specifically, the Task Group/Committee wants a church membership that thinks of stewardship in the broadest of terms and thinks about stewardship as a fundamental responsibility of every church member. The Task Group/Committee adopted the five pillars of Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship as the guiding principles of Stewardship 2016 at FCC. The Task Group/Committee recommendation is to have the five pillars adopted as our mantra to guide stewardship in each area and to build new and lasting relationships throughout the church

membership and ministries. The overarching recommendation of the Task Group/Committee is to engage the entire church in stewardship.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Composition of the Committee – Over the course of its operation, the membership of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) varied between twenty and twenty-five members. The committee was composed of several FCC members who had served on earlier iterations of the SPC and other First Church members who expressed an interest in the planning process and a willingness to serve. A list of the committee members may be found in Appendix A of this document.

The Committee Charge – As members of the Body of Christ, our fundamental responsibility is to do God’s work in Atlanta and the world. With this responsibility uppermost in our minds, the SPC viewed its charge as providing the answers to three questions about First Congregational Church:

Who are we?

Where are we going?

How do we get there?

The Committee’s Operation – In its current incarnation the SPC began meeting in August of 2014. The committee met several times during the remainder of 2014 and regularly beginning in January of 2015. Early meetings were devoted to the development of the committee’s charge and fact finding activities designed to help us understand our congregation and the environment in which we live, work and worship. The early meetings included an asset mapping exercise and reports to the committee on congregational and community demographics.

Detailed minutes of each SPC meeting were recorded and those minutes have been deposited in the First Church office.

While the three questions posed as the charge to the SPC are simple ones, their answers are complex. The SPC decided early on that the most effective way to implement its charge would be to divide the committee into subcommittees or Task Groups. Seven such groups were established.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mission and Vision | Outreach and Ministry |
| Community Demographics | Space, Parking and Development |
| Congregational Demographics | Stewardship |
| Polity and Administration | |

Conveners were appointed to lead each Task Group and those individuals are listed in Appendix B of this document. The Task Groups began their deliberations early in 2015 and each group developed a charge and a set of objectives. Subsequent sections of this strategic plan reflect the deliberations and recommendations of the Task Groups.

It is important to note that while the SPC was conducting its work a reinvigorated Stewardship Committee began its deliberations. That Committee and the SPC agreed that for the purposes of strategic planning, the new Stewardship Committee would also function as the Stewardship Task Group for the SPC.

Congregational Input – Early in 2015 the FCC congregation was encouraged to provide input on the planning process to the SPC Convener and/or to other members of the SPC. Information about the committee’s work was included in the Sunday bulletin for several weeks along with contact information for the SPC Convener. In addition, members of the SPC met with interested FCC parishioners after Sunday service on June 14 and August 9, 2015, to solicit input from the congregation. A detailed report of the committee’s work was provided at the FCC Summer Quarterly Meeting on July 19, 2015.

During the summer of 2015, the SPC also met with a number of young adults who grew up in FCC. Their input was extremely valuable as the committee considered the ways in which various constituencies should be served by FCC worship, ministries and programs.

The Strategic Plan – The subsequent sections of this document represent the product of the SPC Task Groups. These sections contain analyses of the current FCC environment by each Task Group, within the context of that group’s charge, a set of recommendations based on those analyses, strategies and mechanisms for implementing those recommendations and suggested methods for evaluating the success of the church’s efforts.

Future SPC Activities – The Strategic Planning Committee is mandated by the FCC Constitution. Section 7.2.13 of the Constitutions states:

“The mission of the Strategic Planning Committee is to coordinate a continuous planning process that enables the Church to build a common vision for its future and to fulfill its mission.”

This mandate makes it clear that the work of the SPC must be ongoing. Thus, the committee envisions the need to review the strategic plan periodically, to modify and update it and to determine whether the recommendations contained within the plan are being implemented effectively. The Committee will meet annually or semi-annually to perform this assessment.

SENIOR MINISTER'S VISION STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

As First Congregational Church approaches its sesquicentennial celebration of one hundred and fifty years of mission and ministry in 2017, I welcome this opportunity to share a vision of a future for the church that honors its past, critiques its present, and suggests what the future should look like for a community of faith that has offered extraordinary Christian witness since 1867. As we prepare for this milestone, First Church is embarking on a new chapter of service and Christian witness. Like generations before, it is thoughtfully and prayerfully charting a course that is responsive to the needs of the world today and tomorrow. The following Vision Statement is my personal and pastoral reflection on a strategic and tactical plan that can serve as a blueprint for First Church's future service to Atlanta and the world.

II. MISSION

The mission of the Christian Church is to be the body of Christ in the world. The life, death, teachings, ministries, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ serve as the Master Plan for creation and for the church. With Christ as the head of the church, we are charged with being the hands and feet of Christ in Atlanta and in the world....

III. MINISTRY

The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ says:

"Christ calls us into his Church to accept the costs and joy of discipleship. I believe the ministry of the church is to 'love God and one another.' This directive is drawn directly from scripture and is inscribed on the cornerstone of our new addition. Luke 10:27:

He [Jesus] answered, "'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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Christians interpret loving one's neighbor as a hallmark of faithful living. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and addressing the needs of all of God's children are foundational to our efforts to love God and one another. These core Christian values not only require us to put food in the mouths of the hungry, they also require us to *challenge* and critique the systemic reasons for hunger in our world of such great abundance. Our church is blessed with influential and caring members who can literally be the 'voice for the voiceless' in our city and in our world.

To be good Christian stewards, we must continuously assess and re-assess *how* to best serve the needs of our community. James 2:14-16 admonishes:

¹⁴What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

This passage from James 2 reminds us that the needs of the people are diverse and our ministries should speak to that diversity. One cannot tend to the spiritual matters of another without attempting to tend to all the needs of another. We have described this approach as a "holistic" approach to Christian ministry; serving the whole person mind, body, and soul. Our diverse ministries seek to address the diversity of needs of those we serve.

IV. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

From its very inception as the Storrs School, a school for freedmen, the issue of social justice has been a touchstone to the life and character of First Church. First Church began as an integrated congregation with its founding members being the former enslaved African Americans and the white missionaries who gave them religious training, social services and education. With Reconstruction and the attendant increased racial tensions the congregation became nearly all black by the 1880s.

In 1894 First Church called its first African American pastor, Henry Hugh Proctor. Under his leadership, an "institutional" ministry was developed to tend to both the congregation's needs but also the needs of the less fortunate. Outreach programs included a public lending library, a kindergarten, classes in business education and domestic science, an employment bureau, industrial classes for the blind, a public drinking fountain, a home for working girls, and a gymnasium for public recreation. This is an extraordinary list of accomplishments for First Church at the turn of the last century. These programs and ministries reflect Proctor's forward thinking and progressive approach to ministry to address the many needs of all of God's children. Again, those needs necessarily included spiritual, social, economic, educational, physical, and cultural dimensions. A part of Proctor's prophetic ministry and legacy was his effort to institutionalize programs to speak to the whole person.

In 1947, newly arrived pastor Homer McEwen was confronted with a new critical challenge that threatened the very existence of First Congregational Church of Atlanta. A group of white businessmen approached the congregation with a lucrative offer to purchase its downtown property. In exchange the church would relocate to the location of the old Oglethorpe Elementary School on Beckwith Street and change the name of the church to "Proctor Memorial Congregational Church." The name "First" would be assumed by a local white congregation. Rev. McEwen was successful in persuading the members of First Church to remain united and refused the offer to sell. The very ground on which we stand today is the

result of the visionary leadership of our forebears who understood the importance of *place* to our Christian witness. We are also heirs to the many successes and triumphs of the Civil Rights efforts of the 40's, 50s and 60s. Our present membership represents a powerful constituency of lay leaders who are leaders in our community. We are called then to honor those who have faithfully paved the way by courageously advocating for love, justice, and mercy wherever we find ourselves. Luke 12:48 reminds us: "...to whom much is given, much will be required".

In the 1990s, First Church recommitted itself to being a church that served the needs of the entire person, mind, body and soul. It also decided that it would be intentional in its efforts to reach out and connect to the community around it. The results were dramatic resulting in the AGAPE weekly feeding program for the Homeless, an Emergency Night Shelter for homeless women and children, and significant community partnerships dealing with recovering HIV persons, programs for obese youth, and arts and education programs.

I mention these three stages of First Church's history because they provide a context for understanding how the faithful in every generation of our church were confronted with challenges that became opportunities because of God's grace and the congregation's commitment to "being church" here in downtown Atlanta.

In recent years the congregation has sought to strengthen its understanding of a fully integrated life of Christian discipleship. We have developed our "Five Pillars or

Principals" of Christian Faith.

- Worship
- Prayer
- Study
- Service
- Stewardship

We believe that preaching, teaching, living, and reinforcing these Five Pillars will serve as a guide to all of our members regarding the Church's expectation of its members.

V. CONNECTING THE CHURCH'S PAST WITH ITS FUTURE

First Church has a unique opportunity to create its path into the future by carefully and prayerfully considering its past *and* its present. It must ask itself: What should a distinguished African American church be and look like in the twenty-first century? How does our witness for social justice and our advocacy for the human family, regardless of race, speak? What should be the trajectory of our Christian testimony in the new millennia? How can we offer leadership about the meaning of identity (race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation) in a way that is

liberating and not limiting? We know that W.E.B Dubois, who participated in some of the church's cultural and artistic activities, was not terribly religious, but he obviously recognized some things of value at First Church. Booker T. Washington, also a friend of Rev. Proctor, had a decidedly different perspective on the relevance of the church. Significantly, both men found avenues of participation at First Church that were meaningful and transformative. First Church will continue to be a place of welcome and hospitality to people of faith, no matter their place on the journey.

Just as arts and education were core expressions of First Congregational Church a century ago, the arts with its manifold expressions as well as education will be one of the distinguishing characteristics of our church. The revival of the 1909 Atlanta Music Festival, which brought renowned African American musicians to Atlanta and an integrated audience, now connects the church with its past in powerful ways. Equally important, the repertoire that was often racialized and placed at the margin more than a century ago is now a core expression of the entire world. The present of the Atlanta Music Festival represents racial progress in significant ways—including collaborations and performances by HBCUs and Emory University, soloists and performers of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and generous philanthropic support from local as well as national institutions and arts patrons.

VI. MY VISION

My vision for the future for First Church is that it internalizes its distinguished history by its very mission and activities. Just as the Atlanta Music Festival continues the legacy of the “All Colored Music Festival” of 1909, it re-interprets the meaning of the Festival so that music and art can continue to demonstrate racial reconciliation and new understandings of who we are as a people of faith. Thus, the current Festival points to the building of the very beloved community we seek through the shared experience creative expression.

It may be ironic, but it should come as no surprise that many of the challenges our predecessors faced more than a century ago continue to plague our city and our nation today. Decent and affordable housing, a good education, economic opportunity, a ‘just’ judicial system, support of the disabled, as well as hunger, ecological injury, and equal access to the American dream continue to be elusive for many. Like the faithful in every generation, we must discern what 21st century ministry means for us now and in the foreseeable future.

My vision for the next chapter in the life of First Church is to create both a space and a place for twenty-first century mission and ministry. First Church can and must be good stewards of God's many blessings to us. We have inherited an exceptional physical position in the heart of downtown Atlanta and Georgia State University's strategic plan and commitment to Atlanta

only strengthens our opportunity to serve as a voice and architect of the beloved community on the ground upon which we stand.

Building the Beloved Community -Cultivating a community with the intention of bringing people together. A living building complex in which space and place are thoughtfully created to serve the end—a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, economically diverse, and inclusive community that mirrors the beauty of God’s human family.

VII. TACTICAL STEPS

- Create Benchmarks and Timetables for an ongoing self-assessment of where we are in terms of our goals, strategies, and methods.
- Carefully attend to the needs of our present membership even as we prepare a table for the future members of First Church.
- As we consider membership targets, demographics, and goals, create a plan for the re-purposing and development of our land and facilities to address our strategic goal and mission of loving our neighbor (and neighborhood).
- Develop a critical assessment method of our second greatest resource--- our members and our relationships with like-minded people of good will and influence who can help us realize our goals! The human capital at First Church suggests that we have never been better prepared to affect this transformative strategic effort.
- Develop and implement immediately a more effective and efficient Communications strategy to let people know of the good work that’s going on at First Church. This includes addressing the deficiencies of our facilities. Many do not know we have completed our renovation and are back in our church. The hundreds, if not thousands, of people who drive by the church daily on Courtland Street are not given a sense of welcome or life on that side of the building. This should be addressed in 2016.
- Understand ‘church growth’ not simply as a desired target number of members but as a deepening and broadening of our own understanding of *who* we are disciples of Christ and our power and potential as the body of Christ.
- Strengthen and fortify our historic relationships with Atlanta Life, the HBCU community, the United Church of Christ as well as forge new meaningful relationships with our neighbors, Georgia State University, CARE, the City of Atlanta.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Since its modest beginnings as a school for newly freed slaves in 1867, First Church has made a significant contribution to the spiritual, social, educational quality of life for Atlanta and the world for almost one hundred and fifty years. The First Church legacy must forcefully affirm and proclaim the connection between our spiritual foundation and social justice legacy.

Christ's timeless admonition to love requires the faithful in every generation to determine what the act of love means in today's increasingly complex world. We must continue to seek new and creative ways to love; creative ways that speak to the myriad wounds and brokenness that are often hidden underneath our secular accomplishments and materialism. Now, as in every generation and every age, we must be courageous in our Christian witness. We can and *must* be the voice that speaks justice and truth to power in every setting. To embrace God's word is to be compassionate, creative, and just. This is both the challenge and opportunity of our time.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dwight D. Andrews

A MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Who are we?

The Task Group reviewed and deliberated the language of the existing First Church Mission/Vision Statement, and agreed that while it was a good statement, it did not fully express where we believe we are now in 2015-16, and more importantly, where we envision that we will want to be in the upcoming years. The data that we utilized in creating the revised (new) Mission and Vision Statement was primarily the First Church UCC existing statement created some years ago. However, in addition to that, we reviewed the Mission/Vision Statements from several other churches to create the first draft of our document. That draft was crafted around the five pillars proposed to the church by the Senior Minister, viz. Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship. The draft was then discussed and refined among our Task Group before presenting it to the full Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). During that presentation, additional input was solicited, and much of that input was then utilized and incorporated to create the second draft of the statement. Finally, supporting and relevant biblical references were included for each of the five pillars, and this was then disseminated to the entire SPC for additional input. Following that discussion, the final draft of the Mission and Vision Statement was submitted to the SPC, and was accepted.

We believe that in refining our Mission and Vision Statement that the opportunity exists to help focus our time, talents, and treasures to achieve the objectives laid out in the Statement.

Where are we going and how do we get there?

The answer to these questions is detailed within the Mission and Vision Statement included below:

I. VISION STATEMENT

To be a Christ-centered church that models the love of God, builds relationships, and empowers people of all walks of life through our creative services, discipleship, outreach, ministries, and teaching, as well as striving always to use our time, talents, and treasures to the building of the beloved community.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of First Congregational Church, UCC is to be a Christ-centered church which leads people to God through a commitment to, and the practice of our five key pillars of Worship Prayer, Study, Service, and Stewardship.

STRATEGIES

1. Worship

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made you, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:1-5

First Congregational Church, UCC will glorify God through a worship service which continually evolves to meet the spiritual needs of its inter-generational and inter-cultural membership, as well as the community.

This goal will be accomplished by continuing to monitor, evaluate, and improve the content and quality of the worship experience, empowering the leadership to continue to enhance the worship experience, instituting quality programs and musical offerings that make members and visitors feel welcome, and utilizing evolving technologies to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

2. Prayer

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:7

As we have been taught, First Congregational Church, UCC recognizes that through prayer, all things are possible. The church will continue to expand our understanding of the role of prayer in the lives of all believers.

This goal will be accomplished by continuing to emphasize the importance of prayer, and modeling behaviors and strategies which help all believers appreciate the central role of prayer in our lives, as well as expanding how we utilize and rely on regular and meaningful prayer in our daily lives.

3. Study

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 2: 2

The Church will glorify God by strengthening its commitment to existing programs for the study of God's word, and will continue to identify new strategies to reach and appeal to an ever-evolving church membership.

This goal will be accomplished by continuing to support ongoing Christian education efforts, as well as embracing technological advances that create new and innovative opportunities capable of reaching demographic populations beyond those currently being served.

4. Service

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. And the Lord will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Matthew 25: 35-36, 40

The Church will serve its members and community through the strengthening of existing programs, and the development of new programs and ministries that assess the ever-changing needs of these unique groups. The Church will actively seek to form partnerships with existing community entities implementing programs with proven efficacy and outcomes.

This goal will be accomplished by employing and educating an effective and enthusiastic volunteer force, developing and sustaining creative ministries and programs, engaging regularly with sister churches and community organizations, as well as utilizing technology effectively to implement and market these efforts.

5. Stewardship

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.
1 Peter: 4:10

First Congregational Church, UCC believes that all Christians strengthen their relationship with God through the giving of our time, talents, and treasures. We will actively expand the ways in which the congregation fellowships with each other and the community as we strive always to increase our stewardship commitments.

This goal will be accomplished by continuing to educate and encourage members to identify and commit to the numerous ways in which we can serve God through our service to the Church, our fellow members, and the community.

BENCHMARKS, TIMETABLE, AND EVALUATION

The Mission and Vision Task Group, and the larger SPC envisions that the church will need to regularly review this document and make adjustments that ensure that the church and its activities and efforts are continually aligned to meet the goals and objectives of the Statement. This could take several forms. Perhaps the easiest form would be that the Statement is revisited at the start of every year as the church is in the midst of planning its annual calendar and activities to assess in real time that the efforts are aligned towards the stated mission. This for example could take place at the first Church Council meeting of the year. Additionally, the church should endeavor to keep the Mission and Vision Statement on the forefront of the minds of all of its members. The document at a minimum should be posted on the church website, but might also be distributed at the Annual Meeting as a reminder and compass for all members.

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS TASK GROUP

Task Group Charge and Procedures

The Task Group undertook an analysis of the demographics and psychographics of the various communities within a five mile radius of First Congregational Church's location on 105 Courtland Street. The area selected was based on the frequent designation of FCC as a "downtown" church, and the changing demographics of the communities surrounding the church. This radius can either be contracted or extended, should FCC wish to understand the dynamics of either a smaller or larger area. In either case, the Task Group does not recommend review of an area less than one mile in radius or larger than 10 miles. In either of these cases, the size and numbers would make it difficult to understand the dynamics of communities nearby the church. All the statistical information reported here has been gathered for the years 2010, 2015, and projected for the year 2020.

Unlike a demographic profile, which is very quantifiable, a psychographic profile describes more of the life styles, preferences, consumer traits, and other "soft" characteristics of people who tend to congregate in areas, mostly where there are others of "their type of people" living nearby. These psychographic traits are less distinguishable by race, but may be more characterized by income to some degree. The Task Group has chosen to utilize the standard psychographic characterizations used by ESRI*, a company which specializes in providing mapping, quantifiable and quality traits of populations across the United States and the world. These psychographic profiles, called "tapestry segments" are the descriptions most widely accepted and used by demographers, marketers, economists and others.

Who are we? The Community Demographic Profile

Population

The communities within a 5-mile radius of FCC (hereinafter called "the District" or "the Community") are growing steadily, and they will continue to do so over the next five years. They are somewhat diverse – primarily consisting of whites and blacks, with a significant increase in percentage of Asian Americans (from 3.9% in 2010 to 5.6% by 2020) and Latinos holding steady at 5% of the total population, both now and into the foreseeable future. The total number of people living in the District is slightly more than 326,000 today and is predicted to grow to about 344,000 in the next five years. Interestingly enough, this population skews slightly more male (51.6%) than female (48.4%), probably due to the number of students and the increased number of professionals who have chosen to live within the District's boundaries.

This proportionality is quite different than the region at large, and it will remain steady during the next five years.

Unlike the gender skew towards males, the aging dynamic is very reflective of the region, with the single, most notable change being the increase in the numbers of people 65 and older living in the District. This is reflective of a notable pattern of retirees and seniors moving into more urban communities throughout the region and into the City of Atlanta specifically. In 2010, residents 65 years of age and older were 8.0% of the District's population. Today, that percentage has increased to 9.3% and by 2020 is expected to be 10.5%.

Households & Income

Over the ten-year period from 2010 to 2020, the total number of households in the District will increase from 139,959 to 153,794. However there are two notable trends about this household formation. First, the number of family households will decrease as a percent of total household units in the area. Whereas in 2010, families made up 39.9% of all households in the area, by 2020, that percentage will decrease to 37.8%, a two-percentage point decline. The second trend, reflecting the existence of fewer families and more singles, is the continuing decrease in the average household size: 3.03 persons/household in 2010, to 3.02 in 2015, to 3.01 by 2020.)

On the other hand, household incomes, by any measure, will be rising and rising dramatically. Median household income – meaning 50% are above and 50% are below this number – will increase from \$41,654 today to \$50,336 in 2020. Average household income – the value obtained by summing all household incomes and dividing by the total number of households (not families) – will increase from \$71,807 to \$81,762, and increase of almost 14% in just five years! Similarly, per capita income – obtained by adding all incomes and dividing by the total number of residents, including children, retirees, and unemployed people not in the workforce – will increase a dramatic 16.4% in five years from \$32,566 to \$37,903.

Currently, 33.6% of all households in the District earn less than \$25,000 per year and this will trend down to 29.4% by 2020. This large number of households at or below levels of poverty means that a significant number of households with higher wage earners are moving into or are forming in the area. Indeed, households earning between \$50,000 and \$149,999 will have the most significant increase over the next five years.

The high and increasing incomes in the District represent the presence of large number of people with higher education. Currently over 50% (50.4%) of residents in the area hold bachelor's degrees or higher. Projections for 2020 are not yet available, but with the growing numbers of companies moving into and/or starting up in the Downtown and Midtown areas

specifically, and with the increasing numbers of professionals and high income individuals choosing to move into the City of Atlanta we can anticipate that there will not likely be a decrease in the overall educational attainment within the Community.

Demographic Summary

The population of the District continues to experience steady growth, along with the number of households. However, the number of family households will decline as a percentage of new household formation. The population is and will remain primarily a white/black duality, with a small, but noticeable increase in the number of Asian Americans. This is quite unlike the region as a whole in which Asian American and Latino American (of all races) populations are growing rapidly. (Remember “Latino” or “Hispanic” is an ethnic, not racial distinction. There are Latinos/Hispanics of white, black, and Asian racial origins.) However, quite like the rest of the region, people 65+ in age are growing at a faster rate than any other group.

Also growing at dramatic rates are the household and per capita incomes of households and individuals living in the District. This growth will occur despite that fact that 30% or more of households live well below any measure of poverty, subsisting on incomes of \$25,000 per year or less. Thus the demographic data tell a tale of two districts: the very poor and the very affluent.

Psychographic Profile

Roughly 70% of the District’s residents are characterized as five (5) psychographic groups: (1) Metro Renters, (2) Emerald City, (3) City Commons, (4) Modest Income Homes, and (5) Urban Chic. Here are summary descriptions of each of these groups.

Metro Renters

Highly mobile and well educated. Tend to live alone or with single roommates in apartments. Large part of income spent on rent, clothes, computers and smart phones. Technology is their source of employment, entertainment, shopping and socialization. Metro renters like to live close to their jobs, and they are partial to public transit, biking, and taxis or ridesharing such as Uber or Lyft. Since they are well educated, they tend to value education and creativity highly. They like socializing and value social status. This group is the largest segment of District residents, numbering 35.8% of the population.

Emerald City

Emerald City residents live in urban areas, but in lower density neighborhoods. Their incomes approach the U.S. median income level; thus they live in neighborhoods with single-family

residences valued (in Atlanta) between \$150,000 and \$300,000, although many are renting their homes, rather than owning them outright. They enjoy music, art, and learning new things. They love “foodie” culture. They believe in and support environmental, green, and organic initiatives. Emerald City residents are 10.8% of the District’s residents.

City Commons

City Commons residents are largely single and single heads of households, primarily single women. They live in neighborhoods with older housing stock, mostly older, lower-rent apartments. They are less educated than the previous two cohorts, with almost one-third having dropped out of high school. Nevertheless, they prize education and are fervent about their children getting a decent education. Although they are poorer households, most still receive income from wages. Still, many receive Social Security or some other form of public assistance. They are consumers of fast food and convenience restaurants. By and large, they have to rely more on public transportation, indicative of the fact that they live largely in metropolitan centers. City Commons residents are 8.9% of First Congregational District residents.

Modest Income Homes

This segment comprises 8.7% of the District population. This group lives in poorer neighborhoods and lower income housing stock. They experience a greater level of public assistance (almost 33%), much higher unemployment (almost 50% not participating in the labor force). These consumers are more likely to favor traditional gender roles, traditional (moral) values, and engage in traditional religious practices. They favor television for their prime entertainment and information, and they tend to support products endorsed by celebrities.

Urban Chic

Urban Chic consumers are characterized by more educated, more sophisticated households. More than 50% of these households are married-couple families; 30% are singles. Two-thirds of these households live in owner-occupied, mostly single-family housing. These consumers are well educated with over 60% having bachelor’s degrees or higher. They tend to experience unemployment rates below 5%. They hold managerial, technical, and professional jobs. They are tech-savvy, environmentally aware, and many of them follow “green” lifestyles. This group represents 7.5% of the District’s population.

Psychographic Summary

Altogether, these five consumer groups constitute 71.2% of the population of residents in the District of interest for First Congregation. The first two, Metro Renters and Emerald City residents are largely single, apartment dwellers, with high levels of education. Mostly young, they both value art, music, education, and are very tech savvy and connected. Whereas the

Metro Renters have to spend a lot of their incomes on rent, clothes and tech gear (smart phones, laptops, etc.), the Emerald City consumers have higher incomes, live in higher rent apartments or rented, single family houses, and get a lot of enjoyment from “foodie” culture. These two groups are about 47% (46.6%) of all residents living within a five-mile radius of First Congregational.

The next two groups of consumers, City Commons and Modest Incomes Homes, constitute slightly less than 20% (17.6%) of all residents in the District. They are largely single-parent households, mostly led by women; they are younger; they have larger household sizes, and many may be multi-generation households (especially among the Modest Income Homes group.) They are poorer, less educated, experience higher rates of unemployment and public assistance. Modest Income Homes residents are particularly more rooted in traditional values, tradition religious practices, and traditional gender roles. They rely more on the television for entertainment and are more attracted to products and services receiving celebrity endorsements.

The last of the five consumer groups only constitutes 7.5% of the District’s residents. However, they will have a lot of influence in community affairs based on higher incomes, higher levels of education, and being employed in managerial, technical and professional jobs. They are largely married-couple households, are environmentally aware, and are avid readers and movie attendees.

Where are we going?/How do we get there?

It is important to reiterate here that the demographic analysis of the five mile area surrounding FCC is composed of the highly affluent and the very poor. This community profile consisting of lower-income households (30%) and an increasing senior population with varying needs, clearly represents an opportunity to offer Outreach Services and Programs within the surrounding communities. The community demographic profile by race (42% White and 48%) as compared to the historic profile of the church membership clearly raises the question, however, about the kind of church we want to be.

The Task Group believes this data to be critical to the strategic planning process of First Church, and believes that the impact of this data has greater reach within the development of Outreach and Ministry within the church. Thus, the decision as to what “kind of church we want to be,” and “who we chose to serve,” must be a decision made by the congregation.

REPORT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS TASK GROUP

WHO ARE WE?

In order to plan effectively for the future of First Congregational Church, the Strategic Planning Committee felt it essential to understand as thoroughly as possible the current demographic make-up of the church. To this end, the Congregational Demographics Task Group sought to gain information about membership demographics.

Methodology

For Phase 1 of the demographic analysis survey cards were distributed to members attending worship services on February 22 and February 29, 2015. Approximately 149 cards were collected and collated, then entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. Data collected included ages, marital status, and length of membership, number of children and ages of children. Although gender was not captured in the survey the gender of members and children is known and was added after cards were collected. The resulting data are presented in Appendix C.

Phase 2 of this process attempted to identify “missing” members through phone calls to confirm their status and to promote a return to full participation. A survey to complete the demographic profile of First Church is pending and should be completed early in 2016.

Phase 1 -The demographic data

At the onset of the demographic analysis, the Task Group examined an existing list of members of FCC. That list totaled 668 names. Data collected during Phase 1 of the demographic analysis represents approximately 22.5% of the persons on that list.

The Phase 1 survey produced the following demographic information.

1. The membership of First Church is 53% female and 45% male, with an age distribution that peaks in the 61-70 year old range at almost 35% of members.
2. The next largest demographic age group is composed of 71-80 year olds, who represent approximately 25% of the individuals surveyed.
3. The ages least represented are the 23-27 year olds, which is likely not atypical for churches in general.
4. Likewise, the 13-18, 19-22 and 36-45 year olds each make up less than 15% of the survey total.
5. Fully 30% of the married couples at FCC are between 65 and 74 years old.

6. Married couples in the 23-33 and 34-44 year age ranges, those in typical child bearing, or adopting years are respectively 3.1% and 9.5% of the First Church membership.

Phase 2

The second phase of the demographic study of the FCC UCC congregation included a review of the membership rolls as a basis for determining the accuracy of the existing membership roster. This analysis determined that a number of members listed as active have not recently been participants in worship services or in FCC activities.

A survey to determine the accurate number of members and the demographic make-up of that membership is currently underway.

WHERE ARE WE GOING? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Any church is only as robust as the long-term participation of its members. First Congregational Church has withstood and stood with many changing times in its 148 year history. As the neighborhood closest to the church takes on the character of a college community, we are positioned to be the resting and nesting place for the transient and spiritually hungry college-age youth. We can easily become the surrogate church home for Georgia State University students.

As critical as that position is, our demographic profile suggests that the position of surrogate church home is insufficient to the task of sustaining our congregation. The SPC thus believes that the FCC Strategic Plan must consider strategies and tactics to enhance the involvement of families and children and youth. Such a strategy supports the church's outreach to the short term and transient involvement of the college-age community that surrounds FCC UCC and positions us as a surrogate-family that nourishes the spiritual growth of the GSU, Spelman and Morehouse students while also growing the family-spirit that is much of the First Church legacy.

A brief review of the data in Appendix D demonstrates an aging membership with diminishing numbers of young families, and families with young children. As a strategic approach to long-term ministries and impact, FCC UCC should consider the following strategies:

- Develop a stronger child and youth ministry that promotes spiritual and social cohesion of middle school and high school youth around their spiritual life in First Church, and service to the congregation. An Assistant Minister dedicated to youth ministry will help to address this issue;

- *“Marketing”* that specifically focuses on increasing the participation of existing “young families” through ministries that foster spiritual and emotional investment in the long term success of the church body through age-specific five pillar activities;
- Intentional inter-generational five pillar opportunities to bridge the gap between Sunday School and 11 o’clock worship;
- Create intentional support ministries for seniors. It may be possible to use FCC ministers who are members of the congregation to assist with this ministry.

BENCHMARKS

The major indicator of the success of any strategies and tactics FCC might adopt in a demographic context would be the significant growth of the church membership, particularly the addition of new families to First Church. It is important to note that such growth, while desirable in terms of the human and fiscal needs of the church, is of primary importance as a reflection of the roll of First Church in the nourishment of the soul and in recruiting disciples of Christ.

REPORT OF THE POLITY AND ADMINISTRATION TASK GROUP

The Polity and Administration Task Group (PATG) was charged with assessing the present polity and administrative structures of First Church, both in terms of its clerical and its lay structures. It sought to determine whether any modifications to the present polity and organization should be recommended.

The method of the PATG was to consider information gathered from the SPC meetings, reports from the various other Task Groups, and from discussions with the Senior Minister who was also a member of this Task Group. The conclusions reached by the PATG were based on several factors including:

- A study of the history of First Congregational Church
- A comparative analysis of the Church's past and present
- Meetings with the Pastor and other ordained clergy members
- A study of the Church's financial records
- A ministerial needs assessment
- A assets assessment of clergy

Who are we? - Governance

First Congregational Church is a member church of the United Church of Christ. The UCC has roots in the "covenantal" tradition-meaning there is no centralized authority or hierarchy that can impose any doctrine or form of worship on its members. The UCC therefore receives the historic creeds and confessions of our ancestors "as testimonies, but not tests of faith." [See www.UCC.org]

Christ is the sole head of the church and our faith tradition takes seriously the concept of the "priesthood of all believers." Within the local church, the Pastor is the spiritual, theological and worship leader of the congregation. He or she works in partnership with the congregation to be the 'body of Christ in the world'.

As First Congregational Church's polity is one of independence and autonomy, it is internally governed by the will of the membership. The Church's actions are set and overseen by its Church Council. The Church Moderator, elected by the congregation, serves as the head of the Church Council. The Council, in turn, is comprised of three individuals elected at-large, and the presidents, chairpersons or designated representatives of each auxiliary, board, committee and club of the Church. This representative assembly (the ABCCs) thereby represents the congregation and is constitutionally charged with coordinating and facilitating the plans and activities of all ABCCs and officers of the Church.

From assisting in the execution of the Church's strategic plan to planning special events, the members of The Council have a responsibility to the constituents they represent and to the Church as a whole. The expectation of the Council members is that they will take the lead to ensure that programs align with our Church's mission and vision, that they provide constructive input to the minister and leaders of the Church, and that they ensure that there are accurate and comprehensive documents and records of the church.

The Council does an exemplary job of ensuring that the church's programs align with our Church's mission and vision of itself. With the advantage of engaging leadership from the entire congregation, the Council encourages and facilitates First Church's legacy as a leader in arts and education. The Council also assists the church in its efforts to develop community partnerships and connect segments of the Atlanta community that might otherwise remain isolated or even neglected. The Council plays a major role in program and calendar development to support the church's commitment to its five key pillars of Christian discipleship. The pillars are Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship.

The Council meets monthly to consider the progress and priorities of the congregation. It offers constructive input to the minister and lay leadership as well as vets new ideas and suggestions for ministry in collaboration with the Senior Minister.

A major area of challenge for the church as well as the Council is record keeping. As the primary matrix for decision-making on behalf of the congregation, it is imperative that the Council have access to the documents and records of the ABCCs. This helps the Council build on the collective wisdom of its predecessors and minimizes re-inventing the wheel with each new generation of leadership. Although many of our ABCCs have a secretary, recording secretary or note taker, the organizations are not consistent in keeping meeting minutes or notes. Better record-keeping throughout the entire organization of First Church will strengthen its effectiveness, allow for realistic benchmarks for self-assessments and foster a deeper appreciation for the efforts of those who came before us and upon whose shoulders we stand.

In addition to the Church Council, the Church Constitution provides for seven discrete Boards; The Board of Trustees, The Diaconate Board, the Board of Christian Education, the Usher Board, the Board of Missions, several Standing Committees, and Church Officers. The Church Officers include the Senior Minister, Assistant/Associate Minister(s), Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Church Attorney, Assistant Church Attorney, Church School Superintendent, and Assistant Church School Superintendent. The Constitution also provides for the creation of Ad Hoc committees as needed and determined by the Membership. This organizational structure seems adequate and suits the present needs of the Church's ministry.

The SPC will review the functions of the Board of Trustees and the Diaconate in a subsequent meeting.

With regard to the ministerial administration of the church, First Church has an opportunity to address some of its challenges through its present and future efforts to act tactically about its priorities. The church is presently searching for an Assistant/Associate Minister. The major responsibilities of the new minister will be Christian Education and Family Ministry. The Senior Minister has indicated an interest in expanding (over time) the number and areas of specialty of at least three additional Assistant or Associate Ministers. In addition to the current search for a Minister of Family Ministry, the three new positions would be:

- A Minister for Pastoral Care and Counseling
- A Minister of Program Administration, Grants Management & Outreach
- A Minister of Geriatrics

A second thrust with immediate impact is the intention of connecting each of our ordained clergy to a church board or organization. This effort allows First Church to maximize the valued leadership its clergy can provide to boards that would appreciate an experienced “nurturing pastor.” Several clergy have expressed an interest in participating in this effort.

Our proximity to a growing community of college students represents another opportunity for service and nurture. The membership is extremely interested in developing a College Ministry. In our preliminary conversations with students from Georgia State University, The membership recognizes that the students’ needs and interests will require the church to be intentional, and even different in its behavior, in order to attract students and to minister them.

A final area of concern is the intensifying need of our senior members and those who care for them. We have several members suffering from dementia and the toll of caretaking a loved one can seem daunting if not impossible. The church, its clergy and help professionals must come together to develop support mechanism for these families. Here the clergy can also be on the leading edge of such efforts.

Where are we going? How do we get there - RECOMMENDATIONS

Administratively, all ABCCs should continue to be reminded to provide their rosters and meeting minutes to the Church’s Secretary or Church Administrator.

An existing Council member (Church Secretary, Assistant Church Secretary or Church Historian) should be made responsible for contacting ABCCs at regular intervals as needed to secure their records.

All Church records should be kept in an electronic searchable format.

FCC should make better use of the clergy/members of First Church. FCC should consider aspects of visitation, counseling, preaching, team teaching, and group (ABCC) mentoring as opportunities that can readily be incorporated into our present church life.

FCC clergy should be encouraged to meet regularly and form a cohesive team.

We have discovered the power of social media to connect with our membership, young and old. Streaming our Weekly Worship Service has been well received. This activity should be continued and expanded.

The Church Council should periodically review the function of the FCC ABCCs. That review might utilize the criteria listed below for creating new ministries and programs as a starting point for that review. Based on these reviews the Church Council should make recommendations to the ABCCs for strengthening their ministries and programs.

It is clear that the Board of Trustees has responsibilities that connect to but extend beyond those described in the current FCC Constitution. For example, the Board has an important role to play in the area of FCC Stewardship. The Board should work with the Church Council and the Senior Minister to develop recommendations for revision of the Constitution to more accurately reflect the current and projected roles of the Trustees.

REPORT OF THE OUTREACH AND MINISTRY TASK GROUP

The Task Group Charge:

The charge of the Outreach and Ministry Task Group (the OMTG) was to develop recommendations as to how we build strong outreach, in-reach, and ministry programs for First Church. The execution of our charge necessitated the analysis of existing programs and ministries, viz. the ABCCs, auxiliaries, boards, committees and clubs.

Who are we? Resources and the FCC Environment

The OMTG met periodically to assess our approach and to develop a plan for accomplishing our charge. We began by reviewing the 2013 FIRST CHURCH ABCC DIRECTORY.

The following observations were made:

- The directory was a viable information vehicle for the church and church membership, however, much of the information in that document is outdated.
- While the directory reflects a listing and description of all of the Constitutional Boards/Committees, Auxiliary Boards/Committees/Clubs, and Church Ministries, it was noted that some of the groups have not been as formally active and/or structured as in the past. Of significant concern was the lack of guidance and formal structure for the Mission Board.
- Despite the foregoing deficiencies and although the directory was created in 2013, it still represents a useful overview of all of the groups within the church. The directory should become an ongoing/updated published document available to the current and future membership and should be placed on the FCC website.
- While the listings in the Directory reflect the structural relationships of the organizations and groups to the church, they do not necessarily reflect the ministerial or pastoral care relationships to the church or relationships to the church's mission and purpose. Nor do the existing documents provide any presentation of program outcomes that accrue to the church as a result of ABCC activities.
- THE OMTG also recognized that while the Directory exists, there needs to be a dedicated effort to promote the Church and its program efforts with a fully developed communications campaign that incorporates a synergistic and cohesive approach to building awareness and promoting the successes of First Church and its Outreach and Ministry activities.

Where Are We Going?

The overarching recommendation of the OMTG is that the entire church membership become participants in the Outreach and Ministry activities of the church, both internally and externally. FCC should develop mechanisms to assist its members in identifying opportunities for service and ministry that connect with their particular passions and commitment.

The OMTG wants each of the ABCCs to define itself in terms of a Christ-centered ministry of First Church through the adoption of the five spiritual pillars promulgated by our Senior Minister, viz. Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship, as the guiding principles for Outreach and Ministry beginning in 2016 at First Congregational Church.

In addition, the Task Group recommends that marketing/communications/media efforts be developed to further promote the programs and successes of the ABCCs following the development of the new ABCC profiles.

How Do We Get There?

The OMTG will formalize guidelines for use by each of the ABCCs of the Church. Those guidelines will detail how we identify, describe, plan for, promote, and strive to build stronger, more viable groups to support and/or demonstrate the overall mission and ministry of the church. The exercise will be designed to foster greater cohesion and greater understanding among the membership of how and why each has been called to “ministry.”

After approval by the Church Council, the OMTG (or other designated implementation entity) will distribute a formal request to the ABCCs to use the guidelines for redefining the goals, mission, purpose and activities of each group.

Groups will be asked to provide the following information, using descriptions reflective of a ministerial or pastoral care approach.

- 1. The name of the organization**
- 2. Contact information for leadership and membership**
- 3. Church and/or community program population demographics** - i.e. what constituencies are or will be served, identification of constituencies in terms of whether participants or internal or external to FCC, race, age, gender, income, etc.
- 4. Program, service or mission strategy** – The information supplied should include selection of specific strategies based on the five spiritual pillars, identification of specific goals and objectives for the target audience, reach frequency and desired outcomes of

the ministry. This information should be provided not only for the ministry as a whole but for its specific component activities as well.

5. **Human Resources needed** – Information provided here should include possible collaborations both inside and outside of FCC, possible external partnerships, ministerial support, support by ABCC and FCC members, communications/media support, etc.
6. **Fiscal resources required/program costs.**
7. **A plan for annual assessment of outcomes by project or activity**

It was the initial intent of the OMTG to ask each ABCC to review its previous input from the 2013 ABCC Directory and to reassess that input given the new guidelines we would promulgate. Given the Community Demographic Task Force recommendation that the church come to terms with “Who We Are?” and “Who Do We Want to Serve?” the OMTG recommends delaying this assessment until the church considers and agrees on demographic targets for membership and outreach.

The OMTG Task Group also recommends that each group begin now to think in terms of annual goals and accomplishments.

The SPC recognizes that there are many significant health challenges that face the FCC membership and the black community more generally. The committee recommends the rejuvenation of the FCC Health Committee so that these issues can be treated in a systematic rather than an *ad hoc* fashion as they affect FCC. The reinvigoration of that committee should lead to a concrete definition of health goals and objectives for the congregation.

Benchmarks, Timetable and Evaluation

The OMTG recommends that each ABCC establish annual benchmarks and timetables for reviewing established goals and objectives and for updating and modifying goals/objectives as appropriate. Upon submission and completion of initial Program/Project plans, an appropriate committee, e.g. the Church Council or a Strategic Plan Implementation Committee will review those plans and recommend their approval or modification. While we recognize that many groups are mandated by the constitution and/or represent historic entities within the church, it is necessary to determine how human and fiscal resources are utilized by FCC and to determine the best mix of church programs and ministries to maximize overall success and the outcomes of mission and ministry for FCC as we seek to become the body of Christ.

The Senior Minister’s Vision Statement reminds us of the many challenges facing FCC, Atlanta and the world. These include, to name just a few, hunger, homelessness, poverty, racial

injustice, literacy and illiteracy. We anticipate that there will be myriad opportunities for FCC to develop programs and ministries to address at least some of these issues. We feel further that such initiatives should be instigated by the congregation rather than by the OMTG or the SPC.

Finally, we note that the OMTG recommends a set of criteria for FCC to use in the evaluation of proposals for new programs and ministries. Those criteria can be found in the Connections, Recommendations and Next Steps section of this plan.

SPACE, DEVELOPMENT AND PARKING FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Charge to the Task Group

The Space, Parking, & Development Task Group (SPDTG) was charged to assess the current and anticipated space needs of the church. Our group was also asked to look at both the short-term and long-term parking needs of the church. Finally, the committee was charged to study the feasibility of possible development plans/scenarios that would complement current church land uses and help underwrite the cost of any new facilities on the FCC campus.

The SPDTG report is attached to this summary page. The report includes an assessment of FCC's existing facilities and a look at its future space needs. Rev. Andrew's vision for a "Bridge" Facility, a Multi-Generational Service Center, provides additional multi-purpose meeting rooms, classrooms, and activity spaces that can be used by the church as well as rented to the public. The report suggests two potential locations for a structured parking deck to meet the long-term parking needs of the church and transient users during the work week.

The Task Group compiled three case studies of urban churches involved with re-development projects. In each case, the church sought to leverage its real estate through a partnership with private developers to gain funds to renovate and upgrade their existing structures. Those case studies are presented in Appendix E.

The SPDTG also looked at the current zoning for the church's two land parcels. Both parcels are included within the SPI-1 Downtown District. The zoning encourages mixed-use development, an enriched sidewalk experience, pedestrian friendly amenities, street-level retail, architectural guidelines for parking structures, and guidelines for protecting the historic resources of downtown Atlanta. FCC's corner parcel at 105 Courtland Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A development checklist from the Midtown Alliance, is also included as a reference document for future planning studies (Appendix E).

Who are we?

First Congregational Church, UCC of Atlanta is an urban congregation located on the same city block for all of its 148 year history. The newly gathered congregation in 1867 was initially affiliated with Storrs School, a recently established normal school for the former enslaved African Americans and their descendants, located at the corner of Houston Street and Piedmont Avenue. Later, the congregation with the assistance of the American Missionary Association moved to the opposite corner of Houston Street and Courtland in 1877. The congregation has been rooted at this downtown location ever since. We still worship in the historic church structure built in 1908 and are firmly committed to an Institutional Church to serve the religious, cultural, and educational expressions of all Atlantans.

Where are we going (*Recommendations*)

General Recommendation: Create an Ad Hoc Committee in 2016 to continue working on the specific recommendations listed below:

1. Refine the proposed program spaces for a new FCC facility to be located in the parking lot facing J. W. Dobbs Avenue. Develop a concept design for the proposed facility, prepare an estimate for the total project budget, and conduct a feasibility study for financing the project. FCC is presently space challenged and needs additional space. The proposed program calls for approximately 29,000 sq. feet of mixed-use spaces including educational, conference and meeting, wellness, daycare for youth and seniors that is connected to the east wing of the church structure.
2. Conduct a parking inventory of the neighborhood to determine market demand for additional off-street parking during the regular week, Monday – Saturday. Engage the firm of Carl Walker, Inc., a parking and planning consultant to perform the inventory study.
3. Evaluate the best location for a structured parking deck to provide approximately 250 spaces for FCC on the weekends, special events, and other church related functions.
4. Evaluate the pros and cons of a long-term land lease, or parking easement, or other legal structures to permit a parking structure to be erected on the FCC property without selling the land underneath.
5. Proceed with contacting interested developers to serve as a development partner for a mid-rise, student housing development for graduate and upper class students attending Georgia State University, and other metropolitan Atlanta colleges and universities.
6. Continue discussions with key officials with Georgia State University, including the University Housing Office, to determine the optimal quantity and mix of student housing units.
7. Contact Benenson Capital in New York City to ascertain their interest to include 143 Courtland Street in the proposed development. Also contact CAREUSA regarding their willingness to sell the small park that adjoins The Commons at 125 Ellis. Both parcels when combined with the FCC frontage on Ellis Street increased the attractiveness of a student housing development and a multi-level parking structure.
8. Continue evaluating the preferred location for the proposed housing tower along Ellis Street and devise a physical master plan illustrating the development.
9. Put into writing FCC's motivation for participating in the proposed development, listing key reasons for involving the church in the project.

10. Devise a time line and planning budget that outlines the anticipated upfront costs to be borne by FCC. Submit the schedule and budget to the Church Council and Board of Trustees by the 2016 Summer Quarterly Meeting.

The recommendations above are based on the documented ongoing needs of the burgeoning GSU campus for student housing. As an alternative approach, the SPDTG is ready to conduct a more detailed planning study regarding the feasibility of a proposed mixed-use development on the FCC properties, utilizing the services of a professional planning and real estate advisory firm. The outcome of such a planning study would be a campus master plan and rendering of the proposed development.

How Do We Get There (*Implementing the Recommendations*)

The adoption of the FCC Strategic Plan by the Congregation and its operating boards will mean that the SPDTG has on-going work to do in 2016 and beyond, viz. implementation of the foregoing recommendations.

Benchmarks, Timetables and Evaluation (*Means and Methods*)

Post-adoption of the overall FCC Strategic Plan will mean the on-going involvement by the SPDTG. Moving ahead with a major development in downtown will be a long-term project over the next five to eight years. Bi-annual assessment and update of the proposed development plans will be helpful to keep the committee focused on a development plan that is relevant to changing market conditions, the evolving macro-business cycle, and sensitive to FCC's space needs.

Comprehensive Report of the Space, Parking & Development Task Group

The Space, Parking & Development Task Group (SPDTG) presents the report below to the Strategic Planning Committee. The report consists of the following sections:

- Existing Facilities owned and used by FCC
- Current Space Challenges & Future Space Needs
- Existing Parking Demand & Future Parking Capacity
- Future Development Options
- Examples of Churches partnering with Private Developers

Existing Facilities

First Congregational Church, UCC currently occupies three structures connected together on the corner of Courtland Street and JW Dobbs Drive in downtown Atlanta. The historic structure which contains a fellowship hall and classrooms on the first floor, and the sanctuary, narthex, chancel areas on the upper floor was built in 1908 and occupied in early 1909. The Herndon Tower, a three-story addition that includes an elevator, new toilets, offices and meeting space, was finished in June of 1991. The East Wing which contains church offices, meeting rooms, a choir rehearsal room, and new kitchen, was completed in late 2011, and occupied early in January of 2012. The three structures located at 105 Courtland contain approximately 25,300 sq. ft. of usable space. FCC also uses The Commons as a parish house and event space for church use and for rental. The one-story building, located at 125 Ellis Street, contains approximately 9,000 sq. ft. of space. In total, FCC occupies approximately 34,300 sq. ft. of usable space.

In 2000, when FCC began planning for the renovation and expansion project that was completed in 2011, the space program called for a doubling of the existing 17,000 sq. ft. Through the acquisition of The Commons and construction of the East Wing, FCC was able to realize the space projected in the 2000 campus master plan.

Future Space Needs

In June of 2015, Arthur Clement, convener of the SPDTG, met with Rev. Andrews and Miriam Denard to discuss current and future space needs. Rev. Andrews stated that FCC was “space-challenged” at the present time. Saturdays and Sundays have become the busiest days of the week involving meetings of church boards, clubs, and auxiliaries. Because so many members of the church now live afar, the weekends have become the preferred time for members to meet, practice, worship, and fellowship together. Rev. Andrews also noted that every room in the

church is occupied on Sunday morning before worship services. He recommended that the Task Group study the “Peek of the Week” calendar that appears in the Sunday bulletin for more information about the frequency and type of meetings occurring either weekly or monthly at the church (Peek of the Week calendar in Appendix E).

The Commons at 125 Ellis is increasingly rented to outside, community groups looking for a centrally located meeting space in the downtown area. Rev. Andrews noted this as a positive trend, but the space at The Commons is now less available for church functions. Also, the change in elevation and distance in travel between The Commons and the main church structure, make it difficult to integrate programs and functions in both places concurrently.

Rev. Andrews summed-up the current space challenges as follows:

More meeting spaces – Both a large room holding between 30 – 50 persons, and several, smaller rooms holding between 10 -15 persons are needed.

A second music rehearsal space – If two or more choirs or musical groups are on the program for Sunday worship services, practice space is at a premium in the morning before the 11 am worship service.

Another large, multi-purpose space would be desirable to help off-load the demand for either the fellowship hall on the ground floor, or the larger, multi-purpose space in The Commons - There are often concurrent requests for both large meeting rooms, such as Monday evening, when three groups are meeting at the same time - Church Council, Monday evening Bible study, and the NAE orchestra.

Rev. Andrews and Art Clement held a second meeting in July to review a space program developed in 2009 by architectural students at Tuskegee University. The students spent a portion of their architectural studio designing a mixed-use facility for the FCC campus. Rev. Andrews met with the students on several occasions and created a vision for a “Bridge” facility that served the multi-generational needs of a diverse constituency of students, young adults, families with small children, older adults, and seniors. In addition, the mixed-use project included a housing tower and a multi-level parking structure.

Many of the programmatic spaces identified in the “Bridge” facility overlapped some of the current space needs of FCC. Thus, Art Clement adapted portions of the space program from the “Bridge” facility to include the current space deficiencies listed above by Rev. Andrews. The result is an updated space program shown at the end of this report (Appendix E).

Approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of new space is described in the proposed space program. The SPDTG has approved this space program and recommends adoption by the full SPC.

Existing Parking

Most parishioners use the main parking lot off JW Dobbs Avenue. The main lot has 61 parking spaces. Four spaces are permanently designated as handicapped accessible. On Sundays, additional spaces are temporarily designated as handicapped spaces to accommodate the requests of particular members. At The Commons, a maximum of eight parking spaces are located in the front, including three designated handicapped accessible spaces. In the rear of the building, thirteen parking spaces are available. FCC has 82 parking spaces in total on its campus, of which seven are marked as handicapped accessible.

On Sundays during worship service, FCC has secured an additional 133 parking spaces for members to use. The city public works department has permitted FCC members to park along both sides of JW Dobbs Avenue provided a police officer is on duty to direct traffic. Thirty-one cars can be parked along both sides of JW Dobbs Avenue between Courtland Street and Piedmont Avenue. The owners of MSME Architects have permitted church members to use their parking lot directly across from the church. The lot has twenty-eight spaces. The Dialysis Clinic parking lot is also available for church use and can be entered off JW Dobbs Avenue. The lot has twenty-one parking spaces. CARE USA has agreed for church members to use the ground level of their parking deck off Piedmont Avenue. The first level contains fifty-three parking spaces. Therefore, FCC members can use a total of 215 parking spaces on Sunday mornings.

Future Parking

In May of 2015, Rev. Andrews and several members of the SPC met with Robert McConnell, PE, of Carl Walker, Inc. one of the leading planning and parking consultants in the country. Carl Walker completed an earlier parking study for FCC back in 2004. Mr. McConnell agreed to meet with the FCC group at no charge. He discussed two possible options for locating a multi-level parking structure on church property (See attached site plan in Appendix E). One location was toward the rear of the main parking lot adjacent to the green space behind the East Wing. The other location was at 125 Ellis Street. Mr. McConnell explained that an optimal configuration for the layout of the parking deck can help make the structure efficient to build and more efficient to operate. Based upon his preliminary analysis, the Ellis Street location provided a more optimal layout. If the adjoining open park next to the CARE USA building could be acquired at 127 Ellis, this additional land would provide the best configuration for structured parking, with ingress and egress to and from both JW Dobbs Avenue and Ellis Street. There is also the potential benefit under the larger configuration of constructing a podium structure that would permit a future housing development on top of the parking deck.

Carl Walker is available to come back and assist the SPC when they are further along in the planning process. The first step will be to conduct a parking demand study of the surrounding

neighborhood to determine if a large parking deck is economically feasible. Although FCC has a need for more parking on weekends, the parking structure must be used during the week to cover its operational expenses.

Future Development

FCC is blessed to be situated in the heart of the residential campus of Georgia State University. Four large residence halls are located within one to three blocks from the church. Georgia State is currently building a fifth residence hall directly across from FCC. Georgia State's enrollment is projected to rise above 40,000 students by 2020. There are approximately 5,000 student beds operated by the university on the main campus. The university has the potential to increase its housing inventory up to 16,000 beds. Georgia State is currently below the recommended parameter for state universities of providing an inventory of on-campus, student beds between 25% – 40% of its enrollment. As a result, a strong development opportunity exists for FCC to build a student housing development in a high-rise configuration within its campus footprint.

FCC has outstanding a \$3.2 million indebtedness from the last building renovation and expansion project. Approximately 26% of the total church budget is devoted to repaying that mortgage. FCC is not in a financial position, therefore, to incur more debt to build a 30,000 sq. ft. addition, which could cost between seven to nine million dollars. Church members are still paying their pledges from the New Century Capital Campaign in 2011-2012.

Many other downtown churches are in a similar position to FCC Atlanta. They are struggling to update their facilities to meet new demands, and yet they are sitting on prime real estate that has tremendous development potential. FCC could, for example, form a partnership with a private developer who agrees to underwrite the cost of the church's new facility in exchange for the air-rights to build above that facility. One of the most successful such development partnerships occurred in Washington, DC. The historic First Congregational Church of Washington, DC joined forces with a private developer to construct a new church structure and for the developer to build an office tower above.

In Atlanta, multiple examples exist of urban churches exploiting the development potential of their current locations. The Druid Hills Baptist Church on Ponce de Leon has partnered with a private developer and broke ground on a mixed-use development on the church's former parking lot. Proceeds from the development will help the church renovate its aging physical plant. Grace United Methodist Church (UMC) recently sold its building and property at the corner of Charles Allen Drive and Ponce de Leon Avenue to the UMC Global Ministries, which has relocated from New York City to Atlanta. Global Ministries will renovate the former educational wings of Grace UMC as their new home office. Grace and Global Ministries will share the worship center and other common spaces. On a smaller scale, All Saints Episcopal

Church has re-developed the city block it controls between North Avenue, West Peachtree, Ponce de Leon Avenue, and Spring Streets into a mixture of income-producing buildings that house programs which are compatible with the church's mission and vision. All Saints leases the two top floors of its building above the corner parking structure off Ponce de Leon Avenue and Spring Street to Bright Horizons, a childcare provider, which operates the school and daycare facility. All Saints rents its main parish house to outside non-profits needing a convenient place to meet in downtown Atlanta with adjacent parking. Big Bethel AME Church recently announced a \$120 million development in conjunction with three developers. More detail is provided in the case studies in Appendix E.

Looking ahead, FCC may need to engage a professional planning and real estate consultant to help assess what is feasible on its campus given current zoning regulations and market demands. Particular attention will be given to graduate student housing and for office space oriented toward smaller tenants, under 7,500 sq. ft. FCC will also need to assess how large a new development is required so that the proposed "Bridge" facility can also be underwritten by the new development. The proposed 30,000 sq. ft. facility listed in the current space program may prove to be too costly, and as a result, the scope of the facility may be downsized. Working at a conceptual level, a planning consultant would begin to model how FCC might structure a development partnership with a private developer, the goal being to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome – more space for the church and an economically feasible project for the private developer.

See Appendix E for:

- FCC "Peek of the Week" calendar for the week of July 19 – 25, 2015
- FCC Space Summary as of 6-7-2015
- FCC Parking Capacity as of 6-7-2015
- Proposed Space Program for "Bridge" Facility – A Multi-Generational Service Center
- Church site plan showing the two options for a new parking structure
- Case Studies of Three Urban Churches Partnering with Private Developers
- City of Atlanta Zoning Map & Requirements for Parcels in the SPI-1 Downtown District

REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE/TASK GROUP

The Task Group Charge:

Our charge was simply to develop a strong, sustainable stewardship program for First Congregational Church. We note again that the Stewardship Committee functions both as an organ of First Church and as a Task Group for the Strategic Planning Committee.

Who are we? Resources and the FCC Environment

The Stewardship Committee/Task Group (the SC/TG) evaluated the charge it was given and discussed past stewardship efforts and options for more successful efforts. Our resources utilized were primarily the experience and knowledge of the SC/TG members and included experiences at both First Church and other churches. Additionally, the SC/TG reviewed FCC giving data for six months of 2013. The SC/TG also reviewed the Stewardship Committee book produced in 2009. We engaged in a great deal of discussion regarding member reactions to the 2009 booklet.

What the SC/TG learned from our discussion and the review of data is that the members of First Church are not robust givers, either in number of members giving or in amounts given by those who are giving. The SC/TG's view became that there was room for vast improvement in member giving. It became clear, however, that the challenge is creating an atmosphere in which members developed an actual desire to give to their church. In evaluating the need to develop the spirit of giving we determined that fundamentally lacking at First Church were strong relationships. In evaluating what we meant by the absence of relationships we looked at relationships between and among members; relationship between members and the ministers; relationships between members and First Church boards and committees and activity groups; relationships between church families with similar age demographics; relationships among affinity groups. We determined that this list of "missing" relationships was unfortunately quite large. The assessment of missing relationships presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is for FCC members to become involved with and support people that they like. It is the same concept of business development. People do business with people with whom they feel comfortable and are more than casual acquaintances. We determined that many members would welcome opportunities to get to know each other better and to establish more meaningful relationships.

The SC/TG feels strongly that this presents a real opportunity for us. In some ways we are building from scratch, a blank slate. The SC/TG has set out to build a totally new and different approach to stewardship at First Congregational Church.

Where Are We Going?

The overarching recommendation of the SC/TG is to engage the entire church in stewardship. More specifically, the SC/TG wants a church membership that thinks of stewardship in the broadest of terms and thinks about stewardship as a fundamental responsibility of every church member. We have adopted the five pillars of Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship as the guiding principles of Stewardship 2016 at First Congregational. In summary, the SC/TG's recommendation is to have the five pillars adopted as our mantra to guide stewardship in each area and to build new and lasting relationships throughout the church membership and ministers. (The "SC/TG Goals").

How Do We Get There?

The SC/TG has developed a set of activities to achieve the SC/TG Goals. The activities are designed to foster an atmosphere in which everyone is committed to stewardship and there are multiple opportunities to build church-based relationships.

- Stewardship Sunday - This regular Sunday worship service is designed to focus the congregation on the existence of stewardship as an integral part of the entire church experience. In 2015 Stewardship Sunday was particularly important to announce a new approach to stewardship based on the five pillars and to present the idea that every member of the congregation is needed to embrace this concept of stewardship for a new robust stewardship program.
- Stewardship Spiritual Exploration – Members will be asked to attend a session with Rev. Andrews at which he discusses the five spiritual pillars and the concept of stewardship.
- Stewardship Booklet – The booklet will speak to the implementation of the Five Pillars in our daily lives.
- Building Fund Recognition – This program will recognize those who have given to the building fund that helped produce the newly renovated church. The preliminary plans for recognition include the presentation of a giving name plaque to be erected in a prominent location in the church with the names of building fund givers on the plaque and room for additional names. The plaque would be presented to the Senior Minister on behalf of the church at a special reception for the congregation.
- Church-wide Activities – A series of social events for the entire church will be held to build relationships among church members. The inaugural event will be dinner after Sunday worship. Every activity will be open to the entire church. Future activities will be

developed to specifically appeal to varying demographics of the church, but to also be appealing to all members of the congregation.

- Seventy Dollar Giving Matrix - The SC determined that if 200 giving units contributed \$70 weekly First Church would easily reach its annual budget number. Using this formula the 2015 shortfall would have been covered with 20 additional members giving at the \$70 per week level. The matrix was developed based on the operations budget. A similar giving analysis will also be developed for the building fund and for recurring giving programs like OGHS, Neighbors in Need, Thank Offering and others.
- Special Supplemental Funding Opportunities Program – In addition to a member’s private annual giving all are asked to make, there will be special opportunities to give and be recognized by the church for such giving. Additionally there will be opportunities developed to encourage planned giving, naming opportunities and public and private grant opportunities.
- Five Pillar Participation Project – Members will be given opportunities to actively participate in the life of the church in each of the Five Pillar areas and will be recognized publically and enthusiastically for such participation, with special recognition to those who participate actively in all five areas.
- One on One Stewardship Member Meetings Pilot – A small number of FCC members will be identified to participate in one on one meetings with other members during which their life at First Church, what they want from it and what they want to give to it will be discussed. The goal of these meetings will be to help build an even stronger more informed platform for future church development.

Benchmarks, Timetable and Evaluation

Success measures will be varied. Success will be measured in each of the activities listed above as well as in the overall program. For most of the activities, measurements will be based on numbers of individuals and families participating. The SC/TG’s benchmarks will be to have increasing numbers of members involved in each activity category as the program year progresses or to have 75% of active members participating in a particular activity category by the end of the program year. For example, having 75% of church members participating in Stewardship Exploration by the end of the presentation period would be absolute success for that activity. However, it is important to note the SC/TG believes that active discussions of the members who do attend the Spiritual Exploration sessions should also be considered successful

even if as few as 50% of the membership attends. This is largely true because the SC/TG believes that success in our endeavors will be contagious and will breed future success.

Success of the \$70 Giving Matrix is easiest to measure. The SC/TG will utilize a box matrix to visually display to the congregation the number of \$70 giving units that have been committed for a single program year. A sample box matrix is attached (Appendix F).

The success of church wide activities will be measured by the increasing participation as well as by overall participation in the total number of church wide activities held. That is, did 75% of the church membership participate in at least one church-wide activity? Similarly, participation in the Special Supplemental Funding Opportunities Program will be measured by the number of members participating but also in achieving the targeted goal for each giving opportunity.

The success of the Five Pillar Participation Project will be perhaps most important to the SC/TG. This program best exemplifies the SC/TG Goals. Therefore participation in this program suggests that members have embraced the five pillars concept and have begun to build new and lasting relationships simply through their ongoing participation in different areas of the church, Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship.

Summary

The SC/TG's plans are varied and unlike any previous stewardship committee program utilized at First Church. The measures of success are similarly varied due to the varied nature of the program. The SC/TG believes stewardship is dynamic and requires constant monitoring and constant updating. Unlike some areas, there is less of a right and wrong. The SC/TG has determined stewardship means more than dollars and cents. Real success will be having a shared understanding of that throughout the church and seeing that understanding reflected in increased participation in activities, increased giving and increased satisfaction with the church among members.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

RECOMMENDATIONS – The entire set of recommendations from the Task Groups is provided below along with other recommendations that grew out of the deliberations of the SPC.

Recommendations from the Senior Minister’s Vision Statement

1. Create Benchmarks and Timetables for an ongoing self-assessment of where we are in terms of our goals, strategies, and methods.
2. Carefully attend to the needs of our present membership even as we prepare a table for the future members of First Church.
3. As we consider membership targets, demographics, and goals, create a plan for the re-purposing and development of our land and facilities to address our strategic goal and mission of loving our neighbor (and neighborhood).
4. Develop a critical assessment method of our second greatest resource--- our members and our relationships with like-minded people of good will and influence who can help us realize our goals! The human capital at First Church suggests that we have never been better prepared to affect this transformative strategic effort.
5. Develop and implement immediately a more effective and efficient Communications strategy to let people know of the good work that’s going on at First Church. This includes addressing the deficiencies of our facilities. Many do not know we have completed our renovation and are back in our church. The hundreds, if not thousands, of people who drive by the church daily on Courtland Street are not given a sense of welcome or life on that side of the building. This should be addressed in 2016.
6. Understand ‘church growth’ not simply as a desired target number of members but as a deepening and broadening of our own understanding of *who* we are disciples of Christ and our power and potential as the body of Christ.
7. Strengthen and fortify our historic relationships with Atlanta Life, the HBCU community, the United Church of Christ as well as forge new meaningful relationships with our neighbors, Georgia State University, CARE, the City of Atlanta.

Mission and Vision

1. The SPC recommends that the FCC congregation adopt the Mission and Vision Statement and that the Mission Statement become a significant element of the Church’s public persona.

2. The church will need to regularly review the Mission and Vision Statement and make adjustments that ensure that the church and its activities and efforts are continually aligned to meet the goals and objectives of the Statement.

Community Demographics

1. The major recommendation of the Community Demographics Task Group is that FCC give thoughtful and prayerful consideration to the impact of the demographic changes in the church environment on our mission, ministries and programs.

Congregational Demographics

1. Develop a stronger child and youth ministry that promotes spiritual and social cohesion of middle school and high school youth around their spiritual life in First Church, and service to the congregation. An Assistant Minister dedicated to youth ministry will help to address this issue;
2. Develop “*Marketing*” strategies that specifically focus on increasing the participation of existing “young families” through ministries that foster spiritual and emotional investment in the long term success of the church body through age-specific 5 pillar activities;
3. Intentional inter-generational five tenet opportunities to bridge the gap between Sunday School and 11 o’clock worship;
4. Create intentional support ministries for seniors. It may be possible to use FCC ministers who are members of the congregation to assist with this ministry.

Polity and Administration

1. Administratively, all ABCCs should continue to be reminded to provide their rosters and meeting minutes to the Church’s Secretary or Church Administrator.
2. An existing Council member (Church Secretary, Assistant Church Secretary or Church Historian) should be made responsible for contacting ABCCs at regular intervals as needed to secure their records.
3. All Church records should be kept in an electronic searchable format.
4. FCC should make better use of the clergy/members of First Church. FCC should consider aspects of visitation, counseling, preaching, team teaching, and group (ABCC) mentoring as opportunities that can readily be incorporated into our present church life.

5. FCC clergy should be encouraged to meet regularly and form a cohesive team.
6. We have discovered the power of social media to connect with our membership, young and old. Streaming our Weekly Worship Service has been well received. This activity should be continued and expanded.

Outreach, In-reach and Ministry

1. The overarching recommendation of the OMTG is that the entire church membership become participants in the Outreach and Ministry activities of the church, both internally and externally.
2. The OMTG wants each of the ABCCs to define itself in terms of a Christ-centered ministry of First Church through the adoption of the five spiritual pillars promulgated by our Senior Minister, viz. Worship, Prayer, Study, Service and Stewardship, as the guiding principles for Outreach and Ministry beginning in 2016 at First Congregational Church.
3. In addition, the Task Group recommends that marketing/communications/media efforts be developed to further promote the programs and successes of the ABCCs following the development of the new ABCC profiles.

Space, Parking and Development

General Recommendation: Create an Ad Hoc Committee in 2016 to continue working on the specific recommendations listed below:

1. Refine the proposed program spaces for a new FCC facility to be located in the parking lot facing J. W. Dobbs Avenue. Develop a concept design for the proposed facility, prepare an estimate for the total project budget, and conduct a feasibility study for financing the project. FCC is presently space challenged and needs additional space. The current program calls for approximately 29,000 sq. feet of mixed-use spaces including educational, conference and meeting, wellness, daycare for youth and seniors that is connected to the east wing of the church structure.
2. Conduct a parking inventory of the neighborhood to determine market demand for additional off-street parking during the regular week, Monday – Saturday. Engage the firm of Carl Walker, Inc., a parking and planning consultant to perform the inventory study.
3. Evaluate the best location for a structured parking deck to provide approximately 250 spaces for FCC on the weekends, special events, and other church related functions.

4. Evaluate the pros and cons of a long-term land lease, or parking easement, or other legal structures to permit a parking structure to be erected on the FCC property without selling the land underneath.
5. Proceed with contacting interested developers to serve as a development partner for a mid-rise, student housing development for graduate and upper class students attending Georgia State University, and other metropolitan Atlanta colleges and universities.
6. Continue discussions with key officials with Georgia State University, including the University Housing Office, to determine the optimal quantity and mix of student housing units.
7. Contact Benenson Capital in New York City to ascertain their interest to include 143 Courtland Street in the proposed development. Also contact CAREUSA regarding their willingness to sell the small park that adjoins The Commons at 125 Ellis. Both parcels when combined with the FCC frontage on Ellis Street increased the attractiveness of a student housing development and a multi-level parking structure.
8. Continue evaluating the preferred location for the proposed housing tower along Ellis Street and devise a physical master plan illustrating the development.
9. Put into writing FCC's motivation for participating in the proposed development, listing key reasons for involving the church in the project.
10. Devise a time line and planning budget that outlines the anticipated upfront costs to be borne by FCC. Submit the schedule and budget to the Church Council and Board of Trustees by the 2016 Summer Quarterly Meeting.

The recommendations above are based on the documented ongoing needs of the burgeoning GSU campus for student housing. As an alternative approach, the SPDTG is ready to conduct a more detailed planning study regarding the feasibility of a proposed mixed-use development on the FCC properties, utilizing the services of a professional planning and real estate advisory firm. The outcome of such a planning study would be a campus master plan and rendering of the proposed development.

Stewardship

1. Stewardship Sunday - This regular Sunday worship service is designed to focus the congregation on the existence of stewardship as an integral part of the entire church experience. In 2015 Stewardship Sunday was particularly important to announce a new approach to stewardship based on the five pillars and to present the idea that every member of the congregation is needed to embrace this concept of stewardship for a new robust stewardship program.

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3. Stewardship Booklet – The booklet will speak to the implementation of the Five Pillars in our daily lives.
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5. Church-wide Activities – A series of social events for the entire church will be held to build relationships among church members. The inaugural event will be dinner after Sunday worship. Every activity will be open to the entire church. Future activities will be developed to specifically appeal to varying demographics of the church, but to also be appealing to all members of the congregation.
6. Seventy Dollar Giving Matrix - The SC determined that if 200 giving units contributed \$70 weekly First Church would easily reach its annual budget number. Using this formula the 2015 shortfall would have been covered with 20 additional members giving at the \$70 per week level. The matrix was developed based on the operations budget. A similar giving analysis will also be developed for the building fund and for recurring giving programs like OGHS, Neighbors in Need, Thank Offering and others.
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9. One on One Stewardship Member Meetings Pilot – A small number of FCC members will be identified to participate in one on one meetings with other members during which their life at First Church, what they want from it and what they want to give to it will be discussed. The goal of these meetings will be to help build an even stronger more informed platform for future church development.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1. FCC should become more intentional in its evangelistic efforts.
 - a. The practice of providing cards to visitors soliciting contact information should be reinstated.
 - b. The ushers and Trustees should ensure that those cards are conveyed to the Membership Committee.
 - c. The Membership Committee should follow up with each visitor via a welcome/thank you letter and a subsequent phone call. Visitors should be invited to attend additional worship services and to participate in other FCC activities.
2. The church should increase its visibility in the Atlanta area.
 - a. FCC should avail itself more extensively of the exposure provided by radio, television and the area newspapers. Appropriate announcements should be solicited for worship services as well as other FCC activities, e.g. First Fridays and Jazz Vespers. Funding for such efforts might come from restricted funds that might appropriately be utilized for this purpose.
 - b. FCC should consider reinstating the AIB broadcasts. Again, funding for the broadcasts could be obtained from an appropriate restricted fund or by soliciting donations from FCC members who support this ministry.
 - c. As recommended by the Senior Minister, the FCC Communications Committee should increase its involvement in developing mechanisms for communicating information regarding FCC ministries and programs to the Atlanta community and should be solicited to assist in determining the appropriate mix of media options for reaching our desired audiences.

3. There are numerous opportunities for new FCC and FCC Community Development Corporation ministries, e.g. in the areas of social justice, the homeless, youth, young adult and student ministries and after school programs, to mention a few. Moving forward the church must adopt a set of criteria for the creation of new ministries. Such criteria might be formulated along the following lines.
 - a. The proposed ministry should meet an identifiable Christ-centered congregational or community need.
 - b. The proposal should indicate the human, fiscal, space and other requisites of the program.
 - c. With regard to the human requisites, the proposal should list the individuals who will organize and administer the ministry. The commitment of those individuals should be documented in the proposal.
 - d. With regard to fiscal and space requisites the proposal should indicate the source of any funding required to support the ministry and should identify spaces within or outside FCC that will be used for the ministry.
 - e. The ministry should be sustainable. The organizers should provide near and longer term projections of costs, both human and fiscal, and how those costs will be met over the life of the proposed ministry.
 - f. The proposal should include benchmarks that will indicate that the program has been successful.
4. FCC should explore additional ways to use the Commons to generate revenue, e.g. seeking out new rental opportunities.
5. The Communications Committee has an important role to play in ensuring that all members have access to information relevant to the operation, function, activities, programs and ministries of FCC. One aspect of this role will be to ensure that such information is provided in as many formats as may be required to guarantee widespread distribution, viz. hard copy, email, Facebook and other electronic formats.

6. FCC should update the congregation periodically on the meaning and importance of the several regional and national programs which are supported by our donations, e.g. One Great Hour of Sharing, Our Church's Wider Mission, etc. Such updates might take the form of occasional remarks by the Senior Minister describing the purpose of these programs and their importance to FCC and the national UCC.
7. FCC has historically sent delegates to the UCC General Synod and to meetings of the Southeast Conference of the UCC. Those delegates have generally been chosen in an *ad hoc* fashion. The SPC recommends that delegates to these meeting be elected by the congregation and that their responsibilities as delegates include providing reports to the congregation on the activities and outcomes of those meetings. As the implementation of this recommendation has budgetary implications, the SPC recommends that it not be implemented before 2017.

NEXT STEPS

1. As indicated in the Planning Process section, the SPC views the Strategic Plan as a living document. Thus, the SPC as a Standing Committee of the church should review and revise this document periodically. That first review is recommended to take place in the fall of 2016 and annually or semi-annually thereafter.
2. Given its role in developing the Strategic Plan, the SPC is perhaps best positioned to oversee its implementation. As has been mentioned, the SPC is a constitutionally mandated FCC committee. Thus, the committee and its Task Groups will continue to meet throughout each church year not only to review and revise the Strategic Plan but also to assess our success in implementing it and to make recommendations to the congregation to facilitate that implementation.
3. The aspirations of FCC may and should exceed its current financial grasp. Thus, the SPC recommends that FCC consult one of the fundraising/development firms that do business in Atlanta. There are firms that will provide an initial consult at no charge to the church. One question which should be discussed with the consulting firm is whether FCC should consider hiring a fundraiser/development officer. That person would be expected to identify internal and external funding sources for FCC programs, mission and ministries and strategies for tapping those sources.

APPENDIX A– SPC MEMBERSHIP

George H. Jones, Convener

Rev. Dwight D. Andrews, Senior Minister

Rev. Angela Williams

Rev. LaVerne Dixon

Rev. Nadine Rawls

Lisa Alston

Levi Butler

Arthur Clement

Henry Conerway

Tara Hall

Faron Hill

Douglas Hooker

Taylor Jordan

Susan Pease Langford

Lynne Alston-Leonard

Dana McLaurin

Amber Mitchell

Steve Mitchell

Marcia Nurse

Maria Lourdes Pease

Anne Collins Smith

Beckie M. Spencer

Gary Spencer

Carl Washington

The following individuals participated in some of the committee's early deliberations

Rev. Elizabeth Clement

Rosalyn Mack

APPENDIX B - TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Conveners are indicated in bold

Mission and Vision – **Carl Washington**, Anne Collins Smith, Dana McLaurin

Congregational Demographics - **Maria Pease, Beckie Spencer**, Taylor Jordan

Community Demographics – **Douglas Hooker, Lynne Alston-Leonard**

Polity and Administration – **Rev. LaVerne Dixon**, Arthur Clement, Marcia Nurse, Beckie Spencer

Outreach and Ministry – **Lynne Alston-Leonard**, Rev. Dwight Andrews, Levi Butler, Tara Hall,
Rev. Angela Williams

Space, Parking and Development – **Arthur Clement**, Rev. Dwight Andrews, Dana McLaurin,
Marcia Nurse, Faron Hill, Steve Mitchell

Stewardship – **Susan Pease Langford**, Gary Spencer, George Jones. Please note that the
Stewardship Task Group includes members of the Stewardship Committee, some of whom are
not formally members of the SPC.

APPENDIX C

Demographics and Psychographics of Population within 5-Mile Radius of 105 Courtland

Characteristic or Data Item	2010	2015	2020 Comment or Observation
TOTAL POPULATION	309,329	326,230	344,068
Age Characteristics			
Median Age	32.1	32.9	33.3
0-14	14.7%	14.8%	14.5%
15-24	19.9%	18.7%	18.2%
25-44	36.2%	35.6%	35.3% 35 % of population are 25-44)
45-64	21.1%	21.7%	21.6%
65-74	4.6%	5.7%	6.5%
75+	3.4%	3.6%	4.0%
TOTAL	99.9%	100.1%	100.1%
Gender			
Male	159,271	168,456	177,259
Female	150,658	157,775	166,808
Male %	51.5%	51.6%	51.5%
Female %	48.7%	48.4%	48.5%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	42.8%	42.2%	41.5%
Black	48.8%	48.3%	47.8%
Asian	3.9%	4.7%	5.6%
Other & More than one race	4.5%	4.8%	5.1%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Latino	5.0%	5.0%	5.1% Latino is not a race, rather an ethnicity.
Total Households			
Total Families	134,959	143,550	153,794
Average Family Size	53,852	55,466	58,170
	3.03	3.02	3.01

Demographics and Psychographics of Population within 5-Mile Radius of 105 Courtland

Characteristic or Data I	2010	2015	2020 Comment or Observation
TOTAL POPULATION	309,329	326,230	344,068
Total Housing Units	165,177	175,245	186,402
Percent Owner Occu	36.3%	32.3%	31.9%
Percent Rental	45.4%	49.6%	50.6%
Percent Vacant	18.3%	18.1%	17.5%
Income Characteristics			
Median Household Income		\$41,654	\$50,336
Average Household Income		\$70,807	\$81,762
Per Capita Income		\$32,566	\$37,903
Household Income Distribution			
<\$15,000		22.6%	21.3% 34% of households have incomes below \$25,000. This will drop to about 29.5% in five years as higher income households are formed.
\$15,000 - \$24,999		11.0%	8.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999		10.1%	8.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,999		12.1%	11.7% 35% of households have incomes between \$35,000-\$100,000. This will stay roughly the same.
\$50,000 - \$74,999		13.4%	13.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999		9.2%	10.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999		9.7%	12.1% 21.6% of households have incomes of \$100,000 or more; this will increase to 26% in five years as higher income households are formed.
\$150,000 - \$199,999		5.4%	6.9%
\$200,000+		6.5%	7.3%
		100.0%	100.0%

Demographics and Psychographics of Population within 5-Mile Radius of 105 Courtland

Characteristic or Data I	2010	2015	2020 Comment or Observation
TOTAL POPULATION	309,329	326,230	344,068
Education Characteristics			
Less than 9th Grade		3.2%	Over 10% of residents have no HS diploma
9th - 12th, no diploma		7.7%	
High School Diploma		15.4%	15% have a HS diploma (26% of total have HS diploma or less)
GED or Alternative		2.9%	
Some College		15.7%	
Associates Degree		4.5%	
Bachelors Degree		28.3%	50% have a Bachelor's degree or higher
Graduate/Professional Degree		22.1%	
		99.8%	

Tapestry (Psychographic) Segmentation*

Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Who We Are
1	Metro Renters (3B)	35.80%	35.80%	2414	Residents in this highly mobile and educated market live alone or with a roommate in older apartment buildings and condos located in the urban core of the city. Metro Renters residents income is close to the US average, but they spend a large portion of their wages on rent, clothes, and the latest technology. Computers and cell phones are an integral part of everyday life and are used interchangeably for news, entertainment, shopping, and social media. Metro Renters residents live close to their jobs and usually walk or take a taxi to get around the city.
2	Emerald City (8B)	10.80%	46.60%	765	Emerald City's denizens live in lower-density neighborhoods of urban areas throughout the country. Young and mobile, they are more likely to rent. Well educated and well employed, half have a college degree and a professional occupation. Incomes close to the US median come primarily from wages and self-employment. This group is highly connected, using the Internet for entertainment and making environmentally friendly purchases. Long hours on the Internet are balanced with time at the gym. Many embrace the "foodie" culture and enjoy cooking adventurous meals using local and organic foods. Music and art are major sources of enjoyment. They travel frequently, both personally and for business.
3	City Commons (11E)	8.90%	55.50%	985	This segment is one of Tapestry's youngest and largest markets, primarily comprised of single-parent and single-person households living within large, metro cities. While more than a third have a college degree or spent some time in college, nearly a third have not finished high school, which has a profound effect on their economic circumstance. However, that has not dampened their aspiration to strive for the best for themselves and their children.
4	Modest Income Homes (12D)	8.70%	64.20%	639	WHO ARE WE? Families in this urban segment may be nontraditional; however, their religious faith and family values guide their modest lifestyles. Many residents are primary caregivers to their elderly family members. Jobs are not always easy to come by, but wages and salary income are still the main sources of income for most households. Reliance on Social Security and public assistance income is necessary to support single-parent and multigenerational families. High poverty rates in this market make it difficult to make ends meet. Nonetheless, rents are relatively low (Index 73), public transportation is available, and Medicaid can assist families in need.
5	Urban Chic (2A)	7.50%	71.70%	568	Urban Chic residents are professionals that live a sophisticated, exclusive lifestyle. Half of all households are occupied by married-couple families and about 30% are singles. These are busy, well-connected, and well-educated consumers—avid readers and moviegoers, environmentally active, and financially stable. This market is a bit older, with a median age of almost 43 years, and growing slowly, but steadily.

Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Who We Are
6	Laptops and Lattes (3A)	5.10%	76.80%	484	Laptops and Lattes residents are predominantly single, well-educated professionals in business, finance, legal, computer, and entertainment occupations. They are affluent and partial to city living—and its amenities. Neighborhoods are densely populated, primarily located in the cities of large metropolitan areas. Many residents walk, bike, or use public transportation to get to work; a number work from home. Although single householders technically outnumber couples, this market includes a higher proportion of partner households, including the highest proportion of same-sex couples. Residents are more interested in the stock market than the housing market. Laptops and Lattes residents are cosmopolitan and connected—technologically savvy consumers. They are active and health conscious, and care about the environment.
7	Family Foundations (12A)	5.10%	81.90%	472	Family and faith are the cornerstones of life in these communities. Older children, still living at home, working toward financial independence, are common within these households. Neighborhoods are stable: little household growth has occurred for more than a decade. Many residents work in the health care industry or public administration across all levels of government. Style is important to these consumers, who spend on clothing for themselves and their children, as well as on smartphones.
8	Social Security Set (9F)	3.10%	85.00%	381	Social Security Set is an older market located in metropolitan cities across the country. Over one-third of householders here are aged 65 or older and dependent on low, fixed incomes, primarily Social Security. In the aftermath of the Great Recession, early retirement is now a dream for many approaching the retirement age; wages and salary income in this market are still earned. Residents live alone in low-rent, high-rise buildings, located in or close to business districts that attract heavy daytime traffic. But they enjoy the hustle and bustle of life in the heart of the city, with the added benefit of access to hospitals, community centers, and public transportation.
9	Set to Impress (11D)	2.50%	87.50%	184	Set to Impress is depicted by medium to large multiunit apartments with lower than average rents. These apartments are often nestled into neighborhoods with other businesses or single-family housing. Nearly one in three residents is 20 to 34 years old, and over half of the homes are nonfamily households. Although many residents live alone, they preserve close connections with their family. Income levels are low; many work in food service while they are attending college. This group is always looking for a deal. They are very conscious of their image and seek to bolster their status with the latest fashion. Set to Impress residents are tapped into popular music and the local music scene.
10	Young and Restless (11B)	2.50%	90.00%	149	Gen Y comes of age: Well-educated young workers, some of whom are still completing their education, are employed in professional/technical occupations, as well as sales and office/administrative support roles. These residents are not established yet, but striving to get ahead and improve themselves. This market ranks in the top 5 for renters, movers, college enrollment, and labor force participation rate. Almost 1 in 5 residents move each year. Close to half of all householders are under the age of 35, the majority living alone or in shared nonfamily dwellings. Median household income is still below the US. Smartphones are a way of life, and they use the Internet extensively. Young and Restless consumers are diverse, favoring densely populated neighborhoods in large metropolitan areas; over 50% are located in the South (almost a fifth in Texas), with the rest chiefly in the West and Midwest.

* Tapestry Segmentations are population psychographic descriptions developed by demographers and marketers, as represented by ESRI

** Index means relative to the U.S. population. U.S. average is = 100. So a segment index of 150, means that a geographic area has 50% more of this segment type than the average area/neighborhood.

Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Our Neighborhoods
1	Metro Renters (3B)	35.80%	35.80%	2414	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over half of all households are occupied by singles, resulting in the smallest average household size among the markets, 1.66. Neighborhoods feature 20+ unit apartment buildings, typically surrounded by offices and businesses. Renters occupy close to 80% of all households. Public transportation, taxis, walking, and biking are popular ways to navigate the city.
2	Emerald City (8B)	10.80%	46.60%	765	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are mostly older, established neighborhoods with homes built before 1960; around 30% built before 1940. Just over half of all homes are renter occupied. Single-person and nonfamily types make up over half of all households. Median home value and average rent are slightly above the US levels; around half of owned homes are worth \$150,000–\$300,000.
3	City Commons (11E)	8.90%	55.50%	985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single parents (Index 315), primarily female, and singles head these young households. Average household size is slightly higher than the US at 2.66. City Commons are found in large metropolitan cities, where most residents rent apartments in midrise buildings. Neighborhoods are older, built before 1960 (Index 150), with high vacancy rates. Typical of the city, many households own either one vehicle or none, and use public transportation (Index 309) or taxis (Index 354).
4	Modest Income Homes (12D)	8.70%	64.20%	639	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households are single person or single parent (usually female householders). Multigenerational families are also present. Homes are predominantly single family; values reflect the age of the housing, built more than 60 years ago. Over half of the homes are renter occupied; average rent is lower than the US average. Most households have no vehicle or one car, with a high dependence on public transportation.
5	Urban Chic (2A)	7.50%	71.70%	568	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than half of Urban Chic households include married couples; 30% are singles. Average household size is slightly lower at 2.37. Homes range from prewar to recent construction, high-rise to single family. Over 60% of householders live in single-family homes; more than one in four live in multiunit structures. Two-thirds of homes are owner occupied. Major concentrations of these neighborhoods are found in the suburban periphery of large metropolitan areas on the California coast and along the East Coast. Most households have two vehicles available. Commuting time is slightly longer, but commuting by bicycle is

Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Our Neighborhoods
6	Laptops and Lattes (3A)	5.10%	76.80%	484	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-something single householders (Index 174), with a number of shared households (Index 246); low average household size of 1.85. • City dwellers, primarily in apartment buildings: with 2–4 units (Index 190), 5–19 units (Index 223), or 20+ units (Index 548). • Older housing, 2 out of 3 homes built before 1970; 42% built before 1940 (Index 310). • Most households renter occupied, with average rent close to \$1,800 monthly (Index 183). • Many owner-occupied homes valued at \$500,000+ (Index 684). • Majority of households own no vehicle at 36% (Index 398) or 1 vehicle (41%).
7	Family Foundations (12A)	5.10%	81.90%	472	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Foundations residents are a mix of married couples, single parents, grandparents, and children, young and adult. • Average household size is slightly higher at 2.70. • Neighborhoods are found in principal cities of major metropolitan areas throughout the South and West. • Two-thirds are homeowners living in single family houses built before 1970. • Nearly three-fourths of all households have one or two vehicles at their disposal; average commute time is slightly higher.
8	Social Security Set (9F)	3.10%	85.00%	381	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most residents live alone in this older market; 19% of householders are aged 75 and older; another 17% are 65 to 74 years old. • Multiunit rental properties with affordable rents are predominant (Index 62). • Located in higher-density, high-traffic areas of metropolitan cities with good access to public transportation, vehicle ownership is low.
9	Set to Impress (11D)	2.50%	87.50%	184	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartment complexes represented by multiple multiunit structures are often nestled in neighborhoods with either single-family homes or other businesses. • Renters make up nearly three quarters of all households. • They're found mostly in urban areas, but also in suburbs. • Single-person households make up over 40% of all households. • It is easy enough to walk or bike to work for many residents.
10	Young and Restless (11B)	2.50%	90.00%	149	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the youngest markets: Half the householders under age 35; median age 29.4. • Primarily single-person households (Index 163) with some shared households (Index 201). • Highly mobile market, beginning careers and changing addresses frequently. • Naturally, one of the top 5 renter markets (Index 237). • Apartment rentals popular: 45% in 5–19 unit buildings (Index 507), 26% in 20+ unit buildings (Index 325). • Majority of housing built in 1970 or later (83%).

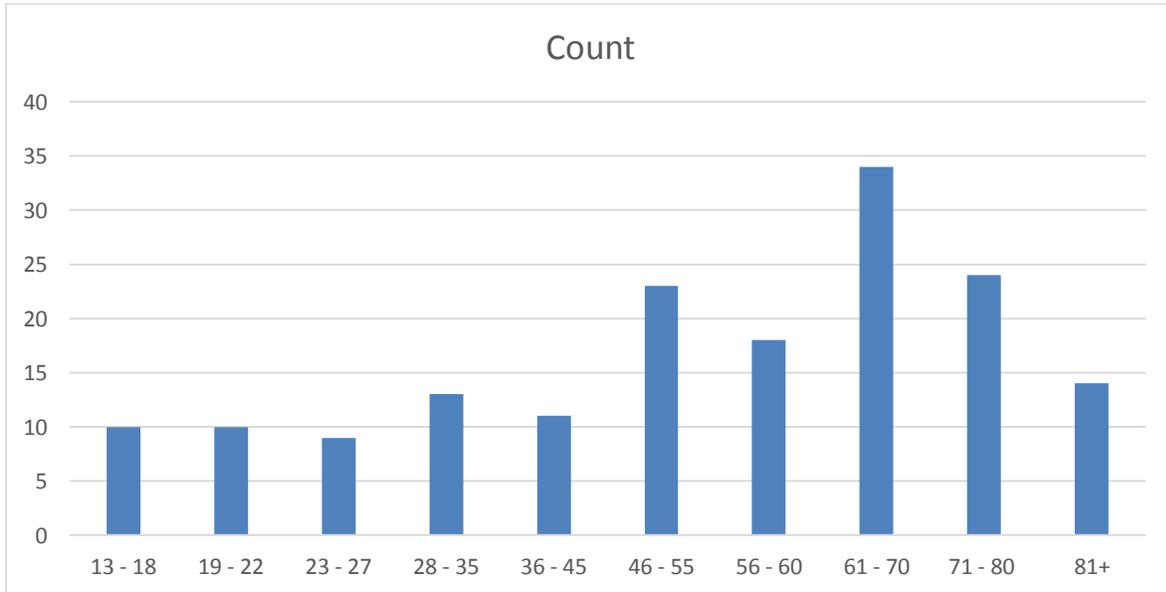
* Tapestry Segmentations are population psychographic descriptions of neighborhoods in the US.
 ** Index means relative to the U.S. population. U.S. average is = 100

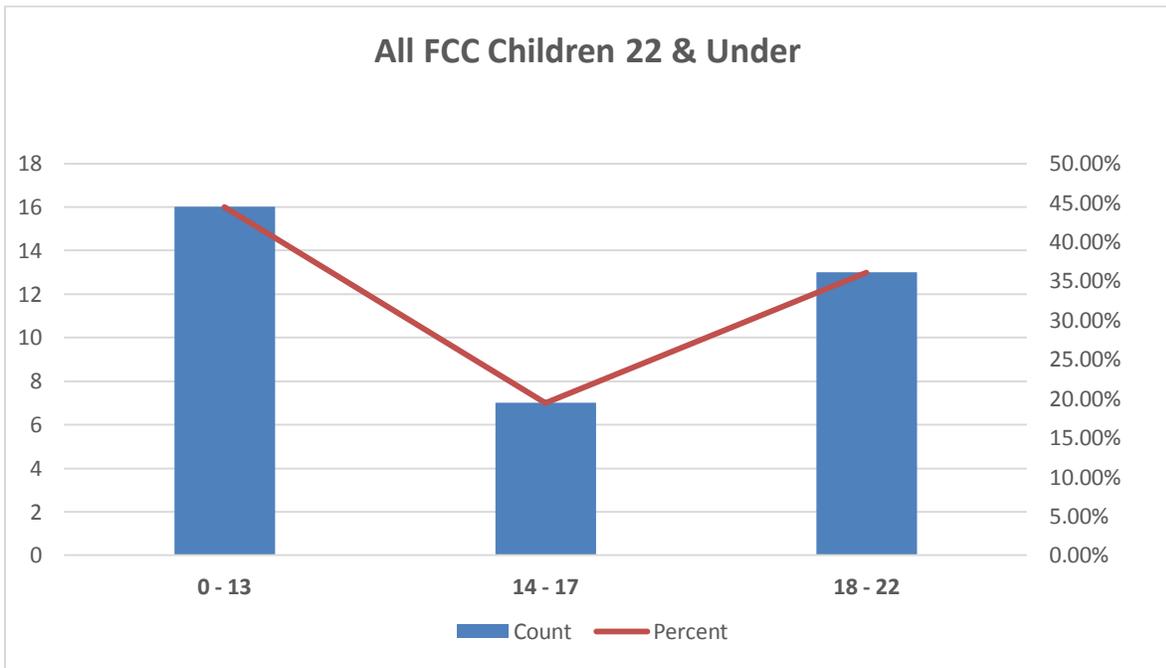
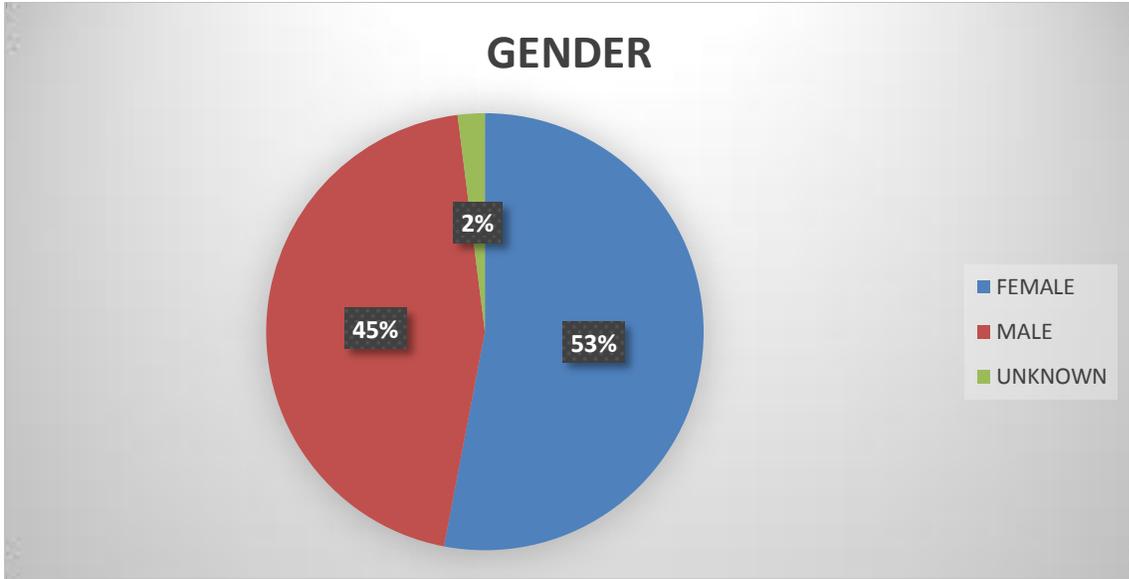
Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Socioeconomic Traits
1	Metro Renters (3B)	35.80%	35.80%	2414	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-educated consumers, many currently enrolled in college. Very interested in the fine arts and strive to be sophisticated; value education and creativity. Willing to take risks and work long hours to get to the top of their profession. Become well informed before purchasing the newest technology. Prefer environmentally safe products. Socializing and social status very important.
2	Emerald City (8B)	10.80%	46.60%	765	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well educated, these consumers research products carefully before making purchases. They buy natural, green, and environmentally friendly products. Very conscious of nutrition, they regularly buy and eat organic foods. Cell phones and text messaging are a huge part of everyday life. They place importance on learning new things to keep life fresh and variable. They are interested in the fine arts and
3	City Commons (11E)	8.90%	55.50%	985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although some have college degrees, nearly one in three have not graduated from high school. Unemployment is very high at 24% (Index 274); labor force participation is low at 54% (Index 86). Most households receive income from wages or salaries, but nearly one in four receive contributions from Social Security (Index 306) and public assistance (Index 420). Consumers endeavor to keep up with the latest fashion trends. Most families prefer the convenience of fast-food restaurants to cooking at home.
4	Modest Income Homes (12D)	8.70%	64.20%	639	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost a quarter of adults aged 25 or more have no high school diploma. Labor force participation is only 50%, with unemployment at more than double the US rate. Income is less than half of the US median income; one in three households are in poverty, dependent on Social Security, public assistance, and Supplemental Security Income. Consumers in this market consider traditional gender roles and religious faith very important. This market lives for today, choosing to save only for a specific purpose. They favor TV as their media of choice and will purchase a product with a celebrity
5	Urban Chic (2A)	7.50%	71.70%	568	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well educated, more than 60% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher (Index 223). Unemployment rate is well below average at 5% (Index 62); labor force participation is higher at 69%. Residents are employed in white collar occupations—in managerial, technical, and legal positions. Over 40% of households receive income from investments. Environmentally aware, residents actively recycle and maintain a “green” lifestyle. These busy, tech-savvy residents use PCs extensively for an array of activities such as shopping, banking, and staying current—a top market for Apple computers

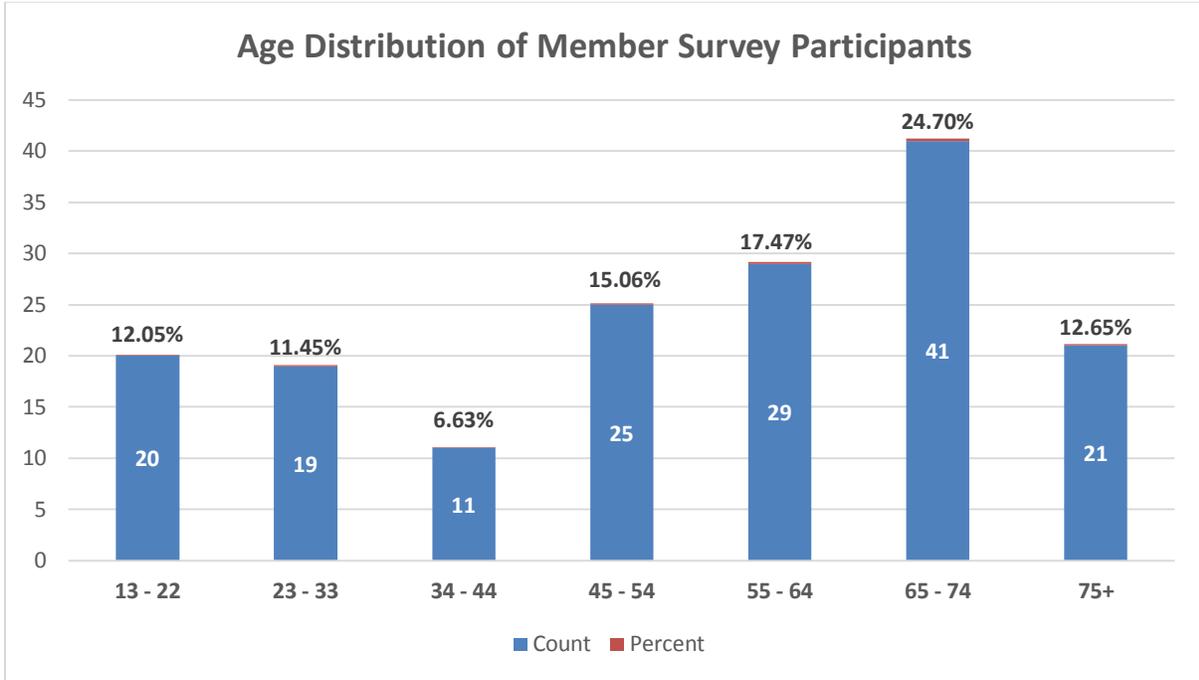
Rank	Tapestry Segment	%	Cumulative %	Index**	Tapestry Descriptions: Socioeconomic Traits
6	Laptops and Lattes (3A)	5.10%	76.80%	484	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three out of four have a bachelor's degree or higher (Index 269). • Unemployment rate is low at 5.3%; labor force participation is high, more than 75%. • Salaries are the primary source of income for most households, but self-employment income (Index 147) and investment income (Index 167) complement the salaries in this market. • These are health-conscious consumers, who exercise regularly and pay attention to the nutritional value of the food they purchase. • Environmentally conscientious but also image-conscious: both impact their purchasing.
7	Family Foundations (12A)	5.10%	81.90%	472	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than half have either attended college or obtained a degree; one-third have only finished high school. • Unemployment rate is high at 15% (Index 178); labor force participation rate is slightly lower at 60% as workers begin to retire. • Over one-third of households currently receive Social Security benefits; more than a quarter draw income from retirement accounts. • A strong focus is on religion and character. • Style and appearance is important.
8	Social Security Set (9F)	3.10%	85.00%	381	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These aging consumers rely mostly on Social Security income but also depend on Supplemental Security Income and public assistance. • Wages and salary income are still earned by almost half of all households. • With fixed incomes, consumers remain price sensitive. • A trusted source of information, TV is an important part of their lives. • An aging population that is often limited by medical conditions, they are willing to try advanced medication but rely on their physicians for recommendations. • Rather than eat out, Social Security Set residents prefer to have their meals at home, whether they order takeout or
9	Set to Impress (11D)	2.50%	87.50%	184	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are better educated and mobile. • Unemployment is higher, although many are still enrolled in college (Index 146). • They always have an eye out for a sale and will stock up when the price is right. • They prefer name brands, but will buy generic when it is a better deal. • Quick meals on the run are a reality of life. • They're image-conscious consumers that dress to impress and often make impulse buys. • They maintain close relationships with family.
10	Young and Restless (11B)	2.50%	90.00%	149	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education completed: 2 out of 3 have some college, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree or higher. Education in progress: almost 15% are still enrolled in college (Index 185). • Labor force participation rate is exceptionally high at 75.4%; unemployment is low at 7.8%. • These are careful shoppers, aware of prices, and demonstrate little brand loyalty. • They like to be the first to try new products, but prefer to do research before buying the latest electronics. • Most of their information comes from the Internet and TV, rather than traditional media. • Carry their cell phone everywhere they go.

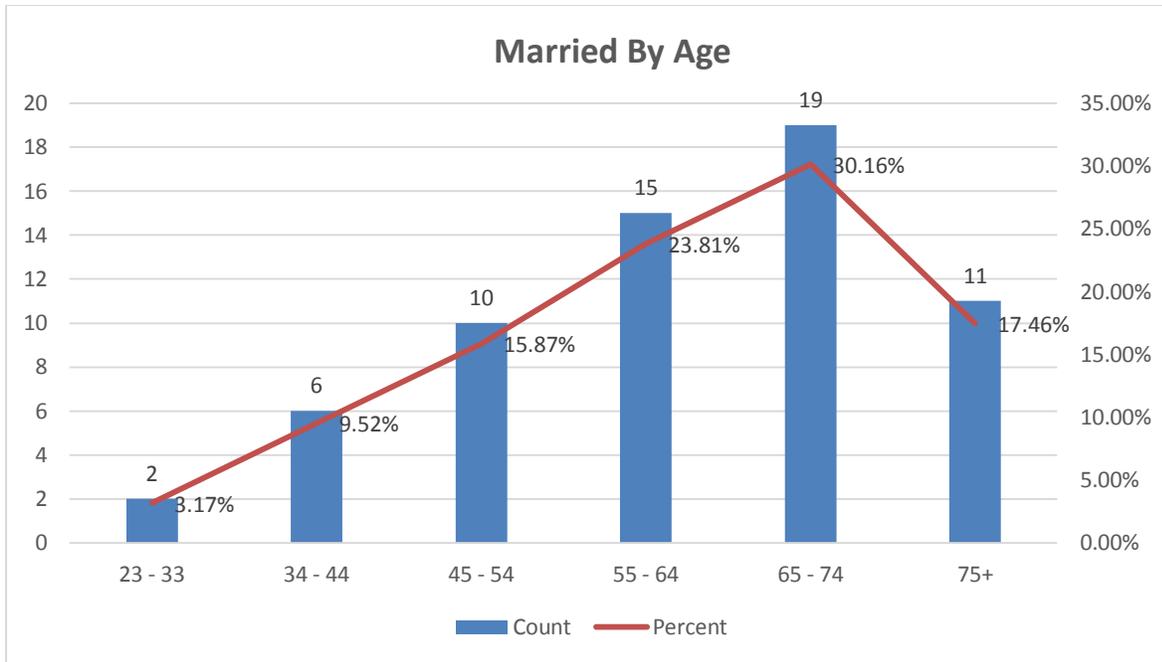
* Tapestry Segmentations are population psychographic descriptions

** Index means relative to the U.S. population. U.S. average is = 10

APPENDIX D – FCC DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION**







APPENDIX F

Peek of the Week – Sunday, May 8, 2016 – Sunday, May 15, 2016

<p align="center">SUNDAY May 8th</p>	<p align="center">9:30 am 9:30 am 11:00 am</p>	<p>Sunday School Mother's Day Breakfast – Fellowship Hall Sunday Worship Service/Children's Choir Rehearsal</p>
<p align="center">MONDAY May 9th</p>	<p align="center">5:00 pm 5:15/5:30 pm 6:00 pm 6:30 pm 6:30 pm 6:30 pm 6:30 pm</p>	<p>Diaconate Family Ministry Meeting (Herndon Tower) Chancel Ringers/Beginner Chancel Ringers NAE Rehearsal (Atrium 2nd Floor) Church Council Meeting (Conference Room) Bible Study (Fellowship Hall) Sinfo-Nia Rehearsal (Commons) SJV Band Rehearsal (Sanctuary)</p>
<p align="center">TUESDAY May 10th</p>	<p align="center">1:00 pm 4:00 pm 6:00 pm 6:30 pm 6:30/7:00 pm</p>	<p>ZUMBA (Fellowship Hall) Membership Committee Meeting (Conference Room) First Friday Meeting (Conference Room) Board Trustees Meeting (Fellowship Hall) SJV Band Rehearsal (Sanctuary)/AJC Rehearsal</p>
<p align="center">WEDNESDAY May 11th</p>	<p align="center">11:00 am 5:30 pm 6:30/7:00 pm</p>	<p>Common Ground (Fellowship Hall) Garden Committee Meeting (Conference Room) SJV Band Rehearsal /Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p>
<p align="center">THURSDAY May 12th</p>	<p align="center">11:00 am 12:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Common Ground (Fellowship Hall) Spelman Class of 1966 50th Reunion Setup (Commons) Line Dancing (Fellowship Hall) Trey Clegg Singers Rehearsal (Sanctuary)</p>
<p align="center">FRIDAY May 13th</p>	<p align="center">6:00 pm</p>	<p>Spelman College Class of 1966 50th Reunion (Commons)</p>
<p align="center">SATURDAY May 14th</p>	<p align="center">8:45 am 9:30 am 10:30 am 11:30 am 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Sinfo-Nia Rehearsal (Commons) Bible Study (Conference Room) Men's Choir Rehearsal Free Spanish Lesson with Maria Lora (Room 118) Spring Jazz Vespers (Sanctuary)</p>
<p align="center">SUNDAY May 15th</p>	<p align="center">9:30 am 9:30 am 11:00 am 1:00 pm</p>	<p>Confirmation Class (Atrium 2nd Floor) Pastor's Bible Study/Sunday School Sunday Worship Service/Children's Choir Rehearsal Altar Guild Meeting (Herndon Tower)</p>

First Congregational Church, UCC Atlanta

Space Summary

June 7, 2015

The Commons at 125 Ellis:	8,968 sq. ft.
105 Courtland Street:	
Basement, East Addition, & Rear Entrance	9,939 sq. ft.
Sanctuary, East Addition, & Atrium	9,545 sq. ft.
Balcony & East Addition	<u>5,753 sq. ft.</u>
Subtotal	25,227 sq. ft.
 Grand Total – both buildings	 34,9197sq. ft.

First Congregational Church, UCC Atlanta

Parking Capacity

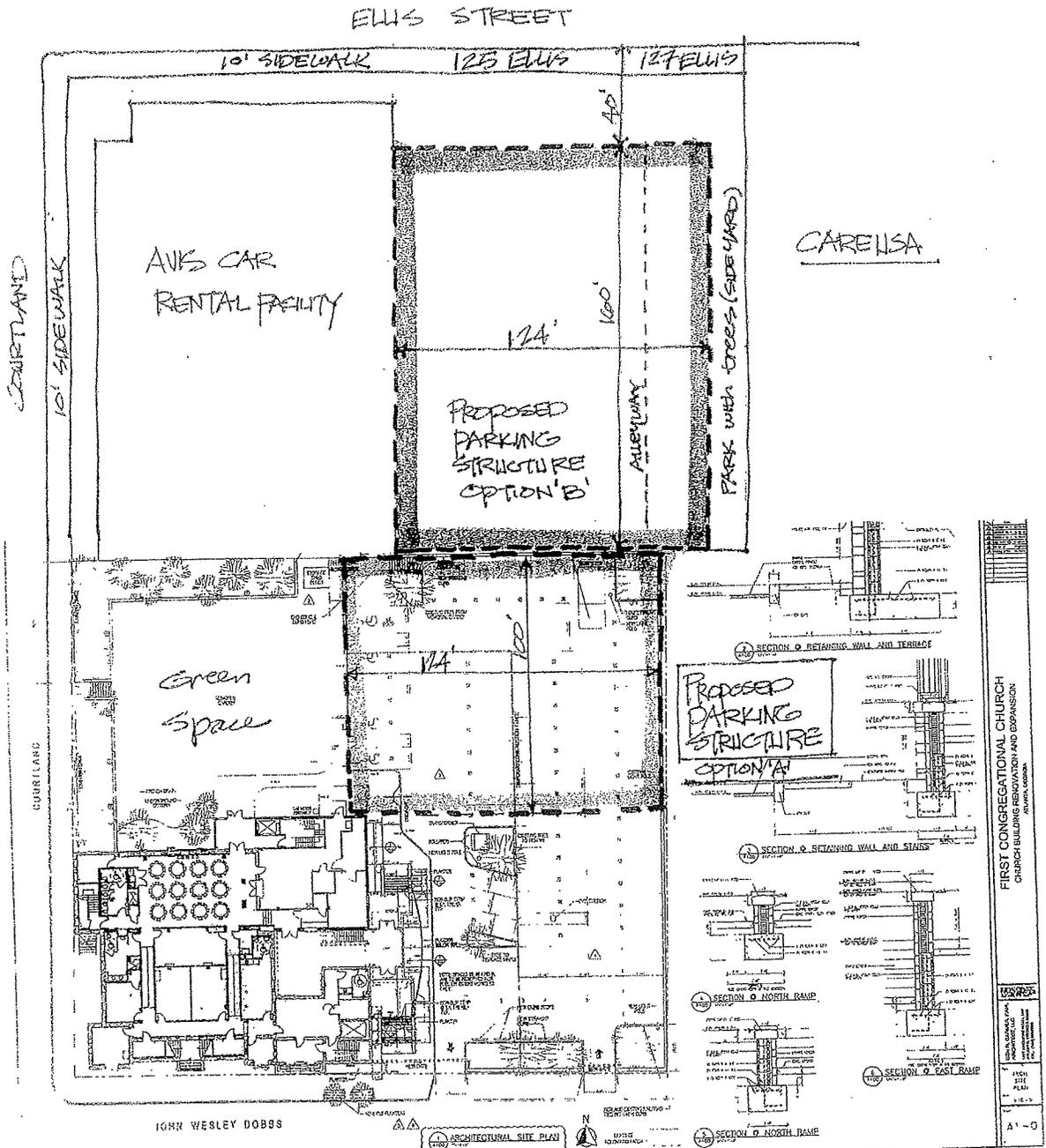
June 7, 2015

Main Parking Lot at 105 Courtland (enter of JW Dobbs Avenue)	61 spaces (4 HC)
The Commons at 125 Ellis	21 spaces (3 HC)
Front - 8 spaces (3 HC)	
Rear - 13 spaces	
Subtotal (spaces owned by FCC)	82 spaces (7 HC)
Sunday Parking along both sides of JW Dobbs Avenue	31 cars
South side – 20 cars	
North side – 11 cars	
Parking at MSME Architects' Office parking lot	28 spaces (2 HC)
Dialysis Clinic Inc. parking lot	21 spaces (2 HC)
CARE USA Parking Structure (ground level off Piedmont Ave.)	53 spaces
Subtotal (spaces leased or available to FCC on Sunday mornings)	133 spaces (4 HC)
Grand Total – spaces owned, available, or leased to FCC	215 spaces (11 HC)

First Congregational Church, UCC Atlanta
The "Bridge" Facility - a multigenerational service center
Proposed Space Program
8/14/2015

Item No.	Program Spaces	Sq. Ft.
1	Main entrance and lobby (two-story space)	1,000
2	Multi-purpose Room - large enough to accommodate a variety of uses, events, performances, sit-down dinners, etc.	4,000
3	Media Room & AV equipment storage	500
4	Storage for tables and stacking chairs for multi-purpose room	400
5	Conference Center - one large room and two smaller rooms	1,200
6	Men & Women Toilets	400
7	Music/Arts/Education Spaces - portion of space will serve as second rehearsal room for church choir groups	3,600
8	Multi-purpose Classroom Room - available for Adult Daycare, fitness & exercise groups, etc.	2,400
9	Men & Women changing rooms, toilets, showers	500
10	Classroom Storage	200
11	Children's Daycare & Offices (leased to outside vendor)	5,000
12	Chapel Meditation Room - (movable seating)	600
13	Retail space - bookstore, gifts, merchandise, storage	1,000
14	Subtotal	20,800
15	Second-Story Connector to the East Wing	800
16	Allowance for mechanical, electrical, & data closets - 20%	4,160
17	Allowance for circulation, stairwells, wall thicknesses, etc.	4,160
18	Grand Total	29,120

TWO OPTIONS FOR PARKING STRUCTURE



SITE PLAN - FCC Atlanta

SCALE 1" = 40'

Three Case Studies of Urban Churches Partnering with Private Developers

The SPDTG has studied three case studies of urban churches in strategic locations who partnered with private developers to create new mixed-use developments while also refurbishing existing church space and/or adding new support space for the church. Two of the examples are in Atlanta and the third is a UCC church in Washington, DC.

First Congregational UCC of Washington, DC

945 G Street NW

Washington, DC 20001

Period of Time from Planning to Completion – 2004 to 2011. FCCDC issued a RFP in 2006 to interested developers outlining their space requirements and desire for a new church structure. The church entered into an agreement with a developer who secured financing. The Great Recession of 2008-09 stalled the project even though construction had begun and the existing church structure was demolished. The developer was able to secure additional tenants for the office building, and the project re-started later in 2009. The church hired a separate architect for its new building. The developer hired another architect for the office tower built above the church structure. The same contractor built both buildings.

Current status – completed

Name of Development and its amenities: Mixed-use church/office/restaurant building, 188,000 sq. ft. of which 24,000 sq. ft. is owned and used by the church. The ten-story office tower stands over the church building at ground level. The church sold its property to the developer but retained ownership of the structure at the base of the tower as a condominium.

Druid Hills Baptist Church

1085 Ponce de Leon Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30306

Period of Time from Planning to Completion – 2007 to present;

Current status – Under construction. DHBC and the developer, who lives in the neighborhood, began working on the project in 2007. The church had to get their property consolidated and re-zoned prior to selling nearly three acres in the rear of their campus to the developer. The church used the proceeds to renovate their main sanctuary which fronts onto Ponce de Leon Avenue. The church hired their own architect and contractor for their renovation work which is separate from the new development. The developer is building a shared parking structure that the church and neighborhood can use too.

Name of Development and its amenities: 675 North Highland; 124 residential units, a shared parking structure, 12,000 sq. ft. for retail and restaurant spaces fronting on North Highland, and 7,000 sq. ft. of storefront office space for smaller suites and for neighborhood businesses on the opposite street, Blue Ridge Avenue. The Neighborhood Planning Unit for the area wanted more off-street parking added to the development. The developer hired a separate architect for the mixed-use development.

Big Bethel AME Church Atlanta

220 Auburn Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30303

Period of Time from Planning to Completion – 2012 to present

Current status – A MOU was signed between Big Bethel and the three developers in late 2015. The church agreed to a 99-year lease with the developers, who are currently seeking permanent financing for the project. In 2012, Big Bethel hired TSW, a local planning firm with both architects and landscape architects, to develop a master plan for the church's land holdings along Auburn Avenue and over to John Wesley Dobbs Avenue. The church announced the results of the planning study in 2014 (see attached project description by TSW).

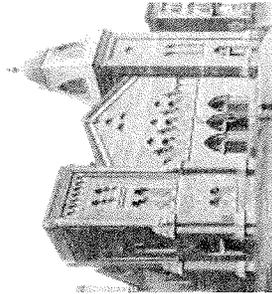
Name of Development and its amenities: \$120 million proposed development, including renovation of the existing 185 bed senior housing tower, a new 400 car parking structure, 1,000 beds of student housing, and renovated support space for Big Bethel along Auburn Avenue in buildings the church already owns. The church's pastor has promised the community and the city that no historical buildings will be demolished along Auburn Avenue.

Church buildings

Original church, 1868-1959

Henry Searle, Rochester, NY, Architect

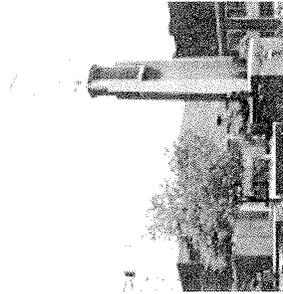
The original church, dedicated in 1866, was condemned in 1953. The trustees recommended that the building be sold and that the church relocate to the rapidly developing Washington suburbs. The congregation rejected this idea and voted to rebuild in the present location, continuing its downtown ministry in the nation's capital and affirming the church's presence in the city.



Second church, 1961-2007

Milton L. Grigg, Charlottesville, VA, Architect

In 1961, the congregation built a new church featuring a carillon tower at the corner of 10th St. and G St., NW. During its 46 years, in addition to First Congregational, the building served as home to other congregations, the church-sponsored Dinner Program for Homeless Women (now Thrive DC), and complementary social service and meal programs.



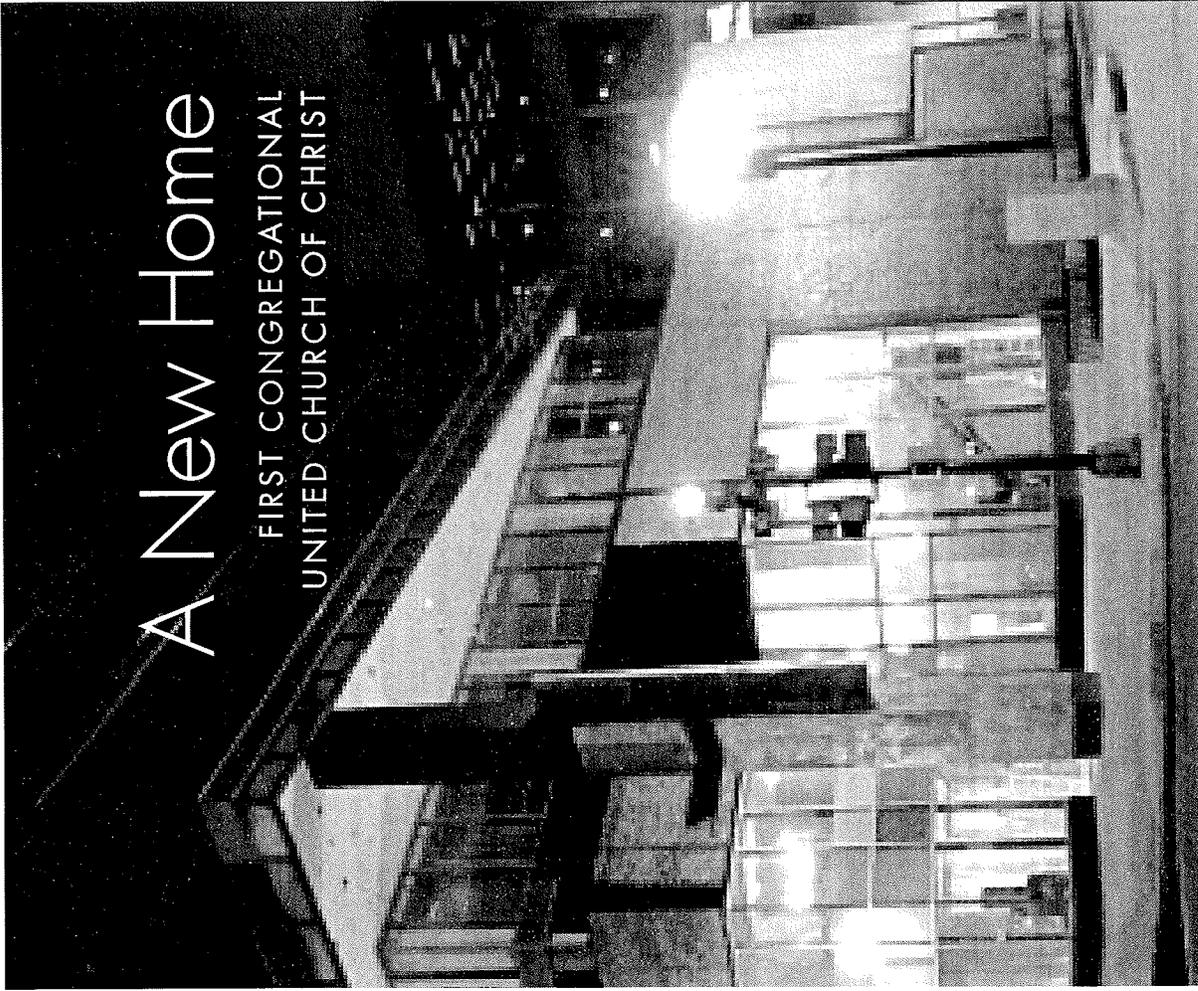
Rebuilding at 10th and G, 2004-2011

In 2004, with a deteriorating building and a resurgent downtown, the congregation made the decision to redevelop the property by selling the air rights to a private developer in exchange for a new, accessible, green building designed to carry out our mission. The FCUCC Site Development Task Force organized and coordinated the extensive legal, design and financial tasks necessary to develop the project; and fostered an extraordinary partnership between the church and the developers, designers and builders whose skill, labor and commitment have made this project a reality.



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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

945 G STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC | A MIXED-USE BUILDING

CHURCH ARCHITECTS: TOD WILLIAMS BILLIE TS'EN ARCHITECTS
BUILDING ARCHITECTS: CUNNINGHAM | QUILL ARCHITECTS

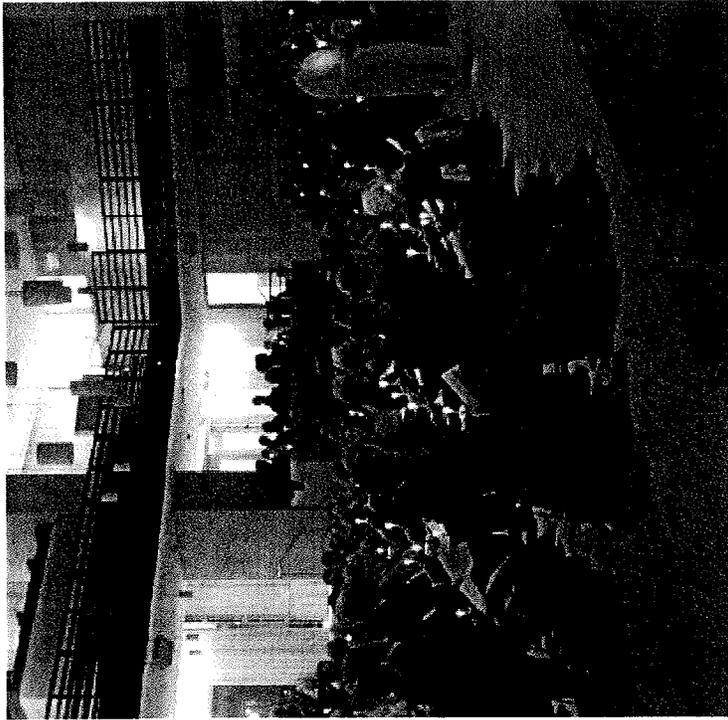


Photo: Matthew LeCunha

Return to
10th and G

Christmas Eve
Candlelight
Service, 2011

Our new home expresses our faith and our values.

We believe that God is the source of all creation, and that our human existence among all creatures of the earth is a marvelous blessing and an immense responsibility. We are inspired by the biblical message to care for the earth. Our church building reflects this value by adopting sound environmental practices.

The 188,000 square feet mixed-use church/office/restaurant building is designed to meet the criteria for the U.S. Green Building Council Gold LEED certification for environmental sustainability by:

- reusing and recycling 90% of the materials in the demolished church, including pews, brick, windows; and transplanting of mature plants and trees from the courtyard to new homes;
- locating close to excellent public transportation;
- storm water quality and management on site;
- high energy efficient glass assemblies;
- floor plates with natural daylight;
- variable air volume (VAV) box systems in the typical office space;
- water economizer in the mechanical system;
- low flow faucets, waterless urinals, and low flow flush toilets;
- new products from recycled materials;
- sustainably harvested wood; and
- 6,195 square feet of green roof.

We seek to radiate the light of truth and justice, and to celebrate the Creative Spirit we find in the message and presence of Jesus Christ. Our church building emphasizes light.

- Two large light box lanterns, an interior light well, and many windows bring light into the building. At night, the lanterns radiate soft light out from the building.
- Pendant and recessed lights in the narthex and sanctuary suggest the celestial realm.

We invite all people to join us in worship, fellowship, and service to others. Our church building at Metro Center joins the life of the city at the sidewalk.

- The tombasil bronze column sculpture at the corner of 10th and G makes our church visible and easy to locate.
- Two massive wooden doors open from the narthex into a stunning column-free sanctuary space that houses a Casavant pipe organ and sophisticated AV equipment.
- A still pool in the narthex signifies baptism and water as sustainer of life.
- Universal design provides full access throughout the building. An open staircase and elevator in the middle of the building connect all parts of the church.
- 24,000 square feet of church space can accommodate small worship services, personal meditation, meetings, celebrations, concerts and community functions.
- Classrooms provide a beautiful learning environment for children and teens.
- A small pocket park can exhibit large outdoor sculptures by local artists.
- Context-sensitive building design and materials honor the neighboring historic landmark Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

First Congregational UCC was founded in 1865 by Congregationalists rooted in New England traditions. Led by Christian abolitionists, it was the first racially integrated congregation in Washington, DC. In 1867, the Mission Committee played a prominent role in the founding of Howard University. The UCC has roots in a "covenantal" tradition meaning that, in relationship with God and one another, we discover our beliefs, worship and way of faith. There is freedom in the UCC. All of God's people matter. So we say, **"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."**

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

945 G Street NW Washington, DC 20001

Church Architects

Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects

Building Architects

Cunningham | Quill Architects

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office tower



church building



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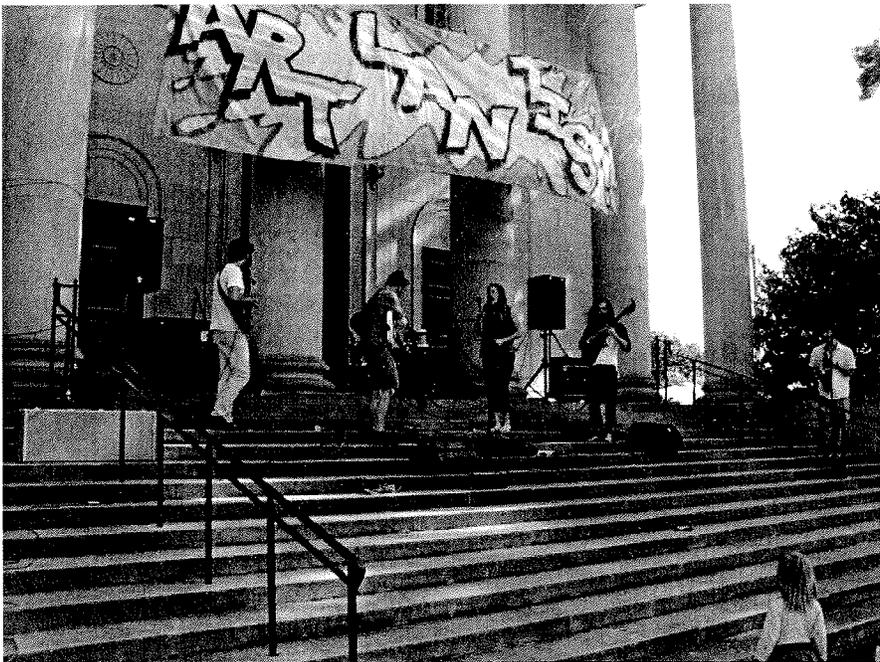


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FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2015

CONGREGATIONS



A band plays on the steps of Druid Hills Baptist Church, part of the way it engages its community by opening its spaces to arts groups. (DHBC Facebook photo)

Property sale positions Atlanta church to engage its vibrant neighborhood

Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta has sold nearly 3 acres of its campus to a developer who will build apartments, shops and restaurants, positioning itself for ministries in its thriving urban area.

By Jeff Brumley

Mimi Walker, pastor at Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta, says she never took a course on real estate negotiating while in seminary. In fact, she doesn't know of any seminaries that offer one.

COLUMNS



Jason Coker
My brother, where art thou?

A transformative moment in the refugee crisis.

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Excellence eludes pastors not passionate about vision

"But I think they should," Walker said Tuesday, less than a week after she and the church closed on a deal to sell 3 acres to a developer who plans to build apartments or condominiums on the property.

Pastors need to know how to participate in such arrangements as more churches navigate through membership and financial declines.

"This is a time of transition for churches and I'm not the only one finding myself making changes in property arrangements," Walker told Baptist News Global.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation shares a narrative with many of the country's historic urban churches.

"This was the place to be in the '20s, '30s and '40s," Walker said. "But by the 50s things were already changing, people were moving to the suburbs and some other things within Atlanta made this area difficult" for churches.



Mimi Walker

Druid Hills' membership reached about 3,600 in the 1930s and 1940s, she said. Today it's around 100.

And it made upkeep on the historic building increasingly difficult.

"Every time you turn around there are more expenses."

Creative use of assets

Druid Hills' experience is becoming par for the course for similar congregations.

"I run into that every week," said Bill Wilson, founder of the North Carolina-based Center for Healthy churches.

Churches like Druid Hills are in urban settings from which most of its traditional membership fled or died. Those left behind are worshipping in buildings that exceed current congregations' needs and ability to maintain, Wilson said.

"And that is the story of about a third of the churches in the United States."

On top of that, new and young people in the area usually don't want to worship in those facilities.

"The local megachurch has drained away all the young adults and they are surrounded by people who think their church doesn't have anything to offer them," Wilson said.

While many churches abandoned downtowns and other urban areas with the masses over the decades, those who remained behind now face yet another challenge: "a tidal surge back to the center of the city."

Resurging downtowns are generating restaurants and nightclubs and other venues all thriving with young people.

What they're not generating is membership for the struggling churches nearby.

"These urban churches that think they are in this wasteland are slowly discovering here come the people and we're not prepared for them — and we are going to have to be very creative with how we use our assets," he said.

But throwing money at splashy worship won't be enough, he added.

"It's a changing paradigm of ministry away from the attractional model where you have a good choir and hope people will come," he said. "Worship style is not a predictor for success."

What is a predictor of success in drawing young people is service. They want their church to be a conduit for their own social and ministry work in the surrounding communities, according to Wilson.

"They want a meaningful opportunity to make a difference in the world, worship and community," he said. "People don't want to come to church just to be entertained — that will be the death of the megachurch."

But it's these sorts of issues, as well as challenges around property, that city-center congregations will need to address — and soon.

Caring for communities

Though there are plenty of churches which haven't been able to make the transition, there are many who have.

George Bullard

By George Bullard Early in my ministry I served on the national missions staff. .

World religions, up close and personal
Doyle Sager

By Doyle Sager Remember when studies of world religions were abstract and theoretical? No...

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HERALD/MID-ATLANTIC

World's restoration is focus of young adult gathering

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Kairos event will explore the God who is "always creating and recreating," say leaders.

Baptist church uncertain why it was targeted by anti-gay protesters

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MOST READ NEWS

One of those is The Church at Clarendon, a Baptist congregation in Arlington, Va., that today has a 10-story tower, including residential units, rising out of its historic church building.

The complex was built after the church leased its air rights to a real estate development firm for 99 years.

Completed in 2012, the facility retained the historic steeple and pillared façade of the former First Baptist Church. The congregation occupies the first two stories with the remaining eight floors of upscale apartments, more than half of which are designated as affordable housing.

The church's heavily remodeled education building also houses offices and educational space for the John Leland Center for Theological Studies.

The arrangement is one that works for both the church and seminary and for the surrounding community, said Jim Johnson, senior pastor at The Church at Clarendon.

"Two-thirds are affordable housing, which meets the social justice objectives of the church," Johnson said.

The mixed religious and residential use also provides opportunities to welcome resident and community members into the church's spaces. Some come downstairs to worship and some have even joined the congregation after doing so, Johnson said.



The Church at Clarendon

"All without coercion," he added.

The church also offers a yoga class open to the public.

"We have really good attendance with the yoga, which ... communicates in a larger way that we care about our community," he said.

Abundant ministry opportunities

Druid Hills has also taken a community-service approach to its revival in conjunction with its property sale.

Over the last decade it has joined forces with the local neighborhood association and a grassroots, faith-based nonprofit agency for work with the homeless and other issues.

It's also opened a 1928 church building — the structure it is keeping after the recent sale — for arts, dance and yoga exhibits, Walker said.

But some of that is curtailed while the facility undergoes renovations being funded by the sale of the property that included an educational building, parking lots, social hall and kitchen building and two homes. The developer was on the property doing preparation work for the eventual demolition.



Druid Hills Baptist Church (DHBC photo)

"It's double chaos around here."

Walker said she's learned a lot about how the real estate and government worlds work in the past year. It was during those months that the church and developer had to get the property rezoned.

In the meantime, Druid Hills is worshipping with a neighboring Methodist church, alternating Sundays for preaching and readings.

But it will be worth it when the dwellings, shops and restaurants open up in a part of Atlanta that's already teeming with new residences and businesses.

Druid Hills plans to be ready when that and its own renovations are completed.

"The traffic is going to be terrible, but the opportunity for ministry is going to be great," Walker said.

— *Baptist News Global's reporting on innovative congregational ministries is part of the Pacesetter Initiative, funded in part by the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation.*

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Brace for Big Changes on Poncey-Highland Church Land (FORMERLY OWNED

Friday, January 16, 2015, by Josh Green



[Renderings courtesy Lord Aeck Sargen. Photos by Curbed Atlanta]

By DRUID HILLS
BAPTIST church

It's been about a year since Curbed broke news that Poncey-Highland property owned by historic **Druid Hills Baptist Church** was being hawked to developers with hopes of bringing a mixed-use project to the area. Along the way, we've seen a few updates — renderings, generic descriptions and breakdowns — but now comes one of *biblical* proportions! After the jump, you'll find an updated progress report, timeline and breakdown of what the development will offer. Also, it has an official name now: **675 N. Highland**.

- Developer **Joe Laster** said he and Abraham Properties officially closed on the land for the project last **Friday**, the same day chainlink fencing went up around the property. Plans for the building permit were submitted Wednesday.
 - Some asbestos removal and demolition work began earlier this week, and grading and utility work is slated to begin, roughly, in **mid-March**.
 - The project — which will rise along North Highland, Blue Ridge and Seminole avenues, across from **Flip Burger** — will feature "**125** high-end residential units." Laster said they're purposely not committing to words like "condo" or "apartment" just yet.
 - Below those so-called "residential units" will be **12,000** square feet of retail and restaurant space fronting North Highland Avenue. To be exact, two retail spaces and three restaurants are slated for the strip, with the eateries promising "lots of sidewalk dining." No news yet on tenants. But good news if you're a fan of urban vibrancy.
 - Around the corner on **Blue Ridge Avenue** will be 7,000 square feet of "storefront office space ... broken up into smaller suites for neighborhood businesses."
 - Altogether, the **Lord Aeck Sargent-designed** project likely means the demolition of some church office space, at least two existing homes and some parking lots. (Officials have previously said the development will feature nearly **400** parking spaces).
 - The goal is for everything to be "up and running" by **June 30, 2016**, six months later than the original, pie-in-the-sky date of January 2016.
- Amid all this, the actual church — which recently turned **100 years old** and sold only excess office space, parking lots and other property for the mixed-use project — is using some of the sale proceeds to renovate its main sanctuary building, Laster said.
- *By Curbed Atlanta contributor Tyler Estep*
- First Look: Condos, Retail, Offices Bound for Poncey-Highland <<http://atlanta.curbed.com/archives/2014/08/26/first-look-condos-retail-offices-bound-for-ponceyhighland.php>> [Curbed]
 - Behold, New Look For Poncey-Highland Church Site <<http://atlanta.curbed.com/archives/2014/02/21/behold-new-look-for-ponceyhighland-church-site.php>> [Curbed]
 - Poncey-Highland Church Land Could Be Destined for Mixed-Use <<http://atlanta.curbed.com/archives/2014/01/14/ponceyhighland-church-land-could-be-destined-for-mixeduse.php>> [Curbed]

From the Atlanta Business Chronicle

[:http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2015/10/14/big-bethel-to-join-benoit-russell-on-120-million.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2015/10/14/big-bethel-to-join-benoit-russell-on-120-million.html)

Big Bethel to join Benoit/Russell on \$120 million Auburn Ave. development

Oct 14, 2015, 6:04am EDT



Maria Saporta

Contributing Writer- *Atlanta Business Chronicle*

Email

Historic Big Bethel AME Church on Auburn Avenue in downtown Atlanta is launching a \$120 million redevelopment project in partnership with the Benoit Group and Russell New Urban – two Atlanta-based firms.

The project – to be built in four phases over four years – will include the rehabilitation of Bethel Towers, a new parking deck with up to 850 spaces, the development of a mixed-use 1,000-bed student housing complex with 30,000 square feet of retail, and the refurbishment of the church’s administrative offices along Auburn Avenue.

Big Bethel signed a memo of understanding with its development partners on the project – Eddy Benoit with the Benoit Group and Jerome Russell with Russell New Urban.

The first phase will involve a complete renovation of Bethel Towers – a 180-unit residential tower that was built in 1971. All residents will have to be relocate during the reconstruction. Benoit said the decision to renovate the existing building rather than to demolish it and start anew will allow Big Bethel to provide affordable housing for its residents.

The first phase will cost between \$15 million and \$18 million, Benoit said.

The second phase is a parking deck in the center of the block to house between 800 and 850 cars, The deck will be available to the development and the general public. Benoit said the garage will cost between \$15 million and \$20 million.

The centerpiece of the development will be the third phase – a major residential development that will target students at **Georgia State University**.

The design envisions a pedestrian environment to encourage people to stroll along the project's streets and hop on the Atlanta Streetcar that connects **Ebenezer Baptist Church/King** Center with Centennial Olympic Park.

That mixed-use phase will include about 30,000 square feet of retail that will be developed with Paces Properties. That phase is expected to cost between \$60 million and \$70 million.

The final phase will focus on four lots along the Auburn Avenue corridor for development of the church's administrative space, ministry activity and additional retail. That includes a vacant lot as well as existing commercial space being used by the church.

When asked if Big Bethel will respect the historic integrity of the district by not demolishing any of the buildings along Auburn Avenue, Benoit said nothing will be demolished, but that there could be significant retrofit.

Big Bethel's pastor – the Rev. John Foster - said: "It is not the intention of the developer or the church to demolish any of the properties but to retrofit them."

That was not always the case when it came to Big Bethel. More than a decade ago, Big Bethel partnered with a developer for property it owned across the street. Several historic buildings along Auburn Avenue were demolished – either completely or everything behind the facade.

On Tuesday, the speakers at the signing of the MOU seemed to be more respectful of the corridor's history. Speakers included A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress; City Council President Ceasar Mitchell; City Councilman Kwanza Hall and community activist Mtaminika Youngblood.

Developer Jerome Russell choked up when he remembered how vital Big Bethel was to Atlanta businessman Jesse Hill Jr., one of the closest friends of his father – Herman J. Russell. The two of them would meet at Butler Street YMCA across the street.

"My father and Mr. Hill spoke every day over a 35-year period," Jerome Russell said, adding that he is proud to be part of the Big Bethel redevelopment project as he knew his father and Jesse Hill would be. "I wish they were here to see this. We are going to make them real proud."

Big Bethel, the oldest African American church in Atlanta dating back to 1847, had been considering options for how to best redevelop its seven acres on the eastern edge of downtown along one of the most historically significant corridors in the South.

In 1957, John Wesley Dobbs told Fortune Magazine that Sweet Auburn was the "richest Negro street in the world." It also is the street where Martin Luther King Jr. was born and where black-owned businesses were clustered to serve the community during segregation.

Dobbs was considered the unofficial mayor of Auburn Avenue – and he was the grandfather of Atlanta's first African-American mayor – Maynard Jackson.

Stanley Pritchett, president of **Morris Brown College** and who serves as chair pro-tem of Big Bethel's Steward board, reminisced of when he was younger and going to church and frequenting the various businesses on the street – the drugstore, the dentist, his doctor, restaurants – virtually all the community's needs – along Auburn and Edgewood Avenues.

Sweet Auburn developed a national mystique – a street that blossomed with the civil rights movement, iconic establishments such as the Royal Peacock and Atlanta Life, as well as several of the most influential black churches in the city. In addition to Big Bethel and Ebenezer, there is Wheat Street Baptist Church and Butler Street CME and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church.

One of the sad ironies is that as society and business became more integrated, fortunes along Auburn Avenue began to suffer as people could shop and eat wherever they wanted.

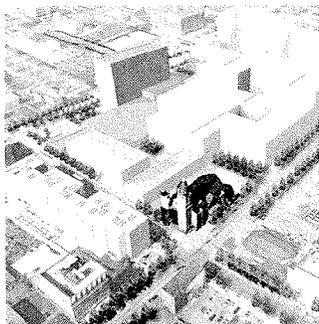
Foster, who has been promoting Big Bethel's Vision 2020, reinforced that point on Tuesday when he remembered a conversation he had when moving to Atlanta.

"Three years ago when I first came to Big Bethel, a friend came to me and said some very discouraging words: 'Sweet Auburn is not sweet any more,'" Foster told those gathered in front of the church to mark the MOU signing. "I'm here today to say the 'sweet' on Auburn Avenue is alive and well."

Maria Saporta covers non-profits and philanthropy

BIG BETHEL AME CHURCH CAMPUS - PLANNING STUDY

Atlanta, Georgia



Big Bethel AME, located on historic Auburn Avenue, retained Bleakly Advisory Group and TSW to develop concepts for nearby parcels that are owned by the church. With the creation of a church campus, along with the addition of a mix of residential and commercial, Big Bethel AME hopes to encourage continued revitalization of the Sweet Auburn neighborhood and complement the streetcar that runs along Auburn Avenue.

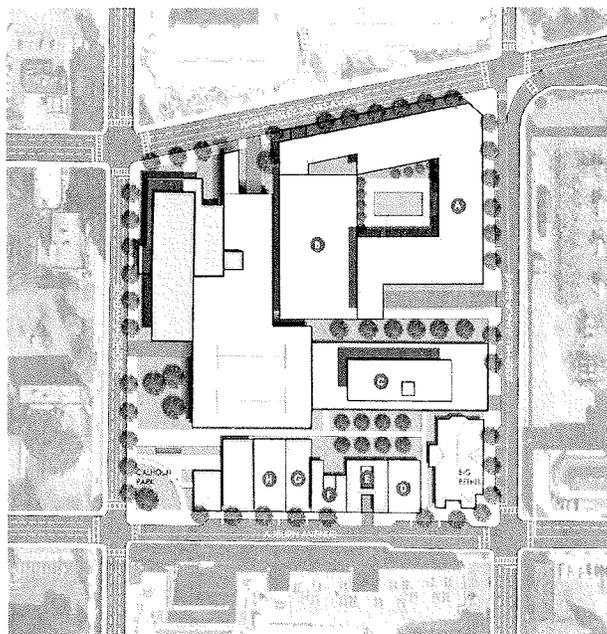
Client:
Big Bethel AME Church

Project Status:
Design completed in 2014

- Project Overview:**
- Planning and design to promote continued revitalization of the Sweet Auburn neighborhood
 - Concept plans for new church buildings and a mix of residential and commercial
 - All concept plans include a shared parking deck

TSW developed three different concept plans for the campus area showing a mix of residential and commercial uses based on market studies. One of the critical features of all of the plans includes a large, shared parking deck, since the congregation's current surface parking lot on John Wesley Dobbs will be developed. Additionally, Big Bethel AME is hoping to build a new Life Center that has been incorporated into all of the different concept plans.

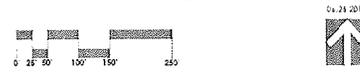
✱ The next step for the planning process includes the selection of a developer to move the implementation forward (a RFP was issued in Fall 2014).



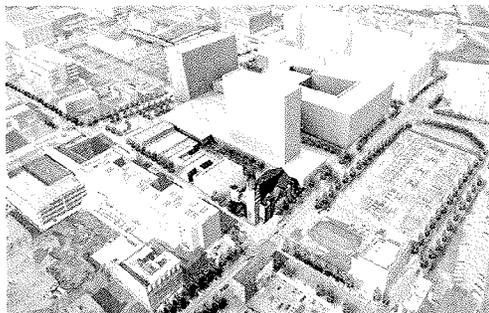
LAND USE SUMMARY

- Totals:**
Proposed Units: 154
Proposed Residential: 184,700 SF
Proposed Commercial: 5,600 SF
Proposed Life Center: 10,000 SF
Proposed Parking Deck: 568 spaces
- Proposed Building A: (5 stories)**
Residential Units: 144
Residential Total: 184,500 SF
Parking Provided in Deck: 232 (1.6 per unit)
- Proposed Parking Deck B: (7 stories)**
Parking Spaces: 568
- Existing Building C: (15 stories)**
Big Bethel Tower Units: 182
Parking Provided in Existing Deck: 25
- Proposed Building D: (2 stories)**
Life Center: 10,000 SF
Parking Provided in Deck: 300 (spaces for Big Bethel AME)
- Existing Building E: (2 stories)**
Bethel Offices: 9,235 SF
- Existing Building F: (2 stories)**
Bethel Shop + Grocery: 6,500 SF
Owned by King Come Co. & Son, Inc.
- Existing Building G: (1 story)**
Vacant: 4,900 SF
- Proposed Building H: (1 story)**
Commercial: 5,600 SF

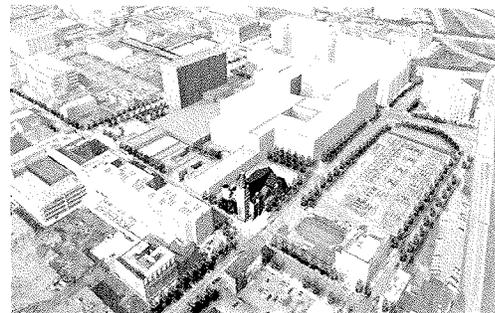
**CONCEPT PLAN A
BIG BETHEL AME CHURCH CAMPUS**



www.tsw-design.com



CONCEPT PLAN A
BIG BETHEL AME CHURCH CAMPUS
08/24/2014



CONCEPT PLAN B
BIG BETHEL AME CHURCH CAMPUS
08/24/2014

**SPI-1 Downtown Special Public Interest District
Fact Sheet
Z-07-38**

- Standardize sidewalk requirements throughout district with an emphasis on required elements of sidewalks (i.e. minimum widths, materials, street trees and lighting)
- Provide regulations for Supplemental Zones (in certain areas) to enrich the sidewalk experience by encouraging outdoor dining and merchandise displays.
- Add regulations that govern the relationship between buildings and sidewalks and streets – i.e. active ground-floor uses and storefront windows are required and blank walls are limited
- Identify Storefront Streets to create primary pedestrian streets with street-level retail and other pedestrian amenities i.e. shopping streets
- Provide additional screening requirements for loading areas, docks and mechanical accessory features
- Regulate curb cuts to balance the comfort and needs of pedestrians with those of automobiles
- Provide design requirements for parking structures to have the appearance of a horizontal storied building, be architecturally cohesive with the surrounding block faces and building uses and conceal automobiles and lighting
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements (particularly for residential uses), provide maximum space totals for all uses, reduce off-street loading requirements, expand bicycle and moped parking space requirements
- Include regulations that support Transportation Demand Management activities
- Protect historic resources particularly in Fairlie-Poplar and the Terminus/Hotel Row area
- Provide illustrative drawings for clarity and to enhance understanding
- Expand the Centennial Olympic Park Development Review Committee (DRC) review area to include project reviews within the entire SPI-1 district. This advisory group shall provide the Bureau of Planning formal comments on special administrative permit (SAP) applications within the district.

For more information visit:

www.atlantaga.gov/government/planning/burofplanning.aspx

Or contact: the City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning
~~Enrique Basounana at 404/330-6145 or ebasounana@atlantaga.gov~~

Creating inspiring places, while meeting Midtown requirements.

The Midtown Development Checklist

Project _____
 Location _____
 Developer _____

Incentives
 Transfer of Development Rights Retail Bonus
 Affordable Housing Bonus Transit Station Area Bonus

Does your building meet the requirements?

SB	Site and Building Organization	ACHIEVED
SB-1	Mass and Block Dimensions	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
SB-2	Edges, Setbacks and Site Coverage	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
SB-3	Heights	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
SB-4	Entries and Access	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
Site and Building Requirements Achieved		<input type="checkbox"/>

ST	Streetscapes	ACHIEVED
ST-1	Sidewalk Zone	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
ST-2	Tree and Furniture Zone	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
	Hardscape Materials	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
	Tree Species & Tree Spacing	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
	Furniture (Bike Racks, Benches, Trash Receptacles)	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>
	Streetlights & Streetlight Spacing	REQ <input type="checkbox"/>

Streetscapes Requirements Achieved

Does your building inspire?

BD	Buildings	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS AWARDED
BD-1	Ground Level	6	
	Active Uses	-	
	Storefront Design	-	
	Grading	-	
BD-2	Facades + Enclosure	4	
	Materials	-	
	Articulation	-	
BD-3	Roofs	3	
	Active Uses	-	
	Materials	-	
BD-4	Parking	4	
	Parking Structures	-	
	Shared, Carpool Parking	-	
	ZEV Parking, Charging Stations	-	
	On-Street Parking	-	
BD-5	Performance & Systems	3	
	LEED and/or Energy Star Certified	-	
	Green Infrastructure	-	
	Real-time Transit Arrival Displays	-	

Total Building Points 20

OS	Supplemental Zones and Open Spaces	POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS AWARDED
OS-1	Supplemental Zones	5	
	Building and Zone Interface	-	
	Active Uses	-	
OS-2	Publicly Accessible Open Spaces	5	
	Location	-	
	Active Uses	-	
	Materials	-	

Total Open Space Points 10

Total Inspiration Points		POINTS POSSIBLE	POINTS AWARDED
Total Building Points		20	
Total Open Space Points		10	
Total Points		30	

00-10 : NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
 11-20 : ABOVE & BEYOND
 21-30 : MIDTOWN VISIONARY