



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Dear Member or Friend of First Presbyterian Church,

Throughout late summer and early fall of 2006, the Vision Team led the congregation in a study of the Great Ends, or purposes, of the Presbyterian church. We explored who we are and what we are about, in hope of discerning where we are going to make a good church better, to provide a sustain able witness for Christ in our community. You may remember filling out a questionnaire which was a survey to see how we as a church are doing in meeting our purposes, and engaging in discussions after hearing sermons on the Great Ends (found on page 176 of the *Presbyterian Handbook*). The Vision Team has now finished its report on these activities, and Session has accepted that report, and authorized the Vision Team to share it with the congregation.

The report does not look like a business plan, because the church is not a business. Just as the children's sermons from the Great Ends study pointed out, God in Christ is our foundation, our roof, and in faithful discipleship, our plan. The Vision Team took all the data which was collected and employed a discernment process, mediated by the Holy Spirit, to locate the general themes which emerged from the survey and discussions the congregation supplied.

As promised, it is time for the congregation to be invited back to work in the discernment process. We're asking that you read over the findings for each of the Six Great Ends, and prayerfully consider them. Come prepared to the Congregational Meeting in February to help point the congregation towards that Great End which has the highest priority at the present time.

Of course all six Great Ends are vital to pursue. How specific plans will be developed from the framework the Vision Team has provided, whether it is done by Session, by individual councils, or by a special team or individual appointed by Session, will be decided by Session.

Yours in Christ

The Vision Team

Margaret Searing, Chair

A Vision for The First Presbyterian Church
Plattsburgh, New York

MAKING A GOOD CHURCH BETTER 2007

We yearn for a deeper life together, and are being called to a deeper commitment in Jesus Christ. What helps us meet this deeper yearning is where our vision should point.

A Vision founded on the Great Ends of the Church

1. PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

- ✦ Embracing an attitude of welcome to change and a deliberate reaching out to: new members to seek greater and quicker inclusion into or faith community; youth in every aspect of church life; and people on the edges of our faith community.
- ✦ Engaging the congregation in confronting a world that is competing for their allegiance to Christ.

2. SHELTER, NURTURE, AND FELLOWSHIP

- ✦ Meeting the congregation's strong desire for deeper connection with one another, and emphasizing commitment, through: programs such as participation in discipleship groups, intergenerational events, and more and broader adult education; fostering meaningful conversations; and the lifting up of strong role models for spiritual growth.

3. MAINTENANCE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

- ✦ Working towards a blended balance of authentic, passionate worship, in community.
- ✦ Accepting come change to keep our youth and young adults
- ✦ Fostering an awareness of the experience of the holy in all our activities

4. PRESERVATION OF THE TRUTH

- ✦ Embracing an attitude of radical welcoming on all levels and non-judgmental acceptance of some change.
- ✦ Employing varied forms of engagement for members to talk about God and encourage the search for the truth.

5. PROMOTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

- ✦ Becoming involved in, and not shying away from, social justice issues, particularly affirming Gay and Lesbian members within our own congregation.
- ✦ Fostering FULL involvement in the social justice area of every congregation member who is able.

6. EXHIBITION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- ✦ Equipping the saints via: small group ministries that teach us how to live our beliefs in a complex and difficult world, and that help us learn how to conduct ourselves in personal relationships that reflect those beliefs; recreation-based, family, and youth-oriented ministries.
 - ✦ Assisting new members in sharing in our life together through our church vision, the Presbyterian Handbook, and Paul Heller's sermon series on the Great Ends.
 - ✦ Fostering awareness of, and embracing participation in, a Kingdom that has already begun, one that is global and that includes our partnerships around the world and is celebrated in such events as the World Day of Prayer and World Wide Communion Sunday.
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