

VISION STATEMENT for Franklin Federated Church (edited mid-June, 2021)

PURPOSE STATEMENT: Franklin Federated Church is a Community of Abundant Welcome to All, Growing Together in Christ and Serving with Love.

Following Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we will seek to live into the following Vision over the next five years

A Community of Abundant Welcome to All

We will be **both inward and outward focused**--taking care of the needs of people who are already part of the congregation in order to equip ourselves to reach out and connect with new people and partner with others to meet the needs of the wider community.

- Continue our Connect Groups and expand them to include people who are not members of the church.
- Train “super welcomers” who welcome those who come to worship; have others who reach out to new families with freshly baked bread and welcome bags.

We will **be visible as a church**, participating in town/community events and holding some of our church events outside our building--both on our grounds and in public places in order to be more accessible to the community who may not know our family of faith exists.

- Tie church activities into town events, such as porch events during Farmers’ Markets and cook-outs at the church for the public after concerts.
- Make vibrant music, e.g., hold concerts in our parking lot; have musical theatre events.

We want to be a **multigenerational congregation welcoming people of all ages**, including youth, but we realize we have work to do to get there. Based on the demographics in our town, the first group in our community to which we will reach out will be people in their 50’s and 60’s, heads of multi-generational households. Some specifics include:

- Hold activities that are specifically designed for both children and grandparents, such as: pumpkin carving, Advent wreath craft groups, Friday night square dancing, preschool play groups.
- Expand our use of technology to include: media screens in our worship space, tech equipment that enables us to enhance the livestream and in-person experience, expansion of our social media presence (Instagram, Twitter.)
- Have a building that has the feeling of a “church home” becoming fully accessible to all; inviting other community groups to use our building; becoming a “green building;”

having a stage/space for musicians; creating outdoor space - with sliding glass doors connecting to dining room - that is usable for worship or youth activities; having an attractive and functional kitchen/dining room that can be used for various activities, including worship. In order to live out the purpose Christ calls us to, we may need to consider the possibility of a completely new or redesigned building.

Growing Together in Christ

We recognize that the core of our faith is **being in relationship with the God revealed in Jesus Christ**. In the words of our Church Covenant, “We promise to walk with one another - in celebration and in sorrow, in confidence and in doubt, in forgiveness and fellowship, and in the Love of Jesus Christ.” Some specifics include:

- Engage in vibrant worship that transforms our hearts and lives and forms us as a community of faith. This type of worship may include but not be limited to:
 - creative elements that appeal to a wide audience, including a specific focus on the possibilities for music in worship
 - leaving doors open so sounds can be heard outside, or creating an overflow area for people who do not want to come in - where we can broadcast a video of the service (e.g., stream video to a screen in the front window)
 - weeknight options with a “different vibe”
 - continuing livestream even when we meet in person
 - outdoor services in alternate locations (e.g., parking lot or public park)
- Offer diverse spiritual education opportunities for individuals at different points in their spiritual journey, potentially including: “Bible Study for Dummies;” Adult Sunday School before or after church; theme exploration prior to worship; Bible study in alternate locations (e.g., pub); films and videos, followed by group discussion; Vacation Bible School.
- Develop and share spiritual practices, such as virtual and in-person prayer groups, spiritual retreats, meditation, yoga, labyrinth walks, etc.

Serving in Love

We believe our faith calls us to action, to **help change lives for the better**. That action involves serving our neighbors in love. As Jesus made clear, our neighbors include anyone/everyone in need, both people who are like us and people who are different. Matthew 25 instructs us to feed the hungry, care for the sick, and work to free those who are oppressed, as Jesus did. With that in mind, our activities **will include hands-on work**, not just monetary giving. We will:

- Work to alleviate hunger, starting in our own community. Some specifics may include: having a garden to get fresh food to the Franklin Food Pantry; being involved in Common Cathedral (or a similar type of organization).

- Hold days of service and mission projects/trips, partnering with other organizations such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Be involved in social causes, taking on current issues and actively working on them, to promote a more just and equal world. Have courage to stand up for the underrepresented. Have ministries/teams focused on this, such as Racism Awareness Team and Compassion Ministry.
- Sponsor educational events that may not be specifically spiritual but help us develop as full human beings and connect with our wider community, such as: retirement planning, applying to college, elder care options, strategies for the sandwich generation, dealing with mental health issues, addressing loneliness, etc.
- Sponsor support groups open to church members and community, such as groups focused on bereavement, caregivers, stress management, divorce, etc.