



# Trinity United Methodist Church

A Vision for 2005 to 2015  
and  
A Process for Developing a Strategic Plan

Prepared By  
The Long-Range Planning Committee

Approved By  
The Church Council

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## **Overview**

Trinity United Methodist Church has a steadfast mission, from which flows a proposed vision for 2015. This document reinforces Trinity's mission and communicates a vision for our Church in ten years. It explains the steps taken to discern God's will for Trinity and how the vision emerged. It introduces five inter-related Trinity Themes, and recommends how Church Council might establish a process for creating strategic goals and integrated plans that would guide progress toward the vision of Trinity in 2015.

## **Trinity's Mission**

To make disciples for Christ dedicated to making a difference in the world

## **The Process of Discerning God's Will for Trinity**

A vision for Trinity emerged from an intentional process throughout 2004 to discern the will of God. Every step, no matter how small or how large, was wrapped in prayer, seeking God's voice in all thoughts and conversations. In keeping with the metaphor of "Trinity is a river", the concentrated planning during 2004 was a continuation of the flow from all prior years, just as the recommendations for proceeding in 2005 will effectively channel the flow of Trinity into the future. The steps taken to date in this intentional planning process are summarized below, and the work products are archived as source documents for a Trinity 10-Year Strategic Plan that would build on this report.

In 2004, the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) reviewed past planning efforts and actively engaged current lay leaders, the Trinity staff, the congregation as small groups, community leaders and visionary perspectives in the following ways:

- A review of the LRPC Report to Church Council from February 17, 2003, and the supporting congregational survey from November 2002.
- A review of accomplishments from the Task Forces created by Church Council to implement the LRPC recommendations of February 17, 2003.
- A review of the Trinity Master Site Plan and the 1995 ministry-focused planning process that gave rise to the Master Site Plan, which is still being implemented.
- Three professionally facilitated visioning workshops with congregational representatives, Trinity staff and Church Council.
- Internal and external demographic analyses based on Trinity membership records and the most recent US census data, with the external analysis professionally commissioned specifically for church planning.
- An inventory of existing space usage and comparison to the Master Site Plan, from which recommendations were made to the Trinity Building Committee in June 2004, as charged by Church Council.

- Outside reading by individual LRPC members of recommended literature authored by church visionaries and secular professionals specialized in organizational leadership and planning.
- Facilitated discussions with 22 organized small groups at Trinity, including virtually every Sunday School class, organized service ministries, music ministries, youth program, etc., plus multiple opportunities for the congregation at-large to provide similar input.
- Two luncheons in December 2004 with 15 broadly representative community leaders to gain an outside perspective on the trends and needs significant to Trinity's planning for the future.

From these collective efforts came an inspired vision penned by our Senior Minister and fully affirmed by the Long-Range Planning Committee. Also, from these efforts, emerged five Transcending Themes that help to integrate Trinity's multi-faceted aspirations, while reinforcing the overall coordination of ministries that best serves Trinity's mission.

## **The Current Context for Planning**

Consideration of the current situation and major trends gives Trinity a frame of reference for making strategic choices among many good options. This is derived from internal demographics and trends, external demographics and trends, needs of the congregation, needs in the surrounding community, and knowledge of broader issues facing churches like Trinity. Together, this "landscape" is the planning context for Trinity to set 10-year goals and plans during 2005.

Trinity's current membership is distributed evenly across age groups, with the exception of lower numbers of college-age and early-to-mid 20s members. Adult singles of all ages currently comprise approximately 33% of the membership, with an increasing trend. This broad group includes never-married people, divorcees, single parents, widows and widowers.

Gainesville and Alachua County anticipate a steady population growth rate of 2-2.5% per year, with much of that growth expected in two demographic groups, driven by the presence of the University of Florida. The number of young professionals associated with post-graduate education is expected to increase, with some proportion remaining here and most representing temporary residents. The number of retirees drawn to the amenities of a university town is expected to increase, representing retirees financially able to relocate. Also, the proportion of single parent households in the community is higher than national norms. Within the community, approximately 66% express strong or moderate faith and 33% express no faith; Christianity is favored by 70-80% of those with faith.

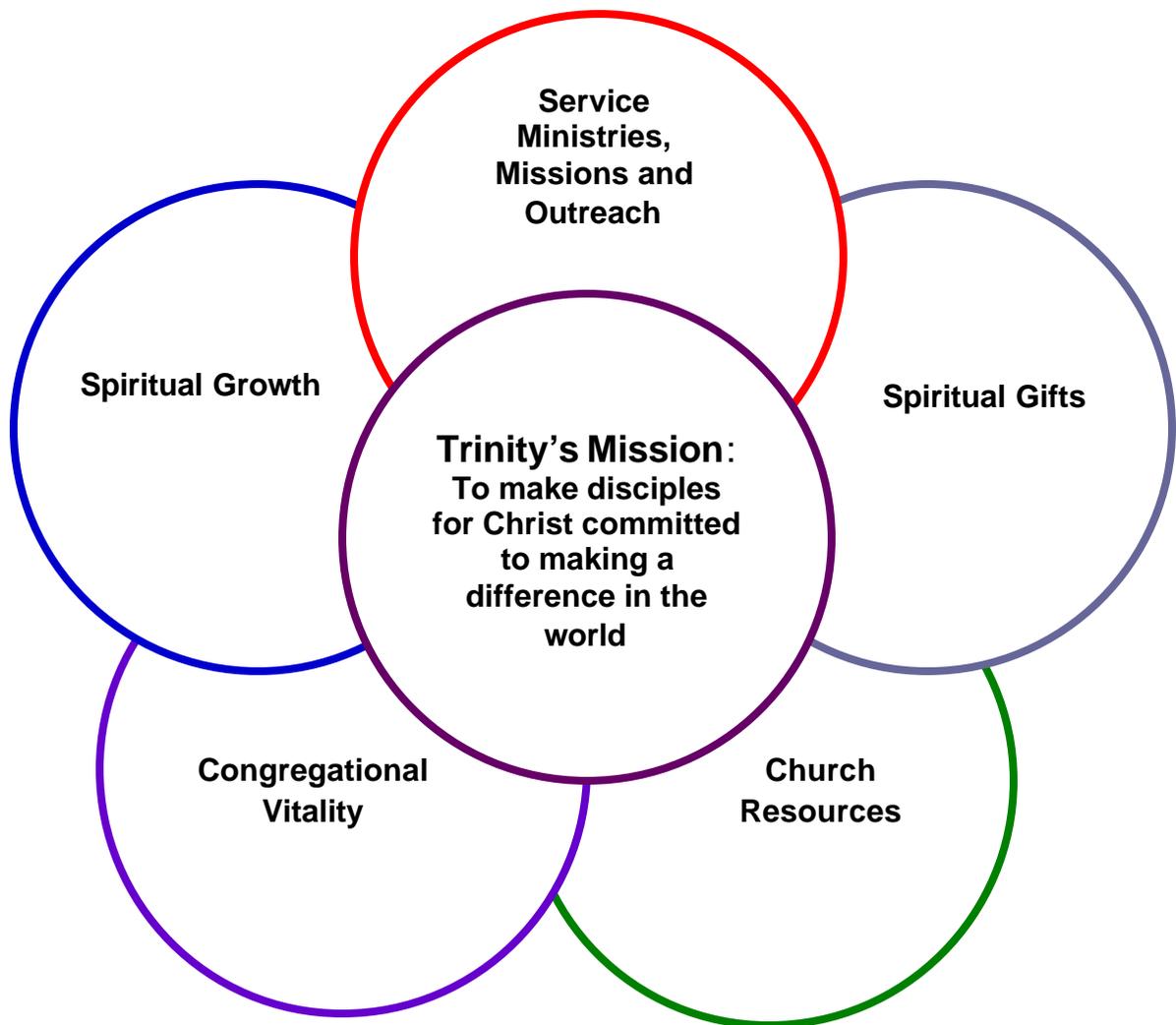
While Trinity membership has increased since relocating to NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, the rate of growth has been less than the growth rate of the surrounding community. Similarly, while Trinity is an ethnically diverse congregation relative to other Methodist congregations, the diversity is less than the community at large.

Needs of the community represented by Trinity's current membership tend to revolve around: (a) support of families of all kinds (dual parent/single income, dual career households, single-parent families, etc.), (b) Recreation, Christian fellowship and life enrichment, (c) Life skills and

support for stressors and challenges, (d) Moral mentoring and accountability, and (e) Activities with spiritual purpose and meaning.

Needs of the community at-large tend to revolve around Gainesville and surrounding communities as “a tale of two cities”. The description above conveys an upwardly mobile, educated and skilled population, albeit with significant needs of its own. However, 23% of the households in Alachua County are below the poverty line, and approximately 47% of elementary school children come from such households. In Gainesville, approximately 67% of all arrests are youth, ages 12-19, and approximately 80% of all crime occurs between 3:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. This situation tends to be geographically concentrated, but every part of the community is directly and indirectly affected. Community leaders fear that solutions for the underlying socio-economic issues and inter-generational cycles are intractable without sustained church-community leadership, active personal involvements and cooperation among congregations.

### **Five Transcending Trinity Themes**



Foremost in a plan for the next ten years is the mission and vision that God has placed on Trinity's heart. Five Transcending Themes, discerned by the same process as above and derived from the same source, will help us to communicate within and among ministries when setting strategic goals, objectives and implementation plans. Just as the Vision Statements on pages 8 and 9 are inter-related, these five themes must be interwoven to support Trinity's Mission of evangelism, as portrayed above. In this section, the general character of each theme is conveyed by a very brief description and summaries of small-group input obtained during September-November, 2004.

## **Theme I: Service Ministries, Missions and Outreach**

Trinity has a passion for missions and ministries that meet people at their point of need. Trinity's vision is upwardly and outwardly focused. This passion and focus permeates all that we do.

A total of 227 entries recorded during small-group discussions were related to Service Ministries, Missions and Outreach, which can be summarized by the following ten statements, listed in no particular order:

- Inspirational and educational materials readily accessible for loan and purchase
- After-school enrichment, mentoring, tutoring and recreation at Trinity and extended into the community
- Ever more effective partnerships with community programs to serve the needy, underprivileged and homeless
- Christian education reaching out into the community (e.g. Alpha, Wednesday Night Live)
- Forums and leadership development that foster understanding and diversity across a range of perspectives
- Adult enrichment, recreation, caring and assistance to meet the needs of different demographic groups (e.g., elderly, empty nesters, single parent families, young couples, teens)
- Abundant mission opportunities and support, with a calling of the congregation into missions
- Support ministries for people in crisis and transition
- Accessibility service ministries, especially transportation and parking
- Youth programs of all types a high priority

## **Theme II: Spiritual Growth**

Trinity is a church family that longs to grow in God's grace, to be nurtured by the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power, and to extend Christ's unconditional love to others.

A total of 71 entries recorded during small-group discussions were related to Spiritual Growth, which can be summarized by the following six statements, listed in no particular order:

- Ample small groups of all kinds (e.g., Sunday school classes, Disciple and Bible studies, Wednesday Night Live, etc.)

- Ample and diverse venues for meditation and prayer
- Infuse service ministries and enrichment programs, and everything we do, with messages of the Holy Spirit
- Grow programs designed for spiritual growth and expression (e.g., Alpha, Emmaus, Music Ministries)
- Theological training for laity, progressively developing a depth of understanding
- Worship as a cornerstone for spiritual growth; continue to illuminate, instruct and challenge

### **Theme III: Spiritual Gifts**

Trinity exemplifies the Body of Christ. Ours is a congregation truly blessed with different skills and talents. It takes a world of differences to make a difference in the world.

A total of 39 entries recorded during small-group discussions were related to Spiritual Gifts, which can be summarized by the following four statements, listed in no particular order:

- Intentional awareness and development of spiritual gifts, talents and skills
- Intentional development of leadership and volunteerism according to individual gifting
- Intentional shepherding and mentoring to cultivate belonging and involvement
- “Every Person in Ministry” and “Each One, Reach One”

### **Theme IV: Congregational Vitality**

Trinity is a warm, vibrant, accepting community of Christians. We want others to be welcomed home, just as we have been. We celebrate our growing diversity in Christ.

A total of 135 entries recorded during small-group discussions were related to Congregational Vitality, which can be summarized by the following seven statements, listed in no particular order:

- Deep sense of caring, welcoming and acceptance, expressed through actions as well as words
- Strong connections within similar groups and among dissimilar groups
- Strong connections within Trinity and beyond Trinity
- Openness, mutual respect and genuine appreciation for diversity, true to our Christian core
- Enriching experiences
- Fellowship, within and across all segments of the congregation
- Vibrant and diverse music
- Passionate, personal and Spirit-led worship that enlightens and lifts our hearts to God

## Theme V: Church Resources

Trinity is aware that its many blessings flow from God. We are called to be generous, compassionate, and responsible stewards with everything God has given us.

A total of 148 entries recorded during small-group discussions were related to Church Resources, which can be summarized by the following nine statements, listed in no particular order:

- Access to all areas of Trinity for the infirm, disabled and elderly
- Sanctified and holy spaces for intimate worship and services
- Spaces designed to foster fellowship and relationships
- Facilities that are shared to connect Trinity with the community
- Debt managed to enhance rather than detract from Trinity's mission
- Full-time staff and appropriate facilities for all the priority ministries
- Visitor-friendly signage and parking
- Recreation and enrichment facilities (e.g. sports fields, music rooms, art studios, computer lab)
- State-of-the-art information and communication systems

These five Transcending Themes represent fundamental perspectives that must be represented in everything that Trinity plans to do. All five themes are inherent in every ministry Trinity has, although every ministry tends to emphasize one or two. Likewise, church staff and lay leaders tend to have aptitudes and passions that can be more readily identified with the character of particular themes. The future envisioned by Trinity truly requires 'the whole to be more than the sum of its parts'. Goals and plans must be coherent within and among ministries to achieve the ten-year vision with excellence. For this reason, the LRPC recommends a planning process below that employs these themes to help foster greater cross-communication and synergy.

### A Vision for Trinity in 2015

1. Trinity will be a **vibrant, worshiping community of faith** with Spirit inspired worship, relevant messages, dynamic music, and multicultural expression. People will know they are deeply loved by God in Christ, be greatly encouraged by one another, and will be enthusiastically committed to our common vision and mission. (Acts 2:1-13, Appendix I)
2. Trinity will have a highly trained, **actively engaged volunteer ministry** that makes use of foundational leadership principles, engages the spiritual giftedness and expertise of its members so that the number of its members involved in servant ministry is continually increasing. (Exodus 18; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16, Appendix I)
3. Trinity will be **thriving center of missions and outreach** that stretches our church, transforms its participants and brings care, aid, support and the Good News of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ to all. This missional outreach will extend next door, across town and to the farthest parts of the earth. (Matthew 25:31-46; 28:16-20, Appendix I)

4. Trinity will be a **catalytic leader for good** in North Central Florida. It will take the lead often and well in efforts to relieve suffering, unite citizens in worthy causes, and seek common ground. (Philippians 4: 8,9, Appendix I)
5. Trinity will have an expansive and **comprehensive recreation and health ministry** of the highest quality to all ages, with first-rate facilities. (I Corinthians 6:19-20, Appendix I)
6. Trinity's **stellar children and youth ministries** will continue to be beacons of love and grace, welcoming children, youth and families into a growing relationship with God, and they will be the platform from which we launch new and vibrant ministries to meet the needs of children, youth and families around our community. (Mark 10:13-16, Appendix I)
7. Trinity will have a **dynamic ministry to adults** of all ages and stages, living into the culture of "life long learning and life long serving." While ministering to all stages of adulthood, it will be especially sensitive to emerging demographic trends, such as the burgeoning singles and young professional populations in our area, with a commitment to continue having the premier singles ministry in North Central Florida. (Ephesians 2:19-22, Appendix I)
8. Trinity will be a recognized **leader in intergenerational ministries** in our area, celebrating the uniqueness of each stage of life, while affirming the wholeness of the Body of Christ united together. (I Corinthians 12, Appendix I)
9. Trinity will be a **thriving center for vital Christian teaching**, through Sunday School classes, sermons, small groups, lectures, forums, seminars and a mini-seminary for the training and equipping of laypersons. Trinity will hold firm in its Christ-centered focus and fidelity to the historic Christian Creeds. Recognizing, too, that we live in a world of different religious views, we will confidently and graciously engage these different points of view as we seek to live faithfully into our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. (John 3; Acts 15, Appendix I)
10. Trinity will be a **place of financial health**, balancing fiscal responsibility, expansion of facilities, and emerging ministries to meet the needs of a growing congregation. Great attention will be given to ensure that all of our facilities are fully accessible to all. (Malachi 3:8-12; Luke 14:28-30, Appendix I)
11. Trinity will be a place where **prayer permeates all that we do**. The emphasis will be comprehensive, including our entire church family, our pastors and staff, for all our ministries, for missions, and for outreach.

### **A Metaphorical View of the Future as Possum Creek:**

On the campus of Trinity United Methodist Church lie the headwaters of Possum Creek, which flows from this hallowed ground into and through the surrounding community.

The fountainhead or spring is Spirit inspired worship, with vibrant music, relevant messages, engaged worshipers and styles that fit the ever-changing terrain where the creek flows. The creek will bring life-giving nutrients (aid, help, care) to persons far away and very near (missions/outreach); its warm pools will be places of laughter, fun and community. The creek will be a blessing everywhere it touches, bringing life to the community of Gainesville. The eddies will be places of special caring for persons until those being helped are able to get into the flow of the creek. Children and persons of all ages will camp by its banks, have picnics, present plays, dance and play music; they will learn from the river of the inexorable love of almighty God; they will experience the washing and refreshing of its baptism waters and hear the sweet sounds of the Spirit in the soft trickle of the flow. Just as the rivers and streams in the Bible bring life and vitality and healing and food, so will the river flowing into and through the community of Trinity sweep its members into vibrant spiritual growth and vital servant ministry. (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Psalm 46:4; Revelation 22:1-6, Appendix I)



### **Approved LRPC Recommendations Toward a Strategic Plan**

1. The LRPC recommended that Church Council adopt the Vision and Themes, as proposed by the LRPC and amended by Church Council in support of Trinity's Mission, as the basis and framework for continued strategic planning in 2005.
2. The LRPC recommended that Church Council adopt the process outlined in Table 1 on page 11 to complete a strategic plan for Trinity.

**Table 1: Proposed Strategic Planning Process for 2005**

Step	Group	Actions	Deadline
1.	LRPC	Introduce to Church Council the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision for Trinity 2015</li> <li>• Transcending Themes</li> <li>• Planning Process for 2005</li> </ul>	Feb 2005
2.	Church Council	Accept/Reject the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision for Trinity 2015</li> <li>• Transcending Themes</li> <li>• Planning Process for 2005 outlined below:</li> </ul> <p>Appoints 11 Task Forces of 5-7 members each, one Task Force for each of the 11 Vision statements on pages 8 and 9, with each Task Force charged to draft goals and objectives as identified in Step 4, below.</p> <p>Appoints the Task Force members from among staff and laity based on nominations by the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the LRPC, with each Task Force nominee/member chosen specifically to represent a different Theme; each Task Force Chair should represent a Theme central to the main purpose of the assigned Vision statement.</p>	March 2005
3.	LRPC	Provides guidance and serves as a resource for each Task Force.	Continuous
4.	Task Forces	Develop for their assigned vision statement the following deliverables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Goals toward the Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Short term: 1-3 years</li> <li>○ Intermediate: 4-6 years</li> <li>○ Long term: 7-10 years</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Measurable objectives toward draft goals</li> <li>• Proposed action plans to achieve goals</li> </ul> <p>Each Task Force reports goals &amp; objectives to LRPC.</p>	Sept 2005
5.	LRPC	Synthesizes the goals & objectives of all Task Forces; reports to Church Council and recommends all task forces be dissolved. The LRPC report should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals &amp; objectives for a Trinity 10-Year Plan</li> <li>• Implementation plans to achieve goals</li> <li>• Procedures for continuous and systematic evaluation of progress toward vision.</li> </ul>	Nov 2005

**APPENDIX I:**  
Scripture References for Vision Statements

**1. Vibrant, worshiping community of faith:**

Acts 2:1-13

**2. Actively engaged volunteer ministry:**

Exodus 18; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16

**3. Thriving center of missions and outreach:**

Matthew 25:31-46; 28:16-20

**4. Catalytic leader for good:**

Philippians 4: 8,9

**5. Comprehensive recreation and health ministry :**

I Corinthians 6:19-20

**6. Stellar children and youth ministries:**

Mark 10:13-16

**7. Dynamic ministry to adults:**

Ephesians 2:19-22

**8. Leader in intergenerational ministries:**

I Corinthians 12

**9. Thriving center for vital Christian teaching:**

John 3; Acts 15

**10. Place of financial health:**

Malachi 3:8-12; Luke 14:28-30

**11. Prayer permeates all that we do:**

## **A Metaphorical View of the Future as Possum Creek:**

Ezekiel 47:1-12; Psalm 46:4; Revelation 22:1-6

**APPENDIX II:**  
**Long Range Planning Committee Membership**

Bill Lindberg, Chair  
Jim Korner, Planning Consultant  
Dan Johnson, Staff Representative  
Richard Kilmer, Church Council Representative  
Nancy Jordan, Administrative Assistant

**Class of 2004**

Rosemary Davis (continuing in 2005)  
Brenda Kelly (continuing in 2005)  
Toby Monaco  
Laura Richardson  
Donna Roberts

**Class of 2005**

Paul Davenport  
Bill Lindberg  
Bob Wright

**Class of 2006**

Earl McDow  
Janise McNair

**Class of 2007**

Charles Allen  
Brian Myers  
Amanda & Ted Nelson  
Dan & Dena Ware