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## Appendices:
- Session Letter of Instruction to the LRPTF – May 2014
- LRPTF letter to church members
- Questionnaire for Session teams
- SCAPC local survey
- U.S. Congregational Life Survey
- List of successful peer churches interviewed
- Questions and answers from successful peer church interviews
- Letter from Session approving the SCAPC Strategic Plan (2015-2019)
INTRODUCTION

The Session in May 2014 formed a Long Range Planning Task Force (LRPTF) to develop a five-year plan that will establish a course for the church to fulfill its current Mission and Vision statements (Appendix 1). These statements articulate the congregation’s aspirations for spiritual growth and mission accomplishment. They were developed by the Long Range Planning Task Force of 2011-2013 for the St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church (SCAPC) and approved by the Session as the basic declarations of what SCAPC desires to be:

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**Mission Statement:**

_We at St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church are called by God's grace to be a community of faith in Jesus Christ, supporting one another in love, and trusting in the transformative power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to bring hope and healing to a broken world._

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**Vision Statement:**

_Holy worship is central to our life as Christ’s disciples, sustaining us, shaping us, and sending us out into the world. As we continue to grow in membership and giving, we will nurture a greater sense of inclusiveness and belonging within the congregation. We will actively encourage increased involvement in the ministries of the church. We will broaden and strengthen our lay leadership. We will be intentional in our spirituality, relying on the power of prayer to direct us. We will be a mission church, reaching out, in the name of Jesus Christ, to both the local and the global community._

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The church’s aspirations and goals, therefore, are well established. These statements by themselves, however, do not prescribe how to accomplish these lofty ideals. Accordingly, the church needs an action plan to help map out and give priorities to and timelines for what needs to be done to realize its mission and vision.

This five-year Strategic Plan (2015-2019) is designed to help set a course for the congregation, so that their spiritual growth, fellowship, sense of community and world outreach are significantly improved. At the end of the plan period, the church should be closer to living its Mission and Vision statements and at a place where God would want its members and works to be.

In developing this Strategic Plan, the LRPTF gathered extensive input from SCAPC congregation and staff and used that input as the driver in developing objectives and action items. Since the plan reflects the will and wisdom of the congregation, members hopefully will be excited by, involved in and supportive of its recommendations.

This Strategic Plan was approved by the Session on (TBD) and will be the policy direction that will guide much of the work of the church over the next five years.
OVERVIEW

The contents of this plan are recommendations, and the assessment, modification, and/or implementation of any of these recommendations are the sole responsibility of the Session committees and their respective staff liaisons, subject to oversight by the Session.

The authority granted to the Long Range Planning Task Force by the Session in June 2014 expired upon approval of this plan by the Session.
BACKGROUND

The members of the Long Range Planning Task Force (LRPTF) who were appointed by the Session in May of 2014 are as follows:

David Mize – Chairman
Patrick Adams
Cathy Franklin
Seth Hagler
Harry Hardin
Louise Hoffman
John Pearce
Renee Peck
Don Frampton – ex officio
Kelly Hostetler (May – Sep) – ex officio
Andy Fox (Sep – Dec) – ex officio

The timing for the development of a new Strategic Plan in May of 2014 was ideal. St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church had finally recovered from the effects of Hurricane Katrina. A major renovation of the first floor and chapel of the church facility had just been completed. The previous long-range plan for the church had ended. The church was in a very strong financial situation. Membership was back to pre-Katrina levels, and the church was operating smoothly, performing as a strong and vibrant body of Christ.

The question was where to go from there, how to answer God's call to make the best use of a set of very fortunate circumstances, how to maintain and enhance the church’s success, and how to fulfill the aspirations of its Mission and Vision statements.

Task Force members quickly agreed that the best way to develop a Strategic Plan was to base it on direct feedback from church staff and members about their specific aspirations for the future of the church. This approach would have the best chance of exciting the congregation, getting the plan enthusiastically executed, and reaching the church's goal of realizing its mission and vision. The Task Force's top priority in developing the Strategic Plan was to gather as much relevant information as possible from the congregation and staff and translate it into actionable objectives.

Information was gathered from the congregation and staff in the following ways:

- One-on-one personal discussions with interested church members;
- Information collected from an email address (scapcfuture@gmail.com) that solicited input on the Strategic Plan from the congregation to the Task Force;
• A formal letter mailed to every church member soliciting his or her input to the LRPTF (Appendix 2);
• Formal interviews with standard questions with every Session team or committee (Appendix 3);
• Extensive meetings with church staff members;
• Appointment of church staff as ex officio members of the LRPTF;
• Meetings with church members in Fellowship Hall after every church service for six consecutive weeks during August and September;
• A local survey of specific questions completed by 307 attendees during morning worship services on Aug. 24, 2014 (Appendix 4);
• A U.S. Congregational Life Survey filled out by 307 SCAPC attendees during morning worship on Aug. 24, 2014 (Appendix 5);
• A series of congregational roundtable meetings after worship services on Aug. 31, 2014 after the local survey results had been tabulated;
• An in-depth meeting with each incoming Session team leader to get consensus on the objectives that were being developed for his or her group to accomplish;
• A final review and approval of the plan by the Session to include two monthly Session meetings for review and discussion of the plan followed by a third meeting for approval of the plan.

Other strategies that the Task Force used to help develop the plan included:
• Scripture and prayer to guide the group’s efforts;
• Finding current practices from successful churches as provided by PCUSA data;
• Interviewing the leadership of nine successful Southern Presbyterian churches and getting lessons learned and current practices from them (Appendices 6 and 7);
• Reviewing many other churches’ strategic plans;
• Reviewing literature on the best formats and content for successful strategic plans.

To create this Strategic Plan, the Task Force held 25 formal task force meetings, participated in more than 100 ad hoc meetings about the plan and logged well over a thousand hours of volunteer time.

The Task Force completed its work in December 2015, and submits its plan herein.
STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

So, after all of the information collection efforts, what did church members have to say about their preferences for future plans for their church?

They said they want to be a stronger and even better church, but that they do not see the need for BIG changes to St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church.

To be an even better church, congregational feedback centered on the following areas that members say they want to concentrate on in the future:

**Outreach**: Be more effective in outreach efforts and get more members directly involved in community and world outreach programs, so that the church can be an increasingly more positive influence on the local, regional and global communities.

**Involvement**: Help current members become more actively involved in the church and its programs, which will help them gain an even better sense of Christian community and connection.

**Growth**: Increase the membership of the church so that more local residents can partake in God's work and join a community strengthened by God's love.

**Christian Education**: Make a strong Christian Education program even better, particularly in the area of youth programs, so that it can attract and retain the next generations of church members.

Underlying all of these aspirations, of course, is the commitment to grow spiritually, as well as in size and outreach. This is the basis for the entire plan, and, in the opinion of the Long Range Planning Task force, spiritual growth will happen as the plan is enacted.

No progress toward these goals will be possible without consciously inviting the presence of God in Jesus Christ to work in and through the members of SCAPC. This is God's church, not that of the congregation, and Jesus is its head.

Thus, primary emphasis is placed on practices that create more openness and responsiveness to the Holy Spirit, so that each member's life is molded in the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation.

Based on feedback from the congregation and study of current best practices from Presbyterian literature and successful peer churches, the Task Force determined that SCAPC, in order to implement the improvements desired, should do the following:
To accomplish the **Outreach** goal identified by the congregation, SCAPC should:

- Communicate better with membership about community and world outreach programs and the positive effects they are having.
- Be as transparent as possible about outreach programs and continuously try to ensure that donations of volunteer help and money are going to the places where they can be most effective in helping community and world needs.
- Provide significant, doable and well-promoted volunteer opportunities for church members as part of and in support of the outreach projects supported by SCAPC, and include opportunities for families with children of all ages to participate in volunteer community activity projects.
- Consider developing a large and significant SCAPC-run community project in addition to RHINO that could be a focal point and sense of pride and identity for SCAPC members (such as Carrollton Camps or Ferry Place house-building and community outreach expansion).

To accomplish the **Involvement** goal identified by the congregation, SCAPC should:

- Create programs and projects that will see a greater percentage of membership attending worship services and church activities.
- Provide more small-sized prayer, social or support / affinity groups and give these groups strong nurturing and support from the church staff.
- Task the Stewardship Team with gathering annual input from members on volunteer time and professional expertise they want to contribute to the church’s programs. (The new Volunteer Coordinator on the church staff can manage this data.)

To accomplish the **Growth** goal identified by the congregation, SCAPC should:

- Develop a focused strategy for recruiting new members.
- Provide worship services and Christian educational opportunities that are ever more meaningful and satisfy worshippers’ spiritual needs.
- Maintain a variety of meaningful and effective small-sized prayer, social and affinity groups, as mentioned above.
- Have a successful community outreach program that involves many members and satisfies their desire for Christian service.
- Improve its already excellent music program to attract and retain even more members and provide even more robust programming.
- Maintain quality church facilities that will accommodate planned growth in membership, staff and activities.
To accomplish the **Christian Education** goal identified by the congregation, SCAPC should:

- Get more members to participate in more and improved Christian education opportunities.
- Strengthen and expand children’s and youth programs.
- Provide the increased resources needed to develop and execute an even better Christian Education program.
- Ensure CE programs are connected and relevant to other ongoing church programs, such as community ministry, small groups, etc.

The **bottom line** synopsis of all the information received by the Long Range Planning Task Force is that for SCAPC to continue its position as a leading church in both the New Orleans area and within the PC (USA), it should:

- Maintain the many good things the church is doing, but establish added focus or new priorities as shown in this Strategic Plan.
- Develop a superb children’s and youth program.
- Maintain and expand the wide variety of small prayer, social and affinity group programs currently in place and ensure that they are nurtured and fully supported by the church staff.
- Develop a comprehensive community and world outreach program that communicates comprehensively with the congregation to offer volunteer opportunities and report on the success and effectiveness of ongoing projects.
- Offer Christian education opportunities that are attractive, interesting, well attended, well promoted and connected / coordinated with other church programs, particularly community ministry.
- Establish a focused and energetic program to recruit new members.
- Renovate and maintain church facilities as necessary to provide quality support for church activities.
- Ensure that a church staff is in place that is large enough to properly support all of the church’s efforts.
To have the resources and oversight needed to accomplish these goals, the following actions are suggested:

- Hire a Parish Associate pastor for SCAPC who would work 20 hours a week and primarily focus on pastoral care. This would be in addition to the senior pastor and associate pastor.
- Hire an additional staff member to help develop superb children’s and youth programs.
- Hire a staff member to help develop and manage a comprehensive community and world outreach program.
- Hire a staff member to be a Volunteer Coordinator who matches church members and volunteer needs across the entire church program (community and global outreach projects, Sunday School teachers, Session teams, ushers, etc.).
- Hire an intern for reoccurring 12-month periods to assist in the youth program.
- Hire an office assistant to work in the afternoons in the church office.
- Establish a stand-alone fund to enable the purchase of an outstanding church organ, one that will be an impetus in the continued growth of the church music program.
- Use available Visionary Fund monies to invest in the church and fund the personnel investments required to make SCAPC the church its members want it to be – that is, fund the church’s priority projects as expressed in this plan. As this plan comes into existence, increased growth and stewardship will allow for additional contributions from new members and better stewardship giving from an involved and committed congregation.
- Create an organizational chart that incorporates the increased church staff and best facilitates SCAPC’s effectiveness.
- Set up objectives and metrics for all the programs listed in this plan.
- Set up a plan to oversee implementation of the Strategic Plan.
SCAPC STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A strategic plan is designed to help an organization develop its long-term objectives and create an action plan to accomplish those objectives. More specifically, a strategic plan provides for the what, who and by when that objectives will be identified and accomplished. The agency tasked with accomplishing the objective (who) is given the task of determining how to accomplish its assigned objectives. In SCAPC’s case, this plan will outline the what, who and by when elements of the plan. The Session teams will in turn be responsible for determining exactly how the objectives will be accomplished.

Another integral part of a strategic plan is to establish metrics that are regularly collected and analyzed, in order to ensure that the assigned objectives are being accomplished in accordance with the by when schedule in the plan. Metrics are included in this plan. Documenting numbers and growth is not meant to impose rules or demand results, but rather is a way of monitoring the plan and determining if goals are realistic or objectives should be adjusted. Any strategic plan must include a thoughtful, regular and frequent manner of measuring results if it is to be effective.

The next major section of this Strategic Plan is the Committee/Team Objectives section. The Committee/Team Objectives lie at the heart of the action part of the plan and contain the specific tasks that Session groups are requested to accomplish by specified dates. These deadlines, over the entire five-year period of this plan, are shown in the Timeline that follows the Committee/Team Objectives section. The Timeline gives an overview of the way that action items are logically phased in over the course of the plan. Planning occurs first and soon, while changes and personnel hires are given the time to undergo normal Session approval and budgeting processes.

As mentioned, the Session teams have the responsibility to figure out how to accomplish their assigned objectives. However, the Long Range Planning Task Force has included information gathered during its research that is intended to provide background on and recommendations for particular objectives. The teams may use this data in whatever way is helpful; the Task Force feels that consideration of this information may make the team’s job of data gathering or decision making considerably easier.
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Merge Christian Education and Youth and Young Adult teams to form a single Christian Education (CE) Team that will be in charge of all Christian education at SCAPC.

TIMELINE: By January 2016.

OBJECTIVE #2: Reorganize Christian Education so that children, youth, and adult Christian educational activities are all in one entity, and so that the Christian Education organization is best staffed to provide for the strong programs the congregation desires.

TIMELINE: Complete a study on how SCAPC Christian Education should be organized and submit it to the Session.

- The study should be presented in the June 2015 Session meeting and should include a plan for Christian Education reorganization to be approved by the Session.
- As soon as feasible, but by January 2016, complete the merger of the two teams.
- Work with the Personnel Committee to fill any necessary staff positions and have the new staff in place prior to September 1, 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Congregational surveys, peer church feedback, and denominational information all have shown that quality Christian education programs are keys to attracting and retaining church members. The congregation has indicated that these programs are a very high priority for this church. While SCAPC Christian education programs already are strong, they could be even more robust, attractive and effective in delivering God’s teachings. According to congregational input, Christian education should involve everything from terrific nursery care to great programs for seniors. In order to maximize the offerings of these affinity groups, additional staff resources are required. Congregational feedback also indicated a desire for the Christian Education committee to periodically bring in exciting guest speakers to increase the diversity of offerings. Long-time committee members suggested that it would be a good idea to aggressively recruit new members from the congregation at large, in order to ensure that the Christian Education Committee has many participants and that subcommittees for specific age groups could be developed. Using information on best practices and current staff and congregational input, the LRPTF developed the Christian Education organizational chart shown below, included here for consideration.
POTENTIAL NEW SACP CHRISTIAN EDUCATION STAFF ORGANIZATION

SENIOR PASTOR

Director of Spiritual Formation
(Full Time)

Duties
- Overall Curriculum Coordinator
- Adult Christian Education
- Small Groups Coordinator

Youth Group Leader
(Full Time)

Duties
- Run Youth Program
  (12 – 18)

Youth Group Intern
(Full Time)

Duties
- Assist Youth Group Leader
- Seminary Intern

20/30 Coordinator
(Part Time)

Duties
- Coordinate 20/30 program
  (20-39)
- Coordinate college program
  (18-22)

Children’s Director
(Full Time)

Duties
- Run children’s program
  (0-11)
- Coordinator with SACP Nursery School
**OBJECTIVE #3**: Conduct a study to determine how SCAPC can offer improved Sunday morning programming for children and youth ages 0-18.

**TIMELINE**: Complete the review and report it to the Session meeting in June 2015, and include any follow-up actions that may be recommended.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**: Research from peer churches as well as Presbyterian resources state that having great children's and youth programs is a key factor in a church's success. If SCAPC is to become a better church, then it must have superb children's and youth ministries. This includes the nursery, children's Sunday School, and youth Sunday School. Parents want to see and feel that their children are safe, cared for, and that they will be offered quality, age-appropriate programming.

**OBJECTIVE #4**: In conjunction with Objective #3, review the case for Christian Education opportunities that would take place during the 10:30 morning worship service for children in second through fifth grades.

**TIMELINE**: Complete the review and submit it to the Session meeting in June 2015, and include any follow-up actions that may be recommended.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**: Some feedback from parents on congregational surveys indicated that they think having second through fifth graders sitting in the sanctuary throughout the worship service is not age appropriate.

An alternative program would be to provide a simultaneous program for children in nursery school through fifth grade during the 10:30 service. Children would benefit from age-appropriate education and activities with their peers, while parents would be free to concentrate on the worship service. This schedule is employed at many churches. This schedule would cause some changes at SCAPC and it would need to be determined if the necessary facilities and Sunday School teaching staff are available.

**OBJECTIVE #5**: Develop a program to prepare and train Christian education teachers.

**TIMELINE**: Have the program in place by September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**: There is a great deal of talent and experience in the congregation that could be tapped to provide wonderful Christian Education teachers. Very few people, however, have any training to be teachers. Developing a focused package of reading materials and starting an annual or semi-annual teacher's workshop might be ways to help current and prospective Christian education leaders.
**OBJECTIVE #6:** Investigate spiritual and worship opportunities for young families.

**TIMELINE:** Complete review and report to Session before January 1, 2016.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The congregational survey and input from members indicated that there is a particular interest in an increased focus on young families in the church. This is an area of great potential growth for SCAPC, warranting a look at how we might better serve parents and children.
CONGREGATIONAL CARE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Assist the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee in hiring a Parish Associate Pastor to concentrate on pastoral care for the congregation.

- Work with the Personnel Committee on this hiring process.
- Then work closely with this pastor on congregational care issues and programs.

TIMELINE: Assist in having the Parish Associate in place within a month after the new SCAPC Associate Pastor is on board.

OBJECTIVE #2: Investigate whether it is feasible to create a SCAPC elder care program (this would include working with the Property Committee on facility considerations).

TIMELINES:

- If deemed feasible for SCAPC to develop and staff an elder care program, then create a plan for it and present it to the Session meeting in June 2015.
- If deemed feasible, launch the elder care program by January 1, 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: 31% of church members are more than 65 years of age. There is very limited access to elder care in New Orleans. SCAPC might be able to provide a program that would offer carefully supervised elder care sessions for up to 12 older adults at a time. Senior adults could be dropped off for pre-arranged periods of 2 to 5 hours a day for two to four days a week. The SCAPC Nursery School would be willing to have its young students interact regularly with this elder care group. This program could provide a stimulating time for senior adults and give some badly needed breaks for senior caregivers. The program would charge for the service and should be close to cost neutral. Coordination is needed with the Property Committee to determine the availability of space for this program within SCAPC facilities. If facilities at SCAPC preclude having an onsite program, then collaboration with other organizations that do have an appropriate facility but no elder care program could be investigated.

OBJECTIVE #3: Continue ongoing programs to provide meals, visits, and support of all kinds to members who are undergoing medical problems or hardships or significant challenges of any kind.

TIMELINE: Continue and improve, as needed, the current program.
OBJECTIVE #4: Develop a system to identify reasons why members become inactive or leave SCAPC.

TIMELINE: Launch a system to monitor voluntarily departing and inactive members and collect data on their reasons for dissatisfaction by July 1, 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: It will be valuable to have data on why people are leaving the church, in order to analyze that information and then determine if there is an appropriate response from the church in order to mitigate loss of members.
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Support and increase the number of small social and affinity groups in the church so that a goal of a 5% increase is seen each year in the total number of active members in small groups.

TIMELINES:

- Have a system in place that can track the membership in our small groups by July 1, 2015.
- 2016 will be considered the base year for membership involvement.
- Increase the memberships of small groups by 5% each year, over the last three years of the plan (2017-2019).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Best practices feedback strongly suggests that the availability of and involvement in church-related small groups is one of the best ways to attract and retain church members. These groups offer the opportunity for a real sense of personal connection among members and help develop a feeling of involvement in the church and the sense that it offers its members moments of real value to their personal lives.

Small groups include everything from Bible study, prayer, knitting and Mother’s Day Out to age-specific group activities, dinner clubs and support. The goal will be to have SCAPC ready to create and support worthwhile small groups easily and efficiently.

The Congregational Life Team has traditionally functioned as the church’s social committee. Its annual budget is principally devoted to subsidizing the Wednesday Night Out program, White Gift Sunday Brunch, Jazz Brunch, Senior Adult Meal Event and annual Barbecue. Weekly Sunday snacks are also supported and greatly enhanced by additional food items prepared and donated by volunteers.

Congregational Life’s objective is reasonable and can be accomplished initially by increasing the number of non-session volunteers to assist its mission. Under the proposed Strategic Plan, Life’s mission is being expanded to include more Christian Education and member support initiatives. This expansion provides additional opportunities for member involvement that should allow Congregational Life to meet its objective.

Tracking membership involvement can be greatly enhanced with IT solutions. Package software applications like Excel would suffice to manage program and member development, but it is recommending that the church develop its IT, or more effectively use current software, to allow more sophisticated monitoring and development of its overall Strategic Plan.

The Director of Spiritual Formation would be the staff person tasked with the responsibility of creating and sustaining small groups, particularly as many of these groups traditionally form around Bible study, prayer or other faith-based initiatives. The Volunteer Coordinator may also assist in supporting these small groups, and help keep track of membership numbers. It
will be important to monitor how many groups are meeting, how many new ones start up, the ongoing membership in small groups, and whether the groups are meeting the spiritual needs of members. This will allow SCAPC to determine if the church is doing well in supporting and nurturing this important facet of church health and stability.

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Develop a system to track attendance/participation at church activities (this is in addition to attendance at worship services, which already is tracked by another committee).

**TIMELINE:** Prior to January 1, 2016.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** If the church is to know whether or not participation in these groups is increasing – and therefore of interest to church members and strengthening church involvement – then it is imperative to document how many people are participating in all church activities. The new Volunteer Coordinator could be the staff person who is mainly responsible for managing this system. IT support also could be given to this project, to make the collection and analysis of attendance figures much easier.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** In the last three years of the Strategic Plan, set a goal of increasing the total participation in church activities by 5% annually.

**TIMELINE:** Begin recording attendance at all church activities no later than calendar year 2016; 2016 will be the base year after which the 5% increases will be tracked.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** This effort would allow us to know if we are achieving the congregational goal of improving the involvement of members in church activities. It would also allow us to know which activities are better attended than others and how we might want to best allocate our resources.
COMMUNITY MINISTRY OBJECTIVES

**OBJECTIVE #1:** Explore, with the World Mission Team, the formation of a single committee focused on local and global outreach.

**TIMELINE:** Report to the Session at its June 2015 meeting on the results of this study.

**OBJECTIVE #2:** If a merger is approved, develop a reorganization plan for the Community Ministry/World Mission effort at SCAPC.

**TIMELINES:**

- Present a merger plan to the Session by the September 2015 Session meeting.
- Have the new organization fully staffed and operating by January 1, 2016.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The congregation wants better communication about service opportunities and projects available at SCAPC. Members also want transparency in what and whom we are supporting. By consolidating teams devoted to outreach, all of the church’s mission efforts can be planned and discussed by one group, and disseminated to the congregation at large. Additionally, SCAPC members can evaluate programs that they want to support by subject area – poverty, illiteracy, hunger – instead of by geography or program name. This will focus SCAPC service efforts on areas targeted and supported by its congregation. Making outreach a single conversation can bring greater focus and success to the great works already being done by the church, as well as better inform the congregation about what we are doing.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Hire an Outreach Coordinator, working with the new Associate Pastor and the Personnel Committee to do so.

**TIMELINE:** As soon as possible after the calling of the new Associate Pastor.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The strongest feedback from the congregation was that its members want SCAPC to be heavily involved in improving the community and world, and that they want to have opportunities to participate in church-supported volunteer and mission work. In response to the survey question, ”What is the most important issue our church should deal with in the next five years?” the congregation listed community and mission outreach by a margin of almost 2 to 1 over the next-most-listed issue. The congregation also reported that they want some feedback on and assurance that what the church is doing with their monetary contributions and volunteer efforts are things that are truly making a transformative difference.
An ongoing evaluation of whom SCAPC sponsors and why is part of a healthy long-range assessment of good works. In summary, there is a clear directive from the congregation to strengthen efforts in these areas. Some increase in staff and more focus will be required to fulfill this mandate. (Please also see World Mission Objectives.)

The primary focus of the new Associate Pastor probably will be on community outreach and mission efforts. The new, consolidated Community Outreach and World Missions team, or the teams individually if a merger is not approved, will work with the new Associate Pastor to develop the organizational flow necessitated by changes in staff. It may, however, be helpful to see the thinking that the LRPTF has done on this issue, based on considerable feedback and discussion. With that in mind, the LRPTF offers a suggested organizational chart below for the newly consolidated missions effort.
NEW SCAPC COMMUNITY MINISTRY STAFF ORGANIZATION

SENIOR PASTOR

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

RHINO COORDINATOR

- Run RHINO Program.

OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Duties
75% of time:
- Oversight of all community outreach and global mission projects.
- Develop volunteer opportunities for the congregation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current projects and develop annual recommendations for what programs to support the following year.

25% of time:
- Oversee the Carrollton neighborhood projects
**OBJECTIVE #4:** Conduct a study to determine how SCAPC should proceed in its outreach efforts in the Carrollton / Ferry Place community.

**TIMELINE:** Report back to the Session by the December 2015 Session meeting on the study and any recommendations.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The SCAPC RHINO program has been tremendously successful. Some members of the congregation have reported that they would like to see the church develop another SCAPC-run program on the same scale as RHINO. One potential candidate for such a program would be the continued development of the new mission in the West Carrollton neighborhood, as initiated by the Carrollton Camps program. Two such camps already have taken place, with good results. Possible new projects that have been mentioned include building and managing a dormitory for RHINO and other church volunteer workers who come to New Orleans (finding safe and affordable lodging is a major consideration for volunteer groups coming to the city). Such a facility could also house the Carrollton Camps program and provide for possible expansion from holiday camps to a more year-round, after-school mission for children. A core idea is that someday the project might result in a permanent community center and new worship community. Tying these two projects together could have a synergistic and positive influence in the Carrollton area. A study deadline of December 2015 would allow the new Associate Pastor to participate in this process.

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Conduct a study of the RHINO program and recommend how best to proceed in the next five years with this program. Work with the RHINO Board and the RHINO Coordinator on this effort.

**TIMELINE:** Report to the Session by September 2015 on the results of the study and the recommendations for RHINO going forward.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** As impactful as the RHINO program has been, the original rationale for it (post-Katrina construction) has been largely satisfied, so new thinking is warranted on what the long-term role of RHINO is going to be, what the focus of ongoing volunteer efforts will be, and how the program will continue to be managed.
FINANCE OBJECTIVES

**OBJECTIVE #1:** Determine the appropriate role that the Visionary Fund should play in the funding of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

**TIMELINE:** As required.

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**OBJECTIVE #2:** Determine the appropriate role that the Visionary Fund should play in the funding of the church’s programs. This determination includes:

- Looking at the appropriate size of the fund;
- Any prudent reserves for unexpected large expenses;
- A clearer explanation for the congregation of any restrictions by donors or Session on how the funds may be spent;
- The appropriate methodology for determining how much is available to support the budget each year.

**TIMELINE:** Report to the Session at its June 2015 meeting on the plan for the organization of the Visionary Fund.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** SCAPC is in a strong financial position, perhaps the best in its history, because of the great ongoing stewardship of the Finance Team and the Director of Administration. As a result of this expert management and the generosity of some members of the congregation, SCAPC is now in a financial position to augment the annual operating budget with funding beyond annual stewardship contributions and what has traditionally been drawn from the Visionary Fund each year in the past.

The foundation of this Strategic Plan has been to determine what the congregation wants for the church over the next five years and to develop a plan to execute those desires. In brief, the congregation wants to increase community outreach; improve its Christian Education program, particularly for youth; increase the involvement of members in church activities; and increase overall membership. To achieve these objectives, the church should expand programming and add staff. The risk of funding the additional staff and programs recommended in the Strategic Plan is very low, as the expense of doing so is added over time (not all at once at the beginning of the plan). Additionally, if things are not working as anticipated, programs and staff can be reduced to stay within means.

Discussion with leaders of the Finance Team indicate that it might be prudent to divide the Visionary Fund into categories that (1) cover the risk to church operations if another Katrina-like event were to occur by setting aside roughly the amount of one year’s operating budget, (2) cover any unanticipated major renovations to the church by reserving a certain amount of
money for that purpose, (3) create an endowment fund for the church that could have an ongoing, aggressive goal that would put the church in a position in which its annual returns could cover a significant portion of the church’s annual operating budget, and (4) create a fund that would allow for funding of important programs and benevolences that the church decides are worth supporting beyond what is collected from the annual stewardship campaign.

OBJECTIVE #3: Establish a stand-alone fund for the purchase and installation of a new organ.

TIMELINE: Work with the Worship and Music Team to have the new organ fund established by April 1, 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: One of the significant interests of the congregation is to have a strong, traditional music program. A top-quality church music program attracts and retains members. In order to continually improve the offerings of the SCAPC church music program, a fund should be established to purchase a new organ. The current organ, while serviceable, is outdated, particularly for the kind of concerts and visiting artists increasingly spotlighted at SCAPC. Many congregation members state that the music program is what drew them to the church, and the music program is certainly a major component of ongoing church growth. Additionally, future music directors will be attracted by the quality not only of the church’s choir, but also its organ. A state-of-the-art instrument will draw topnotch talent when it comes to artists, participants and future members.

An initial amount to seed fundraising efforts for a new organ will be drawn from the Visionary Fund, after which all funding will come from individualized, designated gifts to the Organ Fund. The Worship and Music Team would establish the specific monetary goal of the new organ fund, as approved by the Session.

OBJECTIVE #4: Restart the former SCAPC campaign to attract estate giving to the SCAPC Visionary Fund.

TIMELINE: Incorporate a Wills Emphasis Sunday theme into a Worship Service in the spring of 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: This was a successful program before Hurricane Katrina. It would be beneficial to the church to re-launch this program to give members the opportunity to think about contributing to the ongoing success of the church in their estates.
MEMBER INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Assist the Personnel Committee and the Director of Administration in hiring a Volunteer Coordinator for SCAPC.

TIMELINE: Prior to January 1, 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Getting members to be more involved in the church and church activities is one of the things the congregation responded to the most positively in both the local and U.S. Congregational Life surveys. The ideal candidate for the position of Volunteer Coordinator would be someone able to quickly form or enhance connections with church members. This person would match up opportunities within church programs and activities with volunteers. This would cover all aspects of involvement in the church (Sunday School teachers, ushers, community and world outreach volunteers, Session team members, professional people who can volunteer their expertise to the church, etc.). Consideration should be given to broadening the annual stewardship campaign so that it solicits commitments for volunteer time and talents in addition to money. This information would be put in a database and would give the Volunteer Coordinator valuable background from which to work. It would enable the church to significantly increase the volunteer actions of its membership (again, a major concern in the congregational life survey). Further explanation of this expansion is discussed in the Stewardship objectives.

Consideration could be given to creating a full-time position by combining this new Volunteer Coordinator with the membership duties of the church staff. The current duties of the Membership Coordinator and those of the newly-created Volunteer Coordinator will be closely related, and another full-time staff member would allow more flexibility and depth as church programs increase in conjunction with Strategic Plan implementation.

OBJECTIVE #2: Develop a comprehensive program to make SCAPC be a more welcoming church.

TIMELINE: Have the outline of the program in place by July 1, 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Feedback on best practices from peer churches reinforces the idea that, if the church is truly welcoming to new worshippers and inspires them to get involved and participate, it will meet new and prospective members’ spiritual and social expectations. The Research Services organization of the PCUSA reports that a survey of pastors reveals that 69% of ministers say that hospitality to visitors is the major factor in a church’s growth. Ministers’ next most important growth factor was 26% lower.
It is the goal of SCAPC to ensure that is an inviting church – meaning that it is not enough to just welcome people and give them a place to sit, but that the membership wants them to have a place and a special comfort within the church. It is also critical to make sure new members know what activities are offered for spiritual and social support, but that they don’t feel pressured into joining church activities until they are ready. A comprehensive program to embrace and support new members will retain more of them for the long term. This is an important component of the plan to grow the membership of the church. Suggestions to be included in an organized effort to become an even friendlier church have included: making personal calls to visitors and new members by members with similar ages or interests or family situations; setting up a hostess committee to make visitors feel welcome in worship; personally inviting members/visitors to join small groups or attend events; and resuming the practice of wearing nametags for all members during worship services. Other parts of the Strategic Plan that reinforce this effort include the hiring of a new Volunteer Coordinator and an emphasis on supporting and increasing small-group activities.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Develop a program to prepare new Session Committee/Team leaders to assume their responsibilities.

**TIMELINE:** Have a process in place in time to train/prepare the oncoming Session Committee leaders in January 2016.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The Session committee chairs are some of the most important and responsible positions within the church. The success of the Session teams is integral to the success of the church. Many former leaders reported to the LRPTF that they did not believe they were properly prepared to assume their positions. So an effort is needed to make sure these crucial church leaders are trained for their duties. One part of such a program might be to require each current committee leader to create a document or workbook outlining that committee’s responsibilities. These notebooks might include appropriate documents and a calendar of yearly committee events or deadlines that are used as the basis for briefing incoming leaders on their responsibilities. Consideration can also be given to selecting new Elders who may have some relevant expertise in areas that support their committee/team leadership assignments. Also, staff liaisons of the various committees should be involved in this training.
MEMBERSHIP OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Increase the church membership to 1,350 active members.

OBJECTIVE #2: Maintain the church membership at 1,350 members or more.

TIMELINES:

- By the Session meeting in June 2015, develop a comprehensive plan to accomplish this objective.
- By December 31, 2019, the church rolls should include 1,350 or more active members.
- On a quarterly basis each year, until December 2019, provide the Session with an update on the progress toward the five-year membership objective.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Feedback from the congregational survey showed a consistent desire for the church to be more diverse. In order to become a more inviting church and to improve our diversity, programs should be developed that, (1) provide quality Christian Education programs for children and youth, (2) provide worshippers with a variety of community and world outreach activities, (3) offer numerous opportunities to join small affinity groups and (4) facilitate connections with current worshippers with similar interests.

The congregation and church staff all must be engaged to retain and grow members. The Membership Team cannot do this job alone. The Membership Team might be interested in some of these suggestions that the LRPTF received from SCAPC members and from best practices obtained from successful peer churches:

- Support and leverage a very strong children’s and youth program that will attract and retain young families to the church. A very good nursery operation is also important to this effort.
- Develop a strong relationship with the St. Charles Avenue Church Nursery School program that would include inviting and encouraging non-church member parents and students to become involved in SCAPC.
- Support and leverage a very active Community Outreach and World Missions program.
- Support and leverage small social and affinity groups to foster a greater sense of church community, which will be instrumental in retaining and attracting members.
- Set up a church welcoming committee, whose members would work to make visitors feel particularly comfortable at church.
• Make SCAPC an inviting church, but not one that smothers prospective members or makes them feel they have to commit much of their free time to the church in order to fit in. There are people in the community who are fully invested in community and charitable projects outside the church and may be coming to church for spiritual and meditative needs, yet do not have the time to commit to additional church-sponsored outreach activities.

• Leverage social media to the maximum positive extent to get SCPAC's message out to perspective members in ways and in media forms that they use and understand.

• Use church publications and website to more widely promote the offerings of the church. Examples might be brochures available after services, wider dissemination of publications like The View, and handouts on specific programs.

• Maintain a new-member class for those joining the church.
PERSONNEL OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Support the appropriate Session committees, the Director of Administration and the Senior Pastor in creating the following new staff positions, part-time or full-time as needed, after these hires are approved by the Session:

- A Parish Associate Pastor;
- A Director of Spiritual Formation;
- An intern for the Youth Program;
- An Outreach Coordinator;
- A Volunteer Coordinator;
- An office assistant to work in the afternoons in the church office, and support the Associate Pastor.
- An Administrative Supervisor/Human Resources.

TIMELINES:

- Parish Associate – in proximity to calling of the new Associate Pastor;
- Director of Spiritual Formation – prior to September 2016;
- Intern for Youth Program – as soon as possible, but prior to September 2016;
- Outreach Coordinator – as soon as possible after the calling of the new Associate Pastor;
- Volunteer Coordinator – January 2016;
- Office Assistant – when needed.
- Administrative Supervisor/HR – after new positions are filled, in 2016 or 2017.

OBJECTIVE #2: Develop a staff organizational chart for the church staff at SCAPC that incorporates all the new hires.

TIMELINE: Adjust the staff organizational chart to accommodate new hires as they arrive, but have the complete new staff organizational chart in place prior to September 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Hiring will be coordinated by the appropriate committee chair, the Director of Administration, and the Senior Pastor. Office arrangements will have to be developed for the new staff members, which might affect the timing of the hires. An organizational chart illustrating how the expanded staff might be structured follows, for consideration by the Personnel Committee.

The LRPTF’s data collection has shown that the church staff is working at its utmost capacity to handle the current workload. As the church’s programs and membership grow with the execution of the Strategic Plan, more work is going to be required from the church staff.
Among other requirements, a part-time clerical assistant who can work during afternoons is going to be needed to keep the church staff operating in an efficient and effective manner.

Consideration might also be given to taking the membership duties from the part-time position that currently combines membership and facilities responsibilities and then align the membership duties with the new part-time Volunteer Coordinator, making the latter a full-time position. Rationale for these considerations include that the facilities coordination requirements are getting more robust as the use of the newly renovated facilities increases. This will only increase as church programs and projects ramp up with the execution of the Strategic Plan. With only 17 hours a week allotted to that position, it appears that all those hours will be taken up by facilities requirements. Membership Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator requirements are closely related and are natural fits. Another full-time person in the office would also provide more help in the afternoon hours, when the office staffing otherwise has been light. Another full-time staff member would give some depth and flexibility to the office staff as activities and membership increase.

Finally, a full-time Administrative Supervisor may well be needed once all new staff positions are filled. Oversight of new employees might be accomplished by this additional employee, or it might come in the form of moving current part-time employees to full-time, or it might involve rearranging duties that results in a more senior position at a higher salary. By allocating a slot for a full-time administrator, any of these scenarios can be met.
PROPERTY OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Assess the potential for renovation of the second floor of the main church facility for the purposes of modernizing the area and maximizing the support the space can provide for:

- The SCAPC Nursery School;
- The church office (to include housing additional staff members as proposed in the Long Range Plan);
- Flexibility for multi-purpose uses.

TIMELINE: Complete this assessment as soon as possible in order to provide for further implementation and staffing as proposed by the Long Range Plan.

OBJECTIVE #2: As suggested by the renovation plans in Objective #1, implement necessary renovations.

TIMELINE: Complete the renovation as soon as possible after data is collected and a design is completed.

OBJECTIVE #3: Fix the water intrusion problems of the main church facility.

TIMELINE: Complete the repairs as soon as possible after data is collected and a repair plan is finalized.

OBJECTIVE #4: Support the Congregational Care Committee in determining if the creation of an elder care program at SCAPC is feasible.

TIMELINE: Assist the Congregational Care Committee so that they are able to provide a feasibility report to the Session meeting in June 2015.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Consideration was given to expanding/reconfiguring current church facilities and/or trying to buy additional property in the neighborhood around the church. While an increase to the current church facilities might be warranted if the right piece of property at the right price and with the right zoning flexibility becomes available, this does not seem to be a current high priority or need. If good care is taken of the facilities, and additional renovations are scheduled as needed, then there is adequate space in the physical plant to handle the gradual growth that this Strategic Plan proposes.
ADDITIONAL NOTE: Some members of the congregation voiced concern about parking. The parking issue was reviewed, but no good solution or improvement to the neighborhood street parking was identified. This is not an issue that the Task Force felt could be remedied at this time.
STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Raise enough money annually to cover the increased operating budget of SCAPC that will result from the Strategic Plan expansion of the church programs and staff.

TIMELINE: As soon as possible, but prior to December 31, 2019.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: This Strategic Plan provides for increased activity at SCAPC with more members, more community and world outreach, more Christian Education for all ages, and more small social, affinity and Bible study groups – in other words, more programs and activities and mission support and expenses than currently exist. Since the plan aims to fulfill the desires of the congregation, there should be sufficient support for these efforts. Currently, the necessary resources are in place to cover the short-term expenses for implementing the Strategic Plan, but the goal is that increased membership and a more active congregation will cover the annual operating expenses of our expanded programs through our annual stewardship campaign, as soon as possible, but no later than by the end of the five-year plan. The Stewardship Team should become familiar with the Strategic Plan and use it as leverage in its campaign – the outcome of this plan is drawn from congregational and staff feedback, and now it is the responsibility of the membership to fund its outcomes.

OBJECTIVE #2: Determine the feasibility for the Stewardship Campaign to solicit time and talent commitment in addition to requests for monetary donations.

TIMELINE: Provide a report to the Session on the feasibility of this idea by the Session meeting in June of 2015.

OBJECTIVE #3: If feasible, implement this more comprehensive stewardship campaign, to include time and talent pledges.

TIMELINE: Initiate the new program with the Stewardship Campaign that starts in 2015 and solicits money and volunteer efforts for the year 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: The congregation has loudly told us that they want to be more involved in outreach activities. One of the challenges here is knowing exactly who wants to be involved in what type of activity. In order to give the church a jump-start and then sustain growth in volunteer work by the congregation, it is advisable to collect time and talent pledges from members during annual stewardship campaigns and record that information in a database that the Volunteer Coordinator can oversee and tap. For example, one member might pledge to provide 6 hours of volunteer work a month, while others might offer their special talents when needed by the church (construction or maintenance advice and oversight, legal
work, special teaching or subject matter expertise for Christian education, etc.). This would necessitate a new means of collection for these pledges, as well as a database and strategy to maintain and track pledge information.
WORLD MISSION OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Explore, with the Community Ministry Team, the formation of a single committee focused on local and global outreach.

TIMELINE: Report to the Session at its June 2015 meeting on the results of this study.

OBJECTIVE #2: If merger is approved, develop a reorganization plan for the Community Ministry /World Mission effort at SCAPC.

TIMELINES:

• Present a merger plan to the Session by the September 2015 Session meeting.
• Have the new organization fully staffed and operating by January 1, 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: The Congregation stated forcefully that outreach is a vital part of the church’s identity. With the consolidation of the two benevolence – oriented teams, there would be more assets and focus for church wide efforts. Governing all outreach programs through a single committee would make better use of time, funds, and volunteers. It would also allow for broader conversations about and knowledge of all missions that the church sponsors. The hiring of a full-time coordinator for all of our SCAPC outreach efforts would allow for more emphasis on this area. Merging the teams would also make it easier to share / use the talents of the one new full time asset allocated to mission activities.

OBJECTIVE #3: Concurrent with work on a possible merger, with congregational input re-evaluate current world mission projects and broaden their scope.

TIMELINE: By September 2015

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: While it is important to continue supporting mission co-workers who have long-term relationships with SCAPC, some of them are fully funded by other churches across the country. At the same time, SCAPC members have voiced passion and support for other world mission projects. And an ongoing evaluation of whom SCAPC sponsors and why is part of a healthy long-range assessment of good works. The merger of the two teams is not meant in any way to reduce or limit the scope of SCAPC’s global involvement, but rather to enhance it. This is not a call to discontinue support of partner churches in Cuba or sustaining the pure-water systems that have been installed there. The SCAPC relationship with Cardenas churches goes back decades, and certainly needs to continue. To that end, by merging good works into one larger group, the congregation can be made more aware of this and other worthwhile SCAPC international initiatives. Finally, the June 2015 multi-generational trip that is being sponsored by World Mission and Youth teams is the kind of collaboration among committees and groups that will lead to a stronger and more diverse church.
WORSHIP AND MUSIC OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Expand the music program to involve and reach more congregational members.

TIMELINE: N/A

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: The music program at SCAPC continues to draw new members and gratify current ones. This committee can build on this positive and important presence in the church by exploring ways to broaden the scope and reach of the music program. Suggestions have included increasing the number of choir members, starting a youth and/or children’s music program, increasing the number of special music Sundays, and inviting guest artists more often to participate in worship music (perhaps through a larger special artists’ fund).

OBJECTIVE #2: Work with the Finance Committee to set up a special fund dedicated to the acquisition of a premier new church organ.

TIMELINE: Establish the new organ fund account by April 1, 2015.

OBJECTIVE #3: Work to gain contributions to the new organ fund.

TIMELINE: As soon as possible.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: A top-quality church music program attracts and retains church membership, and one of the strongest interests of the SCAPC congregation is to have a high-quality traditional music program. In the Congregational Life survey, in answer to the question of “What do you value most about our church?” the number one answer from all members (63% of respondents) was the traditional service and music in the church. In another question, as to which music the congregation wants most, the leading response (91%) was traditional hymns. In the local survey and in Round Table discussions, the congregation also asked for continued and even increased occasions when special musicians or vocalists are invited to enhance the music program at worship services.

Given that the current organ in the sanctuary is approaching 35 years in service, and was designed for performance in the sanctuary prior to post-Katrina renovations, a new organ should be obtained. This new organ should be of highest quality, one that will be a draw to visitors and will enhance the music program in such a way as to increase participation in both the music program and the overall church. This instrument should draw regional and national attention, befitting the enhanced acoustical profile of the current sanctuary. A premier organ will also help attract a top-quality music director when Stephen Blackmon retires.

After a small initial contribution from the Visionary Fund to establish the account, the Special
Organ Fund will receive contributions specified for this purpose. The organ will be purchased and installed only after all necessary funding is secured.

**OBJECTIVE #4:** Track and analyze weekly attendance at SCAPC worship services and the number of annual baptisms in the church.

**TIMELINE:** Have the program in place prior to April 1, 2015.

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Work to increase the average weekly attendance at SCAPC worship services and baptisms an average of 5% a year over the life of the Strategic Plan.

**TIMELINE:** 2015 would be the base year, with 5% increases every year thereafter.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** One of the goals of the Strategic Plan is to generate more activity and involvement by the congregation. A big part of that effort is to get more people to attend weekly worship services. It is important that SCAPC establish a program to track attendance and then carefully analyze if attendance is increasing and what seems to work or not work in attracting more worshippers. The church currently has the software to implement this goal; so putting it into practice will be easily attainable.

**OBJECTIVE #6:** Investigate ways to create a more robust online worship and music presence.

**TIMELINE:** Have an initial plan in place by September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** In interviews with peer churches across the Southeast, every pastor stressed the importance of reaching current and potential members through new media. How they do that varies widely: from live-streaming sermons and choir music to enhanced websites. In one case, a church held Friday-night “speakathons” at a local restaurant, based around a provocative question about morality or spirituality, and orchestrated the events through smart phones. In particular, younger church members want to be updated through social media and engage with the church through Internet resources. Maximizing publicity about our current capability to see video of past sermons in the church website would also be beneficial.

**OBJECTIVE #7:** Continue with the current weekly worship service schedule that in normal weeks provides for two services on Sunday mornings.
**TIMELINE:** N/A

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** Whether SCAPC needs a third weekly worship service sometime during the week was a major focus of the surveys given to the congregation. About two-thirds of the 307 respondents said that they do not want or need a third service. Only 16 people indicated they would regularly attend a third service if it were established. Based on this strong congregational feedback, a third weekly service for SCAPC is not recommended.

There also was some discussion about including in worship modern praise music or other local modern jazz music on some periodic basis. The strong preference expressed by the congregation for traditional music in the worship services did not warrant asking for any major change to the existing musical program.

There also was some congregational feedback requesting that SCAPC routinely play more robust and popular/well-known hymns, so that it is easier for the congregation to “make a joyful noise to the Lord.” Some members also expressed concern about having to sing the fifth and sixth verses of some hymns in church. That feedback is passed along for appropriate consideration by the Worship and Music Team.
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE #1: Merge with the Christian Education Team to form a single Christian Education Team that would be in charge of all Christian education at SCAPC.

TIMELINE: By January 2016.

OBJECTIVE #2: In conjunction with the Personnel Committee and the Senior Pastor, hire a 12-month intern annually to support the youth program (12-18 years old) to assist the full-time staff member in charge of the youth program.

TIMELINE: As soon as possible, but prior to September 1, 2016.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION: Congregational surveys reported that having great children’s and youth Christian education programs are one of the most important ongoing priorities for SCAPC. Providing a great ministry for children and youth is one of the top five aspects most valued by the congregation. When asked, “What issue is most important for SCAPC to deal with in the next five years?” providing great youth programs was the third-most-selected issue.

Feedback on best practices from peer churches also demonstrated that outstanding church programs for young people is one of the best ways to attract and retain members. Since great youth programs are a church priority, this program should be appropriately staffed to retain and improve on an already strong program. This improvement would mean expanding the number of youth and volunteer adult participants in programs and increasing the quality and breadth of current programs. Other successful churches have found ways to integrate more family and intergenerational involvement in both youth activities and other church activities, such as community outreach efforts.
CLERK OF THE SESSION OBJECTIVES

**OBJECTIVE #1:** In partnership with the currently sitting Nominating Committee, evaluate the possibility of reducing the number of Elders in each class from 15 to 12.

**TIMELINE:** Should this study reflect a desire to reduce the size of each Elder class, commence the 12 elder classes with the class that would begin its term on January 1, 2016 (Class of 2018).

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** With this change, the process of selecting an elder class would be more efficient and would allow for a greater number of individuals without prior Session experience to be elected to service. Evidence from current and past members of the nominating committee has indicated that this task is increasingly more difficult. This decrease would also require each committee to expand its recruitment to include greater numbers of members of the congregation, but this increase in volunteer activity from SCAPC members is one of the key objectives of the Strategic Plan. The Volunteer Coordinator will be able to assist with this effort.

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Consider reducing the number of Session Committees from 13 to 11 by combining the Community Ministries and World Mission Committees into one outreach team and the Christian Education and Youth and Young Adult Committees into one consolidated team that oversees all Christian Education.

**TIMELINE:** Accomplish this study as soon as possible, but by January 1, 2016.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The work of the church would be more effective, efficient, and coordinated with the consolidation of these committees that cover related areas of responsibility. With plans to hire new staff members in both the Christian Education and Outreach and Mission areas, these staff members will provide the planning and legwork to allow the duties of these two new consolidated Session committees to concentrate on policy guidance and oversight.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Quarterly, designate the Session Steering Committee meeting to address current church challenges in a way that fully fosters input from all Session committees, so that all issues are thoroughly discussed and all church programs, policies and solutions reflect coordinated input from all committees.

**TIMELINE:** Implement by the end of the first quarter of calendar year 2015.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** Feedback from the congregational Round Table discussions
and individual input from former Session committee leaders reported that SCAPC should work harder on more fully coordinating church policies and programs across all committees. Accordingly, an ongoing effort needs to be made to ensure the full coordination of all church matters across all the Session teams. This does not increase the number of Steering Committee meeting, but rather suggests that all committee chairs use the meeting on a quarterly basis as an opportunity to get together to discuss broader church issues.

**OBJECTIVE #4:** Monitor and support the SCAPC Strategic Plan.

**TIMELINE:**

- Starting in 2015, dedicate quarterly Steering Committee meetings and semi-annual Session meetings to be reports by Session committees on their efforts to achieve their Strategic Plan objectives.
- Establish a reoccurring column in *The View* to keep the congregation updated on the progress on the Strategic Plan.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** Management literature shows that the primary guidance for operational issues must stem from the Strategic Plan if its benefits are to be realized. It is imperative that SCAPC set up a system to oversee and ensure the execution of Strategic Plan objectives. Metrics should be recorded and analyzed on a regular, systematic basis. The Strategic Plan has the flexibility to be adjusted as necessary to handle evolving realities, but changes should be based on informed reviews of the execution of the Plan. If SCAPC wants to garner the benefits of a Strategic Plan, then a plan to oversee the action required is as important as the original development of the plan.

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Conduct the U.S. Congregational Life Survey of the SCAPC Congregation every five years.

**TIMELINE:** In 2019, conduct the next U.S. Congregational Life Survey.

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The U.S. Congregational Life Survey is one of the few ways to get objective and anonymous feedback from the congregation on spiritual satisfaction and worship experience. It allows comparison of the congregation’s feedback with that from thousands of other churches of Presbyterian and other Christian denominations. This data is very useful in determining or validating the performance of the church. In between the five-year periods of the surveys, other efforts such as periodic congregational Round Table meetings should be ongoing, to collect and assess member satisfaction with their church.
TIMELINE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ALL COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES

As soon as possible after data collection and design:

- Property – Assess the feasibility of, and then begin renovations to the second floor of the main church building.

As soon as possible after data collection and development of a repair plan:

- Property – repair the major leakage problems with the church’s outer envelope

January 2015

- Clerk of the Session – Issue a letter to the Long Range Planning Task Force to keep members empanelled and tasking them to help oversee implementation of the SCAPC Strategic Plan.

April 2015

- Worship and Music / Finance - Have the new Organ Fund account established.
- Worship and Music - Have in place a program to track and analyze weekly attendance at SCAPC worship services and the number of annual baptisms in the church.
- Clerk of the Session – Begin a process in which quarterly Steering Committee meetings include updates from committee/team leaders on Strategic Plan achievements and discussions on all current church issues, so that full coordination and input from all committees /teams can be leveraged on all church decisions.
- Congregational Nominating Committee begins developing nominations for 12 instead of 15 Elders for the Class of 2018, if decided by the Session.

June 2015

- Community Ministry/World Missions – Report on merger feasibility to the Session.
- Finance - Report to the Session meeting on the plan for the organization of the Visionary Fund.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all committees/teams report on progress on Strategic Plan objectives at the June Session meeting.
- Congregational Care – Report to the Session on the feasibility of creating an elder care program.
- Christian Education/Youth and Young Adults – Report to the Session on a recommendation to reorganize Christian Education.
- Membership – Report to the Session on a comprehensive plan to grow membership over the time of this Strategic Plan.
- Stewardship - Provide a report to the Session on the feasibility of collecting
membership volunteer interest and talent during the annual stewardship campaign.

- Membership Involvement – Implement a program that strives to make SCAPC a more friendly and welcoming church.
- Congregational Care – Implement a program to get feedback from members who leave the church or become inactive as to the cause for their separation.

July 2015

- Membership Involvement – Implement a program that strives to make SCAPC a more friendly and welcoming church.
- Congregational Care – Implement a program to get feedback from members who leave the church or become inactive as to the cause for their separation.
- Congregational Life – Have a system in place that can track the membership in SCAPC small groups.

September 2015

- Community Ministry - Hire a full-time Outreach Coordinator.
- Community Ministry/RHINO Board - Present a study of the RHINO program and recommend how best to proceed in the next five years with this program.
- Community Ministry/World Missions – If merger approved, present an organizational plan to Session.
- Worship and Music – Report to the Session on ways to create a more robust online worship and music program.
- World Mission - Concurrent with merger of missions teams, re-evaluate current world mission projects and broaden scope to include congregational input.
- Stewardship – If determined to be feasible, begin collecting volunteer time and talent information from the membership.

December 2015

- Outreach and Mission Team - Present a study to the Session that recommends how SCAPC should proceed on its outreach efforts in the Carrollton/Ferry Place community.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the December Session meeting.

January 2016

- Community Ministry/World Missions – If approved, complete the consolidation of the two teams.
- Clerk of the Session – If approved, reduce the Elder class that begins service in 2016 from 15 to 12 members.
- Membership Involvement/Personnel – Hire a Volunteer Coordinator.
- Congregational Life - Implement a system to track attendance/participation at church
activities besides worship service.

- Membership Involvement – Implement a system to train incoming team leaders for their jobs.
- Congregational Care - If determined to be feasible, implement an elder care program.
- Christian Education/Youth and Young Adults – Merge.

**June 2016**

- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress on Strategic Plan objectives in the June Session meeting.

**September 2016**

- Personnel - Have a new organizational chart in place for SCAPC that covers all new hires.
- Christian Education/Youth and Young Adults – Be fully operational under the new Christian Education organization with all new personnel on board.

**December 2016**

- Worship and Music – Report to the Session on the goal of growing weekly church attendance and annual baptisms by 5%.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the December Session meeting.

**June 2017**

- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress on Strategic Plan objectives at the June Session meeting.

**December 2017**

- Worship and Music – Report to the Session on the goal of growing weekly church attendance and annual baptisms by 5%.
- Congregational Life – Report on status of the goal to gain a 5% yearly increase in participation at all church activities outside of worship services.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the December Session meeting.

**June 2018**

- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress on Strategic Plan objectives at the June Session meeting.

**December 2018**

- Worship and Music – Report to the Session on the goal of growing weekly church
attendance and annual baptisms by 5%.

- Congregational Life – Report on status of the goal to gain a 5% yearly increase in participation at all church activities outside of worship services.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the December Session meeting.

**June 2019**

- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the June Session meeting.

**December 2019**

- Clerk of the Session – Ensure that the U.S. Congregational Life Survey has been administered to the congregation sometime in 2019.
- Worship and Music – Report to the Session on the goal of growing weekly church attendance and annual baptisms by 5%.
- Membership – Report to the Session on the goal for SCAPC to have 1,350 active members.
- Congregational Life – Report on status of the goal to gain a 5% yearly increase in participation at all church activities outside of worship services.
- Clerk of the Session – Have all teams report on progress of Strategic Plan objectives at the December Session meeting.
- Stewardship Committee - Raise enough money to annually cover the increased operating budget of SCAPC resulting from the Strategic Plan expansion of the church programs and staff.