



Trinity United Methodist Church Sumter, South Carolina



**Long Range Plan
2020-2025**



OUR MISSION:

**TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF
JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE WORLD.**



OUR VISION:

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SERVES GOD AND PEOPLE
FROM THE HEART OF SUMTER.**



Trinity United Methodist Church: A Legacy of Service to God and People

Both geographically and spiritually, Trinity United Methodist Church (TUMC) has enjoyed a long and rich history of serving God and people from the Heart of Sumter, South Carolina. Since our founding over 190 years ago, TUMC has been deliberate in reaching the Sumter community in the name of Christ:

- Trinity Day School, an outreach ministry of the church, has opened young minds to learning in a safe and nurturing environment for decades.
- Through the Trinity Community Center, church members taught marketable skills to those who needed employment as well as a stable home environment.
- Throughout its history, the congregation has taken bold steps in moving and building new facilities to meet the growth of Sumter.
- In collaboration with other churches, TUMC worked to form Covenant Place, a vital ministry for senior adults.
- As Sumter grew, TUMC seeded the start of other United Methodist congregations in the area. TUMC has helped form leaders in the law, medicine, the ministry as well as business and civic leaders who have created opportunities for justice, mercy, and an abundance of life and liberty in Sumter and the state of South Carolina.

TUMC's legacy of serving God and others has not happened only in the tranquil days of our history. The congregation has been responsive to God's vision in times of calamity, such as wars, economic depression, natural disasters, and a church fire as well as the troubles and disagreements that occur in the natural life cycle of a church. Some of the congregation's most fruitful ministry came in times of crisis.

In these early decades of the 21st century, our congregation faces a time of growing religious uncertainty in the world. The methods of reaching people for Christ used for decades are no longer effective; we can no longer merely open our doors and expect people to flock to us. Clarity about our purpose, mission, and vision will offer the congregation sharper focus in these different and unsettled times.

Over the past 18 months, the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) actively researched TUMC, its history, its challenges and blessings, as well as the surrounding community. We listened to various voices within the congregation and to the voices of community leaders and citizens beyond. In our times together as a committee, we discussed what we heard and the possible implications for TUMC. We reflected as a group and talked passionately about our future and what we discern as God's plan for TUMC. As a result of our

work, we offer this long-range plan for the years 2020-2025. This long-range plan offers us focus and direction. It allows our leadership to plan and mobilize for ministry in a deliberate but flexible fashion. It offers TUMC opportunities to be about the work of Christ, opening pathways for grace to flow to us, this community, and to the world beyond.

Our Five Year Plan: 2020 - 2025

In order to better live out its mission and vision over the next five years, we see four areas of concentration for TUMC: Communication, Ministries with Children and Youth, Hospitality and Welcome, and Mission Partnerships. Here is our five-year plan to equip TUMC to serve God and people from the heart of Sumter:



Communication



**Children and
Youth**



**Hospitality and
Welcome**



**Mission
Partnerships**



Communication

We must effectively communicate as a congregation in order to serve God and others. Our diverse membership must have multiple ways to access information about ministry opportunities and ways to serve. Guests and the community at large must be able to find accurate information about what we are doing, and how they can become involved with us. The LRPC proposes the following plans to improve our means of communication:

Action Item

A. As soon as possible and no later than January 15, 2020, we will begin a communications audit of TUMC. The audit team will consist of gifted members of the congregation named by the Church Council. The team will prepare a report detailing ways we can enhance our communication efforts; this report will be shared with the leadership and the congregation.

Rationale: As a Church, we must explore how we can communicate better with each other so our members know of the many ways they can serve God and people in Sumter. Of equal importance, we must do a better job in communicating with the community, so those not connected with TUMC have an opportunity to know what we are doing; and how they can be involved.

Action Item

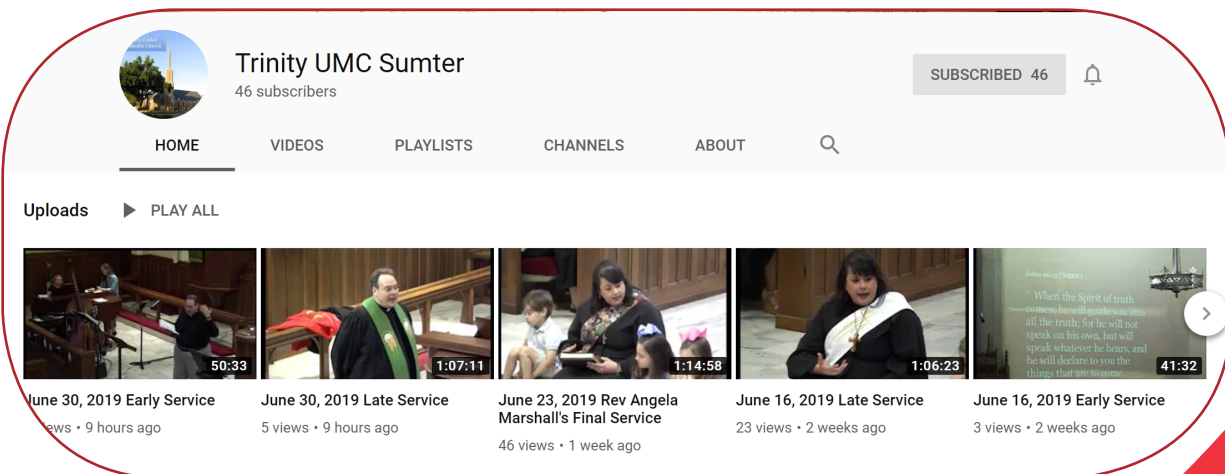
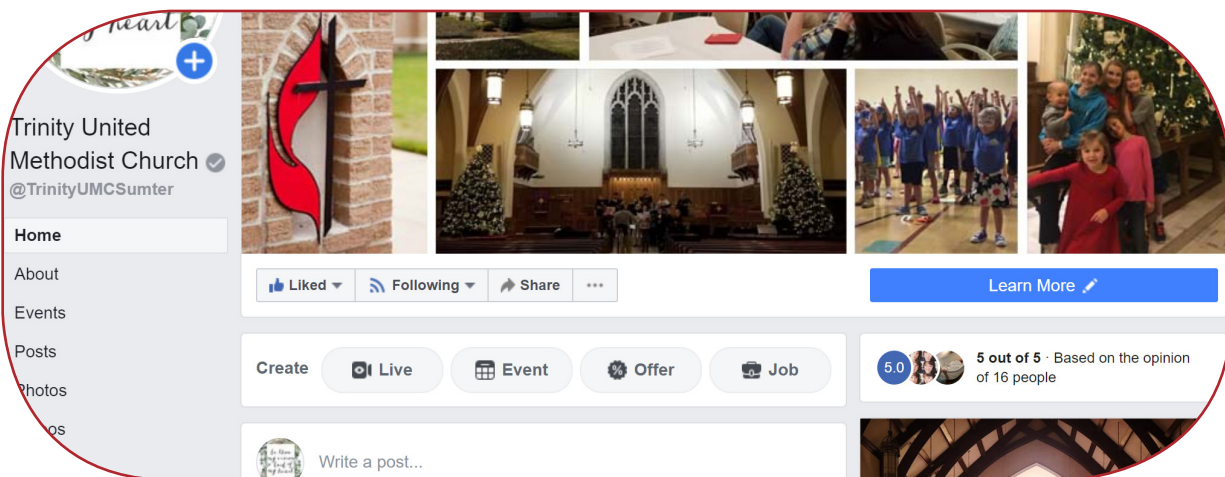
B. By June 30, 2020, the LRPC and the church leadership will have reviewed the audit team's report and will create a fully responsive plan of action prepared for implementation. If the plan includes a recommendation for staff changes, the LRPC will work with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) to make recommendations to church council for either restructuring current staff responsibilities, outsource contracting, or hiring staff as needed.

Rationale: We expect the audit will show us efforts we can undertake to better communicate with each other and with those outside TUMC. We also expect these efforts cannot be implemented overnight, but will instead include deliberate changes that will take time to implement. Nevertheless, it is a task we will want to begin as soon as possible.

Action Item

C. Working with church leaders, we will look to have a new website for TUMC online by March 1, 2020. By the end of 2020, we will work with the committee on finance to find software that can be used through the church website that provides members a private portal to access financial and other information relevant to their participation in the life of the church. In addition, our hope is that this new software will also offer a secure portal for church leaders that will provide our leadership access to membership, church, and church financial reports so that they can be prepared and responsive to the changing ministry needs of the 21st century.

Rationale: If we are going to effectively communicate with people, we must first make sure that our front line of communication is accurate, up to date, and fully informative regarding who we are, what ministries we are involved with, what our beliefs are, and how people can become involved. It must accurately reflect what is happening within the walls of TUMC on a week-to-week basis, as well as what we are doing outside these walls. It should also enable leaders to access information vital to their responsibilities and allow them to have better communication with the church and one another.





Children and Youth Ministries

One message that was consistently heard from the congregation in our listening sessions and various meetings, was the importance of a vital Youth and Children's Ministry. We are grateful that the SPRC has already begun exploring the options for the hiring of dedicated staff for Youth and Children's Ministry; we fully support the SPRC's leadership and invite the congregation to adopt its recommendations.

We do not believe, however, that TUMC's vision will be fulfilled by simply hiring staff. We see a need for a full transformation, a shift in our congregational culture, in how we support and relate to the youth and children of TUMC. This shift will benefit the broader ministry with children and youth within the church's mission and vision.

Action Item

A. Starting on August 26th, 2019, through Staff, Youth Council, Children's Council, Church Leadership, Youth Leadership, and the Church, we will:

1. Build and foster quality faith-based youth and children relations with God, adults, each other, and TUMC;
2. Build and foster a ministry that promotes the engagement of our children and youth with the community beyond the TUMC campus;
3. Encourage other adults beyond our current group of adult counselors to work with our Youth and Children's Ministries in order that those ministries will be more fully sustained and supported by TUMC;
4. Work with our Youth, Youth Council, Children and Children's Council to make our youth and children's program fun, engaging, and inviting;
5. Support the parents of our children and youth to help them be involved and help them help their children grow as disciples through the ministries of TUMC;
6. Encourage the participation of children and youth in current opportunities for service within the life of the church such as in choirs, or as acolytes, crucifers, lay readers, greeters and ushers. Where possible, church leaders will encourage participation as families in acts of service in the life of TUMC; and
7. As an extension of our ministry with children, TUMC will strengthen the bond between the congregation and Trinity Day School (TDS). The TDS Board, elected by TUMC, will work with the Church Council, and evangelism team to welcome TDS families to TUMC.

TUMC's goal for our ministry with TDS is to provide a safe, welcoming, Christian environment for quality education.

Rationale: Our discernment as a committee is that a vibrant ministry with children and youth is more than events and programs; it is a holistic effort by, with, and for children and youth. Children and youth ministry is the integrated work of the whole church and not just a staff person and a handful of dedicated volunteers.

Action Item

B. Starting in the fourth quarter of 2019, TUMC will receive quarterly reports from our youth at Church Council concerning youth involvement in church life and the church's youth ministry; these reports will be distributed via the church newsletter to the congregation. We will invite youth to be active partners in the TUMC youth ministry and the general ministry of TUMC. We will invite youth to assume active leadership roles in our Church life, including being nominated and elected by the church to serve in church leadership.

Rationale: We value the voices of the young among us. Our congregation will be stronger by its participation in fellowship, mission, worship and leadership. By offering the youngest among us opportunities for service, TUMC will strengthen their development as disciples of Christ.





Hospitality and Welcoming

We are blessed with a beautiful campus and facilities, and a loving congregation. Unfortunately, our welcome and hospitality are not always clearly perceived by guests and the community beyond. To serve people, we must work to make sure they feel welcomed into our church, as well as into a growing relationship with the members and friends of TUMC.

Action Item

A. By December 31, 2019, we will work with the committee on nominations to recruit and equip an evangelism team that will focus on making TUMC more welcoming.

Starting in the first quarter of 2020, we will ask this team to explore every aspect of how guests are greeted, and more importantly, what we can do to perfect that process. We will share what we learn with the congregation so that TUMC will continue to grow in this all-important area. Our goal is to make sure that from the moment visitors enter our property until after they leave, they will know they are welcome.

Starting in March 2020, greeters, ushers, and other interested church members will be trained in how we can be more welcoming to all who worship at Trinity. We will offer informal opportunities to sharpen our practices of hospitality in Sunday School classes, small groups and Wednesday night programming.

Rationale: The work of welcome and hospitality is not the domain of a single committee or a handful of people. It is part of the character of our church and therefore is the work of all.



Action Item

B. Because connection and fellowship are part of a welcoming church for visitors as well as members, we will find ways for members and friends to stay better connected with one another. By October 2020, and through the coordination of the church council, TUMC will work through age level and family groups, small groups as well as intergenerational and educational opportunities to build mutual relationships that foster Christian discipleship and deepen friendships.

Rationale: Hospitality and welcoming are not just for guests. Both are at the root of Christian fellowship. We share with visitors what we experience with one another as church friends.

Action Item

C. By December 31, 2020, the LRPC will work with our evangelism team, the Board of Trustees, and the Church Council to develop ways to make our buildings more visitor-friendly and welcoming. By June 2021, the TUMC church leadership will develop and adopt priorities and a viable timetable for changes to the building that will be needed to enhance our welcome and hospitality.

Rationale: As beautiful as the TUMC buildings and grounds are, they can be imposing for the newcomer. We hope our church leadership can find ways to make our facilities more accessible and welcoming to visitors.





Mission Partnerships

Both geographically and spiritually, TUMC sits at the Heart of Sumter. As stated earlier, TUMC has a heritage of working with other congregations for the Glory of God, and the greater good of the Sumter community. Today, we have multiple opportunities to form mission partnerships by collaborating with the churches and community organizations within a mile of our campus.

Action Item

A. Begin inviting other churches in our neighborhood to participate in the Living Christmas Story by November 2019.

Rationale: As large of a production as LCS is, and given its impact in Sumter, additional persons would enhance the ministry as well as build friendships with our neighbors.

Action Item

B. By August 2020, with the assistance of our missions committee and the committee on nominations, we will work on recruiting an advisory group of laity from TUMC and other area churches to find ways to work together for the good of Sumter.

Rationale: As clergy at area churches are assigned elsewhere, a team of laity from each church could ensure continued pursuit of coordinated ministry opportunities.

Action Item

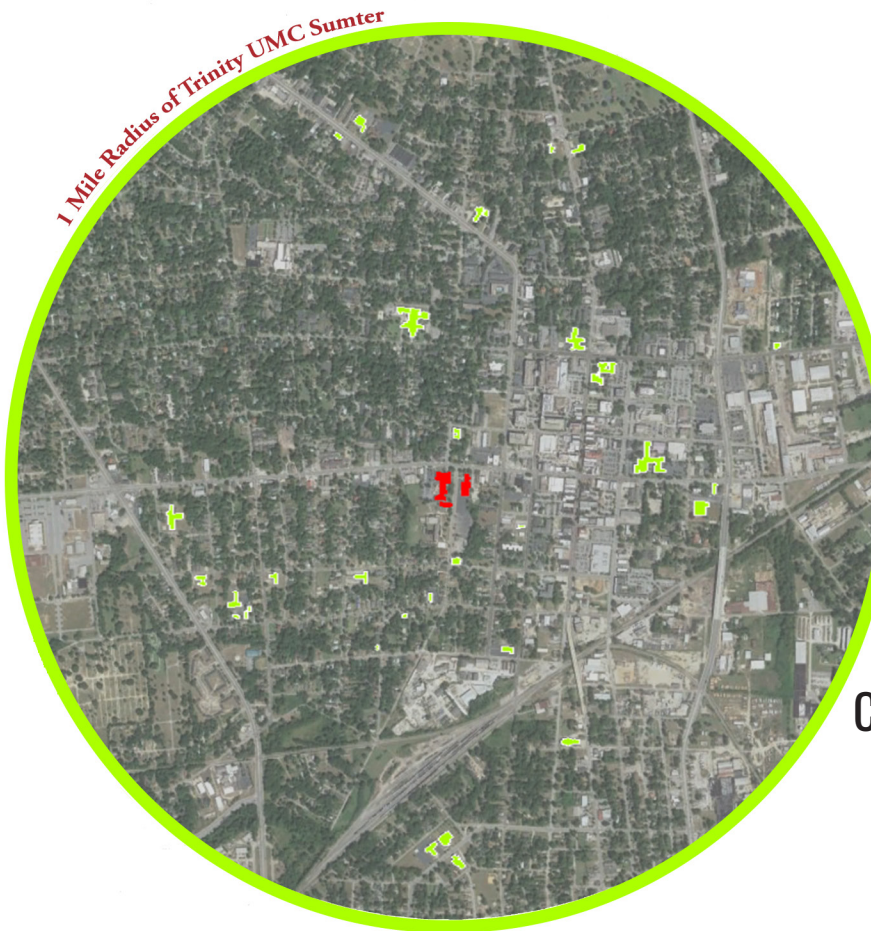
C. Through the various ministries of TUMC, we will be deliberate in our welcome to the community beyond our doors in order to invite our neighbors to participate in our various ministries (e.g., inviting local men outside TUMC to join our men's group) as well as involve ourselves in the various ministry opportunities of other area churches. We will begin doing this no later than January of 2020.

Rationale: Relationships and our greater common ministries are strengthened when we fellowship and work together.

Action Item

D. We will develop, in collaboration with other local churches and community organizations, a mentoring program for school-aged children in the neighborhood around TUMC by June of 2021.

Rationale: The life of our community will be improved as we work to improve the educational opportunities for the children and youth of our community.



There are over
26 Churches
and Synagogues
within 1 mile of
TUMC, including 3
United Methodist
Churches





Final Thoughts and Hopes of the Committee:

The role of the Trinity Long Range Planning Committee, TUMC's responsibility as a connectional church in 2020 and beyond, and the appeal for and necessity of congregational confidence in and integration of the vision and recommendations within the plan.

Upon the adoption of this long-range plan, the LRPC will become the Long Range Plan Implementation Team with a focus on carrying out and monitoring progress of each aspect of the plan. This team will work with the charge conference, church council, other church committees and the church as a whole to ensure successful realization of the changes indicated in the plan. The team will report regularly to the congregation regarding the progress the church is making as well as any challenges before us. In order to further advance the vision as set forth in the 2020-2025 LRP, as the congregation fruitfully responds to the items specified in the plan, this team may recommend additional strategic goals to compliment and further fulfill the vision within the four areas of emphasis. By January of 2024, the team will lead the church in an evaluation of the current plan; in light of community and congregational realities of that year, the church will begin a process of discernment for a long-term plan for the next five years, 2025-2030, starting early in 2024.

As part of being a connectional church, TUMC welcomes the Hartsville District Superintendent's feedback, monitoring of our progress, and continued prayers and encouragement concerning this long-range plan. If a change of clergy appointment is necessary, TUMC will ask the District Superintendent to appoint a pastor with the gifts and graces necessary to guide this vital congregation toward fulfillment of this long-range plan.

For the implementation of this long-range plan, we ask for the deep and abiding commitment of the congregation of TUMC and the clergy and lay leadership of the church. We ask our church leadership to be creative and flexible in offering funding and leadership solutions for changes in the organization and potential addition of staff, campus and building improvements, and shifts in programming. We respectfully ask TUMC to be faithful and diligent in our unified commitment to this vision and the long-range plan implemented to carry it out by our stewardship, relentlessly offering our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness. Ultimately what this means, in down-to-earth terms, is that commitment to put in the effort is required by us, the congregation of Trinity UMC (to include all committees/boards, members and leaders), if we expect any of these plans to be successful. This effort must include our prayers, our presence and our gifts.

Rationale: The findings of this long range planning process must not be placed in a drawer in the office and forgotten. Strategic planning and deliberate congregational action to fulfill the plan will bring fruitfulness to our work and continued vitality and growth of the congregation. A frequent review of the plan and the implementation process will help us stay on task and be successful. It is especially important for the District Superintendent and any incoming clergy to be made aware of this plan, and we must welcome the challenge from the District Superintendent to fulfill the plan and keep the process alive. The faithful interpretation of this vision and plan is dependent primarily on the grace of God, and Trinity United Methodist Church responding to that grace by our dedication to a unified plan.



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

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