

Report on 2016 Mission Progress

We are a Christian community committed to creative and thoughtful worship, care for one another, and the world.

In early 2016 Celebration laid out Mission Goals for the year (in bold); here's some of what we accomplished!

I. We do these things well, and want to continue to do so:

a. Stirring, Helpful Worship (Key 3)

i. Continue strong preaching, beautiful and artistic expressions of faith, creative worship design

1. We handled it well! Several members of the congregation took turns preaching and presiding in Pastor Heidi's absence, and we heard from several guest speakers. This was a major experiment and effort to function within a bare-bones budget and half-time pastoral ministry. A few members mentioned that they'd been skeptical of how this would work, but after the first week when Ken Bosworth preached and presided, they were each reassured. It is an important addition to our worship life to hear from one another; we might consider continuing this practice even when/if we someday have full-time clergy.
2. We consistently receive good feedback from first time visitors who describe our worship and community as "authentic", "warm and friendly", "inspiring", "a breath of fresh air," etc.



3. Attendance at midweek services during Lent and Advent increased, as did our average Sunday participation.

4. Celebrated the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Willow at the Feast of Pentecost, and received her, Tara Montgomery, and Maureen Barkley as new members.

5. On Reformation Sunday we were transported to a castle in Wartburg, Germany, and were inspired with medieval recorder music and table, and an interview with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther himself!

ii. Build on practice of lay leadership

1. Training lay preachers, presiders, assisting ministers, lectors, etc.

- a. Pastor Heidi conducted basic training early in the year. We would like to offer regular sessions both to equip additional volunteers and to expand the depth and breadth of our skills and understanding.

iii. Build on strong musical gifts

1. Invite local musicians to participate in worship

- a. We were blessed with the gifts of Jeff and Tate Cohan.
- b. This remains a worthwhile goal, and would directly support our overall mission.

2. Additional short-term choral opportunities (seasonal and festivals)

- a. We managed choral anthems for the installation service, Easter, and Christmas.
- b. By planning ahead and inviting our neighbors to participate, we would both provide neat opportunities for choristers who love singing, and enhance our worship life.



- iv. Honored and tangibly blessed members and friends in worship (anniversaries, birthdays, marriage, farewell.)

v. What would YOU add to this list?

1. .
2. .

b. Significant Relational Groupings (Key 4)

i. Continue Servant Teams

1. Consider adding new teams as we grow

- a. Before she moved, Vickie Corley organized a new Servant Team with several new members.
- b. A How-To document has been prepared to support members in their service and distributed in our first membership directory. It will be revised as we refine our practices.

2. Consider shuffling teams every 2 years to get to know more members

- a. Charlotte Spada has stepped up to coordinate Servant Teams since Vickie moved.
- b. At least some of these Teams have formed strong bonds of fellowship which nurture our members. Team 1 (maybe others) strives to hold a fellowship gathering at the end of each month of service.
- c. Even Team 1 agrees that although they have become close to one another, it would be a good idea to re-shuffle regularly (biennially?) to develop those bonds with others.

ii. Continue fun fellowship opportunities

1. A group steadfastly (mostly) gathers for coffee at Gere-a-Deli Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., our longest ongoing fellowship group.
2. Cynthia Aanestad conducted simple survey in January 2016, inviting folks to prioritize different kinds of fellowship events. The top vote-getter? “Holy Happy Hour!”
3. Cynthia Aanestad responded to that survey by scheduling several of those! Unfortunately they were not well attended this year. Family responsibilities as Vickie and Cynthia’s mother was dying temporarily took priority, but we look forward to Cynthia’s festive instigating in 2017.
4. Pastor Heidi hosted a weekend “Conversations Around the Campfire” at Washington Park this summer, and several of us joined her for relaxing meals, campfires, singing and vespers. We hope this will become a new tradition!
5. Pastor Heidi and Dave hosted a fun Halloween party at their home. This congregation does Halloween well, and we’d love to make this event annual.



iii. Build up Care Teams

1. Our Care Team organized meals for several members and neighbors this year. This is an important way that we live out our relationships in the Body of Christ, and is deeply appreciated by those recipients of care.
2. The Care Team shared important health updates with members at the request of family members, so that loved ones could be uplifted in prayer and families could share those updates efficiently.
3. We can always improve communication, and might look at other ways to expand and develop this ministry in 2017.

- iv. We produced our first new membership directory in several years, distributing it at last January's Annual Meeting.
 - 1. That is helping support relationships as we have contact information for each other!
 - 2. It contains helpful information on how things work at Celebration, including guides for our Servant Teams.
 - 3. Future editions will include our constitution.
 - 4. Time to update that directory now!
 - v. Small groups gathered
 - 1. For Centering Prayer, weekly at the Bosworth's home
 - 2. For book study on Brene' Brown's The Gifts of Imperfection.
 - 3. We continue to form new groups as members have interest.
 - vi. **What would YOU add to this list?**
 - 1. .
 - 2. .
- c. Generous Giving (Key 12)**
- i. **Continue to encourage one another to give generously to Celebration**
 - 1. We made it through this transition year, funding our entire ministry without external support (in the form of Cluster or ELCA grants) possibly for the first time in our history!
 - a. We sustained our pastoral ministry at .5FTE
 - b. We followed through on pledges 23% greater than in 2015
 - c. Our giving ran ahead of budget for the first half of the year!
 - d. We ended the year in the black, creating a reserve account that will even out cash flow throughout the year.
 - e. We carried out our assessment of mission goals, conducted a successful pledge drive, developed our budget, and adopted it in December, so that we began 2017 ready to go! This is a healthy and do-able pattern for the future.
 - 2. **Build on Thrivent Choice Dollars and Action Teams to expand what we can do together.**
 - a. Several members have designated Celebration as a recipient of Thrivent Financial's fraternal "Choice Dollars". Those donors have agreed that at this time those dollars will grow our cash reserve toward our goal.
 - b. Several members have accessed small seed grants as Thrivent Action Teams to support ministries such as quilt making. All Thrivent members can apply for either one or two of these easily approved \$250 grants. Pastor Heidi and Dave confess that they did not themselves secure any of those grants in 2016, leaving \$1,000 on the table. They intend to take advantage of this program on behalf of Celebration in 2017, and want to encourage every Thrivent member to do the same.
 - ii. **Continue to give 10% of income to Churchwide through the Synod**
 - 1. Achieved! Yeah! Check out the websites of the ELCA and our NW-WA Synod to see what those dollars do.
 - iii. **Continue to give 5% of income to local missions**
 - 1. **Review local ministries every year or so, inviting congregational input**
 - a. Achieved!
 - b. The congregation has indicated a desire to refocus how and where we joyfully share these benevolence dollars locally, and generated a big list of potential recipients. We seem to be near consensus that it is time to either reduce or

eliminate our congregational financial support for Resurrección and El Camino de Emmaus in favor of other ministries more closely aligned with our stated mission goals. That decision will be discerned at our Annual Meeting

- c. The LT will lead a brief conversation at our Annual Meeting to see if consensus exists already about that new beneficiaries, or to see if consensus can be easily developed.

iv. Encourage giving quilts and other sewn projects locally

1. Our quilters rock! This group continues to consistently produce beautiful and functional quilts, sending off about 100 quilts to LWR in 2016.
2. Our 2017 budget contains a line item to fund the work of this Team, made possible by one (or more) pledge dedicated to that work. This means that our Q-Team won't need to fund raise to cover their expenses, and can instead put all of their energy directly toward the work itself.
3. On Mondays our group consists not only of Celebration folks, but several of our community neighbors faithfully participate in this ministry.
4. High school graduate in our congregation are given a quilt to take into the next phase of their lives knowing that they are wrapped in God's love and our prayers.

v. Continue supporting Family Promise of Skagit Valley and Dinner at the Brick

1. As a Support Congregation in FPSV we have partnered with St. James Episcopal Church to prepare and serve 2-3 dinners to Guests at Host Congregation United Methodist Church in Mount Vernon four times a year.
2. Members of Celebration participated in FPSV fundraisers (April at Skagit Gardens and September's Homeless for a Night).
3. Doug Miller attends FPSV meetings and keeps us informed, organized, and effective as our Congregational Coordinator.
4. Members of Celebration have been making and serving monthly meals to our neighbors-in-need for 10 years. This year those who have been coordinating our participation in that ministry handed off that responsibility, and Ann Bennett recruited our new coordinators, Maureen Barkley, Shannon Hurtado, and Dave Dettman.
5. Celebration designated Dinner at the Brick as a recipient of local benevolence dollars in 2016; Anacortes Family Center was the other local recipient in 2016.

vi. Look at other ways of giving

1. Sharing Garden Produce

- a. Yum! The bounty of several of your gardens and orchards blessed us this year!

2. Hosting a Sharing booth at the Farmer's Market

- a. We didn't have someone to spear-head this project, but it's still a great idea. Does someone feel called to take this on in 2017?
3. In 2017 we will encourage one another and celebrate the myriad ways members express their generosity, and see what new efforts the Spirit might inspire in our midst.

vii. What would YOU add to this list?

1. .
2. .

II. We want to develop these Keys into strengths

a. One Mission Focus (Key 1)

i. Clarify mission statement regularly (review every few years)

1. In January and February we came together for a retreat, an Annual Meeting, a work team, and a discernment circle to develop, refine and adopt our new Mission Statement

(We are a Christian community committed to creative and thoughtful worship, care for one another, and the world.) and the mission goals outlined in this document.

2. Through this process we grew in trust and mutual respect which led to consensus among participants.
- ii. **Encourage members to BE the Body of Christ in their daily lives**
 1. **Support the ministry passions of members (“wherever two or more are gathered in my name...”)**
 2. **Lift up and celebrate what people are already doing in the community**
 3. We can be more intentional on this one in 2017.
- iii. **Practice our hospitality in all we do**
 1. **Intentional welcome to visitors**
 - a. **Invite a regular visitor to a meal in your home**
 - i. Anecdotal reports say this is happening
 - b. **Hold regular orientations for potential new members**
 - i. **This worked well in May!**
 - c. **Possibly invite the designation of sponsors for new members**
 - d. **Help new worshippers and members to get to know Celebration and our values**
 - i. Have had guests and visitors attend and participate in congregational conversations
 2. **Make our inclusive welcome known more broadly**
 - a. Affirmation of Welcome is prominent on our website
 - b. Two new banners from Reconciling Works proclaim our welcome
 3. **What would YOU add to this list?**
 - a. .
 - b. .

b. One Major Program (Key 7)

i. Build on our Quilting ministry

1. **Continue to invite others to get involved**
 - a. Weekly announcement, invitations, and welcome extended
2. **Expand the sewing ministry to include totes for foster kids**
 - a. Quilts remain the primary focus, but we’ve done other projects, too.
3. **Invite those who can’t attend in person to sew at home**
 - a. Some do. We might invite that through our website.
4. **Find ways to involve men in this ministry**
 - a. Deep thanks to Doug and Michael, who help weekly to set up and tear down tables!

ii. Consider Advocacy as a congregational calling

1. **Weekly Peace Demonstration – build this up**
 - a. How might we increase our support and participation in 2017? More important than ever.
2. **Sponsor community conversations on difficult topics**
 - a. Conversation within Celebration about advocacy and consensus “Conversations Around the Table”
 - i. Excellent discernment over 3 weeks in May
 1. Determined that consensus exists within Celebration around the issues of homelessness and inclusivity/LGBTQ welcome. Pastor



and LT have full support to speak out on behalf of Celebration as a whole. You raised these other topic for future discussion and the possible development of consensus, near consensus, or common ground, our three levels of agreement:

- Environmental Stewardship
 - morality of climate change
 - oil and coal trains
- Gun Violence
 - gun responsibility
 - “Regeneration” project, turning donated guns into art for peace
- Ecumenism and Interfaith Connections
- Immigration and Refugees
- Racism
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Tribal Treaty Rights and Connections
- Economics
 - Income inequality
 - Global fair trade
- Reproductive Health and Abortion
- C.E.R.T. – Disaster Preparedness
- Political Climate
 - Political Civility
 - Citizens United repeal
- Right to Die
- Peacemaking
- Support for Military Families

2.

b. Love in a Time of Fear

- i. Celebration helped sponsor a “Love in a Time of Fear” conversation in April at the Senior Center that drew over 100 neighbors to listen to Muslim and Christian speakers.
- ii. Following the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, we worked quickly with PFLAG to host a community conversation, well received despite technical difficulties.

c. Gun violence (“Regeneration Art Project”)

- i. No action on this yet, but conversation and research on feasibility continues.

3. Regular opportunities to write [letters of advocacy](#)

4. Support Faith Action Network <http://fanwa.org/>

Nothing on this one in 2016.

More important in 2017?

a. [Interfaith Day at Legislature](#)

- i. Will be February 9 2017.

b. Invite director to speak at Celebration

- i. [Rev. Paul Benz](#) is very interested in visiting Celebration this year.

c. Participate in annual fund raising events

- i. [Annual Dinner in November](#)

5. **Support Open Door Ministries (LGBTQ)** Nothing with ODM in 2016, but did co-sponsor a community conversation/movie night as a response to the Orlando shootings. More work in 2017?
 - a. **Participate in ODM's annual fundraising auction**
 - b. **Invite speakers to come to Celebration**



Let Love Be Our Legacy

We are all in this together
- Skagit faith communities

6. New Coalition of Skagit Faith Communities is forming to help live out our core values in public support for threatened neighbors, under the slogan "Let Love Be Our Legacy: We are all in this together."

a. Pastor Heidi has participated in several of these as yet informal meetings with representatives and clergy from at least 13 separate faith communities. More to come in 2017.

7. What would YOU add to this list?

- a. .
- b. .

c. High Visibility (Key 9)

i. Build on the strength of our location

1. Open doors during worship whenever possible

a. This is a physical demonstration of participation in community; doors were opened often in spring and summer.

2. Connect with other users of the Depot

a. Coordinated twice with Saturday night users. Potential here for future.

3. Pursue having our signs out during Farmer's Market and other events

a. Money is now budgeted for new signs in 2017.

4. Contribute to the upkeep of the Depot in visible ways

a. Thanks to those who are so faithful in service!

ii. Develop and maintain an effective presence in web and social media

1. New web address and site prepared as place-holder in June.

www.celebrationanacortes.org.

2. LT approved expenditure to pay for site development and improvement. Launched upgraded site in Fall.

3. With PFLAG, our name went out in June for hosting Movie night.

4. Zoe Hill worked on our Facebook page

iii. Get our stories out there

1. Article by Karla Locke appeared in online magazine in December "Why I Love My Job"

iv. Continue to participate in community events

1. Fourth of July parade

a. Festive! Handed out over 600 flyers.

b. New T-shirts with new logo, tie-dyed. Some are still available. (Thanks, Shannon!)

2. Winter Wonderland Walk at Washington Park

a. Took a breather this year due to health and transition.

b. Participate in 2017

i. Recruit coordinators, reserve and plan our site early in 2017

v. Build on our beautiful new logo

1. New signage



- a. Two great new banners through ReconcilingWorks.com, used in parade, hung in and outside worship space.
- b. Plan to expand in 2017.
 - i. Two new sandwich board signs
 - ii. Refresh existing signs
 - iii. Replace sign at Christ Church
 - iv. Signage outside office door, inside Christ Church



2. Business cards

- a. Simple cards given to every member to share with others
- b. New cards with web address in 2017

3. Flyers

- a. Fresh brochure made with logo and info
- b. Flyers at 4th of July Parade
- c. Flyers for PFLAG Movie night in June

4. Rack cards

- a. Not yet, but planned for 2017

5. T-shirts

- a. Yayyyyy!! Excellent shirts. Can re-order as needed.

vi. Utilize free community announcement opportunities

1. Happened several times.
2. Consider recruiting one volunteer to shepherd this task throughout year in 2017

vii. Use printed cards to invite folks to worship

1. Prepared and shared prior to Holy Week and Easter
2. Do it again for Lent/Easter and Advent/Christmas in 2017

viii. Encourage members to be more vocal about their participation at Celebration

1. Were YOU more vocal? Did YOU invite someone in 2016? Let's do so in 2017!
2. Quilters do!!
3. New members are sometimes our best source for word-of-mouth buzz. Thanks to Tara and Willow, Maureen and Shannnon, Dana and Lisa, and everyone who extends welcome to neighbors and visitors.

ix. What would YOU add to this list?

1. .
2. .

III. Foundational Work (Not articulated as a congregational goal, but absolutely necessary)

- a. This is the first year in many in which Celebration has been entirely responsible for our own ministry.

We've done a lot of foundational work this year.

- i. Developed a realistic budget, representing sacrifices all around, and we reached it!

- ii. Leadership Team took on

1. Training for healthy church leadership
2. Contracted for bookkeeping and payroll services
3. Revising our constitution to bring it into compliance with ELCA & NW-WA Synod
4. Established ad hoc Personnel Team, Mutual Ministry Team, and Mutual Ministry Review/Evaluation Team.

- a. interpreted pastoral job description together
- b. studied materials extensively and developed short- and long-term recommendations

- c. conducted our first Mutual Ministry Review, evaluating not only the pastoral, but our congregational ministry as a whole.
 - i. incorporated feedback for the health and well-being of Celebration
 - ii. explored ways of managing the limitations of half-time ministry and whole-ministry needs, including creative experiments to balance Pastor Heidi's hours over the entire years. This is an ongoing process.
 - iii. developed new job description for pastor ("Terms of Call and Pastoral Ministry Plan") to be updated annually.
 - iv. The development of comprehensive personnel policies remains as a project for coming months.

5. What would YOU add to this list?

- a. .
- b. .

IV. What would YOU add to this list of goals and progress on them?

- a. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- b. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- c. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- d. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .

V. What would you add/drop/change for Mission Goals for 2017?

- a. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- b. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- c. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .
- d. .
 - i. .
 - ii. .