VALUING AND VISIONING AT COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

By Vicki Tonski, CUCC Narrator

On a snowy Saturday morning in January and again just a couple of weeks ago, many of the members of CUCC came together to *HONOR OUR PAST, CELEBRATE OUR PRESENT AND ENVISION OUR FUTURE.* All those present were dedicated to our attempt to communicate the essence of those days for all of the congregation and invite those of you who were not able to attend to participate in this way and to enjoy the process and become involved in the future of our amazing community church. Above all, we affirmed that CUCC is a community and every single person is valued and vital to our church.

Teresa Campbell, from the Parish Resource Center, facilitated both days and her talents were critical in our communication and successful retreat. On Saturday, January 20th the morning was structured to support the members in sharing our stories to capture what it is about Community United Church of Christ that has made it so special to each of us. We told each other of the first times we entered, who was there to greet us, when we were moved by the events and actions of the church, and many other beautiful and emotional stories. They became the most powerful part of that morning and out of that, the Circle Suppers were focused in the same way.

We built on ALL of the wondrous stories that over and over put into words what we appreciate in our church and community on the second morning, March 10th. This day was designed for results and action. Teresa had us work in small groups to distill to four key points the values of our church. Joyce Robertson, Pete, and I met last week to attempt to bring those together by themes and rewrite them into one summary, holding true to the original statements in the groups. Here is the result for all of you ----

Community United Church of Christ is a congregation that:

- Accepts and honors each person as an individual and as a loving companion in life and in our spirituality.

- Puts faith into action, moving out into the world to seek solutions, to alleviate suffering, and to promote social justice and environmental sustainability.

- Embraces diversity within our faith community as to ethnicity, sexuality, spiritual journeys, and life paths. We are an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ.

- Is non-doctrinal, seeking and growing through inquiry, offering education and worship with a progressive view of Christianity.

You are each invited to consider these values and beliefs of our church and see how they resonate for you and your family. Please let Pete or I know if you have other perceptions or ideas you would like to offer.

Our next activity was really fun and generated quite a bit of energy and excitement. We worked together in small groups to answer the question "If you picked up the Boulder Daily Camera in 5-10 years, what would the article say about the newsworthy happenings of Community United Church of Christ?!"

The results of the Headline/ Newspaper Story work are listed for your review and consideration. What would your headline and/or story say? If you would like, please submit them to the newsletter newsletter@CUCC.org in the future for everyone to enjoy☺

Thanks again to Joyce for getting these put together for us into headlines:

HEADLINES IN A FUTURE DAILY CAMERA

CHILDREN/YOUTH ACTIVE IN STEWARDSHIP

CUCC ADOPTS NEEDY CHURCH; $$$, WORKTRIPS AHEAD

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE OFFERED; YOUTH, BIKERS TARGETED

YOUTH ACTIVITIES GAIN NEW LARGE SPACE

SOLAR PANELS PUT CUCC TOTALLY OFF THE GRID

OUTREACH REACHES FARTHER

CUCCers HAVE CHOICE OF SPIRITUALITY

CUCC ENGAGES IN VARIETY OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CUCC BIG ON OUTREACH, SMALL ON DOCTRINE

CUCC REMAINS 'HEALTHY' COMMUNITY AFTER 50 YEARS

NATURE, EVOLUTION CENTRAL TO CUCC CHRISTIAN STANCE

INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL PATHS POSSIBLE WITHIN CHURCH PATH

CUCC REMAINS INTELLIGENT, HEALTHY, CARING COMMUNITY WHILE ACCOMPLISHING AMAZING GOALS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

BIBLE STUDY: OPEN-MINDED, SHARED DISCOVERY

CUCCers FIND VARIED WAYS TO BE INVOLVED WITHIN THE CHURCH

There is one last piece that we want our entire congregation to know. We moved into work groups to develop action plans to address how to improve some of the areas we would like to strengthen. You are an important part of all of the plans and are welcome to join in any of the commissions or efforts. Here is a summary from each of the groups.

Visioning Retreat - What's next -what do we need to do?

Spiritual Life

We identified two issues to work on.

1. To preserve the community nature of our Church
2. To incorporate visitors and new members into the life of the Church
3. To preserve the intimate nature of our worship

ACTIONS:

a. Extend existing circle suppers
b. Letters to visitors after or with bread
c. Write up responsibilities of New Member sponsors
d. Tell new members class students about SLF and ushers and greeters
e. Bio of new members in the Echo
f. Follow-up on missing members - 3 Sundays
g. Make a weaving service - May potluck luncheon – Making a weaving as a congregation

LONG RANGE

a. Extend circle suppers throughout the year
b. Report to council about size of worship with an eye to a possible new church start
c. Report to council about fellowship issues with an eye to new church start.

- Diane Martin

Following up on many comments about creating more mission trip opportunities, Our group, containing representatives from **Outreach, Christian Education, and Youth,** discussed how to accomplish this goal. We used the term "mission" and "mission trip" to mean a group community service/work opportunity involving one or more days of service. We discussed the possibility of local, national, and International mission trips and discussed creating opportunities for everyone -- youth, families, and adults. Lisa Radelet from the Outreach Commission shared Information about daylong work/service opportunities available locally in April and June. We talked about gathering information from other churches and organizations who have had successful mission trips and building from others' experiences. We generally agreed that a good place to begin would be to participate in a day-long mission opportunity locally, and then work on creating longer mission trips in the future. As a result of the discussion, a Mission Work Team was formed, which will have its initial meeting before church on April 15 at 9:00 am. All who are interested are welcomed to attend.

- Pat Gilbert

The last group mainly talked about the **Earth Action** mission of the Church. One action item is the goal of getting our church off the grid.

One result of our discussion is that a member of the Earth Action Team needs to report to the Council. In addition, the EAT needs better communication with the church at large via an avenue yet to be determined.

This led to other discussions about strengthening and renaming the nominating committee. The expanded duties would be recognizing people in our community who have helped and possibly recruiting

volunteers for various needs within the church.

- Cathy Russell

There will be immediate actions as a result of the retreat. We also began to see some of the opportunities that the future may hold and which may involve long term planning. Thank you to everyone in this incredible church, for all the ways in which you participated in this process. Our values are clear and strong and very much the values that have been embraced at CUCC for many, many years. They are enduring and beautiful in their simplicity and continuously renewed in our work, our worship and our fellowship.