

# Roadmap for Session: Long Range Planning 2022-2026

Possible actions, as they intersect:

## Outreach, Engagement, Diversity, Stewardship, Technology

- Maintain an updated inventory of community Outreach activities led by other community entities that individual members might participate in. Include the contact person, phone number, email address and website information. **(OEDST)**
- Create a searchable database of everyone in the Covenant Community that is updated frequently to include: **(OEDST)**
  - Birthdate (including year of birth) so that we can track our trends by age and to sort and target communication to those most likely to be interested in a particular program or issue.
  - Include all items that are captured in the new member form and offer multiple opportunities for existing members to complete a form so that we can update their experience (i.e. Session membership, committee membership, interests) and be able to sort for future planning and communication.
  - Use the searchable database to target Covenant Community members who have expressed an interest in specific or general Congregational and Outreach activities.
- Modify the church calendar on our website so it is “interactive” with links that provide one-click access to the person to contact for more information about a church event, also to short video testimonials from those who have participated in a past event, and ways to contribute on-line monetarily to a program. **(OEDST)**
- Explore other possible updates to the website (is it who we are? or what we are doing?). **(OEDST)**
- Create a Tech & Communication Team responsible for Covenant’s tech and communication needs and its outreach into the community: review, identify, and fill any current gaps; anticipate future needs and stay up-to-date on the latest technology. **(OEDST)**
- Survey members to make sure they have the ability to watch virtual worship services and look for ways to provide the technology if it is not available to them. Consider holding clinics or assembling a team of tech advisors to provide assistance to congregation members who may need help watching broadcasts on their home computers. **(OEDST)**

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- Consider a dedicated social media platform for outreach to younger members within the church community to publicize services, events, opportunities for service, recognize members/committees for their accomplishments and service within the framework of the church.  
**(OEDST)**
- Explore more ways to communicate to the Covenant Community what we are already doing and how that addresses those living on the margins of society. **(OEDS)**
  - An annual report in writing and celebrated at an annual gathering with in-person testimonials
  - “Bite-sized” information on what Outreach activities we are engaged in, using charts and visuals
  - Development of videos and slideshows illustrating the Outreach effort to be posted on the website, on Facebook and other social media and delivered through the newsletter and by email periodically
- Develop partnerships with other community entities that engage in Outreach efforts. **(OEDS)**
- Develop specific ways of adding to the virtual and hybrid experience, including: **(OEDT)**
  - Intentional messaging during the Sunday worship service to include both those present in person and those attending virtually
  - Virtual messaging before and after the Sunday worship service
  - Explore a virtual choir
  - Provide sign language support for the hearing impaired
- Plan joint activities with other local churches/organizations/faith groups. **(OEDS)**
  - Host events to break down barriers to those “not like us”
  - Apply a special focus on groups within the community
  - Partnership with other churches such as Allen Chapel
  - Choir or minister exchange on Sunday morning
  - Share meals together
  - Have youth and other groups attend a local Black church service
  - Develop adult groups for visitation to other churches
- Create a sub-committee of the Fellowship team. Included in the focus of this group should be specific ideas to deal with their unique situations and

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how to ensure their continued participation in the church. Examples of areas of focus for the subcommittee: **(ESDT)**

- More programs for young families ages 18-35
- Explore a contemporary service for young people ages 18-35
- Development of Moms groups
- Parent specific dinner groups/Bible Studies/outings
- More events for those who have a full-time job
- Inclusion of child care in activities
- Organize certain Covenant programs around children's bedtimes
- Reinstate Agape groups
- Bring back mid-week (TOW) programs
- Include scripture in dinner groups
- Additional virtual bible studies beyond the Monday morning study
- Establish a task force (a "temporary" group with a limited focus) to evaluate existing Outreach efforts and explore other opportunities that can either be led by Covenant or in which Covenant or its individual members can participate. **(OES)**
- Inventory our existing Outreach effort and opportunities. **(OES)**
  - What are they?
  - When are they?
  - How many community members already participate and who are they?
- Use "moment for mission" with personal testimonials more often to educate the Covenant Community as to "what we do." **(OES)**
- Recruit new participants as greeters, team members, choir participants, and Sunday school teachers. Importantly, look beyond those who currently and regularly volunteer to those who would add diversity of age, thought, gender and others. **(EDS)**
- As COVID continues and once we emerge, create more opportunities for online Zoom events for different social groups. **(EDT)**
- Create more opportunities for experiences that foster racial inclusion, understanding, and connection. Explore ways we can connect to those not like us, such as partnering with "Building Bridges" in Staunton. **(OED)**
- Encourage the continued development of contemporary elements to our worship services to attract diverse crowds while maintaining the integrity of our mission. **(OED)**

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- Identify and be intentional about creating programs to bridge the intergenerational gap. Our youth want more opportunities to work and socialize with older people, along with more blended age groups for Sunday school and other activities. **(EDS)**
- Communicate our welcome to the LGBTQ community. Add pronouns in parentheses next to staff names in the bulletin to demonstrate our welcome to all genders. **(OED)**
- Do outreach to Mary Baldwin University students: identify any current outreach and determine whether a task force should be created that includes student representation / surveys. Explore the development of a UKirk mission to the Mary Baldwin students. **(OED)**
- Join with local churches for musical events. **(OED)**
- Create musical opportunities to reach diverse unchurched audiences in our community. **(OED)**
  - Host a concert for UVA University Singers.
- Review the current internet platform for virtual broadcast to provide the best possible visual and sound enhancements to make the service seamless and of high quality. Continue to monitor changes for affordability and quality. **(OET)**
- Review ways to use existing or new technology to offer virtual broadcasts of additional church meetings, such as Sunday School, musical programs, etc. either in real-time or archived so they can be watched at a later date. **(OET)**
- Speak out for those unable to speak for themselves or who are unheard. **(OD)**
- Keep using the societal task force for Outreach projects. **(OD)**
- Define “lay leadership,” identify its structure and develop a training program to include proactive attraction of potential lay leaders. **(ES)**
- Engage new members immediately through surveys and develop a plan to actively follow up in a timely manner. Possibly add a new members class to Sunday School options. **(ES)**
- Develop a system to thank current volunteers to ensure that they know they are appreciated for their contribution to Covenant. **(ES)**
- Develop a “lay leader” program for Sunday School teachers and other identified church leaders. **(ES)**

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- Engage our current preschool families through family-friendly activities and continued outreach. If mandatory Pre-K happens, reach out into the community with scholarships. **(OE)**
- Develop programs designed to allow opportunities for the fellowship of men and to encourage male leadership, particularly as Sunday School teachers. **(ED)**
- Develop more opportunities for the engagement and participation of older women who don't have a partner or a partner who attends church with them. **(ED)**
- Create a drama team for youth. **(ED)**
- Establish a clear strategy for attracting people back to the in-person experience of being part of the Covenant Community, and implement. **(E)**
- Continue to explore different styles of worship, building upon the diverse musical styles that Chris and Jeff bring forward. **(ED)**
- Review hardware requirements necessary to produce the best possible visual and sound for the broadcast. Current equipment is adequate for our needs, but toward the end of the five-year planning cycle, it is expected that there will be changes in technology that would merit review towards upgrading. **(ET)**
- Review ways to enhance the musical portions of the virtual service. There is a need to study the ambient noise in the sanctuary during services so that congregational responses can be detected and included properly during the broadcast. **(ET)**
- Set aside resources yearly for unexpected needs (ex. Afghan refugees). **(O)**
- Explore additional support for the Afghan refugee project. **(O)**
- Consider expanding the Outreach budget. **(O)**
- Provide an explanation of tithing in new member packets and provide to all members periodically. **(S)**
- Have the finance committee develop more intentional ways of providing budget information to the congregation in more detail and more often. **(S)**
- Educate the Covenant Community on the use of wills, stock donations and other approaches to growing the endowment. **(S)**