

## United Churches of Langley

### OUR VISION

***Thriving*** congregation  
***Vital*** to the community  
***Alive*** as followers of Jesus Christ  
***Sustainable*** for the future

### OUR PRINCIPLES

***Engage*** with the wider community  
***Listen*** for the Spirit 'poured out' on God's people  
***Respond*** to the Spirit  
***Value*** and ***include*** everyone  
***Practice*** sustainability  
**Weaving a faith that matters...may the Spirit stir us on!**

### Identity Discovery worksheet:

#### ***What is the Purpose of Church for you?***

The purpose of the Church is to be a place of worship and spiritual practice where we learn from Scripture. Through worship, prayer, music and reflection our faith is strengthened and deepened to help us grow into our individual faith journeys. Music is an important part in our worship as we can praise God in so many joyful ways. Faith expressed in song can often lift us up and give us another perspective.

Our church is a place where one can feel safe and supported. It is a place of belonging that includes supporting one another across age, gender, and sexuality. We are like a family and yet we are open to differences. All can feel connected in a place that does not judge. The connections we make bring us closer together and often last a lifetime.

Social Justice and Outreach is an important ministry. We try to serve others in the wider community regardless of who they are, their walks of life, or their sexuality. By following Jesus' example, we strive to serve others.

#### ***What do we do?***

We offer a safe and welcoming space to develop connections in a faith community. We share in sacraments such as communion and baptisms and support one another in life events such as weddings and funerals. We provide a safe place to nurture and explore ourselves in God's world. We share friendships and explore what we believe in. Our worship includes music, scripture, a space for children and listening to different voices

as we navigate our daily lives. We strive to be a welcoming congregation, open to all, old, young, and in between and all genders. We become like family.

We value our Outreach programs. As the hands and feet of Christ, we build connections in the community and serve others. We reach out with programs such as the Nicomekl Breakfast program, Starfish Pack program, Sources Langley Food Bank, Langley Christmas Bureau, Camp Spirit and funding our Social Justice facilitator. Our commitment to social justice and outreach is growing and encompasses many in the wider community.

### ***What makes us different than other churches?***

Our previous amalgamation of 4 churches provides us with a strong combined faith. The resulting Murrayville and Fort Langley churches have a historical component, within our community and within Canada. Having two buildings has made us willing to accept and deal with the challenges of that, in a loving and open way.

It has also provided us with a city-wide awareness & knowledge, especially in Social Justice. We value social programs that others might avoid and are blessed with a healthy Social Justice & Outreach fund so that we can actively support these many social programs, along with the Affirm process.

We are not stagnant; we respond to what is happening and changing in this world. We are welcoming and accepting of all. We continually question ourselves and do not take the status quo as the answer.

### ***What do we value?***

Sharing and spiritual values are at the heart of what we do and believe at UCOL. We embrace people of all walks of life, along with their different opinions as we believe this opens us to new connections with others, both within the church and in the wider community. We value the fellowship we share when we worship together.

At UCOL our history and traditions are foundational, and we value how Christian approaches to life can improve the world we live in.

These core values lead us to reach out to others through music, scripture and activities and Alternative Worship events. Pastoral care within and outreach activities help us to contribute to a more just and caring society, inclusive of all

We remain open to change through education, experiences in the wider community and any other avenue offered.

### ***What is important to us?***

We value our strong sense of fellowship, sharing, faith and mutual support. Being able to gather in various ways – whether it be in our Sunday morning worship service, or the

many other ways we develop spiritual growth through worship and prayer throughout the week.

We also accept that others build their faith in other ways. We find it important to connect to the various aspects of our community and to be of service to them and our environment.

### **Look and Feel:**

***If you had to describe your desired identity of the church in one-word adjectives, what would they be? Please provide 8-10. Describe these words further or explain why you chose them.***

Our church feels like Home! It is a community that is caring, joyful, warm and inviting. It is a place where people can connect in a safe, supportive, positive, friendly, respectful, inclusive space.

Our church is learning to make changes to help us move forward. We are a community that is trying to be good stewards of its resources.

We have both positive and negative feelings towards our church. On the positive side we all share a sense of welcoming and inclusion. We care and try to support one another. We are a place where people feel they can belong. On the negative side, we are also an aging congregation with limited energy at times. This makes it difficult to find a way forward to become the thriving congregation many of us envision.

***If our Church was a person, describe their personality. (Feel free to be creative! i.e., They grew up in a small town, loves home cooked meals, is soft spoken, or vibrant, comes from a large family, loves adventures... etc,,,,, have fun with this)***

If the church were a person, it would be like a parent that gives warm hugs. It would provide spiritual nourishment to all in need. The church would be part of a large extended family that includes everyone. Lifting her voice in song or listening to a choir or soloist gives great joy to the church. The church is adventuresome and willing to take risks. The church is progressive and unafraid to ask the "hard questions" on social justice issues. The church is aging and worries about its future health as there are few younger people joining. The church is like a wise elder who has deep roots in the community and wisdom to share.

***Are there any facts, statements or symbols that is positively associated with this church?-***

"Weaving a Faith that Matters", "You are Not Alone" and "All are Welcome in this Place", our Mission Statement, and The Lord's Prayer, are very important statements to our congregation. The United Church of Canada crest and New Creed are also important to our members.

Other symbols that are important are the cross, communion cup, candles, banners, rainbow symbol and stairs, the singing bowl, our own logo. These represent a Church that values tradition, is caring, faithful and inclusive and is indeed “weaving a faith that matters”.

***What makes this Church the church you want to belong to?***

It is the open-minded, loving and accepting congregation that brings us to UCOL. Here we find a non-judging, supportive environment in which we can share, worship and pray. This is a place where opportunities abound for service and outreach. There are ways to be part of ministries, programs, music and song

The major themes we found in all of the response can be summed up as:

1. Worship. Prayer, teaching, learning
2. Social Justice and Outreach
3. Belonging
4. Music

In each of the questions that were asked these themes all came through in different ways. These are the things we value and would like to see continue at United Churches of Langley.