

COMMENTARY ON COMMUNITY COVENANT CHURCH'S DRAFT STRATEGIC MAP FOR 2025-2028

READING THE STRATEGIC MAP

Community Covenant Church's strategic map is a one-page display of the church's central challenge, strategic priorities, and strategic objectives for the next three years. (*See draft strategic map on page 3.*)

- All of this is to occur within the context of the church's *purpose statement* (which appears at the top of the strategic map): "The purpose of Community Covenant Church is to cultivate a community that strives to love God, follow Jesus, and serve others."
- The oval at the top of the strategic map is the *central challenge*.
 - It focuses on a critical need for the church to address during the next three years.
 - It is the focal point for strategy.
- The central challenge is supported by several *strategic priorities* (letters A – D).
 - Strategic priorities are the few critical things we must do in order to meet our central challenge.
- The central challenge is supported as well by two *cross-cutting priorities* (letters E, F).
 - These are additional strategic priorities.
 - Because they are considered foundational to all strategic activities, they are placed at the bottom of the map and are to influence everything that happens above.
- *Strategic objectives* are the next level "what to do" steps (rows 1-4) designed to achieve strategic priorities A – D.

A strategic map does not reflect all that is important to our church family or all that our church will continue to do over the next three years. Rather, it focuses on a few things where we seek to give new or renewed attention.

IDENTIFYING THE CENTRAL CHALLENGE AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Leadership Board and Ministerial Staff met for a Planning Summit on August 15-16. Prior to the Summit, participants received and considered helpful input from two surveys:

1. *The Periodic Health Checkup Survey* – a tool designed by the Evangelical Covenant Church to help local churches assess their health in the areas of Missional Vitality, Vision, and Leadership. This survey was completed by 78 congregants in early June.
2. *Strategic Planning Survey* – an online tool used to get input from ministerial staff and from Leadership Board members on their hopes and dreams for the church; CCC's purpose statement; perceived strengths and weaknesses of the church; recommended priorities for the next three years; and any additional input the individual wished to provide.

At the Summit, small groups discussed and then reported to the whole group on:

- *Strengths* to build on over the next three years.
- *Weaknesses* to address over the next three years.
- *Key issues or priorities* over the next three years.

Then, each participant offered a word, phrase, or sentence to describe what he or she perceived as the *central challenge* for Community Covenant Church over the next three years.

After consideration of various options, the Summit group agreed upon the following ***proposed strategic direction*** for the church over the next three years:

PROPOSED CENTRAL CHALLENGE:

Grow and Flourish as a Family of Disciples and Disciple-Makers

PROPOSED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (to address the Central Challenge):

- A. Grow Deeper in Christ
- B. Expand Outreach
- C. Strengthen Church Family
- D. Enhance Ministry Resources

PROPOSED CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES (to impact all strategic planning activities):

- E. Fervently Pray For, and Rely On, the Spirit's Guidance and Empowerment
- F. Value Worship as a Source of Scriptural, Devotional, Missional, and Communal Growth

Small groups then met to discuss and propose STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES aimed at addressing each of the four proposed strategic priorities. Following large group discussion, **PROPOSED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES** were agreed upon as shown on the draft strategic map (see next page) and in the commentary that follows.

Finally, the Summit group turned its attention to priorities for the First Year (2025-2026) of the three-year map (2025-2028). The **PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR YEAR ONE** are:

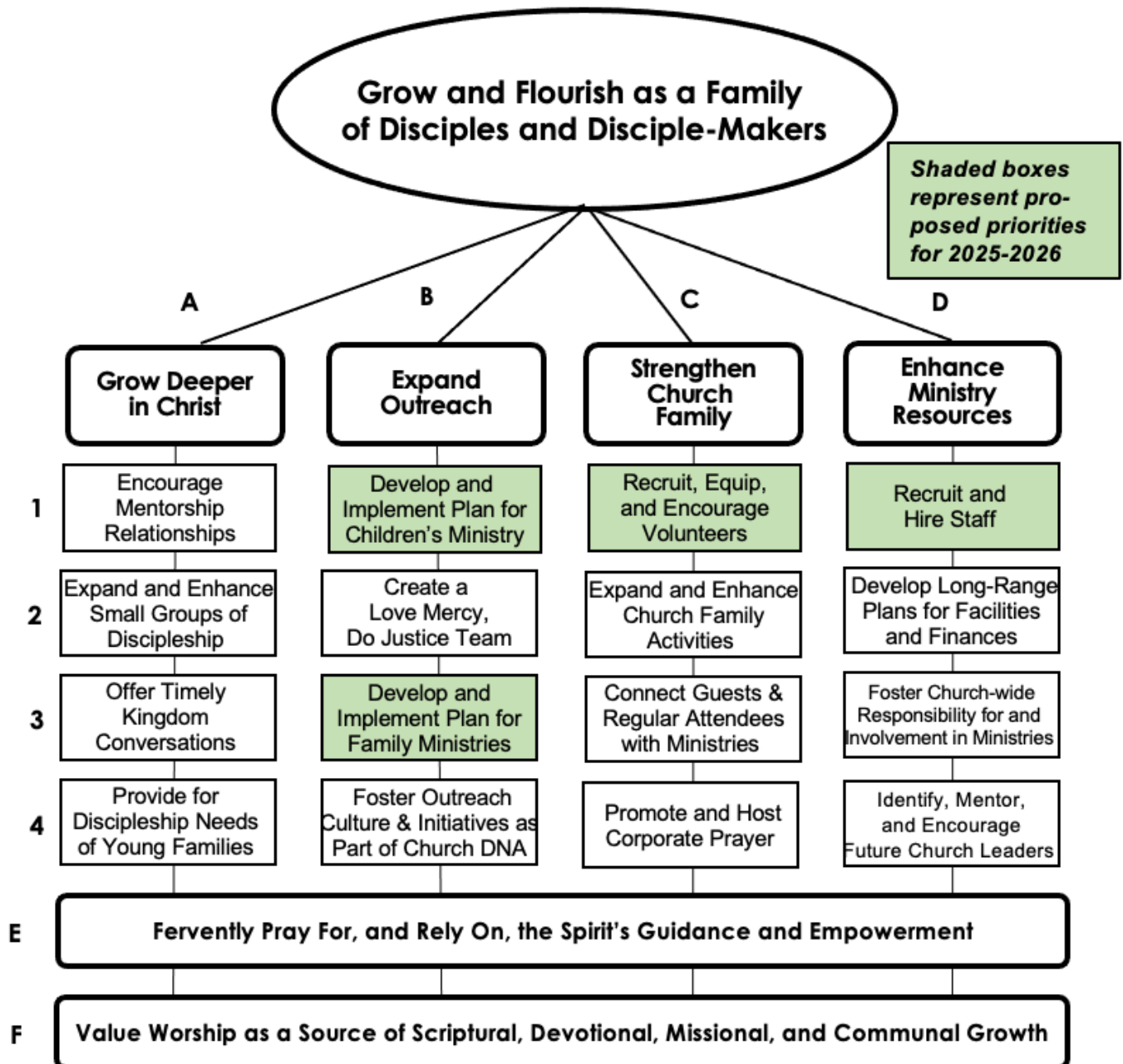
- B-1 Develop and Implement Plan for Children's Ministry
- B-3 Develop and Implement Plan for Family Ministries
- C-1 Recruit, Equip, and Encourage Volunteers
- D-1 Recruit and Hire Staff

The Planning Summit Group agreed to share the draft strategic map at a congregational meeting on September 7 and then seek input on the draft map using a brief online congregational survey. The Leadership Board will review the congregation's input before finalizing a new strategic map for 2025 -2028 (perhaps at the Leadership Board meeting on September 24, 2025).

**DRAFT as of
Aug. 16, 2025**

Community Covenant Church Strategic Map: 2025-2028

"The purpose of Community Covenant Church is to cultivate a community that strives to love God, follow Jesus, and serve others."



THINKING BEHIND MAP COMPONENTS

Central Challenge:

“Grow and Flourish as a Family of Disciples and Disciple-Makers”

- Survey results and small group discussions emphasized both discipleship and outreach. The term “Disciple-Makers” alludes to the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” (Mt 28:19) and encompasses outreach.
- Many Summit participants referred to our church as a “Family.” Because developing and implementing a plan for “Family Ministries” is one of the strategic objectives on the proposed map (B-3) and because this is one of the proposed strategic priorities for Year One, the Summit group favored having a reference to Family in the Central Challenge.
- As a result, the Summit group agreed upon the following central challenge as a focal point for living out CCC’s purpose statement in the next three years: “Grow and Flourish as a Family of Disciples and Disciple-Makers.”

Strategic Priority A:

“Grow Deeper in Christ”

- “Deeper in Christ. Further in Mission. Together.” is a long-time motto of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- “Grow Deeper in Christ” is used here to refer to the lifelong journey of discipleship for followers of Christ.

Strategic Priority A is supported by the following strategic objectives.

- **Strategic Objective A-1, “Encourage Mentorship Relationships”**
 - Those who are younger in the journey of faith and service can benefit from the guidance and wisdom of those who are more experienced on the journey.
 - The primary (but not exclusive) emphasis here is on encouraging and facilitating more one-on-one mentorships for members of our church family.
- **Strategic Objective A-2, “Expand and Enhance Small Groups of Discipleship”**
 - Often, we grow as disciples of Christ as we walk on the journey of faith with brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - Many are currently growing deeper in Christ by participating in Women’s Bible Study, the Men’s Journey Group, and/or Life Groups.
 - Expanding and Enhancing Small Groups of Discipleship is a key means of helping congregants Grow Deeper in Christ.
- **Strategic Objective A-3, “Offer Timely Kingdom Conversations”**
 - Another discipleship tool is to schedule short-term classes or sessions focused on a topic that is timely for us as citizens of God’s Kingdom.
 - Kingdom Conversations provide a venue for teaching and discussion that goes beyond what is covered in a sermon series and in subsequent Life Group sessions.
- **Strategic Objective A-4, “Provide for Discipleship Needs of Young Families”**
 - In light of proposed initiatives surrounding Family Ministries, the Summit Group recognizes that young families face some specific discipleship challenges and that related resources could be made available to them.

Strategic Priority B: “Expand Outreach”

- This priority seeks to address a weakness identified both in the June congregational survey and in the August survey of Planning Summit participants.
- Currently, 1) most church programs are internally focused; and 2) our budget supports a dozen missions-related individuals and organizations. There is a desire to do even more locally to share God’s love with our neighbors through words and deeds.

Strategic Priority B is supported by the following strategic objectives.

- **Strategic Objective B-1, “Develop and Implement Plan for Children’s Ministry”**
 - As we seek a new staff person to help provide leadership in Children’s Ministry, now is a good time to refine our vision (and perhaps reallocate resources) for the future.
 - Simultaneously, there are more children and young families than ever on our campus as a result of Hope4Kids expanding its programs in our facilities.
 - Likewise, there is an increase in the number of students adjacent to our campus at Foothill School.
- **Strategic Objective B-2, “Create a Love Mercy, Do Justice Team”**
 - Prior to the pandemic, the church benefited from having a team of volunteers focused on Love Mercy, Do Justice initiatives.
 - While the church remains involved in some Love Mercy, Do Justice endeavors (e.g., support of Santa Barbara Rescue Mission, Network Medical), gathering a new Love Mercy, Do Justice team will help us expand awareness of and participation in outreach activities.
- **Strategic Objective B-3, “Develop and Implement Plan for Family Ministries”**
 - To attract and retain more young families is a clear priority for our church.
 - To develop and implement a plan for Family Ministries goes beyond any plan for Children’s Ministry. It potentially includes such things as parenting sessions, and resources for family devotions, worship, and service.
 - As noted above under B-1, the expansion of the Hope4Kids program on our campus increases the number of young families who are exposed to our church.
 - According to one Summit participant, there is an increase in young families moving into Goleta.
- **Strategic Objective B-4, “Foster Outreach Culture and Initiatives as Part of Church DNA”**
 - An increase in outreach opportunities will give greater visibility to, and expand awareness of, needs in our local community. Greater participation in outreach is a natural outgrowth of growing deeper in Christ and is essential for our church family in living out the Great Commission.
 - We look forward to the day when hearing that we are to “love God, follow Jesus, and serve others” makes us think about our external neighbors as much as we think about our internal family members.

**Strategic Priority C:
“Strengthen Church Family”**

- How can we “cultivate a community” that 1) “strives to love God, follow Jesus, and serve others” (*church purpose statement*); and 2) will “grow and flourish as a family of disciples and disciple-makers” (*proposed central challenge*)?
- The Leadership Board and Ministerial Staff propose that priority be given to “Strengthen Church Family.”

Strategic Priority C is supported by the following strategic objectives.

- **Strategic Objective C-1, “Recruit, Equip, and Encourage Volunteers”**
 - The ministries of the church cannot flourish without an adequate number of trained, effective volunteers.
 - Each of us has been given one or more spiritual gifts. These gifts are to be used in service of God’s Kingdom.
 - More volunteers who “love God and follow Jesus” are needed to “serve others.”
- **Strategic Objective C-2, “Expand and Enhance Church Family Activities”**
 - Our family life can become stronger if additional attention is given to all-church events that grow our awareness of and appreciation for one another, and our commitment to our joint responsibilities as a church family.
- **Strategic Objective C-3, “Connect Guests and Regular Attendees with Ministries”**
 - There is a desire to be more intentional and more effective at connecting people with ministry needs and opportunities.
- **Strategic Objective C-4, “Promote and Host Corporate Prayer”**
 - This objective is related to Cross-cutting Priority E: “Fervently Pray For, and Rely On, the Spirit’s Guidance and Empowerment.”
 - A specific focus is added here on corporate prayer. Scheduling times of gathering as a church family to pray is essential for us as individuals, for us as a church family, and for the effectiveness of our church ministries.

**Strategic Priority D:
“Enhance Ministry Resources”**

- Adequate resources are needed in order to achieve Strategic Priorities A, B, and C. More volunteers will be required and vacant staff positions will need to be filled. Most likely, additional financial resources will be needed as well.
- Additional planning and training also are envisioned.

Strategic Priority D is supported by the following strategic objectives.

- **Strategic Objective D-1, “Recruit and Hire Staff”**
 - We are entering a period of staff transitions. Filling vacancies with capable and effective leaders will be essential for addressing the church’s central challenge to “Grow and Flourish as a Family of Disciples and Disciple-Makers.”
 - Search committees will be formed to work with Pastor Eric in hiring members of the pastoral staff.

- **Strategic Objective D-2, “Develop Long-Range Plans for Facilities and Finances”**
 - We have been blessed with many resources already. Part of being a good steward is to make plans that increase the likelihood of ministry effectiveness in the future.
 - This includes the development of a written report on options for maintaining and improving the property and facilities over the next 10 years. The report should address the cost, funding, and time required to undertake specific projects (including more housing on campus).

- **Strategic Objective D-3, “Foster Church-wide Responsibility for and Involvement in Ministries”**
 - As has been mentioned already, more volunteers are needed to serve others through existing programs and new initiatives.
 - Consistent, compelling messaging is needed on a regular basis to reinforce that “church” ministries are “our” ministries and that “we” are responsible for helping others grow and flourish as disciples and as disciple-makers.

- **Strategic Objective D-4, “Identify, Mentor, and Encourage Future Church Leaders”**
 - Our church – as well as any organization within God’s Kingdom – is likely to be hampered, if not harmed, by the absence of capable and effective leaders. We can and should invest today in the ministries and congregations of tomorrow by identifying, mentoring, and encouraging those who have the potential for church leadership roles in the future.

Cross-Cutting Priority E:

“Fervently Pray for, and Rely on, the Spirit’s Guidance and Empowerment”

This priority is foundational to all else that happens in conjunction with the church’s strategic map. We cannot grow and flourish as a church family without the Spirit guiding, equipping, and deploying us as disciples and disciple-makers.

Cross-Cutting Priority F:

“Value Worship as a Source of Scriptural, Devotional, Missional, and Communal Growth”

This priority also is foundational to all else that happens in conjunction with the church’s strategic map. The largest and most regular gathering of our church family on a regular basis is worship on Sunday mornings. Our weekly worship service is central to our discipleship and to sending us out to share the love of God with neighbors (both near and far) through words and deeds. Worship – not just on Sunday mornings – gives us the scriptural, devotional, missional, and communal components that are necessary to grow us as disciples and as disciple-makers.