

Cedar Ridge Annual Plan

August 2024

Goal and Objectives

The goal for this coming year is to more fully understand and embody our vision.

The objectives that contribute to this goal are as follows:

1. To identify the current implications of our vision for our personal and collective journeys.
2. To take intentional action to make more of the vision a reality as we live out our mission.

Objective 1: Identifying the current implications of our vision for our personal and collective journeys

Our vision is an imaginative picture of our transformed future as we follow Jesus together. It's a dream of heaven on Earth—what Jesus called “the kingdom of God”—and expresses our commitment to transformation in our personal lives, our life as a community, and the world we live in. It's intentionally broad and expansive with possibility. Our vision is still relevant, important, and the essence of who we are as a community. It's what brings us together and keeps us together. We have no plans to change it.

But in the almost 20 years since it was written, our church, society, and world have altered considerably. As a community, we have increasingly recognized the pernicious, enduring impacts of racism and our need to address them within ourselves as well as in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and society as a whole. We are now open and affirming of our LBGTO+ family and continue to strive to be a place where all people can fully belong. We are more aware of unhelpful patriarchal influences on how we envision and relate to God and are more committed to challenging them. We have grown in our appreciation of the importance of integrating children and youth into the life of the church. And we are more vigilant about applying a justice lens to our work on the farm and in Guatemala.

In the broader context, we live in a highly polarized and often hateful political environment that would have been difficult to imagine 20 years ago. We recently experienced a global pandemic that caused many people to rethink their priorities in life and their commitment to activities that had become second nature prior to the shutdown. And by the very nature of the kind of church we are and the location we are in, some longtime members have left and other people have joined our community.

With so much growth and change, it makes sense to commit considerable time to unpacking the implications of our vision in our current context. We need to ask what our vision means to us now in terms of personal transformation and individual and collective identity and action. How can we take on the mind of Christ and see ourselves and those around us with new eyes? How can we follow the way of Jesus in our families, neighborhoods, and workplaces? How can we worship, serve, and grow together to bring more of “heaven on Earth”? And how can our community values guide and express how and why we go about this?

Objective 2: Taking intentional action to make more of the vision a reality as we live out our mission

We do not want to have a deeper understanding of our vision purely as a theoretical exercise but in order that we might all more effectively embody it as we live out our mission “to be a community of hope and transformation dedicated to following Jesus.” Our mission—our purpose individually and in our life and actions together as a community—is to follow Jesus. Our mission is to authentically have and share hope. Our mission is transformation of self, our community, and our world.

This year we want to invite and encourage everyone in our church community to take intentional action to live out our vision in ways that are hopeful and transformative. Specifically, we want to engage as a community in the following ways:

- To be open to and consciousness of the presence of God in our own lives; to partner with God in the transformation of our own spiritual health and the way we engage with the world.
- To widen and deepen our relationships; to commit to loving and supporting others in our community on their journey of transformation—including people who are currently outside our friendship circles.
- To grow in our willingness and ability to share our stories of transformation with others and to invite them into the journey.
- To increasingly view ourselves as co-owners and hosts in our church community; to serve in our events and activities; and to make room for others in our journey personally and how we “do church” collectively.
- To make practical and tangible commitments to live simply and ethically, serving our neighbors, and pursuing justice with the oppressed and underserved.

Upcoming Series

Fall series: *Vision*

Jesus was born into a first-century world of political upheaval, social oppression, and religious disillusionment. He grew to be a leader grounded in the reality of his present situation, but with a belief, a conviction, and a dream that another world was possible. In the cultural context of his day, he described this as the “Kingdom of God.” But it was not a kingdom based on force or dominance, rather it was about love, selflessness, and sacrifice for the sake of others. Jesus had a vision for another world; he imagined what we could all be together if we followed the divine way of love. He radically and passionately gave his whole self to live this way, and he called anyone and everyone to join him in doing so.

Two millennia later, we are still following Jesus. In our own confusing and even despairing times of upheaval, oppression, and disillusionment, we have committed ourselves as a community to Jesus’ way of love. So in this six-week series, we will re-examine our vision to follow Jesus with the goal of understanding it more deeply and embodying it more fully. In the new context of 2024 and beyond, we want to identify the current implications of our vision for our personal and collective journeys and take action to make it a reality. Each week we’ll explore a different aspect of our vision, reflecting on why it’s so important to us ideologically and how we can embody it practically. We’ll hear from different members of our community about how our vision has impacted their own lives and there’ll be discussion and reflection material available for everyone. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is “at hand,” which means that at any point in history, including ours, there has never been a more important or relevant moment to follow.

Late fall series: *Colossians*

During this six-week series, we will look at Paul’s claims about Christ, “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” Like the Colossians, we will consider the implications of these claims for various aspects of our lives. And like them, we will seek to grow in spiritual understanding, bear good fruit, and “live the kind of life that honors and pleases the Lord in every way” (Colossians 1:10).

Advent: *The Shape of Christmas*

Using the imagery of shapes, we will explore the mysteries of the Christmas story in a creative, engaging, and tactile way. Each week will include insights from Advent traditions from a diversity of cultures represented within our community. The series will begin with an all-ages service focused on piecing together the Christmas story.

Calendar 2024-5

Date	Event	Notes
Mon Aug 26	Back to school for all districts	
Sun Sep 1	Parables 5	All Ages Together, Potluck picnic
Tue Sep 3	Evening Prayer Practice, 7 - 8 p.m.	
Sun Sept 8	Vision series 1	
Sun Sep 15	Vision series 2	Kids at the playground
Sat Sep 21	Burtonsville Day	9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Sun Sep 22	Vision series 3	
Sun Sep 29	Vision series 4	Ministry Fair & groups relaunch
Tue Oct 1	Evening Prayer Practice, 7 - 8 p.m.	
Sun Oct 6	Vision series 5	First Sunday, potluck lunch
Sat Oct 12	Harvest Festival 4 - 7 p.m.	
Sun Oct 13	Vision series 6	The Journey
Sat Oct 19	Harvest Festival rain date	
Sun Oct 20	Colossians series 1	
Sun Oct 27	Day of Service	Breakfast outdoors
Sun Nov 3	Colossians series 2	First Sunday, Community Sunday, DSL ends, Annual Meeting & soup potluck (TBC)
Mon Nov 4	Evening Prayer Practice, 7 - 8 p.m.	Election Day is Tue Nov 5
Sun Nov 10	Colossians series 3	
Sun Nov 17	Colossians series 4	
Sun Nov 24	Colossians series 5	Thanksgiving on 11/28 Christmas decorating, pizza lunch
Sun Dec 1	Christmas series 1	All Ages Together
Sat Dec 7	Christmas at the Barn	
Sun Dec 8	Christmas series 2	
Sat Dec 14	Advent Quiet Day, 10 a.m. -3:30 p.m.	
Sun Dec 15	Christmas series 3	
Sun Dec 22	Christmas series 4	Fireplace and cookies/hot chocolate
Tue Dec 24	Christmas Eve service, 5:30 p.m.	AAT traditional candlelit service
Sun Dec 29	Christmas series 5	

Cedar Ridge Mission, Vision and Values

Cedar Ridge Mission

To be a community of hope and transformation, dedicated to following Jesus.

Cedar Ridge Vision

Our vision is what we dare to imagine our future could be like if we passionately and seriously pursue our mission of following Jesus together as his disciples. The words here are meant to paint a picture of what we imagine this to look like, and we invite you to join us as we live out our vision in everyday life:

Imagine a community that dares to dream of heaven on Earth; a diverse community where everyone is welcomed and respected and their journey cherished; a community where everyone belongs and looks out for the concerns of others, so no one feels alone.

Imagine a community of peace and safety where it's possible to shelter from the frenzied pace of life in order to slow down and explore the mystery and meaning of our existence; where we can take time to address the roots of our anxieties and pain; a place of hope where we can find help and healing and the power to change, no matter how desperate our situation.

Imagine a community of people devoted to following Jesus together, learning to live like him and helping one another grow in their relationship with God; where we are gradually transformed to become better people who enjoy life to the full and who can also deal with adversity well, learning to grow through failure and suffering.

Imagine that community scattered throughout the region working as agents of love, peace, and hope wherever they are; serving our neighbors and pursuing justice with the oppressed and underserved. Imagine a community of people who live simply and ethically, who share their land and resources with their neighbors; a community that treasures the Earth and reaches out beyond national, cultural, and political barriers to offer friendship and practical support.

Imagine a community of people who make the world a better place.

Cedar Ridge Values

- **Love:** This is our highest value and the one that undergirds all our others. Love is what we see in Jesus, the way we define God, and the way we seek to relate to others. As followers of Jesus our journey is ultimately a progressive experience of oneness with God and oneness with one another. For us, love is our final authority and more important than being right. We will disagree on all manner of things, but we will always love.
- **Hope:** We celebrate the reality embodied in Jesus that God never gives up on the world or any single one of us. This hope drives our commitment to transformation. As followers of Jesus, we believe we can all become healthier and more loving people, and the world can become a more just and loving place. We choose to believe the best about others, ourselves, and the future, and we work creatively and imaginatively to bring about new realities and possibilities.
- **Diversity:** We welcome and treasure our differences embodied in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, culture, age and abilities and intentionally pursue a community culture where everyone has a sense of inclusion and belonging. We honor the different spiritual paths we have

each walked and see our differences as a gift because we each have the most to learn from those who are least like us.

- **Humility:** We adopt the servant-hearted posture of Jesus in putting others first. We are honest about our weaknesses and mistakes and authentically strive to change. We pursue vulnerability in relationships, and are committed to working through conflict, rather than walking away. While striving to act and speak with integrity, we seek new understandings of ourselves and others rather than proving ourselves right.
- **Justice:** We seek to live justly and work for justice in our relationships, our communities, and in society as whole. We express this personally (being the change we want to see in world) through our behaviors, what we buy, what we consume, and how we treat both people and nature. We express this corporately through the struggle against systems that perpetuate racial, economic, social and environmental injustice.
- **Journey:** We see life as a journey and all of us are in process. That means none of us are the finished article so we can have patience with ourselves and others. Transformation takes time, so we are committed to faithful practice and not giving up. We embrace mystery and acknowledge the role of both faith and doubt in our journey, recognizing that it takes us into both new understandings as well as new uncertainties. So we remain openhearted and openminded: to God and to one another.