

**For the purposes of the Strategic Planning Team only
(Not a proposal to make an official change to church documents)**

Mission Statement

What is our purpose?

Whom do we serve?

Why does it matter?

Purpose

Little River United Church of Christ (Annandale, Virginia) is a community of followers of Jesus of Nazareth. We seek to embody the Spirit of God as set forth in the life, teachings, death, and living presence of Jesus the Christ. Our purpose is twofold: to seek our own and others' wholeness by experiencing and expressing divine love, and to act prophetically to establish a just way of life. We gather in person and online for: prayer and reflection in worship, enriching music, building relationships, learning, and social justice activities for all ages. We are doubters and seekers, sinners and saints doing our best to create a beloved community with those in the D.C. area and beyond.

Context

Little River UCC was founded at the height of racial strife in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1955. From its inception, our church was committed to having a racially integrated congregation and we were one of the first to do so in Northern Virginia in that era. We have been committed to working for integration, for civil rights, and for changing American society. In addition, we have celebrated LGBTQIA+ persons and families within our congregation for more than 20 years, including the first openly lesbian ordained clergy person in the U.S. Our country has a history of injustice: genocide of indigenous peoples; colonialism; slavery; economic practices that oppress people of color, women, and the earth; and violence against LGBTQIA+ people, women, and people of color. To embody the Spirit of Christ in this particular context, we serve the LGBTQIA+ community, persons of color and all affected by racist policies, and those facing economic hardship with our Open and Affirming, Antiracism, and Social Justice Ministries.

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Vision Statement

What is the ideal future that we can achieve?

To be a leader in progressive Christian thought and social action in Northern Virginia, making an impact by promoting justice and providing a welcoming spiritual community.

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Core Values

How do we do what we do?

- **Joyful and Grateful Community:** Caring for and supporting one another through social engagement and mutual support. Expressing our thanks to God and treating each other with respect, kindness, compassion, friendship, and good humor.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Offering an extravagant welcome to visitors and newcomers, upholding and defending others' dignity, and allying ourselves with the oppressed. Celebrating diversity and valuing differences, including race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, ability, economic circumstance, education, religious background, and immigration status.
- **Justice, Love, and Courage:** Seeking to benefit others by serving the needs of our local community and the wider world. Acting with courage and Christ-like love to achieve justice.
- **Learning in Community:** Approaching spiritual growth and social justice through academic resources and current scholarship, through organized, informed, and thought-provoking sermons, well-researched study of scripture, and informed discussion of issues. Learning with humility, patience, careful attention, including the guidance of other perspectives.
- **Progressive Faithfulness and Outreach:** Prayerfully listening for God's call and will in each new context. Sharing good news with others through events and programs, and participating in local events and networks.
- **Integrity, Transparency, and Democratic Engagement:** Meaningful, inclusive engagement in decision-making based on democratic structures. Engaging with one another with honesty, transparency, and clarity. Adopting an attitude of intellectual curiosity, especially in the midst of change and differences of opinion. With self-reflection and prayer, gracefully interacting with others inside and outside our community, and resolving or understanding conflict when it arises.