

a place to be

a place to belong

a place to become

**Knox United Church
Kenora, ON**

VISIONING OUR FUTURE

**A Strategic Plan
2012-2017**

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Our Vision and Mission

a place to be a place to belong a place to become

The family of Knox will achieve its vision by...

Welcoming absolutely
Accepting compassionately
Celebrating the Holy
Nurturing faith
Seeking justice
Laughing and singing joyfully
Reaching out bravely
Loving unconditionally
Respecting God's creation
Living our faith courageously

... reflecting the life and teachings of Jesus.

A. Background

1. Introduction

As we begin this report, we thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think, what you believe and what you dream for Knox. We hope you will see a reflection of what you told us over the past two years in the following pages. We have tried very diligently to show you what you would like to see happen at Knox and have developed and expanded on ideas from your feedback.

As you read this report, we hope you will feel the spirit in which it was written – one of respect, being true to the teachings of Christ and being open to the challenge of further developing our ConneXions* to God, each other, our community and the world in which we live. All of us are called to reach out with a daring and tender love in our daily living. We want Knox to be that place of relationships, daring love and ConneXions*.

You told us why Knox is important to your life. *“I was seeking a community church.”; “We are called to serve the least of these – the poor, the minority, the disenfranchised.”; “Spread a little love around and follow the examples of Jesus.”; “We were brought up to go to church.”; “to learn about God”; “I have United Church roots.”; “I want to be challenged in my faith and Knox does that for me”; “to connect with the Holy”; “I hope to be lifted to another level of thinking and doing in the community and world”; “It’s tradition.”; “We have always gone there and always will.”; It’s a good place for my children to have that exposure and to be with good people.”; “I like to believe Knox exists because we are Christian and we are called to be the church.”, and; “We come for different reasons and we stay for different reasons.”.*

The above quotes are all part of our Knox story and why many of you spoke about wanting Knox to be a nurturing, alive and relevant Christian community in today’s world and in the future. How are we to achieve these goals?

It is with our commitment, prayers, time, talents, money and energy that the goals of this report will be achieved. The future of Knox lies in all our hands. What role will you play?

“... we as a congregation have the strongest personal responsibility.”

The Visioning Committee

*X is Greek for Christ
See Appendix Page 32

All of the *“italicized quotes”* found throughout this document are your thoughts.

2. Knox United and the United Church of Canada

The committee received many comments and concerns around membership, attendance and givings. The following statistics were extracted from the United Church of Canada Year Books. They are included in this report to provide a "general" idea of the status of Knox relative to the National Church Statistics.

Statistics from United Church of Canada Year Books	National Church 1999	National Church 2009	Knox 1999	Knox 2009
Membership	668,549	549 673	518*	392
Households	529962	416189	500	442
Financially supporting households	336075	254348	220	241
Average Weekly Attendance	278292	183153	220	150
Baptisms - adult	2174	1048	3	0
Baptisms - children	19322	9470	9	3
Funerals	27408	20009	25	14
Membership in Sunday School	140129	68947	118	83
Membership in Men's Groups	13428	12392	0	22
Membership in Women's Groups	88920	59235	50	85
M & S givings	\$27,048,583	\$27,028,247	\$28036	\$30071
Congregational givings	\$234,998,889	\$261,320,880	\$138,413	\$171,956
UCW	\$17,014,585	\$14,673,976	\$10,392	\$8,397
Other means / Organizations	\$76,759,533	\$113,530,421	\$63,842	\$38,029
Total givings-all purposes	\$328,773,007	\$389,525,279	\$212,647	\$219,282
Paid to ministers	\$68,905,603	\$79,887,835	\$34,000	\$44,037
Total liabilities (loans,mortgages)	\$56,218,841	\$86,222,040	\$0.00	\$0.00

Some statistics to note:

Membership	Average Weekly Attendance	Congregational Givings
UCC -18%	UCC -30%	UCC +15%
Knox -24%	Knox -31%	Knox +3.3%

Knox 1999 membership numbers are inflated. They were corrected in 2004 when a major membership review took place. In 2004, membership was reported as 359 members that reflects a 9% increase (2004-2009).

Knox statistics reflect the national trend.

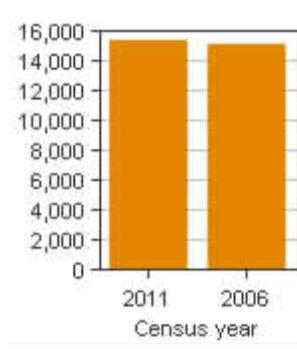
Consider the Knox statistic that showed there was potential for 83 children and youth in the Sunday School programs. It strongly supports your expressions of concern for these groups and our recommendation to hire a Youth Leader.

3. An Environmental Scan of Kenora: Knox United's Community

The May 2011 population count numbers, pegs Kenora's newest number of permanent citizens at 15,348 (a percentage change of 1.1% from 2006). Other preliminary data from the census lists Kenora with 7,335 dwellings of which 6,521 were occupied by their usual permanent residents on census day, May 10, 2011. The dwelling numbers are also up from the 2006 count when 6,845 dwellings were listed, with 6,251 occupied by permanent residents. Provincial statistics may say Kenora's population is on a decline, but the national census conducted last spring tells a different tale.

This compares to the national growth of 5.9% and to the average growth among all CAs of 4.2%.

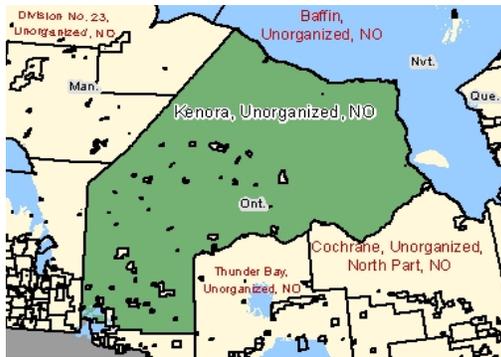
Map of Kenora, Ontario



Population, 2011 and 2006 censuses: Provincial rank 38; National rank 125

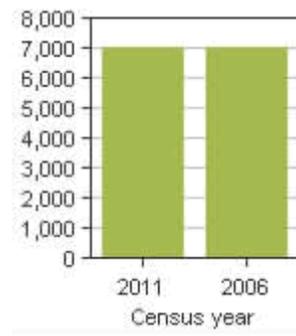
In 2011, Kenora, Unorganized (Unorganized / Non organis ) had a population of 7,031, representing a percentage change of -0.1% from 2006. This compares to the national average growth of 5.9%.

Map of Kenora, Unorganized, NO



Provincial Rank 186

Population, 2011 and 2006 censuses



National rank 538

40 per cent of Aboriginal people in Ontario live in northern Ontario. Aboriginal people living in northern Ontario have lower education levels, a lower labour force participation rate, and average annual employment incomes compared to Aboriginal people in other regions of Ontario.

The 2011 census shows area First Nations are bucking the lure of urban living and continuing to grow in population.

Overall, First Nation populations are now 3,666, compared to 3,316 in 2006 for the dozen communities that use Kenora as their service centre.

The many changes in the demographics of Kenora, the economy and society present and will continue to present exciting challenges for the congregation of Knox. These many ways include such aspects as:

1. Knox has lost young families and youth to out-migration that affects people who might be available for volunteer work and promotion of the church. As the congregation ages, the younger children, youth, and younger families are not able to compensate in numbers or volunteer work.

“There are not a variety of job opportunities in Kenora for young professionals. And as a result all of the young people who attended Knox as children have not returned after getting an education. Those with ties to Knox and traditions in church are simply not there.”

2. Our congregation is aging. And, as our members age, their needs and abilities will change.
3. The First Nations numbers are increasing in our community but are not reflected in the congregation or in Knox Community Service.
4. The priority once given to church financial givings has changed.
5. Kenora is unique in its lifestyle. Many people have a healthy, outdoor lifestyle and take advantage of beautiful weather, especially on the weekends.
6. The majority of parents of our young families both work full time and do not have the energy, time nor the desire to make a commitment to the life at Knox. They have little spare time and usually do not wish to spend it separated from their children.
7. Enhancement in mass media has awakened people to the horrors of war and the part that religion is perceived to play in it. Some people may not want to affiliate with such an institution.

4. Our Process of Strategic Planning (Visioning)

The idea of a Knox Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) was conceived over many years in discussion with Cheryl and Eric and Ministry and Personnel Committee. It was felt that Knox was in dire need of a “visioning” process. The beginning of a Joint Needs Assessment Committee (JNAC) process was approved at the Annual General Meeting in February, 2010 to address the many issues which had been recognized - declining membership and involvement; future for children in the church; search for a dynamic future; needs of an aging congregation; financial support for necessary repairs, and; knowledge of strengths.

A JNAC committee was nominated at a congregational meeting. This group has been meeting long hours, consistently and valiantly over the past two years. The JNAC process quickly expanded into a visioning and strategic planning approach.

We used a recognized Project Planning approach. A Knox “*Visioning the Future*” Team Charter was drafted, accepted by Leadership Team and made available to the congregation. It outlined the:

- 1) Purpose of the Project;
- 2) Scope of the Project including: data collection and analysis, focus groups, surveys, environmental scan and a Vision and Mission; and
- 3) Deliverables of the Project including a Vision, a Mission, Knox Core Values, Completed Profiles (JNCA-as needed) and a five-year Visioning (Strategic) Plan.

Surveys were conducted, a questionnaire was available to the congregation for many weeks, one-on-one interviews were held and focus groups were conducted. The questions and structure were based on the United Church of Canada's *Congregational Renewal: Congregational Self-Assessment* (See Appendix Pages 34 - 35).

The next and key step was to look for themes within the various categories (Appendix page 32). Within each category and within each particular theme, we, then, looked for actions or recommendations to address your comments and ideas. This step involved writing, rewriting and editing the final report to have it ready for congregation at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.

When we began analyzing the data and developing themes and categories, we realized we needed to complete a Vision and Mission statement for Knox before we could begin compiling the recommendations. It was presented and well received by you in June 2011. Every task we undertook was based on this Vision and Mission statement.

5. Visioning Planning Goal

The goal of this Visioning Plan (Strategic Plan) is to ensure the sustainability and relevance of Knox United Church.

We need to challenge ourselves to "live out" our Vision and Mission.

"... things need to be changed but that is not necessarily as negative as it may seem – I hope change happens and is in a positive direction."

"Accolades to Knox for being brave enough to do this visioning exercise. It needs to do it to survive. I hope for change because it can't survive as it is."

6. Final Report

We respectfully submit this final report – ***Visioning Our Future*** - for consideration by the congregation of Knox.

Bruce Graham

Miriam MacDonald

Lynda Pyzer

Valerie Mills-Daly

Tam McEwen

Jan Fletcher

C. Strategic Categories and Actions

I. Strategic Focus: Spiritual Nurture

Preamble:

Knox is a place where we gather to be nurtured on our spiritual journeys. We are a family of seekers, the unsure, beginners and the lifelong followers of Jesus. All are to be welcomed, respected and nurtured in faith. We hope you will see there is a place, a ConneXion*, for every member, visitor and stranger at Knox.

“... what matters is faith that works through love.” (Galatians 5:6)

Recommendations for Action:

1. Continue the search for and implementation of innovative ways of spiritual expression and growth for the Knox family such as:
 - o Retreats – for families, youth, men women, young adults;
 - o Journey groups – study, book, reflective, sharing;
 - o Spiritual cinema – video and discussion; and
 - o Meditation, prayer, yoga.

Action \Rightarrow **Ministers; Congregation**

2. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person to assist the congregation in enhancing the spiritual nurturance of our Sunday school children, youth and teens through strong programming, activities, social events, justice projects and outreach.

"The problem within the Sunday school may bring our problems to a head before the collapse of the building."

"Address Sunday school issues in an effective and productive manner and do it soon."

"I wish there was more for the youth to do. It seems a whole generation is missing."

"For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever." (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Action \Rightarrow **JNAC; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

3. Promote Knox to the community as the *place to be*, the *place to belong*, the *place to become* through thought provoking, inspiring sermons, superb music, a welcoming "family", publicity of special events, ConneXions*, etc.

Action \Rightarrow **Leadership Team; Congregation**

4. The quality of music at Knox is excellent.

- We heard a wish for the entire spectrum of music from "more traditional to more contemporary".
- Provide the people in charge of music and/or the Worship Interest Group with the pertinent data.
- Encourage more music participation in a variety of ways from the congregation paying attention to recommendations of more peppy music.
- Have a *Music Wish Box* for music suggestions.

"It is difficult to wade through new hymns because they are lacking in inspiration and not as touching."

"Newer modern music, please. The old stuff doesn't fulfill me like modern worded and catchy soulful tunes do."

Action \Rightarrow **Worship Interest Group; Ministers; Music Leaders; Choir; Congregation**

5. Encourage and offer feedback regarding the spiritual leadership provided by the Ministers.

Action \Rightarrow **Congregation; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

6. Create more spiritual opportunities in collaboration with other local churches.

Action \Rightarrow **Worship Group; Leadership Team; Ministers**

* ConneXions - See Appendix

7. We heard a variety of differing opinions centered around Knox as a welcoming congregation –

"We are all guilty of finding our niche in the congregation and we are supported in it; however, if someone new comes, s/he may not find support."

"It is a very welcoming church, very warm. The invitation at communion goes out to all."

"Church family concept is good but it does become inclusive."

"Need to be "on our toes" for welcoming newcomers."

Our recommendations include:

- Establish a buddy system for new people;
- Create an updated Knox 101 brochure;
- Encourage the development of a Welcoming Interest Group;
- Collaborate with House Group leaders to find ways to stay connected to those people who are not able to attend regularly or who have stopped attending. We need to think about the messages we are giving when we let people just disappear.
- Brainstorm with the House Group leaders to find a way to accommodate people with limited physical abilities or parents with young children who need

to use the elevator but find themselves locked out when they arrive after the door has been locked.

- Offer rides to church for anyone needing it.
- Have no parking in front of the church on Sunday. Use the parking spots just for drop off.
- Reactivate the Emerging Spirit committee or train people to be *Welcomers*.
- Invite visitors to introduce themselves.

Action ⇒ **Worship Interest Group; Leadership Team; Ministers; House Groups**

8. Create opportunities for sharing personal faith stories.

"Where I saw Jesus today."

Action ⇒ **Worship Interest Group; Ministers**

9. Create opportunities for parents and other interested people for social activities, workshops and discussion groups such as Christianity 101, spiritual discussions with children/teens, understanding United Church theology, etc..

Action ⇒ **Congregation; Parents; Ministers**



II. Strategic Focus: Community Service

Preamble:

We are called to reach out, to serve, to be good stewards of the earth and to care for one another with love, respect and compassion. We seek to respond to the needs of each other, within our church, in our community and in our world.

"I want to see a vibrant church serving the community and spiritual needs. More of us need to step forward and make a bigger commitment than we do."

"Acts of compassion and deeds of caring are worth the time taken from free time and leisure."

"Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

Recommendations for Actions:

1. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person (refer to #2 in Spiritual Nurture) to engage youth and the congregation in community outreach.

Action \Rightarrow **JNAC; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

2. Encourage the family of Knox to love, respect and show compassion for the community by:

- Building awareness of and participate in local homeless, anti poverty initiatives; further support Agape and Fellowship Centre needs and activities.
- Encouraging further contributions and enhancement of the Knox Pantry program.
- Engaging in First Nations relationship building, awareness, involvement, education to support local and national issues.
- Involving Knox in support Habitat for Humanity initiatives.
- Participating in local clean green events and education of local enviro-eco issues.
- Supporting and organizing local community events and speakers on issues such as social justice, sustainable food awareness, bullying, suicide, mental health, local/world water, ethical spending and investing, homophobia, elder abuse, addictions. Support ideas of Knox members for such events.

Action \Rightarrow **Congregation; Youth and Community Service staff person**

3. Knox is a *place to belong* – a place to develop ConneXions*. It is important to provide a variety of opportunities to develop relationships with each other, within small groups and with the whole congregation.

Such ideas could include:

- i. Once a month after church potluck lunches. It could be a social time or study time.
- ii. Knox Neighbourhood Walking Groups – “Knox Walks”
- iii. 50/50 Knox Meal. Those under 50 years of age prepare and serve a meal to those over 50 and then visa versa.
- iv. Knox Skate Night
- v. Social opportunities within House Groups
- vi. Knox team in Relay for Life
- vii. Couples’ Club
- viii. Congregational-held dinners

Action \rightleftarrows **Congregation;**
Youth and Community Service staff person

*ConneXions – See Appendix

III. Strategic Focus: Governance

Preamble:

Knox Church United is a spiritual entity and yet, it also requires organizational aspects. These two differing but important aspects of church governance need to be held in a delicate balance. It is the role of the Leadership Team to exercise the authority, direction and control in all matters and to ensure our Vision and Mission are adhered to in all decision making.

Recommendations for Actions:

1. The Leadership Team:

- i. Provides ongoing support and direction to House Groups;
- ii. Ensures ongoing and regular communication with the congregation. Inform the congregation of changes before they occur.
- iii. Uses a variety of means to share information such as a website, electronic mail outs (e.g. announcements and/or upcoming events), bulletins, newspaper, Opportunity Knox, House Groups, Interest Groups and message boards rather than relying too heavily on informal communication.

"It is important to communicate as though nobody knows anything."

- iv. Regularly monitors adherence to the Visioning (Strategic) Plan.
- v. Reviews the role, function and accountability of all Knox "governing" entities to include Leadership Team, Trustees, Ministry and Personnel, House Groups, Interest Groups e.g. consider Worship and Sunday School as a core function rather than an Interest Group.

Action \Rightarrow **Leadership Team**

IV. Strategic Focus: Money

Preamble:

A discussion of money and financial management of church funds always elicits emotional responses from the majority of people. It may be an uncomfortable but necessary consideration in order to ensure our viability into the future.

Finances need to be seen as a normal, regular part of church life just as it is in our households. All decisions on financial matters must reflect our Vision and Mission.

"My hope for the future is an expanding congregation but how do you bring it about. It requires unconditional and financial commitment."



Recommendations for Actions:

1. Create a Knox Engagement and Sustainability Committee (Stewardship) to address Knox's financial future.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team**

2. Develop and implement a *Knox Rental, Usage and Marketing Plan*. Such ideas could include: expanding the use of the facilities through innovative ideas – e.g. Speakers' Night-Lecture series; or developing a Video Conference Centre for university courses and/or Continuing Education courses.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; Knox Management**

3. Develop a Knox Financial Plan and review it annually. Incorporate the United Church of Canada financial planning guidelines into it.
Action \Rightarrow **Leadership Team; Finance Committee (Treasurer)**

4. Support the ongoing work of the Trustees in managing investments, Bequests and In Memoriams. Sponsor a workshop on church finances.
Action \Rightarrow **Leadership Team; Engagement and Sustainability Committee (Stewardship)**

5. Promote communication about expenditures in creative ways such as illustrative graphs e.g. cost of electricity per month or number or rolls of toilet paper per month, etc.

"We are already stressed out about the lack of money and decreased offering so we don't need to hear negative messages."

Action \Rightarrow **Finance Committee (Treasurer)**

V. Strategic Focus: The Building

Preamble:

"Church is people not a building but it is a "catch-22" because we need to keep it up without losing our focus of why we exist." A fine balance needs to be struck. Nonetheless, *"our building is very beautiful: it is a gift and a sacred place"*. We have it – let us collaborate and care for it as a *place to be*. On the other hand, many of you expressed thoughts about our ability to maintain and afford it. The writers of this report have determined a necessity to be proactive and hope to have plans in place that will ensure our future together.

Recommendations for Actions:

1. Create a Core Building Group that would be accountable to Leadership Team. The Group ensures that:
 - A Building Repair Plan (Project Plan) is developed and reviewed annually;
 - Ongoing "succession planning" for its members is active; and
 - A Plan to address capital projects such as the roof is developed.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team**

2. Re-visit the options for Knox as a Performance, Cultural and Arts Centre of Kenora.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team**

3. Develop a Rental, Usage and Marketing Plan for Knox to explore the potential for Knox as a Centre for youth, sports, art, lectures, writers' workshops, tutoring, crafts, organ lessons, summer camps, video conferencing, yoga, Pilates or Spinning.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; Knox Management**

4. Discuss options with other churches related to building use.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team**

5. Appoint a committee to coordinate the ongoing physical enhancement of Knox.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team**

6. Consider options to maintain the building that go beyond the current job description of the caretaker e.g. Develop a schedule for a spring or fall cleaning

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

7. We need to consider our interior and exterior signage especially from a visitor's point of view. Is it welcoming and adequate? Does it help someone find something as simple as the first aid box? Is the exterior sign in good repair and enticing?

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; see #5 above**



VI:

Strategic Focus: Staff

Preamble:

Knox is very fortunate to have committed, competent and reliable staff. At present, our ministerial staff consists of two gifted half-time ministers dividing one full-time position. Knox also has a part-time custodian and part-time secretary. As of Jan 2012, one of the ministers, Cheryl, will be engaged in an additional quarter time contract for seven months.

As we noted in section one of Spiritual Nurture, there was/is a desire to put more focus on Sunday School, youth, spiritual nurture and outreach work. The writers of this report believe that additional staff is required to achieve these important goals for the sustainability and future of a vibrant church. The role of this staff person will be determined by prioritizing Knox's needs and goals.

We also have learned that in order to remain viable and sustain ourselves, Knox has to be creative and "think outside of the box". This is why Knox needs designated and accountable church management. Such a position could involve the promotion, marketing and rental usage of Knox.

Recommendations for Actions:

1. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person to engage youth and the congregation through community outreach.

Action ⇒ **JNAC; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

2. Refer to the Ministry and Personnel Committee to review roles, responsibilities and position descriptions of all staff.

Action ⇒ **Ministry and Personnel Committee**

3. Ensure that roles, responsibilities and position descriptions align with and support the Vision and Mission of Knox United.

Action ⇒ **Ministry and Personnel Committee**

4. There is a need at Knox for designated and accountable church management.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; JNAC; M&P Committee**

5. Initiate succession planning for ministers, music leaders, secretary, caretaker, building maintenance and house group and interest group leaders.

Action ⇒ **Leadership Team; Ministry and Personnel Committee**

D. Recommended TimeLine 2012-2017

Recommendations	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
I Spiritual Nurture					
1. Continue the search for and implementation of innovative ways of spiritual expression and growth for the Knox family such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retreats – for families, youth, men women, young adults; ○ Journey groups – study, book, reflective, sharing; ○ Spiritual cinema – video and discussion; and ○ Meditation, prayer, yoga. 					
2. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person to assist the congregation in enhancing the spiritual nurturance of our Sunday school children, youth and teens through strong programming, activities, social events, justice projects and outreach.					
3. Promote Knox to the community as the <i>place to be</i> , the <i>place to belong</i> , the <i>place to become</i> through thought provoking, inspiring					

sermons, superb music, a welcoming “family”, publicity of special events, ConneXions*, etc.					
4. The quality of music at Knox is excellent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We heard a wish for the entire spectrum of music from “more traditional to more contemporary”. ○ Provide the people in charge of music and/or the Worship Interest Group with the pertinent data. ○ Encourage more music participation in a variety of ways from the congregation paying attention to recommendations of more peppy music. ○ Have a <i>Music Wish Box</i> for music suggestions. 					
5. Encourage and offer feedback regarding the spiritual leadership provided by the Ministers.					
6. Create more spiritual opportunities in collaboration with other local churches.					
7. We heard a variety of differing opinions centered around Knox as a welcoming congregation. Our recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish a buddy system for new people; ○ Create an updated Knox 101 brochure; ○ Encourage the development of a Welcoming Interest Group; ○ Collaborate with House Group leaders to find ways to stay connected to those people who are not able to attend regularly or who have stopped attending. We need to think about the messages we are giving when we let people just disappear. ○ Brainstorm with the House Group leaders to find a way to accommodate people with limited physical abilities or parents with young children who need to use the elevator but find themselves locked out when they arrive after the door has been locked. ○ Offer rides to church for anyone needing it. ○ Have no parking in front of the church on Sunday. Use the parking spots just for drop off. ○ Reactivate the Emerging Spirit committee or train people to be <i>Welcomers</i>. ○ Invite visitors to introduce themselves. 					
8. Create opportunities for sharing personal faith stories.					
9. Create opportunities for parents and other interested people for social activities, workshops and discussion groups such as Christianity 101, spiritual discussions with your children/teens, understanding United Church theology, etc..					

II. Community Service					
1. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person (refer to #2 in Spiritual Nurture) to engage youth and the congregation in community outreach.					

<p>2. Encourage the family of Knox to love, respect and show compassion for the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building awareness of and participate in local homeless, anti poverty initiatives; further support Agape and Fellowship Centre needs and activities. ○ Encouraging further contributions and enhancement of the Knox Pantry program. ○ Engaging in First Nations’ relationship building, awareness, involvement, education to support local and national issues. ○ Involving Knox in support Habitat for Humanity initiatives. ○ Participating in local Clean Green Events and education of local enviro-eco issues. ○ Supporting and organizing local community events and speakers on issues such as social justice, sustainable food awareness, bullying, suicide, mental health, local-world water, ethical spending and investing, homophobia, elder abuse, addictions. Support ideas of Knox members for such events. 					
<p>3. Knox is a <i>place to belong</i> – a place to develop ConneXions*. It is important to provide a variety of opportunities to develop relationships with each other, within small groups and with the whole congregation. Such ideas could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Once a month after church potluck lunches. It could be a social time or study time. ○ Knox Neighbourhood Walking Group – “Knox Walks” ○ 50/50 Knox Meal. Those under 50 years of age prepare and serve a meal to those over 50 and then visa versa. ○ Knox Skate Night ○ Social opportunities within House Groups ○ Knox team in Relay for Life ○ Couples’ Club ○ Congregational-held dinners 					

III. Governance	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<p>1. The Leadership Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides ongoing support and direction to House Groups; ○ Ensures ongoing and regular communication with the congregation. Inform the congregation of changes before they occur. 					

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses a variety of means to share information such as a website, electronic mail outs (e.g. announcements and/or upcoming events), bulletins, newspaper, Opportunity Knox, House Groups, Interest Groups and message boards rather than relying too heavily on informal communication. ○ Regularly monitors adherence to the Visioning (Strategic) Plan. ○ Reviews the role, function and accountability of all Knox “governing” entities to include Leadership Team, Trustees, Ministry and Personnel, House Groups, Interest Groups. 					
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IV. Money					
1. Create a Knox Engagement and Sustainability Committee (Stewardship) to address Knox's financial future.					
2. Develop and implement a <i>Knox Rental, Usage and Marketing Plan</i> . Such ideas could include: expanding the use of the facilities through innovative ideas – e.g Speakers' Night-Lecture series; or developing a Video Conference Centre for university courses and/or Continuing Education courses.					
3. Develop a Knox Financial Plan and review it annually. Incorporate the United Church of Canada financial planning guidelines into it.					
4. Support the ongoing work of the Trustees in managing investments, Bequests and In Memoriams. Sponsor a workshop on church finances.					
5. Promote communication about expenditures in such creative ways as illustrative graphs, cost of electricity per month or number or rolls of toilet paper per month, etc.					

V. Building	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Create a Core Building Group that would be accountable to Leadership Team. The Group ensures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Building Repair Plan (Project Plan) is developed and reviewed annually; ○ Ongoing "succession planning" for its members is active; and ○ A Plan to address capital projects such as the roof is developed. 					
2. Re-visit the options for Knox as a Performance, Cultural and Arts Centre of Kenora.					
3. Develop a Rental, Usage and Marketing Plan for Knox to explore the potential for Knox as a Centre for youth, sports, art, lectures, writers' workshops, tutoring, crafts, organ lessons, summer camps, video conferencing, yoga, Pilates or Spinning.					
4. Discuss options with other churches related to building use.					
5. Appoint a committee to coordinate the ongoing physical enhancement of Knox.					
6. Consider options to maintain the building that go beyond the current job description of the caretaker.					
7. We need to consider our interior and exterior signage especially from a visitor's point of view.					

VI. Staff					
1. Hire a Youth and Community Service staff person to engage youth and the congregation through community outreach.					
2. Refer to the Ministry and Personnel Committee to review roles, responsibilities and position descriptions of all staff.					
3. Ensure that roles, responsibilities and position descriptions align with and support the Vision and Mission of Knox United.					
3. There is a need at Knox for designated and accountable church management.					
4. Initiate succession planning for ministers, music leaders, , secretary, caretaker and house groups and interest groups leaders.					

E. Conclusion

It is through two years of thoughtfully and vehemently discussing, interviewing, listening, deciphering and praying that we are able to present a final report to you. We have been impressed with your interest in this project and your willingness to participate so fully. It, indeed, has been a privilege to be part of your very personal sharing of ideas for and feelings about Knox.

The congregation at Knox is rather like a large family with each person emotionally invested in living in it, maintaining it and experiencing it to the fullest. It is exciting and healthy that many of you have ideas about what should or should not be done. It's the differences of people that are the strength of a church. And, it is important that everyone knows s/he has value and gifts to contribute, however great or small. Gifts can be time, energy, skills, money, leadership or creativity. So ask yourself – "What are my gifts?" and "How am I willing to commit to the life at Knox?"

If you are reading this report, you are part of the Knox family and have a vested interest in its exciting future. Now challenge yourself to use one of your gifts (or two or many) to journey forward as we follow our vision for Knox to become the *place to be*, the *place to belong* and the *place to be become*.

“I want to see a vibrant church serving the community and spiritual needs. More of us need to step forward and make a bigger commitment than we do.”

“So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God’s message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve: if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness should do it cheerfully.

Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. Love one another warmly as Christian brothers, and be eager to show respect for one another. Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles and pray at all times. Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians and open your homes to strangers.”

(Romans 12:6-13)



E. Appendix

ConneXions

Throughout the report, you may see the word ConneXions. The X is Greek for Christ.

ConneXions are just that - connections to one another, to God, our faith, our church, our community and to the stranger on the street or at our door. In our fast-paced, money/time/me-centered world, making ConneXions can be hard to do. This is our challenge.

We hope Knox can be a place where our ConneXions make a difference in the world we live.

Moving forward as a church is based in connecting to one another in friendship, love, support, risking, challenging ourselves and learning about what Jesus wants us to do - to love one another.

We hope Knox will be a place of loving ConneXions* for you.

UCC Congregational Renewal: Congregational Self-Assessment

In any five-year period, every United Church congregation is encouraged to do an assessment of key areas of congregational ministry. When some form of congregational ministry assessment or visioning process is conducted from time to time, it should streamline the work required during changes in ministry leadership or before presbytery/district declares a vacancy. While congregations will not want to address all of the key areas for review at the same time, it is important to consider all of them at some time. This might happen during regular assessments organized by the congregation or when presbytery/district conducts its regular pastoral oversight visit.

Vision

1. What new reality does our congregation envision?
2. What compelling vision excites us and inspires new projects?
3. What metaphors or biblical stories reflect our congregation's vision?
4. What material and human assets can be used toward realizing our vision?

Purpose

1. Why do we do what we do?
2. What are some significant and key events from our congregation's past?
3. What is the reason our congregation exists?
4. What higher good does our congregation seek to accomplish?
5. What challenges might hinder our congregation's purpose?
6. When was the last presbytery/district pastoral oversight visit?
7. Who in the world are we called to serve?
8. What are our core values?
9. What are our key narratives or stories?

Spiritual Nurture

1. Does our congregation spend as much time on spiritual nurture as in meetings?
2. Do we offer diverse ways for people to enrich their spiritual life?
3. Is spiritual nurture and growth central to our congregation's life?
4. How does our minister encourage spiritual growth?
5. Are there opportunities for people to increase skills in spiritual leadership?
6. Does our worship engage more than one of the five senses?
7. Is our worship interactive, and are emotions freely expressed?

Community Service

1. What groups or constituencies does our congregation serve?
2. According to non-church members, what is our church's value to the neighbourhood?
3. In what ways does our congregation listen to people on the margins?
4. What are the demographics of our church's neighbourhood?
5. What services are offered in our neighbourhood through other organizations?
6. Has our congregation ever been transformed or found itself changed while responding to the needs of others?
7. In what ways does our minister encourage us to serve others?
8. In what ways does our congregation minister to others in the community?
9. What percentage of our minister's time is spent in pastoral care?

Staffing

1. If we have paid staff, do they meet regularly?
2. How does our minister support and coordinate the work of paid staff?
3. How often does our minister meet with the Ministry and Personnel Committee?
4. How does our minister exercise leadership?
5. Does the annual review create opportunities for setting ministry goals?
6. Are there unresolved conflicts among staff?
7. Do all staff enjoy opportunities for professional development?
8. If staff seem unhappy or ineffective, what remedies are being enacted?
9. Do staff receive regular increases in salary?
10. Are staff working conditions regularly considered and reviewed?

Governance

1. Does our structure support our vision and purpose?
2. How many active, functioning committees does our congregation have?
3. Do we have too many committees?
4. Have any new board members been elected within the past three years?
5. Is burnout of committee or board members a growing concern?
6. Does our board regulate most church activities?
7. How are decisions made?
8. What decisions are normally made by the board?
9. How are leaders identified and equipped?
10. How does our minister guide and support the board?

Church Buildings

1. Do our buildings support our vision and purpose?
2. How accessible are our facilities? What improvements are planned?
3. What improvements have we made to the buildings in the last three years?
4. Has old, shabby furniture been removed from meeting rooms?
5. Have rooms been painted within the last five years?
6. What approaches toward reducing energy use have we initiated?
7. Is the building's exterior well-maintained?
8. What building beautification projects have been completed in the past two years?
9. Do we have a policy document concerning rentals/shared space?
10. Is the signage well-placed and easy to read?
11. Are the administrative offices well-designed and properly equipped?
12. Do we have a budget for capital projects and for newer technologies?
13. What improvements are needed in the worship area and meeting rooms?

Money

1. How does money support our vision and purpose?
2. Does our congregation use a narrative budget?
3. How well does our budget reflect our purpose and core values?
4. Is money connected with our spiritual life and our relationship with God?
5. Are people regularly encouraged to increase their givings?
6. How much does a lack of money hinder new initiatives?
7. When was the last time we conducted a capital campaign, and for what?