

HEARTLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



Heartland Presbyterian Church is a Christ-centered community called to provide opportunities for creative and inclusive worship, spiritual growth, and service. We welcome any searching member of the community, no matter where you are in your faith journey, regardless of age, race, gender or sexual orientation.

Heartland's mission is to connect to God, connect to each other, and connect to the excluded and vulnerable.

Strategic Planning Vision

In the next five years, Heartland will significantly enhance our connections with members of our local and global communities and with one another.



STRATEGIC VISIONING



CHRIST IS CONNECTION!

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Our growing awareness of the disconnections people in our communities are experiencing at all ages and especially among young people defines our desire to build spaces and ways for people to find God in creative endeavors; in God's Creation; in relationships with the vulnerable and excluded; in young people; and in our life together as a congregation. These initiatives are opportunities for us to deepen and spiritually grow in our connections to God, to each other, and to others in our community.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Connecting to God through the Arts

➤ Create an arts-based educational program

This program will initially have an emphasis on young people, including those not associated with the church. Heartland will provide lessons for those who would not otherwise have access to them, financial support, transportation, and group performance opportunities, including worship. The activities will be designed to help participants develop relationships with one another and with the church. We will initially draw on Heartland's strengths in music and then expand to other artistic and creative endeavors, and broaden the initiative beyond youth if interest and resources allow.

➤ Build an outdoor performance space and enhance Heartland's ability to host artistic/creative events

Heartland's jazz ministry is distinctive and provides an opportunity for greater outreach to the community. When combined with a new arts-based educational program, the church can become a gathering place for the performing arts in the Western Suburbs, where we worship God through our activities and introduce the larger community to Heartland's ministry. In addition to a new outdoor space, our existing equipment and spaces will be upgraded to facilitate performances and online participation.

➤ Create an audio and video production facility

We will add an audio and video production facility, either within our existing building or as part of a new structure. Media production is critical to communication about all aspects of Heartland in the modern interconnected world. It can also be a centerpiece of youth programming and support the artistic and creative activities of the church as a whole.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Connecting to God in Care for Creation

► Install a solar energy array

Our church is committed to serving all of God's creation, including the natural world. We will make a transition to renewable energy, beginning with our own solar installation. We will also review current practices—particularly as they apply to energy consumption and the use of chemicals for cleaning and landscaping—and adopt new sustainable methods.

► Enhance other environmental sustainability practices

We will host meetings of community partners to share replicable practices. We will review current operations—particularly as they apply to energy consumption and the use of chemicals for cleaning and landscaping—and adopt new sustainable methods. Heartland will also explore ways in which our property can be used to care for creation, including the addition of a pollinator garden.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Connecting to God in the Vulnerable and Excluded

► Bring to life our identity as a welcoming Church program

Heartland wants all of God's people to know that our church community exists for them, regardless of whether they have a formal relationship with our church or with any church. This is especially true for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) people, who have often encountered hostility from some elements of the Christian church. We will increase our emphasis on diversity in all elements of Heartland's operations, including worship, youth programs, Christian Education, and music, and ensure that the church displays visible symbols of our desire to welcome everyone.

► Expand partnerships with the immigrant community

We will establish a continuing partnership with First Arabic Church that will encourage meaningful relationships and address needs and opportunities for both churches. Heartland will also seek other opportunities to create connections with the region's growing immigrant communities, including through interfaith organizations.

► Enhance Refugee Ministry

We will make refugee resettlement a continuing part of Heartland's ministry, including supporting one family per year for the next five years.

► Join AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy)

Through AMOS, Heartland will become an active partner with many other organizations addressing serious community needs, including mental health, poverty, health care, and workforce development. These are broad societal problems and we can amplify our church's impact through partnerships with other area churches and service organizations.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Connecting to God in Youth

- Create a signature program for all youth in our community, designed to encourage collaborative activities and relationship-building, such as small group discussions and social events. We will emphasize activities that address issues of greatest concern among our community's youth, including isolation, mental health, and inclusiveness, and will reimagine the Children and Youth Director position as the Director of this new program.
- Launch a pilot program for hosting a youth conference and for offering worship opportunities that encourage young people to grow in their relationships with God and with one another.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Connecting to God in Heartland's Congregational Life

➤ Develop a comprehensive small group program for members of the Heartland family and others

Small groups have the potential to strengthen our church family and connect in deeper ways with the larger community. We will create a staff position charged with enhancing this ministry, including in the areas of spiritual development; support groups for people coping with challenges such as addiction, grieving, and isolation; and discussion groups for people with common concerns such as parenting, social justice, and personal/gender identity. We will also enhance social activities that enable us to connect with one another and with people outside of our church.

➤ Establish the spiritual development program as a continuing part of our ministry

We will appoint a Director of Spiritual Development and create a group responsible for providing spiritual growth opportunities, including activities such as classes, retreats, and contemplative worship and prayer. These programs will emphasize nurturing our relationship with God and creating connections with others who are seeking to do the same.

➤ Improve communications and raise Heartland's public profile

Effective communications are vital to the health of our church. We will improve internal communications to build community and to reflect Heartland's values, emphasizing the ways in which members are connected to one another and featuring stories of our members' engagement in the larger community. We will also enhance external communications—taking advantage of our building and online presence—to convey Heartland's character as a church that is welcoming to all, that is engaged with societal needs, that nurtures relationships among members and the wider community, that cares for creation, and that is a lively, creative space.

➤ Conduct an estate campaign and establish an endowment

Heartland's members support the church generously with their time, talents, and financial resources. We will host a campaign to encourage members and friends to consider supporting the church as part of their estates. We will create an endowed fund as an additional option for donors who wish for their estate gifts to be invested by the church, with the understanding that the fund's income will support Heartland's annual operations.