STRATEGIC PLAN 2019 - 2021

Connecting God’s Watershed Heroes
STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION
To ignite the power of faith communities in the Chesapeake Bay region to honor all of Creation by working together to protect and restore our shared watershed.

OUR VISION
Faith communities across the Chesapeake region honor, care for, and protect the watershed we share so all our communities, and future generations, may thrive.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND GOALS 2019-2021

Over the next three years, IPC will:

Goal 1: Increase the impact of faith-based action through the creation of hubs.

Goal 2: Increase the capacity and visibility of faith-based leaders restoring the watersheds of the Chesapeake.

Goal 3: Grow funding and partnerships to achieve program and organizational sustainability.

Goal 4: Achieve organizational excellence through investment in IPC’s board, staff and management systems.
DETAILED STRATEGIC PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake’s story starts with an inspired group of individuals at a 2004 National Council of Churches “Holy Waters” conference in Annapolis, Maryland from which our organization, originally named Chesapeake Covenant Congregations, was created. Our founding and mission is rooted in a deep religious call to care for the Earth, recognition that the Chesapeake Bay is a significant ecological feature in our midst for which we have been entrusted its care, and an urgency to restore our local watershed.

We became Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake in 2013 to reflect the diversity of faith communities in the Chesapeake region and the intention to bridge relationships and engage people across religious lines. Between 2016 and 2018, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake implemented a 2-year strategic plan for growth and development. The plan called for our young organization to a) continue its existing efforts while driving steady growth; b) explore bigger vision, scale-up models that could offer the organization a sustainable future; and c) provide strategies to expand into rural parts of Maryland and beyond.

The 3-year strategic plan for 2019-2021 builds on the significant achievements of the last two years. In particular, we reflected on the success of creating the Jones Falls One Water Partnership in Baltimore, and the cultivation of a hub of faith leaders on the lower shore who have now named themselves Wicomico Interfaith Partners for Creation Care. IPC’s One Water Partnership initiative encourages communities of multiple faiths to work individually and collectively to build awareness, advocacy and action in their local watershed. The cohort has begun to see themselves as a collaborative group and cross-congregational actions have hence been catalyzed. On the lower shore, IPC’s work, resources and messaging were instrumental in initiating action from a group of faith leaders in Salisbury who continue to meet monthly and have hosted three annual Earth Day celebrations. These two examples of network-building offer models for scaling our actions and impact throughout the broader Chesapeake Bay region from Maryland’s western shore to the eastern shore, urban Washington DC, and Pennsylvania.

Our 3-year strategic direction for 2019-2021 lays out an ambitious, scalable pathway for Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake to bring initiatives to fruition, and to advance sustainable funding models that will guide organizational life beyond this plan.
Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed by the IPC Board of Trustees with significant input from IPC staff and the perspectives of esteemed partners, funders, and faith-based leaders in our community. The plan was approved by the Board of Trustees on July 22, 2018. We are grateful for the support and contributions of our trustees and staff who made the process both inclusive and strategic. (See Acknowledgments.)

IPC engaged Vikki Frank, Lanier Place Consulting, to facilitate the strategic planning process. She worked with IPC’s Strategic Planning Committee and Executive Director to develop an approach, timeframe and process adapted from the Managance® strategic planning process. We included an environmental scan process to inform our strategic thinking with significant data from both our external and internal operating environments, including a market and competitor analysis. This led to robust discovery conversations helping us develop a SWOT and define our primary customers and supporting partners.

Strategic Plan Implementation

Board of Directors/Executive Director Strategic Plan Implementation Partnership

This strategic plan is intended as an internal guide for IPC Board of Trustees, Executive Director and staff as they work together to implement the plan goals and objectives. Successful implementation of this strategic plan requires a consistent commitment and shared leadership between the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director to work strategically, efficiently, and effectively with IPC resources. To support implementation of the strategic plan, the Board of Trustees, Executive Director, and staff will:

- Use this plan as our guiding framework for key strategic issues through 2021.
- Annually develop an action plan with specific initiatives, assignments, budget and other resource requirements needed to facilitate plan implementation.

Strategic Plan Presentation

The plan is presented in three sections.

Section I presents environmental scan highlights. This summary of the operating environment helped inform IPC discovery and dialogue around how its organization identity, customers, and initiatives.

Section II presents Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake Identity statements. Organization Identity elements that distinguish IPC include our mission statement, 10-year vision statement, core operating values, core beliefs, primary audience for program support and our supporting partners. These Identity elements provide the strategic framework for our organization and the basis for our three-year strategic direction and goals.

Section III presents the three-year strategic direction and the goals, measures of success, and objectives that will guide IPC through 2021.
II. 2018 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN KEY FINDINGS

An environmental scan of IPC and its operating context was conducted in February 2018. We are incredibly appreciative of the many partners, funders, and faith-based leaders who took their time to share their perspective and insight on our work and mission. (See Acknowledgements page for full list of stakeholders interviewed.)

The scan was designed and compiled by our strategic planning consultant and presented to the Board of Trustees and staff as part of a series of robust discovery dialogues to discern our strengths, opportunities, aspirations and goals. The environmental scan compiled and analyzed information and perspective from the following sources:

- Global, national and regional context
- Chesapeake Bay environmental, faith-based community and support landscape
- 8 Partner and Funder Interviews
- Interviews with 7 Board Members, and 7 Faith-based Leaders providing perspective from 14 faith communities including Presbyterian, Episcopal, Jewish, Islamic and Baptist congregations.
- Board and Staff Discovery Conversations
- Organization, Program and Success Measure Analysis

Information about our market, partners and customers, as well as perspective from multiple internal and external stakeholders, were invaluable in helping us refresh our identity statements and create consensus around a clear, bold, ambitious three-year strategic direction.

This section highlights findings pulled from our market analysis that IPC believes are most important to respond to and continue to pay attention to during the period of this plan 2019-2021. The complete environmental scan is available in a separate document.

**IPC Strengths**

- IPC is changing the conversation by connecting the language of ecological restoration and environmental justice with scriptures of multiple faith-based communities.
- IPC has created a foundation for successful faith-based mobilization. Others in the region want to follow our lead and also work with faith-based successfully.
- IPC is valued by funders as trustworthy, strategic, and resourceful.
- IPC is perceived as inspiring, skilled, responsive, authentic, collaborative and unique.
- IPC brings strength and innovation to our secular partners’ work by bringing in diverse voices through faith-based messaging, communication and action.
- IPC creates change through delivery of our resources, projects, and tools.
- IPC is recognized as a trusted partner able to build trusted relationships. Partners value IPC and credit IPC for implementing successful initiatives.
- IPC work has spurred successful hubs of activity such as the One Water Partnership in Baltimore and Wicomico Interfaith Partners for Creation Care on the eastern shore.
Opportunities and Threats in our Environment

- Congregations connect to environmental issues in multiple ways and from multiple starting points: faith leaders, community needs, passion of community members, etc.
- Our strength is in authentically connecting with multiple faiths; however, we do better articulating and tailoring messages to specific faith traditions.
- Faith groups can do a better job of getting the word out beyond congregations.
- Faith-based leaders in environmental work need to be lifted and celebrated.
- Strong interest from funders to lift and leverage faith-based communities to promote advocacy.
- While there are many groups locally working on watershed advocacy, the faith voice is missing. The moral voice is powerful and needs to be heard.
- Climate justice is building at state and national level.
- Environmental justice needs to be solved in local communities.
- Opportunities are emerging with existing and new funders and partners to expand our work in the Chesapeake region to Pennsylvania, DC and the eastern shore.
- Partners, and potential partners, have expertise and programs that complement our work (i.e. Interfaith Power and Light’s climate advocacy network, Watershed Stewards Academy’s stewardship training, Chesapeake Bay Trust mini-grant program.)
- Partners, and potential partners, have deep connections to local watershed communities to help us engage faith-based communities (i.e. Blue Water Baltimore, Shore Rivers and Wicomico Environmental Trust’s aspirations on the eastern shore, Waterkeepers/Riverkeepers).
- National decisions have impact on what we can accomplish locally, i.e. funding, legislation, and enforcement.

IPC Aspirations for Results

- IPC aspires to be an open tent for people of different faiths to connect with local waters whether they are affiliated to an institution or connected through their personal faith.
- National impact feels disconnected from our power and vision. It feels so big! Change happens locally where people live. Watershed focus brings it home; we can take measurable action that makes a difference. Local action can make valuable contribution, one watershed at a time.
- It is easy to measure actions and take pictures of projects, but the most impactful outcome of our work may be in the people we touch and the interfaith relationships we build.
- We believe our One Water Partnership model can be replicated and scaled in local watersheds throughout the Chesapeake Bay region and even nationwide.
- IPC work has the potential to bring in diverse voices with respect to multiple faiths, political persuasions, socio-economic situations and racial diversity. Working with diverse communities takes a different level of commitment, resources, timeframe and tools.
III. ORGANIZATION IDENTITY

In 2015, the IPC Board of Trustees examined their shared values and beliefs about the Earth, its maker, and its inhabitants, and the role of IPC in responding to current environmental challenges in light of these values. This resulted in a clear articulation of IPC’s values, vision and mission. The Organization Identity statements below reflect a 2018 update, building on the language IPC uses to share and communicate our identity and our purpose.

MISSION STATEMENT
To ignite the power of faith communities in the Chesapeake region to honor all of Creation by working together to protect and restore our shared watershed.

VISION STATEMENT
Faith communities across the Chesapeake region honor, care for and protect the watershed we share so all our communities, and future generations, may thrive.

Meaning Behind our Mission and Vision Statement
Language we can use to expand understanding of the words in the mission and vision statements at a deeper level.

Ignite: Inspire, equip and provide resources to connect people with their faith, passion for each other, and their local watershed.

Power: Faith-based voices, individually and collectively, offer a moral, respected, apolitical perspective.

Faith Communities: Engaging people in relationship to one another will create networks and magnify our movement.

Chesapeake Region: Our work is local. We do not aspire to be a national organization.

Shared Watershed: We are intimately connected to the people upstream and downstream of us. The actions we take—or fail to take—impact all Creation within our watershed, and those who will walk in our footsteps.

Creation: The entire web of life: all people, creatures, and plant life.

All: All people have a fundamental right to clean water, green space, clean air, and a healthy community, regardless of religion, race, demographics or sexual preference.

Honor: Caring for the Earth, its waters, and each other is a foundation across all faiths and religious teachings. We have a moral responsibility to defend and restore clean water.
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CORE VALUES
IPC strives to be the change we seek in all our relationships and actions. Our values guide the way IPC works and we aspire that congregations, faith-based leaders and individuals, our staff, our partners, and the community will experience these values in their interactions with IPC.

Respect – Out of love for our Creator and the entire web of life, we cherish and protect all Creation.

Action – We are rooted in faith and hope, and we live out our call to stewardship by taking action.

Justice - We work to achieve a healthy watershed for all community members of every socio-economic status and race.

Inclusion – We strive to build relationships with people of all faiths and races. We are designed by our Creator to be in community with one another.

Accountability – We operate responsibly with the resources entrusted to us, and expect the same from our partners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES/BELIEFS
Our strategy to achieve our mission is rooted in our principles and beliefs. These serve as a filter to helps us assess options and make choices aligned with our mission and vision.

We believe:
1. All faith traditions share a fundamental belief that we have a moral responsibility to be good caretakers of Creation.
2. Clean watersheds are necessary for communities to be healthy and thriving.
3. When people experience and appreciate the beauty of Creation, they will love and protect it.
4. Action at the local level is what drives people. People are connected to local issues, local needs,
and local relationships.
5. People are most energized when they can connect with one another on a personal level, lift each
   other up, work together to repair the brokenness, and demonstrate love and solidarity.
6. Individual champions drive change and need to be supported.
7. Networks of faith-based communities infect others and magnify our message and impact.

PRIMARY CUSTOMER AND SUPPORTING PARTNERS

PRIMARY CUSTOMER
IPC’s programs and support are organized to respond to the needs, wants and aspirations of our primary
customer. IPC’s primary customers:

Faith-based individuals connected with congregations or faith-based communities. This includes people of
faith, whether they are congregants, lay leaders, clergy, or denominational leaders. Through these
congregational points of contact, our messages, information, and models for action reach others in the
congregation and local community.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS
Supporting partners are essential to the success of IPC. IPC supporting partners are:

- Unaffiliated spiritually minded individuals
- Kindred organizations that espouse similar missions and ideologies
- Secular environmental organizations
- Government and local jurisdiction agencies
- Philanthropies and foundations
- Local elected officials
IV. STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2019-2021

Over the three-year period 2019-2021, IPC will mobilize faith-based communities to restore the Chesapeake watershed. We believe we have a sacred duty to protect the Earth and its people. Our work is driven by a commitment to partnerships and environmental justice.

We will carry out our work by creating interfaith “hubs of action.” This strategic direction values congregations as partners and enlists local leaders as champions. It is inclusive of diverse voices so that we can effectively address environmental injustices. Creating interfaith hubs around our watershed is a natural evolution to the work we have been doing and encourages us to think and act bigger.

A successful hub of action is a group of people of any faith working together to heal their local watershed. They do this through engaging in a variety of activities, for instance: public awareness; restoration and cleanup; advocating for policies that address environmental concerns; and actively promoting environmental justice. Hubs provide the potential to:
- Connect watershed champions to each other
- Amplify diverse voices in support of environmental justice
- Increase the capacity of faith leaders to be watershed champions and celebrate their accomplishments
- Increase the participation and visibility of faith communities working together to restore the Chesapeake watershed

Creating faith-based hubs of environmental action will require IPC to develop resources and partnerships in new ways to:
- build capacity among faith-based leaders and congregations,
- facilitate collaboration among congregations and local partners in a specific region or watershed to drive actions and deliver results,
- strengthen IPC’s organizational infrastructure to support anticipated scale-up of operations, and
- ensure IPC’s long-term financial sustainability.
THREE-YEAR GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS 2019-2021

Goal 1: *Increase the impact of faith-based action through the creation of hubs.*

Measures of Success by 2021:
- Three (3) financially-sustainable hubs are taking meaningful, measurable, ongoing action to restore their local watershed.
- Two (2) hubs have begun in new regions and are in early stages of development.
- Hubs increase awareness measured through participation of people and congregations.
- Hubs engage diverse voices measured through the participation of low-wealth communities and underrepresented faiths.
- Hubs demonstrate measurable cross-congregational collaborations and activate around relevant environmental justice issues.

3-Year Objectives/Initiatives:
- Develop a framework for exploring, assessing, and deciding where to engage partners, people, and congregations.
- Create and strengthen faith-based hubs for local action in urban, suburban and rural Maryland, DC and Pennsylvania.
- Successfully engage hubs to organize around issues of environmental justice.
- Track cross-congregational collaborations and their outcomes.
Goal 2: Increase the capacity and visibility of faith-based leaders restoring the watersheds of the Chesapeake.

Measures of Success by 2021:
- Train-the-trainer capacity-building programs are developed to cultivate watershed champions.
- Champions spearhead ongoing hub-based actions and are recognized.
- A communications strategy is in place that supports and connects an empowered community of faith-based watershed champions.
- Events bring together faith-based leaders from hubs and/or multiple hubs for continued learning and celebration.

3-Year Objectives/Initiatives:
- Develop and implement a process of providing training, ongoing mentoring and skilled support for the leaders in hubs, recognizing that IPC’s role will change over time as the hub matures.
- Host gatherings to support and connect faith-based leaders to share ideas, gain new resources, stay up to date on the issues, and celebrate high-impact leaders.
- Develop and implement a media/communications strategy to recognize and celebrate faith-based leaders and faith-based action.
- Share with faith leaders a dynamic set of resources, technical experts, and a speaker’s list to support them in their work.
Goal 3: Grow funding and partnerships to achieve program and organizational sustainability.

Measures of Success by 2021:
- Major funding is secured to expand, nurture and create hubs of faith-based action in Chesapeake Bay watersheds.
- Triple financial support from non-grant sources such as individuals and congregations.
- 150 congregations have formalized their support of IPC’s vision and mission.

3-Year Objectives/Initiatives:
- Implement a diversified development strategy to generate sustainable resources to support IPC’s programs and operations.
- Cultivate strategic partnerships that increase, and diversify the nature of, financial and other support needed to sustain the delivery of our mission and programs.
- Create a process that recognizes congregations as partners in IPC’s mission and work through shared principles and values. (i.e., partnership model, covenant signing)
- Connect with foundations that could support the creation of faith-based hubs in Pennsylvania and District of Columbia and develop a strategy for action.
- Develop a method for tracking grant resources that IPC brokers for congregations and hubs.

Goal 4: Achieve organizational excellence through investment in IPC’s board, staff and management systems.

Measures of Success by 2021:
- Board of at least 12 Trustees with diverse backgrounds and talents needed to drive IPC’s work.
- Annual action plans guide program development and staffing with clear rationale and connection to the strategic plan. Employee Handbook is developed and approved by the board.
- Board committees develop annual goals and execute work plans.
- Board process for succession planning, including evaluating board skillset and needs, is in place.

3-Year Objectives/Initiatives:
- Grow a strong board with diverse and talented volunteers through an aggressive development plan.
- Develop an employee handbook that guides employee hiring, policies, pay scales, and benefits.
- Recruit, develop, and retain diverse and effective staff to carry out our mission and goals.
- Formalize and document IPC’s accounting and financial procedures.
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IPC Board of Trustees 2018

Rev. Mary Gaut
Chair

Albert Todd
Vice-Chair

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Rebecca Ruggles

Noha Gaber, Ph.D.

IPC Staff 2018

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