

First Universalist RE Fee Elimination Workgroup Charter

Draft 9-23-14

Background

First Universalist’s mission is “In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive and grow.” ¹

Every day we endeavor to live into this vision – for our current member and friends as well as the people who will become our future community. One of our primary means of living into our mission is shared worship, spiritual seeking and education. Every Sunday we welcome adults into Sunday worship. Throughout the year we encourage adults to deepen their spiritual likes with faith formation activities such as Circles and Wellspring. There are no fees to attend worship or adult faith formation.

Religious education (RE) is the primary form of worship, spiritual deepening and education for children and youth. We value our excellent, loving, RE programs for children and youth. This is the core ministry for children, youth and their families and we charge families for their children to participate in this worship and faith formation. The ministerial leadership team and some congregants are troubled by requiring children and families to pay a fee to participate. Over the past seven years budgeted RE income has almost doubled with 2014-15 RE fee revenue budgeted at \$42,000, which represents 3% of total church income.

It is our goal to make our core ministries abundantly available to people of all ages – meaning that they are available as a matter of course, provided by our community without fees or financial charges.

How can we make RE, the core of our children and youth ministry, abundantly available to the children in our community today and in the future?

Mission/Purpose

Create a recommended plan of action to make children and youth ministry programs abundantly available and without cost by 2017.

Specific Objectives

1. Finalize workgroup charter
2. Become grounded and develop understanding of past and present RE practices and how that fits with the vision and mission of First Universalist.
3. Solicit feedback and ideas from congregants, board and staff - ask and listen to concerns, ideas, worries, solutions.
4. Develop options for making RE available without cost.
5. Discern and create recommended plan for action for presentation to Senior Minister and Management Team.

Time Frame

1. Form workgroup by 10/14/14
2. Plan to solicit input/feedback 11/7/14
3. Generate options 12/1/14
4. Analysis of options and discernment of path forward 12/15/14
5. Write up and present recommendation 1/5/15

¹This mission is given life through the visionary goals and strategic plan. One of our visionary goals is ‘to help people of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition.’ Another goal is ‘Grow in our UU faith: we are equipped to live out our values and experience worship, spiritual practices and rituals that challenge, comfort, celebrate and heal.’

The strategic plan specifically calls out faith formation for children, youth and adults.

<p>Sponsor Rev. Justin Schroeder -Senior Minister</p>	<p>Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and outcomes are consistent with and further the mission, goals and values of First Universalist. • Work in accord with policy governance structure. • Process must include opportunities for participation and feedback from all sectors of the congregation. • Recommendations will be responsive to the needs and concerns of key stakeholders including board, staff, and congregants.
<p>Members <i>Chair:</i> Jennifer Schuster Jaeger <i>Members:</i> 2 parents 1 youth 1 young adult 1 financially astute person 2 ad hoc Rev. Jen Crow – Program Minister Lauren Wyeth – Director of Children, Family and Youth Ministries</p> <p>Membership diversity mix should include multiple ages, people of color, new and long term members, one person with historical perspective on RE efforts.</p>	<p>Resources First U Mission/Values http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/GPH-updated-April-2014.pdf First U Strategic Plan http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Strategic-Plan-.pdf RE and congregation demographic and financial data – current and historic</p>
<p>Decision-making Authority Workgroup will develop options for eliminated RE fees and recommend a course of action to the church Management Team (Diane Gavere, Director of Operations, Justin Schroeder, and Jen Crow)</p>	<p>Reporting/Communication Expectations Jen Crow will provide monthly updates to Management Team. Present written document with options and recommendation to Management Team by 1/31/15. Make written document available to congregation and board by 2/15/15.</p>