

First Universalist Church Board of Trustees

September 15, 2016

Board Packet

<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Agenda	1-2
August Board Minutes	3-4
August Attendance	5
August Membership Report	6
Senior Minister's Report	7-11
Nominating Committee Memorandum	12-13
Mosaic Makers Conference Report	14-15
Rainbow Research Visionary Goals	16
Strategic Plan	17-33

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Board of Trustees Meeting

[DATE]

6:30 p.m. Cummins Room

Agenda

I. Call to Order (6:30).

- Lighting of the Chalice

May this flame that burns before us light our way, informed by the wisdom of leaders gone before, and inspired by the trust that we have been given as stewards of this Church. May we have vision, compassion, and courage as we serve this congregation now and for the generations to come.

- Reading and Spiritual reflection question (see SM report)

II. Consent Agenda (6:50)

- Approval of minutes from August meeting.
- Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Monitoring items (Senior Minister Report):
 - Acceptance of staff and significant volunteer changes.
 - Treatment of staff - job descriptions and position criteria
 - Staff grievance procedure (GMT) Direct inspection Annual
 - Treatment of volunteers Internal report; direct inspection Annual
- Nominating Committee Memorandum
- Mosaic Makers Conference Report (may be separate from Board packet).

III. Financial Report (7:00)

Reverend Crow will report on the year end and July / August financial numbers.

IV. Visionary Goals Refresh (7:15)

We hired Rainbow Research with the idea that we might refresh our visionary goals in light of the racial justice work in which we've been engaged in the past 2 -3 years. Now that we have the results of Rainbow's work and the Congregational Survey, we will take a deep look at our existing visionary goals. The visionary goals are reproduced in an attachment to this month's agenda, as well as a copy of the Strategic Plan, which was updated in 2014 to include racial justice.

The goal, to the extent we agree to any modifications of the existing goals, is to create a draft that could be shared with the congregation prior to adoption by the Board.

Small-Group Review of Goals (7:20- 7:40)

We'll break up into groups to discuss each of the four goals. The questions for each group to answer include:

- a. Should explicit racial justice language be incorporated into the visionary goal?
- b. If so, what might that language look like?
- c. If not, why not?
- d. Would our racial justice work be better served by a 5th visionary goal devoted to racial justice rather than being incorporated into the goal you are discussing.

BREAK (7:40 – 7:50)

Discussion of small-group work (7:50 to 8:50) (15 minutes apiece)

Each group will present a summary of their discussion and proposal, followed by group discussion.

Final thoughts / next steps (8:50 – 9:00)

V. Adjournment (9:00)

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First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Board of Trustees Meeting

Minutes

August 18, 2016

I. Attendance.

Trustees Present: Dave Bach, Eric Cooperstein, Cindy Marsh, Dick Niemiec, Richard Spratt, Karin Wille, Caitlin Rogers, Lillie Pang

Trustee Absent: Christa Anders

Staff Present: Rev. Jen Crow, Rev. Justin Schroeder

The meeting convened at 6:30 with the call to order and chalice lighting.

The Trustees discussed the concept of hope through looking to the past year as spiritual reflection.

II. Consent Agenda – moved and approved.

- Approval of Minutes from July 21 meeting
- Monitoring: Acceptance of attendance and membership numbers
- Sr. Minister Report, including Staff and Volunteer changes, the Draft Staff Work Plan, and updates on Faith Formation and Supportive Community.

III. Finance Report (Rev. Jen Crow)

Rev. Jen Crow presented a preliminary report on fiscal year-end 2016. Some expenses have not yet been accounted for but the deficit may turn out smaller than was projected back in June. Rev. Crow also provided an update on the potential renters of the education wing for 2016-2017. Our previous renter was allowed to provide nursery care based on a one-year waiver of a fire-code provision that requires a ground-level egress. We need to determine whether we can obtain an extension of the waiver or find another solution to the egress issue before a lease can be completed.

IV. Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign Update (Rev. Justin Schroeder)

Our full-time campaign staff member from Klote & Associates will be joining us the first week of October, in order to prepare and begin Stewardship Campaign activities. Focus groups with the congregation will likely begin in the second week of October.

V. Rainbow Research Report

Beki Saito and Razeena Shrestha of Rainbow Research presented the results of their work, collected from online surveys (117 responses), listening sessions (15) and focus groups (31).

A summary of analysis included attitudes towards racial justice and our visionary goals, the reported positive impact on self, church and the community (65%, 75%, and 83% respectively), perceptions of gaps and tensions, and recommendations based on findings.

Recommendations discussed included:

- Articulate the theory of change, the goals and strategies, and indicators of success.
- Find safe avenues for open, non-judgmental discussion about the racial justice work.
- Desired topics for discussion include the multiple ways people can be involved, the cross-cutting intersectionality of this complex work, and ways to support each other in this journey.
- Provide the infrastructure for effective communication about racial justice related activities and opportunities both within and outside the church.

Discussion then moved toward ways of sharing this information with the larger congregation, including a potential post-service presentation.

VI. Racial Justice Visioning / Change team

Richard Spratt and Karin Wille presented the concept of a Change Team that would look over existing governing practices and policies with a racial justice lens. Rev. Jen Crow has separately been looking into similar work. Reverend Crow will work with Richard and Karin in forming a team and recommending a charter, which will be brought back to the board for approval.

The Board also discussed how to engage in visioning and strategic planning around the next several years of the Church's racial justice work. The Board determined that at the next meeting it would focus on how the results of the Rainbow Research work may impact the Church's four visionary goals.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

August Attendance							
			2016				2015
Adults		10:00				10:00	
1st week		228				254	
2nd week		650*				245	
3rd week		307				208	
4th week		294				344	
5th week						700*	
Monthly Total		829				1051	
Average for August		276				263	
RE							
1st week		44					
2nd week		0*					
3rd week		14		Backpack Blessing, multi- gen service			
4th week		60					
5th week							
Monthly Total		118					
Average for August		39					
Combined Average		315				263	
Notes	*Lake Harriet Service, not included in totals or averages.				*Lake Harriet Service, not included in totals or averages.		*No data available for August 2015 RE

**First Universalist Church
August 2016 Statistical Report
September 15, 2016**

MEMORIAL SERVICES: 1

Zachary Adams, son of Alexander and Debra Adams – 8/13/16 – Rev. Laurie Bushbaum

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT: 0

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL: 4

Nathan Ott and Naira Polonsky, Minneapolis

Pamela K. Hegeholz, Minneapolis

Marlee Leebrick-Stryker, Minneapolis

MEMBERS REINSTATED: 0

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL: 0

CHILDREN DEDICATED: 0

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
(Fiscal Year)	4	54	58	46	110
TOTAL MEMBERS:	908	934	920	921	1030

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 904 (this figure is adjusted to match that of our ACS computer record total. It is attributed, we believe, to the changes we made when we added the listing of “sustaining friends,” for folks who had been listed as members but had not given in the recent fiscal year(s)) and lost membership status.

To be added: 4

To be removed : 0

TOTAL MEMBERS: 908

Sr. Minister Report for Sept 15, 2016 Board Meeting

I. Opening Reflection - Grounded in September's Worship Theme of "Invitation"

Come, Come" — Leslie Takahashi Morris (adapted from Rumi)

Come, come, whoever you are
Come with your hurts, your imperfections,
your places that feel raw and exposed.
Come, come, whoever you are
Come with your strengths that the world shudders to hold
come with your wild imaginings of a better world,
come with your hopes that it seems no one wants to hear.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving we will make a place for you,
we will build a home together.
Ours is no caravan of despair.
We walk together; Come, yet again come.

Reflection Questions: What is it that you bring to this circle? What strengths, hopes, or rawness do you bring? What else does this reading stir up in you?

II. Monitoring Items from Monitoring Schedule:

A. Staff and Volunteer Changes:

Staff: Lauren Wyeth has Emily McPhillips to assist with our 7th grade class..

Volunteers: The **Comprehensive Stewardship Campaign Pre-Design Team**, comprised of church members Peter Styx, Shawn Gaither, David Showalter, Ken Stone, Kristen Mengelkoch, Bette DeMars, Bill McTeer, Paul Kloth, Lynne Stanley, Christy Devens, (as well as Justin, Jen, Tracy, Bree, Elaine, and Lauren), has been hard at work since June, preparing conceptual plans and costs for the Comprehensive Campaign. These group of pre-design member will present the case for the campaign at our 15 focus groups we'll offer in October.

Jane Baudelaire has agreed to join the **Pledge Team!** Zack Steven is chair of the Pledge Team, and Jeanne Peppel is in her second year of service.

The **"Love Rocks" Party in the Parking Lot**, scheduled for September 24, 11am to 4pm, is being spearheaded by Jane Baudelaire and a team of volunteers. This

event will both celebrate our new, environmentally friendly parking lot, and be an outreach event to our immediate neighbors.

B. Direct Inspection of Staff Job Descriptions

These have been sent to Board Chair, Eric Cooperstein, for review.

C. Treatment of Staff

The Employee Handbook, which contains this grievance policy, should staff have a significant concern, has been shared with Board Chair, Eric Cooperstein. There have been no grievances filed by staff.

D. Treatment of Volunteers

In past years, we've shared a survey with our volunteers, in order to discover how well they feel supported, nurtured, and cared for. This year, because of three surveys - the Membership Survey, Rainbow Research, and the Annual Congregational Survey - we did not do a membership survey. It's worth noting that in all three of these surveys no negative comments emerged about the treatment of volunteers. Anecdotally, I often hear stories of how congregants enjoy with our staff and ministers, and feel supported in their efforts.

III. Information Items

A. MidAmerica Mosaic Makers Conference: The team of First Universalist attendees (Richard Spratt, Lillie Pang, Justin Schroeder, Jen Crow, Lauren Wyeth, and Caitlin Rogers) attended the Mosaic Makers Conference at Unity Church Unitarian, August 26, 27, and 28.

B. Update on the Sacred Solidarity Program: First Universalist is participating in a one year "Sacred Solidarity" program for churches living into a racial justice identity. This program is sponsored by MARCH (Multi-faith Anti-Racism, Change and Healing), a local coalition of faith leaders committed to supporting mostly white faith communities in their racial justice work, as well as MUUSJA, the Kaleo Center for Justice, and Outfront Minnesota. This program kicked off with a half day retreat on Sept 11, from 1-7pm. The Sacred Solidarity team is Karin Wille, Ralph Wyman, Christa Anders, Lark Weller, Ben Miles, and Justin Schroeder.

C. Campaign Update: The Pre-design team is nearly done preparing conceptual material and costs for the October focus groups. Under the leadership of Peter Styx, we have engaged with General Contractors, Watson-Forsberg, to help us refine our cost estimates, including our audio visual costs (www.watson-forsberg.com).

The October focus groups will begin on Sunday Oct. 9 and run through the entire month of October. We will have 15 focus groups total. Note: The Board will be invited to

a special "Board Only" focus group on Saturday, Oct 8, as the presenters fine tune their presentation.

At these 45 minute Focus Groups, members of the Pre-design team will present the case for the campaign, there will be a time for questions and answers, shared dreaming, and more; the Consultant Recommends (and I support the idea) that Board members serve as host/hostesses and recorders at these meetings. As host/hostess, Board members would welcome and greet people as they arrive, identifying themselves as Board members, and help capture (record) questions on flip charts during the meeting. It is important that Board members attend as many Focus Groups as possible, in order to be deeply connected to the conversation.

I've included a schedule of the Focus Group meetings, as well as a sign up sheet (below).

At the end of October, the Board, pre-design team, and staff will receive a final report of findings from the Focus Groups. This report will potentially include new priorities, or feedback that might move us in a different direction. After conversations with Peter Styx, I am recommending that Jen Crow, David Bach, Peter Styx and I, be the small sub-team that reviews the case for the campaign, the priorities, and the costs, and makes the hard decisions/recommendations about what's in and what's out, as we move forward. We would share these recommendations with the Board and Pre-design Team before we moved forward.

Also at the end of October, we'll work with our onsite Consultant to assemble the Campaign Team, as well as the various other teams needed to ensure a successful Campaign. In November and early December, we'll begin to meet with congregants, and then we'll launch the campaign in the new year, at the end of February. We've tentatively set Saturday, February 25, as the offsite party/launch day, and then Sunday, Feb 26th, as the follow up worship launch of the Campaign.

Currently, because of the in-house talent and expertise we've using, we have not accessed any of the Legacy Fund Loan for architects or any pre-design costs. We will be billed by Watson-Forsberg, but the costs will not exceed \$2000.

Introducing our Campaign Consultant: Skip Schlafer is the Campaign

Associate who will be working with us. From Skip: "A few facts about me: I'm a midwesterner, born in Illinois and now living in Ft.Lauderdale; I have a BA in Economics from Hope College, Holland, Michigan and an MBA from the University of Chicago. I've always had a passion for stewardship which I've brought to my work with JDK&A. I've done campaigns as far West as Lincoln, Nebraska,

Skip will arrive on Sunday, Oct 2, and attend our Worship Services, getting to know us and our particular culture. During that first week of October, Skip will meet with the pre-design team members, as they begin to fine tune the Focus Group Presentation. We'll hold an a special Focus Group meeting just for Board Members on Saturday, Oct 8, as our presenters get comfortable with and practice the presentation!

1. Sunday, Oct 9, 12:30, in sanctuary.
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
2. Sunday, Oct 9, 10:45, in Arches room (Note: room not handicap accessible)
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
3. Friday, Oct 14, noon - Brown Bag lunch
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
4. Saturday, Oct 15, 9am, Social Hall or Cummins Rooms
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
5. Sunday, Oct 16, 8:00 a.m., sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
6. Sunday, Oct 16, 12:30, sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
7. Wednesday, Oct 19, 6pm, sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
8. Thursday, Oct 20, 2pm (Sanctuary)
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
9. Sunday, Oct 23, 8:00 a.m., sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
10. Sunday, Oct 23, 12:30 - Sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
11. Sunday, Oct 23, 10:45, Arches room (Note: room not handicap accessible)
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:
12. Wednesday, Oct 26, 6pm, sanctuary
Host/Hostess(Board Member): Presenter:

- *All Focus Groups will have childcare available, with advance 7 days notice.

Our tickets have been purchased and I'm excited about participating in this trip.

MEMORANDUM

To: First Universalist Board of Trustees
From: Eric Cooperstein
Date: September 11, 2016
Re: **Open Nominating Committee seats and appointment of chair**

There are 3 positions on the Nominating Committee that need to be filled:

- A member of the Board of Trustees, appointed by the President (Bylaws, Art. 5 (1);
- An at-large member, to fill the vacancy created by Pam Vincent's death until the next Annual Meeting of the congregation; and
- A Chair of the committee, appointed by the President with the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Board appointment. The first slot is conceptually easiest: I need to appoint one of the Trustees to serve on Nominating. It's an important position because there needs to be good communication between the Board and the Nominating Committee. Because the Nominating Committee does not typically start its work in earnest until January or February (interviewing existing Trustees and Foundation Board members to receive feedback and determine the needs of each group if there will be open seats), any of our Trustees should feel comfortable serving. Please let me know whether you are interested in taking on this role.

At-large. The at-large vacancy has some procedure to it:

In the event of any vacancies in the at-large positions on the Nominating Committee, Members will be notified as specified in Article II, Section 3, and the Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, shall appoint replacements for such persons, and such replacements shall serve until the next Annual meeting, at which time a replacement shall be elected in accordance with Article II, Section 5, to serve out the remaining term.

So, the open position must be posted on the website and announced through a communication to all members, which is essentially a blast e-mail. The same text can be used for a Liberal article. The Nominating Committee will have to review any applications and make a recommendation to us, which we can then approve. Whoever is selected will serve until the Annual Meeting and can be re-elected to serve the remained of the term (one more year).

Chair. To fill the Chair position, I will contact the five current members (Sharon Ramirez, Doug Smalley, Greg Hoelzer, Suzann Willhite, and Pat Gottschalk), send them a job description, and ask them about their interest in the position and ask them to send me a resume and a short statement about why they are interested and how they would view their role as chair. I will then report back to the Board with a recommendation (I think we need to choose a chair before we fill the vacancy, because someone on Nominating will have to be the point person to consider the applications. I suppose if no one volunteers to be chair, we could advertise the at-large seat as the chair position).

Let me know if you have any concerns or comments about this proposed plan.

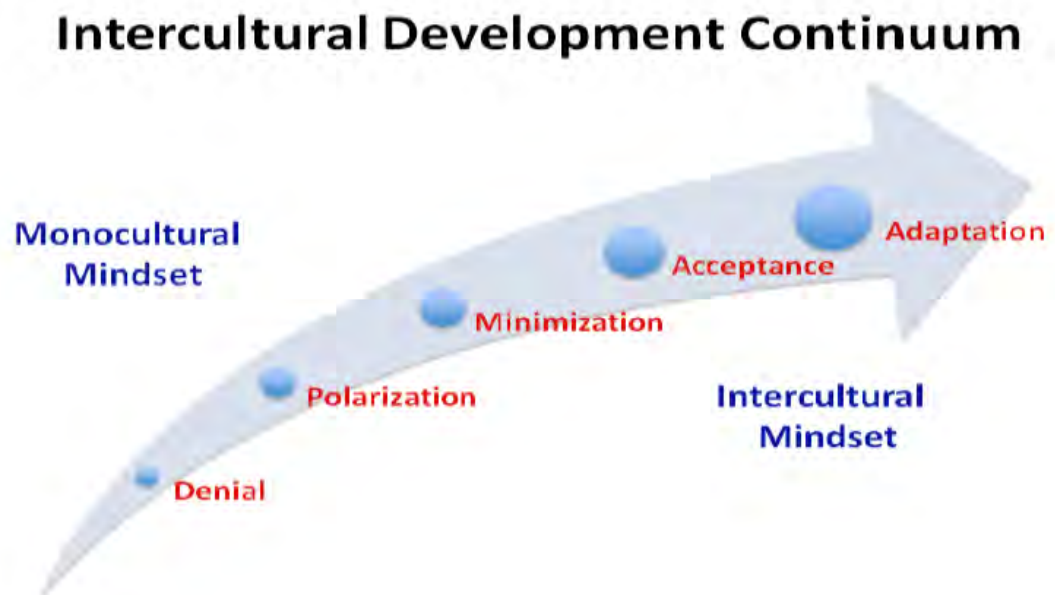
Mid America Region Mosaic Conference Summary August 26-28, 2016, Unity Church, St. Paul

Around 10 UU churches from the midwest came together to share their work towards multiculturalism around the four pillars of a Multicultural Congregation:

- Multicultural Worship
- Congregational Culture
- Leadership
- Justice Ministries

A major tool discussed was the Intercultural Development Continuum:

- This is a sociological model for understanding where an individual or group is on the continuum from monoculturalism to interculturalism.



- It was noted that many of the core beliefs we hold as UUs (for example “we all want justice”) would fall under “Minimization” on this continuum, where the differences between cultures are ignored or obscured with universalist statements.

Results of where people are fall along a standard distribution- with about half of the population falling under Minimization. This was about the same with the average results from all conference attendees.

Examples of stages on the IDC:

- Denial: People who are different than me don't exist; isolation & separatism
- Polarization: "Us vs. them"
- Minimization: "We're all the same at heart"
- Acceptance: Respect for behavioral and value differences
- Adaption: One is aware of and can code-switch between different cultures

Four specific churches were invited to present a session. We presented on Congregational Life, sharing how we create a welcoming community and what our racial justice focus means in church life.

Other key learning moments touched on the subjects of:

- Forgiveness and humility in this difficult work
- How to call each other "in" rather than calling each other out
- Behavioral intent vs impact
- Burnout prevention/mitigation
- Microaggressions

"Multiculturalism is not about counting people, it's about having the people count"

2.3. Visionary Goals (Excerpted from Governing Policy Handbook, June 2016)

The people of First Universalist Church are committed to the following visionary goals, achieve at a justifiable cost which does not undermine the sustainability of the Church:

- 2.3.1 We, the people of First Universalist Church, 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.
- 2.3.2 At First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community. We know our roots, find our wings, and apply our knowledge and wisdom to all our endeavors.
- 2.3.3. First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming everyone and encouraging each person to discover, develop and share their gifts.
- 2.3.4 The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.



First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Strategic Plan: 2012-2017

Updated December 2014

We must do three things: get religion, grow leaders, and cross borders.

~the Reverend Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Strategic Plan: 2012-2017

Contents

Mission, Visionary Goals, Overarching Vision	3
Introduction	4
Statement on the 2014 Update	6
Summary of Findings and Recommendations	8
The Strategic Plan	10
First Universalist Church, 2017	16

Appendices

- a. Strategic Plan Time Line
- b. First Universalist growth patterns, 2007-2012 and projections, 2012-2017
- c. Projected five-year budget, 2012-2017
- d. Strategic Plan Working Group Session raw data
- e. Youth responses and notes

Our mission . . .

In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow. First Universalist Church.

. . . informed our Visionary Goals

- 1. We, the people of First Universalist Church, 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.*
- 2. First Universalist Church is a home for ageless wisdom. People of all ages find opportunities to engage in an intellectual and spiritual search for deeper meaning and understanding in the UU tradition, both as individuals and in community. We know our roots, find our wings, and apply our knowledge and wisdom to all our endeavors.*
- 3. First Universalist Church is an intergenerational community of mutual caring and support. We build this community by actively welcoming all and encouraging each to discover, develop and share their gifts.*
- 4. The people of First Universalist Church work to build a just, loving and sustainable world. We are a visible, influential voice, and we act to shape the larger community into a more just and equitable society.*

. . . which inspired our overarching strategic vision:

- 1.1 Preserve and enrich diversity in worship practices
- 1.2 Accommodate growth in worship and religious education
- 1.3 Expand access to worship beyond our doors
- 2.1 Inspire and deepen faith formation for all ages
- 2.2 Engage children and youth as an integral part of First Universalist faith formation activities
- 2.3 Embrace work for the common good as a central faith formation experience and increase engagement with communities outside our walls
- 3.1 Deepen congregant engagement in the life and ministry of the church
- 3.2 Build on and expand the definition of small group experiences
- 3.3 Ensure pastoral care needs are met
- 3.4 Deepen our capacity for diversity
- 3.5 Strengthen our UU ties locally and nationally
- 3.6 Develop a robust, welcoming communication plan (print and digital) that makes it easy for people to learn about us, that welcomes newcomers, informs current members, and engages all in the activities and resources of the church
- 4.1 Be an effective, loving force for Faithful Action work
- 4.2 Create a renewed culture of Faithful Action
- 4.3 Strengthen and Expand the Umbrella Pilot Project
- 4.4 Enhance Faithful Action effectiveness through partnerships with mission-aligned organizations
- 4.5 Increase staff support of Faithful Action work
- 4.6 Grow our generosity as a community
- 4.7 Commit ourselves to racial justice, by taking concrete, visible steps to dismantle institutional and structural racism
- 5.1 Ensure our space is welcoming, beautiful, and meets the needs of the church
- 5.2 Ensure human resources meet the needs of the church
- 5.3 Ensure financial resources meet the needs of the church

Introduction

In the fall of 2011 the Board of Trustees appointed a Strategic Planning Team and directed it to create a set of specific, actionable long-term strategic goals for First Universalist Church. The basic question was *who are we called to be?* How will the Universalist spirit of love and hope be transformative at First Universalist Church in the next five years? Why are we here, and what are we called to do?

The seeds of this work were planted in 2008 with the search process for a new senior minister. The congregation was polled and an impressive packet of material gathered. Key findings included our yearning for a senior minister who was *motivating, compelling and inspiring, who could provide vision and spiritual leadership, who had a strong presence in the pulpit and in the community, who built relationships with congregants and who demonstrated warmth and humor in our daily encounters*. Sunday morning worship and a deepening spirituality emerged as overarching desires—and we called the Reverend Justin Schroeder. We have been blessed with his visionary leadership, strong presence in the pulpit, new energy in all areas of church life, and a growing membership.

In the fall of 2010 we began the Mission Possible process to re-imagine the church's mission and, based on that work, to create Visionary Goals. The process involved congregants at many levels, took our temperature after a year of new leadership, and created a new mission statement that is a clear touchstone for all that we do: *In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow. First Universalist Church*. The Visionary Goals approved by the Board of Trustees grew out of the mission statement and formed the basis for our work on *First Universalist 2012-2017*, this strategic plan.

In January of 2012 more than 175 of us participated in working sessions to answer these core questions for the next five years: Who are we called to be? What are we called to do? How will we become the church we want to be?

Several overarching themes emerged from the Working Group sessions and the Strategic Planning Team discussions:

- We are a religious community with spiritual growth, personal transformation, mutual support, and connection to each other at the center of all that we do.
- We value the strength, beauty, and depth of Sunday worship services, while also desiring a wider range of worship opportunities.
- We want to be a more diverse community and know there is much deep work we must do to make this happen.
- We know we can't be all things to all people, but are confident that we can open our doors wider.
- We want to engage all ages in spiritual practice, faithful action, and supportive community.
- We want youth to be fully integrated into the life and ministry of the church.
- Our mission extends to the community and to the world. We want to be visible and influential in our work for peace and racial and social justice and to be in respectful

and effective partnership with others in the community as we serve needs greater than our own.

- We believe that with our Universalist message of love and hope, we will continue to grow.
- We must attend to our infrastructure to become the church we are called to be. We will increase staffing and lay leadership, invest in best practices in technology and communication. We want to develop a strong digital ministry.
- We have untapped capacity to fund our calling; we believe in a culture of abundance not scarcity, and know that together we can be a force for good.

We have listened deeply to the congregation, the staff, and lay leaders and incorporated what we heard into a strategic plan for the next five years. It is our hope that the plan captures the essence of our dreams and maps a path to make those dreams a reality.

First Universalist Strategic Planning Team

David Bach, (Chair), Jill Braithwaite, Chris Bremer, Phil Burke, Kathy Coskran, Sharon Ramirez, Jennifer Schuster Jaeger, the Reverend Justin Schroeder

Notes on the 2014 Update

December 2014

Since the Strategic Plan was created, it has guided and enlivened the priorities and activities of our faith community. Staff routinely use the Plan to check in on priority-setting and on how our community has stated its vision of the future.

Our purpose in this revision is not a detailed reporting or accounting of the Plan's implementation. That is evaluated annually as part of the Board's performance evaluation of the Senior Minister. Rather, at this point two years after the Plan's creation, we wish to update the Strategic Plan to reflect high-level changes in priorities and so that it no longer includes elements that have fallen away for a variety of reasons. Revisions to the Plan are shown below and will be accepted by the Board of Trustees at its December 18, 2014, meeting.

In addition to revisions within the Plan, we wish to here highlight several elements of the plan that have been accomplished and continue to thrive. These include:

- Our Community Circle programs (formerly called small group ministry). Each semester, we have nearly 300 people participating in a variety of Circles, from Spiritual Practice Circles, to Racial Justice Learning Circles, to Circles reflecting on the sermon.
- The Wellspring Program. Thanks to Rev. Jen Crow, working with Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink, and a dedicated team of lay leaders, we now offer 4-6 Wellspring groups each year. The National Wellspring Program is housed at First Universalist, and additional curriculum is being created for participants who wish to do Wellspring for a 2nd and even 3rd year.
- Our Worship Arts Ministry. Thanks to the leadership of Rev. Ruth MacKenzie, Dr. Randy Bukeima, and Dr. Jerrod Wendland, our worship arts – Choir, Worship Associates, Folk Band, Orchestra, soloists, and much more, are thriving.
- The Pastoral Care team's reach has been broadened; our Care Team continues.
- In creating a "renewed culture of faithful action," we have re-envisioned how faithful action exists at the core of our faith community. Under Rev. Jen Crow's leadership, a Faithful Action leadership team has been created to determine how we partnership emerge, and how the Holiday Giving Project is decided; we've brought on a half time Faithful Action Intern looking at how our Faithful Action programming can be done with a racial justice lens, and we've continued to deepen our racial justice commitment, including public advocacy.
- Implementation of a database system to support membership development and pledge-tracking. This system has been implemented, but will take much of 2015 before we're able to use its full capacity.

We also wish to note here a few elements of the Plan that have not yet been fully implemented, due to prioritization elsewhere and to limited resources, both of which factors are expected to affect any Strategic Plan. These are in various stages of development, and they include:

- The creation of a “robust communications plan.” This is a priority for the current church year (2014-2015) and includes introducing the Weekly Online Liberal, a stronger web presence, a redesigned Order of Service, and calendars that alert people to upcoming church events and services.
- Development of our online ministry, including live-streaming of services and rich online resources.
- Volunteer and lay leadership development program (Note: this happens in many program areas of the church; however, this is not a formal leadership development process at this time.)
- Five-year budget plan.

Finally, we lift up here what has become a central part of our church’s mission—our racial justice work. While this was not part of the Strategic Plan, we have been called to open ourselves to this challenging and enriching work. The Plan has been revised to reflect this new commitment and focus. Through every area of church life, we are beginning to apply a racial justice lens.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The detailed Strategic Plan begins on page 10. What follows is a summary of the key findings and goals, as well as selected highlights.

1. Worship

Worship is core to what we do together—it is the joyful heart at the center of who we are. We want to continue our growth as a transformational religious community, and we support expanding the offerings to accommodate growth in Sunday morning attendance. We also seek to increase the diversity of worship experiences. In order to preserve, enrich, and expand the worship arts programming—visual and musical—we recommend increasing opportunities for congregants to participate in and contribute to the creation of transformative worship services. In addition, we recommend the following additions, as growth necessitates: an additional worship service; in summer, a second service including religious education; expanded opportunities for children and youth in worship services; an additional and alternative worship experience. We recommend that we expand our ministry beyond our walls with live-streaming of Sunday morning services and other online resources for spiritual development.

2. Faith Formation

First Universalist Church is a vibrant, growing congregation, with spiritual development at its center. Congregants yearn for a deeper connection to our Unitarian Universalist faith and seek increased opportunities for faith formation for all ages. We recommend increasing opportunities for the creative, inspired engagement of children and youth in all aspects of First Universalist life and offering varied, collaborative adult religious education as well. We recommend making a commitment to serving needs greater than our own, as we increase our engagement with communities outside our walls; doing this is a central faith formation experience. We also recommend increased support for the development of Unitarian Universalist rituals and practices.

3. Supportive Community

First Universalist congregants celebrate our connections with each other, knowing that the experience of friendship and community enriches us all. We want to preserve and expand our abilities to care for each other in times of need and recognize that children and youth as well as adults are in need of support. In order to be more fully a welcoming faith community, grounded in care and support, we recommend that we build on and diversify our small-group ministries, making it possible for every member and friend to participate in some kind of smaller community within First Universalist. To that end, we recommend the development of a robust communications plan (print and digital) that effectively welcomes newcomers, informs current members and friends, and provides the means for all to engage in the activities of the church. We recommend a volunteer and lay leadership development program be implemented. We also recommend dedicating increased staff resources to supporting membership development, volunteer coordination, and lay leadership training so the ministry gifts of congregants can be unleashed inside First Universalist and beyond.

4. Faithful Action

First Universalist congregants are deeply committed to putting our faith into action. As a church committed to racial, social, cultural, economic and environmental justice, and to working for peace, we aspire to be an effective force for positive change in the community and in the world. We recommend that we continue what was known as the Umbrella Pilot Project of three Faithful Action focus areas with the possibility of adding additional focus areas in the coming years; that we learn from UU values and principles related to social justice; that we develop strategic partnerships with local nonprofits and churches; and that we engage congregants in intergenerational work in support of these goals. We also recommend that we give away 60% of the Sunday morning offering to UU organizations, community partners, and other mission-aligned organizations. [Note: At the 2014 annual meeting, the congregation approved giving away 60% of the budget.]

5. Resources and Infrastructure

As a vibrant, growing church, we need our facility to support our mission, and we need the financial resources to accomplish our goals. We recommend establishing a task force to evaluate space usage and needs. We must ensure that our human resources, both staff and congregant, are sufficient to meet the needs of the church, and that these resources are used effectively. To meet our financial needs, we recommend the development of an on-going, five-year budget plan that is annually evaluated and that we explore untapped financial resources. We also recommend the development of the technical infrastructure to support our communication needs.

Racial Justice

Throughout each of these five summary areas, we have an explicit commitment to racial justice. This means that as a faith community, we intend to build the capacity to use a strategic framework for advancing racial justice.

Specifically, as we deepen our commitment to racial justice we intend to focus on:

- Structural racism and systemic inequality rather than simply personal prejudice.
- Impacts rather than intentions.
- Addressing racial inequality explicitly but not necessarily exclusively.
- Proposing solutions that emphasize equity and inclusion rather than diversity.
- Developing strategies to empower stakeholders and target institutional powerholders.
- Our social justice efforts all employ a racial justice lens.

The Strategic Plan

1. Worship

With 'faith' as a verb, an action, it means faith is not something we either have or don't. Instead, it is a step, a leap we take over and over again, a trust and loyalty that grows over time. ~the Reverend Justin Schroeder

We have a vibrant, powerful worship experience every Sunday. We want to preserve and enrich the diversity of spiritual and theological sources and celebrate the spectrum of belief and spiritual practice within our congregation. First Universalist congregants value the freedom of the pulpit and the pew, cherish the thinking of a range of poets, thinkers, and prophets, and support expanding the worship services we offer. There is also strong interest in finding meaningful and appropriate ways for children, youth, and lay leaders to share their gifts in worship services. Our current spaces have a capacity of approximately 400 adults and 175 children and youth at one time. The growth we were seeing in 2011-2012 has slowed, and we have put consideration of a third worship service on hold for now. We continue to seek greater diversity of worship experiences and meaningful lay participation. We also seek to significantly expand our digital ministry.

Goal 1.1 Preserve and enrich our diversity in worship practices.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1.1 Expand range and diversity of the arts (music, dance, drama, poetry, etc.) in worship.1.1.2 Expand worship arts opportunities for congregants of all ages.1.1.3 Expand staff and lay resources to strengthen and support the worship life of the church. |
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Goal 1.2 Accommodate growth in worship and religious education.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.2.1 Add third worship service and religious education if needed.1.2.2 Add second service, as well as greater religious education opportunities, during the summer.1.2.3 Add a different style of worship service to appeal to a broader constituency. |
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Goal 1.3 Expand access to worship beyond our doors.
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">1.3.1 Develop information technology infrastructure strategy to support digital ministry best practices.1.3.2 Install quality camera(s) and audio recording equipment in the sanctuary.1.3.3 Live-stream Sunday morning services.1.3.4 Build online resources and services for members, friends, and seekers including online spiritual resources—e.g., daily meditation, resources for times of transition. |
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Goal 1.4 As we grow and expand in our worship life and offerings, we continue to speak to and address race, racism, and whiteness.

2. Faith Formation

Everything we do as a congregation is religious education. Whether it occurs in the sanctuary, the board room, or the classroom, all that the congregation and the minister does and does not do educates us about what it means to be religious as individuals and as a community.
~the Reverend Jen Crow

Faith formation for children, youth, and adults is central to our large and growing congregation. Small groups of all kinds are building blocks for faith formation. In addition, we find that congregants want increased opportunities for multigenerational faith formation, including opportunities for fellowship and deeper integration of children and youth in all aspects of church life. There is particular interest in deepening our connection to Unitarian Universalist history and identity.

2.1 Inspire and deepen faith formation for all ages.

2.1.1 Implement a spiritual deepening program for adults.

2.1.2 Offer a wider variety of adult education opportunities, including pilgrimages, UU history, and identity formation activities, so members are inspired, grounded, and held by our living tradition.

2.1.3 Offer spiritually engaging activities, such as retreats.

2.2 Engage children and youth as an integral part of First Universalist faith formation activities.

2.2.1 Expand worshipping together as a full intergenerational community with children and youth attending entire church services more frequently.

2.2.2 Provide opportunities for children, youth and adults to participate together in faith formation activities.

2.2.3 Develop a documented set of Unitarian Universalist rituals and practices for families to use at home.

2.2.4 Beginning with Coming of Age classes, create programming that develops a Unitarian Universalist identity for youth and a clear pathway to membership.

2.2.5 For youth who go elsewhere for college or employment, facilitate connections to nearby Unitarian Universalist congregations.

2.3 Embrace work for the common good as a central faith formation experience and increase engagement with communities outside our walls

2.3.1 Provide opportunities for group reflection (youth and adult) on the spiritual meaning of faithful action work.

2.3.2 Increase church's effectiveness as a center for youth development and faithful action.

2.4 Ensure that racial justice becomes a core ministry and commitment of the church.

2.4.1 Increase the awareness within our church community about issues related to racism, including its impact and expression at each of the four levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural.

2.4.2 Provide ongoing opportunities for education to learn about race, racism, and whiteness.

3. Supportive Community

We are a community of faith drawn together not by doctrine, but by our desire to be a people of open minds, open hearts, and open hands. We seek to live lives of integrity, in grateful relationship with one another and with that sustaining, transforming power many call God and we often call Love. ~the Reverend Kate Tucker

Being connected is one of the most important aspects of life in religious community. As the congregation grows, we continue to seek ways that people can belong to smaller communities within the congregation and feel connected to one another; we want to provide an infrastructure that nurtures a culture of connection. Our structures and processes must foster access to these communities. We want to ensure that the pastoral care needs of the congregation are met. We seek to be a tapestry of seekers, with diversity in our congregation that is more reflective of the diverse world around us. We also seek to expand our digital ministry to increase access to our ministries and resources. We actively welcome all who share our values, and encourage each to discover, develop, and share their gifts. We want to communicate effectively with and among members and friends. As part of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we share the values, hopes, dreams, and influence of UUs around the world. Together we are stronger.

3.1 Deepen congregant engagement in the life and ministry of the church.

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| <p>3.1.1 Implement a volunteer and lay leadership development program with an annual cycle and documented processes.</p> <p>3.1.2 Increase staff resources devoted to membership development, volunteer coordination, and leadership training and development.</p> <p>3.1.3 Clarify pathways to participation in smaller communities of congregants.</p> |
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3.2 Build on and expand the definition of small group experiences.

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| <p>3.2.1 Continue to develop and support small groups based on interests, life stages, spiritual practices, and common affinities both inside and outside the formal activities of the church.</p> <p>3.2.2 Aim for 100% connection in a smaller community.</p> |
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3.3 Ensure pastoral care needs are met.
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| <p>3.3.1 Regularly evaluate pastoral care capacity and determine need for a full or part-time pastoral care minister.</p> <p>3.3.2 Ensure that youth have access to ministers for pastoral care needs.</p> |
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3.4 Deepen the capacity for diversity and racial justice work.

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| <p>3.4.1 Create a racial justice leadership team to help move this work and commitment forward.</p> |
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3.5 Strengthen our UU ties locally and nationally.

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| <p>3.5.1 Create a multi-year plan to pay our fair share of UUA and District dues.</p> <p>3.5.2 As we build our digital capacity, explore partnering with other metro UU congregations to develop resources and create content.</p> <p>3.5.3 Provide leadership for collaboration with other UU congregations.</p> |
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3.6 Develop a robust communications plan (print and digital) that makes it easy for people to learn about us, that welcomes newcomers, informs current members, and engages all in the activities and resources of the church.

3.6.1 Create user-friendly paths to resources and participation.

3.6.2 Develop beautiful, accessible program guides for the life of the church that clearly communicate what we're about in a coherent narrative that links our values, mission, and goals and describe the depth and variety of church programs.

3.6.3 Create a robust online resource center of spiritual development resources.

3.6.4 Create information system to support membership development, tracking of members and friends, and their interests, skills, and leadership training.

4. Faithful Action

I believe that we are called to stand on the side of love. Love strains to know the other, not shut the other out. Love opens its eyes to a larger vision, struggling not for victory, but for justice. May these sheltering walls be strong, to keep hate out and hold love in.
~The Reverend William Sinkford

Our faithful action work is grounded in spiritual depth and humility, and in our Unitarian Universalist principles. We are committed to working for peace, civil and human rights, stewardship of the earth, and democratic principles in our community and in the wider world. First Universalist congregants are energized, hopeful, and committed to a wide variety of faithful action focus areas. We want the church to be a more visible, influential leader in the community. We understand that in order to achieve influence and visibility we must concentrate our efforts in key areas while acknowledging a variety of interests and activities. We care deeply about human rights issues and will continue to be proactive around specific issues. In these areas we are informed by organizations such as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance. We also want to better understand our own life experiences and how to build authentic relationships with people whose race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, or economic background are different than our own. We commit ourselves personally and collectively to work for racial justice.

4.1 Be an effective, loving force for faithful action work.

4.1.1 Develop a variety of ways for staff and congregants, including youth, to enhance our visibility and influence (media and online presence, partnerships, activism).

4.1.2 Develop a variety of ways for staff and congregants, including youth, to build new skills and assume leadership roles.

4.1.3 Be attentive to issues in current affairs that demand the organized, faith-based action of Unitarian Universalists of conscience.

4.2 Create a renewed culture of Faithful Action.

4.2.1 Provide easy access points for newcomers and members.

4.2.2 Strive for greater accountability.

4.2.3 Encourage new ideas and inspire enthusiasm among congregants.

4.3 Strengthen and expand Faithful Action ministry.

4.3.1 Add more focus areas as appropriate.

4.3.2 Create Faithful Action Leadership team to solidify our current partnerships, determine how new partnerships are create, and decide how Holiday Giving is determined.

4.4 Enhance Faithful Action effectiveness through partnerships with mission-aligned organizations.

4.4.1 Create synergy by coordinating and amplifying social justice initiatives and campaigns with partner organizations

4.5 Increase staff support of Faithful Action work.

4.5.1 Increase staff support dedicated to Faithful Action work.

4.5.2 Provide more avenues for congregants to engage in Faithful Action issues and activities.

4.6 Grow our generosity as a community.

4.6.1 Give away 60% of the Sunday offering to UU organizations, community partners and other mission-aligned organizations.

4.6.2 Enhance our spiritual practice of giving, through initiatives such as our holiday giving program.

4.7 Commit ourselves to racial justice, by taking concrete, visible steps to dismantle institutional and structural racism

4.7.1 Develop leaders committed to racial justice inside our congregation.

4.7.2 Build equitable relationships with people of both similar and different racial backgrounds to our own.

4.7.3 Connect our church community to the racial justice efforts of other Unitarian Universalists, regionally and nationally, and to those of other faith communities.

4.7.4 Connect our church community to the racial justice efforts of secular groups.

4.7.5 Use a racial justice lens to plan, implement and evaluate our justice work.

5. Resources and Capacity

We need for our facility to support our mission and goals, and we also need the financial, human, and technological resources to implement them. There is a dynamic tension between a culture of abundance—we have enough and can do what we are called to do—and responsible stewardship—we have been entrusted with a great legacy and must honor that trust and plan well and responsibly. We believe in proactively addressing future financial needs and goals and seek to reap our financial resources in a variety of ways.

5.1 Ensure our space is welcoming and beautiful, and meets the needs of the church.

5.1.1 Establish a task force to seek possible tenants for our building.

- 5.1.2 In the interim, plan smaller aesthetic improvements at 3400 Dupont Avenue such as creating spaces that meet the needs of our program life.
- 5.1.3 Explore ways to continue to share space with other faith communities.
- 5.1.4 Explore overflow space for youth and/or community programming.
- 5.1.5 Examine ways to move beyond our space to provide programming in other locations and through digital media.

5.2 Ensure human resources meet the needs of the church.

- 5.2.1 Expand lay participation, development, and training.
- 5.2.2 Provide competitive compensation to attract and retain staff.
- 5.2.3 Recruit and retain staff of color.

5.3 Ensure financial resources meet the needs of the church.

- 5.3.1 Develop a five-year budget that is annually evaluated.
- 5.3.2 Research and develop unexplored financial opportunities (such as grants, additional fundraisers, a capital campaign, online fundraisers, rentals, and sales).

5.4 Embed our commitment to racial justice in our policies, practices and other decision making efforts.

- 5.4.1 Ensure financial resources are secured to support the initial and ongoing commitment to racial justice.
- 5.4.2 Evaluate the impact of our policies, practices, decision making and outreach, against our established racial justice principles.
- 5.4.3 Ensure that racial justice training is an ongoing requirement for staff, board and leaders of our church.

This document articulates specific, accountable goals that are important to First Universalist Church members and friends, that create a powerful, possible vision for 2012-2017, and that are within the capacity of the church. It is a living, flexible document that will be evaluated annually by the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister, with input that will incorporate the varied perspectives of the church's many stakeholders. Data will be collected utilizing multiple methodologies that may include online surveys, personal interviews, focus groups, written surveys, review of church documents, and other approaches as deemed appropriate by the Board of Trustees and Senior Minister.

First Universalist Church, Spring 2017

December 2014 update: We note that what follows was an exercised used during the creation of the Strategic Plan and was not intended to be part of the core Strategic Plan itself. It was included here as documentation of our dreaming and our process.

(This is one possible vision of how things might look as this plan unfolds.)

Our several worship services are authentic, transformative, inspiring, and deeply relevant. We are a welcoming community, with more racial and economic diversity than ever before in our congregants, staff, and ministerial team. Our choir has grown significantly; we have two additional choirs, as well as a youth choir. Our other music and arts groups are even more varied and diverse than they were in 2012 and, along with the choirs, frequently perform in the community. Members and friends of the church experience deep joy and meaning as they give, receive, and grow in their spiritual and creative lives.

In the fall of 2013 we added a third Sunday worship service to address the overcrowding in Religious Education classes. In the summer of 2014 we had two worship services as well as religious education for children and youth. In the fall of 2015 we added an alternative service with a multi-generational component that attracted a new demographic to the church.

Here in 2017, nearly 600 people care for each other in our small group program, which has expanded both in number and varieties of focus. We have small groups for elders, parents of teens, new parents, single parents, small business owners, people of color, GBLT parents, multi-racial families, young professionals, and more. We have groups based on particular interests, life stages, and spiritual practices. Because of our deep commitment to small groups and the relationships created through them, we are showing up in the world in different ways. We are more present to each other, are better able to listen, and are grounded in deep compassion. In community and individually we are growing in our UU identity and in our spiritual practice.

In 2013 our staff expanded to serve our growing membership, the variety of services, our aspirations, and our commitment to ministries deeply shared by all. We now have a Membership/Development staff position to ensure that members make real connections with each other, that members are able to share their gifts and find their place in the First Universalist community. We also have a part-time Minister of Congregational Care to work with the Congregational Care Team in ensuring that the pastoral care needs of the church are met.

Over the last five years Unity Center has been woven deeply into the life of the religious education program. As a result Unity Center's relationship to First Universalist was deepened and clarified, and it was pulled into tighter alignment with the church's programming. As Unity Center's national reputation grew, it became recognized by both the Board of Trustees and the First Universalist Foundation as the 21st century equivalent of Unity Settlement House—an affiliate organization with strong involvement of First Universalist youth and adults and with significant outreach in the community.

The Wellspring Program has also become an integral part of First Universalist. It has created a new generation of deeply grounded, UU leaders who, after participating in the spiritual development program, Wellspring, have gone on to lead pilgrimages, serve on the Board of Trustees, and offer significant lay leadership in a many aspects of church life.

Between 2012 and 2017 the church established partnerships with several community organizations. We continue to focus our faithful action work as organized under the umbrellas of Homelessness, the Environment, and Immigration. The partnership with Habitat for Humanity continued to flourish. In addition partnerships with organizations working in our umbrella areas, with community programs in core urban communities, with agencies working with Unity Center, and other congregations were explored and solidified. The processes for participating in social justice activities are clear and inviting for members and friends.

Service and pilgrimage trips for both youth and adults began in 2014 and by 2017 were a regular feature of First Universalist life. Faith and action are seamlessly woven together in every dimension of church life; activities such as the Day of Service are an annual reminder of the many ways we express our faith.

In the fall of 2014 the board empowered a task force to evaluate our space use and needs and to make recommendations ranging from a significant renovation or addition at 3400 Dupont to the feasibility of acquiring a second site. The idea of church beyond the building is no longer unique. Not only is our sanctuary equipped with video screens which allow us to project hymn lyrics, readings and videos, but these elements are woven seamlessly into the worship experience. We have a vibrant online community: we live-stream services, have high quality digital video recordings of each service posted on YouTube, provide online spiritual practice resources, and resources for families. Our growth has focused on our future—young families—and in 2017 we have nine hundred to a thousand adults in worship and over five hundred children and youth in religious education each week.

In all of this there is an emerging understanding that if one truly engages in the First Universalist community, one will be shaped and changed. First Universalist is known as a place to deepen one's spiritual life, whether through our small groups, the Wellspring program, spiritual practice activities, or other classes. Members of the church are supported and cared for during life changes and transitions. Congregational care and deep hospitality is woven into every area of church life. This welcoming is supported by staff and congregants, and is driven by the Spirit of Life moving in and among this community, calling us to our best selves. People come to First Universalist to be changed: to learn to give in gratitude, to receive with an open heart, and to grow into love's people, as we serve one another and the wider community.