

# Vision for Co-Location, January 2019

As people of faith, we are called to live and act out of a prophetic imagination about what is possible as we strive to heal the world and build the Beloved Community. Given our current political climate, to even consider co-locating is a defiant act, an act that disrupts the dominant narratives of fear, division, and hyper-individualism, and dreams about new ways to model what we want to see and be in the world.

*As we consider co-locating, the following vision drives us:*

## **Environmental Stewardship**

Reducing our shared environmental footprint.

## **Disrupting White Supremacy**

White supremacy in America depends on three pillars: racism, anti-semitism, and Islamophobia. Partnering with Shir Tikvah would require First Universalist to be in faithful relationship across culture and religion with a Jewish community. In this relationship, we will learn, grow, and ally with our partners in disrupting white supremacy culture in all forms.

## **Healing Justice Impact**

There is a long history of anti-semitism in the Twin Cities. Co-locating in a historic Synagogue invites us to name and revisit this history, to identify anti-semitism and white supremacy as it exists currently in Minneapolis, and to create a new story about how we (Unitarian Universalists and Jews) support and inspire each other. We will do this as we grow in our own unique religious identities, and work collectively and collaboratively toward the dismantling of white supremacy culture that harms us, our siblings, and the planet.

## **Financial Stability**

By sharing the costs of operating the building, we shore up First Universalist's financial future, ensuring our ability to continue living into and amplifying our mission.

## **Incubator Impact**

As a shared house of worship, 3400 Dupont becomes a new space, a learning incubator for the kind of "brave space," partnering, collaboration, and communication that is needed to meet the challenges we face in the 21st Century.

*Rev. Justin Schroeder & Rev. Jen Crow, January 2019*



**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**

## Change Team Memorandum, January 31, 2019

This document is intended to provide the First Universalist Board of Trustees with a recommendation regarding the co-location opportunity between First Universalist and Shir Tikvah. Assuming these parties are able to agree on legal and financial matters, the Change Team strongly recommends First Universalist and Shir Tikvah co-locate at 3400 Dupont Avenue South.

Our decision is made with a deep respect for the history of First Universalist and an aspiration for the future generations. We come to this decision from a variety of viewpoints in personal, professional and church life experience. Each of the members of the Change Team has at least five years of membership at First Universalist with some members having 20+ years. Furthermore, we have been in conversation with other members of First Universalist and members of Shir Tikvah. Lastly, we have been engaged in the internal process at First Universalist and believe that we have enough knowledge to make an extremely sound recommendation.

Our recommendation is based on the following factors (not in order of importance):

- A co-location with Shir Tikvah is resistance to white supremacy and the dominant culture. The opportunity to reimagine what “our” building is and to be in close relationship with Shir Tikvah is modeling anti-racism for our future generations. As we know, power and resources are at the heart of oppression and this is a model of action in community.
- The First Universalist Mission is “in the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow.” In a co-location with Shir Tikvah, First Universalist gives some of our space physically and energetically, we receive a partner and we grow into a new community.
- One of the seven Unitarian Universalist principles is “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.” A co-location with Shir Tikvah demonstrates the principles of our faith that call us into community and to act for justice. Shir Tikvah shares FU’s commitment to racial justice and continuously acts for social justice. A partnership with Shir Tikvah is a practice of creating a stronger community to work for peace, liberty and justice for all.
- A visionary goal of the church is “First Universalist is a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and intergenerational faith community of mutual caring and support where people bring all of who they are and welcome each other with joy. Our sense of who we are as a community of faith is ever expanding.” A co-location with Shir Tikvah is demonstrating our vision for a multi-cultural community and it expands the First Universalist sense of community.
- Another visionary goal is “First Universalist is a faith community that acts with humility, bravery, and compassion to create a racially just and sustainable world.” Shir Tikvah is a Jewish faith community and antisemitism is connected to racism. A co-location with Shir Tikvah is a practice of First Universalist’s commitment to racial justice and an opportunity to expand its racial justice vision.
- The resources (money, etc.) saved will allow First Universalist to move more significantly and urgently for racial justice (i.e. full time minister of color).

The Change Team: *Sarah Hedge, Ben Miles, Lillie Pang, Kayci Rush, Justin Schroeder, Richard Spratt, Karin Wille.*



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