

Strategic Goals

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua

June 2016

Strategic Advisory Team

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Introduction

This five-year plan was created by a six member Strategic Advisory Team who were brought together in the late Fall of 2015. The Team consisted of four lay leaders: Gillian Hinkle, Gary Lerude, Mary Merkel, John Sanders; and two staff members: Sandra Greenfield and Rev. Allison Palm. The Team met several times over the course of the next six months to lay out this plan and gather feedback from stakeholders.

The plan is grounded in the Values, Mission, and Ends Statements adopted by the Board:

Policy I.A: Mission

The mission of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is to engage people in a search for truth and meaning within a supportive liberal religious community that encourages personal and spiritual growth, embraces diversity, and promotes social justice.

(Modified March 9, 2015)

Policy I.B: Ends Statements

Within

1. The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a spiritual home where members and friends experience personal transformation by:

- Participating in varied and meaningful common worship that nurtures, challenges, and inspires;
- Exploring religious values and discovering individual truths;
- Joining in fellowship with other members and friends.

Among

2. The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a welcoming religious community for all ages where we live our mission by:

- Creating a beloved community where we minister to one another;
- Supporting and respecting one another in our daily lives and our religious journeys;
- Generously giving of our time, talents, and money;
- Being good stewards of our church resources in pursuit of our mission.

Beyond

3. The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a beacon of liberal religious thought and action, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in the world by:

- Promoting our values and programs so that others will hear our voice and have the opportunity to join us;
- Welcoming people who are seeking a spiritual home and personal transformation;
- Partnering with other congregations and institutions in advocating for and promoting social justice;
- Actively participating in regional (Northern New England District) and national (Unitarian Universalist Association) Unitarian Universalist programs and activities.

Policy I.C: Values

The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua embodies the following values in all its programs:

True religious freedom in which participants are

- Open-minded,
- Non-dogmatic, and
- Actively seeking truth and meaning.

Respecting and embracing diversity within the church community, which, despite differences, is

- Supportive,
- Welcoming,
- Inclusive, and
- Safe.

The importance of service to others, whether it is

- Between individuals,
- In support of the church, or
- In the larger community beyond the church walls.

Using these guiding documents, the Strategic Advisory Team has laid out a plan for how the UU Church of Nashua might further our Mission and Ends in the next five years. The Team reviewed various surveys and assessments from the congregation from the last five years. The records of cottage meetings from the recent search process were particularly useful. Drafts of this plan have also been shared with all the relevant stakeholders prior to being finalized in June 2016.

The Strategic Advisory Team chose not to include Stewardship as a separate category within this plan, as we did not want to name Stewardship as an end unto itself. Instead, we envision Stewardship as an overarching means by which all the ends outlined in this document might be realized. The goals in this plan are ambitious, and we assume throughout that both membership and financial commitments will increase over the next five years.

This plan also assumes active participation by members of the congregation in bringing these dreams to fruition. In addition to the Mission and Ends, this plan is grounded in a vision of shared ministry, in which every member of the congregation has a role in moving this plan forward. We envision a congregation in which the Minister, staff and members work collaboratively to strengthen the congregation and further our reach.

As mentioned above, this plan is ambitious, and we want to be clear in setting these ambitious goals that we are using an 80% benchmark for success. If we achieve 80% of what has been envisioned here in the next five years, we will be that much closer to realizing our Mission and Ends.

We also see this as a living document. Each year, the staff and Teams will use this document to set goals for the year, and may need to readjust based on the realities of the moment and what did not get completed in the previous year. In the spring of 2019, a new Strategic Advisory Team will be gathered to review the progress on this plan, adjust the last two years, and set out a plan for the next three years.

Worship and Music

Desired End

By the end of the 2020-2021 church year, the UU Church of Nashua will have multiple types of transformational worship experiences, including traditional Sunday morning worship, regular whole congregation worship opportunities, monthly children’s chapel services, regular youth worship, and evening services. The sanctuary and the services will all be family-friendly and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. There will be a team of trained Worship Associates that participates in the planning and implementation of all types of services and regular guest preachers who bring variety to the services. The music program will be a vibrant and integral part of all of the worship services, with regular guest musicians and opportunities for people of all ages to provide music.

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Implement monthly Body & Soul services and evaluate impact (benchmark 20% attendance of morning services)	2016-2017
Design and implement Worship Associate training	2016-2017
Integrate music program into children’s chapel and Body & Soul	2016-2017
Implement permanent solution for slides in worship	2016-2017
Create plan for making the sanctuary and facilities more family friendly	2017-2018
Create plan for making the sanctuary more accessible	2017-2018
Invite in at least four paid guest preachers each year	2017-2018
Include at least two youth on Worship Associates	2017-2018
Assess need for children’s, youth, and family choirs	2017-2018
Increase the use of guest musicians from outside the congregation during the regular church year	2017-2018
Make any minor changes to sanctuary to make it more family friendly and accessible	2018-2019
Implement children’s, youth, and/or family choirs	2018-2019
Have one whole congregation worship each month	2018-2019
Expand Body & Soul to twice per month if the desire is present	2018-2019

Assess music program staffing	2018-2019
Explore opportunities for regular small musical groups	2019-2020
Reassess the need for a second Sunday morning service	2019-2020
Assess changes to the sanctuary layout as part of a capital campaign	2020-2021
Expand Body & Soul to every Sunday evening if the desire is present	2020-2021

Faith Formation

Desired End

By the end of the 2020-2021 church year, the UU Church of Nashua will have created and successfully implemented the team and staff structures necessary to support and provide lifespan faith formation as well as having created a fully-developed Unitarian Universalist faith formation program for all ages. The congregation will have formed a deeper understanding of the needs of families with children and have created an intentional ministry for those families. There will be updates to the facilities and to program delivery that is more contemporary and makes use of technology. The congregation will have explored and possibly implemented summer programs along with alternatives to Sunday morning experiences involving whole congregation worship followed by developmentally appropriate programs.

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Evaluate and implement team structures for lifespan faith formation (e.g., two teams with collaboration or one lifespan council)	2016-2017
Create a plan for a fully developed faith formation program for adults (ages 18+), including the Young Adult Group	2016-2017
Create a plan for a fully developed faith formation program for children through ROPES	2016-2017
Create a plan for a fully developed senior youth group program (including active outreach and service trips)	2016-2017
Assess the training and support needs of volunteer staffing for children and youth.	2016-2017
Establish collaboration for AREA events with at least two other teams	2016-2017
Hire a permanent Director of Faith Formation	2016-2017
Begin developing parenting support and learning programs; assist families with UU identity formation (family ministry)	2017-2018

Develop regular facilitator training for adult programming	2017-2018
Develop and implement Internet faith formation programs (webinars, A/V in classrooms and meeting spaces)	2017-2018
Assess the needs for updating facilities for the youth room	2017-2018
Assess the needs for updating classrooms	2017-2018
Create and institutionalize family events and play groups	2018-2019
Evaluate hiring preschool teachers for 3s and 4s	2018-2019
Create a library database of books and curriculum	2018-2019
Explore summer faith formation programming	2018-2019
Explore summer UU camp with implementation	2019-2020
Assess the need for a part-time paid Faith Formation Assistant	2019-2020
Assess the need for a part-time paid Youth Coordinator	2020-2021
Assess possibility of 2nd Hour Faith Formation	2020-2021

Pastoral Care Program

Desired End

Within five years, we will have a robust trained lay Pastoral Care Team and programs that provide emotional and practical support to the congregation. The Team will offer a range of services. Because of the sensitive nature of this work, PCT members will be selected by a core group led by the Minister. Other members of the congregation will be involved in programs that interest and suit them.

Possible Programs

(from www.uua.org/care/ga/100500.shtml)

- [Joys Program](#): birthdays, anniversaries, graduations
- Sorrows Program
- [Meals and Transportation](#)
- [Medical Equipment Loan Program](#)
- Visiting the [Ill or Hospitalized](#)
- [Respite](#) Care
- [Time of Death and Bereavement](#)
- [Educational Resources](#)
- Visiting Members in [Retirement Communities and Nursing Homes](#)

- Dealing with [Life Crises or Emotional Distress](#)
- [Protocol for a Death](#)
- [End of Life Planning](#)

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Choose and recruit members for a fully-staffed Pastoral Care Team (at least 6 members)	2016-2017
Design and implement training for Pastoral Care Team members	2016-2017
Develop a list of community resources for referrals	2016-2017
Clarify role of Pastoral Care Team and create job description	2016-2017
Increase visibility of Pastoral Care Team	2016-2018
Assess with new Director of Faith Formation participation in pastoral care	2017-2018
Provide at least two programs per year for the congregation/community	2017-2018
Have at least one youth on the Pastoral Care Team	2017-2018
Evaluate Pastoral Care paid staffing	2018-2019
Evaluate need for and training of Senior Youth chaplains	2018-2019
Have a robust Caring Community network in place	2019-2020
Evaluate need for Coffee Hour Pastoral Care Office Hours and implement if need is determined	2020-2021

Social Justice

Desired End

Within five years (by the end of the 2020-2021 church year), the UU Church of Nashua will have a social justice program that 1) has a defined structure and scope, 2) focuses on one to two main issues at a time, 3) achieves wide participation by the congregation – adults and youth – through multiple projects and levels of commitment,¹ 4) is supported by a paid staff position focused on the church’s

¹ The social justice program will include activities for direct service, advocacy and witness, education, and financial support. Levels of commitment will range from “one-time, no more than a couple of hours” to leadership roles that require a longer, sustained time investment. Projects will include opportunities for families to participate, as well as events where multiple generations work together.

social justice ministry, and 5) witnesses for Unitarian Universalist values in Nashua, New Hampshire, and the larger national and world community, providing an entry point to Unitarian Universalism.

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Engage more children, youth and their families in providing support for community dinners (e.g., helping cook and serve, making table decorations, providing entertainment)	2016-2017
Engage the congregation in evaluating the social justice program of the UU Church of Nashua	2016-2018
Choose one or two main issues to focus on as a congregation for a multi-year commitment	2016-2018
Work with Faith Formation Team to deliver AREA programs focused on the 1-2 main issues	2017-2018
Begin the process of updating UUCN's Welcoming Congregation status	2017-2018
Integrate Community Dinners into Social Justice Program	2017-2018
Implement changes in structure of Social Justice Program based on evaluation	2018-2019
Assess Outreach Offering program and implement changes as needed	2018-2019
Determine the social justice ministry leadership structure (i.e., congregation and staff role definition). Draft role descriptions for each and the requirements and time commitment (i.e., part or full time) for the staff position. Budget and fund the social justice ministry staff position.	2019-2020
Recruit the social justice ministry staff member. Define the staff member's priorities and goals, consistent with funding. Begin developing the social justice program in accordance with these priorities and goals.	2020-2021
Re-assess selected issues and continue with the same issues or choose new ones	2020-2021

Membership and Leadership Development

Desired End

Within five years, the UU Church of Nashua will have a defined path for membership and leadership development.

- Visiting newcomers are welcomed and supported as inquiring friends, as they consider becoming members.
- New members are welcomed and supported as they become assimilated into the congregation and consider becoming actively engaged in the life of our church community.
- Active members are supported as they investigate, then take on leadership positions.
- New leaders are supported as they adjust to the responsibilities and challenges of their new positions.

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Host Leadership Summit focused on Policy Governance	2016-2017
Clarify role of Leadership Development Team	2016-2017
Clarify role of Membership Team and staff accordingly. Clarify relationship with Membership Coordinator.	2016-2017
Evaluate the existing organizational chart in an effort to efficiently and effectively meet the Mission and Ends of the congregation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess all activities/events/programs and assign them to an existing Team or Committee 2. Streamline all functions 	2016-2017
Create a plan for a fully-developed Leadership Development program (linked to Faith Formation plan for adults)	2017-2018
Assess Greeter/Usher program and implement changes as needed	2017-2018
Establish a sustainable process for tracking visitors and new members	2017-2018
Support the congregation in learning about and practicing hospitality	2017-2018
Establish a process to occasionally check with active members to assess their satisfaction and sense of fulfillment with their current roles, to assess their	2018-2019

interest and willingness to assume more responsibility in our church life, and to refer those who are interested to the Nominating Committee and relevant staff.	
Establish a process to follow up with new leaders for the first six to twelve months of leadership to assess their concerns and offer support for any challenges that they are experiencing. Inform new leaders and those considering leadership of resources such as relevant district, New England region and UUA workshops.	2019-2020
Provide financial support for leaders attending leadership development programs.	2020-2021

Denominational Connections

Desired End

Within five years, the UU Church of Nashua will actively participate in and support district, region, and UUA workshops, conferences, annual meetings, and General Assembly, financially underwriting the delegates representing the church. We will also serve as a teaching congregation for a student minister or intern.

Goal	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Host at least one Regional event	2016-2017
Assess Denominational Connections Team and implement changes in structure as determined	2016-2017
Organize Youth Group trip to General Assembly	2016-2017
Assess feasibility of a cluster approach to Adult Faith Formation, partnering with UU congregations in Milford and Manchester	2016-2017
Participate in at least 4 Regional events each year	2016-2021
Organize at least one social event with the Milford and/or Manchester congregation	2017-2018
Have a full contingent of delegates at General Assembly	2017-2018
Participate in at least one Pulpit Exchange	2018-2019

Budget for, advertise for and hire a Ministerial Intern	2018-2019
Ministerial Intern begins working with congregation	2019-2020
Budget for registration of up to six church leaders to attend General Assembly and regional conferences or workshops	2019-2020
Budget travel costs for delegates attending General Assembly and regional conferences	2020-2021

Communications & Administration

Desired End

Within the next five years (by the end of the 2020-2021 church year), the UU Church of Nashua will operate effectively and efficiently as an organization, with clear and comprehensive policies and procedures, technology that enables staff and volunteers to succeed, a communications strategy with roles and responsibilities spelled out, and modern, transparent financial practices.

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Launch new website look	2016-2017
Offer training for Team chairs on new website	2016-2017
Redesign weekly newsletter	2016-2017
Transition to Quickbooks online	2016-2017
Develop internal communications policies and procedures, including assigning staff responsibilities for individual components (with special attention to Social Media)	2016-2017
Submit recommended Safe Congregations Policy to Board	2016-2017
Assess and implement a uniform online evaluation process for all programs	2016-2017
Engage outside firm for financial audit	Summer 2017
Research database options and determine needs	2016-2018
Establish Personnel Orientation procedures	2017-2018
Define target media for advertising and public relations; review and update the protocol for communications	2017-2018
Finish Policy and Procedure Manual	2017-2018
Upgrade online calendar to fit current needs	2017-2018

Assess online registration options in conjunction with updated database	2018-2019
Establish a History/Archives Team	2018-2019
Implement marketing plan, including public relations and advertising in local media (e.g., The Hippo, NHPR)	2018-2019
Assess staff technology use and implement uniform systems as needed	2019-2020
Evaluate Communications policies and procedures and update as needed	2020-2021

Staffing Plan

Desired End

Within the next five years (by the end of the 2020-2021 church year), the UU Church of Nashua will recruit the necessary paid staff to ensure consistent, high quality programs and services that support the church's mission, while enabling church members and friends to focus on faith formation, social justice, and nurturing the beloved community. Staffing goals include:

- Paid positions for roles with fiscal responsibility or require multi-year continuity that would be difficult to maintain when performed by volunteers
- Balanced workloads and compensation that are within UUA guidelines
- Organizational structure of staff and teams that enable church growth

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Transition Office Administrator position to Church Administrator, with added responsibilities of property management and supervising the Sexton	Summer 2016
Add hours to Membership Coordinator and Church Administrator positions	Summer 2016
Assess how staffing adjustments are working and determine best utilization of additional staff hours and training.	Spring 2017
Add staff hours (20 hrs/wk) and training, consistent with the organizational plan.	Fall 2017
Assess how staffing adjustments are working and determine best utilization of additional staff hours and training.	Spring 2018
Add staff hours (20 hrs/wk) and training, consistent with the organizational plan and assessment.	Fall 2018
Assess how staffing adjustments are working and determine best utilization of additional staff hours and training.	Spring 2019
Add staff hours (40 hrs/wk) and training, consistent with the organizational plan	Fall 2019

and assessment. (Ministerial Intern, possible Faith Formation Assistant)	
Assess how staffing adjustments are working and determine best utilization of additional staff hours and training.	Spring 2020
Add staff hours (20 hrs/wk) and training, consistent with the organizational plan and assessment. (possible Youth Coordinator, Social Justice staff person)	Fall 2020
Assess how staffing adjustments are working and determine best utilization of additional staff hours and training.	Spring 2021

Facilities Improvement & Capital Campaign

Desired End

Within the next five years (by the end of the 2020-2021 church year), the UU Church of Nashua will maintain and enhance the current facilities to best serve the mission of the church. This includes:

- Maintenance and improvements that support our goal of growing the church community in a sustainable manner, and
- Maintenance and facility improvements that honor the interdependent web of all existence – making it green!

Step	Ideal Timing (Church Year)
Survey, assess, and prioritize possible projects for a facilities improvement plan.	2016-2017
Create a 20-year maintenance plan	2016-2017
Assess list of possible projects with the Board of Trustees; establish initial scope of the facilities improvement plan.	2016-2017
Create a capital campaign committee	2017-2018
Complete feasibility study, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring professional support for a capital campaign • Identify potential funding sources (e.g., endowments, donations, and grants) • Projected funding and expenditures • Identify staff and volunteers able to organize and conduct a capital campaign • Assess the feasibility of the scope of the campaign and alignment with church goals. 	2017-2018
Recruit the capital campaign committee; train the committee and church leadership on the essential elements of a successful capital campaign; initial fundraising. ²	2018-2019

² A good starting resource: www.thenonprofitpartnership.org/files/cfd-campaign-basics-ppt.pdf

Launch the public phase of the capital campaign.	2019-2020
Per the capital campaign and staffing plan, add necessary staff to support the capital campaign and church goals (see Staffing Plan).	2018-2020
Complete fundraising and initiate initial facilities improvement projects.	2020-2021
Complete facilities improvement projects. Submit final report for capital campaign.	2020-2021