

# Long Range Planning Committee Summary Document

**Goals** – To gather and collect data to present to the board and congregation with which to develop a long-range plan for our congregation 15-20 years down the road.

**Members** – Brenna Woods, Lindsey Hedrick, Carol Houde, Seth Bonvouloir, Kathy Grossman, Nona Storer, Rev. Allison Palm, excused member Ellen McCormick.

**Summary of year-** We, the members of the long-range planning committee, met to develop thoughtful questions to ask the members of the congregation to get them to think about the future. We split up amongst the teams and committees of the church to ask them questions and then held cottage meetings to do the same for the congregants. Listed below are summary results of each category. The categories came from the information we received from our findings. We received approximately 1,120 comments and/or suggestions. The percentages marked next to the topic relate to the percentage of suggestions made for that category.

## **Advertising and Public Relations – 6%**

We would like to see an increase in the advertising of UUCN, as well as a greater public relations presence. Our church does a lot of things to be proud of, but we need to make sure the community knows this. By making our efforts more well known, it's more likely that other people will want to join our efforts. We should use all of the communication tools at our disposal to reach out to the community, with our words and message as well as with our actions.

## **Beyond UUCN: Outreach, Connection, and Participation- 15%**

The overall goal of this section was to be someone who would be helpful within the community. We need to not only be there for people by being present, but by also being able to offer supports and resources in our building. In order to be the church that helps our community, we need to maintain up to date in technology and communication so that we can get our message out. We also need to continue making financial contributions to social justice movements that speak directly to our mission, values, and principles.

### **Communication within the Church- 1%**

The main focus seems to be that the board needs to communicate with the members of the congregation better. Some people feel that transparency is something the board lacks. Moreover, the way in which the church communicates seems to need some reconsideration. The consensus appears to be that this lacks in effectiveness and that different modes need to be utilized in order to reach a wider audience. One suggestion is social and multimedia. Like culture, being a welcoming group of people to newcomers is something that should be the focus of the church.

### **Culture- 7%**

The importance of going out and helping the wider community as a whole through volunteerism is something the congregations needs to incorporate more. This will take different forms such as having radio and TV to broadcast our message. Another method is to create an elevator speech. In addition, creating a space that is welcoming for new people is a focus; since at times we are not as embracing as we could. Financially, there needs a wider population of people that contributes to the church annually since there is a feeling that only 20% of the total church population is giving.

### **Finances- 4%**

We hope congregants value the church enough to want to pledge generously. Our current operations are constrained by our own budget. If we are able to increase our pledges, then we will be able to do so much more (in terms of faith formation programming, scholarships, music programming, staffing and outreach). But more money is needed to achieve all of this. We also should look at growing the endowment. Pledging and giving to the endowment should be made more accessible, so congregants realize you do not need to be a millionaire to give and make a difference.

### **Growth- 4%**

Having seen progress, many congregants expressed considerable optimism for future growth, believing that *if we build it, they will come*. Thus, rather than wait for an increased membership before we begin to function as a larger church (providing a greater variety of offerings, going to two services, etc.), just start doing these things and we will become more attractive to a wider range of potential members. In a similar vein, the suggestion was repeatedly made that rather than hope a greater diversity of people happens to stumble upon us, we should take more active steps in reaching out to them.

### **Interaction within the Church- 4%**

The idea behind interaction within the church stems from involvement of others. The big focuses were really called upon the members of the church. Overall, we are looking for more church wide activities. We are really looking for people to contribute through attendance, music, and spending time with one another in activities that make us

unique. We are also requesting a larger presence of young adults by placing more young adults in leadership and giving them the space and voice to develop as a leader within the church. We want young adults to be more present on committees and find ways for them to develop relationships across generations to keep connection.

### **Parking- 3%**

Given the reality that we are in a land-locked historic district, we have to get creative with parking, most likely in the form of scouring all possibilities for parking and unifying them into a larger plan. Even a concerted effort to maximize parking will likely fall short, thus necessitating some form of shuttle van or bus to bring people to church, particularly those with mobility problems. In addition, a van would allow for more options to bring the church into the community.

### **Programs- 1%**

We as a congregation hope to include children in a much broader way within the congregation through many mediums. One is having different types of services where the needs of all congregants especially kids are met. Similar to this, incorporating families with children in the way the service is structured and when Sunday church school occurs are topics that should be discussed in further detail. As for adults, programs of a wider variety like breakfast before church and having programs at different times so more people can attend are things that were brought up. To end, conflict resolution a topic that has been heard throughout the congregation by various people needs to have a better resolution process for when issues do come up.

### **Property- 19%**

A wish to make the building more visually welcoming was noted, particularly in the form of making it clear exactly where the “correct” entrance is. One frequent hope was that the floorplan could be creatively reconfigured to make it more conducive to easy movement within the building. While working on the floor plan, we want to make sure that our atmosphere is friendly and welcoming to all. We can do this through play spaces made in and out of the church. Another way for us to be welcoming is to make sure that we have the space to match the capacity of our growing church and programs. We need to increase the size of the rooms so that our meeting spaces feel comfortable as opposed to cramped. In doing this, we would also be able to become a greener sanctuary through updates made.

### **Staff and Volunteers- 6%**

Our future as a well-run congregation rests in staff and volunteer hands. We are looking for authentic and meaningful trainings across all teams and committee to be affective volunteers. We would also like to grow our staff. We want to make sure it is scaled correctly to our size and would love to include an outreach minister who can go into the community as well as have student ministers come and serve with us.

### **Team and Committee Goals and Development- 7%**

Our church is run through these teams and committees. We want to make sure that our volunteers have goals that are achievable and attainable. We are looking for organization. We want to make sure that we also have goals to push towards and reach for so that we may truly live to our mission. The overall feel of this section is for “more”. More volunteers, more visibility, more action. We are also looking for really strong staff development so that our minister can have a deep bench of support as her time continues with us.

### **Training, Education, and Spiritual Development- 8%**

We want a church that has a very strong faith formation program. We would like to see more programs for adult faith formation. Whether it be ROPES for adults or teaching us more about our own faith. We really want to delve into what it means to be an adult of UU faith. We also want to see our CYFF programs grow. We want to raise leaders who have a vision for positive change in our community. We can do this through working with kids and bringing them into services earlier so that their voices are heard.

### **Technology- 7%**

In terms of technology, we will need to embrace the use of it in the future. We need a sanctuary/rooms that fit the technology demands of our programs and meetings. This will include the use of up to date audio/visual equipment (speakers, screens, monitors, hearing assistance tools, Zoom, and live streaming tools.

### **Worship- 8%**

Worship is the core of why we attend church. The biggest focus of this topic was making sure that our future continues to have variety across all categories. We want variety in speakers, sermons, music, volunteers, etc. We would also like to see increasing numbers of people and would like to see the domino effect that this has on our congregation. With population increase, we want to see more services or ways to access services, whether it be multiple services in a week or ways to come in remotely. We want to continue our work with other churches and make sure that our connection with them continue to grow.