

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Five-Year Plan: Status Report

**Developed by the
Strategic Planning Committee**

Fall 2008



Weaving the Dream

We, the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, are a compassionate, welcoming community that promotes spiritual growth, ethical living, and social justice in our church and in the world.

Introduction

We are a very rapidly growing community with an increasing involvement in the world around us. Both of these factors make it inevitable that we must recognize and direct the changes that are taking place in UUCE. As we mature from a small, generally inward looking pastoral church to a program church with an active involvement outside ourselves, we must look closely at what our goals are, how we govern ourselves, and how we relate to the larger world.

During 2006-2007 the committee, with input from many individuals and groups within the church, developed a five-year plan for the period 2007-2012. This plan was adopted nearly unanimously at a congregational meeting in early October 2007. The plan emphasized areas that are new or changing, that need further focus, or are irregularly scheduled. It was not intended to provide detailed direction for every committee or program.

This congregation has made it clear that we want to become more involved with the broader community. To do this we must nourish attitudes and structures that will make this possible. This will involve substantial change in our programs and the infrastructure needed to support them.

In preparing this status report the Strategic Planning committee has solicited comments from many individuals, groups and committees representing the breadth of the church's activities. These comments have been summarized, and are available on the church's website.

What the committee is presenting today is a report on what progress we have made, and, particularly, areas where more efforts is needed, together with minor revisions and corrections to the plan, reflecting comments received during the last few months.

Revising Our Five-Year Plan

Mission/Vision

In some ways the most important part of our review is a serious examination of our Mission Statement and an evaluation of our vision for UUCE: Who are we, what are we called to do, and who are our neighbors?

It is important that our activities are in accordance with our mission. It has been more than three years since we snapped a picture of our dreams in the DreamCatcher sessions in which many of you participated. It is time to do more self-examination, and doing it with our settled minister will help us all to be in healthy dialogue, and to learn from and about each other. The UUA and PNWD suggest that a congregation's mission statement

be updated at least every 3-5 years. It has been more than 5 years since we last agreed on the current mission statement. An update exercise is also scheduled in 2011-2012.

As the UUCE congregation continues to mature, we expect to find that our focus will move from looking inward to the joy of giving to the larger community. One of the ways we reach out to others is through focused Social Action projects. Another is through Adult RE. Another is learning to learn – both from those much like us and from those with different values. All of this is part of “program maturity” – finding what we as a congregation are called upon to do or be in the world. We will be engaged in this process more and more.

STATUS: No structure is in place to carry out this vital process.

Programs

We have tried to include some programs that we believe are growing and changing at this time, particularly those that appear likely to require expansion of staff and facilities and are clearly aligned with our stated mission. Continuing development of church lay leadership is also critical. Social Justice and Adult RE continue to be priorities this year. Our Music Ministry has been in a period of rapid growth, and this could be a propitious time to look at the music program to articulate a vision for what the program is and could be for this church. Although not included in the chart, we are aware that our membership is active and doing great things.

STATUS: The past year has seen the emergence of CUUPS and Interweave, the Care Committee, development of the Pastoral Associates, an energized Social Justice focus, expanded Adult Programs, and increased coordination among many groups and committees.

Program Staff

UUCE is clearly poised for continued growth. To provide the level of programming desired by most congregations the UUA recommendations are for 1.5 FTE program staff members for each 100 active adults. This congregation needs to decide what the required skills sets are for the program staff based on our identified needs and desired direction. Currently our program staff is well below UUA recommended levels for a church of our size. Even at current membership levels a more appropriate number would be the equivalent of more than 5.0 FTE program staff. We have increasing numbers of member volunteers, but we need additional paid staff to help our church become a more meaningful presence, both in the lives of our members and in our community. Over the course of the next five years we propose increasing administrative staff, expanding the position of the Director of Music, adding a Volunteer Coordinator, an Assistant or Associate Minister and begin planning for a Ministerial Internship position.

STATUS: The Director of Music has been increased to 0.75 FTE, and administrative staff positions have been realigned. The 2008-2009 budget includes no provision for a

Volunteer Coordinator, nor are structures in place to plan for creation of additional staff positions.

Lay leadership

Our future depends on the development of strong lay leadership for the church. This needs to be a major focus over the next few years. Newer members will move into leadership positions and our present leaders will learn new skills and take on new responsibilities. As programs grow, even with increased professional staff, we will see increased need to expand our leadership pool. Our planning must create mechanisms to provide training for this vital leadership.

STATUS: It has been suggested that an expanded Nominating Committee could become into a for leadership development. No further action has been taken.

Facilities

As the result of the May 2007 vote to seek a new location for UUCE, a Building Project Oversight Committee has been created, with working groups focusing on building needs, site acquisition, and financing. We anticipate that a capital campaign will be launched during 2008-2009, with a goal of relocating to an expanded facility within the next two to four years.

STATUS: The Building Project Oversight Committee and its working groups has actively pursued a variety of options, and provided updates to the congregation at frequent intervals.

Financial/Stewardship

Stewardship is more than just a financial contribution. *Stewardship means taking care of the things we value and enabling them to grow.* It calls us to take responsibility and to make a contribution of our time, talent, and treasure. Beyond our financial support, stewardship calls for us to serve on committees, volunteer in the community, care for our physical facilities, and contribute our skills and energy to doing the work of the church.

The higher level of commitment and involvement found in a program church will also require a higher level of stewardship. The programs we envision require additional staffing and greater involvement of all of us. The financial challenges will be significant, but no more important than our greater personal involvement. We have every confidence that UUCE will willingly step forward to meet them.

STATUS: The level of commitment and involvement in UUCE activities is remarkable. Programs have been substantially expanded as a result. However, although the 2008-2009 budget shows a significant increase over the previous year, it is not sufficient to provide the Volunteer Coordinator position called for by our five-year plan.

Membership

In the recent past UUCE has added between 25 and 30 new members in both fall and spring of each year. While we have also lost members through moving or leaving the

church for other reasons, our total membership has increased by an average of 20 in each of the last eleven years, and we believe there is no reason to expect that this will change in the near future. If anything, we believe the membership estimates for the next five years are conservative. A new, larger sanctuary will likely result in even greater increases in membership. In the meantime, we need to work to ensure that new members are welcomed and incorporated into our community.

STATUS: Our continued growth indicates that UUCE is to a degree meeting the needs of our community. Expansion of the number of children in our Religious Education programs should be part of our effort. We need to re-evaluate our Mission and Vision statements to ensure that this continues to meet our community's needs.

SUMMARY: While significant progress has been made in some areas, we have not begun more clearly define our mission and vision, or to create the structures necessary to meet our expressed goals, particularly in the area of paid staff and development of lay leadership.

Respectfully submitted to the Congregation by the Strategic Planning Committee:

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