

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – MAY 20 – A VOTE FOR OUR FUTURE

On May 20 after the second service, our congregation will vote on the following resolution.
A simple majority vote (over 50% of at least a quorum) is needed to pass the resolution.

THE RESOLUTION:

“The Congregation of UUCE resolves to vigorously pursue finding and obtaining a new location for our physical church in accord with our principles.”

Why the Strategic Planning Committee endorses a “YES” vote on the resolution:

Your Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) recommended this resolution to the Board of Trustees, who placed it on the agenda for the May 20 Congregational Meeting.

The SPC believes our church will be best served by finding a new location. We have outgrown our present building and site. Our current church building has housed our congregation for over 45 years. We want our new building and site to serve the congregation for at least the next 50 years. We believe it is part of our charge to pass along the church – which is so much more than its building – in better shape than we found it, to people we do not know and people not yet born.

This beautiful building is in many ways near the end of its useful life. To stay even the same size, we would have to undertake many major renovations and remodeling, or raze it and build new. We need to have the space we need for worship, children and adult RE, gatherings, meetings, and offices, as well as the necessities: adequate kitchen, bathrooms, library, and storage. For the number of people we are now and even more for the people we will be, we require a much larger building. If we doubled or tripled our facility size by renovating on site, we would have a totally different building, barely recognizable to those of us who love it now.

The best way to preserve our beloved building will be to pass it on to another congregation or group of the right size to use it and who will rehabilitate and cherish it.

If we built a new building on this site, we would max out the site. We would destroy the present building and change this natural environment that we cherish in order to turn it into space we can use, and we would have no space left to grow. To invest all the money, time and effort in

a new building that cannot accommodate more new UUs is not prudent stewardship. It fails to match our values of aesthetic setting, environmental sustainability, and being a welcoming congregation.

We believe we can find a new site – land or an existing building – that will meet our needs and match our values. We will be able to use “green” building criteria in site selection and construction or remodeling. We will be able to create a uniquely beautiful building of an appropriate size to welcome all who want to join our denomination. The design can be flexible enough to meet our needs – imagined and unimagined.

As an example, meeting rooms, classrooms, and social hall could be designed adjacent to one another, allowing for flexible combinations into infrequently needed large areas. A larger space will allow our congregation to host events important to the larger community. A more central location will reduce our environmental footprint and make us more accessible to communities we want to involve in our activities. Not least, given the total costs and inconveniences of occupying a building during construction, we can continue to use our existing building while constructing or remodeling a new church facility on a different site.

What a “YES” vote means:

In essence, a “YES” vote is a mandate to look for a property other than the one we now occupy that will meet our current and future needs.

By passing this resolution, we commit ourselves as a church to a serious, vigorous search for the best new location we can find. We want a location in accord with our values, which include that it be centrally located and accessible to public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrians. We want it to be beautiful and

environmentally sensitive. We expect to build or remodel with “green” principles in the forefront, including but not limited to energy efficiency and use of environmentally and socially benign materials. We expect to look at lifespan costs and efficiencies. Many of us will be actively engaged in the search for the best location, whether that is bare land, a portion of a larger development (which could offer benefits such as shared parking), or an existing structure that can be renovated.

When the best new location we can find is identified, we will have another congregational meeting and vote whether to purchase a specific site. A property purchase decision will take a super-majority vote of the congregation. We hope that a purchase decision could take place next year. The present vote, on May 20, 2007, is a vote to proceed in that direction, and takes only a simple majority.

SPC Recommendation:

The members of the Strategic Planning Committee, some of whom have been working regularly and intensely on this issue for over three years, unanimously support this resolution.

Strategic Planning Committee Members:

Linda Anson, Larry Cummings, Betty Hosokawa, Elliot McIntire, Gretchen Miller, Diane Wooldridge, Bonnie Phipps (*ex officio*)

Just a few FAQ's:

Not everyone has been able to attend all of the past cottage meetings SPC has held in the past two years to inform the congregation. Much of that information can be found in our five reports to the congregation, which are available both in the pamphlet rack and on line at

www.uueugene.org/SPC.html

We have included a few key “Frequently Asked Questions” below:

Why can't we build a parking garage or underground parking facility? Cost and aesthetics. The cost for structured parking is \$70 per square foot. Surface parking is \$8 per square foot. Underground parking would require venting and an elevator. Construction would destroy the surface vegetation. Parking garages tend not to be particularly attractive and would impact the neighbor's view. All significant alterations to the existing site would require approval from the neighborhood.

How many parking spaces do we really need? Actual counts during this church year have shown we have a full lot (58 vehicles), plus another 100 cars parked off street for our second services. As we continue to grow the need will increase. The architect's schematic design was based on city code requirements, which requires 120 spaces for a sanctuary seating 350. This is clearly inadequate even now. With future growth the parking crunch would become much worse. As attendance rises to 350 at the largest service, we will require at least 210 parking spaces if we make no changes to our transportation practices and continue to have two services. If we reduced vehicle usage to 2/3 of present levels – if an additional 1/3 of attendees arrived without their own car – we would need 140 spaces. One thing we know for certain is that easily available parking has a direct impact on church growth – it is another way we make visitors feel welcome.

Why can't we park at Safeway? The building owner is amenable to a short term agreement, but is not interested in writing the long term lease we would need.

Would we lose all of the trees if we stayed at our current site? Most of the natural area would be covered by the new building and parking, leaving very few trees.

Why not split into 2 churches? The number one priority expressed by the congregation in the Dream Catcher meetings is staying together as one community. In addition, successful splits in this district have all involved large “mother” churches whose current membership (after splitting) numbers at least twice our current membership. We currently have 361 members. That means we would have to have over 1200 members right now. A church smaller than about 300 will have difficulty supporting a professional staff, and will offer fewer programs. In the Dream Catcher meetings, the congregation told us we want more programs and that we value a professional staff. Also, the “sending congregation” must commit to sending many of the hardest working, most organized and dedicated people to start the new church, helping it find a location and build or renovate, and get started. The sending church must financially support the receiving church for a number of years.