

President's Report March 18, 2010

Fellow Trustees,

The Monitoring Committee took your thoughtful feedback from the last meeting and revised the draft congregation survey. We rethought our approach and moved from seeing the survey as simply intending to monitor how we are doing with our ends policy to being a transition between the work the Senior Minister search committee did and an ongoing monitoring survey. We hope we met your intent. However, as we made the revisions we were not clear on the intended approach to the first questions regarding the ends statement. As a result we created two versions which divide the parts in different ways. The committee favors the shorter version but in order for you to see which version you prefer, to see what you think of other changes, and to give us feedback on how it worked for you to actually complete the survey, **before the meeting** please go to:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BKSFXBT> and

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GPNRXMZ>

The second version is the same as the first except that it has divided the first questions into more parts. After that point the surveys are the same. Please note you can also copy the surveys and bring them to the meeting if you wish. I am not attaching copies.

You will see on the agenda an item regarding General Assembly delegate issues. A number of things are happening with this but only one is our issue to deal with in my opinion. For background you should know, if you already don't, that the Nominating Committee didn't realize that it was their responsibility to nominate delegates to GA. Thanks to a memo from Jenny Thomas a conversation about the nomination process got started and the committee is now starting to deal with it. There has been some thought by the committee chair that the Board should be involved in picking delegates or in setting the criteria for selecting delegates. I have resisted that effort since under the bylaws it is the committee's responsibility just as it is with other leadership positions.

However, in one of the emails that went around as part of this larger discussion, David Lauth stated his opinion that we should educate the congregation about the issues that will be voted on at GA, adopt congregation positions on those, and instruct delegates to vote in accordance with the congregation's adopted positions. This has not been past practice in recent years. I am not personally inclined to change the practice regarding not taking congregational positions and not requiring delegates to vote those positions but I am also not comfortable just letting things go as they have in the past without at least some Board discussion. If we intend to change the practice I think we should decide that at this meeting so we can notify the congregation and gear up a greater education effort than we might have done otherwise.

Barry

Board of Trustees Meeting
March 18, 2010
Agenda

- 6:30 Gather
 - Chalice lighting and opening words - Justin
- 6:40 Consent Agenda
 - Approve February minutes
 - Approve new members
- 6:40 Review the Past
 - Sr. Minister report
 - Financial monitoring report
 - Second Question of the Month update
- 6:55 Create the Future
 - 6:55 Congregation Survey
 - Action: Approve survey
 - 7:10 Space Issues Feedback
 - Action: Decide next steps
 - 7:45 Sr. Minister Ends Policy Interpretation
 - Action: Provide feedback
 - 8:10 GA Delegate Issues
 - Action: Determine voting approach
- 8:20 Meeting Summary and Evaluation: Decisions review, action items & assignments
- 8:25 Closing - Justin
- 8:30 Adjourn

Attachments:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. President's Report | 6. Finance Reports |
| 2. Attendance Report | 7. Radical Hospitality Summary |
| 3. Senior Minister's Report | 8. Community Connection Report |
| 4. Report of the Staff Management Team | 9. Memo on space issues |
| 5. Statistical Report | 10. Ends Policy Information |
- Next meeting: Thursday, April 15

February Attendance						2010			2009			2008			2007
Adults				9:00 AM	11:00 AM		9:00 AM	11:00 AM		9:00 AM	11:00 AM		9:00 AM	11:00 AM	
1st Week	167	305	472	120	288	408	148	282	430	143	278	421			
2nd Week	136	287	423	190	450	640	94	302	396	125	349	474			
3rd Week	188	408	596	104	303	407	150	398	548	139	298	437			
4th Week	209	491	700	132	287	419	127	247	374	47	126	173			
Monthly Total	700	1491	2191	546	1328	1874	519	1229	1748	454	1051	1505			
Avg for Feb	175	372.75	547.75	137	332	469	130	307	437	114	263	376			
Church School															
1st Week	69	181	250	60	196	256	67	131	198	61	111	172			
2nd Week	58	68	126	90	210	300	47	51	98	97	65	162			
3rd Week	91	165	256	66	179	245	75	112	187	80	108	188			
4th Week	92	174	266	72	61	133	63	117	180	27	54	81			
Monthly Total	310	588	898	288	646	934	252	411	663	265	338	603			
Avg for Feb	77.5	147	224.5	72	162	234	63	103	166	66	84.5	151			
Combined Avg	252.5	519.75	772.25			703			603			527			

Notes:

1st Week Leon Duckley
2nd Week Youth Service
3rd Week Rev Schroeder
4th Week Rev Tucker

Church School Notes:

2nd Week No RE 5th and 6th Grade (Youth Sunday)
4th Week Sleepover Saturday night with RE Families, More adults because of 7th Grade trip to GFMB
All Senior High Attendance is missing for Feb

Growth as a Spiritual Issue:

Three weeks ago, I was in Santa Barbara, at the Senior Ministers of Large UU Churches Conference (<http://www.smoluuc.org/>). We were joined by Rev. Peter Morales, the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, as well as Stefan Jonasson, the Director for Large Congregations for the UUA. Stefan reported that the collective growth this past year among the largest UU churches (550 members or larger) was a grand total of *three* people. Overall, Unitarian Universalists as a whole *lost* members (there are probably many reasons for this, one of them being the economy; if people have lost jobs and can't fulfill a pledge, they often step away from the church.) After receiving this discouraging news from Stefan, Peter Morales reminded us that on average each Sunday, across the United States, our 1000 Unitarian Universalist churches have a total of about 5000 visitors, 5 per church. Over the course of the year, collectively, we have a quarter of a million people who visit our churches. Almost all of them have found us online and believe we might offer them something meaningful. How many of them stay? How many discover that how we've "sold" ourselves on the website is different than how we are in practice? People are interested in our churches and they come every single Sunday, hoping to find love, hope, a nourishing word, a community that invites them into deeper life. And mostly, given our shrinking numbers, they don't seem to find it! I find this heart-breaking.

It's true that we do have some thriving and growing churches in our association, as Peter Morales writes in this month's issue of the UU World (<http://uuworld.org/life/articles/158390.shtml>), but far too many Unitarian Universalist churches are lifeless or in maintenance mode, and visitors can feel that.

I am clear that First Universalist has a different destiny. We are a vibrant, growing, energized church, only beginning to realize the untapped potential we have. I believe that First Universalist has the capacity to be a flagship church in our association, as we become a teaching congregation, begin to share programming and small group resources with other UU churches, model generosity, and strengthen our connections in the community.

Lately, I've been telling the staff that "a thriving church is always in transition." This is true because 1) a thriving church dreams about new and life changing ways it can live out its mission and vision, both internally and externally (and as Barry says, part of the Ministers and Boards work is help the congregation dream about new things! ("Congregations do some of their best work when, instead of giving people what they want, they teach them to want something different."), 2) a thriving church takes financial and spiritual risks in order to fulfill its mission and vision, and, 3) because new people are constantly coming into the church, it is never static; new member's energy, vision, and passion fuel new initiatives and ideas. The church is on the move.

First Universalist is a thriving, healthy, strong church, and I believe we could be a 1200-1500 member church within 10 years. (Or perhaps we could be a 1500 member multi-site church.) But the truth is, I'm not interested in growth for growth's sake. Simply put, I believe in the power of our Unitarian Universalist faith. I believe that we offer a distinctly unique way of being religious (connected by shared values rather than by creed), and that there are thousands of people in the Twin Cities community that are hungry for a faith that can feed both their head and heart and tend to their children, as well. When they come to our faith community (as they are doing!), I believe we have a moral obligation to make room for them, to "welcome the stranger."

I believe that our governing documents (Mission, Vision, and End Statements) all point toward growth (of spirit, faith, outreach, and yes, numerical), but I am in agreement with Barry that our Mission and Ends Statement might need to be re-imagined and clearer. And in the midst of all this conversation, it's critical to remember that growth is a spiritual

journey, and it means being uncomfortable, open to change, willing to dream and think outside the box, willing to serve something bigger than ourselves, and asking the hard questions.

I feel blessed to serve a church that is willing to seriously engage these questions, to dream about the future we hope to see, and then to move boldly toward that future.

Changing the Worship Service Times:

The staff and I have been exploring various options for when we might offer our Worship Services, beginning in the fall. The issues leading to this conversation have been twofold: 1) The attendance at the 11am service has been 2 to 2.5 times greater than the 9am service (425 people at 11am, 150-200 at 9am) and 2) Religious Education numbers are 2 to 2.5 times greater at 11am (200+ at 11am vs. 70-80 at 9am).

This is a significant imbalance and church literature suggests that when a service is 70%-80% full, which the 11am service is, that it feels "full" to guests, and the implicit message is that "there isn't room for me here." Thus, we need to achieve a better balance between the two services.

After considering a variety of possibilities and talking to a number of colleagues, we've decided that we will move toward the following in the fall: 1) changing the worship service times to 9:30am and 11:30am, 2) capping enrollment in Religious Education classes at both 9:30am and 11:30am (to help create an equal distribution of children and youth between the two services), and 3) renting 1 or 2 classroom "pods" that we would probably put in the parking lot by the playground. These could hold several classes. Furthermore, depending on how these changes work, we might add donuts, bagels, and other treats at the 9:30 am service.

These changes are grounded in the belief that First Universalist has a "saving message," that this faith community changes people's lives, and that the church itself wants to grow (i.e., to "share the Universalist message of love and hope."

Desired outcomes: Have 250-300 people at each service (so each service could grow by 100-150 before being "full"), and have about 200 children/youth at each service.

Request: We have given this many hours of thought, and believe this to be the best option. I would welcome the Board's questions and reflections on these changes. In the coming weeks, I'll begin to meet with various church members and groups to invite them into the conversation.

Parking Update: Beginning in March, both the choir and staff who are here on Sunday have been asked to not park in the parking lot on Sunday mornings. Given that we only have 70 parking spots in our lot, staff and choir easily takes up half of the spots on Sunday morning. I am grateful that the choir and staff are willing to park on the street. This summer, we plan to add more "Visitor Parking Spots," "Limited Mobility Parking Spots," and a clearly designated "drop off" area in the parking lot, for families and others. We'll also promote alternative transportation (post bus routes on website, explore getting discount bus tickets, etc.)

Raffle Update: Patti and I have been in conversation about a doing a raffle in the Spring of 2011. We've learned some good lessons from the previous raffle, and believe that we could raise \$15,000 or more on this raffle. Top prizes would include electric scooters and bikes (although we understand we might able to get a good deal on a Prius right now. Collision insurance not provided!) Seriously, though, we know from church literature that people give from "multiple pockets," i.e. people will make a pledge, will support a particular fundraiser,

and give to certain projects if asked. Plus, there was a lot of interest and energy around the last raffle.

Social Hall Update: (Heidi wrote this report and is point person for this project.) This winter, through a study of how our spaces were serving the needs of all of our congregants, from newcomer to long-time member, staff decided to look carefully at how the Social Hall was serving the congregation as a place to make deeper social connections on Sunday mornings.

The Social Hall has long been a less-than-optimal space for newcomers to engage and connect with the community. From hidden coffee lines to poor acoustics, cold spaces to storage and stockpiling, many changes have been needed for a long time.

In my work with new and long term congregants, I consistently hear from people who will not go into the Social Hall. It is overwhelming and hard to navigate. It can make outsiders feel more like outsiders, kids get lost behind the knees of adults, and most importantly it is a place where the true intent of our church is not apparent. For example, we sell lightbulbs and eggrolls, but a newcomer has to figure out where the office is to sign up for RE. The addition of the Welcome Table was good, yet it is one more layer of busy-ness and chaos added to an already overwhelming space. In addition, some of our other spaces on the lower-level (lower narthex, welcome center, atrium) were being underutilized.

We have created a workplan to renovate and redecorate the Social Hall, Chalice Room, and lower level of the Sanctuary wing. In September 2010 we will have a dramatically different space. Here are some highlights:

1. All information and sales tables will be moved to the Chalice Room.
2. Chalice Room windows will get coverings to soften that space.
3. Textiles will be hung to soften the space of both the Chalice Room and Social Hall.
4. The children's nursery area will be moved to the stage with a removable "retaining" wall installed.
5. The only table in the social hall will be staffed as a welcome center.
6. Soft conversation areas with appropriate furnishings will be established in three areas of the Social Hall and Chalice Room.
7. The Welcome Center will become a church bookstore.
8. We will add three additional coffee stations staffed with greeters.
9. The wall in front of the coffee window will be removed.
10. Nametag stations will be installed in the Lower Narthex, signs will be made so visitors know where to get their needs met.

Our next step is to work with the appropriate lay leaders to make these changes. Welcome Teams, BAG and SPIFF will be major players in these changes. The church community will be informed, as some groups have staked a claim to particular areas of the Social Hall. We are thrilled at the potential that these changes have in making the Social Hall a welcome place for all.

Pledge Campaign Report: (Please see Patti Frazee's notes in the financial report.) Again, I want to thank the Board for your collective leadership role in the pledge campaign. It has made a real difference.

**Report from the Management Team
March 2010**

**Staff Goal #1/ Strategic Outcome #2: Build/Strengthen
Community Connections**

Pledge Campaign

Our “Grow.Act.Love.” Pledge Campaign was designed to build community connections with three events with themes around money. The Ross Levin/Justin Schroeder discussion called “Your Money Life” focused on values and money. (26 people were in attendance.) On March 12, there will be an intergenerational event with the showing of the movie "Millions." On March 27, Ruth Hayden will present a workshop entitled “Money and Giving; Living Regret-Free.” On March 28, we will celebrate our success as a community with the unveiling of a beautiful, permanent sculpture in the Atrium and a prize drawing for all households who have turned in their pledge card.

Sermon-Based Small Groups: Planning is underway for a short summer session (3 meetings). Also, we are considering how to integrate small groups and new member development, with small groups designed just for new members. The idea of other "life stage" groups is also being explored.

Staff Goal #2/ Strategic Outcome #2: Integrate Faith in Action

This is ongoing work, part of it about continuing to implement the Compass Plan, part of it about narrowing the focus so that the church can do one or two high impact initiatives, and part of it about encouraging all church members to participate in a sermon based small group (because the skills of deep listening and reflecting are essential for justice work/faith in action work.)

**Staff Goal #3/ Strategic Outcome #2: Help People Move
Toward Spiritual Maturity**

**Staff Goal #4/ Strategic Outcome #1 & 2: Set Quantifiable
Baselines of Participation**

Tracking of all church programs and space use is ongoing.

**Staff Goal #5: Gather baseline information about building
Usage**

Lily Franz, RE administrative assistant, continues to track all building usage and numbers. The staff has been involved in detailed conversation about Sunday usage as we consider changing service times to 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., respectively.

Staff Goal #6/ Strategic Outcome #1: Strengthen programming for visitors - first year of membership

The “What We’re About Class” is now being offered twice a month for visitors and those wanting learn more about the church. The ministers intentionally connect with all new members before the “joining ceremony,” welcoming them, getting to know them, and acknowledging the significance of their membership. We’re in the process of creating “small groups” specifically designed for new members; these groups would meet for three sessions, and then new members would be invited to join a sermon based small group.

Staff Goal #7/ Strategic Outcome #2 & 5: Develop a culture of shared service and ministry at First Universalist

Justin continues to meet with Cindy Marsh to reflect on his leadership, staff leadership, and how the church can develop a leadership track in the future. We’re planning to offer a leadership retreat (for all church leaders) in the fall of 2010.

**First Universalist Church
Statistical Report
March 18, 2010**

MEMORIAL SERVICES:

MARRIAGES/SERVICES OF COMMITMENT:

MEMBERS FOR APPROVAL:

Jeremy and Megan Maynor, Edina
Marian and Tony Santucci, Minneapolis
Michael Butler and Susanna Drake, Roseville
Nancy H. Jones, St. Louis Park

MEMBERS FOR REMOVAL:

	To Date	End of Year Totals			
MEMBERS	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
(Fiscal Year)	44	72	41	63	92
TOTAL MEMBERS:	825	840	824	845	885

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF THE LAST MEETING: 825

To be added: 7

To be removed: 0

TOTAL MEMBERS: 832

Report from the Director of Administration

March 11, 2010

We are in the middle of our pledge campaign and looking forward to two more events and the final celebration on March 28. As of this writing, the pledge numbers are as follows:

Current total of 2010-11 pledges: \$392,226.

New Pledges for 2010-11 (which qualify for the matching dollars): \$8,350

We have heard from 37% of the 09-10 pledging households.

Overall, there is a 14% increase in pledges over last year.

Pledge Report

Data as of February 28, 2010

	# of Pledge Units	Annual Budgeted	Current Projected	Rec'd to Date	Last Yr to date
Pledges	544	\$753,000.00	\$752,205.84	\$496,357.94	\$493,892.08
New Member Pledges	22	\$25,000.00	\$11,501.67	\$6,065.00	\$4,782.02
Contingency for Unpaid Pledges*	n/a	-\$20,000.00	-\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Totals	561	\$758,000.00	\$743,707.51	\$502,422.94	\$498,674.10

* Shortfall built into 09-10 budget to account for any unpaid pledges, lost pledges, etc.

Statement of Financial Position Summary

February 2010

	Balance as of 7/1/2009	Balance Last Month	Balance as of 2/28/2010	Year to Date Change
Assets:				
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	58,071.49	96,705.98	72,955.11	14,883.62
RECEIVABLES/PREPAYS	6,206.23	0.00	0.00	(6,206.23)
INCOME RECEIVABLE	772,997.44	312,660.85	270,728.43	(502,269.01)
PHYSICAL PLANT	2,220,750.75	2,220,750.75	2,220,750.75	0.00
RESERVE FUNDS	597,157.17	684,328.99	695,370.31	98,213.14
Total Assets:	<u>3,655,183.08</u>	<u>3,314,446.57</u>	<u>3,259,804.60</u>	<u>(395,378.48)</u>
Liabilities:				
PAYABLE/PREPAID/CARR	75,418.09	16,026.28	36,328.07	(39,090.02)
DEFERRED REVENUE	772,997.44	312,660.85	270,728.43	(502,269.01)
DEBT	759,173.21	759,173.21	759,173.21	0.00
Total Liabilities:	<u>1,607,588.74</u>	<u>1,087,860.34</u>	<u>1,066,229.71</u>	<u>(541,359.03)</u>
Net Assets:				
EQUITY	1,682,180.77	1,755,878.81	1,766,850.07	84,669.30
TEMPORARILY RESTRICT	214,387.62	252,410.97	257,208.36	42,820.74
PERMANENTLY RESTRICT	159,026.42	107,762.55	107,815.96	(51,210.46)
Current Period Changes	(8,000.47)	110,533.90	61,700.50	69,700.97
Total Net Assets:	<u>2,047,594.34</u>	<u>2,226,586.23</u>	<u>2,193,574.89</u>	<u>145,980.55</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets:	<u>3,655,183.08</u>	<u>3,314,446.57</u>	<u>3,259,804.60</u>	<u>(395,378.48)</u>

Statement of Activities Summary

February 2010

	February Actual	Year to Date Actual	Annual Budget	YTD % of Ann. Budget	Year to Date Last Year
<i>Income:</i>					
OPR. CONTRIBUTIONS	45,334.81	535,926.17	821,500.00	65.24	558,595.68
FUNDRAISERS	2,205.00	36,738.00	47,000.00	78.17	29,930.90
INTEREST	50.43	3,762.17	8,000.00	47.03	6,850.69
BUILDING USE	16,962.40	141,191.69	207,918.00	67.91	124,702.76
MISC.	3,629.52	88,650.07	120,223.15	73.74	78,406.37
R.E. DONATIONS	2,230.15	33,925.64	30,600.00	110.87	21,994.75
UNITY LEADERSHIP	0.00	49,190.02	92,315.50	53.28	0.00
<i>Total Income</i>	<u>70,412.31</u>	<u>889,383.76</u>	<u>1,327,556.65</u>	<u>66.99</u>	<u>820,481.15</u>
<i>Expense:</i>					
MINISTERS	21,085.32	162,541.02	261,545.67	62.15	155,184.78
LIFE SPAN FAITH DEV.	12,708.87	79,613.55	128,170.65	62.12	124,223.70
WORSHIP	3,904.23	29,047.51	48,210.53	60.25	33,644.22
MEMBERSHIP	3,357.07	21,572.03	37,374.00	57.72	21,391.73
DEN. CONNECTION	0.00	18,500.00	39,500.00	46.84	20,738.25
COMMUNICATIONS	5,346.02	33,909.03	50,832.00	66.71	30,368.82
FAITH IN ACTION	4,969.77	34,277.43	59,964.98	57.16	36,196.77
PASTORAL CARE	170.89	6,666.61	8,450.00	78.89	3,592.91
FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION	14,930.35	118,159.51	211,029.21	55.99	120,756.26
PROPERTIES	18,218.25	141,831.80	215,935.78	65.68	141,130.03
DEPRECIATION	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CAPITAL EXPENSE	1,315.16	16,891.87	18,200.00	92.81	19,838.42
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	7,562.31	56,007.18	88,114.00	63.56	0.00
UNITY LEADERSHIP	4,800.40	45,465.12	98,315.50	46.24	0.00
NON-OPERATING	20,877.07	60,737.13	60,454.56	100.47	39,989.17
<i>Total Expense</i>	<u>119,245.71</u>	<u>825,219.79</u>	<u>1,326,096.88</u>	<u>62.23</u>	<u>747,055.06</u>
<i>Income - Expense</i>	<u>(48,833.40)</u>	<u>64,163.97</u>	<u>1,459.77</u>	<u>4,395.48</u>	<u>73,426.09</u>

Notes/Minutes

Finance Committee Meeting of 3/4/10

Present: Patti Frazee, Dan Berg, Jill Anderson, Nancy Gaschott (notes)

1. We began with a check-in and agreed that we should institute 1 minute check-ins and also a chalice lighting to begin our meetings.

2. MAIN AGENDA ITEM. We reviewed Patti's initial draft of the 2010-2011 budget, as per the schedule in the Governing Policies Handbook, pretty much line-by-line.

Jill requested a column that would compare the budget with the current full year forecast by % increase (decrease).

This early budget includes the 'dreams' presented by Justin - an intern minister, additional staff, etc. Its ultimate form will correspond with the results of the pledge drive, of course.

The committee thanked Patti for her thorough presentation.

3. The committee's tasks and goals for the remainder of the church year. We agreed that we would (1) continue to focus on the church's Balance Sheet and (2) ensure the church's compliance with Minnesota's Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act. In particular, we plan to:

Complete a new investment policy

Complete a spending policy for the church's permanently restricted funds, with retroactive application, if necessary, requiring re-payment of capital to the restricted funds from temporarily restricted fund balances

Review and propose revisions to current gift acceptance policy

Review and propose revisions to current solicitation materials for the Legacy Fund, to clarify the purpose of the fund(s) to potential donors. Patti explained that a committee is forming to begin a Legacy Fund solicitation campaign to launch in fall 2010; we will coordinate our work with that group.

Make recommendations to the staff and board regarding the use of temporarily restricted funds that are not intended for general operations. Included in these recommendations should be (a) prudent reserve balance (b) payment schedule on the church's mortgage obligation and (c) availability of funds for needed capital items.

Summary of 61 thoughtful and often detailed responses to February's Question of the Month on Radical Hospitality

AUW as a gateway to feeling connected and welcome—mentioned by a couple of people

Building felt good to me—calming and welcoming.

- Physical challenge of more than one way in—several doors—could be hard to intercept, we still do a good job – Paul Riedesel
- Improved signage to help people find their way around the building—Chris Bremer

Feeling welcome:

- I've felt most "welcome" when invited to think, question, brainstorm, discuss ideas, in order to create or reshape a shared task... sometimes in this online forum, sometimes in committees. Karen Wills
- Sunday after Service Lunches? buttons people could wear to connect with others
-

Friendliness:

- As a group we are too serious, don't reach out. Linda Hammersten
- Nora Page spoke eloquently about our collective responsibility to reach out, to approach somebody standing or sitting alone and initiate a conversation—be the change you want to see—several people agreed

Identifying Visitors and new members:

- *The thing that really got me was the bit where visitors or new people who asked to stand (if they were comfortable) and were welcomed. I felt like I was addressed directly and properly and truly **welcomed**.* Ann (no last name)
- It would help if new members continued to wear a ribbon or something attached to their new nametag for that first year also. Bob Friedman
- Blue coffee cup or mug with smiley face for visitors—or for anybody—our shy members—who would like to be approached in the social hall—but we have to be sure everybody with a blue cup is approached! Several people are enthusiastic about this idea
- Special cup for members who are committed to being welcoming and signaling to others they are approachable Harlan Limpert
- Have volunteers to be sure everybody with a blue cup—or who wanted to go out to lunch—was connected—Chris Bremer
- Green dots in collection plate that visitors can put on to identify themselves—we did this years ago Velma Wagner

Invisibility two people commented on feeling invisible—nobody talking to them even though they have participated in a variety of activities; one person, who wishes to remain anonymous, said that she stopped coming to church during a bad period in her life and nobody noticed or called—very hurtful

Language

- Concern about how welcoming our language is, can feel patronizing—use of word "tolerance." *One example (and I hate to pick on whoever wrote this but examples are important) in the description of the Families all Matter curriculum, diverse families were described as "fine." In another example in the announcement for the meeting on "Becoming More Welcoming to Families of Color" the phrase "ethnic roots" is problematic in a number of ways, but most significant is that ALL people are ethnic, including white people. This use of the word subtly conveys a white "us" which is the church and an "other" that we'd like to invite to join "us." My point here is not to be PC and to speak "correctly" all the time, but that our language tends to expose subtle underpinnings of our belief systems.* Shannon Dahmes
- *I also found our old welcoming statement in services to be very welcoming. I'm not sure why we dropped it but I REALLY miss it. It so explicitly welcomed people, and I remember crying when I heard it the first dozen times or so because it so explicitly welcomed ME.* Norah Page
- it was something along the lines of: we strive to be a welcoming community for people of every race, gender, ethnicity, sexual or affectional orientation, age, physical or mental ability etc. etc. Shannon
- I believe that this long list of who we welcome implies that we are not, in fact, a welcoming community. We either welcome everyone or we don't. Mark Ritchie

- I remember feeling an emotional response to the old welcoming statement and miss it. I feel like what is currently said is a little too generic. Ruthann Wood
- "The foundations of our congregation are love and acceptance, open-mindedness and spiritual liberalism. If that is you, then you've come home." suggested welcoming language by Jessica
- I have observed many times that our explicit welcome -- particularly to people of all sexual orientations -- has been a VERY powerful thing. When I used to give that welcome on occasional Sundays, I saw congregants in tears. Many told me that they had NEVER been welcomed out loud for being exactly who they were. I think that this is worth reconsidering. (He opened by saying Justin gets to decide how every part of the Sunday morning service happens and he is doing a fabulous job.) David Lauth
- One little thing that can really make people feel like an outsider here is all the **acronyms**. Several people agreed with this.
- according to Karen Wills some people have left because as liberal deists, they wanted to go to a church where people didn't "flinch or wince at the word, God"—this is changing now.
- at least one easy to sing hymn in each service – Chris Bremer

New Members

- Mentor for new members—is it something that was discontinued; sounded like a great idea. Sarah Warner
- Likes idea of a sponsor for new members that she's seen in other churches. Linda Hammersten
- New member handbook? Karen Wills
- Ask new members explicitly what made them feel welcome – Chris Bremer
- Do new members get a list up front of events such as the dances, music, auction, solstice service?
- Is Cyber Coffee hour promoted to new members?

Religious Education:

- Teaching in RE makes it more difficult for adults to connect with other adults and to feel part of the community – Linda Hammersten
- Seconded by Emily Wallace-Jackson, who mentioned some of the things the RE Committee is doing to improve this
- Karen Wills says this has been a problem but is changing, mentioned a workshop on “teaching as a spiritual experience” and hoped that this would lead to exploration and sharing among teachers
- Issue of children and teenagers feeling welcome
- How does this extend to kids—how are we hospitable to kids and how do we help them to be hospitable to others—Karen Wills had several provocative questions and ideas on this issue
- Hanging the banners created by the youth every Sunday: *They are not beige. They are not safe. They are created by our youth and say that we value their input not "as the future of the church" but as full participants right now. . . they are the work of our church.* Kelli Clement

Small group involvement is invaluable

- Sarah Warner mentioned Foundations of Our Faith Sarah Warner
- Linda Hammersten described another large church in which everybody is part of a small group that meets on Sunday mornings
- Anonymous statement about the value of small groups, especially the stitchers group
- Ditto re sermon based small groups—Denise Konen
- Need more things for men Chris Bremer
- Choir as her as primary lens—Jan introduces new members, feels welcoming, no name tags—Sue Schiess

Social Hall

- feels intimidating to shy newcomers—the only place she has a hard time feeling welcome. Sarah Warner
- Welcome table makes a big difference to newcomers Ruthann Wood

Board of Trustees Community Connection

Men's Action Group

Tim Balke

3. How does your committee or group relate to visitors or new members? How do you think about them in terms of your mission or purpose? What is your group's role, or what would you like it to be, in creating a welcoming, inclusive presence for newcomers? How do you know that—what kind of feedback have you received or would like to receive from visitors or new members?

The four men of the Men's Action Group with whom I met had the following insights about the above question:

- One of the members (who wasn't at the meeting) said in an email that the question "is somewhat irrelevant to me;"
- The men like the idea of the sermon-based discussion groups as a way to be welcoming and to go "deeper" in forming relationships;
- The men question the idea of "forcing" action to make it more welcoming for newcomers. Instead, they suggested that the process happens "naturally" if it is supposed to;
- The men talked about needing "inspiration from the leadership" to be more welcoming;
- One man talked of giving new members a list of activities, which are held throughout the year, that the new members could attend, even going so far as saying to give the new members "free passes" to six of the events;
- The men want the "personal stories" to be given throughout the whole church year and not just during the pledge campaign;
- Have buttons ("or bright orange vests" – one member joked) that visitors could wear so that existing members could talk with them;
- Some members said they'd like the building to be better maintained which would make the newcomers feel more welcomed. (I heard from a different member (not a part of the Men's Action Group) that she gave a tour of the building to a friend of hers, and the friend said, "Boy, the building isn't that clean.");
- Discussion came up about the Capital Campaign and some folks feeling "duped" because they thought other improvements to the building were promised and then the money went to bring parts of the building up to code;
- It was interesting that some of the discussion went back to the question from last month about the building. Discussion was about: have mobiles in the sanctuary to help with acoustics and make it look "less like a hospital." Also, the men suggested having the 4-6 graders make mosaics to put in the sanctuary every month;
- Again, the building discussion was about making it feel more welcoming to everyone (including newcomers) in the church;
- I got the sense that this group wasn't open to others joining it because of the support (and safety they've developed) they get from the few men already in it.

**Draft
Agenda Attachment
Space Issues
March 18, 2010**

At our last meeting we had a very good discussion of the information received so far in regard to our first question of the month. I heard three main threads in that discussion – long range planning, short term/immediate building improvement needs, and the possibility/desirability of church growth. My hope is that this month's discussion will move us to some action steps in regard to some or all of these issues.

Long Range Planning

There seemed to be general agreement that doing long range planning would be a good idea. Consequently my first suggestion is that we create a long range planning committee and draft a charge to that committee that describes what we wish from it and when. In general I see the purpose of this committee as developing background information that we and the congregation can use as input to decision-making about our future. I don't see the committee making recommendations about future directions we should take, only giving us information to help guide decisions. I think this would be a committee that reports to the Board but is composed of non-Board members except for one Board person to serve as a link.

The committee could collect current and forthcoming census information, available surveys such as our own church surveys or wider ones like the Pew Trust survey on religion in America. This would give us a sense of how local and national trends may affect our future. This information could help tell us, not only what possibilities exist for growth, but how the nature and needs of the population may be changing.

The committee could also collect information about the factors that affect church growth and so gain a sense of those things that are within our power to control. Justin can help educate the committee in this area.

With this information the committee might then construct some scenarios to help illustrate to the Board and congregation some possible alternative futures that we could react to. At this point the Board could initiate a second process of strategic planning to identify the future we want to move toward and the actions that will be needed to get us to that future.

Immediate Building Issues

The congregation feedback received so far has given us a list of things that might be addressed in the building and I'm sure we could all add things to that list. Some of the problems cited are big issues that need to be considered in light of our long term vision. Others are immediate cleaning/maintenance issues that are already being addressed by staff. I think there is an in-between category, however, that contains items that are beyond the capability of the annual operating budget to handle but not so great that we have to have a long range plan before we can decide to deal with them.

I think the Board's role in regard to this issue is to decide if there is, in fact, such a category of in-between building issues that needs to be addressed and, if so, to support using church resources for them. It is not our role to decide what specific improvements are needed. The staff, in conjunction with church committee, should handle that.

It is my perception that we think we don't have the resources to do something like this and so non one has taken the lead to suggest it. While it is true that our operating budget is tight and that we don't have the ongoing income stream to handle all the recurring expenses we might think are necessary, we do have substantial reserves that give us the capacity to commit to one time expenditures. It is my understanding, for example, that we still have approximately \$100,000 unexpended from the last remodeling. In any case we certainly have reserves that would generally be considered more than adequate for the size of our budget. My suggestion is that we ask staff to develop a proposed amount of church reserves to be included in the 2010-2011 budget for one time capital improvements and then, if approved by the congregation, to develop a plan for the use of those funds.

Growth

This is the last thread I pulled from last month's conversation but it is in many ways the most fundamental. It is last only because I am least clear on this one.

My sense is there is an assumption among our Board that we will grow and maybe also a belief that we want to grow. Is that true? But are we comfortable that, if our long range planning shows that there is the likelihood or potential for growth, the congregation will be supportive of growth if it means increased costs and inconvenience or risks changing what they love about the church? If we're not so comfortable with that assumption should we have some plan for helping the congregation become more accepting of growth? This is a theological and mission issue that the ministers can help us understand but do we need more than pulpit talk? As Doug has pointed out before in our meetings and as Dan Hotchkiss reiterates in this month's UU World, the mission owns the church.

One of my concerns is that our mission statement isn't as clear as I would like regarding our attitude toward outreach and growth and this is one reason why I think it is important to revisit the mission statement/ends policy next year. It may be that growth is something the congregation will be totally supportive of but it also may be an area where the Board needs to lead and not just follow. There is a statement in Dan Hotchkiss's book, Governance and Ministry that I like, "Congregations do some of their best work when, instead of giving people what they want, they teach them to want something different." Do we need to do that with growth?

Possible next steps:

Long Range Planning – Create committee, direct someone to draft a charge to the committee, begin to think about how to select committee members and who would be good members.

Immediate Building Issues – adopt a motion directing staff to include in the proposed 2010-2011 budget an amount of reserves to be used for capital improvements, and if approved, to develop a plan for the use of those funds.

Growth – Other than continuing our focus on the mission and ends statements with an intent to clarify our position on outreach and growth, is there more we should be doing?

ENDS INTERPRETATION:

Background Information

I am still wrestling with Policy Governance and the exact form and shape it will take at First Universalist. That being said, in Policy Governance, Ends are not the same as mission and vision statements. Mission and vision statements can be helpful to articulate the overall organizational direction, and they can inspire and help the wider community understand the organization, but who is held accountable for achieving a mission or vision?

Under Policy Governance, the Sr. Minister, in conversation with the Board, is accountable for fulfilling the Ends Statements, not the Mission or Vision Statement. (See specifically, Section 5, "General Authority," in the Bylaws, which state: "The Board shall establish and publish Governing Policies, which shall include policies to delegate the administration of the Church, set the limits of that authority, and assure appropriate progress toward the established Ends (goals)."

Ends (and our Ends Statement) attempt to answer the question: What specific, measurable difference will be made and for whom? Under policy governance, I am held accountable by the Board for achieving the Ends. The Board monitors organizational performance to determine the degree to which end statements (and/or the strategic outcomes) are being achieved.

Well crafted ends are a key part of the Board's strategic work – to put Ends in place that then reflect the dreams of the churches "owners." When the Ends are implemented, the church moves closer to fulfilling its purpose for being.

I've made a rough go at interpreting the Ends, so there are particular measurable that might be easier to monitor. I am looking for the Board's feedback on these interpretations.

Old Ends:

As a liberal religious and spiritual home, First Universalist Church attracts, educates, nurtures and inspires people who seek:

- Comfort, meaning, and joy in our Universalist message of love and hope;
- Transformation through spiritual exploration and growth; and
- Engagement with the greater community as we work for peace and justice

Interpreted Ends (In the interpretations, I've tried to account for "educates, nurtures, and inspires):"

As a liberal religious and spiritual home, the people (children, youth, and adults) of First Universalist Church experience:

- Comfort, meaning, and joy in our Universalist message of love and hope;

*The people of First Universalist Church have a basic understanding of Universalist and Unitarian history and theology, and find meaning and joy in sharing the Universalist message of love and hope with the broader community.

*They receive compassionate pastoral care in times of transition and need.

*They are offered activities that allow the experience of joyful community.

*They develop spiritual practices that allow them to live with greater meaning and hope.

- Transformation through shared spiritual exploration and growth;

*The people of First Universalist Church experience deeper connections through a variety of small group opportunities.

*They explore the spiritual dimensions of faith in action.

*They have opportunities for theological deepening, exploring the values and principles of our faith through guidance and mentoring by spiritually grounded adults.

- And engagement with the greater community as we work for peace and justice

*First Universalist is a legitimate partner in "faith in action" work and we have deep and sustained partnerships in the community.

*The people of first Universalist articulate a faith based response and reason for doing social justice work.

*The people of First Universalist have a basic understanding of oppression and privilege, and how it operates (in racial, class, and gender dynamics).