

Assessment of LRP Action Plan Progress -- March 2020

Spirituality

Congregants are seeking multiple and diverse opportunities for spiritual experiences. They are looking for personal growth and expression within worship services, religious education, social justice action, small group experiences and compassionate outreach and care for one another.

We have accomplished many of the objectives outlined in the Action Plan under Spirituality.

Goal 1: Provide a variety of worship services.....

Strategies:

1. **DONE** We successfully hired a new half time minister, who brings a variety of worship services from multiple traditions and will be leading adult RE program for members as well as the New UU curriculum.
2. **DONE** A Worship Team Workshop was conducted in 2019 and is likely to be offered again this year.

Goal 2: ONGOING Cultivate a robust and growing RE program for children and adults.

Strategies:

1. Grow the RE program for children - **Creative and diligent efforts are being made to grow the program.**

Our RE team and RE Coordinator are working to provide a robust and growing RE program. They are developing a variety of communication strategies to extend our online presence which is an important source of connection with new families.

The RE team has developed a new brochure use for outreach both in-house and at community events. They are also developing new innovative RE programs such as Greta's Friends in conjunction with the Landscape committee. The curriculum introduces our children to the UU principles as well as highlighting the social justice work of UUs.

The RE coordinator is researching Spirit Play to develop curriculum. She reaches out to families on an ongoing basis. She also attends workshops and cluster groups to network with area DREs and has found that low registration and attendance for RE is a widely shared issue.

2. **No longer needed at this time.** Support a monthly parenting support group. A monthly parenting support group is not desired at this time and opportunities for families to bond are being presented. **ONGOING** RE team is developing different strategies to connect RE families and to connect the children with the larger UUFN community, such as the Friendship event planned for Feb 9th. They have also offered free babysitting nights for parents.

3. **ONGOING Has been implemented in classes and congregation.**

Include focus on our principles and sources in worship and adult RE classes.

Focus on the principles is happening in RE classes. Paula taught a course on our principles last year.

4. **DONE** Invite congregants to submit proposals & requests for Adult programs and offer at least four annually.

Congregants were encouraged to submit proposals and requests to RE for adult classes at both the fall and winter meetings of UUFN. Don is offering Building Your Own Theology. **Request was made to lower the number to 2 per year as more realistic.**

Goal 3: Learn and model communication in ways that align with UU principles and encourage exploration and expression of our multiple sources.

1. **ONGOING** Develop opportunities for service as spiritual expression within UUFN and the greater community.

We had an event this fall to introduce people to the opportunities for service at UUFN and connect people with opportunities to serve. The youth group and young adults routinely do service within both the UUFN and larger communities.

2. **ONGOING** Express our UU principles by providing or collaborating on social justice events to include the larger community.
UUFN continues to provide leadership for community social justice activities as well as such things as the Cultural Heritage Festival.
3. **ONGOING** We continue to express our UU principles by providing support for groups and services that are aligned with our values through our Share the Plate giving.
4. **IN PROCESS** Conduct training in compassionate communication as a way of honoring the spiritual nature of everyone.
We are sending 12 people to a daylong workshop on conflict transformation as an alternative to compassionate communication which is not currently readily available to us.
5. **ONGOING** Maintain and publicize the variety of spiritual practices that we engage in, such as worship services, women's spirituality, Zen meditation, earth-based services, the labyrinth program, the Bible for UUs and others.
All of the practices mentioned are being maintained and publicized. In addition, we have Chalice circles that meet regularly.
6. **ONGOING** Create awareness in the public about the spiritual opportunities UUFN has to offer. Through special events and social justice activities, people become aware of UUFN. Funds have been allowed to train the communications committee/team to have a more effective web presence.
7. **ONGOING** Expand our pastoral care ministry and Helping Hands Committee to care for each other. Pastoral Care and Helping Hands teams continue to reach out to members and provide assistance to members in need.

Goal 4: ONGOING Support an enhanced musical experience in services.

We are utilizing musicians from the community and our minister brings an enhanced musical aspect to worship. A change in the practice time of the Choir may lead to increase in numbers of choir members.

Growth

NO PARTICULAR ACTIONS TAKEN ON THIS ITEM

This Action area is one where we have accomplished a few smaller items but have not tackled the larger issues involved. We need to consider what we actually think about Growth and how we want to address it.

Statement of need: The congregation has historically had concerns about growth so it will be important to question what we really want and how to address this in a way that supports the continuing concept of "Fellowship" as the congregation grows. The strategies in this area include discussion about who we want to be as a congregation.

Goal 1. NOT YET ADDRESSED Create a standing Outreach and Growth committee that addresses several items such as our governance and organizational structure, use of our buildings, how we understand ourselves as a religious community and how our faith informs our social justice and community work?

We have not yet addressed the question of Growth and need to assess where we stand on this issue.

Goal 2. NOT YET ADDRESSED The congregation will review what growth means and establish standards for growth in sustainable ways that support the foundational principles of “Fellowship” so that lay leadership continues to be an underlying principle in the operations of the UUFN.

Goal 3. DONE The congregation should develop an infrastructure to support growth that sustains our current values and key foundational principles as a Fellowship.

The Board has explored our governance structure and resized the Board to be more in line with our actual size. They have also created a task force to make our lobby more attractive and inviting.

Goal 4: ONGOING Share our affirming pluralism in both belief and in person with the larger community and celebrate it as a model of hope and service to the larger community. Highlight how our recent, as well as longer, history of activism and commitment to social justice provide examples of how we have accomplished this.

We continue to be an active presence in the community in a variety of events. But we need to consider how we present our message about our faith and how this informs our presence which could lead to growth.

The action items that we still need to consider in this area are include having a Congregational workshop and discussion on Growth which might lead to creation of a Growth and Outreach Task force. We would then need to develop policy that addresses what we mean by growth and how we want to approach growth.

What we can do in advance of that is to continue educational work on the concept of Fellowship and how it functions and to ensure that new members understand what being a Fellowship means. This includes an expanded discussion about what that means in terms of our commitment to UUFN as members.

Community

Statement of need: We are a community of people actively in dialogue with each other both spiritually, intellectually and socially and this is valued and recognized by all who join us.

Goal 1: SUCCESSFUL AND ONGOING Continue to offer opportunities for personal and spiritual growth within the context of the UUFN community.

We continue to develop opportunities to allow us to get to know each other in a variety of settings, several mentioned above in Spirituality, but also the Chili Cookoff, Second Sunday potlucks, Games night, which also brings in community people, and our social justice work.

Goal 2: DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN Highlight the connections between the Culture of Service and Community development.

We need to expand awareness about the opportunities for service available at UUFN through the work around the culture of service. We have addressed this through several services and Committee Sundays, but this is an ongoing problem that is difficult to sustain because there is no specific group that sees this as part of their mission.

Goal 3: IN PROGRESS BUT NEEDS COMMUNITY SUPPORT Develop mechanisms to get to know each other across ages and interests.

We have new initiatives like Friendship Sunday that will help with intergenerational connections.

Goal 4: ONGOING Offer training on compassionate communication to improve our skills and ability to support each other, particularly in difficult situations, so that we practice our principles and maintain a safe space for all.

The Conflict Transformation workshop will help facilitate compassionate communication and enable us to support each other, even in difficult situations.

We have an active Helping Hands and Pastoral Care committees that provide support in a variety of ways.

Culture of Service

Statement of need: A Culture of Service is one that expresses our spiritual commitment to service, permeates the workings of the congregation and facilitates community building.

Recognizing the importance of the ways we provide service to our community and developing the tools to facilitate service with ease and efficiency will open opportunities to members and friends to engage in service, support the Fellowship and connect with others. It allows us to connect our spiritual practice with serving our community and accomplishing important pragmatic work that is needed.

Goal 1: THE WORK HAS BEGUN BUT IS DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN – it is unclear at this time who would be doing this work - To educate the UUFN community on the significance of and possibilities involved in the creation and implementation of a Culture of Service Program.

1 DONE Present a Sunday Service to introduce the concept to the Congregation: Presented Oct 2018 and again Oct 2019

The Long-Range Planning team has organized worship services about the Culture of Services and also Committee Sunday events to allow the different committees and teams to show what they do and recruit new members to join them.

NOT YET DONE Educate the congregation about what a Culture of Service entails through newsletter, and conversation. Incorporate Culture of Service into the New UU and ask all members and friends what their gifts and interests are for service within the UUFN.

Goal 2: NOT YET DONE Develop a UUFN Member Talent, Experience and Interests Database, as well as website resources where committees can post information about needed service opportunities and people can local information about possible tasks and committee positions that need to be fulfilled.

Both Long Range Planning and the Leadership Development Teams were working with Leidy to create a database that will allow us to better communicate our needs and what services and skills we as members bring to the congregation. However, neither is able to sustain this work in light of transitions in personnel on the committees and other demands of the volunteers' time.

Goal 3: ONGOING Develop a process for recognizing and expressing appreciation people's contributions and acknowledging their valuable service to UUFN.

We have gotten better at expressing our appreciation, but we need to develop a process for recognizing and expressing appreciation people's contributions and acknowledging their valuable service to UUFN.

Communication

Statement of Need: Clear, respectful, effective communication helps us to deepen our connections to each other and fulfill our mission. Internal and external communication are essential to fulfilling our mission. Congregants place a high value on communication and have expressed a desire to deepen their spirituality through relationships with each other.

Goal 1: ONGOING WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ACCOMPLISHED To enhance and support positive **internal communication** between and within the Board of Directors, committees, and the congregation, and among congregants.

We continue to work to find ways to provide information to members and educate them and the community about what we do. The Board has been providing effective and transparent communication to members about process, policies and finances through emails, announcements and postings on our website.

We established committee and team email addresses that allow members to easily communicate with different groups at UUFN and this is accessible on our website. Committees regularly use Uupdate, the newsletter, the Order of Service and the website to communicate to members.

Goal 2: NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED MORE INTENTIONALLY Educate congregation about what it means to be a Fellowship and about who we are and how we do things.

Goal 3: ONGOING WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS ACCOMPLISHED Develop an awareness within the congregation of the governance structure and to whom to address questions and concerns by communicating the responsibilities of the Board and the roles of individuals on the Board.

Goal 4. ONGOING Enhance communication between and among congregants. We hope to address this through the workshop on Conflict Transformation to be attended by 12 people which will be shared with the congregation at a later date.

Goal 5. ONGOING Ensure a robust web presence by committing resources to evaluate and update on a regular basis. This would ensure improved communication internally and externally.

We need to expand and recruit more members to the Communication team especially our website and social media as this is where new people find us. The Communication team received an endowment grant to help train people in use of social media outreach.

Goal 6. ONGOING Enhance and support positive external communication with Community partners and other UUA organizations.

We have been active in the Delmarva Cluster and Central East Region events, with representation at the meetings, and many participating in the annual event. The group is working on trying to organize coordinated transportation to GA with other congregations. We need to find more ways to effectively share information from the Cluster and Region to UUFN members.

Finances and sustainability

Statement of need: Following a period of expansion beyond our means, we have had to reduce staff and we have deferred property maintenance, leaving us with a variety of financial challenges.

Goal 1. DONE The primary goal is to have a strong financial base that supports our staff and property, is transparent to the membership, is sustainable over time, and that allows us to fully meet our mission within the limits of our budget.

The Board and Finance teams have made significant strides in ensuring financial transparency and in providing the congregation with information about financial matters. In addition, the Board continues to educate itself on policies related to personnel/ benefits to ensure they are making sound financial decisions. They have been in communication with the Finance team and the Property team about the needs of our buildings and the costs involved.

As a result of our move to a half time minister, we are in a better financial space and are able to work through many of the building needs but also need to consider possible Capital campaigns to address the more significant building concerns.

Goal 2. ONGOING Conduct a review of property maintenance needs related to address and plan for maintenance of our property.

Both the Property and Finance teams are working on an assessment of our property and on the capital needs involved. We are in the process of restructuring how maintenance and repair will be handled to allow for us to clarify who is responsible. They have been developing a plan to address current and long-term property issues and strategies for how to address them.

The Kitchen team has been working to make the kitchen a Green kitchen in line with our Green Sanctuary status. This will involve more active participation in the kitchen or will mean more expenses incurred, so volunteers are needed. The Safety Team has updated several safety features in the building as also provided safety training for UUFN members. In addition, Property and Landscape organized all fellowship work parties to improve our facilities.

Governance and Administration

Statement of Need: In our congregation administrative operations are managed by volunteer lay personnel. As leadership positions turn over, the transfer of information and knowledge to the new parties has varied. Thus, there is a strong need for UUFN to strengthen its governance systems and infrastructure so that systems will be in place across administrations and personnel that support the sustainability of the Fellowship.

Goal 1: ONGOING Fully educate the Board on the best practices regarding its roles and responsibilities and to continue that education across boards over time.

The Board is open to governance training and some members have been engaged with some of the UUA webinars.

Goal 2: DONE Ensure that board members and committee chairs are familiar with current job and committee descriptions, and that all descriptions are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The Board has clarified job descriptions and updated Board orientation binder to include needed materials. They are working on make serving on the Board a meaningful experience and supportive of Board members and to provide mentoring experience. They have updated the committee/team communication process to facilitate better communication between the board and the committees and teams.

Goal 3. ONGOING Enhance the role of the Office Administrator to oversee key administrative functions in order to promote consistency in operations.

Strategies:

Continue to transfer administrative functions and the maintenance of key documents to the Office Administrator to ensure a central operations hub for the UUFN and eliminate the issues of transfer and maintenance of files by volunteer committee chairs.

Activities:

1. **ONGOING** Review the Office Administrator's job description to ensure that it includes all relevant functions.
2. **ONGOING** Review the UUA Benefits Workbook on an annual basis to ensure that the UUFN remains in compliance with its agreements with UUA related to benefits.
3. **ONGOING** The Board will review the growth of responsibilities as part of their ongoing role and will make timely recommendations to Finance and Personnel Committees and the Board concerning the need for addition hours or pay.
4. **ONGOING** Develop an annual calendar for all the Administrative functions including review of UUA documents, benefits review, needs for annual meetings, and others as determined. The Board can use President's monthly calendar to work on this.
5. **UNCLEAR IF ACTION TAKEN** Survey committee chairs regarding key legal and administrative documents that support the Fellowship and need to be maintained in the office.

Goal 3. NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED Develop and implement brief training and/or mentoring for committee chairs on leadership.

Goal 4. NOT YET ACCOMPLISHED Develop a succession plan for volunteer leadership.

Leadership Development is working on developing discussions about Leadership and working on recruitment of new leaders.