

## **Task #1 Summaries**

### **WHAT BRINGS AND KEEPS ME HERE?**

#### **Community→**

- "I come for the people."
- Friendly environment/atmosphere
- Fellowship
- Welcoming to newcomers
- Inspiring friends
- Social activities - fun and other
- Committee work
- A feeling of energy within the community
- Potential for nurturing creativity
- Feels like home spiritually and emotionally
- A sense of love/caring/affection for each other
- It's a safe place.
- It's a diverse place.
- Coffee hour
- Civility
- Supportive place through all stages of life

#### **Shared beliefs and values→**

- UU philosophy
- Shared search for truth and meaning
- Shared liberal religious values
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of worship
- Shared respect for people's individual searches
- Non-creedal congregation

#### **Individual/Spiritual Growth→**

- The need to manifest religious experience
- Spiritual connection with one another
- Self reflection
- Spiritual renewal and nurturing

## **WHAT BRINGS AND KEEPS ME HERE CONT...**

### **Intellectual exploration/stimulation→**

- Critical thinking about today's issues
- Opportunities for diverse thinking
- Intellectual challenges

### **Social values→**

- Opportunities for social action
- Volunteer opportunities
- Connection to the greater community
- Tolerance and acceptance extending to the greater community

### **Children/R.E.→**

- The quality of the R.E. Program
- The opportunity to teach in the R. E. Program
- Children see people they can emulate.
- Safe place physically and emotionally for kids
- Children can grow spiritually while parental values are affirmed.

### **Sunday Services→**

- Time set aside from weekly routine
- Time for centering/slowing down

### **Family/Intergenerational Life→**

- Family togetherness

**→ MY GREATEST HOPE FOR THE CONGRATION IS...**

- Positive diversity: Tolerance, listening and intergenerational interaction
- Shared goals and their achievement
- Positive orientation or outlook
- Joyful, personally relevant search for meaning
- Foster community that is trusting, caring, harmonious, safe, active and challenging
- Political/social action including collaboration with other congregations
- Growth - unbridled or cautionary
- Openness to new people and new ideas
- Upgrade/expand facility
- Become financially stronger
- Be better known -- more influential in community
- Have a younger membership
- Promote a truly shared ministry
- Become a resource to the community - e.g., an urban community center

## **MY GREATEST HOPE FOR OUR MINISTER IS...**

- He will feel loved and love us.
- He enjoys his role and feels fulfilled.
- He takes care of himself and the congregation  
takes care of him
- Personal growth for Sam
  
- Shared ministry
- Facilitator/leader
- Congregational unifier
- Inspire congregation/good sermons
- Institutional advocate
  
- Be self/develop own style
- Prophetic voice /challenge us
- Rise above pettiness / don't get hooked by critics
  
- Source of spiritual guidance/individual search
- Adult education leader
  
- Public face of congregation/Unitarianism
- Leader in community
  
- Respect/trust congregation
  
- Stay long time
  
- Pastoral care
- Be there for kids
- Not have favorites

## **TASK #2: Things we wish to Continue, Start or Stop doing Categorized by Topic**

### Space & Facilities\*

Continue facility care and planning  
 Consider congregational growth and building expansion together: decide a plan and commit to it  
 Start making decisions about building expansion and improvement +  
 Short term, decide on what to do about sanctuary ++  
 Take steps to expand facility ++  
 Stop break-ins (to building)

### Growth & Its Implications\*

Consider congregational growth and building expansion together: decide a plan and commit to it  
 Continue building congregation (numbers)  
 Start building consensus on growth  
 Explore growth as an issue: do we really want to grow?

### Finance and Funding\*

Continue building financial strength + financial planning +  
 Continue to put energy into raising money while recognizing that not all have wealth +++  
 Start a product line to support our projects financially  
 Start Building a sound financial footing  
 Stop Crisis management mentality on financial affairs  
 Stop thinking that money is a dirty word  
 Stop financially relying on a few people

### Community-Internal (Creating & Maintaining)\*

Continue Social Events, social hours, etc + + + + +  
 Continue Silver Bay ++  
 Continue Community building events  
 Continue greeting each other weekly +  
 Continue greeting new people  
 Stop discussing church business at coffee hour, and staying in the same cliques +  
 Start more small discussion groups  
 Start more large group events ie Silver Bay  
 Start women's groups  
 Start And sharing our resources internally (scholarships, etc)  
 Start new interest and affinity groups for pot luck suppers (like the "neighborhood" ones)  
 Enhance and publicize the caring network  
 Consider accessibility factors when planning social events, avoid being exclusionary

### Social Action\*

Continue Social action ++  
 Continue habitat +  
 Continue doing projects that involve most of the congregation +  
 Continue to help Bosnian families +  
 Celebrate and support our individual and specific social actions  
 Start social action projects +  
 Develop support for social action within entire congregation  
 Start sharing our wealth with the community  
 Be a resource to the neighborhood as an urban church +  
 Encourage children in the community to use this facility as a creative arts center

### P.R. & Marketing & Visibility

Continue Involve minister in community activities

Promote our public presence in the community through publicity and marketing + + +

Start promoting our presence on social and political issues

### Intergenerational & Family

Continue Intergenerational and whole family focus

Start more intergenerational activities, between children and adults, and groups of adults +

Promote intergenerational connections and relationships +

Improve activities by/for children

Start Special religious services for children

### Internal Programs (our FUUSA programs)

Enhance and publicize the caring network

Continue caring network and similar pastoral activities,

Continue to minister to each other developing shared ministry, + + +

Continue men's groups +

Continue all the good things we're doing now

Re-evaluate Channing lecture series

### Music & Arts

Continue Music Program + +

Start concerts in the sanctuary

### Relationship & Process\*

Continue to "keep the conversation going"

Continue upbeat positive mood, recognize what we are doing right

Continue Looking at ourselves in relation to minister

Start to value team building

Start to find ways to respond/intervene when one encounters unhealthy criticism

Start trusting each other -- recommit to this every day +

Start modeling positive group behavior

Improve methods for feedback (healthy ways to express praise, criticism) +

Remember that some decisions need consensus and some do not

Define and explore shared ministry

Put shared ministry in action

Walk the talk better

Stop excessive destructive toxic criticism, including via internet + + + +

Stop obsessing about past problems + +

Stop talking about "the conflict" + + +

Stop conflict avoidance (behavior)

Stop excessive self-criticism

Stop being territorial and power hungry

Stop categorization, disrespecting others' beliefs both within and outside our congregation +

Stop Polarizing within our own community (into different "camps") +

### Training & Congregational Development

Continue development of mission statement

Start workshops in non-judgmental communication skills

Interfaith Relations

Continue our relationships in community, esp. with Mt. Pleasant Baptist church  
 Seek out relationships with other denominations +  
 Get more people involved in interfaith activities, outreach activities +

Intra-Faith Relations

Start outreach and more formal nurturing of smaller newer congregations

Sunday Service

Continue dynamic and intellectually moving, spiritually challenging Sunday services  
 Continue coffee hour +  
 Start having different styles of the two services  
 Start alternative coffee hour for those who want to discuss sermon  
 Enhance role of ushers  
 Have children more integrated in services  
 Make forums more accessible for families with children  
 Stop singing three hymns  
 Stop having the collection  
 Stop having two services  
 Stop lengthy joys and concerns and announcements  
 Stop speeches and self-promotion during joys and concerns  
 Stop or moderate applause during services +  
 Stop children's noise during services +

Internal Systems

Publicize names and roles of key committees and encourage committees to seek feedback  
 Start more aggressive recycling  
 Start using more computer technology -- email internet web to maintain communication  
 Stop late delivery of mail

Diversity\*

Keep theological diversity +  
 Continue accessibility  
 Continue diversity, including dialogue about our purposes  
 Continue to explore our diversity +  
 Continue to build comfort level regarding diversity +  
 Continue being a welcoming society "in all ways" reaching out for greater diversity +  
 Explore the nuances of our privilege, and our lack of diversity  
 Honor diversity, celebrate our differences, stop viewing our differences as a problem + + +  
 Facilitate groups of differing beliefs provide for safe discourse on beliefs and other subjects +  
 Stop censoring religious language +  
 Stop censoring our conversations regarding feelings, beliefs and religious expression + +  
 Stop the perception that theism has no place here and start more spirituality at FUUSA +  
 Stop win-lose thinking on theological diversity  
 Stop bashing other religions and setting ourselves above other religions + +  
 Stop labeling ourselves according to socioeconomic groupings

Membership (welcome, solicit, sustain)\*

Continue to energize members and volunteers

Continue support and nurture our members

Bring new members into activities, use them as volunteers and stop burning out the same old volunteers +

+ +

Greater recruitment and retention of new members

Start attracting new members, especially younger members +

Reach out to new members who may need support

Integrate new members better (mentoring)

Encourage Sam to know both members and non-members

Find out why people choose to leave

Religious Education (children, adult)

Continue RE and adult RE

Continue Spiritual growth

Continue intellectual stimulation



## **Task #3 – Working the Interest Groups Identified in Task #2**

### **Categories**

**Growth and its implications (37 votes)**

Space and Facilities (32 votes)

**Social Action (23 votes)**

**Diversity (17 votes)**

**Creating and maintaining our community – internal (16 votes)**

**Finance and Funding (16 votes)**

**Relationship and marketing / training and congregational development (13 votes)**

**Intergenerational and family (10 votes)**

Membership – welcome, solicit, sustain (10 votes)

Music and arts (9 votes)

Sunday Service (8 votes)

Religious education – children and adult (6 votes)

Interfaith relations (4 votes)

Public relations / marketing / visibility (4 votes)

Internal programs (3 votes)

Internal systems (3 votes)

Intrafaith relations (2 votes)

### **I. GROWTH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

**Group Members:** Abby Jones, Amy Lent, Martha Schroeder, Lois Thomson, Charles Estey, Paul Jones, David Clogg, Bruce Rodgers, Robb Smith, Judith Brink, Fred Barker, Alice Philips, Dave Philips, Reese Satin

1. Limit discussion to growth in membership
2. Decisions that congregation needs to make:
  - Should FUUSA grow?
  - How big do we want to be?
  - Should we stay here or locate
  - Should we share our facility with another group?
  - Should we plan on how to maintain intimacy?
  - How will we honor those people with the minority opinions
3. Resources – Raise awareness of what we have to offer: scholarships, access, our principles and purposes.
4. Explore why people leave
  - Do they not feel welcome?
  - Has their socio-economic status changed?

## 5. Positive and negative implications of growth

<b>POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS</b>	<b>NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS</b>
Can increase diversity	Can limit intimacy
More clout in the larger community	Bigger size – divisive
More fresh, new ideas and enthusiasm	More activities, more volunteers needed
Need larger building	Need larger building
More income	More expenses
Less burnout	More administration
To better serve our community	Will it decrease our uniqueness?
More diversity of people and programs	

## 6. Necessary decisions and questions

- Who to target? Develop publicity and marketing campaign.
- Do we need a congregational decision whether to grow?  
If yes:
  - Do we grow as one church or do we help start-up churches?
  - How big do we want to be?
  - Do we stay here or do we relocate? Do we share facility with other group?
- Increasing administrators and ministers
- Examine statistics of growing churches or larger churches – from UUA?
- Examine current facility usage
- How to maintain intimacy in the face of growth?
- How to respect and honor minority opinion?

**II. SPACE AND FACILITIES**

**Group Members:** Peter Meixner, Tom Mercer, Al DeSalvo, John Sherman, Jon Newell, Steve Moskowitz, Patti Jo Newell ...(others were also present)

- Quite a bit of need in short term in the area of refurbishment, especially in sanctuary and Channing Hall.
- Long term general planning work has been done. We need to up-date plans and cost estimates
- Need of commitment by the Board to proceed.
- Congregational consensus and ownership of decisions is essential all the way through the process. Could start with a briefing for the congregation of the planning that has already been done. Should develop some fact sheets. Show cost comparisons new construction vs. renovation
- Sam will need orientation on the issues. Be careful not to overload Sam's ministry in the first year...be practical set realistic expectations
- Look at the possibility of one service if the facility was large enough.

### III. FINANCE AND FUNDING GROUP

**Group Members:** Malcolm Bell, George Allen, Bob Thomson, Donna Meixner, Nancy Willie-Schiff, Ron Ginsburg, DJ Panetta

1. Explore alternative streams of revenue, such as
  - Cell phone towers
  - Corporate sponsorship
  - Sell ads in Windows and newsletter
  - Selling bricks (similar to Cap Rep fundraiser)
  - Rethink the auction (should we put an upper limit on bids like we did in some cases last year)
  - Endowed rooms, e.g. Stott Lounge
2. Address cash flow problems by encouraging:
  - Payment of pledges in timely manner
  - Payments during the summer
3. Endowment Trust
  - What we have is not adequate. Make the congregation aware of this, and discuss what a reasonable amount is for a church our size and age.
  - We've been experiencing a booming market – need to act while that is still the case. People have more money to give now.
  - Tax-sheltered income/giving
  - Once a month disclose the amount in the Endowment Trust to the congregation (in our small group most did not have any idea of the amount in the Trust)
4. Coordinate all finance groups within FUUSA (Endowment Trust, Fund Raising, Finance Committee, Canvas)
5. We need Long-Range Financial Planning
  - 5-10 year plan
  - Include capital and operational budgets
6. How do we determine our yearly budget?
  - Base items
  - Vision items
7. Create a “Culture of Generosity”
  - Publish needs and costs
  - Develop a “Canvas Theme” each year
  - Set higher goals for canvas – what do we really need to have a comfortable cushion
  - Set the budget goal to specific items – i.e. painting the sanctuary.

- Consider a “continuous canvas.” People are more generous in the fall – how do we tap into that?
  - Communicate the total income that is possible (based on estimates) from our congregation. Talk about what we could do with additional money – needs that could be met.
  - Prepare for success
    - Institute “matching pledges” – Similar to WAMC
    - How do we develop 10K givers (would they be more willing if they did it through matching pledges?)
8. How do we bring more people into the Canvassing?
9. Key ideas:
- Money is not a dirty word
  - Building financial strength
  - No more crisis management

#### **IV. CREATING AND MAINTAINING COMMUNITY**

##### **Group Members:**

1. Need to define what is meant by community
  - Membership committee
  - Caring network
  - Social Activities
  - Getting to know each other
  - Helping each other re: committees and tasks
  - Knowing each other spiritually
  - Small group opportunities
  - Enjoy the intergeneration programs
  - Communication holds us together
  - Against Cliques / Try to reduce number of cliques
  - Sometimes issues are made into bigger problem than they really are
  - Improve and increase communication
2. Threats to community
  - Polarization / Prejudiced (toxic) remarks
  - Assumptions made about other “groups” in the congregation
  - Making issues into bigger problems than they really are

## 3. Concrete steps to increasing a sense of community:

<b>SUGGESTION</b>	<b>WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?</b>
Invite/encourage youth to participate on committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PCC contact youth (Rite of Passages Intern?)</li> <li>▪ Communicate we want your help / Minister and Congregation invite</li> </ul>
Interest groups or clubs / not geographic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revival of Circle Dinners</li> <li>- Pot-luck</li> <li>- Games playing (Sunday afternoon?)</li> <li>- Revive Singles Group</li> <li>- Promote intergenerational community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board recognition and support for activity</li> <li>▪ Newsletter for communication</li> <li>▪ We need interested people to organize separate activities</li> <li>▪ Need support from the Board – committee responsible?</li> </ul>
Support Adult Ed program	Already in place – Board puts money in budget; have volunteers; Sam wants to teach/facilitate
Conflict resolution skills workshops – “How to respond when you hear a toxic comment”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate into Adult Education.</li> <li>▪ Regular offer / discuss directly / role playing / volunteers to be teachers</li> <li>▪ Committee chair training</li> <li>▪ Orientation in conflict management</li> </ul>
Strengthen the Caring Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More volunteers</li> <li>▪ More organizers</li> </ul>
Establish Neighborhood Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overseen by Caring Network / Proactive</li> </ul>
Increase spiritual sharing / Have opportunities to increase spiritual selves/journeys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold post-sermon conversation in Stott Lounge about the service</li> <li>- Sermons from members</li> <li>- Encourage sharing personal and spiritual journeys / Allow member to share their spiritual journeys / Sunday services and elsewhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adult Ed Courses</li> <li>▪ Religious services Committee - Conversations</li> </ul>
Consciousness raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- call missing member</li> <li>- talk with each other at coffee hour</li> <li>- Need to know where our nearest UU neighbor is (perhaps phone network)</li> <li>- Conscience awareness of members who are no longer attending</li> </ul>	Put information in Windows regarding intent of outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility of individual member</li> <li>▪ Involve Sam and Caring Network</li> </ul>

## V. SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

**Group members:** Kathy Magee, Nancy Bell, Dorothy Bellick, Pam Clements, Jane Allen, Peggy Slocum, Betty Dietz, Andy Rosette

1. What's been done before – up to now
  - **Habitat**  
Degree of involvement: major – money and member workers
  - **Refugee resettlement**  
Degree of involvement: major money and involvement
  - **Pennies for Haven**  
Degree of involvement: once a year drive for homeless
  - **Food Pantry**  
Degree of involvement: a few people; monthly \$200-300 donated; toys at Christmas
  - **Interfaith Impact**  
Degree of involvement: a few people involved; awareness needs to be increased
  - **Partner Church**  
Degree of involvement: major money; involvement is periodically major
  - **Forum**  
Degree of involvement: low involvement; problems with time, publicity, conflict with the service
  - **UUSC – Christmas cards, guest at the table**  
Degree of involvement: Many members of the congregation support with money; not much action
  
2. Recommendations for the future
  - a. Rethink the forum
  - b. Develop and enhance the SRC (Council). Raise congregational awareness.  
**Involvement:** Minister, Elected, Congregation
  - c. Coalitions with other community groups to address social issues.  
**Involvement:** Minister, Congregation
  - d. Coordinate with minister on projects and seek support through sermons and vice versa.  
**Involvement:** Minister, SRC
  - e. SRC structure projects to enable more involvement. Consider evening events - involving youth, engaging with aging  
**Involvement:** SRC

- f. SRC coordinate with other committees (Care Network, etc.)  
*Involvement:* SRC
- g. Work to involve non-member contributors on committees.  
*Involvement:* Minister, SRC, Congregation
- h. Survey and celebrate congregation individual social action.  
*Involvement:* SRC
- i. Support the minister in social action issues.  
*Involvement:* SRC

## VI. RELATIONSHIP/ PROCESS

**Group Members:** Cindy Morse, Sue Gutman, Hilda Dunne, Cathy Perkins, Amy Zander, Lynn Ashley, Julie Lomoe-Smith, Larry Gambino, Kate Dahlstedt, Andrea Ricard, Shannon Moore

1. **Three areas of this problem:**
  - Individual communication skills
  - Group process skills
  - Opportunities for conflict resolution/ issue processing
2. **Guiding Thoughts**
  - Go one step at a time
  - Have realistic expectations
  - Progress, not perfection
  - Be trustworthy and choose to trust
3. **Define the problem**
  - Nitpicking behaviors
  - Lack of group process skills/training
  - Toxic criticism
  - “Stop” behaviors already listed
  - Lack of “I” statements
  - Need individual and group communication skills
  - Non-verbal communication is negative / exclusive / destructive
  - We don’t know how to handle disagreement
  - The “old stuff” and finally dealing with it. Dealing with the Historical Baggage - suggestion of a ritual, perhaps an exorcism

#### 4. **Congregation**

- Resources
  - We have many professionally trained and experienced people. Identify these and their interests in working with the congregation.
  - Use small groups
  - Approach the committees
  - Use a “process observer” role in meetings
- Involvement
  - Invite, question, assess interest
  - Committees
  - Teach conflict resolution in RE to children and teachers
  - Need opportunities to process conflict/issues without fear and judgment
- Support – UUA, SLUUD, Cluster
- Inspiration - Modeling of behavior
- **Establish general and specific ground rules for meetings**

#### 5. **Minister**

- Resources – Explore Sam’s expertise
- Support – Explore support of trained experienced congregational members to help train others. Don’t make Sam do it all.
- Involvement – Do pulpit exchange with congregations that are very different from ours (RSC task?)
- Inspiration – Sam is a good listener. He models this well and may be able to speak about this from the pulpit. Sam also models respect very well.

#### 6. **Elected Leadership and Committee Chairs**

- Resources
  - Workshop for the Board
  - Give the Board more information about each committee’s strengths, issues, etc.
  - Continue to work on conflict resolution skills
- Inspiration – Share what the Board learned from Davidson about group process



## VII. MEMBERSHIP

1. Three types of members: New, Existing, Lapsed
2. Issue: Current member expresses a “life crisis” or Member no longer attending services  
  
Resolution: Membership committee, the minister, or the Caring Network will follow-up
3. Issue: Visitor and newcomer follow-up  
  
Resolution: Follow-up with a brief informative call and ask if any additional information is desired  
  
Develop a database
4. Issue: When / if to assign a “buddy” to a newcomer  
  
Resolution: For the day  
  
After several visits
5. Issue: How to reach / identify reluctant newcomers?  
  
Resolution: Newcomer “blue card” in hymnals  
  
Follow service leader visitor script
6. Issue: How to identify a lapsed member?  
  
Resolution: Non-pledge contribution  
  
Word of mouth  
  
Administration notification (dropping newsletter)  
  
Reviewing old membership directories / lists
7. Issue: Explore / cultivate with college students

## VIII. DIVERSITY

**Group Members:** Meg Bassinson, Renee Panetta, Leah Purcell, Robert Mayer, Edna Allen, Linda Hunt, Dora Reed, Joan Butcher

There is a real interrelationship between

1. Growth, membership and diversity are all interrelated.
2. Types of diversity
  - Racial/ethnicity
  - Opinion
  - Abilities / talents /gifts
  - Sexual orientation
  - Philosophy / theology
  - Economic status
  - Disabilities
  - Age
  - Mental Illness – Do we have resources/assistance to handle?
3. Resources in the congregation
  - Welcoming Congregation Committee
  - Members who are social workers, physicians
  - Access Committee
  - Recognize, honor and provide diversity
  - Remember our purposes and principles
4. **Resources** - Raise awareness  
**Support** - RE Council, Welcoming Congregation  
**Involvement** - Make commitment to live our purposes and principles  
**Inspiration** - Stay open to wisdom from all esthetic, religious, ethical philosophical views  
  
**Minister** - Teaching  
**Congregation** - Enacting and implementing, participating  
**Elected Leadership** - Increase understanding; provide money to continue education; increase ability to assist
5. **Ideas**
  - Make people aware of resources, one another and each individual's importance and contributions.
  - Diversity of theology and philosophy
  - History of theist/humanist tension
  - Let's stay open to wisdom from all religious and ethical teachings
  - Invite guest speakers from a variety of traditions

- Encourage Sam to use a variety of religious / ethical teachings in sermons
- RE: Be careful not to bash any religion in curriculum – be open, explore diversity
- Diverse RE events are positive – i.e. Circle of Spirit
- FUUSA members discussing their beliefs in Sunday service or in small groups
- Discussed courses in various topics theology, philosophy
- RE: encourage curriculum emphasizing tolerance and diversity
- Socio-economic issues:
  - Publicize scholarships to Silver Bay
  - Caring Network
  - Ride sharing
  - May change and affect their ability to participate - need ways to identify