

The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist

Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015

Our Mission: *Inspired by the wisdom of diverse religious traditions and our own history of ethical engagement, we strive to nurture spiritual growth, support and care for each other, and effect change through our love for the world.*

The Community Church of Chapel Hill has invested almost three years in setting its course for the next decade. First the congregation adopted its mission (2010) then its vision (2012). The goals and actions included in this document reflect the thoughts, dreams and planning of many members. They were developed through a process that was meant to help the congregation decide how it could fully engage in fulfilling its mission and vision. The strategic plan offers a path toward our collective desire to: a) live our vision; b) keep our faith community vital, engaged and healthy; c) communicate more effectively about Unitarian Universalism to a broader community; and d) increase our individual capacity for social justice and service work.

Members of the congregation, the Board, the Church Council, committee members and staff have been involved in creating the strategic actions described in this document. An overview of the strategic planning process is included at the end.

In reviewing this plan there are several essential points to consider.

- **Scope.** This is a three-year plan. The actions completed through 2015 will serve as a foundation for future actions (2016-2020). The focus of the first three years of the plan is education, planning, and providing infrastructure and financial capacity for future actions. The plan will be intentionally revised each year, taking into account the financial resources of the church.
- **Flexibility.** The actions described in each section are intentionally open to allow room for committees and church members to adapt and modify as needed.
- **Finances.** A financial plan was developed to support the strategic plan. In order to achieve the elements of this plan we need to be both realistic and forward-thinking in terms of resources – including time, people and money. If we don't have enough resources, then we simply will not do parts of the plan. The financial plan outlines a path to affording our goals. It shows how we can achieve our financial goals either by increasing membership or by increasing pledge commitments from current members, with an understanding that in reality it will be some combination of the two strategies. An important focus of the financial plan for the next three years is to build the capacity to hire an assistant minister.
- **Growth.** The congregation has strongly affirmed that it wants to remain a midsize church (under 500 members). So our growth assumptions reflect that intention. Although the plan allows for and anticipates some growth, the plan assumes that the maximum number of members we might add by 2020 is 125, at which point we would reach the maximum for a midsize church. The plan is flexible and recognizes that it is very possible that we will not add 125 members by 2020. Growth is dependent on many unknown variables, and we are not counting on it.
- **New Settled Minister.** The plan accommodates our search for and the skills and interests of a

new settled minister. The plan acknowledges that the talents, interests and vision of our new minister play an important role in our work together. We have intentionally left time and space in the plan for developing our relationship with the new settled minister. Goals and objectives include opportunities for the new settled minister to be involved in the implementation of the plan. Our plan is open and flexible to allow the new settled minister to engage with the vision and help shape how it becomes reality.

- **Governance.** The Board of Trustees is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan, including the establishment of new committees and ministries. Each component of the plan includes suggested measures of progress and success – committees and ministries will further develop, change and/or adapt these measures as they begin to implement their activities.
- **Enhanced Programs and New Initiatives.** In the visioning process we committed to building and expanding our excellent existing programs as well as pursuing new initiatives. In the plan below, the Enhanced Programs are listed first and New Initiatives are listed second. They are not listed in order of priority.

This document briefly describes the vision, goals, actions and initial success measures (vital signs) for each of the 11 vision blocks affirmed by our congregation. The most important part of this plan is **the fact that it is a living document that is meant to serve only as a guide**. Goals and actions can and will be modified over the years. It is fully recognized that there is a need for additional resources, both volunteers and financial, in order for us to fulfill the ambitious goals that were created. This plan provides us with a framework as well as specific actions and partnerships to move us forward to live our collective mission.

Enhanced Programs

Worship and Arts*

Vision: *Our church provides transformative, inspiring and multicultural worship, the presence of the visual arts, and accessibility to those unable to attend in person.*

Goals:

1. Beautify our existing worship space and create new worship spaces. (Worship Ministry, Buildings and Grounds Committee, Art Team)

- Hold more services at Memorial Rock, primarily in the fall and spring.
- Engage in the space assessment, space utilization planning and capital campaign process.
- Increase art that is part of the buildings and the grounds.

2. Improve upon and expand our current worship experience. (Minister, Worship Ministry, Communications Committee)

- Expand our audiovisual and technical capacity.
- Open a dialogue with our new settled minister about how to incorporate diverse and multicultural worship styles in Sunday worship without misappropriating rituals and how to engage in shared worship with other faith groups.
- Ensure that the budget for honorariums for outside speakers is fully funded.

3. Extend our worship experience into the larger community. (Worship Ministry, Caring Ministry, Communications Committee, Sound Team)

- Reach out to shut-in members and conduct services with them in homes or at continuing care retirement communities.
- Collaborate with Communications Committee and Sound Team to stream our services to shut-ins and others who can't attend services in person.
- We will improve our communications with the broader community outside the church to advertise our Sunday services.

4. The Worship and Arts program will continue to be accountable, accessible and relevant to the congregation. (Worship Ministry, Minister, Art Team)

- Worship Ministry will improve communication with congregation.
- With the new settled minister, we will solicit input and feedback from multiple sources to continue to evaluate and improve the Worship and Arts program.

Vital Signs:

- Average attendance at services, attendance at virtual services.
- Downloads of services.
- Addition of new art and satisfaction survey.

*The Worship and Arts efforts will be separate action areas in the future. Music is a separate action area in the plan but is understood to be an essential part of worship.

Lifespan Religious Education

Vision: *Our Lifespan Religious Education Ministry serves all ages and includes multigenerational and multicultural programs. It fosters faith development for all ages. It builds Unitarian Universalist identity for young people and provides an adult “Sunday School” program in a space sufficient to accommodate these thriving programs and foster learning and spiritual growth.*

Goals:

1. Add additional space for Religious Education programs. (Board of Trustees, Children and Youth Ministry Teams, Spiritual Exploration for Adults, Congregation)

- Conduct space assessment. Develop space utilization plan, which includes the Manse and grounds, service times, and number and types of services held.
- Implement capital campaign if needed.

2. Develop and implement a “Sunday School” program for adults (Spiritual Exploration for Adults)

- Identify needs and develop a strategy to meet the need for an ongoing education program for adults, which probably meets on Sundays and involves many of the congregation’s adults.
- Incorporate strategy for developing “adult Sunday School” into the space utilization plan.
- Implement strategy.

3. Strengthen multicultural and multigenerational components of Religious Education for all ages. (Minister, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Spiritual Exploration for Adults, Children’s and Youth Ministry Teams, Faith in Action Ministry)

- Identify needs and best practices for effective multicultural and multigenerational programs.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for continuing to build multicultural and multigenerational educational programs and incorporate strategy into the space utilization plan.

4. Develop and strengthen programs that integrate children and youth into the life of the church and build a UU identity so that they remain in the church throughout childhood and are more likely to remain Unitarian Universalists as adults. This program will include programs on UU identity for parents. (Children and Youth Ministry Team)

- Identify and prioritize needs and weaknesses in existing programs.
- Investigate successful programs and develop a plan to strengthen our programs.
- Implement plan to strengthen faith development programs for children and youth.

5. The minister will continue to give oversight to, and when possible expand, current programs that enable individuals to develop a personal spiritual practice, such as Wellspring, Covenant Groups, and Building Your Own Spiritual Practice. (Committees and Ministries)

Vital Signs:

- Religious Education enrollment: children, youth, adults and small groups.
- Participation rates once enrolled, range of topics offered, attendance by topic.
- Satisfaction survey, post-group/post-class feedback sessions.

Music

Vision: *Music is woven into the fabric of all aspects of our church's ministry, expressing the many facets of the human spirit, reflecting diverse cultural themes and our UU principles, and inspiring everyone, as both listeners and participants.*

Goals:

1. Improve participation in congregational singing. (Music Team, Worship Ministry)

- Increase the organization of hymn sings to help the congregation sing with heart and soul.
- Ensure sufficient quantity and quality of hymnals.
- Provide and maintain high-quality musical instruments and sound equipment.

2. Provide regular music in the Children's and Youth Ministry program. (Music Team, Children and Youth Ministry Teams)

- Develop a music program for Children and Youth Ministries, including musicians and choir members and Children and Youth Ministry volunteers.
- Implement program.

3. Encourage greater participation in the overall music program by people of all ages, ability and experience. (Music Team)

- Implement ways to create an ongoing awareness of the various opportunities in the music program.
- Create evening programs, including an open-mic style coffeehouse, to encourage people to participate in the music program.

4. Use music to support social justice issues, engage in community outreach and bring people together around issues, e.g., benefit concerts. (Music Team, Caring Ministry, Justice and Service Ministries)

- Organize at least one coffeehouse concert per year.
- Work with the Justice Ministries and other groups to organize concerts with social justice themes in mind.
- Extend music to the people we care for through the Caring Ministry (homebound and residents of local retirement communities).

Vital Signs:

- Music groups, participants and attendance.
- Locations where music is provided.
- Satisfaction survey.

Caring

Vision: *The Caring Ministry fully involves church members in caring for our congregation and collaborates with groups within the church to provide need-specific support.*

Goals:

1. Establish a robust, comprehensive Caring Ministry Team under the direction of the minister with sufficient membership to communicate effectively. Coordinate the various task forces already in existence, and those yet to be established. (Mental Health Ministry, Pastoral Visitors)

- Meet with interim minister to decide on administrative structure.
- Implement that structure.

2. Expand membership in the current Pastoral Visitor program and the Mental Health Ministry to better serve the needs of the congregation.

3. Develop an effective, ongoing system to inform church members about caring needs.

4. Provide additional support for other areas of high need in congregation.

- Evaluate congregational needs for additional support group(s) and create plan for implementation.
- Begin implementation of additional identified support group(s).

Vital Signs:

- Number of people served and how they are served.
- Number of volunteers.
- Satisfaction survey.
- Types of services needed.

Justice and Service

Vision: *We have an active social justice ministry with engagement by members of the congregation as individuals on issues as well as a churchwide focus on topics identified by the congregation. This ministry includes collaboration with aligned groups beyond our walls and strong links to UUA social justice work.*

Goals:

1. Establish a Justice and Service Council to effectively advocate for, coordinate (where appropriate), evaluate impact, and publicize the justice and service ministries of the church. (All Justice and Service Ministries)

- Create council.
- Implement and evaluate goals identified by the council.

2. Improve communication with congregation about the activities of the service and justice ministries of the church and opportunities for action and learning. (Justice and Service Council and staff)

- Implement a justice and service newsletter for the congregation in a variety of formats.
- Implement social media strategy and continue to improve and evaluate communications.

3. Strengthen coordination and collaboration on justice and service projects with local Unitarian Universalist congregations and with the Unitarian Universalist Association. (*Minister, Justice and Service Council*)

- Host a cluster meeting of the justice and service ministries from local UU congregations to meet, share information, and make connections.
- Identify and implement successful strategies which will improve coordination among congregations.

Vital Signs:

- Number of congregants who participate in project, number of council members, number of regular meetings.
- Number of newsletter issues published, number of meetings with other UU congregations.
- Outcome of social justice work, satisfaction survey.

Welcoming

Vision: *We provide a warm, inclusive, vital, and supportive culture for visitors, newcomers, members, and associates. We effectively welcome and integrate newcomers and new members. We provide ongoing support to help newcomers, members, and associates discern how to share their time and talents and how to connect at church. We create and maintain visibility as an inclusive congregation that stands on the side of love in our extended community.*

Goals:

1. Increase individual and congregational competence and commitment to providing a warm, inclusive, vital, and supportive culture for visitors, newcomers, members, and associates.

- Hold a training for the Membership Team and greeters based on the UUA's guide [*Multicultural Welcome: A Resource for Greeters in Unitarian Universalist \(UU\) Congregations*](#) and participate in other church trainings on multiculturalism.
- Organize and train a group of "supergreeters" to help welcome and follow up with visitors and newcomers.
- Develop, implement and evaluate strategies to meet this goal.

2. Effectively welcome and integrate newcomers and new members as well as provide support for existing members and associates looking for ways to connect at church.

- Gather needed data and implement the UUA's tool *Evaluating Your Membership Process* to identify areas for improvement. Develop and promote new materials on groups and activities.
- Evaluate and update the gifts and interest survey. Make the Service Fair an annual event.
- Develop and offer a short course that delves deeper into the topics offered in our orientations and allows for more interaction. Develop and offer a course on connecting at church.
- Implement strategies identified through *Evaluating Your Membership Process*. Develop a system to provide ongoing support to help newcomers, members, and associates discern how to share their time and talents and how to connect at church.

3. Implement a process to evaluate the church's fellowship offerings and develop new programs that build connections between visitors, newcomers, members, and associates.

- Form a Fellowship Committee, develop a three-year plan based on the results of *Evaluating Your Membership Process* and implement.
- Roll out fellowship activities.

Vital Signs:

- Number of new members and new associates.
- Number of people who participate in multicultural welcoming and diversity trainings.
- Number of people who participate in the gifts and interest survey.
- Number of people who participate in membership course and connecting at church course.
- Number of people who participate in fellowship activities.
- Satisfaction survey.

Growth and Stewardship

Vision: *We have an enduring commitment to the fiscal health, accessibility, and sustainability of our church. We are good stewards of our buildings and the environment. Our growth is supported by increased ministerial and support staff where needed.*

Goals:

- 1. Conduct space assessment, develop space plan based on assessment, and conduct capital campaign to fund new space.**
- 2. Add staff hours as needed to support growth and program needs. Begin funding additional ministerial position and increase annually.**
- 3. Conduct annual satisfaction survey and report vital signs to the congregation in an annual report to be overseen by the Board of Trustees.**
- 4. Either increase membership or pledge per member to fund the strategic plan, or some combination of the two.**
 - If there is no increase in pledge per member, we will need an increase in membership.
 - If there is no increase in the number of members, we will need average pledge per member to increase.

New Initiatives

Sacred Grounds

Vision: *Our buildings and grounds project our welcoming spirit to the larger community and provide spaces that encourage spiritual, meditative, and educational growth.*

Goals:

- 1. To create sacred grounds – a beautiful campus that communicates and reflects our values and theology to our congregation and the public with meditation spots, education spaces, and walking trails, including improved access to our grounds and buildings. (*Sacred Grounds Task Force*)**
 - Establish a Sacred Grounds Task Force charged with discerning needs and priorities for bringing the vision to reality.
 - The Sacred Grounds Task Force will identify small projects for implementation but also participate fully in the space needs assessment and space utilization planning that precedes the capital campaign.
- 2. Create memorial area around Memorial Rock and the amphitheater. (*Board of Trustees*)**
 - Establish a Memorial Rock Task Force to develop a method to memorialize names at Memorial Rock and secure cost estimates to include in the planned capital campaign.
- 3. Improve level of maintenance for both grounds and buildings. (*Board of Trustees, Congregational Administrator, Buildings and Grounds*)**
 - Conduct an assessment to establish what staff, volunteer and contract configuration is needed to clean and maintain the facilities and grounds.
 - Expand and develop Buildings and Grounds Committee to meet unexpected maintenance needs, operations policies and long-term planning.
 - Develop and begin implementing maintenance plan based on assessment.

Vital Signs:

- Volunteer hours for Sacred Grounds Task Force.
- Completion of assessments and planning.
- Funds raised.

Diversity

Vision: *We are a welcoming, multigenerational, multifaith, and multicultural congregation.* We initiate programs that grow our skills to increase and sustain the diversity of our church community and to live and interact with integrity in an increasingly diverse world.*

** Multiculturalism means nurturing a religious community where people of all races, ethnicities, religious backgrounds, sexual orientations, and cultures see their identities reflected and affirmed in every aspect of congregational life – worship, fellowship, leadership, governance, religious education, social justice, etc.*

Goals:

1. Increase the individual and congregational competence and commitment to multicultural ministry by participating in structured learning opportunities designed by the UUA and in consultation with UUA leaders. (*Faith in Action Ministry and the Congregation*)

- Offer the Weaving the Fabric of Diversity program to our members, associates, and youth.
- Offer the Building the World We Dream About program to our members, associates, and youth.
- Offer Beloved Conversations, Jubilee training, JUUST Change training, or some other appropriate advanced training.

2. Ministry, committee and task force members will identify and implement strategies in their areas, which support our collective commitment to being a welcoming, multigenerational and multicultural congregation. (*All groups in the congregation*)

- Engage members of the different groups in learning about potential strategies to implement in their areas. They will then develop a plan for acting on some of those strategies.
- Implement strategies.
- Evaluate programs and make any needed revisions to strategies and plans.

3. Board of Trustees, minister, staff and leaders will engage in a formal and continuous process of discernment and evaluation of our progress as a congregation toward our diversity goal. They will be open to new directions and opportunities for our growing multicultural ministry and will commit to participate in the programs offered in Goal 1. (*All leaders*)

- Establish a diversity task force to develop and guide the implementation process for this goal.
- The diversity task force will evaluate the success of our diversity program and in consultation with the Ministry and Management Team make recommendations to the Board about how to proceed with any needed changes and next steps.

Vital Signs:

- Number of people who participate in trainings.
- Number of committees that work on diversity goals.
- Increase in membership and associates who are different from our current congregation.

Communications and Technology

Vision: *We communicate effectively within and beyond our walls. We use inclusive and interactive technology that encourages involvement, commitment, and spiritual growth.*

Goals:

1. Improve systems and infrastructure to ensure effective communication within and beyond our walls. (*Communications Committee*)

- Add staff hours for communication and establish a Communications Committee.
- Communications Committee will evaluate congregation needs for consistent and effective internal communication and record keeping and develop a strategy and messages to meet those needs.
- Implement plan for effective internal communication and record keeping.

2. Implement enhancements to improve inclusive and interactive communication within and beyond our walls. (*Communications Committee, Worship Ministry, Sound Team*)

- Identify messages and goals for improved communication.
- Implement live streaming of Sunday services.
- Implement a comprehensive social media strategy.
- Implement a professionally designed website.

3. Implement a coordinated program of advertising and promotion of the Community Church of Chapel Hill and Unitarian Universalism (*Communications Committee and Staff*)

- Establish a subcommittee of the Communications Committee to plan an advertising and promotion program.
- Identify the message and goals of an advertising and promotion plan.
- Implement advertising and promotion program.

Vital Signs:

- Website hits and open rates on emails.
- Social media responses (friends, shares and likes).
- PR and advertising occurrences in media.
- Satisfaction survey.

Intentional Leadership

Vision: *Our church offers programs that engage members in identifying and developing their own callings and inspire their ministry to the church and the world.*

Goals:

1. Develop a formal leadership development program to nourish, support and engage our current leaders and to help develop a pool of new and adaptive leaders for all aspects of church life. (*Board of Trustees*)

- Identified leaders will develop or adopt an existing lay leadership curriculum, identify leaders to lead the curriculum, and develop an implementation plan for a lay leadership program.
- Implement the program.
- Evaluate program and continue to implement.

2. Expand commitment to lay leadership development by offering regular courses that support new and current church leaders and support those developing callings and ministries in their personal lives and in the world, including, but not limited to, Lay Leadership as Spiritual Practice. (*SEA Team, Board of Trustees, Church Council, Committees and Ministries*)

Vital Signs:

- Number of members who participate in new and continuing programs.
- Satisfaction survey.

Sanctuary for Dialogue

Vision: *We are known in the community as a sanctuary for dialogue, where people with conflicting points of view can come together in an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment to discover common ground on difficult issues. We are able to hold difficult conversations in our own congregation, where conflict is embraced honestly, courageously, and productively.*

Goals:

- 1. Sanctuary for Dialogue will be fully implemented in four to 10 years.**
- 2. With the new settled minister, develop goals for implementation of Sanctuary for Dialogue vision.**
- 3. Continue to encourage and nurture existing programs and practices that foster an environment of deep listening and dialogue. (Committees and Ministries)**
 - Offer a class on the book *The Righteous Mind*. (Spiritual Education for Adults Committee)

Vital Signs:

- Number of members involved in deep listening groups.
- Number of committees and groups committed to dialogue practices.

NOTE: Training and activities in some of the other vision areas in years one to three will be foundational in building skills within our congregation to welcome diversity, build spiritual leadership, increase social justice skills and essentially prepare the ground for the Sanctuary for Dialogue work.

APPENDIX A

Strategic Plan Development Process

The Community Church of Chapel Hill has invested almost three years in the development of this strategic plan. The visions, goals and actions included in this document reflect the thoughts, dreams, and planning of many members. Our work began with voting on our mission (2010). This was followed by a 12-month process to create our Vision Statement. This work included:

- A search for an external consultant. A request for proposal was issued and responses were reviewed. Mark Molitor was selected.
- Two six-hour workshops in September and October 2011, designed and led by Mark (with input from a very dedicated steering committee). Over 75 attendees contributed.
- A detailed online survey, completed by over 100 members.
- Nine small working groups that wrote draft language for each component of the vision (based on the output from the survey and the retreat).
- Numerous Within These Walls, newsletter, and bulletin announcements, and multiple briefings to the church Board and other groups.
- Three town hall meetings in January 2012 to get comments on the draft vision and refine the wording.
- The Vision Statement was adopted by congregational vote on Feb. 5, 2012.

We then moved into smaller groups with a focus on developing goals and actions for specific interest areas. Each group submitted its work and then a larger meeting was held to assess our strengths, interests and future directions. In January 2013, a small strategic planning committee was convened to help complete the plan. The combined work of all 11 planning teams was consolidated into a single document (60-plus pages) and then carefully reviewed. All of the original work of the committees has been preserved and will continue to serve as a reference and a guide. While the work in the larger plan reflects the efforts of separate groups, the work in this proposed plan takes into consideration the constraints of resources, the needs of the whole organization, and the ways in which all the areas are connected. It also accounts for the timing of different actions so they can work in synchrony.

While the original planning documents included goals that extended to 10 years, this proposed plan focuses on the education, planning and planning for infrastructure development that needs to occur over the next three years in order to lay the foundation for years four through 10. The plan is ambitious but realistic in terms of the resources (time and people) available. The objectives were made more general to allow the involvement of the settled minister as well as to provide flexibility for the staff and volunteers who will be implementing them. Responsibility for the work on many of the objectives was given to particular groups in the church. Measures of progress and success (vital signs) were added to each component of the plan to allow us the opportunity for self-assessment. Modifications were made to the timelines for different goals to accommodate the ministerial transition that is ahead for our congregation and the volunteer, staff and financial resources that this will consume over the next two years. Goals and objectives include opportunities for the new settled

Final CCCH Strategic Plan (affirmed on 6_2_13 version)

minister to be involved in the implementation of the plan. The plan acknowledges that the talents, interests and vision of our new minister play an important role in our work together. Our strategic plan is also aligned with a financial plan, which includes a possible capital campaign to add needed space, resources to hire an assistant minister, more staff hours where needed, and support programs. The plan is built on the understanding that our church has a commitment to multiculturalism, growth (within the midsize church parameters) and fiscal responsibility.

As the strategic planning team worked through the development of the action plan it regularly reported to the Board for feedback and approval. A draft of the plan was shared with the Board for approval before it was shared with the congregation. A series of town hall meetings were held to solicit feedback from members. People who served on the different committees, who developed the original action steps, were contacted and asked for their input as well. The draft plan was also presented to the Church Council.

Supporting Documents:

- [C3HUU Visioning Report.docx](#)
- [Results from Vision Survey 04.Jan.2012.pdf](#)
- [Appendix Copy of C3H Vision Survey 22.Aug.2011.pdf](#)
- [FAQ on Growth.doc](#)
- [Summary FAQ on Growth.doc](#)