

Parking Report, October 2016 *[data collection by ECO, Jun. 19-Sept. 25, 2016]*

The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist

As part of being welcoming to both members and visitors, our church needed to have parking spaces available for those coming to Sunday services. It was clear to many that our parking space was getting a “little snug”. At the June Congregational Meeting, a ten percent growth in membership was reported for the year, further verifying the need. That announcement included that more visitors and possible members were anticipated.

Membership, and its wonderful volunteers who said “yes”, and ECO members teamed up to welcome visitors at the driveway and help them with parking. They also helped develop awareness among church members of alternative parking locations in case there was parking overflow and people had to be redirected. Members who can walk without difficulty were also encouraged to consider use of alternative means to travel to church or alternative parking lots as a service, leaving parking spaces open for others.

Two main needs emerged from data and observations on Sundays from mid-June to the end of September:

- Need some volunteers to routinely use alternative parking on Sunday mornings, whether one or two services
- Need more spaces nearer the buildings for those with mobility issues

Other findings:

- Paths from alternative parking lots present some risks
- Some members have somewhat diminished driving ability (backing out of spaces, in the circle drive and when cars are parked in the center of the large lot, is an issue)

Some facts:

1. Data was collected for fifteen (15) Sundays, from Jun. 19 to Sept. 25.
2. For seven (7) of them, church parking lots would have closed or been near closing without the service of volunteers using alternatives.
 - a. Parking lots would have closed four (4) of the one-service Sundays.
 - b. Parking lots were close to being full for three (3) Sundays, two being for the second service.
3. There are 123 parking spaces in the circle drive, the main lot, the pine lots and a paved lot behind the buildings. *This was the number of spaces the Town of Chapel Hill allowed the church during the last building/renovation effort around 2005.*

4. The four (4) designated handicapped parking spaces are in the front circle drive. *(While churches do not have to comply, the ADA guide is 4 out of 76-100 spaces.)* We have more than four church members who have handicapped stickers. Several others have a disability, chronic condition or temporary situation that makes walking difficult. *[No survey has been done to quantify the need.]* Parking arrangements are not convenient for volunteers who provide rides to church to members who need some form of assistance getting into the buildings.

Next steps

During October, ECO will work on several things. Representatives are meeting with other representatives of Membership, Caring and Building and Grounds to recommend some potential changes to current parking space allocations to better serve our current needs. ECO will launch a church carpool map connection that can help in multiple ways. You could enjoy the company of someone on the way to church, identify whom to call if you need a ride to church, avoid your family having to bring multiple cars to church on a given Sunday when you each have to be there at/for different times, or just lessen the burden on the environment *(and church parking lot)* with one less vehicle on the road.

All members of the church community are invited to share your ideas about possible solutions and ask questions about the parking information or reports at eco@c3huu.org.