

What's New?: Strategic Planning Updates and UCS Video

Introduction of the Strategic Planning Team: Susan Kuney (Chair), Roger Anderson, Ellen Boylan, Karen Damato, Marty Rothfelder, Becky Sinden-Chin, and Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern.

The celebration opened with an inspiring video produced by member, Larry Kain, inviting the congregation to get involved with the strategic planning process and make their dreams and ideas heard.

Thanks to Coming of Age Class for providing lunch.

Thanks to Discovery Meeting facilitators for their help in running Discovery Meetings and capturing comments from participants:

Gary Buscemi
Laura Alper
Barbara Goldberg
Becky Sinden
Carol Ulmer
Jerry Lamagna
Lorraine Wearley
Roger Anderson
Joe Parsons
Kathryn Werlein
Rob Mustard
Bernice Kelly
Margaret Babcock
Asha Bernard
Claudia Cohen
Kimi Nakata
Ellen Boylan
Marion Ceruzzi
Daniel Cymbala
Marty Rothfelder
Tom Howard
Karen Damato
Chris Kellogg
Bev Awbrey

Thanks to Paul Belliveau for his invaluable advice and guidance to the Strategic Planning Team.

Thanks to Marty Rothfelder and Marnee Galbraith for providing and delivering food for Discovery Meetings.

Thanks to Discovery Meeting hosts for being willing to open their homes for Discovery Meetings:

Madhura and Varkii Chacko
Bill and Barbara Foley
Joelle Boechner and Tom McDonald
Sara Kirsch
Chris Kellogg and Helen Kaar
Laura and Trevor Bond
Carol Ulmer and Ken Degan
Ellen Boylan and Dennis White
Jean Crichton and Rob Gunhouse

Results from Round 1: Discovery Meetings

Ellen Boylan presented feedback from Discovery Meetings. Over 150 participants discussed what is meaningful to us about our experiences at UCS and gave three wishes for the congregation. Facilitators also gathered demographic data on the meeting participants.

Responses were thoughtful and insightful and raised several major themes and tensions within those themes, which we will explore in phase two of the process.

- We are grateful for the community that they find here although some do not feel connected or have found that their connection has changed over time.
- We are grateful for our focus on children and youth. It is what brought many of us here, and we seek to strengthen and grow our RE programs.
- Spiritual growth is important to us through sermons, adult RE, and SIP. Even though at the time of the Discovery Meetings SIP had just started, it resonated with many people.
- We value social action and the promotion of social justice.
- We have a strong desire to grow the congregation and to lead in our community and in the UU denomination.
- We are grateful for our staff and are concerned with how we adequately support them and whether we need more staff to accomplish all that we desire.

In our self-reported demographics most, though not all of us, said that we are in good financial health despite the economic downturn demonstrating that we have the resources to support our move forward.

Next Steps: Round 2

Marty Rothfelder outlined the next steps in the strategic planning process prefacing his remarks with thanks to Susan Kunej for her extraordinary hard work and dedication in leading the Strategic Planning team.

The next round in the process does not yet have a name but it will involve presenting the congregation with a series of “provocative proposals”. These provocative proposals are statements about the future framed as if that future is already in place. These statements are imaginative and stretch us beyond where we are today.

We have set aside three upcoming Sundays, March 18th and 25th and April 1st (at the risk of inspiring April Fool’s jokes) for the congregation to hear the Strategic Planning team’s provocative proposals and offer some of their own. These proposals should get us thinking, conversing and generating excitement for the future of our congregation.

Lastly, Roger Anderson led us in creating headlines about UCS ten years hence to be put in a time capsule to be opened in five years when we begin the next cycle of strategic planning. Among the fabulous headlines:

UCS Opens Wing in its New Facility for Transitional Housing
UU Church Defeats Homophobia, Calls out Congress on ‘Sanctioned Hate,
Unitarian Church in Summit Dedicates New 400 seat sanctuary to SRO crowd
UCS Conquers the World!