

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth Long Range Plan 2009-2014

Overview

We're on the right path, we have made great progress. This plan is intended to help the congregation fulfill its full mission and help members and friends deepen their understanding of our faith by doing. We need to dig deep and find the creativity and energy for MORE.

Spiritual Growth

- MORE. More people in church on Sunday to share our UU message, more ways to define our own beliefs and find like minded others, more worship opportunities, more music.

Caring for Each Other

- We are all part of shared ministry to care for each other. We will create a deacons or ushers program to link welcoming to intake and caring. We will develop a carpooling program to help one another and relieve the environment.

Social Action

- It's not enough to have a great Social Action Committee. We will all pitch in by buying food certificates to support local charities, and work in the fellowship and the community.

Green Sanctuary

- We have the UUA certificate and we will keep on engaging the congregation and the community in projects for green living and food and energy justice.

Religious Education

- We will increase activities and resources for parents, especially those with children with special needs. We will better supply and equip our youth group. We will increase adults working in the program. We will be sure the classrooms speak well of the program to visitors.

Adult Education

- We will build on success by offering programs for parents; and by offering more programs by engaging more committees in the work; and by advertising the program in the community as part of outreach to the community.

Membership

- We're growing at the same rate as the upper Cape generally: 3% a year. We will work to grow 5% a year. We will investigate radical hospitality.

Volunteer Development

- We will provide a leadership development program annually; outreach from committees to engage more people in the on-going work of the fellowship; and rotate chairmanships to encourage more people to take responsibility and learn by doing.

Administration

- We will increase administrative support so there are more covered office hours and better support for committees.

Facilities

- We will provide more parking space and reconfigure the existing building to make more room for coffee hour.

- We will develop options and cost projections for building expansion because we're outgrowing the sanctuary for decision by the congregation within the next three years.

Finances

- We will include savings to the annual budget and aim to cover the 85% of the full budget through the annual pledge drive. We will develop a long range financial plan based on projections for maintenance and repair of the existing facility by July 1, 2010.

Each section of the plan has specific recommendations to accomplish in the near future.

A USER'S MANUAL -HOW TO USE AND RESPOND TO THIS FIVE YEAR PLAN-

This Five Year Plan is meant to be a living document that will change every year. Its purpose is to set a course for the Fellowship over the next five years, identifying those initiatives and actions that the Fellowship believes are important to its development. It is meant to be a broad outline of what we want to look like in five years 'time.

For the plan to be successful and "alive" it needs regular attention. For ease of use the plan is organized to match our committee structure. It is expected that each committee will take those goals contained in the plan for which it is directly responsible and use them to structure strategy for their committee's initiatives and actions over the next five years. But five years is a long time and because of that, the plan requires that each year, in June, each committee will prepare a Planning Report to be submitted to the Governing Board. The Planning Report should present in detail accomplishments and the approach for structuring goals, initiatives, deliverables and milestones -the committee's 'metrics for success' - for the year ahead with the long-term goals presented in the five year plan in mind.

The information contained in the Committee Planning Report will then become the core of the presentation made by each committee at the Annual Committee Planning Meeting held in October. This committee plan should also address what has worked and what has not, with suggestions for mid-course corrections, planning additions, and updates required to address changing circumstances. In other words, stress that this Five Year Plan is a living document, and while it may represent our best efforts to look ahead, it is not a "crystal ball" nor is it "etched in stone."

UUFF Long Range Plan 2009-2014

. This plan incorporates parts of the plan first approved by the congregation at its annual meeting of June 2005 that have not been completed. Once it is approved, this plan will replace that earlier plan. The congregation will be asked to approve this plan in October 2009. The congregation reviews and can amend the strategic the plan every year at the annual program Planning Meeting in October.

The purpose of this plan is to help the Fellowship fulfill its mission. which is:

- We are a Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship that is a liberal religious community drawn from a wide diversity of thought and belief.
- We affirm and promote the seven principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Our purpose is to support and enhance each person's individual spiritual journey to give meaning and purpose in their lives.
- We are proud of our heritage of being a new Fellowship in an old New England tradition.

- As a Welcoming Congregation we offer programs and activities to all who would journey with us.
- Through social action we reach out to support those in need in the wider community.
- Our closely knit community provides care and support to all within our midst in times of joy and sorrow.
- By working together we provide the financial resources that support our staff, programs, building and grounds.
- *(Proposed NEW)* Our fellowship meetinghouse is a green sanctuary. We encourage making our homes and community green sanctuaries, too.

Spiritual Growth: The goal is to provide a range of activities and services that supports individuals' spiritual journey and respects the diversity of beliefs within the congregation.

1. Increase regular participation in Sunday Services, the congregation's primary means of supporting spiritual growth and affirming UU principles.
2. Strengthen volunteer support for Sunday Services including sanctuary set up, sound system, chalice lighting, and welcoming and ushering visitors.
3. Expand and support opportunities for members and friends to identify and build relationships with others who share their spiritual approaches and beliefs. Possibilities include a "This I Believe" program; a "Parents as Resident Theologians" group, and structured small group ministries using models that have succeeded in other congregations could yield one or more groups.
 1. Expand and support opportunities for members and friends to build their own theologies.
 2. Expand worship opportunities and opportunities for developing relationships among congregation members of dissimilar spiritual approaches and beliefs to better profit from the diversity in our midst.
 3. Support and expand the music program to include a summer choral program, young people's choral program, and expanded instrumental program.

Caring for Each Other: The goal is for all members to be aware that they are part of a shared ministry to care for one another. A Caring Committee is essential but does not undertake the full responsibility or relieve individual members of responsibility.

1. Develop a common understanding of right relationships within the congregation.
2. Contribute to the Minister's Discretionary fund for helping members and friends in our community.
3. Augment the Caring Committee's work by instituting a Deacons/Ushers program to keep attendance at services and identify and contact "missing" members and friends.
4. Better advertise our rites of passage: weddings, memorial services, and child dedications.
5. Provide chairs with arms with "reservation" signs at Sunday Services.
6. Improve outreach both to newcomers and to those too shy to ask so they know they can get and give help.
7. Promote widespread carpooling so people who need rides get them regularly without having to ask each time.
8. Develop a communications system for deaths and hospitalizations.
9. Develop policies for caring.

Social Action: The goal is for not just members of the Social Action Committee but all members to be aware that they are part of shared ministry to make this world a better place and to be active participants in this shared ministry. Unitarian Universalists believe in deeds, not creeds.

1. Each year, as part of its mission of service and policy of encouraging and supporting volunteer activity in the community, the board will sponsor a Service Fair to celebrate all members' and friends' individual hands-on service to the UUFF community and the wider community.
2. Each year, the percentage of members' and friends' households participating in the food certificate program will grow by 10 households so that in five years close to 50% of the congregation will be participating. The board and other committees will support SAC's work in increasing awareness and participation.
3. Each year, the congregation will continue its leadership role in the Alternative Gift Market and the number of people, both within the congregation and in the larger community, who participate in alternative giving will increase.
4. The SAC will continue to support, through publicity and/or co-sponsorship, specific local events that benefit the community
5. The congregation will provide seed money and help cover administrative costs for SAC's events so that a greater percentage of the funds contributed to charity by an event will go to the charity.
6. The SAC will intensify its efforts to keep the congregation informed about opportunities to participate in or contribute to organizations that are working to meet needs and solve problems both within and beyond the local community.
7. The SAC will explore the possibility and desirability of the congregation "adopting" a specific organization, project or cause, to support both actively and financially.
8. A task force will explore the ideas of "radical hospitality" and report to the congregation and see if the congregation wishes to embrace these approaches to inclusiveness and social justice.

Green Sanctuary –UUFF is an official UUA Green Sanctuary now engaged in a variety of projects in five broad areas: food, energy, green living, adult education for the members, and connecting with other UU and Falmouth congregations related to green sanctuary issues.

1. Identify leadership and continue the group as a standing committee for those with a special interest in this area to provide direction for the congregation.
2. Engage the congregation in support of the on-going projects in food, energy, and green living.
3. Support carpooling to and from the meetinghouse for any and all activities to reduce carbon emissions and help solve the problem of limited parking space without more paving.
4. Support a community windmill to help low income people pay for their electricity.
5. Continue providing education for the congregation in green sanctuary issues.
6. Encourage the youth group to undertake a green sanctuary project.

Religious Education –RE has 64 children and youth enrolled with about 30 attending regularly. Attendance is highly variable due to families' schedules but generally 10-20 children (usually about 12) attend Sunday School, 5-10 teenagers attend Youth Group every Sunday afternoon/evening, and 4-5 youth participate in the OWL program (Our Whole Lives, the UUA sexuality education program). There are generally 2-3 infants/toddlers in the Nursery every Sunday morning. Children's Sunday School follows a rotating three-year curriculum during the school year; there is a less structured thematic arts and crafts program during the summer months and on the Sundays of holiday weekends (when attendance is low). The RE committee sponsors several inter-generational activities every year, including the Halloween/Sanheim Potluck, the Summertime Blues Party, winter movie nights, and summer bonfire parties. In addition to the RE Committee and two paid staff (the DRE and Nursery Care Provider), the RE program is made possible by volunteer

Sunday School teachers (4-5 per year), OWL instructors (2 per year), and Youth Group advisors (2). Generally, parents are satisfied with the growth, content, and direction of the program.

1. Insulate and heat the east wing adequately during Sunday School so children do not have to wrap in blankets to keep warm.
2. Maintain the volunteer base. The program takes over 200 volunteer hours of 4-6 adults who give up 13 to 26 Sunday mornings to make it work.
3. Sustain attendance despite competing activities.
4. Increase activities and resources for parents. Many children have special needs; targeted support and training and coordination with the Caring Committee may help.
5. Parents want support on developing their children's moral and spiritual values.
6. PreK is at capacity (5-8 children); growth may bring new volunteers to add another class.
7. The Youth Group needs supplies and equipment to work with.
8. First impressions of the classrooms should be informative and attractive to parents seeking religious education for their children.

Adult Education – Randomly offered before 2005, an adult education program is now offered every Wednesday night for 10 months of the year and at times during July and August.: 550 people attended programs in 2007-2008. The most popular were those offered by Green Sanctuary yet each offering then and to date in 2008-2009 has attracted and held a core of 5 to 10 people.

1. Parents are an underserved group. Work with RE and other committees to meet their needs.
2. Adult education can be an effective outreach tool. Learn to work within copyright laws so as to invite the public to films. Get adult education notices into the community.
3. Engagement of the Social Action and Green Sanctuary committees has been productive. Engage more committees and/or individuals in providing programming as away to increase participation.
4. Investigate web-based discussion groups.
5. Try offering more than one class per session as a way to attract more participation.
6. Track and report participation to the board and the congregation; set a challenging but achievable annual goal for increased participation.

Membership: UUFF grew on average 3.4 % a year from 2004 to 2008. Projecting conservatively, we will increase our membership 3% annually, from 197 in 2009 to 228 in 2014. The population of the upper Cape is growing about 3% a year.

	Year	Members	Average Attendance	Percent Annual Increase in Members
Actual	2005	172	72	
	2006	176	79	2.3%
	2007	182	89	3.4%
	2008	190	92	4.3%
	2009	197	96	3.6%
Projected	2010	207	100	5%
	2011	217	108	5%
	2012	228	114	5%
	2013	239	119	5%
	2014	251	126	5%

1. Set a new goal of 5% growth each year.
2. Institutionalize membership support including outreach and visitor support and follow-up, perhaps with an usher program.

3. Implement an “intake” process that includes learning about our beliefs, methods or operation, and organization and integrates newcomers into our fellowship life.
4. Now, for every Sunday service, ensure that there are enough hymnals and programs for everyone who attends services.
5. Study why there is so little demographic diversity and work to increase the diversity (in tandem with a “radical hospitality” task force).

Volunteer Development: UUFF has one full-time staff member, our minister, and five part-time staff members. The fellowship relies on its volunteers to provide its infrastructure. Of its 198 members, perhaps 120 are members of a committee, the choir, or some other group with a purpose that meets regularly and many of these also volunteer for the work groups to produce events and activities. A much smaller number, between 25 and 40, serve as committee and activity chairs. UUFF cannot realize this long range plan without adding to the number of people who serve on committees, staff activities, and serve as leaders.

1. Plan and implement an annual leadership development program
2. Enlist committee chairs to publish their meeting dates, times & places to encourage wider participation
3. Enlist committee chairs to submit participation data so the Office manager can build a data base of volunteers
4. Encourage sharing chairmanships (co-chairs) and rotating chairmanships on a two or three year basis so more people can learn leadership by doing it and burn-out can be avoided. If a chair has served three years in the position it may be time for change!
5. Publish committee membership annually so the information is widely available in the congregation for purposes of giving credit where it’s due.

Administration: By 2008, Fellowship administration has grown from a 100% volunteer activity on the part of members and the minister and the minister’s wife to include a part-time (12 hour a week) office administrator. Fellowship office hours are 9 to noon five days a week. The Office Assistant prepares the Order of Service, oversees the Master Calendar, manages e-mail, and develops and maintains computer files for attendance, membership, annual reports, board minutes, and canvass materials. Office volunteers “cover” the phone, deliveries, and reception from 9 to noon five days a week and assist with printing and mailing the monthly newsletter, and filing. Communication volunteers produce a weekly e-mail newsletter, a monthly print and e-mail newsletter, and a website. Cash receipt, deposits, bookkeeping, bill paying and accounting are done by volunteers with two exceptions: a payroll service handles compensation payments and, starting in 2008, a CPA was engaged to institute a new on-line accounting system. In years ahead, to better support growth of the congregation and avoid volunteer burnout:

1. Continue to benchmark compensation to UUA guidelines; do not fall below minimums.
2. Strengthen coordination of staff and volunteer administrative work.
3. Increase the authority of the staff to manage administrative work.
4. Increase the administrative support for essential administrative functions of finance and communication.
5. Increase fellowship office hours.
6. Develop policies for permission for filming, photographs, and website.
7. Increase Administrative staff hours from the current 12 per week to 16 in 2010, 20 hours per week in 2011, 25 hours in 2012, and 30 hours or more by 2013. Include benefits at 20 hours per week.

8. Increase level of responsibility for the Administrator to made decisions regarding office management and budget, perhaps with the exception of purchases not covered by the Office Budget.
9. Provide professional expenses for the administrator, for training, travel to a local meeting, dues in a professional organization, purchase books or other aids. Allow time to attend meetings or trainings. Increase this amount each year.
10. Amend the by-laws to reflect current organization and practices.

Facilities: The meetinghouse is a continuing source of pride. It meets the immediate needs of the congregation with two exceptions, parking and space for coffee hour, but will not provide space for expansion beyond a membership of 220.

1. In 2009, a feasibility study should be done to identify options and costs for expanding the parking area in the way that least compromises the natural beauty of the site.
2. In 2009, meadow parking should be stabilized by gravel or other non-intrusive means.
3. By 2011, parking should be made adequate for the congregation of 230 members.
4. In 2009, space available for coffee hour should be expanded within the existing building. Funds should be budgeted for this purpose. Buildings and Grounds Committee will prepare plans for congregation comment and board action.
5. In 2009 and going forward, every effort should be made by Building & Grounds Committee, with help from Green Sanctuary Committee, to review possible cost-effective energy saving measures, and bring recommendations forward for approval and implementation..
6. In 2009 and going forward, Align the visual appearance of the exterior and interior of the meetinghouse with our beliefs so that it is a teaching and reinforcing space.
7. Our existing site represents an important natural resource, not only for humans, but for our native and visiting flora and fauna. The sunny meadow, the dominant view from the sanctuary, could be enhanced in a sustainable way with native plants that provide seed, shelter and forage.
8. Our current mortgage with the UUA paid at the rate of \$14,400 a year will be fully paid by 2014. The congregation will have prepared for an expansion plan with expenditures to begin when the mortgage is paid.

If membership projections are realized the meetinghouse will not be able to meet the needs of the congregation by 2013 or 2014. The sanctuary was planned to seat 150 people but, based on actual operating experience, can really only seat about 140 people comfortably. Further, good design dictates that only 80 percent of room capacity should be used for planning purposes, indicating that the space can comfortably accommodate 112 people. Attendance in 2009 is regularly 90 or more and over 100 for holiday services and special events. We anticipate regular attendance in 2012 to hit 114. Therefore, based on current growth levels, we can reasonably expect to reach our comfort capacity within the 2014 planning horizon. Changes to accommodate membership growth can be phased in: double sessions, build-out of the sanctuary space to the porch roofline as envisioned in the original plan, or a further expansion of the sanctuary space or the addition to a wing to provide additional functions and meeting space.

8. In 2009 and 2010, the board should prepare phasing plans sufficiently detailed to be costed out for the congregation's consideration.
9. Double sessions will add to the minister's and sexton's work and to the work of the volunteers who help them. The Music and RE programs program will need to adjust to double sessions. Ministry, Buildings and Grounds and Music should consider how best to manage double sessions with least change to the quality of the services and make recommendations for the congregation's consideration.

10. In 2010, provide forums for discussion about the fellowship's response to membership growth.
11. In 2011, 2012, and 2013, the congregation should review its space needs and determine if and when to take action on expansion.

Finances: The annual goal is to raise enough money to support the operating budget and add to the non-operating reserves, and to operate accountably with full disclosure to the congregation.

1. Inform the congregation about income and expenses every month in SandScript.
2. Start the annual stewardship drive not later than February and conclude it by May 1st.
3. Include adding to the non-operating reserves in the annual budget.
4. Work toward meeting the full budget through 85% pledges and the remainder through the plate and fundraisers. (For FY 2010, we're 79% pledge supported and the reserve is not included.)
5. Develop a long range financial plan based on projections for maintenance and repair of the existing facility by July 1, 2010.
6. Institutionalize Ways & Means and Investment Planning functions.