

This is our shared vision for the future of our religious community. It is a vision statement, created from congregational input, in the form of goals, strategies and examples of tactics that might be used to achieve our goals. It is meant to set the overall direction of the church community for the next several years and guide the board and leadership councils in designing and directing activities toward this shared vision. It is not designed to be a strategic plan with tasks and timelines. Those specifics will be determined by the implementing councils and committees.

COMMUNITY

Goal Statement

We build community and a sense of belonging as an essential part of living our faith, by:

- **Deepening the existing connections we have with one another,**
- **Encouraging new connections between people.**
- **Supporting one another through life's inevitable challenges and transitions -- spiritually, emotionally and physically,**
- **Engaging with others in our community to deepen our individual spiritual journeys and strengthen our lived values,**
- **Observing significant events in the life of our community, whether to celebrate, grieve, or simply enjoy one another's company.**

Strategies and Tactics

Provide forums to give us the freedom and safety to know each other more deeply, beyond coffee hour, committee work, and our usual social roles and demands. Specific groups might include:

- **Common interest groups, e.g. women, grief, the newly divorced, singles, men, common age groups, weight-loss, caregivers, new parents, cancer, etc.**
- **"Dream-Ins" where we gather for study, food, shared sleep and reflection.**
- **Soul Sharing groups, with questions designed to encourage deeper sharing, such as, "What was the hardest thing I ever did?"**

Facilitate increased opportunities for initial connections amongst church community members so that we may expand our circles, as well as help to integrate new members. These opportunities will recognize that people desire varying degrees of intimacy.

Specific activities might include:

- Community Circle (coffee hour conversations designed to meet new people and get to know others better).
- Visits to new members to find out their interests/skills, desired level of involvement, and to provide suggestions for participation.
- Buddy System for new members, to help orient and involve them in the church community.
- Participation Program for new and older members to sign up for simple, one-time volunteer tasks.
- Events to bring together members with different outlooks (for example artists and engineers).
- 1st Sunday Potlucks (focus on eating simple, wholesome food with people you don't know). Ask for small donation if not potluck, and provide simple premade meals.

Help people in need to comfortably express their needs to the community so that their needs may be met. Encourage a culture of mutual caretaking, recognizing that givers and receivers both benefit. Possibilities might include:

- Method for identifying "helping hands" to assist those in our community. It could include time-limited jobs, e.g. helping someone move.

Offer additional ways to experience shared spirituality, such as:

- Classes based on specific theological perspectives (e.g. Jewish studies group, Christian-based group).
- Expanding offering of spirituality retreats.
- Building a walking labyrinth on the church grounds.

Commit resources, including technology, to connect people in our community with one another, for example:

- Online TIE Group
- Online Community/Welcome Book with more substance about individual members, to enrich face-to-face interactions.
- Webcast of Sunday services to those who cannot physically attend.

- Online database for volunteer coordination.
- Database to track skills, talents or recommendations from members (e.g. be able to check out office to find someone to bring cookies to an event).

MULTICULTURALISM

Goal Statement

Our congregation will engage in authentic and meaningful expression of a variety of cultures and backgrounds, through:

- **Positive expressions of the racial and cultural identities of our members and friends as part of congregational life,**
- **Culturally respectful efforts to explore a spectrum of viewpoints and learn from their wisdom sources, and**
- **Positive representation of a range of cultures, ethnicities and economic positions in worship, religious education, community celebrations, social action and other aspects of congregational life.**

Strategies and Tactics

Expand opportunities to learn more about multiculturalism, become more comfortable with our identities and explore the identities of others in respectful ways. Specific activities might include:

- Classes on identity formation and class identity.
- Education on identity for Religious Education Teachers and others.
- Identifying the wide range of cultural resources already available within our membership.
- Identifying church volunteers willing to be ombudspople for different languages and traditions.

Develop ways for multicultural families and families of color to gather to support one another and learn from one another's experiences.

Commit long-term resources necessary to become a teaching site for intern ministers from groups historically marginalized in our ministry.

Offer authentic exploration of the spirituality of different cultures and traditions through in-depth exploration in classes and worship services.

Provide regular opportunity to learn and celebrate the cultural heritage of MDUUC members, such as:

- Heritage potlucks with multicultural music, art, games, etc.
- Cultural fairs or movie series.
- Recognition in worship and other community gatherings of culturally significant occasions, holidays and musical traditions.
- Display of religious symbols and art as culturally appropriate.

Extend our hospitality to provide space for culturally significant activities of outside organizations, through means such as:

- Advertising the availability of our facilities to a wide range of community groups,
- Hosting forums on issues of importance to racial and cultural groups in our community,
- Encouraging ethnicity-based groups in the community to join us in outreach activities.
- Participating in interfaith, multicultural efforts.

Bring the message of Unitarian Universalism to other cultures in our community, through means such as:

- Representing the diversity of our membership in our worship services and amongst greeting teams,
- Translating the Purposes and Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association into other languages (if we are able to also provide continued multi-lingual resources),
- Providing introductory materials in other languages important to our neighbors.

Recognize the bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender families as part of our multiculturalism, through efforts such as:

- Providing a support group for bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender and intersex people.
- Organizing social groups to promote the needs of UU sexual minorities.

MULTIGENERATIONAL

Goal Statement

Our congregation will make multigenerational connections integral to the life of our community, especially:

- **Regular opportunities to build community and expand a sense of “family” and familiarity across generations,**
- **Opportunities for meaningful participation for ‘tweens, teens, young adults and our eldest elders to maintain connection, and**
- **An expectation that congregational life will be meaningful, fun and nurturing for people of all ages.**

Strategies and Tactics

Create opportunities for learning about one another to establish deeper connections across generations. Examples might include:

- Bringing the whole Church together more frequently: In addition to the community dinners, have a bigger group luncheon or dinner periodically around different themes.
- Oral History Projects: Involve all generations with the creation of videos. These could be shown at periodic all-church luncheons. To keep this going, we could use the different themes for each of these luncheons and have the videos reflect the congregation’s views about these themes/topics. These could potentially end up being the public face of our congregation as well.
- Secret Pal: Exchange letters with a randomly selected pal in the congregation ‘blind’. After a few weeks of this, you get to meet the person at the luncheon.
- Involve youth and adults alike in leading events.

Create a regular schedule of fun and engaging events: A variety of events meant to give members the opportunity to discover common interests, besides service, in entertaining and educational ways. Activities might include:

- Movie Nights (along the lines of the book club, but requiring less preparation)
- Game Nights
- Tree Trimming/Apple Pie/Ice Cream Social
- Superbowl Party, Oscar Nights, Election Night parties

- Craft Night, Make a Kite Day, Knitting/Quilting circle, Make Valentines/Easter eggs,
- Create an all Church Mural outside the church
- Harvest festival
- Fieldtrips

Connect with the community through service projects to serve the congregation's needs or the needs of the community-at-large.

- Bus/Van Pool for those needing transportation.
- Winter Nights or similar projects.
- Community Garden
- Homework Night: MDUUC students drop in and receive help on their homework or other projects. Over time, this could involve other students in the community as well.

Consider ways, when organizing/scheduling events, to enable multiple generations to participate, for example:

- Make sure events start/finish at a time that facilitates interaction either before or after.
- Van Pool/Car Pool for those who can't make it to late night events.
- Create more community spaces such as places to sit, more effectively use the bulletin boards.
- Online groups can be useful in creating connections across generations.
- Emphasize community building aspects of cleaning up after events.

OUTREACH AND GROWTH

Goal Statement

We are committed to broadening the reach of Unitarian Universalism and spreading its good news, by:

- **Reaching out to others in our community and welcome their participation our midst,**
 - **Welcoming new members and friends into the life of our community in ways that affirm their journeys, and**
 - **Deepening the meaning of membership for existing members.**
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Strategies and Tactics

Involve people more fully once they are here, for example, by:

- Developing a mentor program.
- More active distribution of "rights and responsibilities of membership".
- Newcomer discussion groups.
- Podcasting of sermons on mduuc.org, paired with a blog and comment board.

Reach out to the community through the Arts in a way that appeals to all ages, for example by:

- Hosting arts events that may include food, break time conducive to mingling and/or a discussion period.
- Creating a drama group for children and young adults.

Reach out to the community through Lifespan and Religious Education, by

- Exploring the possibility of summer camps, open to children in the community, which highlight our values.
- Inform participants in our classes, including OWL, of the fuller range of activities at the Church by adding them to our visitors list.

Develop a community ministry in geographic areas where we would like more of a presence, for instance:

- Find community ministers for our church, support their activities, and involve ourselves in their local projects.
- **Publicize MDUUC's strengths to target audiences, for example:**
- Advertise MDUUC as a venue for secular events, such as Toastmasters.
- Co-host community events with like-minded organizations, to attract potential constituents: liberal intellectuals, those who embrace diversity, families seeking religious education and OWL-like programs for their children.
- Host 12-step groups.
- Host our own events that would attract the public, including lectures and educational forums, environmental, music, and arts events.
- Develop a consistent outreach message and approach for all events serving the public.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Goal Statement

We make social justice integral to our identity as a congregation, with:

- **Justice-seeking activities that involve a significant percentage of the congregation,**
- **A core understanding that public ministry and interfaith efforts are at the heart of our congregational life together, and**
- **Ever-deepening work on justice issues which builds on the unique history of Unitarian Universalists, and our congregation's history of working to better our world.**

Strategies and Tactics

Reach out to the larger community to assess and meet needs, becoming known as a leader in social action. Activities might include:

- Adopt a school in need, conduct an assessment, then organize to meet unmet needs.
- Select a major social justice cause or topic to focus on for each church year, based on identified community needs.
- Seek opportunities to provide public witness as an expression of our values and to increase our visibility in the community.

Leverage the expertise and capabilities of local, regional, national and global non-profit service agencies to increase the effectiveness and reach of our social action projects, for example:

- Collaborate with existing community projects that bring us into direct contact with people in need -- nonprofits, other faith communities and other groups with similar values who are working on relevant issues.
- Expand opportunities to participate in and partner with the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County or similar interfaith organizations.
- Create opportunities for civil dialogue with "conservative" organizations.
- Explore international partnerships.

Increase congregational involvement through education about local needs, then provide opportunities to take action. Activities could include:

- Use web and social media to identify and list social action opportunities.
 - Who is organizing? What types of help are needed? When and how?
- Offer public forums, events, and speakers to express our social justice values to the community.
- Use a version of the "Social Justice Fair" in the spring to select one to three areas/topics of concentration for the following church year.
- Provide more opportunities, like Winter Nights, for many people to contribute small, finite amounts of time to support a large project.

Encourage a wide range of committees and groups to explore the identified social justice themes for the year. Activities could include:

- Encouraging groups to check in on the identified key social justice activities.
- Focusing worship services on relevant and timely issues.
- Creating opportunities for groups to provide hands-on work together on key issues.

Explore the greater possibilities that community ministry could afford social justice efforts.