

*Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal, Illinois*

# **STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010 - 2015**

## **Strategic Plan Task Force Members**

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**The Strategic Planning Task Force was formed by the UUBN Board of Directors in August 2010, and asked to draft a Strategic Plan that could be voted on by the congregation in February 2011. The February meeting did not have a quorum, and the meeting was rescheduled on April 17. The Strategic Plan was accepted by unanimous vote of the congregation.**

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2015 – OVERVIEW OF GOALS

**Goal # 1, Governance and Program Church.** We will optimize the effectiveness of our governance structure as a “program church”, and provide meaningful opportunities for all Church members to participate in governance, committees, and congregational meetings.

**Goal # 2, Worship and Ministry.** We will attend to the spiritual, worship, and pastoral needs and opportunities that will emerge in the transition to a program church.

**Goal # 3, Social Action.** We will support social action activities which will advance the mission of this Church.

**Goal # 4, Lifespan Religious Education.** We will strengthen offerings for lifespan religious education programming in our Church.

**Goal # 5, Active Community Outreach.** We will make our presence, our vision, and our values better known in Central Illinois and beyond.

**Goal # 6, Membership.** We will enhance the welcoming of visitors, increase our outreach to potential new members, and create opportunities for the Church to foster spiritual growth and promote member retention.

**Goal # 7, Financial and Member Stewardship.** We will develop a plan for the stewardship of the Church, focusing on financial and non-monetary resources. The plan will include leadership development and ways to encourage members to assume leadership positions.

**Goal # 8, Building and Property Improvement.** We will develop a plan with attention to energy and greenspace issues for the renovation, improvement, and expansion of our current Church building as well as the continued enhancement of our property.

## ***STRATEGIC PLAN 2010--2015***

**Our Vision:** We are an intentional covenanting community that promotes the free expression of liberal religious values in central Illinois. We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual, the use of the democratic method in our governance, and the responsible search by individuals for their religious truths. We further believe that our faith calls us to promote social justice in the wider community. Our Church will be recognized as a center that supports community involvement, dedicated to progressive religious values, peace, justice, and social equity.

**Our Mission:** Our Church mission encompasses these works:

- Expanding our social justice outreach
- Personal and religious development
- Celebration of life (rites of passage, worship, spiritual development)
- Lifespan religious education
- Fellowship, friendship, and fun
- Caring and nurturing
- Stewardship of the history, tradition and other assets of the faith
- Fostering and promoting the faith by growing our message

The eight goals and strategies below are presented in numerical order for identification purposes. No order of priority is suggested.

The goals are in bold, and strategies follow along with lead groups and timelines. The Program Council is listed for all Goals because of its unique role in leadership and coordination with church committees.

**Goal and Strategy # 1, Governance and Program Church. We will optimize the effectiveness of our governance structure as a “program church” (see definition below), and provide meaningful opportunities for all Church members to participate in Church governance, committees, and congregational meetings.**

One feature often found in program churches is a program council; this was created at UUBN in 2010 as a way to provide leadership and coordination to Church committees. At UUBN we value democratic governance where individual participation and input are fostered. This needs to be maintained while we develop as a program church.

**Lead Groups:** Board of Directors, Program Council

**Timeline:** Continuous, but the Strategic Planning Task Force suggests that the Program Council report to the Board of Directors annually on the movement of UUBN toward a program church.

**Program Church:** “known for the quality and variety of its programs...separate programs for children, youth, couples, seniors, and other age and interest groups provide entry points for a wide range of people...The pastor’s crucial role is to recruit, equip, and inspire a small circle of key program leaders...working as a team with the pastor, they reach out to involve others as program participants and as leaders...decision making is broadly distributed within the wider leadership circle (25 to 50 people)...size, 150-400 adults and children at worship” (p. 184). *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. Gil Rendle and Alice Mann. 2003. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute. The term used in this book, "adults and children at worship," is equal to the sum of two figures collected at UUBN. First, there is the total number of adults in the building which is a figure reported to the Church Office each week as “the total number in the building.” Second, there is an RE attendance figure which is reported weekly to the Church Office. Adding these two figures together equals the number of adults and children at worship. These figures, however, are not the same as pledging units, membership, or voting members which represent other data collected by UUBN.

**Goal and Strategy # 2, Worship and Ministry. We will attend to the spiritual, worship, and pastoral needs and opportunities that will emerge in the transition to a program church.**

The development of UUBN as a program church as well as the beginning of the ministry of a new, senior, settled minister offers a unique opportunity to examine and coordinate the multiple aspects of the spiritual side of UUBN. The activities of ministry lie at the heart of UUBN Church Life as their very purpose is to carry out the Church Mission. Recognizing that ours is a shared ministry, we all have roles in this undertaking; however, the new Minister, Associate Minister, Affiliated Minister, a newly-reconstituted Committee on Ministry, and others involved in worship will play critical roles in these endeavors. Working collaboratively with all involved in the multiple ministries of UUBN, including the full congregation, we will clarify the roles of the Ministers. A plan for the assessment of the ministries of the Church, including worship, pastoral ministry, and ministries to the greater community, needs to be formulated and

implemented. It will be valuable to periodically assess the spiritual and worship needs of the congregation. Quality worship will provide a strong incentive for visitors to continue attending UUBN. Increased cohesiveness between worship and spiritual development of the congregation is desirable. A worship plan for the entire church year could serve as a way to thematically organize an integrated program of worship connected to church programs, events, and activities.

**Lead Groups:** Committee on Ministry, Worship and Music Committee, Caring Committee, Pastoral Care Associates, Program Council, Board of Directors

**Timeline:** Worship plan and Assessment plan to be developed in 2011 with implementation beginning in 2012

**Goal and Strategy # 3, Social Action. We will support social action activities which will advance the mission of this Church.**

Social action through community involvement is an important value to UUBN, and it has been an historic strength of this Church. Jesse Fell, William O. Davis, Florence Fifer Bohrer, three governors including Adlai Stevenson II, and three presidents of Illinois State University were civic-minded community leaders and Church members, as were others including numerous recent and current UUBN members. We strive to support programs and activities that reflect our liberal religious values, social justice, ecological concerns, peace, and the welfare of the poor or disadvantaged in Central Illinois and beyond.

**Lead Group :** Community Concerns Committee, Outreach Committee, Program Council

**Timeline:** Initial goals to be achieved by 2012

**Goal and Strategy # 4, Lifespan Religious Education. We will strengthen offerings for lifespan religious education programming in our Church.**

We believe in the responsible search by individuals for their religious education as well as their spiritual development. These are processes that are ongoing throughout life, often beginning during school-age years and continuing throughout adulthood. The concept of ***lifespan religious education*** is important and needs to be developed by offering opportunities for growth and learning in all stages of life's journey.

**Lead Groups:** Religious Education Committee, Adult Religious Education Committee, Program Council

**Timeline:** Initial goals to be achieved by 2012

**Goal and Strategy # 5, Active Community Outreach. We will make our presence, our vision, and our values better known in Central Illinois and beyond.**

We believe in active community outreach by fostering and promoting the faith beyond church walls and proclaiming our message in ways that are meaningful to those outside UUBN. This includes attention to our website as a portal to potential members as well as media publicity for and coverage of UUBN activities. While Central Illinois is an obvious focus, there are opportunities for meaningful community outreach beyond Central Illinois, such as the Central Midwest District of UUA and meetings and workshops at state and national levels.

**Lead Groups:** Outreach Committee, Community Concerns Committee, Denominational Affairs, Program Council

**Timeline:** Initial goals to be achieved by 2012

**Goal and Strategy # 6, Membership. We will enhance the welcoming of visitors, increase the outreach of our Church to potential new members, and create opportunities for the Church to foster spiritual growth and promote member retention.**

We believe in providing caring, nurturing and fellowship to current and potential new members, as well as visitors and inactive or former members. It is important to be proactive at welcoming all who attend and visit UUBN, and to identify committees, activities, programs, and positions at UUBN in which new members might be interested. It is said that appropriate welcoming activities get potential new members “in the door,” but relevant programs of substance bond members to the Church.

**Lead Groups:** Membership Committee, Fellowship Committee, Outreach Committee, Caring Committee, Pastoral Care Associates, Program Council

**Timeline:** Initial goals to be implemented by 2011

**Goal and Strategy # 7, Financial and Member Stewardship. We will develop a plan for the stewardship of the Church, focusing on financial and non-monetary resources. The plan will include leadership development and ways to encourage members to assume leadership positions.**

The concept of stewardship needs to be addressed by the Church in the development of both a financial plan and a membership plan that has collaboration at its core and meeting future Church needs as its purpose. The two areas, financial stewardship and member stewardship, need to be developed together and not in isolation from each other. Collaborative development of financial and member stewardship deals directly with resources, financial and human, and is important to church life. These activities will be increasingly important as we anticipate membership growth and the need for more space.

Financial stewardship encompasses the annual operating budget, individual financial commitments (pledges), and growing the Trust Fund. Non-monetary stewardship includes individual responsibility for Church operations and programs that include holding leadership positions, joining committees, participating actively in Church events and programs, and caring for our Church home which incorporates physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual elements.

Leadership development needs to be pursued intentionally by UUBN. This includes identifying potential leaders and encouraging newer members of the Church to become involved in leadership activities and assume leadership positions. Leadership development should make use of UUA and district level workshops and programs as well as attending General Assembly.

**Lead Groups:** Finance Committee, Trustees, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, Program Council, Board of Directors

**Timeline:** Stewardship and Membership Plans, including leadership development, to be developed in 2011 with implementation beginning in 2012

**Goal and Strategy # 8, Building and Property Improvement. We will develop a plan with attention to energy and greenspace issues for the renovation, improvement, and expansion of our current Church building as well as the continued enhancement of our property.**

The arrival of a new senior settled minister heralds a new era in UUBN. In this emerging era there will be opportunities to enhance, improve, and even expand our current Church building. Meeting the current and future physical space needs of the Church is of vital importance. The need for additional space

will become more evident as UUBN continues to develop as a program church. Future growth depends on an adequate and pleasing physical space that fulfills individual, group, committee, and program needs. Recent discussion involving the Board of Directors provides evidence that UUBN must give attention to its carbon footprint, and the need to improve energy efficiency through retrofitting the building to achieve important goals for energy use and conservation.

Even now we are approaching capacity in space for Religious Education. We are mindful of the vote of the congregation in 2004, denoting that while we decided to remain in our Church home on Emerson Street and complete limited renovation, we will consider future opportunities for purchase of property that would meet the needs of our growing congregation at some future time.<sup>1</sup> Information and projections regarding site criteria, expansion limits, staffing requirements, and program needs will be useful in this process.

<sup>1</sup>Note: "Remain at our present location/do limited building renovations/continue property search" (A Special Congregational Meeting was held to discuss the results of the Long Range Planning Committee regarding whether or not UUBN should continue the search for a suitable building or property, Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting, September 24, 2004, p. 2).

**Lead Groups:** Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, Administrative Committee, Program Council, Board of Directors

**Timeline:** Plan for building and property to be developed in 2011 with implementation beginning in 2012